Treating blindness through cataract surgery

Background
A cataract is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye, causing blurry vision and eventual blindness if not surgically removed. Vision can be restored surgically by removing the affected lens and replacing it with an artificial one. Cataract is responsible for half of the world's blindness, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) although treatment can restore vision and prevent eye loss.

Luanda and Benguela are the only two provinces with ophthalmology centres in Angola, leaving the remaining 16 provinces with thousands of unattended cases of blindness, or with people at risk of blindness from cataract due to lack of access to eye care and surgery.

Project focus
Since 2015, Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE) has performed eye surgeries outside of Luanda and Benguela. SOLE surgeons are located at several faith-based regional hospitals and clinics, and operate in their own clinic in Benguela. Two surgery techniques are used; these are 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 provided 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 at 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.

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

Duration
Rua da Cerâmica, Cazenga
Sector 1A - Bloco 8
Luanda
Angola

Pfingstweidstrasse 10
8005
Zürich
Switzerland
The first project started in 2013 and was set to end in March 2015. Given the successful results and related impact, the project was extended and ended in April 2017.

**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).