

Clearing Mined Roads for Agricultural Development IN ANGOLA

HDI'S UNIQUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

by Daniela Kempf | Director, Mine Action Programs, HDI |



The Humpty Dumpty Institute
Putting The Pieces Together Again

The Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) is putting the pieces together again—again! This time, HDI is putting together landmines, agriculture, milk and the U.S. government to create and implement an innovative partnership project for mine clearance in Angola.

As a result of a productive collaboration among HDI,

HALO Trust and Land O'Lakes, HDI has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to clear approximately 1,500 kilometers (932.06 miles) of arterial roads connecting farms to market centers in Angola. HDI's program is the first-ever application of U.S. food aid toward humanitarian demining in the 50 years of the successful Food Aid program. HDI created a unique partnership with Land O'Lakes and HALO Trust around the concept of clearing landmines as the first step toward agricultural development and was able to convince the U.S. Department of Agriculture to approve a grant that promotes this inextricable link.

Because of this partnership, HDI is making a real impact on the lives of the people in Angola right now. Using the proceeds from the sale of surplus nonfat dry milk (NFDM) made available

by the USDA, approximately \$620,000 (U.S.) is being applied to fund HALO's demining operations in Angola. HDI is providing overall project management including monitoring, reporting and verification. HALO Trust, a UK-based non-profit organization and one of the most successful landmine clearance organizations in the world, is securing, surveying and removing landmines along 1,500 kilometers (932.06 miles) of arterial roads in the Planalto region. Founded in 1988, the HALO Trust has been clearing landmines in Angola since 1994 and today employs 692 Angolan and six expatriate staff. It is currently clearing mines in nine countries worldwide.

Landmines in Angola

The USDA reports that nearly 650,000 square kilometers (250,966.40 square miles—an area about the size of Texas) in Angola are infected by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle landmines as a result of the 25-year civil war. Consequently, economic development, commerce and the delivery of humanitarian relief have been greatly hindered or prevented altogether.

The Planalto region in southern Angola, one of the most agriculturally rich areas in the country, is also one of its most heavily mined regions. Major and minor arterial roads connecting local producers and farms to commercial hubs have been mined extensively, preventing the movement of people and goods. As the Angolan peace agreement takes root, several hundred thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning

to the Planalto region, and in recent months, road and foot traffic has more than quadrupled. As a result, landmine-related casualties have increased dramatically and local farmers cannot safely transport their produce to and from local markets. Without safe access to land or markets, rural economic recovery is at a standstill.

Surplus Commodities

Through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) provides surplus U.S. agricultural commodities to needy countries through direct donations and concessional programs. Food aid may be distributed through Public Law (P.L.) 480 (also known as Food for Peace). Under the terms of Section 416(b) of P.L. 480, surplus commodities may be donated to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for monetization, with proceeds used to support agricultural, economic or development programs.

Before HDI's project, the USDA had more than 1 billion pounds of surplus nonfat dry milk (NFDM) warehoused in storage facilities around the country, at an annual cost to U.S. taxpayers of more than \$1 billion. Typically, this commodity is used for food aid programs in the developing world. USDA has issued a notification via the Federal Register to utilize the Section 416(b) authority for NFDM owned by the CCC.

HDI made the case to the USDA that landmine removal in agriculturally rich regions is a necessary first step to get farmers back to their

Crater on a dirt road in Huambo province, where a vehicle drove over an anti-tank mine, killing five people and injuring seven.

Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust's program manager in Angola, and Daniela Kempf, director of HDI's Mine Action Programs, with HALO's RTR vehicle.



land and is critical to agricultural redevelopment, particularly in countries like Angola, where millions of landmines block access to some of the most fertile land in the country.

Advanced Business Concepts, Inc. (ABCI), a subsidiary of Land O'Lakes, assumed responsibility for the importation, handling and storage, and monetization of the NFD in Angola. ABCI identified potential buyers, sold the commodities at fair market value, ensured proper receipt of the proceeds, and monitored the importation and discharge of the commodities.

