



BUILDING FORWARD WITH RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION

ANGOLA COUNTRY OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

2021

UNFPA Angola 2021 Annual Report

UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS SUMMARY

Acronyms

Name	Acronym
Angola Gender Observatory	OGA
Central Emergency Response Fund	CERF
Civil Protection and Fire Service	SPBC
Country Office	CO
Country Programme	CP
Dignity Kits	DKs
Family Planning 2030	FP2030
Gender-Based Violence	GBV
Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies	GBViE
Government of Angola	GoA
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Guidelines of the National Policy for Population	DGPNP
Implementing Partners	IPs
International Conference on Population and Development	ICPD
Informed, Responsible and Organized Youth	JIRO
Menstual Health	MH
Menstrual Health Management	MHM
Minimum Initial Services Package	MISP
Ministry of Health	MINSA
Ministry of Social Action, Family and Women's Promotion	MASFAMU
Ministry of Economy and Planning	MEP
Multiple Health Indicators Survey	IIMS
National Statistics Institute	INE
Personal Protective Equipment	PPE
Sexual and Reproductive Health	SRH
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	SRHR
Sexually Transmitted Infections	STI
Short Message Service	SMS
Survey on Expenditure and Income and Employment in Angola	IDREA
Sustainable Development Goals	SDGs
United States Dollar	USD
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
Youth-Friendly Health Services	YFHS



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MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE



Dr Mady Biaye

Resilience can be defined as the ability or capacity to recover from adverse situations. For young people, adolescents, pregnant mothers, children and infants in Angola who faced the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged drought in the south, resilience meant survival. For the UNFPA Angola Country Office (CO), 2021 certainly tested our capacity to rebuild, strengthen and sustain our projects and keep marching forward with our mandate to realize universal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

In 2021, the overriding challenge faced by Angola was to sustain efforts to control the COVID-19 pandemic by accelerating vaccination and ensuring the provision of essential services. The fight against Covid-19 was compounded by the worst drought the country has faced in 40 years. Over 1.1 million people required humanitarian assistance, including over 260,000 women and girls of reproductive age. Working in collaboration with the Angolan government and United Nations (UN) agencies, the CO ensured the continued integration and coordination of SRHR into existing development and humanitarian programmes. UNFPA coordinated the distribution of dignity kits to women and girls, reproductive health care kits, training of community mobilizers, and the provision of information on sexual and

reproductive health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence.

EMPLOYING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Adapting to the health risks and movement restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic was essential to guarantee the continuation of SRHR services and sustain programming. Acknowledging the constraints placed on implementing partners, the Angola CO rose to the challenge and became the first country in the East and Southern Africa region to launch a virtual training solution for Implementing Partners (IPs) using the e-Lounge Platform. Over 120 participants from partner organizations in multiple provinces were trained online, overcoming the need for in-person training. As a result of this project, the Angola CO won the Innovation Culture Award at the 2021 UNFPA Innovation Awards.

Technology-based solutions were also at the fore of our interventions with young people and adolescents. The digital service SMS Jovem/U-Report, a partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNICEF, saw significant uptake from young people. By the end of 2021, close to 80,000 young people had received vital information on SRHR and COVID-19. The platform also provided a much-needed safe space for young people to voice their concerns and to receive timely advice from trained youth counsellors.



FULFILLING THE RIGHT TO MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Another vital component of our work with adolescents and young people was educating them about Menstrual Health and providing materials for girls to manage their menstruation in a hygienic and dignified manner. In a series of lectures and training sessions, girls and boys received fundamental information on menstruation and how it relates to family planning and long-term sexual and reproductive health. With the correct knowledge, young people will be well-equipped to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. The inclusion of boys will also go a long way towards tackling the myths and norms that maintain stigma, shame and silence around menstruation and eventually, lead to broader discrimination against women and girls.

INVESTING IN POPULATION DATA

Monitoring progress on the transformational goals, requires quality disaggregated population data. In 2021, we continued to work with the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the National Statistics Institute to strengthen national population data. The Government also began preparing for the 2024 National Census. UNFPA is supporting preparations by facilitating South-South knowledge transfer on operational and logistical issues and providing expertise on census mapping.

The results presented in this annual report were made possible by the generous contributions from our funding and implementing partners. Even in a resource-constrained environment, the commitment to advancing SRHR remained evident in the successful mobilization of resources including domestic financing to develop, maintain and strengthen SRHR and women's empowerment programmes.

Towards the end of 2021, we presented the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025 to our implementing partners. At its core, the new strategic plan is an urgent call to action to expedite the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Challenges are inevitable, and as we have learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, often unpredictable.

Our collective resilience will be tested again. In the face of challenges and setbacks, accelerating our work towards our transformational results (zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning, zero gender-based violence, and zero HIV transmissions) in Angola will require us to strengthen our partnerships, build new ones, and continuously innovate to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all are respected, protected and upheld.



COUNTRY CONTEXT

A vast and diverse country geographically and culturally, Angola is the second-largest African country south of the Sahara. Located in the southwest region of the continent, Angola comprises 18 provinces and borders the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and Zambia.

Angola has a rapidly growing and exceptionally youthful population. According to data from the National Statistics Institute (INE), in 2021, Angola's population stood at an estimated 32.1 million and over two-thirds are under the age of 25. The country's fertility rate is 6.2 live births per woman - one of the highest in Africa. With a population growth rate of 3.2 per cent, the population is expected to reach 41.8 million by 2030.

The oil industry is currently the foundation of the economy - accounting for a third of gross domestic product (GDP) and 95 per cent of Angola's exports. The effects of lower oil prices and production levels compounded by the global economic impact of COVID-19 contributed to consecutive declines in economic growth and pushed more people into severe poverty. As of 2021, World Bank estimates indicate that 49.9 per cent of the population lives on less than USD 1.90 a day.

