

ANGOLA PROVINCE

Official Language: **Portuguese**

Vision Statement

Inspired by the examples of St. Paul, St Arnold Janssen and the first SVD missionaries, we, the Divine Word Missionaries rooted in the Word of God as the source and foundation of our life, vocation and mission of our missionary religious commitment in Angola, inserted in the new reality of changes in the socio-economic-political and religious sphere of the country, awake in the people new hopes and challenges. So, we are called to live the mission of the Word in this new reality through the four Characteristic Dimensions of SVD.

Mission Statement

Our identity as Divine Word Missionaries finds its ground in the Trinitarian Mystery: We are called by the Father, sent by the Son and inspired by the Holy Spirit to live our religious vocation and mission in fraternal communion, forming international and intercultural communities, inserted in the local church and guided by a profound experience of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, announcing the new life in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

1. Societal Setting

Although Portuguese is the official language of Angola, more than 95% of its population speaks Bantu languages. The remaining 5% of the An-



golan population can be further classified under two linguistic groups: the first one is the Portuguese-speaking *mestiços*, most of whom live in the urban centers of Western Angola. The other consists of hunting and gathering bands found in the southern region of the country and characterized by their so called "click languages" (for the tongue-clicking sounds in them). Their small stature and lighter skin color further associate them with the so-called "bushmen" of southern Africa.

Twenty-five years of civil war followed Angola's declaration of independence from Portugal in

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1975. The rebel party UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) then opposed the governing MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). While the warlords fought for the country's vast oil and diamond resources to further their political and economic interests, the people in the country lived in dehumanizing poverty under their crossfire. Ethnic differences along with class divides raised by colonialism came into play in what appeared to be a clash between socialist and capitalist ideologies.

Since that war finally ended in 2002, around 4 million Angolans who fled for refuge to neighboring countries have returned. Since then, hope for peace and prosperity is stimulating economic recovery and fostering social reconciliation in the country. At the present, the country is facing an economic crisis that creates financial difficulties and delays the development of the country.

2. Ecclesial Setting

The geographical spread of Christianity in Angola took a surprising ethno-linguistic turn. In the 15th century Catholic missionaries came from Portugal to introduce the Catholic faith in the Kongo kingdom. When the colony of Angola was established in 1575, Catholic missions spread around Luanda and inland. In the late 19th century, Protestant missionaries came to the north, Methodists inland among Kimbundu-speaking people, and Congregationalists in the east and among the Ovimbundu settlements.

When the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) came to power in 1975, its Marxist-Leninist ideology was understandably anti-religious. Roman Catholics were denounced for their collaboration with the colonial state. Baptists and Congregationalists were denounced for supporting its rivals - UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola). Only the Methodist Church received some favorable treatment, because many MPLA leaders emerged from it. Since the formal abandonment of Marxism, however, the government has shown tolerance toward the Churches and allowed ecclesial organizations to once again operate openly.

3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

Those in Final Vows

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	25	50.0	64.8	32.9
Education	7	14.0	5.6	9.8
Schools	7	-		
Universities	0	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	3	6.0	13.5	9.8
Administration/ Support	2	4.0	10.7	15.8
Other Apostolates	5	10.0	2.7	15.8

JPIC	1	-		
Bible	1	-		
Communication	1	-		
Mission Animation	1	-		
Others	1	-		

Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/Orientation	1	2.0	2.7	13.4
Retired/Sick	2	4.0	0	2.4
Others	0	0	0	0

Since the arrival of the SVD in Angola in 1965, parishes have been the main bases and centers for our missionary presence and integral pastoral service. Many of them include clinics and schools. We are running 12 parishes in 8 dioceses. The majority of the parishes, whether in urban or rural settings, are in poor areas. The parish in Sendi was the last expansion of our missionary presence; it was established in 2008.

Due of the poor education in much of the educational system of the government, the Church is invited to be part of the educational system so that it can give quality education. As SVDs, we have schools in almost all the parishes we run and some confreres are involved in that apostolate.

Characteristic Dimensions

Biblical Apostolate: In our parishes biblical seminars are offered to form catechists and lay leaders who can help us promote the biblical apostolate through prayer groups and retreats. Apart from our bookstore, parishes also serve as centers for distributing bibles and related spiritual literature at prices affordable to the common people.

