

ANNEX 8

# **SPHERE PROJECT EVALUATION**

## **CASE STUDY, ANGOLA**

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I also wish to thank the people that took time to meet with me, sometimes at very short (if any) notice. I would list them here but some requested to remain anonymous so instead of leaving them out I will just say thank you to all those that gave me time out of your busy schedule to discuss the Sphere Project.

A big heart felt thank you also goes out to the people of Angola. Their spirit and friendliness to me during my stay will always be remembered and I wish nothing but the best for the future of Angola. I hope to return to your lovely country some day and return the kindness offered me.

While I may have only been one, this case study could not have been done by just one. Thank you all for your help, I hope you know how much I appreciate it!

Marci

## Acronyms

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ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CCF	Christian Childrens Funds
CESVI	Cooperazione e Sviluppo Onlus
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CVA	Cruz Vermelha de Angola (National Red Cross Society)
FTC	Feed the Children
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
IMC	International Medical Corps
LNGO	Local Non Governmental Organization
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NPA	Norwegian Peoples Aid
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Counsel
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SA	Salvation Army
STC	Save the Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program

## **Executive Summary**

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### ***Introduction***

Angola has been in nearly continuous civil war since 1975 but with a peace agreement signed in 2000, there is a finally a possibility of sustained peace. Everyday more people are returning to their homes and IDP camps are closing. With the possibility of sustained peace NGOs are redefining and adapting programs to work with in the changing context. In other words, the situation in Angola is changing by the day.

Angola was chosen as the site of the second case study in the sphere project evaluation by the Sphere Evaluation Team in consultation with the Sphere Evaluation Advisory Group, the Sphere Management Committee and several other individuals.

Inclusion Criteria:

- There are humanitarian aid agencies that both use and do not use Sphere
- There are both international and national humanitarian assistance agencies
- The humanitarian response is supported by donors both in and outside of Angola
- While the situation in Angola is not a new humanitarian response the situation is changing quickly causing NGOs to reorganize their programs and in many ways begin anew
- There has been intensive Sphere activity in Angola including trainings and government interest

The aim of this case study was to determine the knowledge of attitudes of the Sphere Project and what role the Sphere Project plays, if any, in the situation in Angola.

### ***Methods***

The Angola Sphere Evaluation case study focused on three locations; Luanda, Huamba, and Kuito. These sites were selected based on the presence of a Sphere Pilot agency, UN agencies, INGOs and LNGOs. In each location as many aid workers as possible were interviewed. In total, 40 people were interviewed with notes taken and later entered into a compilation sheet to allow for easy comparison of data. Each interview followed a set of guidelines written before arriving in Angola and then adapted to meet the specific situation.

### ***Results***

#### ***Knowledge of the Sphere Project:***

Knowledge of the Sphere Project varied considerably depending on international or national status. In general those that work for an INGO have a better understanding of the Sphere Project than LNGOs and the international staff among those also have a better understanding of the Sphere Project than the national staff. There was also a divide in the knowledge of the Sphere Project between those based in Luanda and those in the field. Field-based personnel were less likely to know of the Sphere Project than their counterparts in the capital Luanda.

*Attitudes towards the use of standards (not necessarily Sphere standards):*

Nearly every person and every agency interviewed in Angola operated according to some a standard or guideline and felt that doing so improved their programs. The standards they used varied included various UN guidelines, Angolan protocols and individual agency manuals.

*The impact of standards on the quality of humanitarian assistance in Angola:*

While it is difficult to quantify quality of humanitarian aid it is the opinion of this evaluator that standards, and the Sphere Project specifically, has had a positive influence on the humanitarian aid agencies in Angola. Standards have encouraged discussion of quality and appropriateness of services and even though they often do not reach the minimum standard, they are aiming for them. Only a few NGOs demonstrated a systematic organization wide approach to implementing the Sphere Project and those that do report finding the Sphere Project useful and claim it has improved their programming.

*The attainability of Sphere Standards and/or indicators in Angola:*

Whether or not aid agencies are able to meet Sphere Standards and/or indicators in Angola is unclear. Some aid workers confessed that they often had difficulty reaching standards (Sphere, UN, Angola or internal standards/guidelines) but others were confident in their agencies ability to reach what they aim for. For those that felt meeting standards in Angola was difficult they most often sited logistics, funding, staff capacity and security (frequently landmines).