However, in 2021, after five consecutive years of recession, the Angolan economy showed signs of recovery. Helped by higher oil prices, Angola's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 0.7 per cent.

In addition to staggering poverty rates, inequality also remains high as a result of unequal access to resources and basic services. Women, girls and young people bear the brunt of this inequality. The maternal mortality ratio sits at 239 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births.

Over a third (35 per cent) of girls aged 15-19 have been pregnant yet many struggle to access family planning products and services - the unmet need among adolescent girls stands at 42 per cent. Low schooling rates - only 60 per cent of those who have attended primary school finish - further jeopardise education and employment opportunities that could lift individuals and households out of poverty.

Against the backdrop of poverty, inequality and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in the arid southern region, Angola also faces a devastating drought aggravated by climate change. The prolonged dry season has

severely impacted agricultural activities and given rise to migratory movement as affected communities search for more favourable conditions in other provinces and neighbouring countries. An estimated 8 million people are exposed to drought, of which 3.8 million are directly affected facing acute food insecurity and deprivations in health, education and living standards.

To address Angola's sexual and reproductive health needs and improve the lives of adolescents, youth, and women, including in humanitarian contexts, the Government of

Angola (GoA) is collaborating with development partners to increase investment in family planning, maternal health, and gender-based violence prevention. The GoA has further prioritized gender equality and women's empowerment as an indispensable lever for socio-economic development.





UNFPA IN ANGOLA

Active in Angola since 1978, UNFPA supports national objectives to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care. UNFPA works with the Government of Angola (GoA) and civil society to improve the lives of women, girls and young people, including in humanitarian settings. Our programmes provide access to and delivery of SRH information and services, including HIV and gender-based violence prevention, reducing maternal mortality and harmful cultural norms and practices, and ensuring no one is left behind in progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2021, UNFPA continued implementing the 8th (2020-2022) Country Programme (CP). The CP is aligned with Angola's National Development Plan (2018 - 2022) and was prepared in close coordination with the GoA, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, and youth representatives. The CP addresses the priorities established in the Long-Term Development Strategy (Angola 2050) and contributes to the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063.

For UNFPA, the CP results for 2021 also contribute to the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health as outlined in the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 which is centred on the promise of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) - that is ensuring

and protecting rights and choices for all. Fundamental to the UNFPA Strategic Plan, is the pursuit of pathways and the strategies necessary to accelerate the achievement of ICPD transformative results: ending the unmet need for family planning; ending preventable maternal deaths; ending gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage; and ending HIV infections.

In 2021, UNFPA worked with partners to support health systems to deliver core services to women and their newborn infants, young people, and men. Programme activities included: support to provide quality maternal and neonatal care within the constraints of limited availability of health units due to COVID-19 closures; expanding modern contraceptive methods at health facilities and increasing youth-friendly facilities; equipping women and young people with skills and knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health; and strengthening institutions to provide comprehensive prevention and response to gender-based violence.

UNFPA also partnered with government agencies on generating and using effective, disaggregated data on inequality and vulnerability to guide policy-making and evidence-based advocacy for sexual and reproductive rights.

3 KEY RESULTS

The three programme areas of the Angola CO include: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Young People and Adolescents, including Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and Population Dynamics. The UNFPA Angola CO report presents a snapshot summary of the key activities and results from January 1 to December 31, 2021. The following are the three key results of the year.



75,500 LIFE-SAVING DIGNITY KITS WERE PROCURED AND DISTRIBUTED in the drought affected provinces of Benguela, Cuando Cubango, Cunene, Huambo, Huila and Namibe

60 YOUTH FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES (YFHS) implemented in Luanda, Uíge and Cuanza Norte provinces.

THE SMS JOVEM DIGITAL PLATFORM REACHED 79,500 ADOLESCENTS with key messages on SRH, GBV, STIs, and COVID-19, in the first 3 months of 2021.



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In the southern region of Angola, farmlands lie desolate; grazing animals have been replaced by decaying corpses, hunger is normal and thousands have moved from their homes to survive. The worst drought in four decades has destroyed 40 per cent of the region's crops. Already, prone to cyclical droughts and floods, intensifying climate impacts have affected rainfall, prolonging the dry season and interrupting food production.

Reports from various government institutions and the United Nations System estimate that 8 million people are directly affected by this severe drought, half of them deprived of health services, education and decent standards of living. Among the most vulnerable are women and girls of reproductive age.

UNFPA responded to the humanitarian situation (cyclical drought) in the Southern provinces of Angola enabled by two key partnerships. Through a World Bank loan to the Government of Angola, administered by the Angolan Ministry of Health (MINSa), UNFPA purchased and distributed 50,000 dignity kits in Huila, Cunene, Namibe and Cuando-Cubango - the worst-affected provinces. At the same time, under the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF),

UNFPA reached over 143 000 people affected by the drought. The response included the distribution of 25,500 dignity kits to women and girls of reproductive age, 113 337 clean delivery kits to pregnant women and girls, and 60 birth attendant kits in health units. These kits are used for various procedures including births, treating sexually transmitted infections (STI) and treating sexual violations. To ensure an integrated humanitarian response, 780 community awareness sessions were held combining vital information on SRHR and GBV prevention. Notably, 5000 men and boys received key messages on GBV and SRHR-related issues.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE KEY RESULTS FOR 2021



75,500

Life-saving Dignity Kits procured and distributed in drought-affected provinces.



113,337

Clean delivery kits distributed to pregnant women and girls.



60

Birth Attendant kits in health units.



780

Community awareness sessions on SRH and GBV held.



5,000

Men and boys reached with lifesaving key messages on SRH and GBV.

The distribution drive is part of the government-led Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Response in Drought Affected Areas in Southern Angola project. The project supports the provision of integrated services in family planning, prenatal care, safe delivery, newborn care, childcare and prevention of STI and HIV. The distribution drives were also used as opportunities for community mobilisation to engage both women and men on preventing unwanted pregnancies, HIV and STI transmission, and gender-based violence.

