

**PUBLIC POLICIES FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN
ANGOLA: FROM FORMULATION TO IMPLEMENTATION,
WHAT HAS CHANGED?**

**POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS PARA A EDUCAÇÃO PRÉ-ESCOLAR EM
ANGOLA: DA FORMULAÇÃO À IMPLEMENTAÇÃO, O QUE
MUDOU?**

Narciso Dumbo

Research Centre on Child Studies
University of Minho

Teresa Sarmento

Research Centre on Child Studies
University of Minho

Abstract

This text seeks to reflect on the nature of the formulation of the current public policy for preschool education in Angola. Based on documentary analysis of the main official and legislative documents, we see the involvement of the state in regional and international challenges has increased the development of a set of policy texts directed at children's rights. Thus, the question arises as to whether the public policy for preschool education, fragmented in normative instrumentalization and in national development programmes and plans, mimics and complies with the international Agendas, or if they are functional and indicative of social justice in education that allows for the mitigation of inequalities in access, especially for vulnerable children, in a context where out of 10 children from low-income families, only two children have guaranteed access to attendance.

Keywords: Children's rights, preschool education, public policies

Resumo

Este texto procura refletir sobre a natureza da formulação da atual política pública para a educação pré-escolar em Angola. Com base na análise documental dos principais documentos oficiais e legislativos, verifica-se o envolvimento do Estado nos desafios regionais e internacionais aumentou o desenvolvimento de um conjunto de textos políticos voltados para os direitos da criança. Assim, coloca-se a questão de saber se as

políticas públicas de educação infantil, fragmentadas na instrumentalização normativa e nos programas e planos nacionais de desenvolvimento, mimetizam e cumprem as agendas internacionais, ou se são funcionais e indicativas de justiça social na educação que permita a mitigação das desigualdades no acesso, especialmente para crianças vulneráveis, num contexto em que, em cada 10 crianças de famílias de baixos rendimentos, apenas duas crianças têm acesso garantido.

Palavras-chave: Direitos da criança, educação pré-escolar, políticas públicas

Introduction

In Angola, children have gained prominence in recent years, especially after the achievement of peace in 2002. This is signalled by constitutional recognition (Constitution of the Republic, CR, 2010) based on the concern for protecting their rights focused on their best interests and holistic development. This constitutes a tripartite responsibility of the family, state, and society, meaning that ensuring children's rights should be a systemic commitment of all existing institutions (point 6, article 35, p. 80). Since this period, several legal and political instruments have been produced to define rules and guiding principles for the protection and holistic development of children. At the legal level, Law No. 25/12 of August 22 stands out, and at the political level, the 11 Commitments to Children. In this text, we did not intend to analyse the general policies that have been implemented to fulfil children's rights, but rather focus on early childhood education policies, based on the perspective that children have a right to care and education from birth. Early childhood education, referred to in Angola as preschool education, ensured by the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, LBSEE, No. 17/16 of October 7, amended by Law No. 32/20 of August 12, is conceived as a subsystem that aims to serve children from 0 to 5 years of age.

In the scope of childhood sociology, we integrate the reflection within the "integrated systemic approach to policy development and implementation" (see UNESCO 2002; Sarmiento, 2015; UNICEF, 2019; Haddad, 2006; Cameron & Moss, 2020), seeking to inventory the political texts produced in various periods and their impact on the expansion and development of preschool education in terms of the realisation of the principles of non-discrimination and equity. This intent stems from the conceptual understanding of policy, which according to Dye (2000, p.2-3), "is whatever governments choose to do or not to do," implying "[...] the processes by which public policy was determined [...]" and "[...] involves a description of the content of public policy" in order to "discover how things work" (Ozga, 2000, p. 84). These assumptions serve, on the one hand, to argue that early childhood education as a social problem is subject to the governments' choice of whether or not to prioritise it on their political agenda; on the other hand, the ambivalence of the approach serves to delimit our analysis, focusing on the processes of policy formulation (policy making), referencing the content and context

in which it was determined. We articulate the analysis with the logic of *policy cycle* theory defended by Stephen Ball's, Bowe & Gold (1992).

The authors propose a continuous political cycle, consisting of five arenas: the context of influence, the context of text production, the context of practice, the context of outcomes, and the context of political strategies (Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball & Gold 1992). The contexts are interconnected, expressing non-linear and non-sequential periods and do not have "a temporal or sequential dimension" (Vilarinho, 2013, p. 283). This model is a "framework for analysing the trajectory of social and educational policies" (Mainardes, 2006, p. 48), in a way that "values the complex and conflictual nature of educational policy [...]" or rather, "[...] opens up the possibility of understanding the complexity of the investigated policy, the plurality and dialectical nature of the political process, and the interests and meanings given by different actors" (Vilarinho, 2013, p. 283).