The first tranche (250 MT) of NFD that HDI received as part of its 416(b) USDA grant was sold in mid-October 2004 and the first shipment arrived in Luanda on October 25, 2004. On October 21, 2004, HDI transferred \$333,282 to HALO Trust-Angola for landmine clearance operations in the Planalto Region of Angola. The second tranche of NFD was shipped and sold in Angola on December 21, 2004, at which point HALO Trust received the second half of the funds allocated for mine clearance, totaling approximately \$620,000.

Road Threat Reduction

Bill Rigler, HDI's Executive Director, and Daniela Kempf, HDI's Director of Mine Action Programs, traveled to Angola in November 2004 to meet with HDI's in-country staff, coordinate with local and national Angolan officials and meet with the U.S. ambassador and embassy staff in Luanda. Daniela, Bill and Henda Gaspar-Martins, HDI's representative in Angola, also visited HALO Trust's operations in Huambo province, where they received detailed briefings and inspected the areas to be cleared with the funds from this grant.

They were all struck by the way landmines affect the local communities in the Planalto region—many roads are littered with anti-vehicle mines that block access to markets, aid and medicine. At the time of their visit, 100 out of 150 villages in the region were completely isolated due to mined roads. The local population is also desper-

ate for farming land. A community near Huambo city started planting beans in a field that had been just recently cleared by HALO Trust, located between two current minefields. As Bill, Daniela and Henda walked around the minefields in full protective gear, they were passed by children on bicycles, grazing cattle and adults going about their business right next to the minefields. Even with HALO's careful and obvious markings of the minefield boundaries, the physical line between seemingly normal life and potential tragedy seemed blurred and arbitrary.

HDI staff also held a series of briefings at the U.S. Embassy in Luanda, culminating in a meeting with Ambassador Cynthia Efird. Ambassador Efird expressed great enthusiasm for the project and understanding of the landmine problem in Angola. Ambassador Efird subsequently sent a very positive cable to the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Agriculture expressing her support for our project.

The training of a group of local manual deminers was finalized in January and the demining operations with the Road Threat Reduction System (RTR) and a manual demining team funded by HDI's grant started at the end of February. HALO's RTR team has set up camp near Chinguar and has started working on the high-priority road from Chinguar going south to Chitambo in the Bie province.

By the end of this project, HDI's goals are to complete a successful verification of 1,500 kilometers (932.06 miles) of mined and suspect arterial roadways, achieve subsequent road use between sources of agricultural production and market hubs serving 20 communities, and complete training for 29 Angolan demining staff. As a result of arterial roadway mine clearance, HDI expects increased farming activity and market trading through greater access to market centers and increased volume of food aid from international NGOs to needy areas.

HDI believes that effective mine clearance is a critical prerequisite to increasing agricultural productivity and advancing rural economic develop-

ment in Angola. HDI will continue to work with the U.S. government and the private sector to establish innovative public-private partnerships that will advance goals to accelerate humanitarian demining and agricultural development worldwide.

About the Humpty Dumpty Institute

HDI is a results-oriented non-profit organization forging innovative public-private partnerships designed to solve specific international problems. The worldwide landmine problem is among the Institute's top priorities. Over the past several years, the founders of HDI, working through and with other organizations, have laid the groundwork for a series of public-private partnerships focusing on international mine-clearance activities and generating awareness of the landmine problem among the American public.

HDI has worked with a wide network of public and private organizations to support mine clearance projects around the globe. HDI has established unique public-private partnerships to fund projects in Angola, Armenia, Eritrea, Lebanon, Mozambique and Sri Lanka. Together, these partnerships have raised nearly \$2 million for landmine detection and clearance operations. ♦

Contact Information

Daniela Kempf
Director, Mine Action Programs
The Humpty Dumpty Institute
29 W. 46th St., 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10036
USA
Tel: (212) 944-7111
Fax: (212) 398-0304
E-mail: daniela.kempf@humptydumpty.net
Website: <http://www.humptydumpty.net>

Huambo residents planted crops in the recently cleared minefields.



First team of HALO deminers hired and trained under HDI's grant.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANIELA KEMPF