Adolescents and youth are particularly vulnerable during humanitarian emergencies. Food insecurity, poverty, interrupted education, and separation from families may lead to exploitation, sexual abuse and greatly affect their ability to practice safe reproductive health behaviour or access health services. The provision of youth-oriented services, such as mental health care, psychosocial support and gender-based violence prevention activities to protect girls and women at the community-level are therefore an important component of the project.

Forced migration, food shortages, and lost livelihoods place women and girls at increased risk of violence and sexual exploitation during emergencies.

Rape, forced or early marriage, and intimate-partner violence escalate at a time when health and protection services are stretched to their limit. UNFPA and government partners therefore continued to collaborate to mitigate the risk of violence, particularly for adolescent girls and young women. UNFPA partnered with the Civil Protection and Fire Service (SPCB) by supporting a regional course on Comprehensive Risk Management and Civil Protection, including a module on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) on SRH in Emergencies. This capacity building exercise will ensure that gender-based violence prevention is integrated in the government's humanitarian response.

In humanitarian contexts, collecting data about people at risk is critical to ensure the most vulnerable are reached first. UNFPA continued to support government agencies and civil society to strengthen the capacity of national, provincial and municipal public institutions to generate and use disaggregated data to support policies and programs that inform effective emergency responses.



IMPACT STORY: RELIEF FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE DROUGHT-HIT SOUTH

“I enjoyed receiving the dignity kit, because it helps with my hygiene”, says Bela José, a girl from southern Angola, who sells Mupeque oil in the Bibala market, in Huíla province. Bela lives with her brother who is under her guardianship, due to her mother’s fatigue, and now faces the vulnerabilities created by the drought that affects the country. Bela was one of the beneficiaries of the dignity kits distributed in Huíla.

For Bela, it is very important to have the support of UNFPA in menstrual health issues, but what she would really like is to study. I sell hair oil here at the market, on weekends I sell the chickens on the farm where my brother works, then I do housework, but I want to study” reinforces the girl, hoping that someone will listen and support her.

Dry crops, dead cattle corpses from lack of water and dusty land are some of the visible effects of the most severe drought in the last 40 years in southern Angola. In this bleak landscape, girls and women are among the most vulnerable. Food shortages and the destruction of the communities' way of life aggravate the already existing gender imbalances and the relatively high rates of violence they suffer daily. Many try to turn around and take on jobs traditionally occupied by men, such as producing and selling charcoal. Others migrate to Namibia and nearby towns in search of food. In their quest to survive, they make easy and fragile targets for sexual exploitation.

The situation is worrying and there is much work to be done. UNFPA is already on the ground to help reduce the exposure of this population group to the effects of drought. The distribution of dignity kits to women in southern Angola is just one step in the emergency response program.

In total, UN agencies involved in the partnership with the Government of Angola will eventually support 874,000 women of childbearing age and 113,337 pregnant women



in matters of sexual and reproductive health and prevention of gender-based violence.

Saving lives is the ultimate goal. UNFPA predicts that this set of actions, combined with emergency obstetric care, will reduce infant mortality rates. Pregnant and lactating women will also benefit from reduced risk of death from preventable causes, in addition to having a positive impact on the reduction of HIV transmission.

On the other hand, the program also wants to intervene to improve the general health of this group. For example, girls and women in emergency contexts may avoid drinking water to limit using toilets which increases the risk of urinary infections. Or they may keep what little water there is for household tasks, neglecting their daily hygiene, a particularly delicate situation during menstruation.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of marginalized populations and made it even more challenging to deliver essential SRH services. For young people, limited access to SRH services results in the unmet need for contraception leading to unwanted pregnancies and drives up the number of unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections. The adolescent birth rate for Angola is among the highest in the East and Southern Africa region at 163 live births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 years; and while COVID-19 may have overshadowed the HIV epidemic, young people - especially adolescent girls and young women - account for 30 per cent of new infections.

REDUCING EARLY PREGNANCY AMONG YOUTH AND ADOLESCENTS

To reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies among adolescents and youth and new HIV infections, UNFPA, in partnership with the National Public Health Directorate of Angola, implemented 60 Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) in Luanda, Uíge and Cuanza Norte provinces. The YFHS are part of the operationalization of the National Adolescent Health Strategy to improve access to quality health services in hard-to-reach areas for adolescents and youth.

UNFPA Angola also supported the Youth Secretariat of the Angolan Christian Council of Churches (JUCICA) to raise awareness among young people about sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, Menstrual Health Management, and COVID-19 prevention. In Luanda province alone, 11,000 adolescents and youth were mobilized on early pregnancy and HIV prevention. Apart from JUCICA, the UNFPA Angola CO has established excellent working partnerships with Centro de Apoio aos Jovens (CAJ), Conselho Nacional da Juventude (CNJ) and AfriYAn Angola.

REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY IN EMERGENCIES

In Angola, around half of all births happen outside of health institutions, placing the health of mothers and newborns at risk. Though the maternal mortality ratio has decreased significantly since 2014, the current ratio of 239 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births is still higher than the global ratio of 211 deaths per 100,000 live births. According to IIMS 2015-2016, the percentage of female deaths associated with pregnancy among women aged 15-49 is 16.3 per cent.

This percentage is even higher among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years (16.5 per

cent) and young women aged 20-24 years (21.2 per cent).

In fragile humanitarian contexts, expectant mothers often face heightened risks and additional barriers to accessing SRH services. Health care units may operate at minimal capacity or stop routine services altogether. The timely provision of SRH services saves lives by preventing death, disease, and disability and protects the rights of women and girls. Without access to delivery services and emergency obstetric care, pregnant women are at risk of fatal complications. Women and girls may also lose access to family planning services, exposing them to unplanned pregnancies. In emergencies, they become more vulnerable to sexual violence, sexual exploitation and HIV infection.

