

PROFILE: ANGOLA

One of Africa's leading oil producers, Angola is struggling to shake off the legacy of a debilitating 27-year civil war which claimed half a million lives.

The two combatants – the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the rebel group Unita – were bitter rivals even before independence was gained from Portugal in 1975.

Ultimately, the conflict became an African reflection of the Cold War: the Soviet Union and Cuba backing the MPLA, and the US and white-ruled South Africa supporting Unita as a bulwark against Soviet communism.

A peace accord was signed in 2004, but Angola is still contaminated with landmines. Rebuilding infrastructure poses a huge challenge – as does the resettlement of millions of displaced people.

Despite recent economic growth, few ordinary citizens benefit from Angola's mineral wealth and most survive on less than US\$2 a day.

In early 2010, persistent rain caused severe floods in the Huambo and Cunene regions. Seasonal rains are an annual occurrence, but more than 300,000 people were affected.

Nearly 180,000 people are known to be living with HIV, and they often face stigma and discrimination. Knowledge about transmission and infection is sparse and services are inadequate.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN ANGOLA

Tearfund has been working in Angola for more than 20 years and currently works with eight partners. Here is a selection of their work:

The Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola runs a range of projects in community development, human rights, literacy, and care for people living with HIV.

Active in HIV prevention, the Reformed Evangelical Church in Angola used its close links with communities to distribute food rations after flooding in Uíge Province.

A centre run by the Angolan Evangelical Alliance (AEA) serves a slum area in Kikolo with healthcare and HIV education.

El Shaddai addresses double discrimination suffered by disabled people who also live with HIV, offering counselling and practical care and re-educating communities.

The AEA theological college ISTEEL trains pastoral workers to combat ignorance about HIV and promote hope, acceptance, respect, inclusion and self-esteem.

UIEA, a denomination in southern Angola, is increasing the number of people in Huila Province who know their HIV status through the promotion of voluntary testing.

Through training and publications, Rede Esperança (Hope Network) is empowering church leaders to serve communities affected by HIV.

GBECA, an evangelical student organisation, is targeting a reduction of HIV in Huila and Namibe provinces and overcoming taboos in schools and churches through open discussion of HIV, sex and sexuality.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Angola.**
- **Please pray for our Angolan partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for Angola: for justice, peace, good health and hope for everyone.**