CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study basically focuses on the excessive deployment of landmines in Angola and its effects on the lives of people in Huambo province.

The first part of chapter two presents an analysis of war at the global level, followed by a discussion of some literature on guerrilla warfare and the many conflicts in Angola during the decades of colonisation until recently. The chief argument is that due to the natural, geological and internal strategic riches of the country, as well as important external influences, the country has been devastated both economically and socially.

The Huambo province, in the central plateau of Angola, has been selected for particular attention in this discussion. This is analysed in the case study as a whole, in chapter three. It includes a discussion of landmine usage, types of mines and the effects of mines on both individuals and on the economic and productive infrastructures of the country, as well.

Chapter four is the methodological section. The chapter wraps up the strengths and pitfalls in compiling this report. It also discusses the reasons for choosing a qualitative methodology regarding the nature of the study. Chapter five deals with the analysis of data gathered from individual interviews. The chapter also includes a sub-section on the major findings, integrating the results from the literature used in this report. The major argument is that landmines are per se the primary means of degradation of both the physical and agricultural milieu.

In chapter six a descriptive data analysis is presented of the focus group interviews, i.e. conducted with three mini-groups, consisting of four individuals each. This part involves essential and illustrative quotes from non-victim respondents.

Chapter seven presents concluding remarks. These assert that landmines do exist in Angola due to the fact of many years of fighting. It is shown that the constant spread of landmines in Angola
is a phenomenon that is more monstrous than one can imagine, and results in a crescendo of human rights violation against Angola’s own citizens and a violation of the land itself. In the recommendations section, the view is contemplated that, as part of the healing process, landmine victims must be offered post-traumatic rehabilitation. Recommendations are also made which call for effective mine clearance in Angola, a process which must be properly controlled and assisted by local and international bodies.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

The aim of this study is to outline how the people of the Huambo province of Angola have been affected by the massive overuse of landmines in the area. The main objective of this report is to investigate how the destructive effects of war, jointly with a large number of mines, retard not only the rural development per se, but also the progressive life of the entire nation. This is due to the fact that large numbers of economically active people, who reside in the rural areas, are the major targets of landmine explosions.

There are a number of reasons for having chosen this particular research topic. Firstly, and according to news reported by Cable News Network (CNN), the chief motivation arises from recent growing global pressure to ban any further use and manufacture of landmines, as was decided in 1997 during the Ottawa International Conference in Canada. This has also been given further support by the late Lady Diana, Princess of Wales, in collaboration with the International Red Cross Organisation (CNN, 1997 World Report).

Secondly, the research topic was chosen with the purpose of gaining insight and a better understanding of an important and sensitive social problem existing in Angola for many years. The human face of Angola with the scourge of landmines is one of over 25,531 amputees, which constitutes one in 470 people in a population of about twelve million inhabitants (Rupiya, 1997:16). Landmines pose a global threat that haunts different countries around the world, and in particular in Angola. Having lived in one of the most contaminated countries with an extensive use of nine to fifteen million of landmines (Rupiya,
I have been concerned with the serious destruction caused by landmines. It affects most basic social structures, such as the family, the elderly, the youth, as well as young children. Thus, it is interesting to know how some of the landmine victims in Angola cope with their disastrous reality. By trying to study some factors such as their major concerns, and also their own mine awareness, I hope to shed some light on this issue.

Furthermore, I found the topic interesting since it deals with the reality of my own country. It also gave me the opportunity to travel to the outskirts of the Huambo Province, as a practical field of research, and to be able to communicate with the victims and their relatives.

Finally, an important motive that compelled me towards the choice of this theme was the fact that when I first contacted Professor Jacklyn Cock, from the Sociology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand about this idea, she replied ‘Maria I am delighted to hear that you are doing your Master Thesis on landmines. The best way to do it is to write about it’ (Personal correspondence). Put simply, the major intention of this study is therefore to seek to contribute to ongoing research directed at resolving this, and to assist in the restoration of a dignified human and social order, by writing about the problem.

1.3 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study was limited to the Huambo province. I was unable to reach other Angolan provinces, mainly because of limited time and financial restrictions. I would like to point out that this particular study was entirely self-funded. However, the military return flight from Luanda to Huambo, as well as accommodation and local transport, were entirely supported by the local military authorities.

Huambo was formerly the most populous province of Angola. It was the second capital and the largest economic centre during colonialism. Located in the south of the Kwanza River on the central highlands of Angola, about thirty six percent of its population is Umbundu-speaking.

\footnote{For the purpose of this study both the concepts ‘landmines’ and ‘mines’ refer to anti-personnel and
Basically, local people depend on a subsistence agriculture to sustain their life, growing corn, vegetables such as cabbages, lettuce, strawberries, etc. Normally the crops are planted during the rainy season. This season might start before September and last to between October and December (Fichtmueller, 2000:1; Henderson, 1979:3031).

Huambo was officially inaugurated by the Decree of 1040, on 21 September 1912, when the Portuguese governor was Norton de Matos. Since then the plateau was favoured by white colonialists due to its climate and natural resources found along its roads and railway stations that linked to the rest of the major provinces of Bié, Moxico up to the interior of Africa, to Zambia, Zaire and with the Atlantic. Given its natural position the province became the cradle of the metropole and it was given the name Nova Lisboa (New Lisbon).

Moreover, Huambo is situated between five rivers, namely the Cahululo, Cavongue, Candjaéne, Gombe and Sacaála rivers. Its original name derived from the Umbundu language, Ombila io ngombe, meaning “the cemetery of oxé”. This was because cattle were driven by Boers from the southern borders of Angola and going to Bié and Moxico in 1909.

Although these trips were enjoyed by those individuals, it happened that the cattle died along the roads because of exhaustion, lack of grass and local plagues (Keiling, 1962:13; Molar, 1962:29).

Today, Huambo belongs to those cities depicting the end of the world, where every single house has been intensively marked by signs of repeated fights. The city is in a state of total chaos, from its roads to its buildings designed by Portuguese architects.

anti-tank mines. The concepts will be used interchangeably throughout this mini-dissertation.
The following chapter draws attention to some literature on warfare, different types of guerrilla war, and most importantly it examines the profile of Angola in its past and current days of military conflicts.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE ON GUERRILLA WARFARE

2.1 DEFINITION AND CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

Before going into the specific debate about the use of landmines in Angola, some literature on war has been selected which it is hoped will shed light on the author’s particular understanding of the problem being studied.

There is no single definition of war. However, a simple definition of the term is that war is the capacity that states and individuals have to settle disputes and overcome rivalries in modern societies, by exerting military force and violence (Giddens, 1993:358; Howard, 1984:10-11; Laffin, 1990:7-9; Summers, 1989:27).

According to Giddens (1993:354-358) war, as a contemporary means of the modern world, serves to settle political differences amongst different parties. Particularly, war has been notorious in settling disputes around national borders, as was the example of Europe across the last century (Tilly, cited in Giddens, 1993:354). The European invasion of foreign territories occurred due to European superiority in economic and military terms (Giddens, 1993:354).

The penetration and occupation of both South and Central America by the Portuguese, a point that will be developed later, and Spanish colonists, led to the demarcation of boundaries during the time of white colonialism. The expansion of territories through warfare, as well as occupation, resulted in the social and political division of North and South America (Giddens, 1993:354).

Acts of violence and related social activity are still being carried on by modern states with common trends. Particularly, sophisticated armies and highly technological weaponry are constantly used and employed in these wars (Giddens, 1993:358; Howard, 1984:25). The nature of contemporary war may vary from nation to nation, and ultimately its causes may vary from individual interests to political ideologies as well.
Indeed, the cause of war may be considered ideological, or economic in order to maintain power, assisting allies, defending rights and so forth (Giddens, 1993:358; Howard, 1984:12).

It is the ultimate balance of power amongst states that makes war a social activity whereby states engage in fighting against each other monopolizing sophisticated armies as noted above (Giddens, 1993:354-358). For this reason Karl Von Clausewitz, the doyen of war studies, defined war more than a century ago by saying that war is a “test of power in the international arena. War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means” (Giddens, 1993:358). A simple reading from the above quotation suggests that in this context, war appears to be a commodity, not biologically inherited by individuals, but instead a human phenomenon socially constructed, causing disastrous domestic suffering and crises.

2.2 Distinct Types of War

Taking war as an interaction of violence between political groups or governments, there is a need to draw a distinction between some of the most usual types of war. The particularities of their aims will be discussed and the resources employed:

1. **Total war** - involves a struggle between governments with the purpose of defeating the other. In this type of war all means are used to destroy the enemy. An example would be the war between super powers, using nuclear weapons, such as the two major world wars, also referred to as conventional war (Huntington, 1962:xv-xvi).

2. **General war** - involves a struggle between governments. The purpose is that one seeks the defeat of the adversary. However, it does not use all means at its disposal and it does not use nuclear weapons, though it still makes use of sophisticated military means (Huntington, 1962:xvi).

3. **Limited war** - involves a struggle between super or inferior powers with limited arms. Each power makes use of limited resources, and normally it occurs within a
specific geographic area. An example of this would be the Korean war that can be defined as limited to both the United States and China (Huntington, 1962:xvi).

4. **Revolutionary war** - involves a struggle between a non-governmental group (partisans) against a governmental group, aiming to overthrow the political regime in power. A case in point of this type of war is the Cuban (1956) and the Algerian wars (1954). Indeed, each type encapsulates military interaction, involving numerous participants, with powerful armies, tactics and materials (Giddens, 1993:355; Huntington, 1962:xv-xvi).

5. **Guerrilla warfare** - Quite often revolutionary wars are linked to guerrilla warfare and, subsequently, to the so-called wars of national liberation, mainly conducted against the white and foreign occupants, commonly known as colonists (Huntington, 1962: xv-xvi).

As noted above, in the past century the world has been shaped by different forms of conflict. Thus, changes in the degree of the intensity of war might be reflected in widespread ethnic or tribal wars, religious, ideological, domestic or intrastate violent wars, expressing an absolute internal discontentment amongst individuals. Arguably, this form of violence most often results in guerrilla warfare. Primarily, the nature of guerrilla warfare is also related to inter-state links where it is likely that “. . . external events contribute to sustaining guerrilla warfare . . .” (Grundy, 1971:24). The Angolan situation has been deeply marked by guerrilla warfare. An example of this current and lasting problem is discussed below.

2.3 **Guerrilla Warfare with Reference to Angola**

Literature on guerrilla war is diverse and extensive. However, as a form of irregular warfare, guerrilla warfare, simply “is a military action, involving tactical attacks and counter attacks by small and independent groups” (Chaliand, 1982:7-11; Thayer, 1963:xvi). As a type of unconventional war, the chief objective of guerrilla warfare is to pursue a struggle of the weaker against the stronger. The former refers to irregularly displaced or individual troops as said earlier, whereas the latter refers to official conventional armies (Giddens, 1989:375; Huntington, 1962:xvi; Wilkins, 1962:3-5).
A particular characteristic of guerrilla war is that local battles are often conducted by skilful and irregular combatants whose primary intention is to spread fear and terror amongst the local population. At the same time, guerrilla tactics rely on the fact that guerrillas are not predisposed to win wars, but conversely, to ensure that their counterparts (enemies) are unlikely to win them (Thayer, 1963:xxv; Wilkins, 1962:7).

2.3.1 Brief, Historical View of Guerrilla Warfare

Guerrilla warfare is as ageless and ancient as human history. However, it has been developed ever since the Second World War to the extent that modern guerrilla warfare can turn into conventional wars. The reason for this is that, in general, guerrillas are outnumbered and outgunned (O’Sullivan & Miller, 1983:119; Thayer, 1963:xvii). The term guerrilla has its origins in Spain, meaning ‘little or small war’, and dates back to the days when Spanish troops fought the French armies during the times of Napoleon’s invasion in 1804-1814. These troops employed the tactics of guerrilla warfare such as networks of mobility and flexibility against well-trained and equipped regular forces (Huntington, 1962:xix; Wilkins, 1962:5).

As guerrilla operations progress, they begin to be characterized by an element of geographic attachment. For example, guerrilla warfare is found in rain forests, and at the heart of the jungles, where inevitably there is a tendency to establish close and friendly relationship ties with the local population (O’Sullivan & Miller, 1983:16; Thayer, 1963:xiii). Moreover, and as noted before, the current success of guerrilla actions makes it extremely problematic for regular forces to control guerrilla movements both at geographical and numerical levels (O’Sullivan & Miller, 1983:117).

In addition, an important element of guerrilla warfare is that it is an old phenomenon that has been carried on in different parts of the globe, even from the days of Mao Tse Tung in China, where he fought as an organizer and participant in 1926. A most striking feature of guerrilla
warfare is that it has developed strong ties with nationalist struggles. These full-scale guerrilla struggles for national liberation were in evidence in former Portuguese colonies, such as Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, as the principal wars during five centuries of colonisation of these countries. The following section presents an analysis of the Angolan war, a country in the Southern Africa region on which this study is focused.

2.3.2 Portuguese Expansion and Historical Legacy in Angola

The penetration of Portuguese colonialism in Angola goes back to 1482, when Diogo Cão, a white settler, reached the Congo basin. Like any other colonial occupation, the primary goal was to explore other territories in search of trade routes to the Indies. Linked to this was the desire to expand the slave trade due to the existing ports and fortresses. In 1885, after the Berlin Treaty was signed, the Portuguese established links with the then King of Congo to exchange slaves for Catholic missionaries and teachers (Henderson, 1979:75-79; Humbaraci & Muchnik, 1974:85-86; Newitt, 1981:1 Somerville, 1986:9).

Expanding colonial settlements was also regarded as a way of establish lucrative trading bases. Taking into account the geographic position of the Angolan Atlantic coast in relation to the Indies’ routes, Portuguese commerce was essentially undertaken in terms of ivory, cotton, coffee, copper, cocoa, diamonds, oil, sugar, expanded through maritime lines as noted before (Newitt, 1981:2-10). The system of governance imposed by the Portuguese regime was one of the direct rule, whereby the regime took entire economic and political legitimacy and control (Gann & Duignan, 1981:27; Newitt, 1981:18).

Portuguese colonialism in Angola clearly created patterns of human conflict with a particular type of popular resistance warfare. Historically, it can be argued that this form of civil war has made the conflict to be the longest, most vicious and bloodiest. It has resulted in the current international crisis.

Internal wars fought by Portugal in Angola had two major objectives. Firstly, there was the military purpose backed by its NATO allies (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), such as the United States, France, West Germany and England. Secondly, a psychological war was
fought intentionally to take control over the civil population. This was intended also to cut off any possible interaction with local nationalist forces. At the same time Portugal’s interests to move more white settlers into the territory was to balance its own economy of expansion (Humbaraci & Muchnik, 1974:38).

In order to pursue a massive war throughout the colony, Portuguese authorities deployed the best high commanders and modernized armed forces to fight against guerrilla forces. Far more striking was the degree to which Portugal as a poor and little country in 1968 was able to spend “… 73 per cent of her total public expenditures forwar (and) on military purposes” (Humbaraci & Muchnik, 1974:34).

**2.3.3 Growing Resistance**

The precarious and deteriorated psychological reality experienced in Angola during the period of colonialism led to the fact that local forces acted against the imperial metropolis through constant and intense battles of resistance. These fierce and vicious battles against foreign penetration are landmarks of Queen M’zinga Mbandi in 1635 – to the period led by King Mandume in 1655. Recent wars resulted in thousands of deaths, armed and para-military colonial forces employed tanks, heavy artillery, bombs and mines, ground-attack aircraft battalions and so forth (Humbaraci & Muchnik, 1974:91; Keegan & Wheatcroft, 1986:103; Newitt, 1981:121).

Given this violent background, it can be easily be seen that there would be latent hostility against Portuguese occupying forces, continuing in the 1960s with revolts inside Angola. The Portuguese people were not entirely prepared for such actions and were surprised and disorganised when, in 1961, conflict erupted at both urban and bush levels: “… urban guerrilla began action in Luanda [with] uprising by local groups which took the nationalist leaders as well as authorities unawares” (Keegan & Wheatcroft, 1986:104-105; Newitt, 1981:228-229).

In response to the bush war strategies employed by guerrilla fighters and revolts that spread all over the country, Portugal initiated a counter response to the border war in order to
defend important areas such as chief towns, economic and communication sites. In the 1970s the struggle reached its peak and the number of victims (particularly civilians) rose on both sides, with atrocities escalating both from defenders and attackers. Notably, guerrilla warfare was conducted in unpopulated areas while the Portuguese still maintained control of the economic and productive zones. By contrast, guerrillas found their rapid movements at night amidst villagers, using tactics of mining roads and “... intimidating government headmen, and keeping a large military force guessing as to their whereabouts” (Brittain, 1998:1; Newitt, 1981:231-232).

