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## **Eradicating leprosy**

### **Background**

Leprosy, or Hansen's is a chronic infectious disease caused by a bacteria, transmitted through close contact. It is curable. If treated early, it doesn't leave any physical impairment. Left untreated, leprosy can cause permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes.

Angola has Africa's third highest incidence of leprosy after Mozambique and Madagascar, with over 1 000 cases detected each year. Preventing disabilities and further transmission requires early diagnosis and treatment with multidrug antibiotic therapy (MDT) and reducing treatment drop-out through improved follow up.

The Ministry of Health's leprosy plan seeks to expand detection, better integrate leprosy into primary health care and map the pockets of disease.

### **Project focus**

SIPA is partnering with Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE) in the national effort to eliminate leprosy. The project aims to detect and treat new cases early, educate communities and eliminate the stigma attached to leprosy. It also seeks to reach reach 6 000 school pupils with information every year.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to improve the quality of leprosy care in peri-pheral health facilities, help ensure drug availability to patients, and work closely with provincial health departments and the Ministry of Health.

### **Key activities**

Key project activities include training and follow up that seek to reduce stigma and increase prevention and treatment knowledge in communities through:

- Improved prevention of leprosy through innovative and integrated approaches
- Supporting better detection systems and case tracking through SMS updated databases.



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### **Location and target audience**

The project targets people with leprosy, their families and communities in high endemic areas in Cabinda, Kwanza Norte, Lunda Norte and Uige provinces. There are a minimum of 40 nurses and 28 community health agents working on this project.

### **Duration**

The project was established in October 2014, and will run until April 2017.

### **Implementing partners and stakeholders**

Implementing partners and stakeholders include Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE), working closely with the Association for the Reintegration of People Affected by Leprosy (ARPAL) and the Ministry of Health.