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ANGOLA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



AMSF NEWSLETTER



*Luis Samacumbi and
Teacher Estefânia*

Profiles of a Formation School Teacher and Student

By Luis Samacumbi, General Director of the Department of Social Assistance, Studies and Projects of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA)

It was a cold, rainy morning when I arrived at the Evangelical Mission of Camundongo, located 27 kilometres northwest of the city of Kuito, the capital of Bié Province. Camundongo Mission was founded in 1884 by Henry Sanders, an American missionary. In fact, May 2009 will be the mission's 125th Jubilee. A great celebration is planned, including the construction of a new church as well as the rehabilitation of the former Sanders Primary School and the rural middle school. In this highly energized environment, I found Estefânia, a teacher at the young woman's

training centre, in the process of working with a student, Flora. My travel weariness left as I took advantage of this opportunity to talk with these very capable women profiled below!

Estefânia Nanono Ernesto's story sheds light on the stories of thousands of women in Angola who suffered directly the consequences of war. Now 55 years old, Estefânia was born in the village of Sachuma, near Camundongo. She is the daughter of Ernesto Chilowa who



*Student Flora and
Teacher Estefânia*

worked for many years with missionaries and later was a catechist at Camundongo. Estefânia has seven children, five boys and two girls. The eldest son, 35 years old, works as a nurse and the youngest daughter, 14 years old, is a student at Camundongo. Estefânia's first husband died in 1979 as a consequence of Angola's Civil War – a situation that happened to thousands of women. At that time she had five children. In 1983 she married a man she met in the bush, where many people lived, trying to survive the conflict around them by moving from place to place. During that period, she had four additional children. However, she and her



*Rehabilitated Former Sanders
Primary School, Camundongo*

second husband separated in 1993 when he rediscovered his first wife, whom he thought had died in the war; he left Estefânia which meant that she went through some very difficult times just (**con't pg 2**)

AMSF grants \$20,000 for higher education scholarships to the Council of Christian Churches of Angola.

In the past these scholarships have been given to students studying in the capital of Luanda. As institutions of higher learning are being reestablished throughout the country AMSF has reserved a further \$10,000 for scholarships for students in regional institutions, to be applied as soon as CICA has regional scholarship committees who can administer the funds.

CICA's latest scholarship report was recently submitted to AMSF president and corresponding secretary Rev. Etta Snow. Fifteen scholarship students (an almost equal number of young men and women) are registered in courses such as law, mental health, financial management, administration, bookkeeping, computer science, engineering, nursing and medicine. Four of these students are outside of Luanda: one in Benguela (computer science), one in Malange/Quessua (1st year theology), one in Cabinda (mental health) and one in Namibe (financial management). On behalf of the students Rev Kiaku of CICA sends their deep appreciation to AMSF donors for their continued financial support; donations help Angolan young people to acquire the skills and leadership qualities necessary to make a worthwhile contribution to sustainable development, a solid rebuilding of their war shattered country.

(Con't from pg 1) trying to get food for her seven surviving children.

In March 2003, Estefânia returned to the city of Kuito from the bush in Moxico Province. A year later she returned to her home village of Sachuma. The very next year, Estefânia took a women's training course in Kuito, which covered: cooking, embroidery, knitting, baking, decorating, sewing and cutting, laundering and housekeeping. Two years later, she decided to help the young girls in the villages around the mission go through the same type of training course; she became not only a teacher, but also the Director of the Camundongo Domestic Arts School! As of November 2008, she had trained 56 girls. And she did this all as a volunteer, out of the goodness of her own spirit, because of the help that she had received from her own training! Estefânia loves her work because she does not feel right staying at home while numerous young girls in the villages need to learn many things. The greatest challenge of working as a volunteer is that Estefânia also has to meet her family's needs by raising pigs and goats. Estefânia appreciates the support AMSF gives and encourages other women not to abandon the training of future generations.



