

Angola and Sweden – thirty years of cooperation



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Thirty years, for richer for poorer

Last year Angola celebrated its 30th birthday, the very same number of years that Angola and Sweden have worked together. Actually, even longer if the liberation struggle years are included. In Sida's archives lie more than two hundred metres of files and binders, all witnesses to the hopes and dreams invested during those years. More interesting, of course, is what happened to Sweden's contributions of almost 900 million US dollars (5 billion Swedish kronor). We travelled to Angola to find out.

Expectations were not especially high. What could possibly be left after so many years of war and disaster? But we were surprised at what we found. Yes, there were abandoned vehicles, stranded wrecks of boats and the faded signs of the institutions involved. But we also heard about activities which still affect Angola, effects that cannot be explained simply by Angolan politeness.

Healthcare and fishery were the sectors chosen for long-term cooperation, but eventually support also expanded to energy, telecommunications and other areas. Training was a major element of almost all the projects financed by Sida.

From the outset it was clear that Swedish staff were essential. And so a couple of hundred Swedish doctors, nurses, teachers, fishermen and technicians and their families studied the language and changed their working environment for a while. They came from a well-organised country with a cold climate and met the warm, rich Angolan culture with a strong vision of the future, in spite of all the difficulties. And they gained memories and friends for life.

Now the last Swedish field workers are leaving Angola as the final, long-term bilateral development project draws to a close. Their houses will be transferred to the Angolan state. Peace and oil income means normal trading conditions and cooperation between the two countries may take other directions such as individual contracts for technical assistance (CTS), international courses (ITP) or activities via the UN, the EU and the World Bank.

Martin Rosén



Detailed wall maps of Angola are still for sale on the streets of Luanda



One people, one nation and a new map!

Following Independence the Ministry of Education needed a new school atlas and wall map. The first Angolan atlas was printed in Stockholm in 1982 – a million copies – one for every schoolchild in the country.

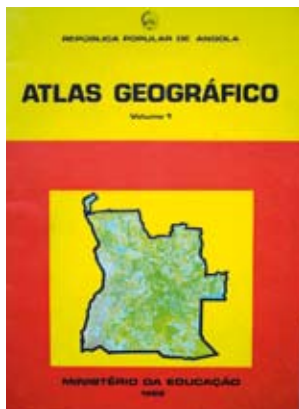
Leif Sjöström was the Swedish Ambassador when the first atlas was presented to President José Eduardo dos Santos. He describes the emotional handover ceremony as an almost historic moment. It felt as if this new map finally confirmed the country's identity.

A world atlas was also produced – half a million copies. These maps relegated the colonial names to the history books and Nova Lisboa became Huambo while the new name for Sá da Bandeira was Lubango.

The wall maps were delivered in sturdy, custom-built wooden boxes and Mejt Fagerkvist at Esselte Map Service in Stockholm, now Liber, was told how many of those boxes went on to function as perfect chicken coops.

Many of the original wall maps can still be found on the walls of public institutions throughout Angola, although perhaps a little faded. It is still possible, however, to buy new ones on the streets of Luanda.

Atlases printed in Sweden are used in schools and other institutions



Another little miracle in Sambizanga

On the morning of 18 May 2006, Dina Simao Milagre ('miracle' in Portuguese!) aged 22 gave birth to her second child. Her daughter, called Bernardina, and her mother were also present at the birth, just to be on the safe side. The baby was born at the Agostinho Neto health centre in Sambizanga. Dina says that she and the baby are doing well and that they were well cared for.

The Agostinho Neto health centre is one of several in Luanda with maternity clinics that Sida helped to build. The project began in 1990 as maternal mortality was very high and the hospitals could do little to help. Today, there are 22 such clinics.

The Sambizanga Centre employs more than one hundred people. The Head of the maternity clinic, Leopoldina Paulo Francisco comments:

"This clinic exists thanks to the cooperation with Sweden. Sweden supplied us with furniture, fridges for medicine storage, generators for power cuts, an ambulance, etc. Sida has also supported the Ministry of Health with training for 150 midwives."

Since the first delivery of medicines, medical equipment and ambulances arrived in Angola in 1977, healthcare has been a major part of Swedish-Angolan cooperation. The latest activities have concentrated on maternity care, midwifery training, vaccinations and basic drugs.

