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## Summer 2005 Mission Trip Report

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### Lubango

We spent several days in Lubango visiting school sites and holding workshops. Workshops were offered in several locations including the SOS Children's Village just outside Lubango. We were able to participate in the celebration of the dedication of a school at Chibia, named in Andrew's honor. We also visited school sites at Huila and Christo Rei, where children have been meeting in classrooms under the trees since 1995.

### Kuito/Chilonda

The team then traveled to Kuito and spent the next week at Chilonda, living in a small village built for us there. It is a beautiful and powerful place—the place where Andrew grew up and where he is buried; and the site of the first RISE school—joy and sorrow live side by side.

A most exciting element of our time was the teacher training workshops in Chilonda. Over 100 teachers, inspectors and leaders met together for a week of training. It was a special time of relationship building and learning for all. Workshops were held in the RISE school at Chilonda, Monday through Friday. Teachers came from Chilonda, Chianga, Chipuli, Chingango, Cassuanga, Wongo, Trumba, Chitete, Chicundo and Kuito. There is a great need for teacher training and the teachers were delighted to participate. Representatives from the Ministry of Education attended and we received their full support.

Several on the team made a two-hour trek each day to reach the village of Chitete where another school funded by New Trier was being built. Men, women and children worked together, with RISE team members joining the effort. There has been no school here since the '70s. Several of us spent a day driving north of Kuito through Kunhinga to Chissala. This is yet another village, far removed, one which would be impossible to find without someone who knew of it. It is hard to explain the joy one feels, after having walked or driven for several hours, to come upon a building that is clearly recognizable as a RISE school. This school is nearing completion and men were stuccoing the outside when we arrived. A small church sits next to the school, and it was there that school was being held; three groups of children, each facing a chalkboard, with two teachers sharing their time among the three groups. Learning is taking place in the midst of great odds. We stopped as well at a school in Kunje, also nearing completion, with children meeting for classes under the trees until their building is ready.

### Bailundo/Huambo

Upon departure from Chilonda, the team stopped to visit the RISE school in Wongo, which was sponsored by New Trier last year. The school is completed and beautiful, and most importantly, children are attending school and learning. The children proudly held up their books and we were to discover RISE bookplates inside the front cover. These bookplates once again symbolized the support and partnership of many in the United States, who had purchased book for Angolan children as Christmas gifts for their families and friends.

We spent the night in Kuito and Sunday morning loaded into 3 local taxis for the drive to Bailundo. The roads are miserable, and red dust billows in the cracks and holes covering the passengers. Abandoned tanks litter the roadside—what horrors have been experienced here? This give Americans a small taste of real life in Angola. After 5 hours, we arrived in Bailundo to a waiting crowd from the IECA church there to greet us. As is often the case, we gather for an impromptu introduction of the team and words of greeting. We were treated to a wonderful meal and then given a tour of the nearby Mission. We were told that you haven't visited if you haven't visited the Mission. The hospital and church are being rebuilt. Our accommodations were in the Women's Center belonging to the church.

The following morning we loaded into the taxis and drove to see the RISE school at Alto ama—a school with over 700 children in attendance. Classes were halted and children poured out of the school upon our arrival to welcome us. We next visited the school built in a village called Mukalia. It is the village where Armando Abias Kandenge, a fine man we initially met in the Nangweshi Refugee Camp in Zambia, was raised. The village is very remote and the 200 or so children sang songs of welcome. We came to a third site, where once again, many were working together to build the walls of the school.

## **Schools for Angola**

A “Pilgrimage of Service” is a time of going to serve, and yet it is the participants that are often most deeply impacted—and that was true once again. RISE’s vision is to work together to rebuild lives and communities reflecting Jesus’ charge to love others as we love ourselves. Our mission is to partner with Angolan churches, community leaders and government officials to build primary schools in rural Angola. Our desire is not to build a parallel school system, but to help jump start the system and offer assistance in places where there would be no schools for years to come—that is exactly what is happening.

The Schools for Angola program began in Bie, for that is where we have a network of relationships. It has been wonderful and amazing to see how the network of our refugee friends and partners has helped spread the schools across 5 additional provinces: Huambo, Benguela, Huila, Namibe and Cuando Cubango. As refugees return to their homes across Angola, they have been in a position to help rebuild their lives and communities by working together to build schools.

## **Current status**

2003 – 5 schools

2004 – 25 schools

2005 – 38 Approved and under construction; 6 Funded and approved—July 2005

**31 more to go!**