Simultaneously, this led to the existence of different groups of freedom fighters in Angola, namely the UPA (União Popular de Angola), MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) and UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola). Their actions were to some extent uncoordinated because of their inability to organize themselves nationwide. It is noteworthy that rival ideologies in the country made it impossible for these groups on the eve of the independence of Angola to resolve their political differences (Keegan & Wheatcroft, 1986:103; Newitt, 1981:241).

2.3.4 Other Contributing Factors

Even if one has some understanding of the internal dynamics of Angola, it is not an easy task to discuss the root causes of this war. Any study done in relation to the country cannot exclude external factors. Angola is known to have had continuing crises and military instability in the Southern African region over the past three decades. In other words, the country has a historical basis of little peace and endless years of conflict within the regional and contemporary human history. In fact, it is an unstable nation, politically and militarily. In short, the country is one of the most destroyed by war and as a result has a high level of social disarray and turmoil.

In trying to point out some contributing factors, scholars argue that since the war started in the 1960s, Angola has been used as a proxy of international super-powers. In the early 1970s at the center of these international actions we have, on one hand, the support given to rebel insurgents (UNITA) by the United States during the Reagan and subsequently Bush
administrations from 1985 up to the 1990s (Minter, 1994:148; Thompson, 1989:11). On the other hand, the Soviet and Cuban allies gave their support to the ruling party since independence in 1975, the then popular MPLA (Klinghoffer, 1980: 114-134). Notably, this controversial West versus East ideological struggle was notorious at the time of the so-called era of anti-cold war discourse (Copson, 1994:103; Duignan & Gann, 1984:292-294; Matloff, 1997:5; Minter, 1994:37; Wolfers & Bergerol, 1974:11). Meanwhile, the worst part of imperial and external panels’ policies was that ‘…from the colonial period to the Cold War, the West has been engaged in Africa, often with damaging results…’ (Purvis, 1996: 33). In this regard it is important to bear in mind that the counterinsurgency profile, extended by the Reagan regime, was built up in order to spread conflicts of low intensity in Third World countries. Examples are countries in Central America, such as El Salvador, where more than $3 billion was spent (Thompson, 1989:11).

In Honduras, the American budget extended to $1.5 billion, in Costa Rica $1.2 billion was spent and in Guatemala military expenditures were about $660 million. Similar amounts were given to forces in Afghanistan in 1984. Not surprisingly, a tenth of the budget was directed to the war in Angola with the purpose of discouraging a Soviet stand inside the country (Minter, 1994:148; Thompson, 1989:11).

If it is true that the historically popular and revolutionary MPLA was hosting Cubans and Soviets on its soil, and having their assistance on the ground, it is also true that these Eastern forces first came to rescue a possible threat imposed by outside players, trying to avoid a similar situation to what happened in the former Congo, while Patrice Lumumba was still alive (Brittain, 1982: 2; Klinghoffer, 1980:5).

In the late 1960s after the death of Lumumba, the country declined into total political instability and bankruptcy with the ruling dictator Mobutu, who at the time was a close ally of the American CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) with aid and strategies directed later on against Angola (Brittain, 1998:2; Emerson 1967:1; Klinghoffer, 1980:45; Minter, 1994:151; Wolfers & Bergerol, 1974:1).

2.3.5 The Role of South Africa
Elsewhere in this report it has been argued that the discussion of the causes of any war are multiple and a complex issue to deal with. Some complex interplay needs to be highlighted at a national, regional and international level, in dealing with specific causes of this civil war.

The ugliest side of this war was that the former South African government was interested in diverting its domestic and racial explosion. South Africa’s apartheid ideological policy was also convinced of a regional hegemony at about the same time that Namibia and Mozambique were also fighting for national independence (Brittain, 1998:3-4; Minter, 1994:5; Wolfers & Bergerol, 1974:216).

However, the interests that lay behind these violent operations were also linked to the strategic “unbridled exploitation by foreign monopolies” (Wolfers & Bergerol, 1974:1) and Angola’s interest in having a prosperous non-racial society in the country. Another source of irritation could have been Angola’s immense geological, natural and mineral resources, such as its huge off-shore oil deposits, coffee, diamonds, oil, uranium, cobalt, chrome, fusing quartz, and so many others that would become competitive and sources for South Africa and big outside players, such as America, Britain and France.

As far as the wars fought in Angola are concerned, they have been primarily about competition for economic and mineral resources, through the use of force and the destabilization of the country per se (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998:7-9; Huldt & Bearman, 1993:245; Wolfers & Bergerol, 1974:1).

2.3.6 Effects of Guerrilla Warfare on Development

Any effort to evaluate the impact of war, including the saga of landmines in Angola, runs into difficulty. It is important to note that Angola’s peripheral economy is mainly based on family or individual agricultural development mostly in the plateau and southern regions (Francis, 1994:7-13; Todaro, 1989:305-309).

Basically, its major characteristic is agricultural and pastoral development in which the ‘…family farm [is] the basic unit of production’ (Henderson, 1979:32; Todaro, 1989:300).
Such a structured agrarian endeavour encompasses, therefore, the subsistence farmers, having a common pattern of family, physical and socio-economic survival of their own production, harvest, sales and exchange, as a peculiar pattern of their own organisational structure of rural life (Todaro, 1989:301-302).

Similarly, another characteristic is that this structural family unit involves ‘cohesiveness and family solidarity’ of mainly extended family members (Francis, 1994:10). The lives of rural family farmers, therefore, revolve around productive activities such as modes of cropping of seeds, plantation of fruits and vegetables, consumption, storage - with the social and economic aspects of rural development directed at basic family self-sustainability (Crow, 1992:26; Dixon, 1990:19; Francis, 1994:10-11).

Recently, the major factor altering this traditional and agrarian family, social and economic development, as well as its structural status undoubtedly, in the Angolan central and highland parts, has been the immense rate of landmine explosions, especially over the past thirty years of war.

Therefore, it can be seen that the irreparable fragmentation and disruption of economic and rural development is currently shifting the local standards of cultivation and agricultural capacity. This is linked to the fact that the value of land production reduces, and the process of planting and weeding becomes significantly altered for these families (Todaro, 1989: 309-310).

Taking subsistence farming as the predominant value factor of the socio-economic village development position, the argument is that the scarcity found in land availability, with the disruption caused by the countless existing landmines, is a ‘man made’ social phenomenon due to the deepening war in Angola (Crow, 1992:20-22). In fact, because farmers are unable to engage in subsistence farming, food production has declined. Therefore, thousands of them become impoverished and face a worsening and precarious crisis of famine in the years immediately ahead, a point that will be covered later (Crow, 1992:20-22; Todaro, 1989:310-311).
Ameliorating the devastating effects of war and landmines does not necessarily imply the complete well-being of rural village dwellers, and their small-scale economic fragmented activity. On a broader spectrum these also have serious problems. Within a regional context Angola is still an embryonic member of the SADC (Southern African Development Community); it has been a member since 1980 (Alao, 1994:13). This institutional body was founded in that same year in order to co-ordinate inter alia sub-regional economic development and sustainability (Alao, 1994:13).

Consequently, it is important that we view some of the internal impacts of war and landmines in Angola, in a wider sub-regional and global context, bearing in mind the impoverished economic development of Angola today. It must not be forgotten that in the past Angolan ‘… crops and a handful of manufactured products flow steadily to Europe, America, and other parts of Africa’ (Duffy, 1959:3; Henderson, 1979:141).

Due to war and landmines in Angola $229 million from the World Food Programme was given to Angola to relieve its crisis of food and humanitarian chaos, in a joint effort of international donors (Jornal de Angola, 2000:9; Kumby, 2000:20).

These factors also demonstrate a slower rate of breakdown in Angola’s own national, regional and international economy. Moreover, the vulnerability of the family farmers is reflected in a stagnated productive unit, and whose plain effects are acute and extreme indicators of poverty for the households as a whole, with the number of maimed family members rising while there is ‘… the lack of development, in form of production’ (Crow, 1992: 23).

2.3.7 Summary

Guerrilla warfare is the oldest and longest lasting strategy employed in contemporary wars for national liberation. In Angola, this dates back to the Portuguese penetration of the hinterland. Plunged into the bloodiest conflicts with deep resistance growing all over the country, the pillars of the Angolan conflict are also rooted in the clash between West and East during the Cold War, with remarkable evidence of former South African government involvement. The deepening effects of guerrilla warfare in Angola have resulted in the
dismantling of its human and economic development, and have given rise to one of the
greatest humanitarian catastrophes.

In the following chapter, the inconsistent use of mines in conventional and unconventional
conflicts will be discussed. Subsequently, the chapter will also analyse a case study of Angola
and its brutal scenario in indiscriminately using landmines as a weapon of war.
CHAPTER THREE

LANDMINES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

Landmines are mechanical or plastic explosive devices planted in the ground aiming to destroy both humans and vehicles (Anderson, 1995:19; Henriksen, 1995:4). Alarming figures point out that 84 million of undetonated landmines still exist in 64 countries. Countries with current conflicts are listed as highly contaminated with landmine devices. These are: Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Yugoslavia (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:9; United States Department the State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 1998:11).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), also claims that annually 2-5 million mines are planted in the ground worldwide, resulting in ‘…one of the most widespread lethal and long-lasting forms of pollution’ (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:9). According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, landmines have claimed more than 2,000 victims per month over the last 50 years. One may argue that landmines cause more deaths and injuries in low-intensity conflicts, than would be caused by nuclear wars. Primarily, landmines are directed at civilians, i.e. men, women and children (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:10).

3.1. Historical View and New Technology of Mines

Landmines have performed their haphazard and deadly legacy in conventional wars from the earliest days of the First World War up to the insidious Vietnam conflict. The first antitank mines were used by German forces in the 1920s to prevent the advance of both French and British tanks (Croll, 1998:7; Human Rights Watch, 1993:16). Later in World War II these lethal weapons of about 30 centimeters in diameter and having 10 kilograms of trinitrotoluene explosive (TNT) were often used by different armies. The United States Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) claims that in the Second World War over 300 million antitank landmines were used. Of these, 220 million were planted by the former Soviet Union, 80 million by Germany and the remaining 17 million were laid by the United States of America (Human Rights Watch, 1993:16).
Initially, antipersonnel mines were activated by 15 to 40 pounds of direct pressure. Later more complex explosive devices were manufactured. These were capable of exploding ‘…when pressure was applied or when an electrical circuit was closed’ (Human Rights Watch, 1993:20). In this context, antipersonnel mines have been used with the concrete objective of creating massive destruction and to ‘…demoralize troops or terrorize civilians’ (Human Rights Watch, 1993:17). In the Japanese war these mines were employed as booby-traps in the fruit boxes placed close to different tactical obstacles, such as pipes and radio stations (Human Rights Watch, 1993:16).

From the 1960s onwards the United States of America started to develop a new antipersonnel mine technology, known as “scatterables.” These aimed to impede movements between North and South Vietnam. Commonly, the BLU-43/44, or “dragon tooth” (due to its similarity to a needlelike shape) was launched from the air to the ground, but without exploding. It was a mine which weighed only 20 grams, but when trod on it ‘… could tear off a foot’ (Courregelongue et al. 1996:3; Human Rights Watch, 1993:16). During the same period the BLU-42 or “spider” was constantly deployed in Vietnam. On the other hand, the PFM-1 or “butterfly” of Soviet make, was intensively used by the Soviets in the Afghanistan war (Human Rights Watch, 1993:17-18). Often, antitank mines carry about 2-9 kilograms of explosives, and to be activated they need a pressure of 100-300 kilos, whereas antipersonnel mines contain 10-250 grams of explosives, and explode with 5-50 kilograms of pressure (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:10).

Primarily, landmines are designed to target tanks and vehicles as noted above (anti-tank mines), or civilian population (antipersonnel mines). Recent figures demonstrate that these mortar weapons have claimed the lives of 10,000 people every year and they ‘… maim more than three times as many, worldwide (and) every 22 minutes someone around the World is killed or maimed by a landmine’ (Bottiglieri, 2000: xi; International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1997:1).
3.2 **Landmines’ Effects on Villagers**

Despite these horrific statistics the use of these devices is still on the increase. In most of the cases they are randomly deployed without being mapped or marked. This is typical of internal conflicts. The result is that the majority of victims are non-combatants (unarmed population). The most affected individuals are children, women and young men. It is argued that a child maimed by a landmine is seen as having little or no hope in his/her prospective life. Ngwenya points out that a particular effect of the landmines is that they tend to inflict horrific injuries on the victims. These injuries particularly refer to the maiming lower or upper limbs, but rarely are landmines designed to kill their victims (Ngwenya, 1997:7).

Generally, children are extremely vulnerable to landmine exposure due to their own infant curiosity when playing around in areas that are mined without any reference. One important effect on children is an economical one. The victimisation of children constitutes a ‘drainage of resources’ of any contemporary society (Ngwenya, 1997:8). As a result of this, when a child is affected his/her expectations of contributing towards the family are minimal, as he/she grows into an adult, creating therefore, a familial burden. By the same token landmines also impact negatively on children if their parents are victimised under the same circumstances. Ngwenya’s study indicates that commonly the loss of employment and the possible familiar and social rejection occurs with these individuals, hence having a direct impact on children’s lives (Ngwenya, 1997:8).

Ngwenya also argues that a second large category of landmine victims comprise women. The effect on women is greater than men for several reasons. For instance in Afghanistan 3% of victims were women. In Cambodia the figure is 5% for women in Mozambique it is 16%. In African countries like Angola and Mozambique women are essentially agricultural producers. In addition, women face enormous risk in the course of their daily activities, such as collecting firewood, fetching water, harvesting and farming. According to Ngwenya these rates vary from country to country. An important factor is population density: clearly, the more densely populated an area is, the greater the
probability of people falling victims to landmines accidents ‘… the number of mines laid [vary] and the need to venture into mined areas to collect wood or cultivate the land’ (Ngwenya, 1997: 9-10).

In many traditional African societies, the mutilation of women may have many implications both within the family and the community as a whole. According to cultural and religious stereotypes, women may no longer be capable of pursuing their normal duties as mothers and wives in terms of childcare and field work. Usually, if they are mutilated before getting married they may no longer be seen as normal women, so that ‘… a woman’s chances of marrying and having children are very limited’ (Busé, 1999: 28; Ngwenya, 1997: 11).

The total number of existing landmines in Angola is a matter of debate and it is difficult to ascertain due to the lack of a concrete data released from any national surveys, which should ideally be conducted during a period of sustained ceasefire. It must be said that South Africa (from its past position of supporter and manufacturer of landmines), during its incursion into Angolan civil war actually co-operated by handing over ‘… some maps of minefields it laid…’ (Williams & Roberts, 1995:100). The landmine problem is very disproportionate in both southern and eastern areas of the country. The regions of Bié, Huambo and Moxico have the highest record of landmine injuries with an increased rate of amputees (including both ex-soldiers and rural inhabitants). Among the civilian population it comprises both men and women of different productive ages, with a higher incidence among children (Vines, 1997:29).

One of the major reasons for high rates of mine casualties is that the chaotic state of land compels people to venture out and to look for food in areas that are heavily mined (Williams & Roberts, 1995:101). In addition, landmines are planted near fields, schools, markets, medical centers or on riverbanks (Williams & Roberts, 1995:101).

This continuous and dire sociological problem of landmines means that ‘Angola will have to live with the human cost of landmines war for many years…’ (Vines, 1997: 34). Furthermore, this social dynamic also indicates that most landmine survivors end up as
beggars in towns or remain a burden to their family, especially those from farming backgrounds. The result is that the human, social and economic recovery of the country is jeopardised and the severity of the problem is visible at all levels of the society.

The Arms Projects of Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights (1993:14) argue that the global use of landmines makes it difficult for economies of subsistence to grow in a normal path. Adding to this problem is that the indiscriminate use and abuse of landmines seriously disempowers people. This reflects a rejection of individuals’ and communities’ prosperity leading directly to human poverty. Linked to this is the fact that the widespread use of landmines also hinders both economic and financial progress. When affected by landmines the family, the community and the individual as a whole become unproductive. This implies a huge loss of livelihood and the result of this is that the ‘… community life becomes strained or disintegrated altogether’ (Davies & Dunlop, 1994:63; Human Rights Watch, 1993:4). It is this lack of cohesiveness that hampers nations, particularly in the Third World, and incapable of coping with the possibility of reconstructing their economies in a post-war situation. This harsh reality is exacerbated by the poor system of transport and communication in any attempt to build up agricultural efforts (Davies & Dunlop, 1994:63; Human Rights Watch, 1993:4).

The United States Department of State estimates that landmines destroy rural populations, by killing or wounding 150 civilians per week worldwide and this results in a culture of instability which ‘… provide(s) a continuing element of chaos in countries striving for stability … the impact of uncleared landmines on a developing economy is tremendous’ (American Department of State, cited in Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, 1993: 4-5).