*Donor issues:*

While in Angola 5 donors (including U.N.) were reached and only one of those had ever heard of the Sphere Project. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, it was not possible to meet the European donors.

## **Historical Background**

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Angola is the largest country in Southern Africa. It borders the Atlantic Ocean, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and Zambia, and has an area of 1,247,700 square kilometres. Angola has a population of over 11.9 million people, out of which 69% live in the rural areas. Since its independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola has been in a nearly continuous civil war which continues to damage and disrupt social and physical infrastructure. Despite the formation in 1997 of a government dedicated to national unity and reconciliation, the situation remained tense and civil war resumed in March 1999 between the current government led by the ruling party MPLA, and the UNITAS' movement.<sup>1</sup> In April 2000 a peace agreement was signed and the future looks hopeful. Everyday more people are returning to their homes and IDP camps are closing. With the possibility of sustained peace NGOs are redefining and adapting programs to work with in the changing context. In other words, the situation in Angola is changing by the day.

## **Case Study Objectives**

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- To determine the knowledge of Sphere of both the humanitarian community (local and international) and the affected population in long-term humanitarian operations
- To understand the attitudes of both the humanitarian community and the refugees towards the use of standards (not necessarily Sphere) in emergency and development activities.
- To assess whether the Sphere Project has made a difference to the quality of humanitarian aid in Tanzania and an impact on the lives of those affected by disasters
- To establish the process by which agencies have incorporated Sphere into their activities
- To determine if sphere has provided a common framework for humanitarian assistance such as improved co-operation, professionalism and planning
- To assess donor attitudes and policies towards Sphere
- To establish constraints, if any, to meeting sphere standards

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<sup>1</sup> UNECA

## **Methodology**

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### ***Study Design***

The evaluation team had every intension to conduct both the Tanzania and Angola case study in the same manner. This plan incorporated a cross sectional study design involving both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Specifically, focus group discussions with the affected population, key informant interviews, questionnaire and document review. The first case study in Tanzania was conducted as planned by a team including Dr. Wamuyu Maina, Lynn Atuyambe and Marci Van Dyke. The same three investigators were to conduct the case study in Angola but unfortunately, despite the best efforts, Dr. Maina and Lynn were unable to get visas to travel to Angola. Attempts to hire someone in Angola were fruitless leaving Marci Van Dyke to conduct the case study independently. Since one can not do the same work as three the case study methodology was redesigned to meet the challenge.

When it was clear that two of the investigators would not join Marci in Angola, Dr. Maina and Dr. Ronald Waldman were consulted with on how to best handle the situation. All agreed that based on the Tanzania results if something was to be changed it would be the focus groups discussions with the affected population and the questionnaires. While this was unfortunate we are confident in the results of this case study even though it was not possible to conduct it as planned.

### ***Study Population***

#### **International NGOs**

Africare  
ADRA International  
APS  
CARE  
Catholic Relief Services  
CARITAS  
CESVI  
Christian Children's Fund  
Comitê d' Aide Medicale  
Concern International  
Feed the Children  
Goal  
GTZ  
Intermon  
International Committee of the Red Cross  
International Federation of the Red Cross  
International Medical Corps  
MedAir  
MSF Belgium  
MSF France

Movimundo  
Norwegian Peoples Aid  
Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oxfam  
Salvation Army  
Save the Children  
Trocare

**National NGOs**

Young Angolan Christian Association (ACJ)  
ADRA National  
AVIMI  
Community Action Aid for Development  
CVA  
FONGA  
Humanitarian Action Angola United (ACHAU)  
SCAM

**Donors and UN Agencies**

OCHA  
Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance  
UNICEF  
USAID  
World Food Program

***Data Collection Methods and Procedure***

All interviews followed a prewritten guideline with separate guidelines for NGOs, donors, and UN agencies. The interviewee was asked questions directly about the Sphere Project but when they had no knowledge of the Sphere Project they were probed for information about other guidelines they use and what role they play in their programming.

Interviews ranged from 15 minutes to 1 hour. Notes were taken during the interview and then reviewed and recorded in a tally sheet for analysis.

