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Securing Angola's future: improved market access for women

Background

Angola needs to diversify its economy away from mineral resources and create employment in other sectors to reduce social and economic vulnerability. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Angola, 37 per cent of Angolans live below the poverty line. However, rural poverty is three times higher at 58 per cent than in urban areas at 19 per cent.

Project focus

The provinces of Huambo and Benguela have soils with good potential for agriculture, six months of reliable rain and excellent water resources for gravity-fed irrigation. Moreover, the city of Benguela (pop. 500 000) is a lucrative market for farm products and a gateway to Angola's coastal market. Boosting local food production and marketing could lead to highly needed import substitution.

The project focusses on:

- Supporting women as entrepreneurs and primary care givers for children
- Providing improved market access for women
- Improving coop technologies with a focus on the introduction of orange sweet potatoes (high vitamin A for child nutrition)
- Innovative value chain support with seed banks and fertilizers.

Purpose

This multi-dimensional project seeks to improve smallholder farming, access to markets, increase farmers' incomes and household food security, as well as improve child nutrition in municipalities along the corridor linking Huambo and Benguela.



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Key activities

Activities under this program include farming, marketing, grassroots mobilization and nutritional education.

Farming: Agricultural extension workers help farmers adopt sound farming techniques and improved access to seeds for high-value crops such as Irish potatoes, groundnuts, dry beans, cabbage, carrots and onions. Farmers also learn how to better store and process their products to reach the market in good condition.

Marketing: The project links consumers in Benguela and on the coast with agricultural producers in four municipalities along the Huambo-Benguela rail and road corridor, opening commercial opportunities for high-value crops preferred by urban consumers, and advising farmers on smart marketing strategies.

Grassroots mobilization: Up to 10 000 farmers will be organized in 50 associations.

Nutrition: Communities receive nutritional education, cooking lessons, tips on improved baby weaning and feeding, and detection of malnutrition in children. Kitchen gardens supply nutritious food and dietary information. Fifty communal areas will grow the highly nutritious orange flesh sweet potato, rich in vitamin A, for distribution to farmers. Community health activists will receive training in nutrition and hygiene.

Location and target group

The project location areas include Ukuma, Longonjo and Tchinja municipalities in the Huambo province, and Ganda and Cubal municipalities in the Benguela province. The project targets an estimated 10 000 farmers, equivalent to 50 000 people. Key target groups include women as farmers, entrepreneurs and family health providers.



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At least 60 per cent of participants will be women and 20 per cent from female-headed households.

Rosalina's story

Rosalina Bundu is a member of the Calundende Farmers' Cooperative (Cooperativa Agropecuária de Calundende) that represents five farmer associations and 250 smallholder farming families in the municipality of Cubal in the province of Benguela. She is 38 years old and married. Rosalind has given birth to six children but only three are alive today. Her other three children died as a result of disease and malnutrition when they were less than three years old. Rosalina normally cultivates cassava, maize, vegetables and squash and sells the produce from these crops in the local market. She has never planted Irish potatoes before, never having the opportunity to buy seeds.

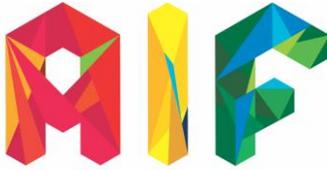
The Coop received four tons of the Irish potato seed variety *Cara*, introduced to Angola by World Vision. The seed has been a huge success with smallholder farmers and commercial producers alike, and is now commercially available through an agricultural input supplier. It shows a high degree of resistance to potato blight, is a robust producer and can be used by consumers for a wide range of culinary use.



Says Rosalind: "I'm very happy... Now I can grow and sell potatoes and help solve some of our problems. If there is a good yield from the potatoes we will be able to buy animals and improve our house with a cooker, furniture and cement the floor. We will also be able to support our children in higher education and when we have health problems purchase medicine and pay the hospital. We are also very interested in the cooking lessons and how to prepare nutritious foods for infants and improve the health of our children. We will look after the potato seed and be careful to save and store the seed every year... we will maintain and multiply the potato seed to give to others in the community to help them as well."

Project duration

The project was established in March 2015 and will run until March 2017.



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Implementing partners and stakeholders

World Vision, working closely with the Institute for Agronomic Investigation (IIA), Institute for Agrarian Development (IDA) and the Ministry for the Family and Promotion of Women (MINFAMU). Municipal and communal local administration officers are also involved in the project.