Interview with Dr Raúl Feio

"Cooperation with Sweden played an essential and ground-breaking role in the development of important parts of primary health care within the country. Particularly the vaccination



Dina Simao Milagre with her newborn daughter



Dr Raul Feio

and basic drugs programmes, but also in health information and in the fight against endemic diseases – including the first activities aimed at curbing HIV.”

These are the words of Dr Raúl Feio, who for many years was Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Health.

“Sweden played an important part in staff development, especially for nurses, such as providing the impetus for the development of more advanced nurse training. During this time, cooperation included technical advisers who had a positive influence both on institutions and society. Altogether, this period was very inspiring and enriching on both the technical and the human levels for Angolan health workers and – as far as I can understand – for their Swedish colleagues.”

Kristina Snoder – nurse from Gotland, Sweden

In a flower-filled garden on the peaceful Swedish island of Gotland, Kristina Snoder browses through the family’s photo albums. Some of the photos are from the Agostinho Neto Health Centre in Luanda, while others show the colourfully dressed Angolan delegation to the International Confederation of Midwives Congress in Vienna in 2002. Kristina also appears in some of the photos, in her position as Coordinator of Maternal Health Care in Luanda. Many of the midwives in the photos have participated in specialist training supported by Sida.

“Four days a week we travelled out to health centres in a Toyota Landcruiser. We were usually a little late by the time all eight of us had arrived but then the singing started and everyone’s mood lightened. We sang hymns and listened to tapes. I introduced Carola and a few other Swedish musicians to the team. We all came from such very different places but we all had the same job and became firm friends. I sometimes think that it is times like those – in that Landcruiser – that is what life is all about,” says Kristina, who also worked with the nurses’ training and as the Sida staff nurse during her six years in Angola.



Kristina Snoder worked in Angola for six years

Another miracle – the Orthopaedic Centre

Thirty-odd patients from Kwanza Sul have just arrived at the Orthopaedic Centre in the Neves Ben-dinha district of Luanda. At the moment there are fifty patients staying there – ten more than the number of beds in the guest house.

“They stay for three to five weeks,” says Tomaz Catonge, *Chefe do Departamento* (Head of Department). He is 40 years old and was an orthopaedic technician when the centre opened in 1989. Six orthopaedic specialists and physiotherapists from Sweden and other nations worked there, as well as more than seventy people from the Angolan Red Cross and Ministry of Health.

“We received a lot of very good support; financial, technical, material, moral and social,” says Tomaz. “Considering the number of casualties from landmines this was a really good way for Sweden to support its Angolan brothers and sisters.”

Franck Rasmussen agrees. He was the Swedish Red Cross Coordinator for the first few years and now works at Sida. He has never felt more needed; “Imagine, people coming to us with one leg and leaving with two!”

In those days prosthetic legs were made of local timber, old tyre tubes and with locally-cast aluminium knee joints – anything to keep costs down. The Swedish Red Cross also sent crutches, walking frames, clothes and shoes that had been collected by local associations. More than 15,000 patients were rehabilitated during the seven years that Sweden worked there.



Dr Tomaz Catonge fits a prosthetic leg on Esperanza



Esperanza tries out her new leg



Some of the 50 fishing boats delivered are still in use



Joao Batista was once a captain on the Swedish-built vessel Mar Sol

The blue boats

Swedish visitors are soon made to feel welcome at the harbour of Ilha de Luanda. For example, someone may come up and ask them if they know Sture. Of course they know Sture! Sture Hultsbo from Hönö in Bohuslän. He was one of the Swedes working for the Swedish small-scale fishery project.

“Coming from the west coast of Sweden, I soon felt at home among the fishermen in Luanda,” says Sture. “Just like at home, they swaggered down the jetty just a bit more after a good catch, and when you gave your trust it was returned.”

Nets, hooks, ice machines and thirty plastic canoes with outboard motors were

sent for fishermen who worked from the beach. But the most important things were fifty light blue fishing boats, 8.5 meters long and specially built in Lysekil. These blue boats were assigned to fishing cooperatives – cooperatives that have long since been privatised.

The fishermen have a pretty good memory of what happened to those first thirty boats; they estimate that between 20 and 25 are still seaworthy, some were wrecked on the rocks (no fatalities) and one was set on fire by UNITA in Ambriz.

“Really good boats; strong and robust,” says Joao Baptista, 55 years old and Captain of the Mar Sol, one of the Swedish vessels that has hauled many tons of fish to the shops and markets of Luanda during its service of more than twenty years.

