



Adventist Dental Clinic, Luanda, Angola.

Photo courtesy of Bongi-nkosi Sibanda.

Adventist Dental Clinic, Luanda, Angola

BONGI-NKOSI TSHUMA SIBANDA

Bongi-nkosi Tshuma Sibanda, Master's Degree in Development Studies (Lupane State University, Zimbabwe), is a Zimbabwean citizen, raised at Solusi College (now Solusi University). She attended both primary and secondary school there. Later she trained as a registered nurse and midwife at Maluti Hospital in Mapoteng, Lesotho. Sibanda and her husband are currently missionaries serving in the North-Eastern Angola Union, where she is the departmental director for Health Ministries/AAIM, Women's Ministries and Children's Ministries.

The Adventist Dental Clinic, in Luanda, is a subsidiary medical institution of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.

Overview

The Adventist Dental Clinic, in Luanda, operates as a day-care service institution, offering dental-care services in Luanda, the capital city of Angola. It is one of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's medical institutions established in the post-war period, as well as the post old Angola Union Mission realignment. It is operated under the administration of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission. The dental clinic board oversees the management functions of the clinic.

Developments That Led to the Establishment of the Institution

When the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission (NEAU) was constituted in 2010, it focused on establishing itself and developing its constituency. Many of the clinics that had been operating in the union territory were at best memories of past glory, as the thirty-year-long Angolan civil war had destroyed the infrastructure.¹ Institutional governance, service delivery, and sustainability were impossible during the war. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) made several attempts to keep the medical services going, but after the war ended and ADRA had withdrawn its assistance to the medical services, it was not possible for the clinics to remain sustainable as the entire Seventh-day Adventist Church organization in Angola was in recovery mode.

Conversations for establishing a dental clinic in Luanda were initiated during the visit of the Adventist Health International (AHI) representatives Dr. Nick Doyle and Dr. Quint Nicola during the formative years of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission.² The idea they planted was kept alive, and preparations followed until April 2016 when the doors of the clinic were finally opened.

Thus, the Adventist Dental Clinic in Luanda originated as a result of a felt need to offer dental services in a city of more than five million inhabitants, almost a third of the country's population at that time, to bring visibility to the Adventist work and its influence in the nation's capital city.

Establishment of the Institution

The NEAU Mission's contribution to the establishment of the dental clinic was through the provision of a two storey building located behind the union office building.³ The leadership of the Union Mission then consisted of Dr. Passmore Hachalinga—president; Pastor Teixeira Mateus Vinte—executive secretary; and Pastor Burns Sibanda—chief finance officer. The Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) Health Ministries Department, AHI, and UCI (Global Mission Fund) also contributed funds and equipment for the clinic project.⁴ In August 2013 a vote was taken to accept the concept of setting up a dental clinic⁵, begin the renovations to the building, work on registering the institution, and search for suitable staff. Providentially, the SID, through Dr. Alexis Llaguno, the SID Health Ministries director, processed the transfer of a missionary dentist of Brazilian origin, Dr. Luis Oliveira, who had been serving in Madagascar, to go to Luanda, Angola, to help with setting up the dental clinic.⁶

Meanwhile, a local dental technician, Dr. Manuel Henriques Canongembi, was hired, and he began making significant strides in setting up the equipment.⁷ The missionary dentist, Dr. Luis Oliveira and his family, stayed in Luanda for less than a year, and at the request of his family a vote was taken on January 14, 2016, for them to go on permanent return to Brazil.⁸ By that time Dr. Manuel Henriques Canonguemi was also about to complete his dentistry studies. After his registration with the Medical Board of Angola, the church hired him,⁹ and the clinic was able to open its doors to the public in April 2016 with five employees and two locum dentists. Sister Fatima Lucamba served as the first clinic administrator from April 2016 to August 2018.¹⁰ More locum dentists and dental specialists were contracted to complement the clinic's full-time staff.

In addition to providing clinic based dental services, at an average of nine patients per day, the Adventist Dental Clinic in Luanda conducts outreach services. Its continued collaboration with the Association of Adventist Dentists (Carinot) has made it possible for the clinic to conduct mobile services targeting dental patients living in per-urban areas of the country with limited access to dental services, such as Vila Estoril, Unitel Expo, ADRA Expo, and Maye Maye, and those areas with high rates of pediatric dental problems. The outreach services are organized in conjunction with local churches, which provide the spiritual ministry in those targeted communities. The local churches also conduct various health expos, accompanied with music, distribution of literature, clothing, and food sometimes.

Future Outlook

The Adventist Dental Clinic in Luanda receives many requests from its clients for the expansion of its services. The clinic has received a donation of US \$570,000 to assist in the expansion of its services. The clinic is also receiving support toward this end from AHI, the SID, and the Government of Angola. For example, AHI has donated a container of dental equipment and a panoramic X-Ray machine. The clinic building is currently undergoing renovations to create more room for expansion. It is hoped that by the end of 2022, this initiative that was begun during the union mission presidency of Dr. Justino Paulo Jr. may come to completion during the current union mission presidency of Pastor Teixeira Mateus Vinte.

In this community environment where there are currently many other dental-care service providers, the Adventist Dental Clinic in Luanda must continue providing high-quality, patient-friendly services through its caring staff, using cutting-edge equipment, and with a highly efficient work approach. This will enable the institution to maintain its leading position as a preferred dental-care service provider in the nation's capital city.

List of Administrators

Medical Directors: Dr. Luis Oliveira (2016); Dr. Manuel Henriques Canongembi (2016–2022); Dr. Augusto Francisco Teixeira (2022 to date).

Clinic Administrators: Fatima Lucamba (2016-2018); Miguel Pinto Silvano (2019 to date).

SOURCES

Clinica Dentario Adventista em Luanda, Angola. Minutes of meetings of the Board of August 23, 2013. Available in the North East Angola Union Mission Secretariat Archives.

Seventh-day Adventist Church (Luanda, Angola). Minutes of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meetings of August 23, 2013; January 14, 2016; February 11, 2016; January 24, 2017; April 30, 2019; May 7, 2021; January 27, 2022; May 30, 2022. Available in the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission Secretariat Archives.

NOTES

1. Bonginkosi Sibanda, personal knowledge from serving as director of the Health Ministries Department of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission from 2012 to date.
2. Ibid.
3. Clinica Dentario Adventista em Luanda, Angola, minutes of meetings of the Board of August 23, 2013, available in the North East Angola Union Mission Secretariat Archives.
4. Bonginkosi Sibanda, personal knowledge from serving as director of the Health Ministries Department of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission from 2012 to date.
5. Seventh-day Adventist Church (Luanda, Angola), minutes of the North East Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meeting of August 23, 2013.
6. Seventh-day Adventist Church (Luanda, Angola), minutes of the North East Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meeting of November 20, 2014.
7. Manuel Henriques Canongembi, phone message to author, September 20, 2022.
8. Seventh-day Adventists (Luanda, Angola), minutes of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meeting of January 14, 2016.
9. Seventh-day Adventists (Luanda, Angola), minutes of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meetings meeting of February 11, 2016.

10. Seventh-day Adventists (Luanda, Angola), minutes of the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission Executive Committee meeting of January 24, 2017.

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