To maintain sexual and reproductive health in drought-affected areas, from August to November 2021, UNFPA in partnership with the World Bank and the Angolan Ministry of Health (MINSa) provided over 41,000 women and girls in 22 municipalities across four provinces (Cuando-Cubango, Cunene, Huíla and Namibe) with the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP). MISP services include family planning, antenatal consultations, care for normal and complicated births and care for sick newborns. In addition to the distribution of dignity kits, community engagement activities took place that focused on early pregnancy and HIV/STI prevention. The importance of antenatal care and institutional deliveries were also disseminated during the community activities.

To reach the country's development goals outlined in Angola's National Health Development Plan 2012-2025, MINSa is working to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by at least 50 per cent and increase institutional deliveries attended by technical personnel to 80 per cent.

The activities carried out by UNFPA and government stakeholders in 2021 will contribute towards the national vision of an integrated, inclusive, and sustainable health system and a strong workforce capable of providing quality health services to all Angolans.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS KEY RESULTS FOR 2021



60
Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) implemented in Luanda, Uíge and Cuanza Norte provinces.



11,000
Adolescents and youth mobilized on early pregnancy and HIV prevention in Luanda Province.



41,000
Women living in drought-affected areas provided with the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) in four provinces.



50,000
Dignity kits procured and distributed in four provinces affected by the drought in Southern Angola.





YOUNG PEOPLE & ADOLESCENTS

Angola's population is young. The most recent population data shows that 65.9 per cent are under 25 years of age while 46.4 per cent are under 15 years. This means the majority of the population needs immediate access to education, health, employment and information to make positive choices and decisions that will influence the country's development trajectory. Yet a significant contributor to the country's high fertility rate is the early age of sexual debut - 14 years is the average age of first sexual intercourse and consequently the high adolescent pregnancy rate - 163 live births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 years have already had their first pregnancy.

Preventing unintended pregnancy is directly linked to women's economic participation and is shown to accelerate economic growth. When more women and girls are educated and employed, societies benefit from a demographic dividend - when the working age population outnumbers dependents (the elderly and very young). However, projections from the INE in 2015 (using 2014 data) shows that if the annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent is sustained, the Angolan population, estimated at 32.1 million inhabitants in 2021 will reach 41.8 million in 2030 and could double in 2038.

ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY SRHR INFORMATION

A lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health in general is one of the reasons for Angola's high teenage pregnancy rate. In their responses to surveys conducted by youth organisations such as Mwana Pwo, teenage girls indicated "a lack of information" as the cause of their first pregnancy.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADOLESCENTS KEY RESULTS FOR 2021



100,000

Adolescents and young people reached with key messages on SRH, GBV, STIs, and COVID-19 through the **JIRO programme** which was expanded to 18 Provinces by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.



79,500

Adolescents reached with key messages on SRH, GBV, STIs, and COVID-19 through the **SMS Jovem** digital platform.



4,000

Girls and boys reached with **educational information on MHM and SRH**.



27

Technicians from Government and Civil Society received **Menstrual Health Management training**.

To equip young people to make informed and positive sexual and reproductive health choices, the Angolan Government established the Informed, Responsible and Organized Youth Program (JIRO) in 1997. JIRO is a UNFPA-supported programme run by the Ministry of Youth and Sports together with the Ministry of Social Action, Family and Promotion of Women; the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Health.

In 2021, the JIRO Programme was expanded to 18 Provinces by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Between January and April 2021, 101 activists were trained and the JIRO program reached 56,792 young people across the country. By the end of the year, more than 100,000 adolescents and young people were reached with key messages on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and COVID-19.

Realising the importance of consistent engagement with youth to bolster healthy choices, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in partnership with UNFPA and UNICEF, has also invested in mobile apps and technology including the SMS-Jovem/U-Report. The digital platform reaches young people and adolescents with life-saving information, to enable them to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Engagement is two-way as the messaging service also allows any young person to send mobile messages to report or find out more about problems that concern them, on a wide range of topics including health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth unemployment, sexual reproductive health, gender equality, COVID 19, HIV/AIDS or epidemic outbreaks. At the end of 2021, the SMS Jovem digital platform reached 79,500 adolescents.

MENSTRUAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Limited information on puberty at the start of adolescence is also closely linked to the high teenage pregnancy rate. For many of the 10 million girls and women in Angola of menstrual or reproductive age, menstruation is often a period of deprivation and stigma. Yet, when menstrual health and hygiene is effectively managed from the start at menarche, it has a remarkably high potential to contribute to increasing female empowerment at a critical stage of a girls' life, all the way to menopause.

On the other hand, when girls lack adequate facilities to manage their menstruation or access to affordable menstrual products or are shunned by stigma, they begin to miss school and fall behind in their education. So while 75 per cent of girls attend primary school in Angola, this proportion drops to a meagre 15.5 per cent in secondary school suggesting that many girls drop out after skipping classes successively due to menstrual pain, lack of supplies, stigma or shame.

Factors such as humanitarian crises and harmful traditions, combined with the lack of economic resources of many women and girls, also make it difficult for them to access menstrual hygiene products and the dignity to which they are entitled. Many girls living in rural and remote communities are unaware that menstrual hygiene products even exist.

During the pandemic in 2020, vulnerable women and girls faced constraints in accessing affordable menstrual products, with food being prioritized in the family budget. In this fragile context, UNFPA partnered with BeGirl Inc. to address menstrual health and hygiene. In 2021, UNFPA scaled up the BeGirl programme to look beyond the COVID-19 crisis toward a larger goal of advancing girls' education and gender equity by ensuring periods and unintended pregnancies do not keep girls from school. UNFPA and the BeGirl Inc. partnership trained 27 technicians (educators) from government institutions and civil society to provide menstrual health and sexual reproductive health educational workshops. Training sessions included other relevant topics such as body literacy, puberty and reproductive health, menstrual cycle, SmartCycle practice and self-care during menstruation.