Flora shelling beans at home with her sister and mother

Flora Kayando is the 15-year-old daughter of Armando Manhingo and Adélia Cecilia. "Bonbon" – as she is affectionately called at home – is the third of six siblings, of which two are boys and three are girls, and she is in the 6th grade. She studies during the afternoon and takes about an hour each way to walk the distance between her home and the mission where the school is. Flora does this in the company of other girls in her village, which, she says, makes the journey far less tiring.

Flora was a student in Estefânia's 2008 training of young women. Flora says she enjoyed and learned many things in her class, including: reading and writing in Umbundu, her national language, and in Portuguese, cooking, knitting, agriculture and other topics. She liked sewing and embroidery best because they have helped her to make clothes for her nieces. Thanks to AMSF, DASEP-IECA is able to deliver services and hope to many young girls like Flora through strong women like Estefânia!

Note: AMSF has donated \$40,000 this year to the IECA Formation School program.

Report of the Dille-Dunbar tour of the educational work of The Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola (IECA) by Nancy Dunbar nee Dille

Note: Carl and Lois Dille were United Church of Christ missionaries for many years in Central Angola. The Dilles' adult children, Tom and Nancy (accompanied by spouses Paula and Wayne), travelled to Angola in 2004 to visit the places where Carl and Lois Dille had worked, and to find out how they could help with post war reconstruction. This trip inspired the 2 couples to set up the Dille-Dunbar family foundation, whose first goal was to build a school for young women in the former mission of Chilessso, now run by IECA. In October of 2008 Tom and Nancy and their spouses returned to Central Angola to visit the now completed school for young women and to see how else their foundation might be of assistance. Below they report on what they learned of the education work of IECA, particularly in Chilessso and the former mission of Camundongo.

It is abundantly clear that IECA is a very strong, effective, and highly respected force in Angola working to restore stability in the country. Through IECA's Department of Social Assistance, Studies and Projects (DASEP) **the church now operates 58 schools serving 21,000 students in grades 2-9; the Angolan government pays the majority of the salaries for the 591 teachers provided by IECA.** In both Kuito and Andulo (Bie regional administrative centres) we met with government officials (both of whom are women) who are very supportive of the work of IECA and have given accreditation to the IECA Schools for Angolan Young Women.



Paula Dille, Nancy Dille Dunbar & Wayne Dunbar, Chilessso

In all our travels through Bie Province the Ovimbundu people made it clear that education is a high priority for their communities. In **Chillesso** there are 963 students enrolled in 3 schools, under the guidance of 19 teachers; they attend in 2 shifts – morning and afternoon. The students in the lower three grades have classes in the Swanson School building, now nearly roofless with many walls and floors in deplorable condition. Chillesso has no funds to rehabilitate this school and there are no government funds for school repairs. The government has built a school in Chillesso where the upper level students have classes. The Chillesso School for Young Women, built with Dille-Dunbar Foundation funds, has 2 classrooms, an auditorium and 2 offices for the teachers. The school has a capacity for over 100 students and currently has 9 teachers. Of the 963 students in the 3 schools, about 50 are residential students, currently housed in buildings that need extensive repair.



Chillesso School for Young Women



Class in Camundongo

In **Camundongo** students meet under a huge tree sitting on adobe blocks or small stools they bring with them. The teacher uses a “blackboard” (a board painted black) propped against the tree trunk on which she writes information. When the rains come, small “buildings” with thatched roofs and walls serve as leaky classrooms. The students in the young women’s school have housing and food problems that have caused enrolment to drop this year from 50 to 36; many come from a great distance and can’t bring

enough food to sustain them for the duration of classes. The Sanders School being built by the government is nearing completion and the students are looking forward to having their classes there even though there are no desks and equipment. An industrial arts building has also been constructed by the government but it is in need of equipment. We were very impressed by the quality of construction of these buildings.

While we were in Camundongo, Tom was able to teach 2 teams of 2 how to make reading glasses using supplies he and Paula brought with them. Enough materials were left there to make 300 pairs of reading glasses for a cost of 41 cents per pair. It is our hope that this will develop into a money-making opportunity as well as helping visually-impaired individuals in rural areas. Over and over, folks talked about the work that our parents, Carl and Lois Dille, did and how our return has given them hope. Our trip met our expectations and reenergized us to continue the work of the D/D Fund to provide education for young women in Angola. To this end, together with IECA, we have developed goals for the Fund for the next three years.