They were in the first class

In May 2006, Lennart Nyqvist from Grästorp travelled from Sweden to Cacuo in Angola to visit old students and friends he made during his time as machine shop teacher at the Ministry of Fishery school – Cefopescas (Centro de formacao profissional das pescas). He was rather sad to see that the five Swedish-built training vessels were either stranded or wrecked on the beach.

“If we hadn’t had those the school would never have survived. They caught the food for the students to eat,” he says.

At the school Lennart, or Leonardo as he is known there, met Marcos Luis, now 44, a student from his very first class. Marcos was trained as a marine electrician, and is now working as a maintenance manager.

It all started in 1982 in a abandoned fishmeal factory that had to be renovated. Marcos and the other fifty students were divided into five classes. They had Swedish teachers in courses like marine engineering, seamanship and navigation, and Portuguese teachers in English, history, geography, etc. By 1985 the school was fully functioning with 300 students and 25 teachers, as well as administrators and technicians. There was a campus and even a Swedish school.

According to Marcos Luis and many others, Cefopescas was the best vocational school in the country. For Angola it was vital because of the demand for food in the markets and the paralysed state of the fishing industry.

In 1999 when Sida finished its work in the fishery sector (the school had been the biggest project) almost 2,000 students had graduated. More than half of the students went on to work in the fishery sector, while others chose different paths. Antonio Palhares is both an inspector and has worked with vocational training at the Ministry of Fishery. He was also headmaster of the school for four years. He says that the school is still operating but has problems because new equipment is desperately needed. “Swedish support was very important to Angola. In 1975 we had no trained fishermen, mechanics, electricians or refrigeration engineers. Cefopescas produced a whole cadre who are now out on the labour market.”



Produced in Angola. Students at Cefopescas who are now working as mechanics and electricians at Desco in Luanda



Former Cefopescas teacher Leonardo meets Marcos Luis, one of his first students



Antonio Palhares, Ministry of Fishery

The Goa rests after forty years

In the floating dock, Doca sovietica, at the entrance to Luanda harbour, the forty-year-old Goa lies waiting for, perhaps, her last trip. But for almost ten years she was essential to the training of researchers in the Swedish-Angolan fishery sector cooperation.

The Goa is around thirty metres long and was built at the Sorefame Shipyard, Lobito in 1966. She became a research ship in 1974. And there really was a need to see how much fishing the coastal areas could stand. At that time the Portuguese were taking up twice as much fish along the Angolan coast as the Swedes and Norwegians together took from their waters, and more than sixty fish factories lined the coast.

After Independence the need was still there but the Goa was in trouble. But rebuilt and repaired she returned to duty in January 1984. This time her job was to deliver data to the laboratory that had been established at Centro de Investigacao Pesqueira (CIP) on Ilha de Luanda. Nils-Olov Karlsson, who worked on the Goa for many years, recalls how they were often stopped on their way into the quay by women in small boats who wanted some of their research material – particularly the kind from the trawling nets. They got what they wanted, of course.

Victoria de Barros Neto, Junior Minister for Fishery, travelled on the Goa many times and was responsible for sea floor testing.

“The Goa was essential to our research. We would love to make a museum of her but there is no money now. The first studies of the marine environment were undertaken with Swedish help. They helped us with repairs, equipment and staff training. That help was enormously important in that it created our first researchers and supplied our institute with much-needed computers.”

Sweden also worked with the Institute for Small-Scale Fishing. Fishermen, who previously had trouble earning a living for their families, were given boats, nets and other tools. This also meant there were more fish for the markets. Sweden also helped to set up cooperatives.

“However, the most important was Cefopescas, both through the building of the school itself and the training there, which today is still helping to qualify people for the labour market.”



Victoria de Barros, Junior Minister for Fishery

The project that works best at night

The electrification of Luanda is a project of the more discreet kind. At least in the daytime – it is rather easier to see at night. Around a thousand Swedish lampposts have been erected to help make the city safer at night.

Other monuments to Swedish-Angolan energy cooperation in Luanda include more than two thousand distribution boxes made by Cewe in Nyköping, Sweden. The boxes are connected by almost two hundred kilometres of underground cable.

