FOREWORD: MY LIFE

I am Leandro.

I am 25 years old. I was born in Benguela, and I have been in Luanda since I was four, so I am more from Luanda than from Benguela.

I started out drawing. From when I was very small I drew everything: caricatures, people, landscapes. Then, at six, I discovered the internet, and after that I had two enthusiasms, drawing and computers, and I began putting them together.

A lot of that came from my parents, who put me in a good school. We had internet at home — slow, but it was there, and I was free to search for things and teach myself. I started out with a basic phone, a computer and an internet dongle. The first application was Google Chrome. To this day I use it; it is a toxic passion, because it eats so much memory on a simple computer. From Chrome I got to YouTube and learned how to do graphic design.

For a long time we could not pay for the software we needed. There was no way to send money out of the country, so we used pirated software, like everyone around us. What changed that was the digital wallet. Cards are still difficult here, but now we can pay for what we use.

I began making everything from music covers to banners for companies. I did not charge for this, because I simply liked it and wanted to learn. One day someone asked me, "How much do you charge to make a banner like this?" and I realised that you can actually earn money with this! I invented a price on the spot. I was living in my parents' house, and I had no notion of what the market was.

I worked like that for about two years. I started writing to people whose work I really liked: I want to collaborate with you, I do not want you to pay me. The name spread by word of mouth. Then came a stretch where there was far more demand than I could handle. Sometimes I would take a job on and end up letting someone down. I thought, I need people.

I searched on the internet how to start a company. I had no capital to pay salaries, so I did what a lot of startups do: I looked for potential rather than experience. I wrote to friends and said: I already have clients, I have made some money, I can put it all into the company, let us build something together from nothing. My colleague who has run finances since day zero was in his last year of secondary school, studying accounting. That was 2019, 2020.

At the start, SUPA Serviços did a bit of everything. I looked at my circle of friends and contacts and said: this person does this, that one does that; I will find clients for you, and you just execute. Today I am the general manager. We work in three areas: communication, image and marketing; technology, building websites and applications for other companies; and accounting and tax for small and medium-sized companies. From these jobs I was able to pay for studies in business administration so I could run the company full-time. Most of the people who work with us are still studying. I live alone, and I do not receive money from home; I have supported myself for four,

five years now. Technology has given me independence. What still holds us back in Angola is the slow and unstable internet. There are projects we cannot take on: we know exactly how to do it, but lack the connection to deliver it. We should be tackling harder problems than internet connectivity by now, but this is where the country still is. What we are still missing are investors. At the beginning it was my own money, and we're reinvested what we've earned. We have got as far as we could with our own efforts. But there is no real culture of investment here yet, and no policy behind it either. And I do not mean backing risky ventures, just new ones.

With investment I would upgrade our kit - faster machines, more cameras and lighting - and bring in specialists. Every startup hits the point where the next step needs your A players, and that means salaries and a proper financial structure behind you. For myself, I would spend it on education. It is the one investment that pays you back for life.

There are many challenges here, and many still ahead of me. But there are many I have already overcome, and everything I have been building over time is starting to bear fruit. That is what keeps me going.[1]

Leandro,
17 September 2026

[1] Translated from the Portuguese and edited for length and clarity.