Mission Animation: After the last general chapter an SVD Lay Association was founded in view of sharing with its members our missionary spirituality and engaging them in the local mission activities in our parishes. The provincial mission secretary has begun a ministry of fundraising to support the worldwide mission of our Society, but starting within the province. Most of the lay people in our parishes have been generous.

JPIC: Some confreres in the province are active in networking for the Episcopal Commission for migrants. They are working with Vietnamese and Chinese as well as organizing different activities related with the migrants and itinerants. The street children's apostolate is with those who are expelled from their own families or village communities after being accused and maltreated as child witches. Whenever possible, the center strives to reintegrate them in their families. In any case, the center offers them food and shelter as well as some vocational training. A mobile team goes around at night to rescue children in need.

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Communication: Our Communication coordinator gives his service to our parishes by offering some skills and seminars on writing articles, taking pictures, as well as making videos. Some videos on YouTube about the activities within the province are made by some parishes and the coordinator. Some parishes collaborate on Radio Ecclesia, a broadcasting station owned by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Angola, by informing them about the activities in our province and parishes.

Priorities among Congregational Directions

We chose three Congregational Directions as our priorities and some activities are being done in these areas:

Primary Evangelization: Formation of the catechists, revitalization of the catechesis, biblical training in communities, leadership training and more presence in the local communities.

Family and Youth: Home visitation, course for newlyweds, communitarian weddings, praying the rosary in families' homes, and youth camps.

Education and Research: Moral and Christian education in the schools run by the SVD.

Collaboration with SSpS and Others

We have good collaboration with the SSpS in various activities. We are working together in three parishes where we are involved in pastoral

activities. They also work with us in *S. Lucas Center of Healthcare* and *S. Arnold Janssen Center* where we take care of the children from the street. We have a common retreat every two years.

SVD Lay Partners

ANG province began with the lay groups in 2012 in our parishes. The groups are accompanied by the mission secretary and the leaders of the groups. They have formation in our four Characteristic Dimensions and raise awareness for the mission work. They participate and collaborate in our various celebrations and activities. Every year they organize a retreat based on our spirituality.

4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012	2005
Bishop	3	1	0
Clerics	36	34	34
Brothers (final vows)	5	7	7
Scholastics	6	5	8
Novices	1	0	0
Total	51	47	51

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012	2005
Average age	44.5	43.1	40.3
Nationalities	15	14	16

We are a province full of young confreres. They are full of energy that brings new ideas and challenges. The main internal challenge that continues to face the province today is that most of the experienced foreign confreres have left and returned to their home provinces and some have left due to sickness. The young confreres needed their guidance and accompaniment in the beginning. But we are moving on. We continue to hope for more foreign confreres to be assigned to the province so that we can do better in meeting our challenges in various areas of our pastoral work. In spite of that situation we are making efforts at vocation promotion for our society among the Angolan youth.

Our leadership focuses its energy on three main priorities

Leadership: The provincial leadership offers its share in reinforcing community life and team work by assigning confreres in pairs or on a team of several persons. It makes periodic visits of every community to encourage confreres in their respective ministries. Exchange of news through the provincial communication is made available in print as well as through the internet. We organize a meeting at the beginning of every year with all the local superiors and coordinators for evaluation and planning of the community life as well as pastoral activities.

Formation: The province has a three phase formation program. Our young candidates go first through a propaedeutic program which will change its way of doing things by 2018. Then they move on to philosophical studies. After that they will go to the one year of novitiate. Finishing these three phases the young confreres are distributed to the three SVD common Formation centers of the AFRAM zone or other provinces outside of the zone for theology studies. The province is searching for a new place to relocate its present novitiate in Kifangondo. Also, zonal planning is on the way to create a fourth common formation center for the AFRAM zone in Luanda-Angola. The province continues to welcome OTP candidates.

Most of the lay people in our parishes have been generous.

Finance: The province still relies on the generalate to fund its efforts to rebuild its wrecked mission structures and carry out its mission projects. A good plan to venture big investments has been prepared. In view of self-reliance the province has initiated in Luanda: a shop for religious articles, and a few contributions of those confreres at the service of dioceses in Luanda, Caxito, and Viana. We also acquired some lands for future investments.