The actual war and the endless number of landmines put at risk not only the lives of million of people, particularly in the countryside, but particularly the principal infrastructures such as roads, bridges, communication facilities, are indefinitely damaged for decades. In 1992 with the restarting of conflict the new deployment of mines cause enormous daily hardships to the economy of the ordinary population with immense areas of land becoming unusable.
Estimates have shown that almost 8577 km of paved roads and 3189 km of railroads are planted with landmines. This means that the agricultural land is totally useless for plantation, and also for use as pasture (Anderson, 1995:20-21; Cahill, 1995:3-4; United States Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 1998:17-19; Williams & Roberts, 1995:96).

An added negative impact on individuals is that landmines create massive social movements of displaced people and internal refugees, most of whom rely on relief programmes, as said before. Consequently, the country faces one of the greatest humanitarian crises. The ‘...humanitarian crisis [is] exacerbated by a 70 percent loss of the maize harvest in the central planalto (highlands) region due to drought’ (Jornal de Angola, 1999:3; Williams & Roberts, 1995:99). The deliberate use of landmines serves to disrupt the social and economic life of thousands of civilians, and the effects are incalculable. Even though peace may become a reality in the country, landmines will remain a dormant threat for many generations to come.

It seems likely that the price of this war of more than two decades is comparable to those overwhelming civilian traumas that were found in Europe during the two world wars (Brittain, 1998:4; Minter, 1994:2; Sitbon, 1998:62).

3.2.1 CASE STUDY - ANGOLA: AN APPALLING SCENARIO

(i) Angola’s Geographic and Climatic Features

Angola is an immense and wonderful country. The second largest country in the sub-Saharan region, it is a land of geographic, climatic and natural contrasts. Most of its five borders are delimited by water with 810 miles (1 296 kilometers) out of 3 800 miles (6 080 kilometers) being part of rivers or the Atlantic coast (Henderson, 1979:26).

Angola’s climate and fertile land are extremely favourable for agriculture, especially with the subtropical climate in the regions of Bié, Huambo and Huila (inland plateau) and in the north of Malange and Kwanza Norte. Strong windfalls are normally registered in the Cabinda region, particularly in the Mayombe forest. As its climate varies, so does its altitude and vegetation, with grass savannah and some dry woodland commonly found on the plateau and in valleys.
Geographically, in the northeast Angola is bordered by the former Zaire, and in the north, by Congo Brazzaville. The southern border converges with Namibia, in particular with the Kalahari Desert, while in the east it shares a border with Zambia (Somerville, 1986:1-3).

Because of this natural and environmental *bricolage*, the country was exploited for its natural resources. In addition, human drainage resulted from the profitable sea-slave trade, making it one of the most depopulated regions in Africa today (Duffy, 1962:59; Humbaraci & Muchnick, 1974:88). Governed by Portugal for five centuries, from approximately 1482 to 1975 (Humbaraci & Muchnick, 1974:85), Angola became independent from its former colonial rulers on November 11, 1975. On February 11, 1976 the country was recognised as the People’s Republic of Angola by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In that same year on December 1, 1976 Angola became a permanent member of the United Nations Council (Henderson, 1979:23).

As regards the landmine crisis, Angola is considered to be the most highly mined country in the Southern African region. Its position is unique, and United Nations and United States sources estimate that about nine to fifteen million landmines have been planted throughout the country since conflicts against Portuguese colonialism seriously began in 1961 (Courregelongue, et al. 1996:5; Vines, 1998:25). Although Angola is widely hit by this enormous threat posed by the landmines, other countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) are also heavily mined. They are as follows: Mozambique, 2 million; and Zimbabwe between 1.5 to 2 million among some other nations (Vines, 1998: 125; Winslow, 1997:7).

The exact number of mines scattered throughout the country is in fact not the heart of the problem. Instead, what is critical is that the widespread use of mines in the region, and in particular in Angola, is a disastrous problem to civilians, curtailing any attempt at economic redevelopment as well as any possible endeavours to enhance national reconstruction. According to Vines (1997:1), in Southern Africa landmines have claimed over 250,000 lives over the past four decades of war, which spread in the colonial and post-colonial eras (Vines, 1997:1).
Angola, as a co-signatory at the Ottawa International Conference in Canada, joined many international players in an attempt to ban the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of landmines. However, these lethal devices can still be disseminated by either of the major social actors in the country’s conflict, namely the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), on the rebel side, or by the government troops (Human Rights Watch, 1999:460; Jornal de Angola, 2000:9; Jornal de Angola, 2000:1-11; Vines, 1997:127). This occurs in total violation of the humanitarian law that advocates that there are limits to ‘… the means soldiers may use to achieve their ends… [and] that soldiers and their weapons must discriminate between combatants and civilians, who are not to be targets in war …’ (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1983:13; Mine Ban Treaty, 2000:1-2; Williams & Roberts, 1995:3 [their emphasis]).

(ii) The Mine Strategy and the Dysfunction of Economic Infrastructures

The excessive and random use of landmines in the Angolan conflict dates back to the war for independence and the years of sustained civilian conflict which followed. There are both strategic and military motives for landmines being employed (as a tactic) for defensive and contra-offensive purposes (Williams & Roberts, 1995:7). Strategically, the government uses mines for protecting primary economic infrastructure, such as roads, railroads, bridges, dams, oil and diamond areas, and water pipelines. The ‘… government controlled population centres were also surrounded by minefields’ (Williams & Roberts, 1995:97).

Quite often these minefields are unmarked or unmapped, causing great damage to civilian and rural communities, particularly in the region of Benguela, Bié, Huambo and Uíge provinces. Such indiscriminate minelaying practices ‘… render paths, fields, and villages unusable to civilians except at great personal danger…’ (Human Rights Watch, 1993: 149-50). This leads to the creation of terror among communities.

(iii) Minelaying, Types and Origins

According to Human Rights Watch (1993:150-151 and 1997:13-35) Angola is a sort of United Nations genocidal recipient of mine types from diverse sources of origin. The literature also points out that although mines existed from 1961 onwards, the vast dissemination of mines occurred between 1975 and 1988, i.e. after independence. The
studies also comment that at least fifty-one different types of antipersonnel mine are to be found within the Angolan territory. Their sources vary from countries such as Austria, Belgium, China, Cuba, former Czechoslovakia Republic, France, East Germany, West Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Romania and South Africa. It is also worth noting that these mines vary in size and in their capacity to destroy human’s lives and physical limbs (Human Rights Watch, 1993:35; 1997:13-19).

The most commonly used types of mine found in Angola are the blast mine and the fragmentation mine. The former is laid either at the surface or under the ground, and explodes when someone steps on it. The fragmentation mine explodes by being activated through tripwires and it spreads large quantities of ‘…fragments of metal over a wide area’ (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:10). At the same time, anti-tank mines exist and seventeen types are found in Angola from a wide number of different countries, namely United States of America, Great Britain, Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. Anti-tank mines are primarily deployed to prevent the advances of tanks and vehicles, posing to some extent less risk to civilians, requiring a pressure of 60-500 kilograms to be activated. However, they are problematic since in many cases on the top of an anti-tank mine an anti-personnel mine is placed, and this is detonated when its victim stands on it (Human Rights Watch, 1997:18; International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:10).

(iv) **Infested Regions**

There are a huge number of mines scattered throughout the country, the most affected areas being Bié, Kuando Kubango, Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul, Malange, Moxico, and Zaire provinces, where the intensification of conflicts has been more marked over the past three decades. It has been argued that some soldiers when at large place landmines on ‘… both sides [of] … hospitals, schools and markets’ (Williams & Roberts, 1995:17; Winslow, 1997:3)

The second major areas where mines are located are roads and roadsides. In studies carried out in 1990 and 1992 by the Africa Watch in Angola eleven out of a sample of 57 victims had been maimed on roads. Similarly, another study conducted by the Red
Cross International in 1990 found that eleven out of 17 civilian people were also injured on roads. Most of the injuries are caused by antipersonnel mines ‘…affecting people who left the road to follow a short-cut, to rest, or to urinate’ (The Arms Project of Human Rights Watch & Physicians for Human Rights, 1993:156).

(iv) **The Social and Economic Consequences**

Angola covers an extensive area of 1,246,700 square kilometers. It is the second largest country in the sub-Saharan region, after the former Zaire. The country is bordered by the Congo in the North, Zambia in the East and Namibia in the South. Its vast size covers an area similar to France, Great Britain and Spain together (Tvedten, 1997:3; Williams & Roberts, 1995:96). According to figures presented in the literature, Angola tops the ranks of mine injury victims per capita in the world. This means that of a total population of 12,178,00 inhabitants, records estimate that about 15,000 Angolans are amputees as a consequence of the wide deployment of landmines, in one of the most infamous conflicts in the world today (Williams & Roberts, 1995:97; Winslow, 1997:1-3).

Stiff (1986:3-5) reminds us that war, like any other social activity, has a correspondence of causes and effects. Economically, Angola has collapsed since its independence in 1975 and is dependent on its oil production to sustain most of the costs of its war. In the period of 1995-1997 its continuous oil production increased to 679,212 barrels of oil per day and was expected to reach 1,300 million barrels in the five-year period from 1995 to 2000 (Martins, 1997:9).

The diamond industry could also provide the basis for a prosperous economy. Other potential sources of revenue include gold, uranium and many other minerals. A recent report presented ‘...a test case in a wider campaign to force multinationals to ensure that their profits do not go to finance wars, and its first report on Angola was on the diamond trade’ (*The Economist*, January, 2000:46). In a seminar presented at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) Professor John Saul argued that this is what leads to ‘a war of two Lords,’ being both the oil and diamond interests as cauldrons of the actual war (Saul, 2000). It is argued here that both the oil as well as the diamonds of Angola, which should be used to restart the economy of the country, have instead been widely employed by the war-makers as
profitable war commodities, resulting in one of the most distorted economies, and therefore, ‘… a new flood of illicit Cuango diamonds would pose a serious problem for the cartel …[and] both Unita and government have signalled that the war will not end quickly…’ (Gordon, 1999:8).

Recently, Junger (2000) in an interview with Cable News Network (CNN) stated that diamonds in some African countries, such as Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been the cause of misery for civilians and power for rebels and war patrons.

(vi) The Global Family and De-mining Actions

A crucial feature of the landmines is that their clearance is extremely costly. While a single mine can be traded as a cheap commodity, pricing at about $3, their removal is estimated to cost between $200 and $1,000 per mine. This means that the mine clearance bill in Africa will rise to $33 billion (Bensid, 1997:5; The International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:10).

The social scourge of landmines in Angola has captured international attention. The ongoing process of de-mining is the result of an International Campaign to Ban Landmines, after the Treaty signed in Ottawa, Canada in December 1997. Such a large campaign entails mine clearance operations, as well as education and awareness programmes in most of villages and around rural communities (Boulden & Edmonds, 1999:132-137; Williams & Roberts, 1995:103).

At the core of the international panel there is the Red Cross International with some centers for prosthetic and rehabilitation aid, mainly in Luanda and Huambo Provinces. This initiative follows a proposal presented by the Central Mine Action Office (CMAO), with a donation from the Canadian government of an amount estimated at $277,000 in March 1994. The same programme is presented in conjunction with the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (UCAH). Mine clearance in Angola has also been carried out in collaboration with demobilised teams of local armies, namely the government troops and former UNITA soldiers (Reuters, cited in the United Nations De-mining Humanitarian Action Mine Clearance and Policy Unit, 1996:1; Williams & Roberts, 1995:103). As part of a national humanitarian programme 16,000 mines were exploded in Angola in 1997.
Experts of the National Institute for Removal of Explosive Devices (INAROE) estimate that the actual number of mines scattered throughout the country is between five and seven million\(^2\) (cited in Bottiglierio, 2000: 53).

Meanwhile, the Halo Trust carries out impressive mine awareness activities in Mbave and Chipipa communities – 20 to 30 Km to the north/northeast of Huambo city (Krugmann, 2000:35). The mine awareness programme conducted by the Halo Trust involves different techniques to large audiences. These vary from the use of posters (having different types of mines and other explosives, how to react before a mine situation, how to support a victim, etc), followed by clarifications with traditional songs to capture the attention of people and to ‘…prevent senior citizens falling asleep, and lots of theatre play’ (Krugmann, 2000:37).

The first mine operations undertaken by the Halo Trust in Huambo Province took place in 1995. The institution possesses three demining teams, located in Huambo, Kuito, Bié and in Cubal in the Benguela region with a total of 123 deminers (Krugmann, 2000:37). Similarly, educational programmes in Kuito in south-eastern Angola, have been developed by Care International. These aim at teaching local people about ‘…the dangers of mines, how to plot their location and destroy them’ (The Star, 1997:15). The campaigns follow the sounds of ‘beating drums’ calling the attention of women and children to classes on the perils posed by landmines and other unexploded devices. It is important to note that Kuito is considered one of the most heavily mined towns in the world. It was one of the fiercest zones of combat against South African troops where the ‘..ground and air battles raged for weeks’ (The Star, 1997:15). Kuito was also visited by the late Princess Diana in January 1997 in her battle to ban the use of anti-personnel mines, before she died in a car crash on August 31 of the same year in Paris.

This social movement of human solidarity is also shown by another important player, namely the Norwegian Peoples’ Aid (NPA). Since 1994 the NPA has been in Angola offering de-mining services and enhancing the training activities of some 200 de-mining workers. This non-governmental organisation is also in charge of the mapping of eleven northern provinces.

\(^2\)It is important to note that while in Huambo, David Frederick, the Halo Trust Coordinator, told the researcher in an informal conversation that the organisation claims that 400 000 mines persist in the soil. He further stated that it would take fifteen years to clear the planalto central (central plateau).
in Angola. This comprises a total of ‘… 650 local staff, 30 dog teams in addition to 5 mechanical clearance vehicles’ (Bottiglieri, 2000:56). In addition, and as part of a regional strategy, the South African government has funded R12 million for mine clearance in Angola and Mozambique as the most heavily land mined countries in this region, in an attempt to contribute to the economic development of both nations (The Citizen, 1997:2).

It has been reported that South Africa began to produce mines in the earlier 1970s along with other mine products, including mine detectors and anti-mine armoured vehicles (Stott, 1998:69).

However, the former South African community of mine producers and manufacturers, such as Mechem, a branch of Denel, are currently engaged in new technologies ‘… to find even the lone plastic mine in a hectare of earth, and to protect workers involved in de-mining construction [and] … striving to meet the landmine challenge’ (Boulden, 1997:38). Ironically, South African innovators, while trying to employ their new strategies across the globe, have been criticized for their present tasks. The point is that because of their past, they are being accused of double profit-making. Originally, it entailed the selling of such mortar devices and presently their engagement involves removal operations (Boulden, 1997:38).

In the next chapter, the validity of choosing a qualitative approach for this specific research project will be discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 GETTING INTO THE FIELD: EXPERIENCES AND DIFFICULTIES

This present study was made possible by the participation of individuals in Huambo. However, the researcher would like to report some on conditions prevailing while conducting this research project.

The first incident happened in Huambo at the Red Cross Rehabilitation Centre, where at a primary care facility the researcher was denied access to interview some victims. The arrogance expressed by one of the expatriate members in the centre was such that he almost forced me to assure them that my study was not at any stage been carried out for political purposes. The researcher reassured them that the study was for a Master’s Degree and presented a letter by the University clearly stating the reasons for my presence in Huambo. Only then was I granted permission to enter. Initially, the Red Cross Centre did not allow the researcher to take photos. However, the researcher made it clear that the study would be meaningless without any photos. I came to understand later on that part of this obstructionism was due to the fact that I was driven into Huambo in a military Land Rover Jeep.

I also had difficulties at the Red Cross Head office in town. When I approached the office in Huambo and asked for their help in providing brochures or literature concerning landmine awareness campaigns, a local and young official simply replied: “We do not keep our records on files.”

The work done was conducted outside the city and some kilometers from the centre of Huambo. For this reason I was always interested in carrying my camera.
There was a day in which I was keen to photograph a dirty and torn Angolan flag nearby a bullet-riddled building. An extremely irritated security individual in civilian clothes came out and just swore at me: “In Huambo you can’t take photos without the permission from the government or the Ministry of Social Communication. Lots of people became rich at the expense of Huambo.”

One Sunday afternoon, another attempt was made to get a picture of a similar flag around an abandoned railway station. This time another more polite individual came, but he took the car registration number. I then realised that I should give up looking for another flag.

Although I recall these inconveniences during my four weeks in Huambo, I would have to say that there were other memorable moments spent there too. One of the strengths of this research was the support given by the Halo Trust Organisation in allowing me access to inaccessible areas to attend their manual programmes of de-mining.

