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## Rural poverty in Malanje, Angola

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CMI report, number 1, May 2017

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**Cover photo**

Angola – the rural version.  
Photo by Gilson Lázaro

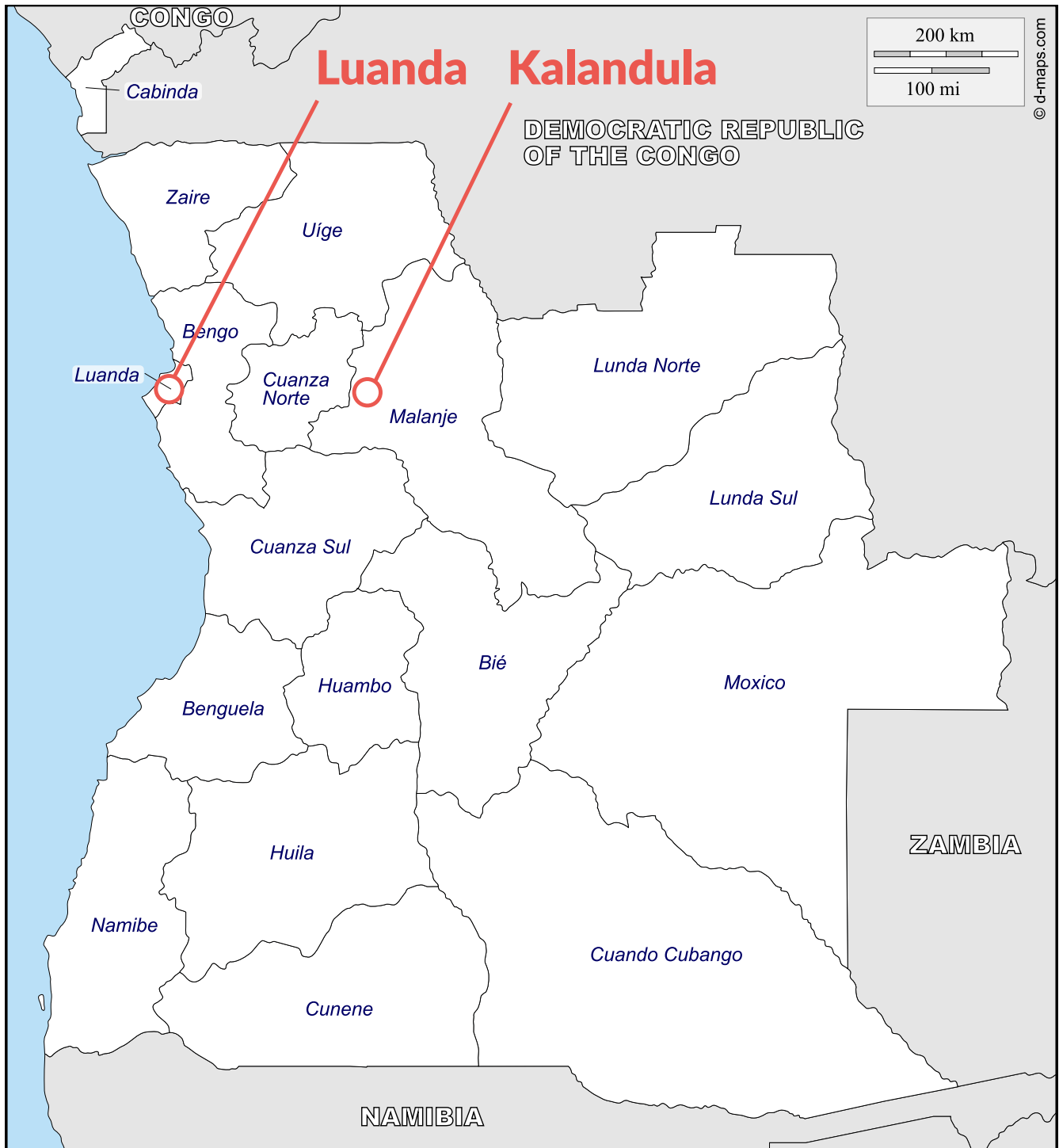
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Angola with project sites.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report is part of the research programme “Cooperation on Research and Development in Angola” between *Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica* (CEIC) at the Catholic University in Luanda, Angola and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway. The objective of the programme is to increase the quality, quantity and availability of relevant research-based knowledge on Angola. The programme has several sub-projects in political science, economics and social science<sup>1</sup>. This report on rural poverty in Malanje is related to the social science sub-project “Urban and Rural Poverty Dynamics”, and will be followed by a similar report on urban poverty in Luanda (forthcoming 2017).

Doing social science research on poverty and inequality in Angola is challenging. There is a dearth of aggregate statistical data showing the distribution of poverty over space and time,<sup>2</sup> and there are practical hindrances at the local level ranging from lack of experience of being subject to studies of this nature to logistical problems in implementing data collection. This project has been based on a combination of the limited aggregate quantitative data that exist, and the collection of quantitative and qualitative primary data in carefully selected urban and rural sites centred on a ‘Reality Check’<sup>3</sup> approach.

## 1.2 Poverty in Angola

Existing aggregate information indicate that despite high economic growth the past couple of decades, poverty in Angola is severe. Angola’s ‘official’ poverty rate is 36.6 percent, with 18.7 percent for urban and 58.3 percent for rural areas (INE 2013; see also Vidal and de Andrade 2011).<sup>4</sup> However, scholars and commentators argue that that the figures are too low<sup>5</sup> and conceal considerable variations between and within different provinces and urban and rural social formations. The most common proxy for multidimensional poverty, the under-five/child mortality rate, has seen some improvements the past few years but remains exceptionally high at 17 percent – with 23 percent for rural and 15 percent for urban areas (UNICEF 2015).

Angola is ranked number 150 out of 188 countries in the most recent Human Development Index despite its enormous oil wealth and high GDP per capita, implying exceptionally poor scores in terms of education and health indicators (UNDP 2016). Official data show that 30 percent of the population is illiterate and the mean years of schooling for an adult is 4.4 years; life expectancy at birth is 51.1 years; the child mortality rate is 167/1000; 42 percent of the population live without access to potable drinking water; and 60 percent lack sanitation facilities. The approximately one third of all households headed by women are poorer than those headed by a man (INE 2010, GdA 2015, INE 2016).<sup>6</sup> Angola ranks 126 out of 145 countries in the 2013 Gender Gap Index (WEF 2016). Table 1 below shows available data on differences between urban and rural poverty in Angola.

1 Economics: 1) The distribution of income and wealth across households and regions; 11) Diversification of the Angolan economy. Social Science: 1) Poverty and social differentiation; 11) Gender relations and human rights. Political Science: The role of the *município* in public services, participation and poverty reduction.

2 The most relevant data sets are 1) Household Income and Expenditure Survey or IDR, conducted in seven provinces (INE 2003) and 11) the Survey on the Welfare of the Population or IBEP conducted in 18 provinces (INE 2013). The 2014 Census (INE 2016) contains data relevant for multi-dimensional poverty (incl. education, health and material assets), but does not measure it as part of multi-dimensional concept.

3 A ‘Reality Check’ approach makes it part of a series of studies under the same name that share a vision that there are not one but several ‘realities’, and that it is important to capture issues of poverty both through statistics/surveys and as perceived ‘from below’ by people living in rural villages and urban slums (see e.g. Tvedten et al. 2016).

4 The National Poverty Line is set at 4,793 kwanzas per month, which translates into about USD 2.00 per household member per day.

5 The official poverty headcount declined from 62 percent in 2001 (INE 2003) to 37 percent in 2009 (INE 2010), but both are based on inadequate survey methodologies and uncertainties regarding the processing of the data.

6 As seen from Table 1, the figures range from 20 percent to 50 percent – depending on how female headship is defined.

**Table 1: Living conditions in urban and rural Angola**

Sources:

INE 2013;

UNICEF 2015;

INE 2016.

Item	Rural	Urban
Poverty incidence (%)	58	19
Total population	9.635.037	16.153.987
Average household size	4.4	4.8
Proportion Female Headed Households (%)*	52.2 / 14.6	51.4 / 23.6
Unemployment (15–64 yrs) (%)	14.3	30.8
Literacy rate (15 + yrs) (%)	41.1	79.4
Child mortality rate (%)	23	15
Civil registry (%)	30	68
Cell-phone ownership (5 + years) (%)	21.2	46.8

\* Figures from INE 2016 / INE 2013 respectively

This report is about rural poverty. 37.4 percent of Angola's population live in areas designated as 'rural' (INE 2016). Many of these areas have been marginalised during decades of war, and are still on the margins of political attention and development interventions with the partial exception of social (education and health facilities) and physical (road, rail) infrastructure. Rural poverty has received limited attention, historically due to inaccessibility during decades of war and more recently due to the dominant attention to urban development in Angola. Studies existing have, for good reasons, focused on the most accessible areas in the vicinity of cities and on the central highland, and yield valuable information on the political economy and distribution of poverty and well-being (see e.g. Jul-Larsen and Bertelsen 2011; Carvalho et al. 2011; ADRA 2012). However, few if any studies focus explicitly on the socio-cultural context and social relations of poverty and well-being in post-war rural Angola.

Both urban and rural poverty are currently affected by the profound economic crisis in Angola following from dramatic fall in the price of oil and poor governance, which has had immediate effects in terms of access to and prices of basic commodities (de Oliveira 2015; World Bank 2016; UCAN 2016; Inglês 2016). It has also affected relations between urban and rural areas. From a long period of near unilateral migration to urban areas in general and Luanda in particular as a result of the war and what has been considered superior options for income and a 'modern lifestyle', there are indications that this is in the process of changing with the crisis in many ways hitting the commoditised urban areas harder than agricultural rural areas (INE 2016).

### 1.3 Analytical Approach

A key premise in the current research project is that poverty is multi-dimensional. It must be understood partly as tangible measurable conditions of deprivation in the tradition of empirical positivism and partly as emic categories through which people think their worlds and act upon them in the tradition of sociocultural subjectivism (Green 2006; Addison et al. 2009; Schaffer 2013). This means that in order to grasp the dynamics of poverty and the main constraints and opportunities for upward social mobility and poverty alleviation, we must measure key aspects of being poor in quantitative terms as well as understand peoples' own perceptions and experiences of what it means to be poor in Angola.