“In addition to Luanda we also electrified Bairro Mabor, where there were more than a thousand families with no electricity whatsoever,” says Domingos António, department head at EDEL in Cassenga, who worked on the project. “They not only got street lighting but also the chance to become private customers.”

“We learned a great deal through these projects, and most of the workers from then have now climbed the professional ladder and hold down top jobs in EDEL,” remarks Domingos. “I am one of them myself. We were also helped with our driving licenses, which are essential for this job.”

The electricity projects were started up in 1991 by ENE (Empresa Nacional De Electricidade), EDEL (Empresa De Distribuicao De Electricidade) and Swedish Transelectric. During the nine years the projects were running around 120 Angolans got jobs with them – often people who had been unemployed or were demobilised soldiers. Employees were sent on courses in Angola and Sweden.

“I benefited from just such a course,” says José Marinho, Head of Administration at ENE. “It was on electrical power management – seven weeks in Stockholm, Västerås and other places.”

The biggest project within energy cooperation – at a cost of 150 million Swedish kronor – was the electrification of the Dembos Region with a transmission line from the dam. This meant that 90,000 local people could receive electricity. The



*José Marinho, Administrator, ENE,
Empresa Nacional de Electricidade*



*A sign on a truck used by Edel Sonefe
Transelectric*



Domingos António, Edel, checks a distribution box made by Cerve

project was inaugurated by the Swedish Minister for Development Co-operation, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, who flew by helicopter from Luanda to Quibaxe. Amid much cheering, she pressed a button and lit a symbolic light bulb. She fondly remembers the warmth she met, the good food and the festivities.

The following day, 6 September 1987, the happiness was crushed. Three Swedes were kidnapped in an attack on a convoy on the road from Quibaxe to Luanda. One of them, Göran Larsson, died of his injuries. Lena Hjelm-Wallén attended his

funeral back in Sweden. The other two, Kent Andersson and Gunnar Sjöberg, arrived at the UNITA HQ in Jamba after walking through the bush for 63 days. In exchange for their release UNITA demanded a visit to Jamba by a senior Swedish government official. That person was Annie Marie Sundbom, who was working (as she is today) for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Energy cooperation also included Swedish gas turbines for Cabinda and Huambo as well as the training of technicians to run them. The gas turbine in the provincial capital of Huambo was vital to its electricity supply. The town had been surrounded by UNITA troops and all power cables had been cut. When the turbine broke down it was taken to Sweden for repairs and reinstalled in Huambo with Swedish assistance. Fuel was also flown in on a converted DC 8 that was also transporting petrol!

Blue moped hunting

Eighteen years ago, 24 Swedish mopeds equipped with front-mounted flatbeds for transporting goods arrived in Luanda. They had three wheels and a blue telecom tool box mounted between the front wheels. All you need to keep a telecommunications network in trim.

It is only natural, in this historical context, to find out whether any of these mopeds managed to survive in the bustling traffic of Luanda for all these years. There is a rumour that at least one of these ‘azulinhos’ was sighted in town not so long ago.

Research leads us to Angola Telecom’s warehouse on Cuca Street, near the Panga-Panga wood factory. There we meet José Amaral, 39 years old. Once the coordinator for CRILA (Centro De Reparacao E Instalacao De Linhas Aereas), he later took over the project’s freight moped brigade with its attendant 24 tele-technicians.

Today José is manager of a division that installs and maintains the subscriber network. In his office lies a faded micro-bouquet of Swedish and Angolan flags. He shows us round the warehouse stocked with cardboard boxes marked Ericsson and orange tools – the orange that TeliaSonera normally uses in Sweden.

“The mopeds were very useful,” says José Amaral. “They helped us to rehabilitate the network and even expand it to new areas.”

This Swedish-Angolan tele-cooperation began in 1988 and resulted in practically every block of flats in Luanda being equipped with phone lines.

António Pedro Benge, a Director at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, is still positive about the cooperation with Sweden.

“Our cooperation with Sweden gave us the best support we have ever had, as it not only got our machinery to work but it also improved our organisation. It helped us to formulate a sustainable policy for the development of the telecom sector.”



José Amaral from Luanda and Evaristo Tendele from Huambo have both attended courses in Sweden



Equipment from Swedish TeliaSonera could easily be recognised by its orange colour



Bridge over Rio Cuzo, Kwanza Norte

Connecting people and provinces

The Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) started building bridges and repairing roads in Angola after the 1994 Peace Agreement between MPLA and UNITA. None of the provincial capitals could be reached by road and relief supplies were being flown in – an operation actually larger than the Berlin Blockade relief. Altogether, SRSA has constructed more than seventy bridges and opened up around two thousand kilometres of road in fourteen provinces.