On a Saturday morning, I witnessed two scheduled demolitions of a total 431 unexploded devices, which were quite remarkable. The first explosion included the demolition of 229 devices (see table 1) took place at Belém Huambo, at a distance of 10 km from the city. For reasons of security the researcher and the team of sweepers were positioned at a distance of 700 meters beyond the detonation site. Due to rain, the second detonation was cancelled. This consisted 120 mortars of 60mm; 12 mortars of 120mm; 70 projected grenades of 0G9 types found in former military bases, farmlands and other places where the population normally work.
Table 1: Demolition of Explosives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Demolition and Type of Explosives</th>
<th>Total of Explosives</th>
<th>Second Demolition and Type of Explosives</th>
<th>Total Number of Explosives</th>
<th>Total for that particular week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OG7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60 mm</td>
<td>120 mortars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG9</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>120 mm</td>
<td>12 mortars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OG15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>OGV9 projected grenades</td>
<td>70 mortars 1*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOG25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82 mm</td>
<td>3 mortars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEGEND: 1* The 70 mortars of the type of OG9 projected grenades were brand new devices found in former military bases.

Most of the above material was of Russian and South African origin gathered in that same week (23-28 October 2000). It was striking to see the landmines being removed from the ground. A particular picture was taken of a live mine placed at an unmarked edge of a bridge used by young boys for fishing in the river.

I also had the opportunity to observe mine-awareness campaigns, in school as well as to participate in mine awareness cultural activities in rural areas around Huambo.

This study has undoubtedly helped me to learn and to share the experiences of landmine victims and to find out their shocking situations in Huambo, one of the most destroyed provinces in Angola. If it is true that research is *per se* costly and excessively stressful, it is also true that research is time-consuming. Indeed, this study has been rewarding although a risky experience. Barely two weeks after leaving the province, according to some rumours, new fighting erupted. I was never able to confirm or dismiss such speculations.
Huambo was apparently a very calm province. In all the decades of war the province has been the forefront of the most intense fighting in Angola. During the day, the situation was always peaceful, but at night gun-fire could be heard. However, a top official in Huambo told me in an informal conversation that “It is better when we know that UNITA is around because, if it is so quiet, it means that they are preparing something not good.”

I was housed at a military guesthouse. The power was supplied by a generator in the house from 7-10pm, but the lights were very dim. It was a huge town house, with almost eight bedrooms. Three of the bedroom were modest suites. I was given a suite with minimal conditions with an en-suite toilette. Inside there was a big twisted and rusted drum filled with water. Drinking water was **água do luso**, Portuguese imported water. These were the best things that local authorities could have provided me with.

Every morning, a cleaner would clean the room. Another woman would come with a basin to refill the drum. The main entrance doors were never locked. The house had previously been the UNITA headquarters. It was in a state of disrepair, and one could see that work had been halted for some time. However, at night in the darkness I could see the house was surrounded and protected by more than twenty young soldiers, nineteen and twenty one years old, heavily armed with ammunition belts, rocket launchers and AK 47s in a daily sentry guard parade.

The stress of sharing live views, experiences and new inputs from the research population meant that it constituted to some extent a source of trauma to the researcher as well. Particularly when transcribing the tapes and listening to those voices of sorrow. I would argue that the worst part of this report was in fact the transcription of the audio-tapes. Especially those tapes recorded from focus groups carried on for many hours, and I was in touch with people’s tones of hunger, suffering and distress which were repeatedly shown in their words and faces. It has to be remembered that I was completely powerless to find
ways to help those victims while conducting the study in Huambo, and this made it extremely sad.

Once back in Johannesburg I put the tape recorder aside and gave myself long breaks due to the constant feelings of psychological instability and personal frustration. At the same time, I learnt from the doctor that I was displaying symptoms of malaria, having constant strong headaches, probably from the lack of basic conditions found in the province, particularly the lack of clean running water.

I also wanted to offset the delay in getting some books that were not available at any of the South African libraries relating to this study. In an attempt to get things to run normally, I approached a South African activist against landmines who was very willing to lend some books. Despite these slight difficulties I have tried at all costs to work hard and do whatever was possible to present a first draft of this work on time.

Nevertheless, my informants’ humble and special contribution gave me the confidence to continue to further my study in the near future relating to any social and scientific enquiry.

4.2 Conducting Face to Face In-Depth Interviews

The nature of this study required the researcher to adopt a qualitative approach. In doing so, the research used a non-probability sampling method. Due to the sensitivity of the data gathered and time availability of the research done, it was the most suitable methodology to be employed. The non-probability sampling strategy was snowball sampling. This sampling method encouraged the identification and the selection of cases within a network. It is a sampling method which leads to a more spontaneous strategy. Its analogy resembles a snowball which begins small and gets bigger, rolling on wet snow, by picking up additional snow. The level of spontaneity allows one source to lead the researcher to the next (Neuman, 1997:207).
In order to enhance the validity of this report the researcher combined focus group interviews through the method of group discussions. This is another type of qualitative methodology that will be discussed later.

### Table 2: Biographical data of respondents interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>Maimed In</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tété</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Chicala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Xoloanga 5*</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>±17</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>May 2000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1985</td>
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**LEGEND:**

1* Rosita has no idea of her real age
2* Catchiungo, 62 km east Huambo
3* Cubal is a village in the Benguela Province, 205 km from
The sample consisted of twenty respondents. Included in these individual interviews were ten females. Of these, two were widows, one single and three young girls and the remaining ones were married. Initially the females in particular were very suspicious and showed signs of fear and dread in their eyes while communicating. I realised that men to some extent were more talkative than women. At the end of any interview and whenever the tape recorder was off, then the interviewees were more willing to talk. At the same time, ten men were also interviewed, four of whom were single and six married. In the course of gathering data the researcher used in depth semi-structured interviews. The research interview was defined with the purpose of establishing a friendly conversation. The main objective was to conduct interviews, to ask questions, to listen, and to express an interest and to record the experiences of my interviewees. This technique differs from those questionnaires which are limited to written responses, whereby the contact between the researcher and the subject of the study is never maintained (Fink & Kosecoff, 1985:19-21). Any study of the social and of the individual implies an understanding of their insights, feelings and any relationship is a beneficial part of a discussion process that accounts to subjective meanings (Neuman, 1997:335). Thus, the researcher used a common approach of open-ended questions which probes to increase the richness of the data that was collected.

Most of the interviews took place at informants’ shacks, with the exception of a few who were interviewed at the Red Cross Centre and at the Catholic Centre. By knowing one amputee, this source led the researcher to the subsequent ones. Furthermore, interviews varied from one hour to three hours. As said above, most of the interviews were conducted
at participants’ mud shacks where there wasn’t a single chair available and the researcher had to sit on a stone. I could perfectly feel the degree of discomfort and insecurity towards an outsider like myself. I could not take photos of their houses. A camera was considered a disturbing and unknown device. In cases where they were in groups the camera captured them in a natural mode, but sometimes with wide-open, inquisitive eyes.

Moreover, the principal aim of interviews was to interact as fully as possible with the informants, with the intention of getting their sincere feelings, emotions, beliefs and experiences about the subject matter. This technique also produced in-depth results, as seen ‘through the eyes’ of the interviewees. This is in line with Neuman’s assertion that a researcher should try ‘… to see through the eyes of those being studied’ (Neuman, 1997: 335).

Due to the qualitative nature of this research, in depth semi-structured interviews were used in the recording process of respondents’ experiences, and thereby ensuring them the level of confidentiality throughout this study, and as an attempt to ascertain accuracy of responses given by my respondents. Given the linguistic differences of my informants, the interviews were conducted in Portuguese, which is the official language of Angola. The final analysis of the results was rendered in English. Yet, a translation of the actual respondents’ views was made available in English by the researcher. This research entails transcriptions of the interviews with the respondents. Thus, conducting interviews is advantageous due to their degree of flexibility, whereby the researcher in her capacity of interaction with the interviewees adds an ability to fully observe specific behavioural patterns of the respondents, such as tones, gestures and facial expressions which would have been impossible to capture if questionnaires or surveys had been used (see Neuman, 1997: 328).

Finally, the areas on which the research focused were divided into three main categories or themes. The major divisions constituted:

- Familial component involved in landmine explosions
- Community relationships and its role in averting landmine casualties
- Economic effects of landmines
In each division the questions were grouped in such a manner that a particular theme was covered. An example of this was: (1) ‘How many family members have been victims of landmines?’; (2) ‘What role does the community play in averting landmine casualties?’; (3) ‘What economic impact has the landmine usage had on the productive capacity of the village?’

Finally, as part of ethical considerations, every single individual was rewarded with a small piece of washing soap and biscuits. I understood that in Huambo, soap was a precious commodity among the rural inhabitants of the province, due to the scarcity of basic products.

4.3 CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEWS

Simultaneously, as noted before, the use of focus group discussion was included. Three mini groups were conducted and each of them comprised four individuals. The first group was composed of four untrained female primary school teachers, aged between 28 and 46 years old. The second target group entailed young anti-mining activists between ages 23 and 37. The third and last group involved four Catholic lay ministers and undergraduate students of Philosophy, ranging between 22 and 25 years of age. All the cited groups were identified through a young friend working in a landmine alert training centre.

The focus group is a method aimed at gathering rich qualitative data. In each group discussion, participants were invited to raise both their positive and their negative views. In this context each individual was given the same opportunity to speak and respond to others’ views. During the course of this qualitative genre, whenever answers were given the researcher made use of probing in order to attain better clarification (Krueger, 1994:101-103; Marshal & Rossman, 1999:114; Morgan, 1993:57-59).

The researcher also employed the use of note-taking and she also played a neutral and moderating role towards group members, with the purpose of directing the discussion and allowing a friendly, natural flow of conversation (Krueger, 1994:103; Morgan, 1993:64). At the end of each session, participants were asked to add any comments about the topic discussed. Before the meetings ended, most important points were wrapped up.
The questions used were of the type of semi-structured interview. They varied from general to specific questions to increase people’s inner validity communication, regarding the impact of landmines, and to find mechanisms of combating the insecurity posed to rural communities (Krueger, 1994:67-69; Morgan, 1993:58-59).

One of the greatest advantages of focus group discussions is that this technique, as part of inter-personal relationship, develops as a social process occurring in natural settings, with the purpose of people sharing opinions and experiences, and to gain insight and wisdom from each other. By contrast, some of the disadvantages are that in the discussions not every member speaks freely at all times when expressing his or her own views. Instead, bias may emerge as some members tend to be influenced by the group discussion (Bless & Smith, 1995:113; Krueger, 1994:12; Morgan, 1993:56).

A particular difficulty encountered was how to analyse data from focus groups. This was a technique that I never used before. For the purpose of a natural and clear understanding of the study the researcher has made use of descriptive quotes. These provide a specific and illustrative picture of a substantial group of young people from Huambo and some regions beyond.

The researcher would like to point out that both individual and focus group interviews were conducted in the Portuguese language by herself. The following chapter presents the data analysis of individual interviews and they are divided into themes. For a better understanding, chapter six analyses the data of focus groups by means of a descriptive summary, where substantiating quotes are selected. Finally, the duration of each group discussion was about five hours.

In chapter five, an overview will first be given of the biographical profile of the respondents and thereafter an analysis of data gathered from intensive face-to-face individual interviews will be given.
CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The research population consisted of twenty individuals who were landmine victims from the city of Huambo, and from the outskirts of the Huambo province. There were two from Huambo city; one from Kwanza Sul province; one from Benguela; one from Bié and the remaining victims were from different villages surrounding Huambo.

The respondents were all maimed and between the ages of twenty-eight years and seventy-nine years old. Their number of children varied from three to six children. The exception was three young girls aged between twelve and seventeen, and a group of young men whose ages were between eighteen and twenty-seven. This last group of individuals were all single and without children. The majority of incidents with these landmine victims occurred between the early and late 1980s, and the early and late 1990s. The most recent ones occurred in 2000.

5.2 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The landmines situation in Huambo creates disturbances amongst some of the victims, their close relatives, and amongst communities. For instance, a forty-year-old woman told the researcher that when she stepped on the mine in 1987, she still lived with her husband and her four children. She was forced to sell in the market and fazer candonga (buy and sell), because “After I stepped on the mine my husband ran away because I lost my legs,” says Tété, with a deep sense of abandonment. “I was suffering too much that time, I was forced to move into my mother’s house with my little kids.” She pauses and then stresses that “Later on I learnt that my husband had a second wife but he died from a plane bomb during the war.” She raises her eyes and gestures with her hands demonstrating the movement of bomb fighter plane. She adds

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1 For reasons of confidentiality, all names used in this study are fictional in order to protect informants’ identity.
that her husband said “I was an amputee, no longer working, I could no longer cultivate, collect firewood, then, I decided to go and live with my mom.” Raising her voice she continues, “…that day I went just to buy coal, I used to sell coal. I did not see the mine. I just slipped on a rope and heard a strident sound.”

A similar incident happened to Agostinha, a forty-three-year-old woman. She is a mother of six children. She has been an amputee for 15 years, and amazingly when she stood on the mine she was pregnant with twins. As she stated, everything went normal until the ninth month when one of the twins died of natural causes and the other is now 15 years old. She raised her arm to indicate the size of her eldest son. Her youngest baby is nine months old. “I was walking with my father who was in his fifties and died there.” Agostinha, speaks with a strong sense of despair and total repulsion about her own life because, “My family does not want to hear from me. They abandoned me. They said that I am a murtilada.” She emphasizes that “For them I am worthless. My husband just comes to make children with me, that’s all.” Once things were harsh for her, the husband “…used to beat me, he is a bad man with a bad character.” She told me that her husband suffers from “Epilepsy, that’s why he lives with his mother and it makes him even worse.”

Her sense of bitterness is even more evident when she recalls that, “I live here alone with my six children. We sleep with hunger when there is no food.” She is very unhappy with her situation, and while moving her little baby from her back she states, “A vida da murtilada não presta.” This means that the life of an amputee is rotten. At the same time, pointing to her empty shack and at her dirty and smelling clothes, and lowering her arms to show her left leg amputated, while trying to cool down the baby that shows signs of hunger, she says “We rely begging on what someone gives to us, millet cassava, clothes and so on.”

Another respondent, Valente (36), a father of three children, said that “Initially, my family rejected me. I was obliged to leave my village and seek refuge and help here in Huambo.” Their familiar relationship became even more complicated “…when my family chased me because they said – you can’t work, you do not do anything. The family does not accept the reality of us being amputees.” Meanwhile, he believes that currently things have changed.

4 Read from a broken Portuguese, means amputee.
“Now they no longer reject me, no ways. Their Kimbos⁵ are at war. There is a lot of suffering there. They are the ones who run away too,” he said laughing.

Alberto (21), also experienced some familial embarrassments. In 1993 he went to the field to meet and help his father. On his way back, “I found a hidden enemy. The mine that took my right leg.” He tries to lift his trousers to show his prosthesis. He feels very sad because after a while that same year, his father passed away in an identical circumstance, “…but my father was just besides our home. We lived just near by a military base.” During the confrontations he and all his family hid in a remote area. “When we came back we did not know that the troops mined the area all around our house.” He still remembers the day that his brothers insulted and mistreated him: “You are handicapped, you are useless. You are no longer a human being”. Although very calm and very well-spoken he emphasises that: “I always feel so sad and painful. Those days the war was at its peak. It was very difficult to find something to eat. I went to look for food.” He pauses to say: “It was then, when all problems started.” Actually, he lives with his mother and the situation looks better: “I am no longer living with my brothers – but my brothers used to despise me, having an extreme negative attitude towards me.”

These are some of the examples of family rupture caused by landmines to some of its victims. According to the literature one of the major strata of landmine victims are women. Studies aver that a person who is maimed tends to be stereotyped by relatives and surrounding community members. The findings seem to confirm this assumption: my two first informants were abandoned by their husbands after being maimed. The literature also indicates that young men face similar social and familiar rejection and harassment. This is confirmed by the present findings (Busé, 1999:28; Ngwenya, 1997:7).

Pedro is forty and he was introduced by a friend who has known him for a long time. I met him in Huambo at a friend’s house. His friend encouraged me to go and listen to his story. I agreed and met him at his work. He was highly talkative and very well- spoken, neat and always showing a smile and good manners after shaking my hand. I spent almost three hours interviewing him. His interview was the best that I conducted.

⁵ Villages
Honestly, while listening to him, I was trying to prevent shedding tears. His spontaneity was striking when he said: “I am the principal of this Escola Primária Número 46 de Fátima. It was on the 28 December 1978 in our work place, we used to have a bus that transported us to and from the work place. In those days I was working in Caúlolo, one of the suburbs in Huambo, where the bus used to stop. By the time we got in, the explosive was already put inside. It was placed there already, and few minutes before the driver put the engine on, it exploded. Inside the bus, inside the bus. The bus was a public one, and lots of people died. We lost lots of our colleagues who were primary teachers too. Muitos populares. I survived, thanks to God.” He raises his voice and gives much emphasis when referring to this deadly picture, portrayed by the detonation of a mine inside the bus.

Another traumatic story comes from João who is forty-eight years old and has five children. His eldest son of eighteen years old is in the capital of Luanda studying at the catholic convent. João lost his sight due to a mine. It was in 1990 when he was working for the Caminho de Ferro de Benguela (Railways Station). Almost his entire family got maimed in the subsequent years of 1993 and 1994. His seventeen-year-old cousin lost his arm; his brother of nineteen lost one foot. Unfortunately, his aunt of forty-three years who was walking with his father died. “I was the first one to be the victim of landmines in my family, but we help each other whenever possible.”