## **Results/Conclusions**

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It is clear that the Sphere Project has had an influence on the delivery of humanitarian aid in Angola but it is difficult to say exactly how much of an influence because of seemingly conflicting information. On the one hand the Sphere Project has influenced national legislation but when looking at humanitarian programming the picture is not as clear. The knowledge of Sphere among NGOs, both international and local, is sporadic. There are only a few NGOs that have integrated Sphere into all aspects of their work an even larger number never having heard of the Sphere Project. The following information will outline this in more detail.

### ***The Angolan Resettlement Norms***

At one time, around the year 2000, OCHA used the Sphere Project as an example to push for the development of Angolan country wide standards protecting the rights of IDPs when returning home. These norms, based on the Sphere Project and the Dang Principles, eventually became a legalized presidential decree. They specifically outlined the assistance displaced persons in Angola should receive and all government agencies and NGOs were expected to follow these norms.

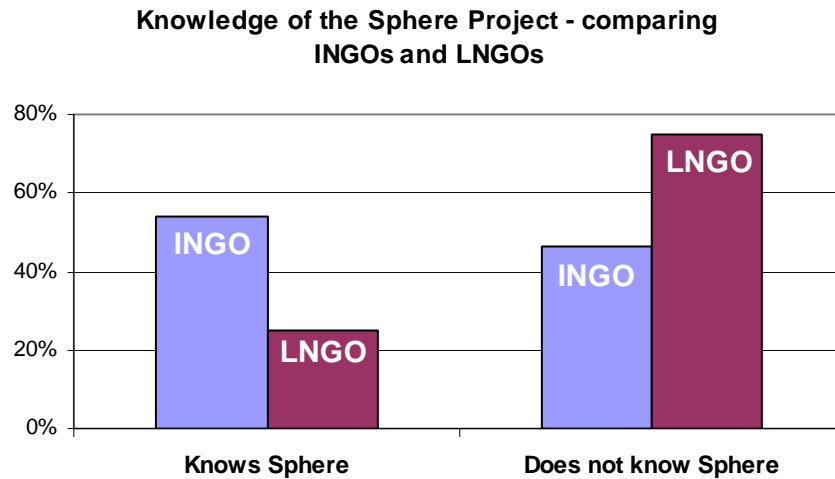
The Angolan Resettlement Norms are obviously an impressive piece of work with the Sphere Project having a great influence on the final product. The first draft of the Resettlement Norms gave credit to the Sphere Project but subsequent editions have lost this credit.

The success of the norms is variable at best. According to one of the interviewees, the Resettlement norms were once tested and the results were not positive indicating that many of the standards outlined in the norms were not being met or provided to the IDPs (note: the author has not seen these evaluation results). There also seems to be very limited awareness of these norms by local and international NGOs alike despite the fact that nearly all of them are working with IDPs. During interviews aid workers were questions about the Resettlement Norms and only a few had even heard of it. Those that had heard of the Norms did not regard them highly or use them in their work.

### ***Who is using the Sphere Project?***

While it is clear that the Sphere Project influenced policy in Angola at one time it is unclear what influence it has had on the NGO community and their work. During this case study 45 agencies were interviewed throughout Angola. This included 27 international NGOs (INGOs), 8 local NGOs (LNGO) and 5 UN/Donor agencies (please see page 8 for a complete list of agencies). Many of the INGOs interviewed are completely Angolan operated while maintaining international status. This is important to note when trying to gauge whether or not the Sphere Project has reached the Angolan aid workers.

Of the 38 people interviewed that work for an INGO in Angola, 20 had heard of the Sphere Project (sometimes more than one person in a NGO were interviewed) and 18 had no knowledge of the project at all. Among the LNGOs the results were not encouraging with only 2 of 8 having heard of the Sphere Project and only one of those using the Sphere Project in their work.



If we look at the results based on nationality of the NGO staff only 6 (38%) of the Angolan staff knew of the Sphere Project compared to 17 (61%) of the international or non-Angolan aid workers.

Looking at nationality within individual organizations is also interesting. In several INGOs the international staff knew about the Sphere Project but when speaking with the national staff of that same agency about the Sphere Project many of them were unaware of it. However when those national staffs were questioned in more detail about how they manage projects and make programmatic decisions they would often quote Sphere indicators. One particular Angolan water project manager working for an INGO knew nothing of the Sphere Project yet he was able to recite nearly every Sphere Project indicator that related to his work. It seems the NGO he worked for trained him on the indicators but never gave him a handbook or explained the relationship between the standards/indicators and the humanitarian charter.