“One problem with bridge building is logistics,” says Louis Anderson of SRSA. The roads are often in really bad shape and the bridge construction material is heavy and difficult to transport, which wears the vehicles out. Another problem is the mines. The roads and areas around the bridge footings have to be cleared before we can even start. Because of this, Sida has supported Norsk Folkehjelp’s mine clearing programme since 1995. Large areas of land are now cleared and safe.

SRSA, which was previously known as Swedrelief and is part of Sweden’s emergency services agency for natural disasters, has carried out this work in close cooperation with the Angolan Roads Authority (INEA) and Bridges Authority (ENP). Financiers include Sida, the EU, the UN and the Angolan Government. As early as 1977 Sida helped out by providing Bailey bridges as temporary replacements for those destroyed in the conflict after Independence.

He changed the traffic

Rafael Costa from Malanje is a driving instructor at the Bus Driver School belonging to the state-owned TCUL which operates 270 buses on the streets of Luanda – mostly Volvos – some of which have been around for 26 years, since 1980.

This is no coincidence. It all began in 1988 when Rafael Costa attended a six-month mechanics course in Base Cassenga that was supported by Sida. It was here that he realised there was a connection between the way the buses were driven and the number of times they visited the repair shop. When he completed the course he suggested training in the art of bus driving.

Management thought it was a good idea, as did Sida, who decided to help pay for that course too.

“We learned traffic regulations and ‘defensive driving’, which means driving carefully. Our conduct was praised by other people on the road and other companies started to use our training. So we changed everything! Now we have trained more than 3,000 drivers, which has really affected the entire traffic environment,” says Rafael Costa.

Sweden helped with these courses for ten years, and provided import support funds for buses and trucks for many more years. By 1988, around 8,000 Swedish trucks had been bought by Angola – many with the help of Swedish development credits – and they still dominate the market today.



Rafael Costa, enjoys his position as driving instructor at TCUL



Marcela Costa is a dedicated artist

Marcela wove dreams

At Independence, Marcela Costa became Principal of the Art School in Barracao. One day a group arrived from the Swedish University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. This group held seminars in colour and form and Marcela and some of the other teachers were invited to participate in courses in Sweden. A period of close contact followed – so close that one of Marcela's five children was christened Ulla after the mother of one of her Swedish colleagues!

“The Swedes taught us about technique, not how the work was to be designed. So they helped in the development of our culture that had been repressed for many years. For me, Sweden was a miracle. It was the love and support I encountered there that gave me the strength to fight for my dreams.”

Her dream is now reality in the form of the Gallery Celamar. Here there is a studio, offices, bar and workshops all collected around an open square where palms and other plants and flowers flourish. In one room there is a Swedish loom from Glimåkra. It was bought cheaply from Swedes returning home. According

to Marcela it was twelve years' hard work on that loom that paid for all the buildings.

Although cultural exchange has been only one small element of Swedish development cooperation, it has included help for the Angolan Writers' Union and a greatly appreciated tour of Sweden by the groups Kituxi, Kilandukilu and Internacional Merengue, as well as the visit of a Swedish group to Luanda led by choreographer Lena Josefsson.

Interviews

Carin Norberg from Stockholm – the first Sida representative at the embassy in Luanda, 1977–1979.

“Bread was delivered almost every day”

“There were around twenty Swedes in Luanda. Us at the embassy, some working for Volvo and the Africa Groups, and a few more. At the beginning the embassy received a bread ration almost every day from the people’s shop and sometimes meat and chickens. But we went out ourselves to get hold of chickens and fish.

At Sida we continued with the health support that we had previously operated with the MPLA. We then invested in fisheries and infrastructure by building bridges to replace those that had been destroyed in the war, as well as providing humanitarian support to refugees from Katanga. I also worked in supporting ANC and SWAPO.

In spite of all the difficulties there was a strong feeling of optimism in the country. Everyone knew that there were natural resources to develop. Personally, I felt very close to the Angolans so the coup attempt on 27 May 1977 affected us very badly. Several people we had got to know in Lusaka and Luanda were murdered, including the Minister of Finance, Saidi Mingas, who had been the MPLA representative in Stockholm, and Garcia Neto, who was responsible for development cooperation at the Angolan FO. The street where the Swedish embassy is located bears his name, by the way.”