In addition, menstrual health products such as reusable period panties and tools to help participants track and understand cycles were distributed. During approximately fifty sessions, four thousand menstruation panties (two per girl) and four thousand menstrual clocks were distributed. The COVID 19 pandemic made clear the need for sustainable products and systems to counter supply chains disruptions.

Through the Ser Menina programme, 4,000 girls and boys were reached with educational information on menstrual health management and SRH in the provinces of Benguela, Cuanza Sul, Lunda Sul and

Moxico. In addition to fostering practical menstrual health knowledge, the training also promotes gender equality and fights stigma around menstruation. The deconstruction of myths and taboos around menstruation is critical for young people as menstruation-related stigmas and norms often reinforce discriminatory practices. Cultural and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) barriers related to menstruation at school, at work, in health services and in public activities also perpetuate gender inequalities, creating obstacles to educational and employment opportunities and the empowerment of women and young adolescents.

The participation of boys in this type of training is therefore a priority. With the knowledge gained, boys can support their families, partners and society at large in the future. They are also less likely to exhibit toxic masculinity that puts women at risk of gender-based violence and extreme economic vulnerability, without opportunities to empower themselves.

The programme offers an encouraging step forward; results showed that participants learned how the female reproductive system works and how menstruation and family planning are linked. Girls felt confident in participating in activities when they might have held back before, and boys felt more comfortable supporting friends, girlfriends and sisters in making informed health choices and in everyday participation. With these interventions, the cascading effects on the lives of girls, boys and their communities are integral so that all girls and women can manage their menstrual health with comfort, confidence and dignity.



CLÁUDIA'S STORY

Social activist and student, Cláudia Simão Semedo grew up in a humble family, but “with a lot of strength and wisdom”, she explains. In Viana, where she lives, everyday life demands determination. Situated 18 km from Luanda, Angola’s capital city, Viana is the second-most densely populated municipality in the country. More than 1.8 million people live there, most in extreme poverty. Despite being one of the region's top industrial areas, Viana lacks basic infrastructure making life difficult for its residents.

Cláudia works as a counsellor at the SMS Jovem/U-Report Youth Call Centre in Viana. The messaging service from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, with support from UNFPA and UNICEF, allows young people to send mobile messages to report or receive information about problems that concern them.

Even before joining the call center, Cláudia knew she was born to help others. “Since I was little, I had this constant desire to support others without getting anything in return. Sometimes I sacrificed myself to see others happy and I continue to do that”, she explains.

Her journey as an activist started when she joined JIRO (Informed, Responsible and Organized Youth) and received training on sexual and reproductive health and broader issues faced by young people. “I had a lot of training in the area of SRH and beyond, and this was fundamental to transmit knowledge to other young people and to answer their questions and support them.”

While Cláudia comes across as a strong young woman, she has had to work hard on her confidence. “I’m a fearful person, but I prefer to hide my fears,” she admits.



"I am a true African woman warrior!"

Rather, she relies on the fighting spirit that she has cultivated over the years as she triumphed over difficult circumstances including not always having enough money to meet her basic needs and not receiving support for her work from family, colleagues and neighbours. “I am a true African woman warrior!” she exclaims.

Cláudia’s conviction that knowledge on SRH, especially family planning, will transform generations of young Angolans provides her with the determination and motivation to keep working hard even in the face of opposition. Her mission, she reinforces, is that the young people are successful and have a platform to make their voices heard. “Tomorrow I will be able to say that I did fight and that the opportunity I have at the SMS Jovem Call Center was worth it!”



SEE MORE



DANIELA'S STORY

26-year-old Daniela Isabel Raimundo Ngunza joined the JIRO (Responsible and Organized Informed Youth) after she was approached by activists from the group. Since then, she helps young people in her community in the province of Luanda, Angola. Her work is crucial. In Luanda, 40 per cent of young people between 12 and 19 years old have used alcohol; the average age of first sexual intercourse is 14 years old; and 41 per cent of girls of the same age have already had a pregnancy.

"My daily life as an activist involves being in the field and talking to young people so that they can change their behavior," says Daniela. Supported by UNFPA, JIRO is a government-led programme first launched in 1997 to promote positive behaviours in youths and adolescents through education on sexual and reproductive health including on family planning, positive gender norms, and STI/HIV prevention.

From an early age, Daniela wanted to train as a doctor so that she could take care of people. Her path was riddled with difficulties and she initially tried to study nursing but could not complete her training. Daniela has now become an entrepreneur and she continues to care for and support other women and young people from her community through JIRO, bringing them knowledge about topics related to youth and in particular to women.

Through digital technology, young activists are now able to reach more youth, communities are coming closer and information is widely available. For Daniela, digital communication has allowed her to have a broader view of the world and she feels empowered through the information available on digital platforms.



"I wish to see a world where women are well-informed so that they can achieve their goals."

"One of the great benefits that digital technology brought to my life was knowledge. Today I know a lot that I had no idea about before."

Digital platforms like the SMS Jovem/U-Report developed from a partnership between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNFPA, are reaching young people and adolescents via mobile phones with key SRH and lifesaving information to realize their human rights.

Daniela says she wishes to see a world where women are "well-informed so that they can achieve their goals", so she keeps working towards this dream.



SEE MORE





GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Women in Angola have an enormous impact on the well-being of their families and societies, yet their potential often remains unrealized because of discriminatory social norms, incentives, and legal institutions. Although their status has improved in recent decades, gender inequalities persist.

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is considered a critical success factor in achieving the national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Data and statistics are indispensable tools for devising evidence-based policies and programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment, assessing their impact, and promoting accountability. UNFPA supports countries in securing national data on violence against women to develop evidence-based programmes to promote and protect women's rights.

