



## Hoop Dreams For Disabled Youth in Angola



Photo: USAID/Angola

Ido Elias, also known as “Lito,” plays wheelchair basketball as part of the USAID-funded Sports For Life program.

Ido Elias, also known as “Lito,” is 15-year-old with bright eyes and a shy smile. Though all the signs indicate that Lito suffered from polio at the age of 2, when you ask him, he says this was not the case. Lito and his family believe that it was a “fitzero” or wizard who cursed him and gave him the high fever and inflammation in his limbs. The illness left him with permanent weakness and loss of movement in his legs.

Despite his timidity in conversation, he is a force to reckon with on the basketball court. He was a late starter and a bit shy his first day of practice, but is now one of the team’s top players. Spinning in circles and popping wheelies in between quarters, he is an aggressive player. The USAID-funded Sports for Life Program provided Lito with a wheelchair in 2003, which has allowed him a level of mobility he has not always had. The chair has also helped him attend school. He often carries his notebook in his lap, says that Portuguese is his favorite subject, and that he would like to be a doctor one day.

He started in the competition for Luena Day in front of many of his classmates who could be heard cheering from the sides, “Vai, Lito, vai!” He is hopeful that he will be chosen to represent his home province, Moxico, in a national wheelchair basketball competition.

Photo & Caption