These results, at first glance, are not encouraging. However the situation in Angola is more complicated than differentiating between those that know of and use Sphere and those that do not. While not every person interviewed knew of the Sphere Project every one did know and use some sort of standards and/or guidelines in their work. These standards included various UN guidelines, Angolan protocols and individual agencies manuals.

INGOs seemed to have more control over how they design and run their programs than LNGOs. They are able, for the most part, to choose the standards or indicators that they use in their programming and include in their proposals. However, LNGOs did not seem to have this same degree of freedom and were expected to follow the donors or INGO partners lead. More often than not the LNGOs said that they make programmatic decisions based on what the donors or their partner INGOs tell them to do. They are often instructed on what standards or guidelines to follow but the instruction is on a case by case basis meaning that they may not be given the entire Sphere Project Handbook but only certain standards and/or indicators that relate directly to the program they are running. Again, the rights based approach of the Sphere Project was not developed in the LNGOs, they were simply following the indicators.

Aid workers that have worked in Angola for many years felt that this was not always the case. They reported that at one point the understanding of the Sphere Project was very high with many NGOs sending their staffs to trainings. However, during this case study there was very little evidence that this is still the case today. Perhaps it is a problem of high staff turn over or maybe once the push for the Sphere Project ended people just forgot it. It is hard to say what happened but if the Sphere Project was once well know it is no longer the case.

### ***Are the standards attainable in Angola?***

Understanding whether or not aid agencies in Angola are able to meet Sphere standards and/or indicators (when aspiring to that) is difficult to know without spending months reviewing each individual NGO reports. During this case study no reports were examined\* but during each interview the interviewee was asked whether or not they are able to meet Sphere standards and/or indicator. If they did not use the Sphere Project they were asked the same about the other standards/guidelines they do use.

The answers were mixed between different NGOs and different sectors with no real patterns. Some aid workers confessed that they often had difficulty reaching standards or target (Sphere, UN, Angolan or internal standards) but others were very confident in their agency's ability to attain what they aim to reach. For those that felt meeting standards in Angola was difficult they most often sited logistics, funding, staff capacity and security (often landmines).

Since the situation in Angola is changing very quickly NGOs are finding it difficult to meet the needs of the affected population. With IDPs returning home the logistics of an NGOs operations are being challenged and that makes it difficult for standards to be reached. For example, where NGOs were once offering health care to a static population in a camp setting the NGOs now have to offer health care to villages that are often small and far from each other. Many felt that outside the camp situation the Sphere Projects usefulness was limited. Several NGOs expressed concern that in this new setting they were not able to meet the Sphere Standards but all that expressed that still used and strived for the Sphere Standards. They admit they might not be appropriate for the context of the current situation but as one aid worker said, *“Even in the transition the Sphere Project is still good. It is something to aim for even if you can't reach it. Conditions in Angola would be even worse without the Sphere Project”*.

### ***Donor Issues***

When questioning NGOs about donors and what expectations donor have when working with an NGO the reaction was split between those that felt donors required Sphere standards or similar standards and those that felt donors were not that sophisticated. They felt that donors distributed funds based on an NGOs track record and whether or not their proposals fit into the plan already in place but they didn't necessarily look at whether or not the NGO was able to perform to standards.

While in Angola 5 donors (OCHA, USAID, OFDA, WFP, and UNICEF) were reached and only one of those had ever heard of the Sphere Project, that being OCHA. All the donor representatives were experienced expatriate staff with many years of experience in the field – not only in Angola but in many other parts of the world. After giving a brief explanation of the Sphere Project to one of the donors they said, *“[the Sphere Project] sounds very interesting. If the NGOs are using it in their programming they should tell*

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\* During this case study the NGOs were asked if they would be willing to share reports but few were open to that. Examining the records of just a few NGOs would not give a representative picture of the situation.

*us. We should all sit at the same table and talk about it".* Their lack of understanding of the Sphere project was surprising. If everyone in each donor office was interviewed it would probably been possible to find someone that did know Sphere but those interviewed were in positions of authority and made the decisions on fund distribution.

Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, it was not possible to meet with the European donors in Angola.