About ANGOLA... 

Geography
- Located in southwestern Africa, bordering Namibia, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Atlantic Ocean
- Area is slightly less than twice the size of Texas
- Capital: Luanda
- 18 provinces
- Mineral resources: Petroleum, diamonds

People
- Population of approximately 12 million
- Official Language: Portuguese
- Over 8 major ethnic/language groups, the largest of which are:
  - Ovimbundu
  - Bakongo
  - Kimbundu
- Religions: approximately 40-70% Catholic, 15-20% Protestant, 10-45% traditional beliefs
- Literacy rate: approximately 40-50%
- Poverty rate: approximately 70%
- Infant mortality rate: approximately 20%
- Demographic information uncertain due to the long period of war and the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons during this period

History
- Inhabited for thousands of years
- First millennium A.D. Bantu peoples arrive, displace Khoisan people
- Kongo Kingdom flourishes, 14th and 15th centuries
- 1482/1483 Portuguese arrive, slave trade begins
15th to 20th centuries: Angolan resistance to colonization, slavery
1671 Portuguese consolidate control of Kongo and Ndongo kingdom
late 1800’s/early 1900’s: Portuguese consolidate control of interior of Angola, including Ovimbundu kingdoms
Modern independence struggle, 1961 - 1975
November 11, 1975: independence
Civil war: 1975 – 2002

The UCC and Angola
1880: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sends 3 missionaries to central Angola, including one African-American
1922: African-American mission established at Galangue Mission; supported by American Missionary Association (AMA) and ABCFM
1955: Council of Evangelical Churches of Central Angola (CIEAC) formed
1975: Last UCC missionaries leave Angola as civil war starts
1979: CIEAC transformed into the national post-independence denomination Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola (IECA)
1980’s - 1990’s: UCC support for IECA continues, with periodic exchanges of delegations during times of relative peace
1990’s: Southeast Conference supports landmine removal efforts
2000 - 2004: University Church/Trinity UCC of Chicago begin partnership work with IECA; Tuthill Fund of Illinois Conference provides funding for Canata Cultural Arts program, Lobito, Angola

Illinois Conference U.C.C./IECA Partnership
Purpose and Philosophy
To build on historical ties between the UCC and IECA and between the U.S. and Angola
The 2002 cease-fire ushered in an era of peace, creating a biros moment, a time when God offers Angolans, and us, an opportunity for faithful discipleship and action together
The body of Christ consists of many members and “if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)
Recognize the many opportunities we have to learn from each other and grow together
Priorities for projects and action to be set by the Angolans for projects in Angola
New avenues of reconciliation and transformation

Current Projects
Support IECA initiatives for church and community development:
Fundraising for Dondi Seminary Married Student Housing Project
Education and outreach to Illinois Conference congregations
Preparing for hosting and sending delegations in coming years
  o Potential “Minister in Residence” within the Illinois Conference