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## **Recovering from blindness through cataract surgery**

### **Background**

A cataract is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye, causing blurry vision and eventually blindness if not surgically removed. Vision can be restored by surgically removing the affected lens and replacing it with an artificial one. Cataract is responsible for half of world blindness, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) although it can be treated to prevent losing or restoring vision. In Angola, only Luanda and Benguela have ophthalmology centres. In the remaining 16 provinces, thousands of Angolans are blind or at the risk of blindness from cataract due to a lack of access to eye care and surgery.

### **Project focus**

Since 2012, people in the provinces have received eye care services and cataract surgery. As of 2015, Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE) is the only health provider that performs eye surgeries outside Luanda and Benguela. Its surgeons operate at several faith-based regional hospitals and clinics, and in SOLE's own clinic in Benguela. Two surgery techniques are used, micro-incision *cataract surgery (MICS)* and phaco-emulsification.

### **Key activities**

The main activity is to increase the number of competent eye care health professionals through training. Besides consultations, surgeries and training, the project has supplied surgery and eye care equipment to IEBA hospital in Mbanza-Congo, serving the northern region.

In 2014, more than 25 000 consultations were conducted, with 10 000 in outreach centers. In this same year, more than 3 000 surgeries were conducted, with 1 000 in outreach centers.

Annual targets until the end of the project cycle include: screening 25 000 people; performing 3 000 cataract surgeries; and training Angolan nurses and doctors in screening and surgery.



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### Location and target group

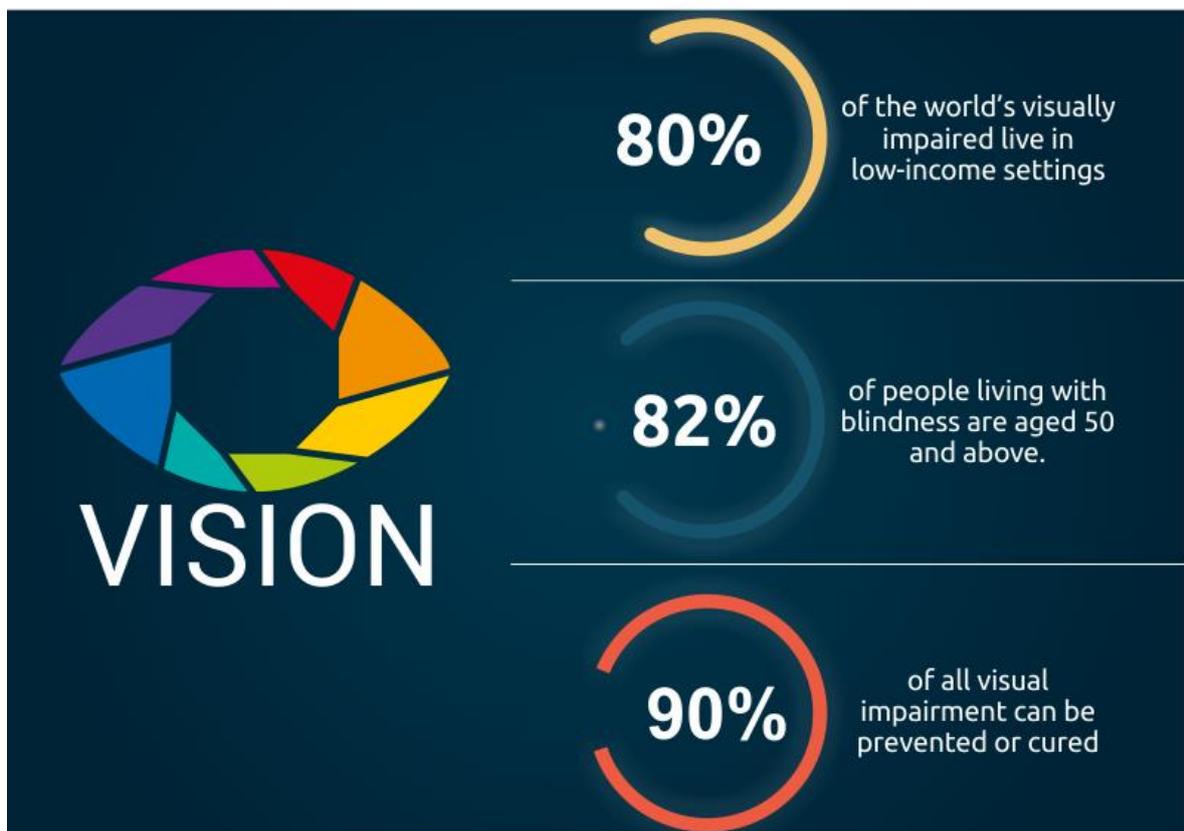
Activities take place in eight provinces, from the basis in Benguela, support is given to Zaire, Cunene, Huambo, Bié, Cuando-Cubango, Lunda-Sul and Cuanza-Sul.

### Duration

The first project started in 2013. In March 2015, this project was reinforced and will end in October 2016.

### Implementing partners

Implementing partners include Solidariedade Evangélica Angola (SOLE), in partnership with Igreja Evangélica Baptista de Angola (IEBA), Catholic Church, Igreja Evangélica Congregacional de Angola (IECA), Igreja Evangélica dos Irmãos and Convenção Baptista de Angola (CBA)





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