The text has three main axes: in the first part, we situate the place of preschool education through a historical review of educational reforms, specifically focusing on the production of political texts; in the second part, we present a summary of some official data on access; and finally, a brief critical analysis of the meaning of these data in terms of equality and opportunities for children to enjoy their right to quality care and education.

Preschool education policies in light of Educational Reforms

Educational policy in Angola, constructed from a diachronic historical perspective, can be understood through a periodisation, specifically post-independence, which points to a different social, economic, and political context of the country. This involves the transition from a socialist to a democratic state, from one-party rule to multi-party democracy, from a state-centred economy to a market economy, and an escalation of armed conflict. However, the social and educational problems resulting from the colonial legacy and the "direct impact of political-military instability and economic-financial recession" (MED, 2001, p. 11) - such as rural exodus and extreme poverty, lack of human resources (qualified teaching staff at all levels), lack of material and pedagogical conditions (schools, teaching materials and textbooks, laboratories) - influenced the definition of new educational projects that could address these situations on the part of the state.

Thus, two educational projects were developed and implemented: the first, reform approved in 1977 and implemented from 1978 (Decree-Law No. 40, May 14, 1980), and the second, approved in 2001 by the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, No. 13/01, December 31, with its implementation following a schedule of activities, as per Decree No. 2/05, January 14. The discretionary reasons, objectives, system composition, pedagogical organisation, and other processes of these educational projects will not be the focus of this text (see Zau 2005; Anzacote 2010; Binji 2013; MED, 2001; Ministry of Planning, 2007), however, it is important to make reference to the space and production of preschool education policies.

In the 1978 education system in Angola, preschool education was not recognised and was associated with access to compulsory classes in primary education. In other words, attending one year in the initiation class corresponded to preschool education, which was mandatory for all children aged 5 or 6. According to Binji (2013, p. 84), based on MED (1993), there was "a designation of Initiation defined as a provisional structure; it assumed the role of preschool education," and its main purpose was to promote the psychomotor and social development "of 5-year-old children in order to facilitate their entry into the first grade of the I level of Basic Education."

During this period, preschool education was under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which was responsible for "organising and directing the work of institutions dedicated to working with preschool children enrolled in nurseries (up to 3 years old) and kindergartens (from 3 to 6), with the last year of this period (from 5 to 6 years old) dedicated to the initiation class" (Zau, 2002, p.121). The author also states that the purpose of this entity was to create recreational activities for children, support working families in the care and education of their children, and prepare them for school, with pedagogical assistance from the Ministry of Education.

During this phase, in the early 1980s and late 1990s, the state developed two social programmes targeting preschool education: the Community Child Programme (PIC) and the Community Education Programme (PEC). These programmes were implemented through bilateral agreements with United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and international NGOs (with a special focus on UNICEF, WFP, WHO, FAO, ADPP, and Cuban and German experts, as well as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation). This was due to the absence of childcare centres, qualified staff, a curriculum for early childhood, and the precarious living conditions of many children. With the support of these agencies, the programmes aimed to provide primary health services, nutritional recovery, and advance community-based basic education, particularly for mothers, mostly in rural and peri-urban areas. This included the construction of the first Community Child Centres (CIC) and Child Centres (CI), the development of the first curriculum plans, and the training of early childhood educators at the basic and intermediate levels (MINPLAN, 2007).

Studies by Binji (2013) and Zau (2002) present a historical parallelism of preschool education policy embedded in two distinct features: universal access and social assistance. In terms of universal access, it was based on the policy of expanding the initiation class introduced in primary schools, with organisational, administrative, pedagogical, and methodological aspects functioning in the same model as the primary cycle. This situation had two negative effects. First, it led to the saturation of facilities and the operation of many schools on a triple-shift basis due to the high number of children enrolled in initiation, with many (60%) being over 6 years old. Second, teachers used didactic and pedagogical methodologies "similar to those of primary education" without specific preparation (Government of Angola, 2001, p. 21). Second, there were signs of an expansionist policy in access to preschool education through external support, marked by the presence of international organisations, with a greater emphasis on addressing social issues.

The absence of quantifiable data in official reports from relevant entities and studies on educational policy in Angola regarding the institutional structures of preschool education built under cooperation programmes limits the analysis of its social and educational impact in the post-independence period (MINPLAN, 2007). In 2001, the Angolan state implemented the 2nd Educational Reform through LBSEE No. 13/01, aiming to "ensure the schooling of all children of school age, reduce youth and adult illiteracy, and increase the effectiveness of the education system," in order to readjust the education system to "respond to the new demands for human resource development necessary for the socio-economic progress of Angolan society" (as stated in the preamble of LBSE No. 13/01). The main changes included recognising preschool education as the first subsystem and extending primary education from 4 to 6 years. In this sense, the preschool education subsystem was legitimised as the foundation of education, with the purpose of caring for early childhood during a period of life in which conditioning and psychomotor development activities should take place. According to the first point of Article 13, the subsystem was structured into two cycles: nursery and kindergarten.