Júlia is twenty-eight years old with four children. Her little baby is one month old. In 1985 she was twelve, and she, her cousin of twelve and her neighbour’s child of fifteen, all went to a political rally when “…the government was calling us to sing songs. We belonged to OPA.” After pausing and raising her voice she expresses that: “The mine was there in the rally – they placed the mine because they knew that lots of kids were going there – it was UNITA. My cousin and the other friend of ours got mine fragments. My other leg also got mine fragments.” Lifting up her skirt she tried to show her affected leg. Referring to her family support, she emphasises with a brightened tone, “I never had problems, because I was still a child those days. My father died of sickness, but my mum remained. Now my husband helps and collects firewood, because I am in this wheelchair.” She smiles when pointing to her chair and both legs, one of which was swollen.

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6 As referred to a mine cowardly placed inside the bus.
Mariazinha (30), a married woman with five children had her leg amputated in May 2000. She gets the support of her husband, particularly because he is the one who ploughs with the older sons. She believes that for her now the best help that she can have is to get her left leg that: “…can enable me to walk better.” She reported this with tears in her eyes.

Dadinha (14), is a war orphan. In 1998, when accompanying her parents on their daily chores she became another victim of a landmine. Her parents died at the scene and she survived with her brother of twenty-eight years of age. She is a young girl with a soft voice showing some sorrow when recalling her lost parents, to whom she shows a great degree of affection. She was introduced to the researcher by a maimed friend who knew her from the rehabilitation centre. We went to visit her in her house.

This girl was neat and the house cleaned because she manages to do so. She told me that: “I lost my leg two years back, I lost my parents, and although my brother is a born paralytic, we plant beans and maize.” She also reported to me that she never went to school because she used to help her mother in the lavras (ploughing). She pauses and shows with her hands how they collect their produce. Although very young, she showed perfect confidence in her activities, and she added: “After, it is crushed, we take it to the market and sell it, and also we keep some for our own consumption.”

The above small family enterprise is what helps them: “…from the money we get, we buy meat and shoes, our clothes and we do not go that far these days to plough. We stay nearby but we work hard.” Her tone of voice was always slow and though she never smiled, and had her head almost lowered during our one-and-half-hour interview, she sighed to say that: “I know that everyone complains about aid that it is not enough. The best support that we and other people like me can get, is the end of war.”

In fact, her desire for days of peace was profoundly noticed when she said: “…if peace comes, I wish it can help people. If peace comes, people can go as far as they want to. People can travel wherever they want without any problems. As pessoas podem andar

7 Organização dos Pioneiros Angolanos, a MPLA wing which mobilises children for special events.
mesmo em paz.” This literally means that people will walk in peace, in a sentiment that was expressed in her soft and touching tone.

Her sense of anxiety gave the researcher the idea that this girl was trying to forget about her physical disability. At the same time she was more concerned about a prosperous future and looked forward peace that in her view is still to come. Few days later the researcher learnt that this same girl was taken around their community as a role model, not only because of her self-determination and high level of confidence, but some months ago, she was interviewed by the Danish television in a programme dedicated to landmine victims.

As far as the effects of landmines on family life are concerned the major findings are that landmines cause the disintegration of some families. This creates to some extent a culture of stigmatisation amongst family members and relatives. Although the literature does not suggest this, the findings show that other families grow stronger. Generally, informants mentioned that they did not have any trouble with their families. They found their principal support amidst their relatives, amongst their friends and neighbours, as in the case of the last four mentioned respondents.

5.3 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

By including this section, the researcher wanted to bring to the fore any role played by the community in assisting landmine victims. Another area of interest was to find out if community participation was useful, and what could have been done to improve it. The researcher also tried to investigate if there were any ways in which those victims had supported others affected by the same predicament.

As noted earlier, respondents told the researcher that they relied on family support. The extra support that they received from time to time comes either from the Red Cross, the Church, or the World Food Programme. They also expressed their gratitude to the Red Cross Rehabilitation Centre for the support given concerning free prostheses and pairs of shoes, as well as the rehabilitation training. Particular emphasis was also referred to the support given in the hospital by team workers. António (20) expressed his indebtedness in the following way: “I was brought to the hospital during May of this year. My granny died
there. I lost too much blood. I was about to die. The doctors did everything to save my life. I want to thank all of them, because I lost too much blood I was anaemic. My state was horrible, but I managed to recover. The help came from the doctors and nurses. They gave me pap and biscuits, medication, everything. I was very weak.”

In some other instances, informants were very critical of the ways in which government and certain non-government institutions reacted to their difficulties.

For Carlos, 75 years old, “…whether the church or the government whatever it is, they are doing nothing.” He is a displaced old man with five children from the former Vila Nova, 51 km from Huambo. However, he says that: “I stay in Huambo because one of my children is hospitalised. We left Vila Nova walking due to the war in 1992.” His view was that there is too much suffering and hunger because he receives only meagre rations. “A cup of cassava flour, but what is one cup for a family of seven members?” he inquired with deep indignation. He also questioned himself about this type of help. Because he is hurt, for him help is meaningless and, “I just want them to give me a plot of land, where I can work. After that I want maize and bean seeds.” He said this with a more assertive tone of his voice. Still, he thinks that the aid he gets is insignificant since the government and other organisations appear to be very disorganised. He goes on to claim that: “I also want to be provided with a wheel chair because I have my own prosthesis, but I feel too much tired as I am an old amputee, but with a wheel chair I can travel a distance of 3 to 4 kilometers. With the prosthesis is very difficult for an old man like me to walk that much.”

Augusto (42), a father of five children and also displaced from Catchiungo, 62 km from Huambo, shares the same sentiment. “It is necessary that the state thinks a bit more about us and can work better to support us.” The disturbance caused by his physical situation leads him to complain, “We do not have strength to walk like when we had all our limbs. With only one leg, things are completely different. When our bodies were still normal we did a lot of things that require physical energy. Now the maximum that we can go and come back without difficulty is 1,5 km. It is too sad for us.” He emphasises that primarily he does not only want a wheel chair, but for him, “…the government needs to know that we want food, medication, clothes, especially blankets.”
Between hope and despair these people feel a total abandonment, like the eighteen-year-old boy Leonardo, from Kwanza Sul province, 300 km from Huambo.

He believes that his major problem can be solved, “…if I can get a job. I came here to look for a prosthesis because with my crutches all my work is delayed.” He is confident that he can do better because, “…with the prosthesis I can work and relax. If I feel tired at the end of the day I go home. Nowadays life is about begging. In the market they abuse us. Sometimes they beat us. Because we are mutilados.” He emphasizes and expresses some anger when referring to the government: “If we go to the government no one helps us. The troops, ex-combatants are the ones who get support. We civilians no one cares or knows about us. I am suffering too much because my mother is not here.” He concluded by expressing a desire to revolt.

José, a twenty-seven-year-old man from Caála, 20 km from Huambo, stepped on a mine last May. He is a former mechanic and he wants to go back to his former profession, “What I want one day is to get a job like the one I used to do. I can dismantle cars, engines, work with the screw driver and other mechanical tools to see if a guy like me manage to develop life a bit.” He spoke very calmly, showing signs of confidence in his future.

The principal findings relating to community support towards landmine victims are that the type of help that victims receive from either local or international boards is totally unacceptable. The literature does not make any reference to this situation. However, amputees live in a world of total poverty. Thus, the system is not perfect at all, but still it is what deficient people get.

5.4 MINE AWARENESS

As part of my semi-structured questionnaire, I considered this issue important for my study. This means that I wanted to find out if my respondents were aware of any type of landmine campaign. Also embedded in this theme is the issue of the campaign being useful to the rural
population – if there were any recent incidents reported, and if there were mines continuing to threaten villagers.

In general, my subjects showed a good sense of understanding and to some extent their participation in such mine-alert endeavours were also noteworthy. Most of the individuals interviewed mentioned that the campaign has followed its normal path, and has been successful in reducing the infestation of mines. Actually, the amount of incidents have been decreasing, except in few cases that informants said that they hear that from time to time someone somewhere had stepped on a mine. Subjects also stated that the perils that landmines present occur more frequently in distant fields and in areas that are out of their daily reach. For example, say, from the outskirts of Huambo province, where de-miners had not yet gone to clear mines.

In answering the question: “Are you aware about any campaign to ban landmines, here?” respondents were eager to state that: “They come and call the people in our rural areas. We all gather together to listen to them saying – if you touch a strange object, it can kill you. Mines do not know anything, but they just avenge against you in a senseless manner.” This is what Rosita says. She is a young girl who does not know her age. In fact she was very confused when asked about her age. Whether, 19, 21 or thirty-four, she could have been anything. To me the girl looked seventeen years old. Her big, expressive eyes spoke for her, and she wore dirty and torn clothes. Playing all the time with a piece of rag, she showed a degree of nervousness: “Aunt, my body is not feeling well, I am shaking. Yesterday, I fell in Bomba Alta when I was exercising.”

After pausing, she continues, “I know, they also said that some time ago there was a brother who grabbed something from the ground. It exploded in his hands and he died. Now they say we must not touch anything. We have to know how to walk and how to look on the ground, because the mines are hidden in the ground and in our fields.” She moves one of her fingers up and down in an assertive mode to imitate the manner in which de-miners and anti-mine activists advised them. Adding to these remarkable efforts, she also

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8 The use of the words of brother and sister amongst Huambo inhabitants is often used when referring to someone that they respect or know. It is also related to the strong Catholic influence in the province.
learned that: “Mines have different shapes and they can be like a pen lid, a pen, that’s what they told us.” She added this with great emphasis to her explanation.

Leonardo, believes that the current dangers that they are facing are: “…incidents of attacks from Unita only. They attack whenever people want to go to Bié.” António has a different opinion: “Mines are still a threat to the population. They are dangerous because they just destroy both civilians and militaries.” Valente, a thirty-six-year-old, is even more concerned with the situation, and he shows some resentment about landmines: “To walk whether in the old footpaths or on the new ones there is always a danger. For instance, we say that is the enemy, but I think we are all the same. We are our own enemy because we place in the land things that are mortal. At the end of the day we are all the same.”

Rosana, a thirty-four-year-old woman, argues that actually the risks are no longer landmines, but instead “The bandits [who] come at night to attack our shacks. They come to steal our little things like clothes and food. They came last week at night. They were wearing their Unita fatigues.”

In Dadinha’s opinion the campaigners spread their message everywhere and: “…they go to schools and present posters to show the types of mines. They say - we are trying to combat and clean the mines, that people will no longer be amputees.” The successes of the campaign are also referred to by Júlia who thinks that: “Here in Angola não está mais bué (there are not that much) people who die because of mines. Those who die are those who stay far, those who travel by car.” She raises her arm in an attempt to demonstrate the long distance taken when travelling.
Soninha, twelve-year-old, was introduced to me by Dadinha. Coincidentally, she is another war orphan protected by the Catholic nuns in Bailundo. She came to Huambo a month ago for her prosthetic treatment. Even though she is not well-informed about the campaign itself she says that: “In Bailundo there are so many victims. We are a lot. There are more military people, but too many civilians, as well. Sometimes the government troops talk about mines. I don’t know that much because I don’t listen to the radio. There is no electricity to watch television too.” She said this with a deep expression of sadness in her eyes.

Regarding mine awareness campaigns, and linked to what the literature states, the findings indicate that local and rural programmes are producing positive results (Krugmann, 2000:35-37). However, following some informants’ responses, there is the need to effectively expand these programmes further. For instance, one informant is of the view that landmines still are a peril to their lives.

5.5 ECONOMIC EFFECTS AND RESPONDENTS’ COPING MECHANISMS

In this part of the study the researcher attempted to get to know about the respondents’ source of income. Another aspect of interest was that the researcher wanted to determine if landmine situation has affected informants’ economic living conditions. Adding to this was the importance of finding out whether landmine explosions did affect the subjects’ child-bearing plans.

Most of the research population reported that they were engaged in petty business, best known as *candonga* or *négocio*. This entails engaging in the informal sector. This also means that the majority of informants buy articles from the big market, and they re-sell their products in small markets or *praçinhas*. In this social setting the most common products to be bought and sold are foodstuff like cassava flour, maize and beans. These goods in some cases come from their own harvest, particularly for those who can afford to have a plot of land and cultivate their farmlands. Another unfortunate point is that some of the respondents said that nowadays they no longer move far to their former fields. Some other respondents do engage in other activities such as embroidery, washing and knitting.
For instance, Tété, my first interviewee, whom I met in her house and who was introduced by Agostinha at the Rehabilitation Centre, said that her life carries on normally. She is a very hard worker, despite the loss of her two legs. She manages to clean the house with her prosthetics fitted. Another daily activity, that she performs well, is cooking over the fire and washing her clothes. According to her, only water is carried by others, being her young son or neighbours. Surprisingly, given her shocking physical appearance of having lost her two legs, she comments that: “…sometimes I do carry a basin of ten litres of water from the crank well.” Her strength is clearly in evidence and while busy, “I am knitting, the pot is cooking on the coal fire, because my life is normal.” Besides these domestic chores, she mentioned that she sells at the market. She buys *loengo*, a sort of local fruit, and she sells in the parallel market. Her own understanding is that: “…in the big market, business takes longer to finish and the profit is inferior. There is too much competition amongst sellers.”

In the same context Ana, a thirty-year-old single mother of five children, fights for her own survival and for that of her infants. Not only does she plough the land, but she also does washing and she has assured me that: “… in the afternoon, if there is no washing and if my clothes are not dirty, I sell at the market potatoes, maize or beans.”

Likewise, Fernanda, a widow of seventy-nine-year-old, is anxious to continue with her domestic roles when she is granted a new prosthesis. Whenever possible she works on the land.
Carlos, seventy-five, is a shoe-maker. Initially, he worked for the Ministry of Agriculture, and he was in charge of the store room, dealing with the exchange of fertilizers and clothes in place of maize and been seeds. Although his current activity is not profitable enough, he still earns a living. With the help of his wife, they manage to feed the whole family. Similarly, another informant stated that his income is minimal because he is an apprentice. He learns tailoring at the Centro das Irmãs Espiritanas da Kamussama. In the Catholic Training Centre not far from where he resides, he and other learners are granted a daily lunch meal, but, as he reported, this is not enough. He and his wife are forced to beg from time to time: “...if I have my plot of land to work on, I do not have the capacity to walk far. Our surrounding lavras still far and the land that is closed, the owners do not give them to others. They prefer to cultivate themselves.”

The same fate is reported by Rosana, who is thirty-four. She also does embroidery, but unfortunately she does not have threads and other materials such as pieces of clothes and needles to continue with her manual work. Unfortunately, like some others, she can’t do that much, and has to resort to begging. She has got land, but the harsh part of her problem is that she does not have seeds.

In relation to respondents’ experiences concerning the idea of child-bearing, all subjects demonstrated that being an amputee does not affect them as regards child-bearing. Thus, landmines do not prevent respondents from continuing their reproductive lives and having the family as a basic integrated unit.

Mainly informants laugh at this question and remark that children in their communities are seen as a familial asset. Surprisingly, they expressed their desire to bear more children. Exceptionally, in cases where for reasons of health or advancing age of one of the spouses, respondents stated that they accepted the reality of their lives as maimed individuals. Interviewees also stated that they preferred to remain loyal to their current partners instead of going around and looking for extra-marital relationships. This could somehow be
attributed to the fact that almost ninety per cent of the Huambo population is strictly religious and they comply to a certain extent with moral principles.

Meanwhile, the idea of bearing children was also viewed as functioning as a network of child-parent support and personal achievement amongst the rural Huambo society that made up the sample. António (20), believes that he is still very young but having children for him is because, “…tomorrow or after I can be an old man and I won’t be able to walk. My son will be there to help me in holding my stick. He also can show me the footpaths.”

During the course of interviews only two young women said that they go for birth control. Three single young men responded that although they are not married they would like to father children, and eventually to have between four and seven children. They also remarked that economically they are faced with lots of financial problems, and the best is therefore to: “…limit the number of kids, because money is too short these days to buy clothes for them, food and even to have a proper house with furniture.”

It is important to bear in mind that the literature mentions that women have difficulties in carrying on with their daily activities (Busé, 1999:28; Ngwenya, 1997:11). The findings dispute this aspect. Ultimately, the findings confirm that women are the sole providers of their own subsistence. This reveals that women are in charge of producing their own income and supporting their family members. Contrary to what has been said by other scholars, the researcher also found that some victims are more vulnerable to stagnation than others.

