

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Access to education is most difficult for displaced women and children (2001/ 2002)

- More than 180,000 children and adolescents and 30,000 women in IDP camps are estimated not to have access to formal or informal education
- As little as 45 percent of Angola's school-age children attend school

"The most vulnerable populations in this sector are children and women in IDP settings. Agencies estimate that more than 180,000 school-aged children and adolescents and 30,000 women in IDP camps do not have access to formal or informal education. In addition, approximately one million displaced and vulnerable children living in resident communities or resettlement areas are not integrated into existing educational programmes. During 2002, partners will target approximately one-third of the most vulnerable children, adolescents and women in 54 accessible municipalities throughout the country. In addition, 8,000 teachers and educational promoters will benefit from technical training programmes and educational materials." (UN November 2001)

"As little as 45% of Angola's school age children attend school. Dropout rates remain high, particularly among girls - estimates show that as many as 65% of adolescent girls are illiterate. Virtually none of the children who are permanently or temporarily outside the formal school system have access to other educational opportunities, including non-formal education. Teaching is severely hampered by the lack of basic materials and high pupil-teacher ratios in almost all classrooms make it difficult for children to learn. In several provinces, schools have been forced to shut due to the lack or absence of teachers. Teacher training is often poor, affecting professional performance and leading to lower educational standards." (UNICEF 11 February 2002)

National education crisis highlighted by severe problems in Luanda (June 2001)

- Luanda is only place in Angola where children stand a chance of getting an adequate education
- Teacher to pupil ration in Luanda is 1:80 in some cases
- Government unable to accommodate large number of war-displaced arriving in city
- Only 45 percent of school-age children attending school

"While some teaching at under-staffed and under-equipped schools takes place in the provinces, the only place in Angola where children stand a chance of getting an adequate education is Luanda, the capital. And even here, the constraints are immense. The government has not been able to accommodate the large number of war-displaced or starving families arriving in the city to live with extended families or to look for work.

[...]

An Oxfam report on primary education in Luanda found a severe lack of classroom space, high teacher/pupil ratios (1-80 in some cases), wastage because of high failure and drop-out rates, the lack of trained teaching staff (only 48 percent of primary school teachers in Luanda are adequately trained), and lack of learning and teaching materials (teachers and pupils have to buy their own). With an official global poverty rate of about 67 percent, not many parents can afford all the costs associated with sending their

children to school. By the end of 2000, official statistics indicated that only about 45 percent of Angola's children of school-going age were in class." (IRIN-SA 14 June 2001)

IDP parents are often unable to pay bribes or otherwise pay for schooling (2001)

- Displaced parents cannot pay extra fees or bribes required by some school authorities
- Education for IDPs provided by external actors generally only available in camps
- Even in IDP camps, parents cannot afford to keep children in school since they need their labour to survive

"Although there is great awareness of the importance of education among the displaced, there is a long way to go before most displaced children receive even a basic education. Displaced parents often cannot pay the 'extra fees' or bribes, which the teachers and administrative staff at the schools demand to provide certificates of matriculation. (The request for 'extra fees' is not surprising: teachers' salaries average about US\$20 per month, and payment is often two to six months late.) Interestingly, this seems to be less of a problem in Huambo than in, for example, Luanda. A significant number of parents who were displaced from Huambo province to Luanda (that is, some of the families who fled in December 1998) sent their children to schools in Huambo, when the city became safe again, because they didn't have to pay as many bribes and the quality of the education was better than in Luanda.

Education provided by external actors, such as UNICEF, is concentrated in the IDP camps and urban areas. One displaced woman described how her children only got access to education when they moved to Kasseque III camp. They had first fled from Sambo do Kuando and later Escóla 113 (both of which were large IDP settlements, accommodating several thousand persons, that received minimal assistance from agencies). They arrived at Kasseque III one-and-a-half years after they first took flight. Even though Kasseque III is regarded as one of the best IDP camps and transit centres in Angola, most of the children living there do not get past the first year of school. Parents cannot afford to keep their children in school when they need their labour; and hunger and illness among the pupils and a lack of qualified teachers keeps children away. Because most children have either not finished their schooling or have never attended school before, the ages of those in the first grade can range from 6 to 14 years.

Some displaced persons we spoke with told how they had organised education for their children in transit centres by asking the teachers among them to teach their children in return for a small amount of food or cash. Later, some of these schemes were supported by outside agencies, such as UNICEF. In villages where the displaced have resettled and others are returning home, several schools and health centres are being built as part of food-for-work projects. ADRA-Angolana, together with the government and WFP, provide food for the workers and some construction material for school buildings. The agencies only become involved when the projects are initiated by the villagers." (Birkeland and Gomes 2001, p. 43)