In 2021, the Ministry of Social Action, Family and Women's Promotion (MASFAMU) with the support of UNFPA and UNDP started the process of creating the Angola Gender Observatory (OGA). The OGA will be the main national mechanism to track and report the progress on gender equality and gender equity; contribute to monitoring SDG 5 on Gender Equality but also gender-sensitive indicators across the SDGs and the National

Development plan. This investment in gender statistics will close the large data gaps that prevent the successful monitoring of progress on regional and international instruments on gender equality.

UNFPA and UNDP are supporting MASFAMU to continue and deepen the work it started with the creation of the OGA, which will constitute a fundamental resource, not only to gather and make available quantitative information but also to include qualitative data and research results. So far, conceptual guidelines and operational tools for the Observatory have been produced.

One of the main ways gender discrimination and inequality persists is seen in the level of violence against women and girls. In Angola, over a third of women (32 per cent) complain that they have been victims of violence since the age of 15. On average, eight per cent of these women have been victims of sexual violence at some point in their lives and 34 per cent of married women have experienced spousal or physical violence in their lifetime.

Even though gender-based violence (GBV) is prevalent in Angola, it largely remains shrouded in a culture of silence that undermines the health, dignity, safety and autonomy of women and girls.

Cases of domestic violence often go unreported due to fear or lack of knowledge of the process of reporting. Further, authorities that respond to cases may not always have the relevant knowledge to intervene in a timely, adequate and appropriate manner that does not further jeopardise the safety of the victim.

At the country level, UNFPA works to strengthen the capacity of health and law enforcement services to address GBV. In response to the need for guidelines to respond to domestic violence, UNFPA supported MASFAMU to develop a Handbook for Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence. The handbook contains minimum requirements for intervention, monitoring and assistance to complainants. The guide is a vital component in strengthening the national response to combat GBV in line with Angola's regional and international commitments. The handbook will be disseminated in 2022.

One of the key priorities identified in the context of GBV and harmful practices prevention is strengthening the legal framework on violence against women and girls. In addition to the handbook, the CO further supported MASFAMU to revise the National Law against Domestic Violence. The updated version aligns with the newly approved Penal Code of Angola. The formalised document was aptly presented during a Round Table on GBV Data held on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which also marks the start of 16 Days of Activism against GBV.

In addition to providing a responsive legal and health system, women's economic

empowerment is an essential avenue for promoting gender equality and mitigating the risk of gender-based violence. Young women in particular are less likely to become involved in transactional and exploitative sexual relationships if they can earn an income on their own. In partnership with Lara Almeida, a Cape Verdean entrepreneur, UNFPA supported the training of 31 young women to produce reusable pads, create appropriate product branding, and market their products on social media. The entrepreneurial training was complemented by awareness sessions on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and menstrual health management (MHM). With this fundamental knowledge, the producers can design and market their products effectively and become an additional source of information on MHM and SRH for women and girls who use their products.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

KEY RESULTS FOR 2021



Supported the creation of the **Angola Gender Observatory (OGA)**. The OGA will be a fundamental resource to gather and make available quantitative and qualitative information and research results.



Supported the development of the **Handbook for Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence** - ready to be disseminated in 2022.



Supported the Ministry of Social Action, Family and Women Promotion to revise the **National Law against Domestic Violence** and align it with the newly approved Penal Code of Angola.



31 Young women learned how to **produce reusable pads** and trained on brand creation and promotion through social media.





POPULATION DYNAMICS

Angola's population in 2021 was 32.1 million at an annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent. The Demographic projections prepared by the INE in 2015, with data from 2014 (25.8 million), show that maintaining current growth trends, the population will reach 41.8 million in 2030, and could double in 2038.

Angola's high fertility rate, averaging 6.2 children per woman, has resulted in a steep child dependency burden. The inability of many households to provide basic needs undermines the country's prospects of achieving its Vision 2050 goal - to reduce poverty by promoting economic growth, macroeconomic stability and employment.

If Angola's birth rate were to decline rapidly, the age structure would change from the current one dominated by dependent children to one dominated by working-age adults. This transformation in the dependency ratio will trigger accelerated economic growth known as the Demographic Dividend.

UNFPA is supporting the government, led by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), to realize this policy scenario where economic growth consistently outpaces population growth and investment in the economy, education and health, including

family planning, are simultaneously prioritized. The combination of policies could see the country eventually transition to a high-income country with a per capita GDP of USD 24,609 by 2054. The demographic dividend would account for up to a quarter (USD 6,121) of the GDP per capita. The recommendations of this policy are specified in the National Population Policy draft and its respective Action Plan.

UNFPA supported the National Population Policy document revision to ensure that it fully informs the process of harnessing the demographic dividend. In July 2021, partners from priority sectors including Health, Youth, Economy, Education, Statistics, Finance, civil society organizations, including religious organizations and youth, and development partners met to provide strategic feedback on the draft policy. Following the high-level meeting, the MEP and UNFPA held a multi-sectoral workshop with the participation of government, civil society and development partners where the General Guidelines of the National Policy for Population (DGPNP) were presented and examined. Inputs from these deliberations will ensure a collaborative spirit and strong acceptance from government agencies and partners to implement the national population policy - set to be finalized in 2022 - and its related action plan.

A crucial enabler of the National Population Policy is comprehensive and disaggregated population data. The national census, supported by thematic surveys and studies, is fundamental to national population data. These data improve the accuracy of scenario planning and help to formulate and direct national plans and policies.

Angola will hold its second General Census on Population and Housing in 2024. Government preparations led by the MEP and the National Statistics Institute (INE) began in 2021 to ensure the smooth running of the Census. UNFPA is actively supporting the census planning process through capacity-building efforts. UNFPA held a successful Census Preparation webinar with over seven countries, 50 staff from the INE and over 100 global participants. The webinar focused on South-South knowledge sharing including, crucially, on operational lessons learned and was also an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between government and international partners who will support the Census in 2024.