Thus, concerning individuals’ coping mechanisms and their own economic effects, the findings are that most of the respondents rely on minimal income produced from their involvement in the informal sector. This may be attributed to the fact that the country’s economy is entirely broken. It therefore becomes more difficult for these people to work and produce on the land, as was the case previously. As noted in the findings the majority of informants are from an agricultural background.
5.6 **RESPONDENTS’ PROSPECTIVE VIEWS**

Interviewees were asked about their responses to a possible ban of landmines and in which way it would facilitate their own lives. To this particular aspect every single landmine victim expressed his/her contentment with a total abolition of mines. They all said that this would imply that they would be able to go back to their original zones as far as possible. They could not only cultivate freely, but also visit some of their relatives left behind in some other different regions and provinces like Bié, 75 km west, Sumbe, 300 km southeast, Bailundo 70 km northeast and so forth. Another important point is that the interviewed population was eager to emphasise that a ban on landmines would allow them to move about more freely, and also enhance their agricultural productivity.

For respondents it would mean an ideal boost for the exchange of their marketing crops *do campo para a cidade* (from the rural to urban areas) and the other way round. In summing up, informants told the researcher that the cleaning up of mines in their farmlands and fields would mean that there would be less fear and they would be able to continue their normal daily, social, economic and family activities.

5.7 **GENERAL FINDINGS**

This chapter brought to the fore some of the striking stories of the respondents. These are typical and vivid experiences of a particular group of twenty individuals who are landmine victims in the Huambo province. While conducting this study, and according to the diverse literature used, the researcher discovered that almost every single victim was an agrarian individual, and except rarely, they were all displaced people from the surrounding villages and some provinces in Huambo, becoming therefore city-dwellers. Another particular feature is that because the majority of informants were from a peasant background, they all also expressed the desire to go back and plough. This confirms the idea of their direct links with the arable land as their major source of income and self-sustenance.

At the same time subjects also claimed that the continuation of war with the indefinite existence of landmines would hamper their own subsistence and would further break down
their family bonds. The interviewees that I spoke to were quite unhappy about being left without support. They also stated that they do face huge material, social and moral difficulties. Linked to this, most of them mentioned to me that they have been totally forgotten, either by local or international authorities. Hence, I drew the conclusion that landmines have been planted in these people’s fields to deform their own bodies and to make them among the most abject individuals in Angola. This later assumption also correlates with the findings that landmines are extreme foes of agrarian communities, in their daily chores, mainly when collecting coal and firewood and cultivating.

Surprisingly, despite the fact that those landmine victims are severely disfigured and have had horrific personal experiences, they showed a sense of hope in their souls and shining eyes. I did get the impression that they neither know what distress is, nor were there signs of hatred towards those who made them invisible. The point is that these individuals did learn and manage to cope amongst themselves in relation to their own physical discomfort.

In addition, they were also forced to re-integrate into a society of self-survival, due to the shortcomings of that same society from which they derive. Indeed, their words spoke for themselves; as an old woman informant made clear, “Our life is a sacrificed one. Even though we try to make it to run in its normal ways, mines affect the morale of people, it disturbs lots of people, but what can we do if mines are there? We were not born like this.”

Similarly, the harassment presented by mines and their negative effects on villagers was mentioned by another old man: “I can be an amputee today, but if we have to work, we do better in the rural areas, rather than in the city. We are not from the city.” This clearly shows the degree to which these individuals are forced to live out of their own contexts. In short, there is a sense in which these people were able to accept their hard reality. Somehow, they live in a world torn apart from their previous ones, where the struggle for survival is a daily affair. This appalling struggle for existence it is what makes them some of the most impoverished and unprotected social creatures.

The subsequent chapter analyses data from four mini focus group discussions through the presentation of the most relevant descriptive quotes given by each member.
CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUPS

As noted previously, three mini focus group discussions, composed of four individuals each and with key informants, were conducted by the researcher in order to explore the daily experiences of non-victims of landmines and their own understanding of the problem, and to discuss with these individuals the mechanism of preventing communities in general from further incidents. The entire section includes the questions posed to the groups, followed by the answers given by each member. At the same time a summary of findings is given at the end of every group response. The section also includes a selection of the most relevant quotes given by each particular member in the discussions.
Table 3: Group Discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Group Interview</th>
<th>Natural From</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosarinho</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First Group</td>
<td>Catchiungo</td>
<td>Untrained Primary School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belinha</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First Group</td>
<td>Catchiungo</td>
<td>Untrained Primary School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First Group</td>
<td>Catchiungo</td>
<td>Untrained Primary School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tininha</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>First Group</td>
<td>Catchiungo</td>
<td>Untrained Primary School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zé</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second Group</td>
<td>Huambo</td>
<td>Mine Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasco</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second Group</td>
<td>Huambo</td>
<td>Mine Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceição</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Second Group</td>
<td>Lubango 1*</td>
<td>Mine Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rui</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Second Group</td>
<td>Huambo</td>
<td>Mine Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Third Group</td>
<td>Lubango</td>
<td>Second Year Student of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Third Group</td>
<td>Lunda-Norte 2*</td>
<td>Third Year Student of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcos</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Third Group</td>
<td>Malange 3*</td>
<td>Third Year Student of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mário</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Third Group</td>
<td>Zaire Province</td>
<td>Second Year Student of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEGEND:**  
1* Lubango is approximately 250 km south of Huambo  
2* Lunda-Norte is about 500 km north of Huambo  
3* Malange is 450 km north of Huambo  
4* Zaire is approximately 460 km north of Huambo.
6.1 MAIN FINDINGS

What are the most serious problems communities here face with landmines?

“War forces people to move out of their areas of origin into the urban centres, seeking safety, without knowing the mined areas. This results in an enormous underdevelopment among the families. Mines prevent the movement into the fields. It reflects huge economic problems and it causes extreme poverty in the community as a whole.” (Zé, October - 21 first group)

“Mines give us too many amputees. Lack of food forces people to go to the bushes looking for something to eat.” (Tininha, October - 18 second group)

“Hunger is our problem and a person can’t stay just in one place. People daring to go a bit far looking for any necessary things to our own livelihood, find many dangers without reaching our objectives. We have so many amputees of war, children and elderly.” (Rosarinho, October - 18 second group)

“The physical disfigurement of our brothers, is something grave. More serious is when deaths occur, when there are losses of children. The costs of treatment are very high and in general the family has to participate in that treatment with more difficulties, in food and medication.” (Marcos, October - 26 third group)

“Those who are poor become poorer when stepping on a mine. The chances to feed themselves are reduced, than it was before when having their four limbs.” (Mário, October - 28 third group)
“For those who worked before they become unemployed. Unemployment also brings other consequences, such as hunger, family suffering and boredom in itself. People stagnate.” (André, October - 26, third group)

“Losing limbs is a serious problem. An individual who steps on a mine today, tomorrow somebody else will step on another mine. The society and the labour force become diminished too. Both the country and the communities face other consequences in terms of production. Thus, the population feels discriminated against.” (Eduardo, October - 26 third group)

“As with unemployment, a maimed person is despised in the sphere of sports. Our society is already poor and the people who are poor mostly depend on agriculture. Our communities found their fields mined due to the war. The result of this is that it increases the number of displaced persons, the number of street children, and essentially the level of poverty.” (Marcos)

“Frustration is another problem that people encounter. Why? The communities already affected are unable to reach their goals and society can’t shelter them all. They end up begging on the streets and because they are rejected they overreact. Attacking people, sometimes they steal not because they want to, but because of the situation that they go through.” (Eduardo)

Each group participant cited a number of factors with three principal dimensions referred to quite often. These were the levels of physical deformity found in the maimed community, the increase in poverty and the rejection as well as the discrimination that victims face to some extent in that particular social environment. Informants were concerned at the difficulties found with mines in the rural areas and the lack of mobility in specific areas. The issue of increased poverty was expressed in different ways, with emphasis placed on hunger and lack of opportunity to find food. These respondents were also very concerned with the denied access to resources that communities encountered and the burden that they faced. Factors mentioned less frequently refer to job losses and the discrimination encountered by victims in the sporting arena.
Some concerns have been mentioned. For instance, communities find mines in the footpaths and fields in searching alternative ways to get food. How do these problems compare to others already mentioned?

“We have been subjected to ambushes and armed robberies in our areas. People died a lot because of enemies’ attacks from UNITA. Firstly, they attack the vehicles, and then, they mine the surrounding area. They do this to prevent people from recovering the bodies as well as the wreckage.” (Rosarinho)

“A serious issue is when the conflict ends and the enemies try to run away from the cities. Furthermore, landmines are found on main roads to trap us although this is not as easy as in the field. In the field they last longer undetected. We are not always able to mark and trace them with tree branches.” (Tininha)

“Mines are found on the edges of the roads too. Whenever there is an attack on a vehicle people try to escape into the forest. While running people find mines in the bush. There are certain mines that the population can detect; others are not easily discovered because they are buried deeply.” (Belinha)

“These are basic problems. Our communities are devastated by war for so many years. The difficulty of finding jobs can be another serious problem associated with delinquency.” (Eduardo)

“African families are extensive. Here in Huambo families can have fifty members. Out of this number we may find that ten are amputees. This results in the destruction of the family unit. The breadwinner alone, and without others working, we realise that they will consume more. We have to look at quantity, rather than quality that might serve them as a whole. Alternatively, they will end up in corruption. Involuntarily, corruption will be their last resort. Teachers, for example, will pass their pupils in exchange for food. A police agent will intimidate the population. All this ends up in social disorder.” (Marcos)
“Mines are not the sole problem. The war creates complex issues, such as social injustice. War also brings too many deaths and casualties due to the persistence of military activities. It results in enormous inequalities due to politics and lack of good governance. War affects mostly the poor at all levels. There is no justice because this war [Angolan] is made for the poor and it affects the wealthier ones less, such as politicians and rulers.” (Mário)

Informants responded that they encountered some other problems. Generally the major concerns were ambushes and military attacks. Due to limited employment opportunities and obvious economic shortcomings, respondents also mentioned the rise in criminality. Another theme that arose was the issue of official corruption, and subsequently, the question of social justice. This is rife in a war-torn situation due to public negligence, and reflects a source of discontentment amongst respondents.

In your community which areas are most affected?

A. The footpaths  
B. The fields  
C. If there is any difference, explain why?

“Other major affected areas are camps and abandoned houses. War has brought lots of hatred amongst people. I don’t see any difference. What we call enemies of war, so-called UNITA(s), they come and mine. I wonder if those who mine in the rural areas are the same as those who mine in the cities?” (Rosarinho)

“Bridges are also mined and military trenches. To me there is no difference. Either in the fields or in the bridges we still find mines.” (Bélinha)

“In the empty houses and also in the riverbanks. This is risky for those who go fishing. These areas are affected because they [enemies] know that people always try to return to their former areas.” (Tininha)
“With war, fields and paths are the most affected areas. These are the places of major access to population. These areas are heavily mined.” (Vasco, second group)

“Abandoned military units, airport surroundings, abandoned factories where there is no one and even rivers too. There is no difference. Whatever is mined is mined with the aim of destroying.” (Rui, second group)

“The difference relies on the unexploded bombs. We find bombs in the countryside, but also in the roads as a targeted action against civilians.” (Zé)

“The level of seriousness is the same. When mines are used in military posts, they are for prevention. Innocently, when people try to go there they find mines.” (Rui)

“In 1992 when the armed conflicts were very intense the headquarters were mined for protection. Once abandoned those areas were never marked. Within the cities, those bases became very susceptible to mine accidents. The bombs were left in the city where children play now. They played with them and they exploded [bombs].” (Zé)

“The difference is minimal. If one mines a field, naturally, there will not be agricultural production. If it is the other way round, obviously there won’t be free movement of people and goods. The result will be again stagnation in the cities, while people will wait for food and help to come.” (Eduardo)

The most common responses from group members to this question were given in relation to the threat that public spaces presented to rural inhabitants as sites where they pursue their civilian life. Besides footpaths and fields, the groups identified other mined areas, such as bridges, abandoned houses, as well as military zones. They said that the youthful innocence was a particularly large risk. Children play with unexploded devices like bombs thereby making it a deadly game for children.

Tell me about the circumstances in which mines explode. When and where is this most likely to occur?
“Whenever people think of taking a trip by car and then, in most transport routes.” (Rui)

“When people take risks in try to make a living. Then they fall into such traps.” (Conceição, second group)

“Mines explode in circumstances whenever people move around. I would also say that there is less damage to livestock than to people.” (Mário)

“When and where? Especially in routes providing access to other communities. In Malange, my own province, the repaired bridges by the UN, one regularly finds mines. These bridges are often used by local people to move from one area to another.” (Marcos)

“Mines explode when a human being unconsciously activates it. As my friend said, in major roads. If a mine explodes on a bridge, it is because that same bridge serves to convey goods and food. The communities need all these things. Where? Amidst, at the core, of the population to create panic.” (Eduardo)

“We hear that mines are connected to a thread. Whenever a person crosses that line it suddenly explodes. Also an anti-tank mine explodes if a car passes over it. It creates lots of difficulties to vehicles in our areas.” (Rosarinho)

“A mine explodes whenever someone touches it. In the villages and in the small routes, at any time, but more during the day, because people move more.” (Tininha)

“They explode everywhere. In places where there are children or elders looking for water, firewood and so forth. In the cases of commercial vehicles this occurs when they move in and out of the province.” (Sandra)

“When we are forced to travel far. Say, we go to the bush looking for wild fruits. During this rainy season, there is too much hunger therefore, we go to the bush to get fruits and sell in order to get something to eat.” (Belinha)
Mines seem to inflict casualties on people in a cowardly manner. Normally, respondents said that mines explode whenever or wherever there are visible movements of people, by car or by foot for especially economic reasons, such as making a living, to find water, firewood, fruits, etc. Being forced to move around, and in trying to secure a livelihood they may be maimed or killed by a landmine. Inevitably, these contradictory motivational forces result in high levels of stress.

**Where do you think mines are planted and why are they placed there?**

“Mines do have a more political objective rather than military one. The enemy [UNITA] knows that, if there is a military convoy, or even a convoy of goods they plant mines for reasons of sabotage. Unfortunately, the civilian population is the most victimised. Military people, they have got better strategies of self-defence and protection in this regard. In many cases mines never reach those who they are intended for.” (Zé)

“In diamond areas, mines are planted and placed there because of overcrowding. In those areas people try to make some business. Money in those areas is easily made. However, not only Angolans go there [diamond areas]. Congolese, Portuguese, Senegalese people and so many others come. These individuals sometimes bring strange unexploded objects. Eventually it will be said that war is made by Angolans [sic]. Some of these elements infiltrate the area to blame Angolans of wrongdoings.” (André)

“Last year, here in Huambo some people were found with unexploded devices inside a plane. Others were arrested with those objects inside the airport. It was just a threat. It never exploded. From time to time, it is a common occurrence.” (Marcos)

“Nowadays with all the difficulties that one faces and because the public sector salaries are so low, air tickets are very expensive. We are all forced to fly in military planes. Another aspect is that commercial planes do not always land in certain provinces due to the lack of
conditions or for security or military reasons. Thus, loading control is not very strict.”
(Marcos)

“It happens more in military planes, and normally, the authorities never identify those who
place mines. From both sides [Government and UNITA] they do the same – the answer
will always be – it was placed by armed men [sic]. Then, who are they? No one knows.”
(André)

“My own experience tells me that mines are planted for two reasons: commercial and
military ones. The commercial issue happened in my province of Zaire. In 1995, a South
African de-mining company, while de-mining, they re-mined again. The intention was to
renew their work contract for many years. Later on, they [companies] ended up with their
contracts terminated by the local authorities in the province. The military aim, everybody
knows that mines are placed in defensive areas.” (Mário)

“Concretely, we never know who plants the mines, but what we know is that they are left in
the ground in common and accessible areas. These companies are recruited but their
projects or unexploded objects cause more damage. Besides the terror, it also destroys the
roads in such a way that cars may not easily move. And what happens? The prices of
transport and food products rise. Sometimes the salt fish comes almost
in a rotten state. Still we have to pay lots of money for it [dry fish in Malange].” (Marcos)

“Mines are planted and placed for two purposes. One is the already mentioned, warfare
objective, and the other is terrorism. To reinforce the issue of commerce I ask: these
international organisations, do they help us to de-mine, or do they mine, instead? If they
[organisations] do so, what are their goals?” (Eduardo)

“Generally, mines are planted on the right side of the roads. Whoever places them believes
that cars and trucks take the right side. Mines are also placed in the farmlands at a certain
level from the soil in a sneaky way. No one sees them.” (Vasco)

“Mines are hidden and placed by our enemies.” (Tininha)
“Mines are placed at odd hours. Either during the day or at night. Quite often, the first person manages to pass to a certain extent. After a while, a second or third person may become a victim. This means that the first person walked slightly aside without stepping on the mine.” (Rosarinho)

As far as the planting of mines is concerned the group interviewees pointed out some particular issues. In their view, mines are placed to further with some vested interests. The main idea that emerged from those groups was that planting mines served a dual purpose, whether for political or military responses or for commercial intentions. Thus, some informants were very sceptical in relation to the ways in which landmines were used in profitable modes, referring to de-mining versus re-mining operations taking place throughout the country.