Fernando Pacheco – one of the founders of ADRA

“Our visit to Sweden still influences our work”

“My warm feelings for Sweden developed long before Independence. I was working for two Portuguese in Kwanza Sul and happened to hear them talking about that country in the north that supported the ‘terrorists’ MPLA.

In 1988 I asked for help from the Swedish embassy to



*Carin Norberg. The book in the photo: *Vamos escrever, desenhar e pintar*, 1978, Eugénia Neto. Published by Inald. Instituto Nacional do Livro e do Disco*



Fernando Pacheco worked with Adra

finance a visit for me and two others to the international cooperative alliance in Stockholm. All three of us are still working with cooperatives today. When we started up ADRA in 1990, informal contacts led to Sida financing some workshops and other things. In 1994 the Africa Groups organised support for our first project. This was to help internal refugees in Benguela so that they could produce their own food. The people there were nearly dying of starvation. Now after twelve years there are 13 local autonomous organisations that cooperate with provincial governments on agricultural matters, training, cattle and fisheries. ADRA also has projects in Malanje, Lombe and Quela, and a dialogue with similar associations in other regions. We have won recognition from the authorities and influence over policies which is a success for democracy in the country.”



Paulo Jorge, former Minister of Affairs

Paulo Jorge – former Foreign Minister of Angola.

“I learned what solidarity could mean”

“My first contact with Sweden occurred during the liberation struggle. As a liberation movement, MPLA was in contact with the Africa Groups and within that framework we travelled to Sweden to spread information about our struggle and, naturally, to apply for support from Sweden and the Social Democratic Party. Eventually we were also able to contact Prime Minister Olof Palme directly.

After Independence, when I became Foreign Minister, one of my first trips was to Sweden in November 1975. Two years later I made my first official visit to Stockholm when the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation and I signed our first bilateral co-operation agreement. By the way – this agreement established a principle that still holds true today – that members of the Angolan Government all use Volvos as their official cars. The many trucks and buses from the Volvo and Scania factories on our roads here were also a result of this.

Sweden supported us within the technical and the social sectors, as well as diplomatically within the UN and other international organisations, since before Independence in fact.

Through this cooperation I learned what solidarity could mean.

To this day our countries still have a close relationship. We now have peace and the government is implementing its social development programme. Within the MPLA we are continuing our contacts with the Social Democratic Party even if we can never understand why they have to hold their congresses in the winter when it is so very cold!”

Miguel Kiame, AutoSueco – Director of Studies at Cefopescas 1988–1994.

“These marks will not disappear”

“Cooperation with the Swedes at the fishery school gave me a lot which I benefit from greatly in my work today as Director of Auto-Sueco in Luanda. For example, the importance of accuracy in my work, punctuality and how to plan and control operations. There I also encountered IT technology for the first time.

I never experienced any problems with the Swedes; some misunderstandings due to language, of course, but we could fix that. Cooperation with Sweden has meant a lot to Angola. It was very fruitful. Inputs at the fishery school and other institutions, and in the health sector, have left marks on society that still remain and will not disappear. In addition there are still well educated cadres here, as a result of the cooperation, who mean a lot to the development of our country.”

Sten Rylander – Swedish Ambassador to Angola 1985–1988.

“I was proud to represent Sweden”

“When I was in Angola the country was still an arena for, and victim of, the conflict between the two superpowers. In that situation I felt that we could play a special role as an international partner who protected the interests of the smaller nations. We accomplished important, humanitarian inputs through the UN system, ICRC and other organisations and also within healthcare, the fishery and energy sectors, in an emergency situation where there were very few other development actors. I was proud to represent Sweden in Angola. The activities we carried out have contributed greatly to their view of Sweden. A stable foundation was laid for bilateral relations of another type – not least commercial – in times of peace. I



Miguel Kiame, Director of Auto Sueco



Ambassador Sten Rylander was proud to represent Sweden in Angola. Photo: Pavel Flato

have heard from many leading Angolans that they would like to repay Sweden and Swedish companies for what they did during the liberation struggle and the first few difficult years after Independence.

