

Oxfam in Angola

- An estimated 68% of the Angolan population lives below the poverty line
- Three in five people do not have access to safe water or sanitation

In numbers*...

80,000
total people helped



The situation

Angola is rich in natural resources, such as oil and diamonds. It's the major oil exporting country in Africa, pumping more than 1.5 million barrels a day. Its GDP has been growing, constantly placing Angola among the fastest growing economies in the world. It's also the world's fourth-largest exporter of rough diamonds and its sales reached approximately \$1bn in 2005.

A major proportion of Angola's oil and diamond revenue has been spent on nationwide infrastructure development, mainly in Luanda, which is in the midst of a construction boom. Rebuilding and reconnecting damaged roads, railways, airports and bridges has been the main government strategy to make the weak agriculture and commercial sectors start working more effectively and quickly, and to redistribute wealth more evenly and equally.

But most Angolans remain poor. Luanda is the world's most expensive city, while 12 million people (67%) survive on less than \$2 a day; 94% of inhabitants in rural areas.

Angola became independent from Portugal in 1975, after 450 years of colonial rule that segregated the country by race, class and region. 27 years of civil war followed. During the war an estimated 1.5 million people died; more than 4 million were forced from their homes; and another 500,000 fled the country. Roads, railways, and bridges built during the colonial era were destroyed; agricultural infrastructure was severely damaged; and much of the population was left in appalling poverty.

War resulted in sustained under-development of the nation. This has affected citizens' ability to assert their rights in the leadership and development process. Even after the 2008 election, the public is unable to demand accountability from elected leaders to demonstrate their commitment to the development of social structures and institutions that will improve the poor and deprived people's living standards.

The government has made some progress after the war, but has focused on developing large infrastructures, rather than on poverty reduction and improvements in poor Angolans' lives. Angola still has the capacity and huge potential to become food self-sufficient. And the agriculture sector could create a significant number of jobs, as two thirds of the population earns its living from small-scale agriculture. But the government allocates less than 1% of its budget to the sector.



Teresa Bingo, an Oxfam trained peer educator, teaches her village about the different modes of HIV transmission and how to protect against the disease

Photo: Andy Hall

How Oxfam is helping

Oxfam GB started supporting Angolan people in 1975, with relief and emergency response through partners. We opened an office in Luanda in 1989, and continued our humanitarian support in different parts of the country, mainly working on water and sanitation.

In 1997 we had massive emergency operations in the Cubal Municipality of Benguela province during the civil war. We constructed about 600 water wells in Bie to give communities access to clean water and sanitation services.

In 2010 Oxfam moved its office from Luanda to Benguela and moved from emergency response work to development work, with a human rights based approach, and further commitment to operate fully through partners. We have worked on water and sanitation, humanitarian programmes, HIV and AIDS and livelihoods, including gender work.

The major cause of poverty in Angola is not lack of resources but lack of good governance. So Oxfam is wrapping up its water and sanitation work in Angola and focusing on governance and public policy.



People collect water from a pump constructed by Oxfam

Photo: Andy Hill



Activist and home-based carer, Beatrice, counsels one of her HIV positive patients in Kuito

Photo: Simon Rawles