



## Polio Eradication in Angola

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Celso is a young Scout leader in Angola, a large but poor African country. Angola is one of only 8 countries in the world where the wild polio virus is still present. Many children are victim of this virus, which attacks the nervous system and provokes paralysis.

Celso became aware that his country was facing a serious humanitarian situation, and that the situation would only be reverted if its people, especially the young ones take ownership of the process of social change. With other Scout leaders, he undertaken a project in partnership with UNICEF with whom the Angola Scout Association already has a proven track record.

The idea was to organise a large campaign of immunisation all over the country with the aim to immunise most of children and then to eradicate polio. This was possible because the Scout Movement was implanted in all areas. However, Scouts had not been just used as manpower. The whole operation had also an educational content:

- The project provided Scouts with an opportunity to contribute to social change through undertaking a community development challenge. It created an awareness amongst the Scouts of a real challenge in the community, whilst giving them an opportunity to contribute to its solution.
- It provided each Scout with an opportunity to learn and acquire new skills (inter personal communication), which will enable them to be more effective as young people in their community now and in later life.
- The Scout Method was used, with emphasis to the team system while implementing the project. The Scouts worked together in teams to take the immunisation messages to house and market places where mothers would meet.

The results of the project were impressive:

- 5,000 Senior Scouts and Rovers in 16 of the 18 provinces of the country where mobilized to participate in the polio eradication campaign and they were provided with training in inter personal communication (IPC).
- 200,000 households were visited and as a result about 1,000,000 persons were targeted with polio eradication messages;
- 400 Scouts participated in 6 international football matches at the National Stadium, wearing polio eradication T-Shirts and holding banners around the playground, so disseminating messages;
- Over 300 megaphones rallies and street theatres were made at public places like schools, markets, water points, etc., all over the country.

Celso writes: "With the current political situation, altruism and disinterest of financial gains are rare commodities in Angola. At the beginning, people were always looking to see if the Scouts had a hidden agenda. However, the enthusiasm, fortitude and discipline shown by the Scouts during the project has made of them an example of commitment to the Polio Eradication Cause. The Ministry of Health now insists that the Scouts participate every year. We have renewed our "Project Co-operation Agreement" with UNICEF, and have raised the number of participating scouts from 5,000 to 7,000. This time we will intervene more in the Routine Immunization, and our target will be children under 1 year of age. In exchange, UNICEF will provide materials like rucksacks, whistles, pens, notebooks, etc., which Scouts will use to implement the Monitoring and Evaluation component of the Project, while learning to deal with statistics, numbers and reports in the process."

Celso and his friends from the Angola Scout Association are really "Scouts of the World".