One of the strongest memories from my time in Angola is the night when the Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme, was murdered – 28 February 1986 – my birthday. I was woken up at around five in the morning by loud banging on my street door. It was a group of Angolans, crying and wailing in their sorrow over the death of our Prime Minister.”

Paulo Tjipilica, Parliamentary Ombudsman – former Minister of Justice

“Sweden contributed to democracy and rule of law”

“My first contact with Sweden was in 1996 when I, as Minister of Justice, attended the ECPAT Congress in Stockholm. I met

representatives of the Swedish Government and Sida, which lead to support for two of our projects.

One, via the World Bank, concerned the training of judges in Portugal and support to the Ministry’s library. This helped to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, which is based on courts staffed by qualified judges. Many of these are now senior judges and professors.

The other project, via UNICEF, helped to register children and young people. This was primarily aimed at street children in Luanda and led to them being moved to places of care.

When I was invited to Sweden in 2005 as newly appointed Parliamentary Ombudsman, I was greeted with great warmth. I found it very interesting that there were other types of ombudsman offices; for

children, for example, and against discrimination due to sexual orientation.”



Paulo Tjipilica, Parliamentary Ombudsman



Many women wait for a visit to the legal advice centre at OMA

The Africa Groups support women's rights

There is long queue in front of the office of the legal advice centre on this May day in 2006. In one room sit advisor Maria Gourgel and lawyer Laurinda de Barros, in conversation with mother of seven Rita from Bengo Province. She works as a trader and has come for help as her husband does nothing for their children. He has been called to give his side of the story and is explaining himself using excited gestures.

In another room sits law student Paula Menezes talking to Florinda from Huambo, a mother of two who works as a maid and whose husband does not contribute to the household. She wants a divorce.

"Often the problems concern men's violence to women," says Eulalia Randa, who heads the Centre. "There can also be inheritance disputes and the right to the house after divorce. Sometimes a conversation is enough; sometimes the Centre helps take the case to court."

The Africa Groups (AGS) had representatives in place in Angola before Independence and helped to form the public opinion in Sweden that later led to massive Swedish development contributions. Many inputs concerned strength-



OMA is one of AGSs oldest partners

ening the situation of women.

“OMA, their women’s movement, is one of our longest cooperating partners,” says Hillevi Nilsson from AGS who was one of a group of three who visited the area controlled by MPLA in Moxico as early as 1971.

The Africa Groups’ current activities consist of a number of projects supported by Sida in cooperation with ten or so independent Angolan organisations.

Most of their activities are in the provinces where they reach approximately 60,000 Angolans. The projects supported by Sida are aimed at rural development and support to organisation and training. One important aspect is courses at grass-roots level, to which local authorities are also invited. AGS’ most frequent partner in this work is ADRA together with a handful of like-minded organisations in Malanje, Moxico and Benguela.



Counselling is an important part of OMAs work



The former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme meets with the MPLA leader Agostinho Neto

Some history

After a meeting in Stockholm in July 1970 between the MPLA leader Agostinho Neto and Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, humanitarian support to MPLA is initiated including help for the MPLA School in Congo. Support continues up until Independence on 11 November 1975. The Africa Groups of Sweden already have five employees stationed in Angola, in contact with the MPLA and later the Government. Sweden prepares Swedish representation in Angola via the embassy in Zambia.

1976. In January the Angolan Foreign Minister, José Eduardo dos Santos, visits Stockholm. On 18 February, Sweden officially recognises Angola and opens its embassy in October. Swedish support is initiated with the purchase of foodstuffs, vehicles, school materials, medical equipment, ambulances, ferries and Bailey bridges. SWAPO opens an office in Luanda as does ANC, which moves the major part of its military training to Angola.

1977. In February Sida opens its development cooperation office at the embassy. The Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Ola Ullsten, and Sida's Director-General, Ernst Michanek, visit Angola. For a period of six weeks, Hercules planes from the Swedish Air Force build an air bridge carrying relief supplies from Luanda to refugees in Lunda Norte. UNITA leader Savimbi states on British TV that the planes are transporting government troops and threatens to 'liquidate' them.

1978. SWAPO moves refugees from Zambia to Angola.

1979. Sweden and Angola sign a General Agreement on long-term cooperation focusing on the fishery and health sectors. SWAPO moves its Headquarters in Exile from Lusaka to

Luanda. Sweden supplies massive support for the construction of SWAPO's camp in Kwanza Sul. The Africa Groups also have staff there.