**What are some of the characteristics of people of your age who have not yet stepped on a landmine, or those who did step on landmines?**

“They are all disabled people. Some don’t have legs, others lost their arms, and some just die. We call them *mutilados* of war. People like us who never fell on a mine, share a collective suffering. We are not openly wounded, but instead our hearts are.”(Tininha)

“Not everyone has sentiments. We are all refugees of war. We escape from war zones with them [amputees], but we also do not have means to support them. They are so many and the majority of them are dependent on others, especially on their families.” (Rosarinho)

“Some are more dependent than others. Only those who can get a prosthesis try to do things faster. Others, even with only one arm work more than those who have all their limbs. We just try to express our solidarity. There are no ways that we can help them.” (Sandra)

“Life is very harsh for us as displaced persons. We do not have enough food and clothing. Our lives and theirs [amputees] are precarious.” (Belinha)
“Mainly victims face an enormous trauma. Life for them is tasteless. They no longer do normal things as they did before. Their physical state is already degraded. Né? Socially, they can’t look after their family. For us there is a psychological trauma too. It can’t be otherwise.” (Conceição)

“The greater the level of disability, the higher the level of poverty. Victims lose their sense of self-esteem and they find escape in alcohol. Those who were never victimised have little or no feelings.” (Zé)

“The society is not a sensitive one to do that much towards those victims.” (Conceição)

“Both victims and non-victims are always against the mine act. There is a sense of hatred and repulsion. We are all against mining, and against those who persist in doing so.” (Mário)

“Not only repulsion, but fear too. Everybody is scared of being the next victim. We always swear at those [users] for their misconduct.” (André)

“There is a sort of solidarity between victims and non-victims. Our support towards those victims is a blessing. Maimed people are humble and humiliated because of their poor conditions, once they become disabled.” (Marcos)

“Generalising this issue the sentiment is of repulsion. Only those individuals totally senseless can still make use of these horrific objects.” (Eduardo)

Every group member clearly explained that quite often maimed individuals become a source of social and moral indifference, as well as humiliation. The other side of the coin, for those not maimed, is that their attitudes towards victims are of compassion and pain. A sense of revolt against the irresponsible use of mines was also mentioned.

Let’s talk about what can be done to prevent people in general from becoming victim of landmines. [Feel free to talk about awareness campaigns, civic education and other activities which you feel are carried out in your community.]
“It is necessary to improve people’s movements in the peripheries. We are stuck in the city and we cannot get what we need. There is the need to increase the number of de-miners. In the meantime, we can appeal to others to be aware of unknown things they may find in the ground. Communicate with local authorities to go and clean our areas. Our state of vigilance must be redoubled.” (Tininha)

“Our areas are too vast; we can’t wait only for sweepers. We need to engage in communal and collective campaigns. As primary teachers we must reserve a bit of time and educate our children at school.” (Rosarinho)

“In cases that we may find mines we must signal them with spare sticks and warn others less informed about the associated dangers, and preventing them from going into the same area.” (Sandra)

“We all live as a community. As a mother it is my duty to tell my children that mines do exist. I never saw a mine but we must participate in campaigns.” (Belinha)

“The fight against mines is a social task. We are all young people. Some of us do have friends, relatives, schoolmates, or even neighbours who are victims. We can’t prevent mines from being planted, but we keep trying to fight more than ever before. We alert the inhabitants of rural areas.” (Vasco)

“The tasks are huge. Society must contribute with educational programmes towards peace. People must be sensitive to build a culture of peace and to find their own material and food products in peace. Even with the ongoing war, we must work in conjunction with local development programmes, such as micro-enterprises and local commerce. This will prevent people from being discriminated against.” (Zé)

“Mainly, we must prevent new mines from entering the country. We must work with the UN in this regard. We Angolans are totally against mines.” (Marcos)
“There is the need for a new consciousness from the Angolan authorities. All of us know that mines are deadly objects, that they harm people, they destroy, they are sources of social disorder. These little, but significant things must become the focus of our concern.”

(Eduardo)

“The economy is the decisive basis of any society and our economy is always dependent on the rural areas. When we farm, the [users] also plant their mines. The answer is then to abolish mines completely.” (Mário)

Each group brought into the discussion the need to increase community inter-relationship regarding the abolishing of mines. The principal theme discussed was combating mines in order to rebuild a society based on new aspirations towards development and peace, and of economic progress in farming.

What do you think people like you [primary school teachers, students and young activist] can do to prevent children and rural people from becoming victims of mines?

“We need material on mines. Pictures, designs to show our pupils and any other person so we can better understand this situation.” (Sandra)

“Although we are primary school teachers, we are also inexperienced people. We also need to participate and learn to progress. We must work not only with our pupils, but also around this community of displaced people.” (Rosarinho)

“Whatsoever one tries to do, bear in mind that populations risk their lives in looking for food. Showing posters, pictures, photos to people about mines is part of educating them.” (Conceição)

“Intensify de-mining programmes. In this province only the personnel of the Halo Trust is in charge of clearance. It is too little for the amount of unexploded devices. We need to include more institutions. More government support is needed too.” (Zé)
“The Kuma village is infested with mines. At present if someone dies, people can’t bury in the municipal cemetery. They [people] have to seek other places because that area is highly mined. The Halo Trust knows this but they alone can’t cope with everything at the same time.” (Conceição)

“Any campaign requires the inclusion of the majority of people in the real sense of the word. The ultimate goal is the elimination of landmines.” (Eduardo).

“It is totally against our human heart that mines are put near schools. We can’t prevent children from learning. Any programme must be directed towards both users and manufacturers of mines. These two groups really need to be alerted too. The call for a total abolition of mines is the best solution.” (Mário)

“In Greek language polis means city. I want to ask why is the government within a certain society buying mines? Do they [politicians] not think about what mines cause and claim? No one has the right to rob people of their lives.” (André)

Group informants called for the redoubling of efforts, namely, the need for more popular participation and the need to have more illustrative material concerning mines. Once again a need for the eradication of mines from the country was a striking point mentioned in the group discussions.

**What are the best ways for you to communicate with the communities about landmine explosions and the care that they should take on a daily basis?**

“In their spare time children must be invited to participate in open discussions. We must pay more attention and explain to them that mines can kill them.” (Tininha)

“Children play too much with whatever they find. We may warn them with songs, showing them pictures of mines and with people already maimed. Another issue is the theatre, telling
them stories. All these are useful strategies to deal with our children as part of our culture.” (Rosarinho)

“We are activists in the rural areas. Whenever we go, we lobby. By contacting the local chief he appeals to the community to adhere to our programmes. We talk about mines, the ways in which they are dangerously planted. People’s interests in this matter have positively grown.” (Vasco)

“In Huambo people like dancing. Whenever there is dance, there are songs too. People easily participate in our sessions. Two years back we used debates with the communities. Now we adopted dance, and theatre. It is the best way to educate along with some posters and having everybody gathered together.” (Zé)

“Angolans love sound pollution. Music is a good way to capture people’s attention, from children to adults.” (Marcos)

“Theatre presented via the media. For instance, showing a group of children playing soccer, supposedly in a mined area. It will help to advertise problems.” (Mário)

“Children like television. Theatre should be presented through televised publicity.” (André)

“Theatre in schools. Visual education where children can draw and learn the destructive nature of landmines. Children also retain the message through cartoons that mines are unnecessary.” (Eduardo)

“The task of educating and protecting anyone should be seen in the light of contributing towards a better society for all and never in terms of making a profit.” (Marcos)

Each group believed that popular theatre and music as part of audio-visual education were extremely helpful to communities. Respondents also voiced their opinion in engaging children
in open discussions, having songs, and lobbying amidst communities. The use of popular media such as television is the best means to communicate the devastating impact of mines on the community. Alleviating their fear of mines also reflects the richness of Huambo cultural tradition.

**What about other people of your age? What can they say or do to prevent other youngsters from stepping on landmines?**

“Everybody in the communities has been directly or indirectly affected. We must unite against mines.” (Belinha)

“We all face the same perils. We all need to be more cautious and be patient and be closer to young people, especially boys.” (Rosarinho)

“We may play or talk to transmit a message of warning. Especially to those who are innocent.” (Tininha)

“Our contribution is to call for an active and total participation. Youngsters do have more accidents because they are curious. They try to explore and touch things that they have never seen before. For instance, some time ago there was a myth that inside a bomb, there was another bomb [sic]. Lots of youngsters became victims because of this idea. They grabbed bombs and tried to open them, searching for mercury. For them mercury was highly marketable and expensive.” (Zé)

“Debates are important to help them to understand the origins, the causes and effects of accidents with mines.” (Conceição)

“A few days ago a man lost three fingers. He found something unusual, and used it as a hammer. He is one of those guys who runs away from our activities.” (Vasco)

“Another incident happened with a woman. She was piling the garbage near her house. Underneath, there was a grenade. She set fire to it. It exploded and she is in hospital.” (Rui)
“Youth get maimed not only because of their naive curiosity, but they also want to enrich themselves in an unrealistic manner. Unfortunately, they pay a high price, by becoming disabled people.” (Conceição)

“Youth must participate and set up meetings and rallies amongst themselves. Discuss the impact and traumas caused by mines.” (André)

“Youngsters are naturally receptive to listening and learning. Promoting conferences, workshops for them to share their ideas. Train them to go back to their areas and proceed with what they have learnt.” (Eduardo)

“Having young people sitting for a long time is not that easy. Other alternatives could be discos, bars, cafés or places where they gather.” (Marcos)

Generally, groups envisaged the need to increase debates, training sessions, popular rallies and meetings among the youth. In doing so, the groups admitted the possibility of gathering in recreational and public spaces such as discos and cafés, normally places of youngsters’ preference. They feel that the increase of social meetings such as those mentioned above could be extremely beneficial to communities to curb the deadly threat of mines and other devices of human destruction.

**Who are the other groups or individuals who could influence and sensitise the communities about the devastating impact of mines?**

“The family as a whole, do have a strong influence on their children and relatives.” (Tininha)

“Military people, their policy is about mining. They must be capable of working with young and rural communities and with parents too. Conditions must be improved at our schools to expose children to mine issues. This could be done in the Church by means of prayer. Certain appeals might be made. Religious anthems may be sung. Debates with young and old must be carried on outside the Church.” (Rosarinho)
“Men should talk to one another at their local meetings. Catholic fathers and sisters. Pastors, religious people, local chiefs, catechists.” (Sandra)

“The government is the principal player in the communities. They must come first. Traditional leaders and churches.” (Vasco)

“People here are very religious. They believe in what the Church says. The Church is a credible and valuable partner to any mission.” (Zé)

“In schools there is a sub-programme called Programa de Educação para a Prevenção de Acidentes de Minas –PEPAM. It is supervised by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The programme runs twice a week in primary schools. In each class pupils learn about mines. This programme must be broadened to include secondary and senior levels. The danger of mines should be communicated regularly.” (Rui)

“We also complement our activities with art programmes. We prepare young children as future young activists/instructors. After three or four weeks they embark on exchange programmes with other schools. They are rewarded with little incentives, like t-shirts, brochures about mines.” (Vasco)

“The media is also important to co-ordinate programmes. The aim is a common one that is to reduce the harmful impact of mines.” (Rui)

“In Angola particularly, we consider the moral authority to be the Church. People follow whatever the priests have to say. The clergy has a political and social acceptance because of the respect and admiration the population show towards them.” (Marcos)

“The press is part of the awareness. For us [Angolans] to be successful in such programmes we have to consider public spheres. Places where people go to listen to someone serious. At schools it is very important to carry on this mission. So, are the teachers.” (André)
‘The Church has been at the centre of the population for long enough. The Church has worked among people for many centuries. They go where the rulers never go or those who manufacture mines never put their feet. The Church is always there with its message of evangelisation. The Church can create a new culture of alerting people.’ (Eduardo)

The answers provided to this question indicate that the Catholic Church is a subtle and moderate vehicle to pursue what may be considered to be a social and moral obligation to the decisive banning of mines. Informants were unanimous in referring to the important role that the Church has played in spreading its voice of peace.

**What do you think can be done in the future so as to live in safety and without fear of landmines?**

“Be more conscious that mines exist. Mines will finish when the war ends. Our vigilance will increase with the end of war too.” (Belinha)

“Strengthen our friendship among our neighbours and communities. In moments of danger we may be more united, by talking more to each other. As teachers we may not only console but pray constantly.” (Tininha)

“Developing traditional games and dances amongst parents, leaders and so many others. It is not easy to be isolated in a community. In the future we may develop stronger campaigns. Before people can develop their work in areas affected with mines we may call de-miners to clean up places.” (Rosarinho)

“Initiate a better explanation about mines. We need more enthusiasm to determine what is causing so much destruction, pain and sadness amongst us.” (Sandra).
“Only with peace may we live happy and quiet. With war we can’t do that much.” (Rui)

“To fight more whether with war or in peace. Even with war we have to work hard and get things done. It’s true that there are lots of difficulties, but in Huambo we are adventurous people. We keep doing things before the war ends.” (Vasco)

“People need to learn and to accept living with mines. The mines will not end, even if peace is there. What is real is that we live with mines.” (Zé)

“Associations may have the strength to proclaim and advocate ideas to abolish mines, but mines will be there for long.” (Conçeição)

“The international community must intervene more. To invest in programmes of peace and reconciliation, by giving special attention to victims. Particularly, to children that end up marginalised at early ages.” (Zé)

“Be conscious of the value of the human being. After evaluating the human being it will be possible to keep people away from mines.” (Eduardo)

“Such a valorisation of the human being makes us love and respect life, and to love the other person. Only when we acknowledge these principles will it be possible to unite and to fight against the use of mines. If an entire community will stand together, others [users] will be afraid to plant mines in the future.” (Marcos)

“To work the consciousness is important in the sense that we may understand what is wrong and right. Any wrongdoing is against human beings. Against all of us youth, our children, parents, the aged. We all have a right to life.” (André)

“In the future I would like to understand the role of the state. The state should not make things worse, rather it [the state] has to facilitate things and make life happy as far as
possible for its citizens. The state has to stop causing disturbances in communities and much suffering.” (Marcos)

“Defining the mission of the state will make things easier for everyone to live in a harmonious society. There will be a guarantee for all in terms of peace and fraternity. There will be a dignified social living, not so?” (Eduardo)

“Adhere to peace. Peace will bring a new constitution for a new society. Departing from old to new ideas. An anti-war constitution, with a strong Republic promoting health and education. Our country is in decay with young and old generations falling on mines.” (André)

Foreseeing the future of each group seemed to be a way of replacing a mentality of war with one of peace and dignity shared amongst individuals and their own communities, where signs of tranquillity and hope indicate that they want to live differently.

**What are the main activities that you would like to develop in your community and explain why?**

“Agriculture. Only through agriculture will we develop. In Huambo food is very scarce. Now that it is the rainy season we need to start planting maize, beans, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Sometimes, our salaries as primary school teachers are delayed. Huambo is an agricultural province. If we develop agriculture it will give us more independence. The food crisis is enormous.” (Belinha)

“Hunting and poaching. Men can hunt and the meat can be sold or exchanged for other products, and for our own consumption. Sometimes the skin may be used for shoes and drums. It will help to reduce poverty.” (Sandra)

“Fishing too will enable us to consume and sell. We may exchange fish for cooking oil, food and salt. We may also dry the fish because it is part of Huambo tradition.” (Tininha)
“Develop education and health. Developing education will reduce illiteracy and help to develop the country. Health is chaotic in this process due to many years of war.” (Rosarinho)

“Our main culture consists of dancing and singing. In our campaigns people love songs. They sing and forget about the war. They feel so emotional. Song and dance touch their hearts.” (Zé)

“Regional songs may be linked to sport, especially with mine victims. At the orthopaedic centre some victims play soccer, others do play basketball. They play nicely. Some without two legs in their wheelchairs. We should see that they are re-integrated socially.” (Vasco)

“The social integration of the victims is very important. Unconsciously, we are more concerned with prevention of accidents and we neglect somehow the healing process.” (Zé)

“In our region song and dance are well accepted. It is linked to drum beats as part of our tradition. The development of soccer as one of the principal sports unifies people and it serves as meaning to pacify everyone’s spirit and mind.” (Vasco).

“People will forget their traumas. Any sport activity may improve their moral condition and self-esteem. It will create more relationships between the victim and non-victim community.” (Conceição)

“It could be useful to distribute pamphlets at soccer matches. No one will forget that particular game and the impact of mines because the propaganda was right there at the stadium.” (Marcos)

“Family support along the lines with television shows. At meal-time the family could discuss information regarding the effects of mines.” (André)
“Education where and how? Just let’s start from home. Right there, at schools, in the society with the Church and so on.” (Eduardo)

Each and every group informant identified an activity which could be developed in the future for personal interest and as means of ameliorating their social and family plight in order to overcome their daily struggles and limitations. Thus, the most common interesting activities mentioned were: agriculture, hunting, poaching, fishing, etc, clearly indicating the desire that communities have to move forwards, increasing hence, their living standards. On the other hand, the issue of having improved educational and health services was referred to by respondents as a possible need to reintegrate victims and their family members. Respondents answered that this can be done through television programmes, sports and propaganda that may be deployed in sports such as soccer.