As the largest statistical operation carried out by a country, the census aims to reach every household and collect data directly from household members. Census mapping is, therefore, a critical tool in the operational and logistical planning of the collection of data on a national scale. UNFPA supported the

30-day mission of an international consultant to support the update of the country's cartography. This process will ensure total coverage of the national territory in 2024 and enable a graphic display of information, including disaggregation into urban and rural areas.

To further strengthen national population data, UNFPA supported the INE to develop two thematic studies on Gender and Youth based on the 2018/2019 Expenditure, Income and Employment (IDREA) Survey in Angola. The studies were finalized and launched in the last quarter of 2021 and provide an in-depth view of the effects of poverty on women, girls and young people.

POPULATION DYNAMICS KEY RESULTS FOR 2021



The **National Population Policy** draft and its respective action plan were revised and presented at a stakeholder workshop and a high-level meeting with key partners.



50 INE staff & **100** Global participants attended a webinar promoting South-South collaboration in **Census Planning**.



UNFPA supported a 30-day mission in Angola by an international consultant to help update the **country's cartography** in preparation for the 2024 Census.



2 Thematic Studies on Gender and Youth were carried out based on the 2018/2019 Expenditure, Income and Employment Survey (IDREA) in Angola.





PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

In a year of global insecurity and economic turbulence owing to the COVID-19 crisis, UNFPA Angola managed to successfully mobilize resources by strengthening domestic partnerships and enhancing national capacity to deliver on the key mandate of universal sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In 2021, UNFPA's total investment in Angola was approximately USD 5,7 million. This included an investment of USD 3,1 million in regular resources and USD 2.5 million in other resources from donors. The UNFPA Angola CO enhanced its efforts to secure domestic financing for the ICPD agenda, by mobilising resources from the Government of Angola (GoA) to amplify the coverage of quality health services for women and girls in hard to reach areas. The CO successfully mobilized funds from the Ministry of Health through the World Bank as well as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support the government's humanitarian response in the southern region provinces.

Using non-core resources, the Angola CO expanded its human resources through

additional project positions. These roles have been instrumental in achieving the CO's results and have led to a more equitable distribution of programme duties and assignments.

The CO also supported implementing partners (IPs) to navigate through the challenges brought about by COVID-19, to deliver programme results including carrying out humanitarian interventions in drought-affected provinces. These activities by IPs contributed to reducing maternal deaths, expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services including family planning and gender-based violence prevention.

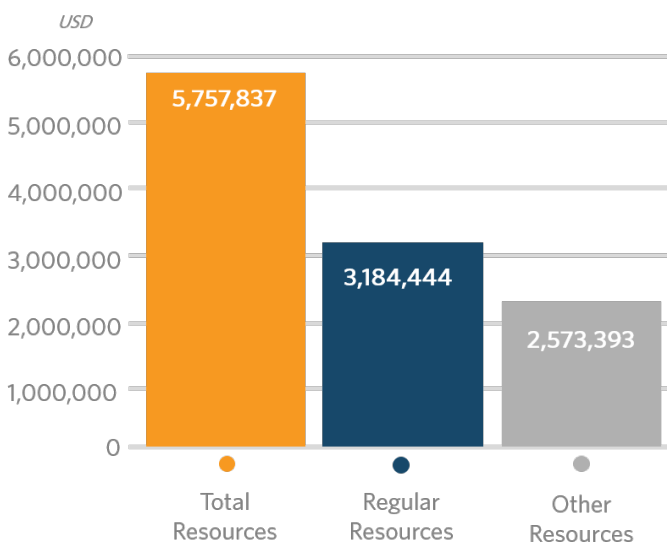
UNFPA Angola CO offered hands-on support to the IPs in planning and execution of their workplans. The annual reviews with IPs have particularly been very helpful to IPs in terms of providing space to share experiences and lessons. UNFPA has also used this forum to give feedback to IPs as well as receive inputs from IPs which has led to improvements in the execution of their workplans. The best performing IPs are also recognized

and rewarded during these annual reviews which clearly communicates UNFPA CO's commitment to result-based management principles.

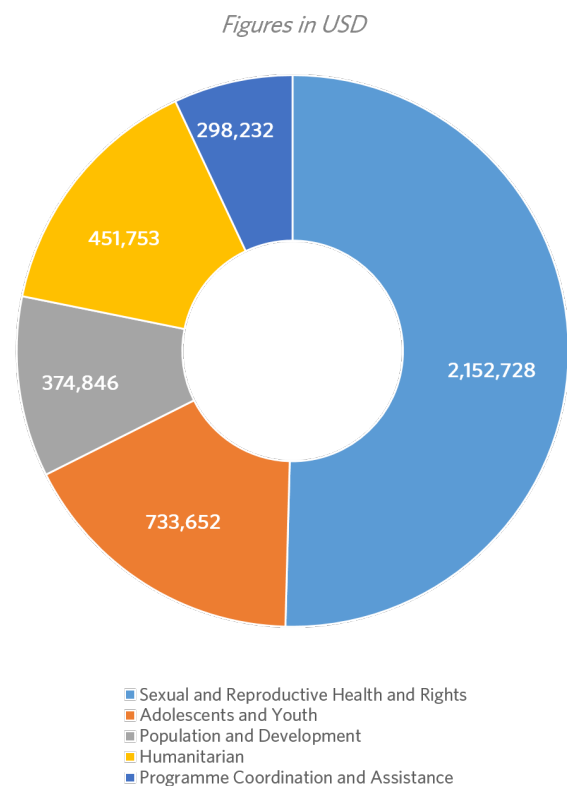
With movement restrictions, in-person training programs for UNFPA partners was no longer feasible. The challenge led to an innovative solution - a virtual training space. Based on the eLounge Platform, the online training reached a larger number of participants than would have been possible in a physical training. In addition to the training course sessions, UNFPA provided technical support webinars to guide participants on accessing and navigating the platform. Following the successful training, the Angola CO IP Training eLounge Platform won the Innovation Culture Award at the 2021 UNFPA Innovation Awards.