1980. The Left Federation of Swedish Women initiated co-operation with AGS and OMA, the Angolan women's movement.

1981. Swedish support to the fishery sector commences with the research programme at Centro de Investigacao Pesqueira. Asea gas turbines are delivered to Cabinda and Huambo.

1982. Parts of the fishery school begin operating with six Swedish teachers and 50 students in temporary premises. Fifty fishing boats from Lysekil are delivered for coastal fishing. The new atlas is printed by Esselte with support from Sida.

1983. Health support is concentrated on eradication of malaria, TB, sleeping sickness and support to basic drug supplies, as well as nurse training with extensive technical assistance. Import support is launched for spare parts for Volvo and Scania trucks and buses and development credits for vehicles.

1984. Electrification of Dembos Region initiated.



The "Swedish camp" in Miramar

1985. Fishery School in Cacuaco ready to open at full capacity of 300 students – with 26 Swedish field workers, a Swedish school and 120 Angolan teachers and administrators.

1986. New Swedish embassy inaugurated in Miramar as well as a camp consisting of more than twenty housing units for field workers and a Swedish school (Swedish school in Cacuaco is closed down).

Swedec initiates operations in SWAPO's vehicle repair shop in Viana. AGS concludes a cooperation agreement with the Government of Angola. The Basic Drugs Programme starts up – Swedish supplies form the basis of the nation's pharmaceutical supply system.

1987. The Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, opens the electrification plant in Dembos. UNITA kidnaps three Swedes; one is killed. Extensive disaster relief is provided including material for the manufacture of farming tools and other agricultural supplies.

1988. Swedtel commences operations in Luanda.

1989. The fishing boats are privatised. The Swedish Red Cross opens its Orthopaedic Centre in Luanda. SWAPO's camp in Kwanza Sul closes down in August.

1990. Support initiated to a maternity care programme in Luanda through the creation of maternity clinics.

1991. Swedtel begins 'long-term cooperation'. Transelectric begins the electrification project in Luanda. 25 housing units for field workers in Maianga completed. Operational support is provided for the repair and maintenance of gas turbines in Cabinda, Huambo and Luanda.

1992. War returns after the election. Swedish personnel are evacuated; the Ambassador's residence is vandalised. AGS begins cooperation with ADRA.

1993. Health support is focused on maternity care in Luanda.

1994. Support is provided to renovate gas turbines in Luanda. Swedtel is working in Luanda. Swedrelief (later Swedish Rescue Services Agency) begins road and bridge building.

1995. Health support contracted out to Swedish consultant Indevelop.

1996. Support to Ministry of Health Orthopaedic Centre in Neves Bendinha, Luanda transferred from Swedish Red Cross to International Red Cross (ICRC).

1998. Programmes within the tele and energy sectors concluded. First midwifery course begins in Luanda with Sida support. Sida begins activities in Malanje with agricultural, social structure and internal refugee projects. Due to the war, this programme was concluded the following year; however support to internal refugees was channelled through a joint ADRA/AGS Programme in Malanje.



Women wait for a check-up at the Agostinho Neto Health Centre

- 1999.** Support to fishery sector concluded after twenty years.
- 2000.** The first 24 midwives graduate; the second course begins.
- 2001.** Eleven maternity clinics for the maternity care programme in Luanda are completed.
- 2002.** Peace Agreement between the Government and UNITA concluded on 4 April. Swedish school in Luanda closes.
- 2003.** Second phase of the ADRA/AGS Malanje Programme provides support to returning refugees and stabilisation.
- 2004.** Swedish Minister of Infrastructure, Ulrica Messing, visits Angola.
- 2005.** 22 maternity clinics within the maternity care programme in Luanda are completed.
- 2006.** The sixth and final midwifery course supported by Sida starts in Luanda. Health support is wound down and, consequently, technical assistance. The housing complexes in Miramar and Maianga consisting of approximately 50 housing units are transferred to the Angolan state. Since 1975 bilateral development cooperation with Angola has amounted to 4.24 billion Swedish kronor or 900 million US dollars. This amount does not include Swedish regional programmes, covering several countries, or activities financed by UN agencies, the EU or the World Bank.

Martin Rosén, who wrote the text of this booklet, died in August 2006 soon after completing this material. During his career he worked in Angola for several years and developed a special relationship with the country. He is sorely missed by his many friends in Sweden and Angola.

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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