In practical terms, multi-dimensional poverty involves the lack of employment and income needed to attain basic necessities (alleviated through a combination of increased *opportunities* and an increased *capacity* to capitalise on available opportunities); a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in relation to institutions of society and the state (alleviated through increased *empowerment*); and vulnerability to adverse shocks, linked with the ability to cope with them through social relationships and legal institutions (alleviated through increased *security*).

In order to grasp such a notion of poverty, the analyses will be framed within a broad outline of ‘practice theory’ – separating political, economic and socio-cultural structures affecting peoples’ lives and their own agency (Bourdieu 1990; Ortner 2006; Moore and Sanders 2014). People will be seen to relate to the structural constraints and opportunities the best they can from the social position they are in. Social and cultural order (or ‘structures’) have a powerful or even determining effect on human action and the shape of events, but there is also room for human agency. The kinds of activities people perform are governed by their individual positions within these structures, as determined by poverty/well-being, unequal social relations and dominant cultural discourses including those based on class and gender.

## 1.4 Methodologies

Methodologically, the studies have been carried out using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data (Mikkelsen 2005; Tvedten 2012; Hesse-Biber 2015). The former combine existing government data on poverty and social stratification at national, provincial and municipal levels; data from individual studies carried out by donors or (applied) research institutions; as well as an especially designed Baseline Survey carried out in selected communities by the project.

The Kalandula Baseline Survey 2016 (hereafter KBS16) has been done with careful attention to being as ‘representative’ of the larger community as possible (i.e. the municipality of Kalandula in the province of Malanje), but cannot claim to be representative for more than the villages/bairros where it is carried out in any strict statistical sense. It was implemented in eight communities (see below), with a total of 240 interviews or 30 in each community. The households were selected through systematic random sampling.

The survey seeks to combine 1) classical *quantitative socio-economic data* on the composition of households, income and expenditure, assets, levels of education, health and access to public services; 11) questions relating to people’s *perceptions* of conditions in the household and their community with implications for their position as poor or better-off and 111) the *social relationships* (with extended family, friends, community leaders, and public institutions) in which they are engaged and that have implications for their position as poor or better-off.

The qualitative methodologies used were 1) qualitative interviews with stakeholders in local government, civil society, traditional institutions, 11) systematic observation in the visited communities, 111) interviews with individual households and 1v) a set of explicit participatory qualitative methodologies carried out in focus groups of approximately ten persons. These include the following:

*Histograms:* To ascertain the history of each site under study, with an emphasis on events and processes that have been particularly important for current socio-economic conditions of well-being and poverty. The group itself decides on what point in time of history to start.

*Community Mapping:* To map the physical places (buildings, natural elements, sacred places etc.) as well as individual community members considered most important for the life of the community – and why. The group itself is asked to define the spatial borders of what they consider “their community”.

*Community problem matrix:* To identify and rank the most important problems that affect the whole community or larger groups of people in the community. The group will first identify the major problems, and thereafter rank those on the basis of the number of people the problem affect, and the seriousness of the problem.

*Wealth Ranking.* The objective is to capture the communities’ own perceptions of different levels and types of poverty and well-being. The group is asked to 1) define what being ‘poor’ and ‘rich’ means for them, 11) identify the most important conditions that separate the poor from the less poor, 111) list the local names/idioms for different categories of poverty and well-being, and 1v) identify households belonging to each category for further interviews.

The quantitative and qualitative methods described are useful tools for obtaining the information necessary for an analysis of poverty dynamics in Kalandula. However, they also have their limitations. Surveys operate with predetermined (*etic*) themes and categories

that do not necessarily coincide with peoples' own (*emic*) perceptions of what is important in their lives. Moreover, the interview situation in places like Kalandula is challenging with people not being used to respond to questions about their lives and being uncertain/fearful about how the information is to be used.<sup>7</sup>

Also, systematic observation and interviews in groups and with individual have challenges. Groups tend to be dominated by local power-holders/influentials, and particularly women are often reluctant to answer questions about their household without the husband being present. This is sought compensated for by selecting more marginal households/individuals for separate interviews in settings where they felt comfortable/confident.

While all this has influenced the quality/reliability of the quantitative as well as the qualitative data, we believe that this is minimised exactly by combining/triangulating the two types of approaches.

### 1.5 The Project Sites

The project/study has been carried out in the municipality of Kalandula in the province of Malanje (see Map). The ideal would have been to identify representative communities in the entire Municipality – covering the range from the 'semi-urban' municipal centre, communities along the main road to Malanje City/Luanda and communities in the interior .

However, logistics and the time at disposal made it necessary to focus on communities in the southern half of the Municipality that are most easily accessible from the Municipal Centre/*Sede* (Many of the communities in the north/deep interior would take too long to reach or are simply not accessible by car).

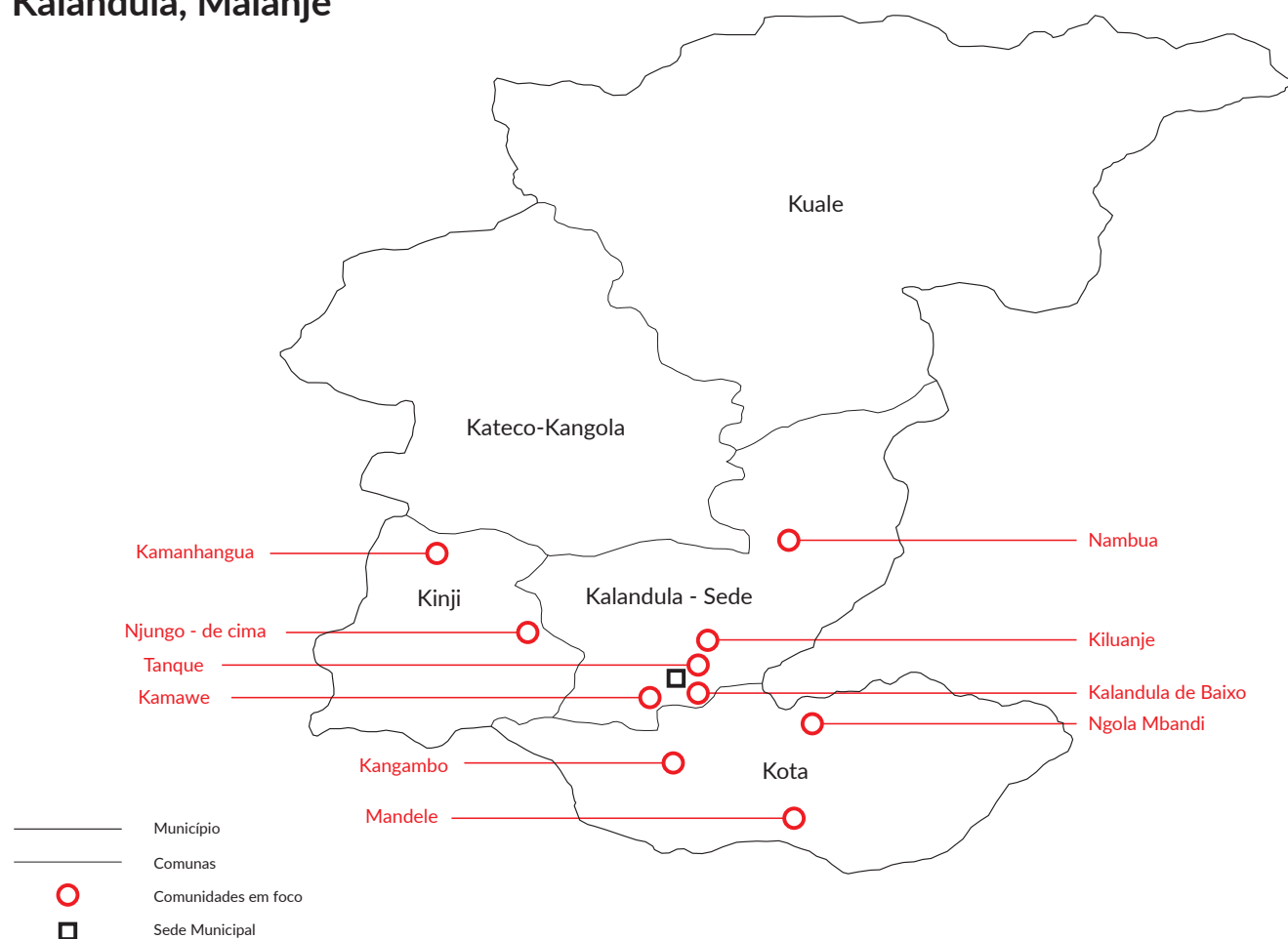
The ten communities ultimately chosen were selected in partial cooperation with the Municipal authorities and consist of three in the immediate vicinity of the *Sede*, three along the main road, and three in the interior. Both the survey and the qualitative methodologies were carried out in all except Kiluanje and Kamanhangua, where only the latter were implemented.

Written material (AMK 2014), interviews with public authorities as well as our own observations show that space/distance from the Municipal centre/main road affects poverty negatively – not necessarily in terms of agricultural productivity but in access to basic social services and commodities.

This way, the qual-quant data presented in this report are likely to reveal a socio-economic situation that – although marked by an extreme poverty – would have been even more serious had the study included more communities in the northern/most remote parts of the Municipality.

7 This largely accounts for the 'Missing' category in the data/tables to be presented – with some people simply refusing to answer questions they were not comfortable with (which of course is their right).

## Kalandula, Malanje



Kalandula with project sites.  
Map by Hanna Tvedten Jorem.

## 2 STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

### 2.1 The Political Economy of Angola

Angola has a total population of 25.8 million people (INE 2016). Since independence from the Portuguese in 1992, the country's political economy has been dominated by two factors: A devastating war lasting until 2002, and vast incomes from oil and gas that has made Angola a middle-income country in GDP per capita terms – albeit with equally huge levels of inequality (de Oliveira 2015; World Bank 2017; UNDP 2017).

Angola has had parliamentary elections since 1992, with the MPLA being the dominant party. However, the *de facto* power rests with president Eduardo dos Santos who has been head of state since 1977. A new president will be (s)elected in 2017, which has created significant political uncertainty.

Nearly 40 percent of Angola's population live in rural areas (INE 2016). The country has an extremely centralised political economy, which has largely left the rural areas as theatres of war fending for themselves – albeit with the centralised power still maintaining overall political control (de Oliveira 2013).

A post-war policy of neo-liberal economics combined with huge infrastructure projects were meant to nurture relations between urban and rural areas – but the concomitant neglect of agriculture has made this an impossible endeavour.

Still, rural areas are *de facto* dependent on/tied to the nearest urban centre and Luanda in particular through the political clientism of public/traditional leaders and the dependence on the city both for sales of agricultural products and access to basic commodities and services.

Low population densities, weak purchasing power among people and a dominance of economic transactions based upon barter rather than cash, make the rural areas largely uninteresting for internal as well as external investors, with the partial exception of investments in agro-based industries/fazendas.

### 2.2 The Province of Malanje

The province of Malanje is located in the northeastern part of Angola, and has a population of 986.000 of which 66 percent live in rural areas (INE 2016a). The City of Malanje is the main urban centre, and has a population of 220.000 people.

Most people in Malanje are of Mbundu origin, and have traditionally lived on a combination of agricultural production and trade. During the colonial era many people were employed as labourers in cash-crop production (cotton, tobacco, maize etc.), with some also being employed in manufacturing industries (Dias 1986; Vines 2016)<sup>8</sup>.

Since independence, rural Malanje has been severely affected by periods of war (1975 to 1990 and 1992 to 2002). A large part of the population was compelled to escape to Malanje City where many lived in refugee camps or to Luanda where they joined the vast number of people in informal settlement areas (Lázaro 2015).

Since 2002, the Province of Malanje has experienced population growth. In addition to natural growth, many people have returned from Luanda where living conditions have become increasingly difficult. The bulk of the population depend on agriculture or informal economic activities (see Table 2).

8 As emphasised by e.g. Birmingham (1974), the history of the Mbundu/north eastern Angola is very scarcely covered even in an Angolan perspective.



Item	2014/2015
Poverty incidence	53 *
Female Headed Households	39
Labour force participation	60
School completion rate 6–17 yrs	35
Child mortality rate	23
Civil registry	35

**Table 2:**  
Socio-Economic Indicators,  
Malanje (Percent)

Source: INE 2010, 2016a.

\* Poverty rate for Malanje, Bengo and Cuanza Norte combined (INE 2013)

## 2.3 The Municipality of Kalandula

Kalandula is one of 14 municipalities in the Province of Malanje, and has a surface of 7.037 km<sup>2</sup>. The rainy season lasts from September to April with an average of 900 millimetres of precipitation and with average annual temperatures of 21–22 degrees – although people say there is no system to it anymore (AMK 2014).

The dry season (*cacimbo*) lasts for about five months. There is also a period of no rain between December and early February called the *pequeno cacimbo* – but also this does not behave as it used to according to the local population.

Soils are generally poor in minerals and organic matter. The *Município* is also characterised by a large number of rivers, of which the Lucala River (with the Kalandula and Bengo-a-Nzenza waterfalls) and the Musseleje River with its waterfall of the same name are the best known.



The Kalandula Waterfall.  
Photo: Inge Tvedten.

The population in the Municipality has been strongly affected by war. Between 1973 and 2003, it decreased from 93.977 to 47.887. However, since 2003 the population has increased considerably to an estimated 72.422 in 2011 and 80.450 in 2016 – due to high birth-rates, limited out-migration and return-migration from cities/other provinces (AMK 2014; INE 2016a).

The large majority of households in Kalandula (89 percent) originate from the Municipality, while 24 percent have at least one family member who work/live in a big city

(Luanda and Malanje City). The population is extremely young, with 50 percent being 0–14 years of age and only three percent being 65 years of age or more (INE 2016a).

### Administration

Administratively, the Municipality is divided into the five *comunas* Kalandula Sede, Kuale, Kateco-Kangola, Kinji and Kota (see Map), 18 traditional delineations (*regedorias/soba grandes*) and a total of 458 villages/*aldeias* that each has their own *soba* - who is a traditional leader but appointed and paid by the State/MPLA.

MPLA totally dominates the political landscape, not only formally by heading the Municipality (there are no local elections in Angola), but also by MPLA membership/affiliation being a *de facto* precondition for any type of public sector position. Other parties with local representation include UNITA, PRS and CASA-CE.

The most influential political figure is the Municipal Administrator and the highest political organ is the Municipal Consultative Council (*Conselho Municipal*), composed of all the organs of the Municipal Administration and – upon invitation – representatives of non-government institutions.

Another central institution is the *Conselho de Auscultação e Concertação Social* (CACS), consisting of representatives from the Municipal government and civil society. In principle, CACS is meant to follow up the national poverty alleviation programme “*Programa Integrado de Combate à Pobreza e Desenvolvimento Rural*” (PICPDR).



Main Street, Kalandula town. Photo: Inge Tvedten.



Community centre, Kalandula village. Photo: Gilson Lázaro.

### The Poverty Reduction Programme

The PICPDR was established in 2010, and was meant to be a permanent transfer of funds to make investments and set up social and economic programmes to reduce poverty in municipalities like Kalandula.

According to the Kalandula Assistant Administrator (*Administrador Adjunto*), the poverty programme in Kalandula initially made up a large part of the entire Municipal Budget. In 2012–2014 and the onset of the crisis, no transfers were made at all. When taken up again in 2015, the crisis was a reality and the funds were used for other purposes – or disappeared.

Still according to the *Adjunto*, the population in Kalandula is very poor and have no purchasing power. It is therefore very difficult to establish businesses or other economic activities (“*o povo faz a diferença*”). People do not have money to transport their produce to the city, and do what they are used to, which is to “produce mandioca and keep goats”. However, people are not lazy “as they go to the field every day at five in the morning” and want to work – so it is a question of learning new ways and getting capital.



## Education

Looking at municipal services, the educational system is formally headed by a *Chefe de Repartição de Educação*, with one Head of Secretariate, one responsible for statistics/logistics, one for the adult literacy programme and one for maintenance/cleaning (AMK 2014).

Official data (AMK 2016, 2014) imply that 65 percent of the children between 5 and 15 years of age in the province are matriculated/go to school. There is a considerable reduction in the number of children actually moving up classes (in 2012 there were 3.939 in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, 2.222 in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and 606 in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade).

60 percent of the students in Primary School (1st to 6th Grade) are boys and 40 percent girls. In Junior Secondary (7th to 9th Grade), the proportion of boys to girls is 84 percent and 16 percent respectively. And in the only public Secondary School (10th to 12 Grade) in the Municipality, 61 percent are boys and 39 percent girls. There is also a private Secondary School/Teachers Training College run by the Kalandula Catholic Mission.

Formally/legally children are entitled to study up to 6th Grade in their community, but hardly any of the rural communities have any regular instruction as teachers and educational material are usually missing – often both. The number of youngsters between 5–15 years in school is approximately 78 percent of those eligible (AMK 2016) – but as we shall see this figure is not reflected in the survey carried out for this study.

## Health

The public health sector in Kalandula is managed by the Department of Health (*Repartição de Saúde*), and consists of one Municipal Hospital, 4 Health Centres and 10 Health Posts – according to official statistics from 2013 and 2015 (AMK 2016, 2014). In addition, there are a health post/maternity ward related to the Catholic Mission, 50 registered traditional midwives and 30 registered health promoters (*Agentes de saúde*).

Still according to official data, 50 percent of the medical personnel find themselves in Kalandula *Sede*. Among these, there is one doctor, one health administrator/statistician and one pharmacist from Cuba and a few Angolan nurses and health technicians (*técnicos de saúde*). There is no health personnel with qualifications above the basic level (*Técnicos Básicos*) in the other four comunas in the municipality.

In addition to the dearth of qualified personnel, a common denominator for all the health institutions – with the partial exception of the hospital – is that there is inadequate/no access to electricity and potable water, medical equipment is poor and there is very limited access to medicines.

Official data from 2013 show that 88.5 percent of the households in the Municipality had at least one member sick during the 60 days prior to the survey, which is confirmed by our own survey (see below). The most common diseases are malaria, acute diarrhoea and acute respiratory diseases (AMK 2016, 2014).

## Other Services

There is no formal legal institution in Kalandula, but the civil registry (*Registo Civil*) plays a vital role for the population. Formal registration (*Certidão de Nascimento, Bilhete de Identidade*) is important not only for being 'legal', but also for access to basic services in education, health etc. The only Civil Registry office is located in Kalandula *Sede*. In 2013 as many as 59.6 percent of the population did not have any identity card. A majority of those (68.1 percent) claim that the main reason is that it is too expensive (AMK 2014) despite legal guarantees that civil registration should be free.

The Municipal Department of Social Issues is responsible for support to vulnerable groups – defined as the handicapped, homeless elders, orphans, widows and ex-military. In 2012 there were 1.799 people registered in these categories, but support was limited to distribution of second-hand clothes and food to a small number of beneficiaries (AMK 2014).

There is no Municipal institution responsible for sanitation, but the area is in principle covered by Community Services (*Serviços Comunitários*). Their actual work is limited to removal of solid waste on the main street(s) of the Municipal Centre. There is no public system of waste/garbage collection in the communities.

*"We keep hearing the word 'crisis', but until now nobody explained to us why".*

*("Só estamos a ouvir 'de crise', mas ninguém ainda não nos explicou porquê".)*

– Young woman, Kalandula

Provision of water is the responsibility of a Water Department under the Municipal Administration, but wells/handcrancs (*furos*) are only accessible for public institutions/employees in the Sede and the comunas of Kota and Kateko-Kangola. Over 90 percent of the population depend on rivers and creeks for their water consumption.

Finally, there is no electricity in Kalandula, but a system of generators (*geradores*) supply public institutions and spaces in the Sede and some comunas. Some families/households have private generators, but over 90 percent of the households have no access to electricity (AMK 2014).

According to the Municipal Administration itself (AMK 2016:24), the main problems they face in carrying out their tasks are insufficient budgets, inadequate number of staff, and lack of transport and accommodation for the staff to work outside the municipal centre.



Producing building material. Photo: Gilson Lázaro.





that occupied the area, but this does not prevent that some have been directly appointed by the State if the administration saw it necessary.

Practically all villages also have a formal representative of the MPLA party, who acts as the Party's voice (and ear) in the villages. They are usually inhabitants of the community in question. In most of the villages, the *sobas* are older men and the MPLA representative younger with education. While the former maintain considerable influence, the latter often acts as the village 'spokes-person'.

A third State/Party related institution usually present in the villages is the Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA). While they may not have much influence compared to the *soba* and the Party representative in the village as a whole, they do have influence in immediate neighbourhoods and particularly among women.

The institution with the most widespread proliferation and following is the church. All ten communities under study have at least two churches, often being small precarious buildings with local pastors/priests and active congregations mainly consisting of elders and women.

Associations/cooperatives – that historically have been encouraged by the MPLA – are rare, because of the limited production/economic crisis that has forced people to primarily fend for themselves. In the community(ies) where such institutions were present, this was primarily a result of outside interventions from churches (PROMAICA, Escoteiros, Caritas) and a national non-governmental organisation supporting agriculture (ADRA).

The communities also mapped informal institutions/groups established by themselves around special tasks for maintenance of roads, access to water or transportation (in times of emergency) – but as we shall see also local organisation/cohesion seems to have been weakened with poverty and the ongoing crisis.

### 3.3 Economic Adaptations

In marginalised/poor communities in settings similar to Angola, the common strategy to avoid risks (crops that fail, market fluctuations, unexpected expenses) is to diversify sources of income. In Kalandula, the most salient feature of peoples' economic adaptation is the dearth of such opportunities and the concomitant reliance on agriculture.

This is largely the outcome of structural features of the economy: The marginalisation of rural areas in the national political economy; the distance/costs to main markets; the economic crisis with high local prices on basic goods/commodities; and the extremely low local purchasing power among the local population.

The depressed local economy is clearly visible in the Municipal centre: There are only a few shops (those that exist are usually owned by citizens of other African countries) and a local communal market with a limited range of goods, and there is hardly any visible informal economic activity with marketing stalls, cantinas and mobile traders (*zungueiras*) that is so common in other similar settings on the continent.

The main sources of employment and income are as informal builders/construction workers (masons, carpenters, plumbers etc.) and agricultural labourers, but these are seasonal/ intermittent, very poorly paid and currently negatively affected by the economic crisis.

For women, the main alternative sources of employment/income are in agriculture, as small-scale traders, as fishers, as domestic servants and in prostitution (for which there is a market in Kalandula in the form of tourists and other visitors).

The only sources of formal employment are in government/public institutions (Municipal administration, construction, schools, health units etc.). Many of these require formal qualifications that the local population do



Hard work. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

not have, but it is also extremely difficult to get non-qualified jobs without the right (political or family) connections or paying bribes.<sup>9</sup>

This leaves agriculture as the main source of employment and income for the large majority of the population in the Municipality of Kalandula as well as in the ten communities under study.

The State agencies responsible for supporting agriculture (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Agrário, IDA and Estações de Desenvolvimento Agrário, EDA) are not functioning in practise. There are three technicians in the Municipality located in Kalandula Sede and Kota, but they neither have autonomy nor a budget. Some agricultural implements are available in local commercial stores in the municipal centre, but at high costs and in limited quantities.

Agricultural production in Kalandula is rudimentary, with only the simplest agricultural tools (axes, machetes, hoes) being used and with hardly any access to/use of irrigation, improved seeds, fertilisers or other improved methods – with the exception of approximately 70 households in one village supported by ADRA.

At the same time, there is a long historical tradition for commercial - as well as subsistence agriculture; there is ample access to rainfed land except for a limited area in the vicinity of Kalandula Sede; and there is a huge potential market for agricultural products primarily in Malanje City and Luanda.

Arable land that has not yet been cleared is normally under the control of the *soba* since he represent the original lineage of the village. Land that has already been cleared is under the control of the elders in separate lineages residing in the village, normally between two and three in addition to the original one. People foreign to the village depend on the *soba* to receive land.<sup>10</sup>

Unless government claim land for their own purposes or sell land to private investors, which they can do with reference to the existing Land Act, all land remains under the control of the sobas and the lineages. Individuals are given access to land according to their descent, but only as much as they are able to work.

Dryland/rainfed agriculture is carried out on the basis of a rotational system of cultivation (*pousios com rotação*), while wetland agriculture close to rivers (*hortas*) is done through a combination of natural and manual irrigation. In a context of ample access to land, what determines how much people can produce is their access to/control of labour. The key phases of production (land clearance, planting, weeding, harvest) are in the outset all labour intensive with clear divisions of labour between men and women.

Partly in order to minimise labour cassava or *mandioca* is by far the most common crop. A larger variety of crops is produced in the *hortas*, but these are more arduous and time-consuming to produce and do not have the same deep cultural connotations as rainfed land.



Time for some fun.  
Photo: Inge Tvedten.

<sup>9</sup> According to one interviewee, not a single position has been openly advertised in the public sector the past five years despite considerable turnover of personnel.

<sup>10</sup> In some of the villages we observed that lineage leaders tried and (sometimes) succeeded to establish themselves as a sort of “sub-soba”. In such cases one would find several *bairros*, each constituting its own village. The original *soba* easily supported such attempts as it gave himself increased influence by becoming a *Soba Grande*. However, the government authorities were not always supportive and could stop such attempts by refusing to pay the required honorarium.



## 4 SOCIAL RELATIONS OF POVERTY

Referring back to the outline of our analytical approach presented in Chapter 1, the structural conditions presented in the preceding chapter have considerable implications for the agency/ room for manoeuvre of men, women and children in the ten communities under study.

At the same time, the space for agency or alternative strategies vary with people's economic position – that we have defined as their place on a scale of social advantage/disadvantage. Households/people with resources (in the form of labour, income, assets) and/or social relations with people in such positions are in a better position for social mobility than those without it.

### 4.1 Local Perceptions

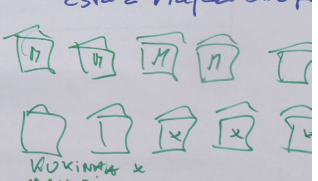
In assessing the coping strategies/options for social mobility of the household, we will take peoples' own (*emic*) perceptions of levels of poverty, as measured through Focus Group/ Wealth Ranking exercises, as point of departure. All communities emphasise that there are two main stages of poverty – the normal poor (*ngandiamia*) and the very poor/ destitute or 'those who have nothing' (*kukunhi*) – and that ascending to one of the two 'rich' categories (*nguenje* and the 'super rich' *juama*) is practically impossible under the current structural conditions of socio-political constraints and poverty.

Asked to list what 'the poor' and 'the rich' have/do not have, the general argument of the Focus Groups was the "the poor have nothing" ("Os pobres não têm nada") and that the rich "have everything" ("Os ricos têm tudo"). In one of the groups, the following list was compiled:

The Poor: "Precarious house; roof of reeds; no work; no chairs; sleep on reed mats; children not able to study; meals made without oil, onions and garlic; eat porridge with cassava leaves; eat (only) rice for Christmas; don't have (proper) clothes". The Rich: "Cement house with tiles; furniture in the house; (formal) employment; eat chicken or goats in the end of the week; dress well (suits, shoes); have many and large fields; hire workers". To the question «How do people become rich?», the three main answers in the Focus Groups were: "Only God knows", "They work hard" and "They work for the government".

Asked finally to assess how many out of ten households in their village who belong to each category of poverty ("Entre dez casas na sua comunidade, quantas casas são *ngandiamia*, *kukunhi* and *nguenje/juama*?"), there were particularly heated discussions about the 'rich' category: While acknowledging that some people in the communities were richer than others (pointing to people with generators, parabola antennas, improved housing and motorcycles), all the Focus Groups insisted that there were no rich people in their village as such people only live in "Kalandula (Sede); Malanje (City) and Luanda". Remaining with the two categories of poor, the proportion of the destitute (*kukunhi*) ranged from three to five and the proportion of the normal poor (*ngandiamia*) ranged from seven to five out of ten.

BAIRRO JUNGO DE CIMA

POBRES	RICOS
<b>CASA</b> - Galinha - Cuelhos - Mulher - MESA (SOL) - Esteira/Cama - Estradas (paredes) - Paredes de barro	<b>BOA CASA</b> ✓ - Mobiliário + fogão - Electricidade - Carro - Gados - Emprego - Quintas - Conta bancária - Tem saúde - Tem queijo formado - Esta a riqueza do povo
<b>LAURAS</b> - 0-3 pobres - Mandioca/bd/ - Jinguê/milha - NÃO TEM JO PAGA - ANIMAIS - Cabrito - Porco - Galinhas - Rato - "SD já vai embora"	 KUKUNHI x MAUUDI = SOLTEIRA (DIKUD)
<b>NGANDIAMIA</b> KUKUNHI - KUKUNHI	<b>NGUENJE</b>

Wealth Ranking.  
Photo: Inge Tvedten.

## 4.2 The Household

The analysis will take its point of departure in the household as a decision-making unit, in order to ascertain how people in the communities relate to structural political, economic and socio-cultural constraints and opportunities through their agency. We define a household as “One or more persons who share and use the same resources [i.e. eat from the same pot], and who may or may not live under the same roof and may or may not be related by kin” in order to capture the permeability of household units (Randall and Coast 2015).

Originally, the Mbundu of Kalandula were matrilineal with an uxorilocal residence pattern, implying that the wife and children in a household were closely linked to her lineage and particularly the wife's oldest brother. This represented a social security for the wife and the children. They lived with their own lineage and received land and other rights through them.

However, through colonialism, war and (urban) migration the household as a social unit has changed character and become more permeable. The household units we encountered in the ten communities under study usually consisted of a couple with children; they were usually located in the village of the husband's father (i.e. a patrilocal residence pattern).

This means that households now often live in villages where neither the wife nor the husband have rights to land, since the husband gets his rights through his mother's lineage and not his father's. The households also have a dominance of young members – and they often had a recent history of fission and fusion of household members.<sup>11</sup>

Traditional marriages and cohabitantship is the most common way to organise conjugal unions, with very few being legally married (Table 3). People also become heads of household at an early age, with many young couples moving together rather than being married. This reflects conditions of poverty: Becoming formally married requires expenses that very few people can afford. And poor households often see it as the only way out to marry their daughters away to avoid too many mouths to feed.

The relatively large size of the households at 5.5 members compared with the national average at 4.4 (Table 1) seems to be the outcome of a combination of the household definition used and the ease of establishing separate household units – with easy access to own land and cheap dwellings made of local material. Households strive to have sufficient members for their economic adaptation/agricultural production.

29.5 percent of the households are female headed, which is close to the national average (INE 2016). The smallest household units are often headed by widows, divorcees or single mothers. While some women express that married life is hard due to heavy workloads, limited freedom and domestic violence, being single in a rural/ traditional context like Kalandula carries considerable practical as well as socio-cultural challenges. Men have important tasks that need to be filled in agriculture, and not having a man still carries a negative stigma in the community particularly for single mothers.

**Table 3:**  
**Civil Status of Household Head**

Household Characteristic	Figure
Average household size (number)	5.5
Men/women in households (%)	47.8 / 52.2
Household members 1–14 years (%)	43.1
Household members 65 + years (%)	6.3
Male/female household heads (%)	70.5 / 29.5
Polygamous households (%)	21.2

**Table 4:**  
**Household Composition**

Civil status of household head	Percent
Single	11.7
Formal marriage	2.1
Traditional marriage	43.5
Cohabitantship	23.9
Divorced/separated	2.1
Widow(er)	15.1
Missing/Not applicable	1.7

11 All figures are from the Kalandula Household Survey 2016 done for this study unless stated otherwise.

A striking feature in the communities is the large number of very young girls who have children/are pregnant – some as young as 12–14 years of age. While some become part of the household of the father of the child(ren), there is an increasing tendency for men not to assume responsibility. For the girls/young women there are usually two options: One is to remain in their original household, and the other is to establish a separate household unit.

As many as 43.1 percent of the household members are younger than 15 years of age, which in the outset implies a high dependency ratio. However, many children have heavy domestic as well as work-related responsibilities, and hence form an important part of the household labour force. Children are also seen as a value in and of itself: People readily state how many children they have, and not having children is seen as a sign of disgrace and poverty.

### Intra-Household Relations

The households in the survey vary between one and 17 members.<sup>12</sup> There is in the outset strict divisions between men and women/boys and girls and between generations in the households. Women in the communities are responsible for practically all domestic tasks, including taking care of children, cleaning, making food and fetching water – and girls are socialised into such roles from a very early age (Table 5).

**Table 5:**  
**Household Members**  
**Responsible for Domestic**  
**Chores (Percent)**

Household chore	Household Head	Spouse	Girls	Boys	Other*
Clean the house	21.8	51.5	18.0	0.8	8.0
Clean the yard	23.4	50.2	18.8	0.8	6.8
Cook	22.1	54.0	19.3	0.4	4.2
Fetch water	22.2	46.4	20.5	2.9	8.0
Buy food	29.7	40.6	18.0	1.3	10.0
Wash utensils	21.8	43.5	24.7	4.2	5.8

\*Includes couple together, all children, whole household, people outside of the household

Men are culturally/in principle responsible for the well-being of the household. They are expected to make the important decisions, and bring income to the family. Also boys are socialised into their role as '*chefe de casa*' and breadwinners, and have few domestic responsibilities (and hence ample time to play as we frequently witnessed).

Observations and discussions with people in the communities show that gendered divisions within the households are still very strong. Women frequently complained that they have to obey what their husbands/cohabitants say, and that not obeying easily leads to physical or other forms of punishments.

Traditionally, there are also socio-cultural expectations to incorporate elders into the household of one of the children (usually the oldest son in the current patrilocal residence pattern) and be taken well care of at old age. Tradition also implies that unfortunate/poor relatives should be taken in by more fortunate/better-off extended family members.

However, poverty and the ensuing pressure on the household as domestic unit force many people to act and behave in other ways than socio-cultural expectations prescribe. Women living alone take on additional 'male' responsibilities (such as making economic decisions and clearing fields), and we also saw men doing domestic chores that they are not expected to do (such as sweeping yards and fetching water).

Perhaps most dramatically, many elders find themselves alone and sometimes with the sole responsibility for grand-children that their own children are not able to take care of.

12 Unfortunately, we do not have data on the more detailed composition of households in terms of core (mother, father, children), extended (parents, siblings, nephews, nieces, inlaws of head etc.) and non-family members. Our impression from the field is that the most common composition is with parents, their children and possibly grandchildren.





Boys playing. Photo: Inge Tvedten.



Girls working. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

Thus the pressure on poor households also contributes to their permeability – usually in the form of processes of separation of spouses, children and other household members.

For the better-off households, however, extended family members may be incorporated into the household unit in order to strengthen it both socially and economically. A large household gives prestige, and many productive household members enhances the number of alternative economic strategies.

### External Household Relations

To most rural households, then, it is vital to be able to extend social relations beyond the immediate household unit both for social and economic reasons. This not only requires extended family- and other kin relations, but also resources that makes it possible to fill the relations with material content as few people can afford to have outstanding claims – even with relatives.

The most common strategies to extend/divide the household and make it more flexible is by entering relations with extended family; through polygamy (i.e. by men having more than one wife/cohabitant); and by splitting the household in rural and urban sub-units (often with young men moving temporarily to the city). However, as already mentioned, the cities has recently lost some of its relevance and attraction due to the ongoing crisis.

The traditional emphasis on cooperation within the extended family has come under pressure with the dispersal of extended household members following war, urbanisation, and the challenges of sharing/exchanging following from poverty. Key extended family members, such as maternal uncles (in the matrilineal tradition) or father's oldest brother (in the patrilineal tradition) may live far away – and/or not be able to live up to socio-cultural expectations.

21.3 percent of the male-headed households are polygamous. Polygamy has a long tradition among the Mbundu/in Kalandula, and used to be a sign of wealth and prestige/influence. However, polygamy currently seems to be less formalised with a blurred distinction between having 'co-wives' and having (often secret) girlfriends/lovers ('*amantes*').

There are also variations in the nature of polygamous relations: 'co-wives' who are integrated into the household of the husband both socially and economically, polygamous women who are *de facto* independent/rely on themselves and polygamous women who in reality 'feed' their husband through their agricultural production or other forms of income.

Finally, some households have at least one member 'eating from the same pot' but not 'living under the same roof'.<sup>13</sup> These are often young people who either are away for education or live in an urban area because they prefer the life-style and/or in order to work

<sup>13</sup> The very low figure recorded in the Kalandula Household Survey is likely to be an under-representation. AMK (2014) find that 24 percent of the households in Kalandula have at least one member who work/live in a city.

and make money. Also in this case relations with the Kalandula-based household vary, from people with regular social as well as economic contacts to people with whom the household only have sporadic relations/support.

Still, the large majority of the households depend on their own efforts and resources. Only 28.3 percent had received any kind of external support six months prior to the interview, while 36.1 percent claimed they had given such support (Table 6). The most common source of support for those receiving was the extended family/neighbours, with hardly any household receiving support from the government and no one from aid organisations/NGOs.

**Table 6:**  
Source of External  
Household Support (6  
months prior to interview).

Source External support	Percent
No support	69.9
NGOs	0
INSS	1.3
Social Assistance	1.3
Public health facility	1.3
Extended family	14.2
Neighbours/friends	12.1
Other	0.8

**Table 7: Main Occupation of Household Head**

Main Occupation of HHH	Percent
Public servant	7.5
Private sector	3.8
Farmer	69.9
Self-employed without employees	4.5
Student	1.7
Pensioner *	0.8
Domestic	1.3
Other **	9.2
Missing/Not applicable	0.4

\* Mainly former combatants (*antigos combatentes*) and traditional authorities.

\*\* Include young taxi-drivers (*moto-taxistas*) and people claiming to have no occupation.

### 4.3 Employment and Income

The large majority of households in the ten communities are involved in agricultural production, with 91.2 percent having their own agricultural fields. Those who do not are primarily elders and destitutes who do not have the means and the strength to pursue agriculture. Looking at the main occupation of household heads, 69.9 percent are farmers, 7.5 percent are employed in the public sector, 4.5 percent are self-employed and 3.8 percent are employed in the private sector (Table 7).

#### Agriculture

With reference to the structural constraints and opportunities of agricultural production discussed above (the environmental conditions, the dearth of State or private sector support, the ample access to land and the limited local market), people in the ten communities primarily practise extensive rainfed agriculture. Among the 91.2 percent of households who have access to agricultural fields (*lavras*), the number is equally distributed between households having one (28.0 percent), two (27.1 percent) and three (27.1 percent) with the remaining having four fields or more.

As noted people in the village may occupy land for cultivation according to their needs/ability to produce. Both men and women have rights to fields under production. Men are primarily responsible for the clearance of land (trees and bushes in rainfed *lavras* and digging canals/ditches in wetland/*hortas*), while women have the main responsibility for weeding, watering (in *hortas*), harvesting and processing.

Most households have a distance of more than two hours from the dwelling to the field, which means that agricultural work not only is exhausting but also time-consuming. Two reasons seem to explain the long distances. One is that the fields controlled by the husband's

matrilineage are located in another (nearby) village, the other is that they must be located far away from where animals (particularly goats) are grazing.

While rainfed land is not a constraint as such, households carefully delineate their plots into rows/sections called a *mubanga* (plural *mibanga*). The size of each section is approximately 60 times 70 metres. According to our interlocutors, a normal household needs three sections in order to have enough to feed its family members. However, people only denote sections that are actually under production as fields (*lavras*) and need additional plots when the soil is exhausted – preferably after a period of two to three years.

Cassava/*mandioca* is by far the most important crop (produced by 95 percent of the households), which people explain with reference to tradition/habit, that it requires less labour/care, that it does not require much rain/water and that it does not require seeds. The root is used to make grain/porridge (*bombó*) and constitute the main produce, while the leaves may be picked, cooked and eaten as a vegetable aside (*kisaka*). Cassava takes two to three years to mature (depending on species), but poor households are often forced to harvest and eat prematurely. From a nutritional point of view cassava is not very valuable (Mombo et al. 2016), but this was not raised as a concern in the villages.

Most of the households have to rely on their own family labour to produce what they need, but only 31.1 percent of households in Kalandula actually manage to produce enough for all-year consumption and/or commercialisation (AMK 2014: 61). Those who do not will either have to enter periods of low consumption/ hunger, or rely on other sources of employment/ income to be able to buy food.

Households in the best position to maintain high/enhance their production are those with relations/means to employ non-household labour through a system called *mingota*. These may be extended family members, but are usually poor people from the village or its vicinity. People who sell their labour are paid in kind or cash – the latter usually very small sums such as 200 Kw for two-three days of work in the production of *bombó*.

The poorest without access to sufficient resources/labour face hard choices: They can either rely on their own land/labour knowing that they are likely to suffer periods of hunger, or work in the fields of others and secure a minimum access to food or money – which will jeopardise their own production and self-esteem.

The large majority in the villages eats the staple cassava, for one, two or three meals depending on what they have access to/can afford. Cassava is also easy to process, is resistant and easy to preserve, and yields flexibility in terms of sales/ commercialisation (see below). Fish is also a 'staple', either in the form of cheap horse-mackerel (*carapau*) or local species (25.5 percent of the households fish for consumption). What distinguishes the better-off from the poorest is the extent to which they also eat more coveted 'urban' food, such as meat, chicken, bread and eggs (Table 8).



Cassava field.

Photo: Gilson Lázaro.

"I would 1000 times rather die of hunger than clean and pound cassava from the field of another person who pays me 200 kwanzas. Man, it is the same as slavery!"

("Prefiro mil vezes morrer a fome do que morganar a mandioca da lavra de outra pessoa para pagar-me 200 kwanzas. Mano, é a mesma coisa que escravatura").

– Male farmer, Kalandula

**Table 8:**  
Consumption of Basic Food  
Items the Week Prior to  
Interview

Consumption item	Percent
Meat	21.7
Chicken	7.5
Fish	91.3
Porridge/Rice	70.3
Greens/beans	86.2
Bread	26.7
Milk	3.8
Eggs	18.0
Fruit	30.1



On wetland close to rivers, land is also in principle ‘communal’ and accessible to everybody in the village. However, the quality/productivity varies with distance/altitude from the water source, and powerholders/influentials tend to be the owners of the most lucrative and biggest gardens or *hortas*. Each garden is delineated by ditches (*vales/milombos*) filled with water from the main water source/river, and further subdivided into smaller fields or *canteiros* (also known as *mabakalas*) of around five by ten metres in order to preserve the moisture.

While men are responsible for digging and maintaining the ditches (and clearing the ground when relevant), all additional work (watering, weeding, thinning, harvesting) is the responsibility of women and children. In critical phases, the *canteiros* have to be looked after every day, and we hardly saw any men when visiting the *hortas* (a man we met emphasised strongly that he was only there to visit and not to work).

Cassava is grown on rainfed dryland. Beans, peanuts and sweet potato may also be grown on dryland in the rainy season, while households producing other crops will usually have access to *hortas* (Table 9). People grow a broad variety of crops in the *hortas*, including onions, garlic, avocado, tomatoes, maize and eggplants. These are eaten as side-dishes for those

who have access/can afford to, but are more difficult to preserve (as they easily rot) and sell (as there is a very limited local market and transport to larger population centres such as Kalandula Sede, Malanje City, Luanda requires large quantities to be worthwhile). People are much less likely to produce fruits (orange, mango, banana etc.).

The farmers largely rely on external traders coming to the village to sell their produce. A few transport bags of *bombó* to markets in comuna/ municipal centres on bikes or motorbikes, but with small quantities costs tend to be too high for the local price level. Traders from Malanje City and Luanda come with large trucks/lorries, but people complain that they come at irregular intervals (in one village, traders had not appeared the last three months at the time of our visit).

The traders usually bring commodities, such as fish, second hand clothes, plastic buckets, cooking oil, salt, batteries and detergents, in order to exchange for agricultural products. With the limited local circulation of money, exchanges are usually done in the form of bartering (*permuta*). People complain that the exchange is unfair, but say that the *comerciantes* argue that the commodities are expensive and the prices for *bombó* are low – which they cannot control (see Table 10).

\*Borodes, bringela, café, carage, gergelin, gimboa, jindungo, goiabeira, hinhambe, imenta, kiabo, kizaca, ngunda, quinhambe.



Wetland garden. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

**Table 9:**  
**Agricultural Products**  
**Cultivated the Previous**  
**Season (Última Campanha).**

Agricultural Product	Percent
Butter beans	62.4
Other beans	51.8
Cabbage	11.5
Garlic	20.6
Onion	26.6
Banana (table)	8.3
Sugar cane	6.0
Cabbage	13.8
Avocado	8.7
Orange	2.8
Papaya	6.0
Maize	60.6
Rice	0.5
Banana (bread)	3.2
Cassava	97.3
Peanuts	64.7
Pumpkin	50.0
Tomato	39.9
Potato	34.9
Sweet potato	64.2
Mango	9.6
Other*	29.4

Quantity	Local term	Kalandula (sale)	Luanda (purchase)
3–4 kg	Siga	250–300	1500
50 kg	Raso	5000–6000	14 000–15 000
150 kg	Insakado	8000–9000	20 000–19 000
160–170kg	Kusulado	10000–11000	26 000–24 000

**Table 10:**  
Prices for Cassava Flour  
Kalandula and Luanda August  
2016 (in Kwanza)

To sum up: The very poorest and most destitute farmers in the communities are those who do not have sufficient access to labour, and who have to beg or work for others to survive. Working in the fields of others is not only an extremely badly paid undertaking, but also a violation of the very essence of being a complete person and community member. For the large majority of households in the communities, agricultural production is hardly sufficient to feed themselves. When people sell or barter their *bombó*, this is often to cover absolutely necessary expenses for education, illness or other crises – which for most households will have to be compensated for with subsequent periods of hunger.

For the better-off who manage to produce a larger surplus, marketing agricultural produce is usually done to/via external traders (*comerciantes*) or wholesalers (*grossistas*) from Malanje City or (more commonly) from Luanda. The better-off seem to prefer to sell for cash or exchange in commodities for which they know/can control the price.

The farmers in the villages/bairros in the best economic position are those who can cooperate with relatives or other contacts in Malanje City or Luanda, trade directly and get higher prices – or who have resources and relations to stay in the urban centres themselves during periods when the market is good.

### Informal Economic Activities

The drama of poverty in Kalandula/the ten villages is the dearth of alternative sources of income beyond agriculture. Traditionally people have been involved in a range of activities and many people have practical skills, but there is simply no market for most of these activities any more. The array of activities yielding cash income in the communities appear in Table 11 – with agriculture remaining the only source of income for the majority of households in the Municipality (see also AMK 2014:57).

In the villages themselves, there are a few openings in construction/repairs of dwellings, fences, wells, beds etc. for people who cannot do it themselves. Some, often the very poorest, also help with domestic tasks such as cleaning and fetching water. There is also a market for traditional medicine and healers (*curandeiros*), but this requires qualifications that very few have.

Particularly young people are aware of other options for cash income, but are hardly able to find people who can buy/pay for it. We came across people with generators who showed video/DVDs; a young man renting out loudspeakers to weddings and funerals; a young man doing pedicure/manicure; people making beds/straw-mats for sleeping; and women making fat-cakes – but all with the common denominator of few customers and low income.

The most prominent options for alternative sources of income are found in trade and crafts in Malanje City and Luanda in particular, but most people are prohibited from this simply by not being able to afford the trip/travel – let alone paying for accommodation (as a consequence of a *crise*, people complain that they even have to pay when they stay with relatives in Luanda).

The best option/strategy seems to be to combine rural life/agriculture with urban life/informal income. We met a few people who managed to do this. Most of them had a recent history of having moved from Malanje/Luanda to Kalandula and had been in a position to maintain a dwelling and contact in the city – often through a family member remaining behind.

**Table 11:**  
Sources of Household  
Income\*

\* That is the sources of employment/work from which households reported income in cash/Kwanzas. One household could report more than one source of income.

Employment	Percent
Formal employment	10.9
Domestic worker	1.3
Informal trade	3.8
Lodger	0.4
Construction	1.3
Mason	2.5
Electrician	0.8
Taxi-driver	0.8
Other*	45.6

\* In addition to agriculture, this include (usually one case of) mechanics, tailors, hairdressers, barbers, lorry-drivers, painters and pastors.

### Income, Expenditures and Consumption

61.5 percent of the households in the survey sold part of their agricultural produce during/after the last season/campaign – either because they managed to produce a surplus or because they had to sell in order to cover necessary expenses. The average income for those selling agricultural products was 29.100 Kz. In addition, 61.5 percent of the household reported some income and 38.5 no income at all during the period of six months prior to the interview – i.e. after the termination of the preceding 2014/2015 agricultural season.