The current section presented some of the most prominent answers provided by the members of the focus groups during their discussions within the framework of the study conducted from September to October 2000 in Huambo. The results indicate that landmines are menacing devices to both the disabled and the healthy communities. The perils faced by inhabitants of Huambo are the same for public and the most populated areas. These are to some extent areas of daily need for the local population: bridges, footpaths, rivers and fields (Williams & Roberts, 1995: 97).

The findings confirm what the literature contends. To sum up, the illustrative and shared experiences of group members are mainly focused on themes such as the desperation caused by hunger, poverty, suffering due to the presence of landmines, and the desire to struggle by any means possible for prosperous and peaceful days, as much as possible to reduce the obstacles to their movements, eventually decreasing the number of landmines in the roads and their agricultural land.

The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Initially, the research entailed a study of how the development of rural communities is thwarted by the presence of dormant landmines. The objective of this study, as discussed in Chapter 1, is to understand the effects of landmines over many decades of war on rural communities in Angola. The interest of studying people’s plights and ways of living with landmines, among other issues, emerged from the international movement to abolish the use, stockpiling and manufacturing of mines in 1997. The study is devoted to the Huambo province and some surrounding areas in the central plateau of Angola, one of the most
heavily mined zones in the world. The study was undertaken in the area over a period of almost four weeks in October 2000. The qualitative methodology employed a combination of the snowballing sample, using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Apart from this, the researcher also conducted focus group discussions.

In the first stage, a group of twenty maimed individuals were sampled, whereas in the second stage twelve non-deficient people were also involved as part of my research population. The first group comprised ten females, including two widows. A single female and three young girls were also included. The remaining females were all married. Ten males were interviewed as well. Four males were single and six were married. In the meantime, focus groups discussions encompassed three mini-groups of four elements each composed of untrained primary school teachers, mine activists and a group of Catholic lay ministers.

The nature of the study compelled the researcher to use semi-structured and open-ended questions, moving from concrete to abstract issues. The choice of a qualitative approach seemed more valuable than a quantitative method in which the friendly contact with the subjects being studied is never established in depth.

Finally, the analysis and interpretation of data were presented in divided themes and each section also presents a summary of the main findings. Relating to the mini focus group discussions the analysis is rendered with the most valuable ideas pointed out by group members. The major findings of the present study are summarised as follows:

- landmines have an extremely negative impact on the economic development of the communities studied in the rural areas of Angola;

- landmines discourage rural inhabitants from pursuing their normal agricultural activities; and

- landmines create a culture of social exclusion and of economic marginalisation of the individuals who have been maimed.
therefore, the social re-integration of the victims has to be complemented and facilitated by efforts made by local and international officials. In fact, it must be acknowledged that a great deal of time and attention is required for successful de-mining to be undertaken by other international organisations and international donors.

I would like to conclude this study by expressing the idea that there is a direct link between the prolonged war in Angola and the continuing use of mines. Since war is carried out by powerful individuals and institutions it leads the researcher to conclude that the existence of millions of mines in Angola must be viewed within the context of a human phenomenon whose consequences are immeasurable.

In trying to identify the root causes of the Angolan war, although the underlying causes are undoubtedly related to her internal riches and political upheaval, international involvement and interests cannot be overlooked. It is a war of ambitions, followed by foreign interests and domestic doctrines. Whatever the case might be, it is a fact that the war was brought into the country by Western supporters and allies. These push and pull factors have endangered the development of the country at all levels.

Thus, discussing the roots of the Angolan conflict is a very difficult task. I would emphasise that the tremendous brutality made possible through the use of mines needs to be understood not only at the grassroots level. Its underpinnings are essentially global in nature.

However, like any other social process, the scourge of landmines in Angola is complex and hard to categorise sociologically. A sociological reading asserts that in order to find a possible solution it is necessary to bear in mind the importance of both local and international efforts in attempting to sweep these destructive weapons from the Angolan soil.

Although, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Angola has signed the Ottawa International Treaty on the abolishment of mines, this is not a spontaneous and simple plan. Landmines must be banned from the world, and especially from Angola, since it is the villagers and individuals who face the greatest risks and dangers.
I was emotionally touched by the study that I was assigned, and the issue of landmines made me greatly aware of the economic, family, social and communal destruction of the Huambo rural life.

In this regard, I would also like to stress that landmines are disastrous sources of social disarray, emotional and latent pain. The phenomenon is more understandable if one goes into a field ripped by war, where the wounds are unforgettable, seen either in young children, rural mothers, or old parents.

Mines give rise directly to the incapacity of persons who end up in poverty, human and social malfunction.

However, whatever the argument might be, one thing is clear: mines are notable weapons of wrongdoing than something done for good. They reflect the reality of the human tendency towards extreme actions of violence and conflicts in society.

My own understanding of the situation in the field is that landmines have been afflicting unprotected and defenceless communities, whose agonised voices are not heard by the warlords, let alone by any of the providers, as well as manufacturers of these horrible, disfiguring weapons. Landmines have been used since the times of classical warfare, and they continue to be used widely in guerrilla wars and low-intensity conflicts.

The terms may vary, but the tactics are all typical of protracted wars. Simply, with the objective of claiming mass victimisation, while gradually preventing rural communities from walking freely, carrying out their agricultural activities or from being the donos of their agricultural land and production.

In conclusion, I would like to re-express the fact that the basic objective of this report was to modestly contribute towards the termination of the fratricidal carnage wrought by landmines and their users. Landmines are mortar devices which disfigure and maim human beings thereby
preventing the economic development of the country. Finally, my perception is that we are witnessing an escalating orgy and a flagrant violation of human rights against the most frangibilis innocent citizens, and against the agricultural production of the rich Angolan soil.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The horrific situation of landmines in Angola is fraught with immense hardships and difficulties. It is a complex social reality which has serious consequences for agrarian individuals in a society that is reliant on the land. For this reason ongoing research is necessary in the future, in other Angolan provinces, in order to improve and expand not only my knowledge about the use of mines in Angola, but that of other researchers as well.

As noted previously, Angola’s case needs special attention in terms of a concrete and vast mine clearance that it should be as factual as possible. This will not be an overnight process. The major concern is that Angola is still a unique country in the world in terms of the incoherent and irrational use of mines there. In the future research in this specific area should be aimed to follow up changes, which may occur in the country from time to time, especially in moments of political and military stability. As an instance, in cases in which the mine
process will be regarded as persisting, then the solution is to call for the penalisation of both users and sellers within a context of international monitoring and censure.

My extensive remarks on the landmine crisis in Angola are that more effort and thought needs to be put to devising solutions to the diverse problems of Angola, and the kind of assistance to be given to victims of the scourge. It is in the light of this argument that I would like to put forward the following suggestions which I consider essential for the successful re-integration and recovery of victims.

Human recovery cannot be seen strictly in terms of physical rehabilitation. Performing vital tasks in assisting landmine victims and their families requires something more. Overcoming an unhealed trauma needs special moral and psychological dedication and training. Thus, improved services to victims are really needed, not only at the level of the Huambo province, but at other provinces, as well, wherever this is possible.

Guidance, orientation, counselling or moral support are the primary services that should be available. This includes post-traumatic treatment of the victim, training facilities, housing conditions with special facilities for those victims critically injured, and regular free health and medical assistance, until the victim is capable of coping with his/her own physical disability and capable of restarting his/her former life. These services need to be allocated where they are immediately and easily accessible to victims.

In the worst cases, the victim must be automatically granted a wheel chair, and eventually given more attention. The multifaceted nature of problems experienced by victims will definitely require the help of specially trained personnel, not only orthopaedic surgeons, psychologists and sociologists, but preferably individuals who are interested and who have a real flair for working in rural areas, which are sometimes affected by war, and who have an understanding of landmine cases. Here it is important to bear in mind the need for community-based relationships and the building and strengthening of close co-operation with rural villagers, while working at the same time with existing local organisations in Huambo and other provinces.
I should highlight the point that no one has the right to ignore the human suffering, and the resistance presented by landmine victims in coping with one of the most dramatic changes observed in their physical state. Many victims have been able to make their own efforts to adapt to their new and horrible reality without any public outcry and are forgotten by external aid organisations. Taking the opportunity to correctly and socially rehabilitate, and enabling them to re-adapt and become successfully part of a new society should be seen as everyone’s concern and a common social task. Undoubtedly, the survival, successful recovery and social integration of the victim depends more on endeavours to be undertaken by the Angolan administrators, and only then, one may be sure of their commitment to a reflective and enduring nationwide cause.

Finally, I hope that this modest study will increase my understanding and improve my ability to take action on behalf of those thousands of outnumbered, unregistered and dismembered individuals with whom I have been close from whom I have learnt, and with whom I have shared their devastating stories and personal, traumatic and painful experiences.
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APPENDIX 1

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your marital status?
4. Where are you from?
5. How many family members have you got?
6. How many of your family members have been affected by landmines?
7. When and how did this happen?
8. What is their relationship to you?
9. How old were they when this occurred?
10. Did this affect the family relationship?
11. How?
12. Does the community play any role towards assisting you in dealing with this predicament?
13. Do you think that the community intervention is enough, or should there be more community involvement?
14. In what way can the community deal more effectively with this problem?
15. Do you play any active role in the community, by way of supporting others who have also been affected by landmine explosion?
16. Are you aware of any campaign to ban landmines here?
17. Tell me about it?
18. Has the campaign been effective in reducing the problem of landmines?
19. Have there been recent incidents of people being maimed?
20. Are landmines still a threat to you?
21. What is your main source of income?
22. In what way is your economic activity affected by the landmine problem?
23. Have landmines affected your plans of bearing children?
24. In which ways have they done so?
25. Do you think that by banning landmines will alleviate the familial, social and 
   the economic problems that you are experiencing?
26. In what way?
27. Is there anything else about landmines you want to share with me?
28. Thank you for your precious time and co-operation.
APPENDIX 2

PROGRAMA DE ENTREVISTAS

1. Como se chama?
2. Que idade tem?
3. Qual o seu estado civil?
4. Qual é o seu município?
5. Quantos membros de família tem?
6. Quantos membros da sua família foram afectados pelas minas?
7. Quando e como aconteceu isso?
8. Que relação de parentesco tem com eles?
9. Que idade tinham eles quando isso aconteceu?
10. Isso afectou a vossa relação familiar?
11. De que modo?
12. A comunidade jáu algum papel com vista a apoiá-lo neste problema?
13. Você pensa que a intervenção prestada pela comunidade é suficiente, ou você pensa que há necessidade de maior envolvimento?
14. De que modo você julga que a comunidade pode ser mais eficiente em lidar com este problema?
15. Você joga algum papel activo na comunidade em termos de apoiar outros deficientes que tenham sido afectados por explosão de minas?
16. Você tem conhecimento de alguma campanha para se abolirem/acadarem com as minas?
17. Conte-me o que você sabe sobre a campanha?
18. Você acha que a campanha tem sido proveitosa?
19. Têm havido/surgido incidentes com as minas recentemente, por aqui?
20. As minas continuam a ser uma ameaça para vós?
21. Qual é a sua principal fonte de rendimento?
22. De que forma tem sido a sua actividade económica afectada com o problema das minas?
23. Têm as minas terrestres afectado o seu planeamento familiar?
24. De que modo tem isso acontecido?
25. Você pensa, que se as minas forem abolidas (acadarem), isso irá aliviar os seus problemas familiares, sociais e económicos?
26. De que maneira?
27. Há alguma coisa mais que me queira dizer acerca das minas anti-pessoais?

   Muito obrigado pelo seu precioso tempo e cooperação prestada.
APPENDIX 3

FOCUS GROUPS GUIDE

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION: Tell me your name and your age?

1. What are the most serious problems communities here face with landmines?

2. Some concerns have been mentioned. For instance, communities find mines in the footpaths, fields in searching alternative ways to get food. How do these problems compare to others already mentioned?

3. In your community which areas are the most affected?
   (a) The footpaths?
   (b) The fields?
   (c) If there are any differences, explain why?

4. Tell me about the circumstances in which mines explode. When and where is this most likely to occur?

5. Where do you think mines are planted and why are they placed there?
6. What are some of characteristics of people of your age who have not yet stepped on a landmine, or those who did step on landmines?

7. Let’s talk about what can be done to prevent people in general from becoming victim of landmines. [Feel free to talk about awareness campaigns, civic education and other activities which you feel are carried out in your community.]

8. What do you think people like you [primary school teachers, student and young activists] can do to prevent children and rural people from becoming victims of mines?

9. What are the best ways for you to communicate with the communities about landmine explosions and the care that they should take on a daily basis?

10. What about other people of your age? What can they say or do to prevent other youngsters from stepping on landmines?

11. Who are the other groups or individuals who could influence and sensitise the communities about the devastating impact of mines?

12. What do you think can be done in the future so as to live in safety and without fear of landmines?

13. What are the main activities that you would like to develop in your community and explain why?

Thank you for your co-operation.
PERGUNTA INTRODUTÓRIA: Digam-se como se chamam e que idade têm?

1. Quais são os problemas mais sérios que as comunidades aqui enfrentam com as minas anti-pessoais?

2. Certas preocupações foram aqui mencionadas. Por exemplo, as comunidades encontram as minas nos caminhos, nos campos quando vão à procura de comida. Como podem ser estes problemas comparados a outros já mencionados?

3. Na vossa comunidade quais são as áreas mais afectadas?
   (a) Nos caminhos?
   (b) Nos campos?
   (c) Se existe alguma diferença expliquem-me porquê?
4. Falem-me acerca das circunstâncias em que explodem as minas. Quando e aonde isto ocorre com mais frequência?

5. Onde pensam que as minas são plantadas e por que razão serão elas colocadas desse modo?

6. Quais são as características das pessoas da vossa idade que nunca caíram numa mina, ou daquelas que já pisaram em minas?

7. Falemos acerca do que pode ser feito para prevenir/evitar que as pessoas em geral continuem a pisar nas minas. [Sintam-se à vontade para falar acerca das campanhas de sensibilização, educação cívica e outras actividades, que vocês julguem estar em curso na vossa comunidade.]

8. O que pensam vocês como [jovens professores primários, estudantes ou activistas], podem fazer que venha a ajudar a prevenir/evitar que as crianças e a população rural se torne vítima desde flagelo?

9. Quais são as melhores vias que vocês têm para comunicar com as comunidades em geral acerca das explosões das minas, e o cuidado que elas devem ter com as minas?

10. E que tal acerca das pessoas da vossa idade? Que podem elas dizer ou fazer para prevenir outros jovens de caírem em minas?

11. Quais são os outros grupos ou indivíduos que podem influenciar e sensibilizar as comunidades acerca do impacto devastador que as minas causam?

12. Que pensam vocês que pode ser feito no futuro para que possamos viver mais seguros e sem medo das minas?
13. Quais são as actividades principais que vocês gostariam de desenvolver na vossa comunidade e expliquem-me porquê?

Muito obrigado pela vossa colaboração.

APPENDIX 5

MAP OF ANGOLA WITH THE MOST INFESTED MINE AREAS
APPENDIX SIX

PHOTOGRAPHS OF LANDIME VICTIMS IN HUAMBO
Photograph 1: Huambo has been intensively marked by decades of war

Photograph 2: An anonymous female amputee carrying firewood in Huambo

Photograph 3 Mines vary from country to country in origin and in size
Photograph 4: A Halo Trust member educating people in rural areas
Photograph 5 Everybody gathers to learn about the perils of mines

Photograph 6: A sweeper leaning up mines
Photograph 7: A mine subtly planted in a footpath leading to a river

Photograph 8: A group of primary school teachers> From left to right, Belinha, Sandra, Tininha, and Rosarinho
Photograph 9: Agostinha sitting with her two young children

Photograph 10: Júlia, in her wheelchair, holding her one-month-old baby
Photograph 11: Mariazinha, showing sadness, is surrounded by her three young children

Photograph 12: Rosinha. Having an incomplete body, she is not always able to offer a gratuitous smile
Photograph 13: Rosana, with her left leg amputated

Photograph 14: Using posters and illustrative measures are part of mine awareness
Photograph 15: Soninha, with a spontaneous smile of innocence

Photograph 16: Fernanda, with her crutches and an orthopaedic technician
Photograph 17: An anonymous amputee cultivating the land

Photograph 18: Unexploded devices are extremely dangerous to communities
Photograph 19: Bridges are also common mine sites

Photograph 20: Little children seem to be the best listeners in the campaigns
Photograph 21: Theatre serves to educate rural villagers

Photograph 22: Informing youngsters is a social task in Huambo
Photograph 23: School programmes have been intensified
Photograph 24 Huambo is a fertile and green province

Photograph 25: Landmine carnage