



# WORLD WITHOUT MINES

## PROJECT: ANGOLA



Photo: HALO Trust

As is the case with all the deminers on our female team, Rosalina completed comprehensive training and regularly takes part in further training programmes.

## „I'M JUST SO HAPPY”

**Rosalina Lussinga Coqueiro Loth is making a career as a deminer in Angola. Unemployed at one time, she is now a section leader. She is especially happy to be heading up an all-female team.**

The sun beats down on Rosalina from a cloudless sky, as she kneels amongst the thorn bushes in the Angolan steppe, a heavy anti-shrapnel vest on her body and a protective shield made from plexiglass covering her face. Rosalina is sweating but she makes it look effortless – and she pays just as little attention to the scorpions lurking under many of the stones. Rosalina is focused – she cannot allow herself to get distracted, as this is a matter of life and death.

Her detector has just beeped – it might be a piece of old metal, but it also could be a mine, or the remains of a grenade fired during the thirty-year civil war, buried now in the ground right here, near the small

village of Kanenguerere in the Benguela Province. Rosalina doesn't know. She only knows that her home Angola is one of the countries most contaminated with mines and other explosive remnants of war. Since the war ended in 2002, some 80,000 people have been injured or killed in accidents. She wants to change this, and this is why she now carefully places one stone after another aside, then takes up a small shovel and starts to dig – one millimetre at a time...

Rosalina Lussinga Coqueiro Loth is section leader of our demining team, made up entirely of women. She and her colleagues currently work in the minefields around Kanenguerere. In total, there are five fields



Angola is still suffering from the explosive aftermath of the civil war. Mines on agricultural and grazing land makes the already difficult food situation worse and hinders the country's development.



The danger needs to be respected but protective provisions and expertise provide the highest possible level of safety.

Please support deminers in countries like Angola today by making a donation.

Thank you!

which almost entirely surround the small village. Only a narrow path remains for the children to take on their way to school – one false step could claim a life.

Rosalina, usually with a gentle smile on her face as if her work were a walk in the park, comes from Catumbela, a town with Portuguese origins, 40 kilometres away. She lives there with her three brothers. After finishing school, Rosalina trained as a teacher but couldn't find a job, until she heard of World Without Mines in 2017. „An uncle told me about this foundation in far-off Switzerland. At first I was afraid. Clearing mines sounded so dangerous. But I wanted the job and my instructors told me there was no reason to be afraid. Over the course of the training, I realised that they were right. In the end, I felt more confident and I was ready to start this vital job.”

Rosalina got so good so quickly that she also qualified as a paramedic. „I learned how to treat injuries caused by a mine accident and how the most common illnesses can be handled.” Her team's Land Rover is equipped with a blue flashing light so she has right of way in an emergency.

Rosalina excelled in this new role too which is why she was recently appointed

section leader. She has this to say about her new role: „My promotion has shown me that hard work pays off. Now that I am training new deminers myself, I can contribute to clearing my country of landmines sooner.”

Rosalina is particularly proud that World Without Mines in Angola is very deliberately backing female teams. In her country, not only is one woman in three unemployed, but many of her colleagues get pregnant and are then abandoned, leaving them to bring up children with no support. Rosalina: „This is why it is really important for me to have women at work, earning enough money.” She encourages other women to look for work whenever she gets the chance. „Whatever men can do, we can do too.” And she herself is delighted that she has work now: „I can feed myself and my family and also do something good for my home – I am just so happy.”

When asked what she would like to tell our donors, Rosalina says: „I am grateful for the opportunity you are giving us! Please continue to support us so we can carry on with our work.”

Most of our deminers come from poor backgrounds. Giving them these jobs gives them the opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families.



Photo: HALO Trust



Photo: DASH

The working day for the deminers starts with taking temperatures.

## DEMINING DESPITE THE CORONAVIRUS

Due to the coronavirus, a strict lockdown was in force in Sri Lanka for weeks and even clearing mines was prohibited. However, soon a special permit allowed our team to start work again, as clearing mines is essential for the safety of the population.

Gowry'sankar Sivapoopathy – „Gowry” – washes her hands carefully and gets ready for work. She is glad to be allowed to work again. After the lockdown was imposed in mid-March, she had to stay at home with nothing to do up until a few days ago. Wearing a face mask is now compulsory for all deminers and, in addition to the protective vest and headgear, this makes Gowry's work in the hot and humid weather even harder. But she takes this in her stride, along with all the other conditions imposed by the authorities: disinfecting vehicles, taking temperatures before starting work, setting up mobile washing and disinfection points at the mine clearance sites ... but the most important thing is that Gowry has her job back.

Gowry has worked as a deminer for our partner organisation Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH) since September

2019. As her husband is long-term unemployed, Gowry has to provide an income for her family of eight alone. So when the government imposed the lockdown, it was a big shock. „I need the wages to educate my children and to survive.”

But then Gowry had two strokes of luck – DASH had applied for a special permit in good time and was successful. After a meticulous plan of action and a pandemic plan was presented, the authorities permitted demining again in mid-May, in spite of the lockdown. This shows how important demining is for the country. Not only that: Gowry discovered that World Without Mines was continuing to pay her wages during the lockdown. One less thing to worry about!

Gowry has a smile on her face again: „I am proud to be able to work as a deminer and I am grateful to World Without Mines for funding our vital work.”



Photo: DASH

Gowry'sankar Sivapoopathy's wages are enough for the whole family.

### Our work in Sri Lanka

World Without Mines supports Sri Lanka in its ambitious goal – to soon be free of mines. Last year, our team cleared an area of 70,524 m<sup>2</sup> and dealt with 1,217 mines and unexploded ordnance.

You can find more information about World Without Mines on our website: [www.wom.ch](http://www.wom.ch)



Rosemarie Bratter-Gamper (18/06/1931 – 05/11/2019)

## A POSTHUMOUS THANK YOU

Testamentary donations are an important pillar of funding for most non-profit organisations. Time and again, World Without Mines too receives bequests both large and small. We are so happy to receive these donations but also very sad that we cannot thank the donor in person, as we generally only find out about the legacy after the will is revealed.

As a representative of the numerous moving stories with regard to legacies, we would like to mention the bequest from Ms. Rosemarie Bratter-Gamper. The pensioner had supported our foundation since 2013 with regular donations. She left World Without Mines a legacy in her will, and thus continued her support after her death.

Her cousin, Ms. Getrud Aebi-Gamper wrote to us about her:

„Rosemarie Bratter-Gamper was an intelligent, compassionate and popular teacher. She was horrified when she found out from World Without Mines about the misery that displaced people experienced

who could not return home due to mines, and she greatly admired the men and women who trained as deminers. ‚I would never have had the courage for this work,‘ she often said.

However, the least she wanted to do was contribute a donation that would pay for wages and thus also enable children to go back to school. This was the best way to express what was really important to her in life.”

For our part, we have nothing further to add to these loving words, except to say that we treasure the memory of Rosemarie Bratter-Gamper’s dedication.

Photo: World Without Mines



Our managing director Gabriela Fuchs is happy to provide you with information on the topic of wills and legacies.  
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