In line with this, expenditures are also very low. The week prior to the interview, the most common expenditure was on food which is usually seen as a sign of poverty (Table 12). A relatively large proportion of the households also spent money on cleaning products – but very few spent anything on other items. Although a highly problematic figure to arrive at, the average weekly household expenditure was 17.409 Kz.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, people

have substituted a number of basic commodities for cheaper and lower quality alternatives: Cooking oil (*óleo vegetal*) has been substituted by peanut oil (*moamba de jinguba*) – with some confessing to eat *bombó* and *kisaka* without any accompaniment; refined petroleum previously used to illuminate the house at night (*candeiro*) has been substituted by firewood; and the soap (*sabão*) that was previously used to bath and wash clothes and plates/cups has been substituted with the much cheaper detergent OMO.

### Housing and Assets

The level of poverty in the communities is also reflected in their possessions/assets. Ownership of certain assets is coveted, seen as signs of wealth and progress and good indicators of differentiation between the poor and the less poor.

The largest investment/most important asset for people is housing. The type and size of ones dwelling has practical implications (living space, protection from wind and rain, health etc.), but is also seen as a sign of wealth and status. A rundown house also requires considerable inputs of labour, to maintain walls and roofs etc. Building a house of two-three rooms takes around four-five days, and is usually done with teams of young men under the guidance of an older builder. For the poorest without money to pay for labour, building and maintaining a house is a long and tedious process and some of them effectively live without physical protection.

The large majority of households (91.6 percent) do not have formal titleship to their dwelling, but do not consider this to be a problem. Most (90.4 percent) also use mud for walls and floor, which is easy and cheap to get hold of. 83.7 percent use corrugated iron/chapa rather than grass for roofing. The size of dwellings vary with economic means and household size: 31.8 percent of the dwellings have two rooms (excluding the kitchen and dispensary), 22.6 percent have three rooms, and 26.8 percent



Urban dreams. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

**Table 12:**  
Proportion of Households  
with Expenditures Week  
Prior to Interview.

Item	Percent
Food	66.1
Cleaning products	44.4
Rent	1.3
Clothes	3.8
Water	1.3
School material	4.6
Illumination	13.4
Batteries	18.8
Medicines	15.1
Transport	15.1
Television	2.1
Domestic servant	0.4
Communication	9.2
Other	0.4

<sup>14</sup> People have problems remembering what they spent, and they are often not very interested in revealing exact figures of this nature – even though figures on expenditure tend to be more accurate than on income.



have only one room. However, we also witnessed large and poor families living under extremely crowded conditions in one single room of poor quality.

The Survey data on ownership of commodities reveal an apparently surprising result in a context without electricity: 32.9 percent of the households have TV and 18.6 percent have a video/DVD player. As judged from observations in the field many of these are actually not functioning, but the number reflects that many households have relations or own history in urban areas where a TV is an important symbol of 'success' and 'modernity'. 35.8 percent of the households have a tele/cell phone, but this does not reflect actual use: Most of the households live in rural communities with limited or no network/connection, and many do not have money for buying credit. For those who do have, it is considered an advantage not only socially, but also economically in terms of communicating about markets and prices.

Other commodities are a more natural reflection of living in poor rural communities: The majority of the households have basic assets such as beds, blankets, tables and chairs (although many in very poor condition); relatively few

have assets that are considered important but expensive such as television, telephone and bicycles; and hardly any have very expensive/ exclusive assets such as cars, motorcycles and watches. Perhaps the best proxy for the very poorest is households who neither have the basics in the form of tables, chairs and beds nor straw mats (*esteiras*) on which to sit and sleep. Not only does this have practical implications for people's daily lives, but it also violates deep cultural expectations regarding how to live/receive visitors.

Domestic animals are usually not kept for regular consumption, but for saving and use for special occasions such as births, marriages and funerals. Only one of the 240 households in the Survey has cattle, and only 16.7 percent have goats that are considered important for cultural manifestations. The most common animals are chickens (owned by 31.8 percent of the households), followed by pigs (7.1 percent), ducks (1.3 percent) and doves (0.1 percent). Also animal ownership point in the direction of very poor communities.



Rural housing. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

Asset	Percent
Radio	32.1
Television	32.9
Video/DVD	18.6
Telephone	35.8
Watch	21.7
Bed	50.4
Chairs	64.6
Table	61.3
Electric stove	21.7
Gas stove	17.9
Iron	8.6
Refrigerator	6.3
Big chair	7.1
Bedsheets	81.7
Bag	61.7
Blanket	67.1
Basket	58.3
Curtains	72.9
Bicycle	3.3
Motorcycle	19.2
Car	1.7

Table 13:  
Ownership of Household Assets

#### 4.4 Public/Social Services

As shown in Chapter 2.3, there are severe structural constraints in terms of the delivery of key public services to the 458 villages/bairros and their population of 80.000 in Kalandula. People have to relate to this the best they can from the position they are in, through a combination of accommodation, defiance and despondency. So what do people do?

##### Education

The overall level of education is very low, with 54 percent of the households having no members with education above Grade 6 – which in the current context/poor system of education implies functional illiteracy. Among households with children at school age (six to 15 years), 43 percent do not send any of their children to school.

**Table 14:**  
Highest Level of Education in Household

Level of education	Percent
None	14.2
1–5 grade	39.8
6–7 grade	27.2
8–10 Grade	9.2
11–12 Grade	8.0
Professional (médio)	0.4
Bachelor	0.4
Licenciatura	0.4
Missing/Not applicable	0.4

Among the children who do study, most of the youngest (up to 3rd grade) go to public schools in the village/bairro in which they live; and some go to public schools in the comuna/ município centre. Hardly anyone go to private schools/colégios. Above 3rd grade many walk up to 12 km every day to get to school in a larger community. There is no regular public transportation, and costs for private transportation are too high if available at all.

In a few cases, parents in the communities have organised informal schools with a non-qualified teacher or *explicador* at their own expense – albeit rarely with much success. In addition, this type of education is not recognized by the State and hence does not give a child the right to later move up a class in the public school system.

According to the Survey, households pay an average of 3.827 Kz for school material per term. However, in reality they pay more. Access to education is complicated by a widespread system of bribes/corruption among teachers. If children do not show up for class five times, the parents have to pay fines of 50–100 Kz each time and inability/unwillingness to pay leads to expulsion. For many teachers, these fines are an important additional source of income in a job that in the outset is poorly paid.

**Table 15:**  
Type of School Frequented

Type of school	Percent
Public school in bairro/village	42.7
Public school in comuna/município centre	12.6
Private school (colégio)	1.3
Other (explicação)	3.8
Missing/Not applicable	39.8

As most schools in the communities offer only up to 3rd Grade, parents who want their children to continue usually have to send them away to stay in the comuna centre or in Kalandula Sede. Some are able to stay with relatives and some have to pay for lodging, but for the large majority of households higher education carries expenses that are impossible to cover.

Even though some people still do see the value of education as a possible way out of poverty, the structural constraints and the dearth of children who have made it through the system and benefitted from it in the form of

employment and income lead most parents to keep their children in the village/bairro to work in agriculture or at home.

The highest education possible in the Municipality is the Secondary School/Teachers Training College. Perhaps the most devastating implication of the widespread system of corruption and nepotism in education is the hiring of teachers from Malanje City, Luanda and other urban areas at the expense of local teachers: Locals would not only be willing to live in local communities and be more present, but they would also be vital role models.

##### Health

In health, there is a very limited number facilities and only a handful of qualified personnel (see Chapter 2.3). Illness and disease are widespread in the communities, and have strong implications for production and income, poverty and well-being as well as for peoples' sense of vulnerability. As many as 86.6 percent of the households report that they have had at least one sick household member the month prior to the interview.



The most common diseases occurring among household members are malaria, fever, diarrhoea and vomit – which coincides well with other data sources (AMK 2014). According to the local population (and confirmed by health personnel) very few households use mosquito nets – not primarily because they do not want to but because they are not available. Also, people are well aware that many of their health problems come from poor quality water and sanitation.

In cases of severe illness, people in the communities try to make it to the nearest health unit either on motorised transport or – for the majority who do not have access or money – on foot. ‘Motorised transport’ usually means a light motorcycle (*motorizada*), with the sick being tied to the driver in order not to fall off. Reaching the destination, people are confronted with long queues and demands for payment (*para-cheque* for 500 Kz) – while still ultimately not receiving the treatment/ medication they need.

The dearth and expenses of health institutions imply that people usually postpone seeking treatment in the hope that disease will cure itself – or resolve to traditional doctors/remedies (including ‘Ginseng de Kissongo’, ‘Kibalala’ and ‘Malolambula’ in the local vernacular).

With the extremely severe health situation, people are accustomed to people dying and burials (without thereby making it less dramatic and painful). As many as 44.7 percent of the households have experienced child/under five mortalities, and only 18.7 percent of the population is 50 years of age or more.

Marginalisation and poverty have also made its mark on funerals. People say they used to be large events gathering many relatives and non-relatives alike, but currently they usually have the form of more private manifestations called *murako*. The body is dug into a hole inside the dwelling and wrapped in banana-tree leaves, in order to preserve it long enough for relatives to be able to attend the ceremony at the graveyard in the proximity of the village.

### Other Services

Most communities have no access whatsoever to public services such as transport, sanitation and clean water. The very poor roads and near-absence of public and private transportation may have the most consistent implications for people’s daily lives. It not only inhibits travels and trade, but also instils in people a very strong sense of insecurity and vulnerability. If something happens they know it will be difficult, if not impossible, to seek support outside of the community.

The drudgery of obtaining water is embodied in women and girls, who usually spend hours per day walking to water sources they know are inadequate. In a Focal Group with 20 women, it was agreed that a normal household will use 60–100 litres of water per day. They all primarily depend on water from rivers, but also try to collect rainwater from small tanques (*cacimbas*) when possible. There are two problems they claim: The distance to the river and the poor quality of the water.

There is no electricity in Kalandula, and only a handful of households in the communities have generators. When explaining what they are missing by not having electricity, most people emphasise the problems with cooking, studying and the dangers of moving around in dark places. Many also complain that they are “not able to watch TV and be informed”, and the young people are not able to watch “cartoons, films and telenovelas” – again showing how the rural poor are in a position to contrast their lives with the world outside their rural communities.