The law emerged internationally to address the six challenges for Quality Education for All, known as the Dakar Declaration (2000), which builds on the global commitments of the Jomtien Declaration (1990), as affirmed by then Minister of Education Mpinda Simão:

The political commitment of the Angolan State to Quality Education for All dates back to March 1990, on the occasion of the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien (Thailand), which adopted the World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, signed by the majority of States in the international community and reaffirmed in April 2000 at the World Education Forum held in Dakar (Senegal), which adopted the Education for All Framework for Action until 2015. These two international events defined a broad set of challenges that have been addressed in various ways, where significant collective efforts have been made to provide the means to improve the educational conditions of thousands of children, youth, and adults.

Currently, with the establishment of the 17 SDGs, the Angolan education system has a policy guideline oriented by LBSEE No. 17/16 of October 7, amended by Law No. 32/20 of August 12. This instrument shows an innovative character in recognising the preschool education subsystem as the first level of education. Thus, through Presidential Decree No. 129/17 of June 16, the specific Statute was created and approved, establishing a set of principles and rules that regulate the subsystem.

The period from 2001 until today is characterized by a stage of policy production for children, at an instrumental level, with a general emphasis on children's rights, with the international legal instrument of the Convention on the Rights of the Child being ratified by the Angolan state in 1991. Therefore, we can summarise the public policies for children, starting with the regulations that legitimise preschool education as a fundamental right of the child, particularly the 2010 Constitution of the Republic, Law No. 25/12 of August 22 - the law on the protection and holistic development of the child

- and the 11 Commitments to Children. Then, there are the political instruments that express the government's intentions as outlined in the national education project of 2001, called the Integrated Strategy for Improving the Education System, reaffirmed in the Long-term Development, the Angolan government (2025), in the National Education Development Plan "Educating Angola 2030" and recently incorporated into the National Development Plans (2013-2017; and 2018-2022).

Fundamentals of pre-school education produced within the scope of the right of the child

The Angolan State guarantees a constitutional protection of the fundamental rights of the child circumscribed in article 80 in which the nature of the content is evaluative and guided, in point 2, of a public policy in education that "safeguards the principle of the best interest of the child", meaning "everything that contributes to the defence and security of its integrity, identity, maintenance and development are sound and harmonious" (bridge 3, of article 6, of Law no. 25/12).

Law no. 25/12 aims to define rules and legal principles on the protection and integral development of the child, aiming to strengthen and harmonise the legal and institutional instruments aimed at accrediting the rights of the child. Among several prescriptions, we highlight articles 63 and 74, because they substantiate early childhood education as a right of the child, and should be compulsory and free, and the State may contribute to assistance to parents, as can be explained in the excerpt:

into account the importance of early childhood in the integral development of the child, access to early childhood education should be guaranteed in a compulsory and free manner by the State from the first days of the child's life. The State shall adopt appropriate care plans for parents in the exercise of their responsibilities to educate the child and in the planning of early childhood programmes (art. 63, point one and two).

For its reification, according to article 74, the service of care and education of early childhood (0-5 years), crèches, kindergarten, Community Children's Centres or Free Community Centres, must be available in all areas of the Angolan territory and for all children, especially for the most vulnerable. The document also gives relevance to the initiation class, which appears as a transition class to primary school, ensured by the principle of gratuity, and the services must be of quality:

1. Early childhood services and actions in the area of education, guided by Commitments 4 and 5, in the part reserved for the initiation class, shall be made available in each community by the ministerial department responsible for social assistance and reintegration and by the ministerial department responsible for education, to ensure the development and learning of the child in Angola from the first years of life;
2. Mandatory minimum services shall be ensured, including for the most vulnerable child and child in emergencies, namely:

- a) Quality care and education services for children from 0 (zero) to 2 (two) years of age whose parents work, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.
- b) Community Children's Centres or Free Community Educational Centres, Crèches and other alternative approaches for the child from 3 (three) to 4 (four) years of age, and these services must be accessible and of quality.
- c) In communities without initiation class, the services referred to in the preceding paragraph shall cover the phase of 3 (three) to 5 (five), and these services shall be accessible and of high quality.
- d) Free and quality Initiation Class for the child of 5 (five) years of age, giving priority to the child who has not had access to other types of pre-schools education.

In 2007, the State, together with the national and international social partners, especially the United Nations System, elaborated and assumed the 11 Commitments to the Child that constitute a set of responsibilities to ensure the integral development of the child, based on national and international legal norms on the child. This document covers the totality of the rights of the child, including civil rights and liberties, family environment, alternative care, basic care, health, well-being, education, leisure, cultural activity, and social and criminal protection measures. