

## Visiting Ganda, Angola

Danish soroptimist Grete Bundgaard tells about visiting the project area:

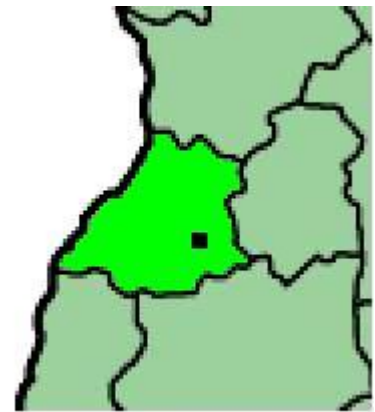
*"From Luanda we started for Ganda, a state in Benguela, the Chilala family's domicile.*

*They have continuously had fights for human worth, first against the colonial power; later against the regime, taking control after Angola got so-called freedom. This freedom meant dictatorship, a form of government, worse than the colonial time with inhumanity, widespread corruption, and the power in few hands.*

*The area was partly spoiled by the long civil war with uncultivated land and widespread poverty. We found great hospitality by these Angolans, and met openness, confidence and wishes.*

*We were driving for hours in a minibus, always with a support car, and we stayed with changing members of the family, always bringing 3 living chickens for supper and once a bleating goat. We forced dried-up riverbeds, difficultly accessible roads to get to outlying villages, and wherever we came, we met a strong population with strong local leaders/chiefs.*

*The Chief in the town of Franca made great impression on us. Placed on stones in his courtyard we formed a circle and witnessed, how Lillemor and the Chief said courtesy forms to each other, before Lillemor came to the point, asking for permission to use his source to build a well with drilling, piping, water tank etc. At the same time, she promised that Soroptimist International would take the economic responsibility. The Chief gave his consent, and the next step was meeting Mayor Popos to get an accept from the authorities to establish more water cleaning systems.*



*It was difficult to obtain an interview, but with our untiring Lillemor, in front we succeeded in telling about our plans, and about our Soroptimist ideals and our exact wish to support a water project in this region. Vi could assure that there was a group of Angolan women and their families ready to help us. After about half an hour's speech from us, the Mayor looked at us for the first time, and after another half hour's conversation he gave his sanction and suggested that we gave this group of local Mamas a more Soroptimist sounding name: Mamas Optimistas, and that they got a local NGO status. We thanked him kindly.*

*Now we had to gather this group of women, who were ready to cooperate with us. Lillemor and Francisca invited a group of younger and older women, and by sunset we met 12 women and told them about our project.*

*It was with great veneration and respect that we gave them the name Mamas Optimistas and told them that they would get NGO status, and this was accepted with respect and humility.*

Grete Bundgaard