While the Survey indicates that a relatively large proportion of households have used basic social institutions in education and health six months prior to the interview, our qualitative analysis has revealed that these are accessible at very irregular intervals and are

**Table 16:**  
Household with Sick  
Members by Disease the  
Month Prior to Interview

Disease	Percent
Malaria	51.9
Fever	71.1
Cough	51.1
Vomit	39.3
Diarrheas	40.6
Typhoid fever	20.1
Colera	4.6
Hypertension	31.8
Vehicle accident	8.0
Tooth ace	38.9
Stomach ace	38.1
Other	19.7 *
Missing/Not applicable	0.4

\*Usually specification of different types of ‘aces’ (*dores*) and malnutrition/anaemia



Water post.  
Photo: Gilson Lázaro.

**Table 17:**  
**Use of Public Institutions Six**  
**Months Prior to Interview**

Public institution	Percent	Assessment of quality (1=very bad; 5=very good)
Primary school (1–6)	60.4	3.30
Secondary school (7–12)	21.3	3.51
Vocational school	5.4	3.89
University	0.8	3.50
Medical post	9.6	2.97
Health centre	6.8	3.24
Hospital	47.1	3.04
Maternity	10.0	3.00
Public Administration	12.1	3.10
Civil Registry	9.6	2.80
Police	7.5	3.14
Tribunal	0	–

of very poor quality. Despite this, the Survey also shows that people are relatively satisfied with the services that exist (Table 17). Juxtaposed with the near unanimous complaints and anger in focus groups and individual interviews with community leaders and the population at large, the most likely explanation is that people feared/were uncertain about how the data would be used and whether they would be scrutinised by the authorities.

## 4. 5 Community Relations

The notion of ‘community’ in Kalandula is complex – in a context where the national state has strong impact on peoples’ lives, where households rarely spend their entire life-cycle in one place, and where localised social relations both express commonality and sustain diversity. 57.3 percent of the household heads in the Survey were born in the community in which they currently live, and among those who were not the large majority were born in Kalandula. The main reasons for moving to the current village/*bairro* were – in order of importance – family, work/employment, better life conditions, the war and problems with witchcraft.

The most important symbol of ‘community’ is the *soba* (at the levels of *soba grandes/ regedores*, *sobas* and sub-*sobas/ sekulus*), and the way they embody the history of individual communities. As evident in most of the communities, the *sobas* still uphold considerable authority, and they are a constant point of reference when discussing community issues with people. When the *soba* calls meetings people

show up, they have the final say in the distribution of/access to land, and they are arbitraries in domestic as well as other conflicts.

Nevertheless, they are also susceptible to resistance. Although never in public, people voiced anger and concern when the *soba* was seen as representing his own rather than the community’s interests (as in cases where he had sold/given land to external interests). In addition, the *soba* seemed to have less influence in ‘urban’ *bairros* in Kalandula Sede with people selling land and dwellings on their own and other acts that challenges the *soba*’s authority.

Finally, with *sobas* being increasingly seen as representing both tradition/the community and the State/Party he is also associated with the dearth of social services and the increasing poverty that people experience. Most of the *sobas* are also poor and do not

have resources to support the most destitute who need external support to survive in line with tradition.

While the *soba* represents the political/ symbolic sense of community in the villages, the churches have the most immediate social impact/role. In addition to their spiritual connotations, churches are important meeting places particularly for women. The majority are conventional global churches (95.8 percent of the households in our sample are Catholics with the remaining being Adventists, Methodists, Protestants, 7<sup>th</sup> Day Evangelists and Jehovah Witnesses) – a faith which for 19.7 percent of the households is combined with practising traditional cults (*cultos dos antepassados*).



Farmer with cattle.  
 Photo: Gilson Lázaro.





The Catholic Church. Photo: Inge Tvedten.

The Catholic church has a long and important tradition in Kalandula attracting many people to its services, and as we have seen it also has important activities related to education and health. However, at the level of communities/villages hardly any of the churches have resources to support members of the congregation beyond what individual members do to support each other.

We argued above that poverty and vulnerability tend to force people to primarily take care of themselves and their immediate family. However, we were told that the old tradition of collective agricultural work called *Kisole* – in which people cooperated to clear terrain and organise it into individual fields or *mibanga* – is reappearing in some

communities. There are also cases where community members have joined forces to improve/clean vital public spaces/ facilities such as central squares, roads and water outlets.

Despite the situation of extreme poverty found in the communities, moreover, people argue that crime and theft happens very rarely and that when it takes place it is done by people outside the community. This may be the combined outcome of social control in close-knit society and a sense of the importance of preserving community coherence.

This does not mean that there is no tension in the communities. Perhaps the main tension is between older community members, who have experienced war and uncertainty and want to live in peace, and the youth who have aspirations they cannot fulfill. The former still tend to be ardent supporters of MPLA and sceptical to outsiders (called *mukwakisa*), while the latter support alternative political movements and claim they are more tolerant of others.

Also domestically there is tension. Women say that there is much yelling and screaming: Fathers who yell at their sons, mothers who yell at their daughters, and there is violence against women. According to one young woman: “There is no police. If we take the case to the soba, he is a man and will always agree with the man. The only thing is our family”.

According to the Survey, the main problems facing the communities are lack of water, lack of electricity and poor roads that impact very directly on peoples’ well-being and sense of being marginalised. The limited emphasis on employment opportunities – that could have remedied many of the problems people experience in their community as well as in their private lives – is likely to reflect that people simply do not believe it is a realistic option.

**Table 18.**  
Main problem in community

Problem	Percent
Lack of employment	2.9
Theft/robberies	1.3
Land conflicts	0
Water conflicts	0
Lack of electricity	25.4
Lack of sanitation	5.0
Lack of potable water	26.7
Poor roads	7.9
Delinquency	0.4
Lack of police	2.5
Other*	27.1
Missing/not applicable	0.8

\*Lack of agricultural extension services, mills, medical posts, (improved) seeds, tractors and domestic violence.

Despite experiencing few if any tangible interventions from the Government, people overwhelmingly vest the Central/Provincial government with the responsibility to improve the situation in their communities. They have less expectations/faith in the local municipal and *comuna* government and the village/bairro leadership that they know well – and don't even seem to consider aid organisation/NGOs an alternative.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 19:**  
Responsibility for solving the  
community problems

Problem	Percent
Central/provincial government	79.1
Municipality	7.5
Comuna	2.1
Village/bairro leader	7.5
NGOs	0.4
Other	3.4

Luxilo River, Kalandula.  
Photo: Gilson Lázaro



<sup>15</sup> Which makes sense: Development aid negligible in Angola and represents 0.8 percent of GDP.

## 5. DYNAMICS OF POVERTY

As argued in the initial part of this report, the dynamics of rural poverty in Malanje can only be understood through the articulation between structural political, economic and socio-cultural constraints and the agency of poor men, women and children. As seen from the table below, the majority of households in the ten communities believe that their situation has deteriorated or remained the same the past five years.

The analysis has revealed a situation of profound structural oppression, from a state/political system as well as an economy in crisis and with minimal accountability. People also embody a volatile history of war and migration – which adds to a basic sense of vulnerability.

We have also shown that the political economy has repercussions at the lower levels of government: Not only does the Municipality/Comuna have very limited staff and resources, but rent seeking and corruption further limits what the State delivers in terms of services.

Economically, being at the rural margins means that the market is poorer and more fragile, commodities scarcer and the exploitation from economic agents more profound, which limits the options for income generation.

In this context, people act in the best they can from the position they are in. The large majority of the population is essentially constrained to their local communities with very few alternatives for employment and income. Agriculture remains the backbone of the local economy and key source of subsistence and income, but with rudimentary means of production that limit options for development/growth.

The local/community room for agency is also affected by socio-cultural constraints. The communities are highly patriarchal, with strict divisions of labour both in public and private space. Women in single headed households have more room for agency as the main decision-makers, but tend to be more constrained by poverty than male-headed households.

The socio-cultural fabric of gender and age is maintained through a strictly gender-segregated socialisation of boys and girls, who largely perform the tasks of their male and female peers respectively. For girls, their status and roles seem to be segmented by very early motherhood and dearth of education.

Long-term and severe poverty is embodied in the necessity of acting 'ad hoc' in order to fulfil immediate needs for food, shelter and clothing and a concomitant difficulty of planning longer term.

Implications of this vary from inability to invest in new form of livelihoods to keeping children at home and in the field rather than in school.

Social mobility is based on a combination of structural constraints and opportunities, and peoples' perceptions of the alternatives/possibilities for change. In Kalandula, compliance seems to be more common than resistance. There is a basic sense of powerlessness and vulnerability among people in the communities, and most people live precarious lives.

Based on the cases-studies of households who have managed to improve/maintain a situation of relative well-being, a pre-condition for upward social mobility seems to be able to establish/maintain social relationships outside the local community. Some have managed to exploit such relations for material progress, while others have become aware of alternative options and pursued them.

The large majority of people in the communities we have studied are effectively captured in poverty, and conditions are not likely to change without profound structural change. As seen from the table below, the population in the communities see employment as their most immediate need – realising that this may solve many of their other problems. They also highlight the precarious health system, that has strong implications for well-being and the ability people have to work.

On the other end of the scale, the relatively low score for agriculture shows that people do not see increased production as realistic with the current constraints. And people do not seem to see education as a possible way out of their difficulties. In a longer-term perspective, improved agricultural production and education may in fact represent the best options for poverty reduction and social mobility in Kalandula.

**Table 20:**  
Changes in Household the  
Past Five Years.

Change	Percent
Improved	11.3
No change	29.2
Deteriorated	59.2
Missing/Not applicable	0.3

**Table 21:**  
Areas in which the household  
would like to see change the  
coming five years

Problem	Percent
Employment	23.0
Education	3.8
Health	20.1
Agricultural production	10.0
Habitation	8.4
Roads	0.8
Material Assets	18.4
Others*	10.9
No change	4.2
Missing/Not applicable	0.4

\*Include costs of living, access to water, transport, poverty and agricultural equipment – with one respondent insisting that he has 'lost hope' (*perdi a esperança*).

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