The ability of partners to adapt and continue their work in the face of adversity stemming from COVID-19 and climate-related disasters was invaluable to sustain the delivery of SRH services. Similarly, flexible and predictable funding through regular resources is vital to UNFPA's mission to fulfil the promise of the ICPD by 2030. The generous support of our donors and the dedicated work of our partners continues to change the lives of women, girls and young people across Angola.

Resources mobilized in 2021



Resources mobilized per programme area in 2021



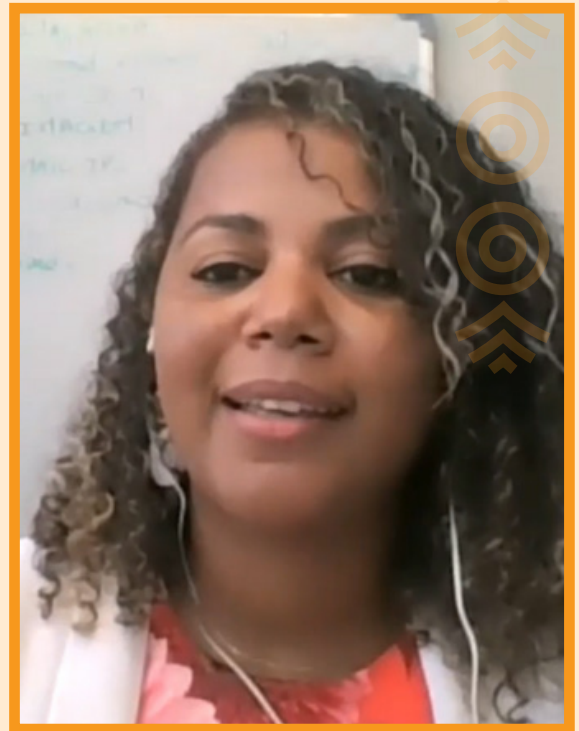
IMPACT STORY: ANGOLA COUNTRY OFFICE E-TRAINING PLATFORM WINS UNFPA INNOVATION CULTURE AWARD

Facing the COVID-19 pandemic, Eneida Fortes, acting operational chief, created an ambitious educational program online that ensured the continued training of implementing partners.

In 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Eneida Fortes, UNFPA Acting Operational Chief, called into question the in-person training programs of UNFPA partners. Eneida had an innovative idea: “to create a virtual training space, where technology was the main ally”, she says. With the “unconditional support” of the agency’s former representative in Angola, Florbela Fernandes, and the hard work of UN Volunteer Diandra Costa, Eneida Fortes quickly got down to work.

“I started investigating free online platforms and contacted UNFPA head of training, Markus Voelker, who invited her “to participate in a training on how to convert face-to-face training into effective virtual training”. In record time, with her team, she created and launched the course on the E-Lounge Platform, with content entirely in Portuguese and enabling partner organizations to learn at their own pace. It is the first project of its kind in the entire region of the continent and a source of pride for UNFPA Angola. “This project showed us what we can achieve when people unite around common and clear priorities and needs,” explains Eneida.

The response from UNFPA partners exceeded all expectations. “Due to the costs of face-to-face training, we used to have two participants per organization, who travelled to Luanda, but with this online course, some partners even enrolled 10 participants”, she says.



Eneida Fortes, acting operational chief 2021

"This project showed us what we can achieve when people unite around common and clear priorities and needs."

The virtual course eventually reached 123 people - far beyond the 50 expected participants. Eneida explains that the advantages of this tool are clear. “The virtual training will facilitate communication with partners and contribute to improving their performance and quality standards in response to UNFPA requirements.”

SEE MORE



OUR PARTNERS

UNFPA works in close partnership with the Government of Angola, which provides the policy framework for its mandate and implements many of the key programmes. Other implementing partners include international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations (including NGOs, community-based organizations, associations and networks). The Angola CO also relies on its close collaboration with international development partners including UN agencies, and international donors. UNFPA extends its appreciation to all partners across sectors who were instrumental in the achievement of our strategic results in 2021.

Government of Angola partners:

- Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP)
- Ministry of Education (MED)
- Ministry of Energy and Water (MINEA)
- Ministry of Health (MINSA)
- Ministry of Information and Social Communication Technologies (MINTTICS)
- Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MINJUSDH)
- Ministry of Social Actions, Family and Women Promotion (MASFAMU)
- Ministry of Transport (MINTRANS)
- Ministry of Youth and Sports (MINJUD)
- Municipal Administration of Menongue
- National Directorate of Public Health (DNSP)
- National Civil Protection
- National Institute of Statistics (INE)
- National Youth Council (CNJ)
- Provincial Government of Cuando Cubango
- Provincial Government of Cunene
- Provincial Government of Huambo
- Provincial Government of Huila
- Provincial Government of Namibe

International development partners:

- Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)/ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
- Embassy of Netherlands in Angola
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Resident Coordinator Office (RCO)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- World Bank (WB)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Implementing partners from civil society, include:

- African Youth and Adolescents Network Angola (AfriYan)
- Aid for the Development of People for People (ADPP)
- Angolan Network of AIDS Service Organizations (ANASO)
- Angolan Women's Network (REDE MULHER)
- Be Girl Inc. (Headquarters and Mozambique Office)
- Council of Christian Churches in Angola (CICA)
- IAJ - Youth Angolan Institute
- Iris - LGBTQIA Association
- Mwana Pwo: Transforming Young Women into Leaders
- Prazedor NGO
- Youth Friendly Services Center of FUBU
- Youth Support Center (CAJ)

*note this list does not include all government partners at the district or provincial levels.





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