Tom Dille giving a reading glasses construction workshop, Camundongo

AMSF has received donations in memory of Phyllis Burgess, Bessie Dalrymple, Whitney Dalrymple, Warren Jackson, Dr. Allen Knight, Mary MacDougall, Edith Radley, Warren and Mabel Snow, Betty Speer, Rev. Arthur Steed, Dr Walter and Mrs. Alice Strangway, Nancy Tolley, Elizabeth Utting, Amelia and Ralph Wilson.

AMSF has also received donations in honour of Fred Brancell and Mary Ann Litwiller, Mrs Helen DeWitt, Mrs. Betty Jerret, Mary MacDougall in honour of her 94th birthday, Kay Pearson, Rev Etta Snow, in thanksgiving for friendship, Lillian Taylor in thanksgiving for friendship, and Mr. Peter Waite.

Donors, your prayers and donations to the AMSF-sponsored education work in Angola are so very appreciated.

Why I support the AMSF

by Rev Tom Gilchrist, founding member and former president of AMSF



Sid & Frances Gilchrist in Bailundo, 1960



Brothers Tom, David, Kenneth, Ian and Rae Gilchrist



Betty Gilchrist in Bunjei, 1960

My parents Dr. Sid and Frances Gilchrist served as Angola missionaries for 36 years in the missions of Camundongo, Dondi and Bailundo; they then worked for several years in the I.M.E mission in Kimpese, Zaire. My sister Betty served as a missionary in Angola, building a women's training centre and orphanage in Bunjei. In 1970 Sid and Frances retired to Canada and Betty came home on furlough. The three joined together to drive from Naramata, BC to Edmonton, on speaking engagements. South of Red Deer a blinding rainstorm forced an approaching vehicle across the median. All three and the two occupants of the other car died instantly.

Tributes to Sid, Frances and Betty, and their memorable contributions to missions in Angola poured in. My four brothers and I requested that memorial gifts be made to a newly created Gilchrist Memorial Angola Student Trust Fund. From a modest beginning of \$10,000 the Fund grew to raise around \$100,000/year. It was administered for ten years by the Mission & Service Fund of The United Church of Canada; although a committee of ex-missionaries and the Gilchrist sons selected students and dispersed the scholarships. Hundreds of refugee students in Portugal, Africa, UK, US and Canada were supported in medicine, education, theology, engineering, nursing, agriculture and other professions.

In 1980 the Fund was registered as a Charity under Ontario charter and renamed the Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund so as to honour the memory of a large company of Christian missionaries who had given their lives to Angola. The Fund's membership grew to embrace US and Portuguese ex-missionaries and Angolan nationals. Gradually scholarship selections were entrusted to the Council of Christian Churches of Angola which apportions scholarships to all participating denominations. At the conclusion of Angola's internal warfare, followed by the return of millions of displaced people, the Fund engaged in efforts to help returnees become reestablished in their mine-strewn home areas, and to finance educational initiatives at primary and formation school levels.

Our major task at present is to tell Angola's story, proclaim Angola's hope and reach out for all the help we can raise so that the lives of our predecessors and the lives of tens of thousands of Angolan nurses, teachers, agriculturists, clergy and other workers will not have been sacrificed in vain. Our task now is to help Angola's lovely people rebuild a tear-stained land which has wept through slavery, colonialism and revolution. "Yes, we must" see to it that "Yes, they can" rise again.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE DONATIONS! Cheques to be made out to **Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund** or **AMSF**. Donations may be sent to your **AMSF Regional Representative**. If you do not have a regional representative, donations may be sent to the **AMSF Treasurer Eleanor Ellins, 2016-1333 Bloor Street, Mississauga, ON L4Y 3T6**. Donations may also be made on line at www.angolamsf.org.

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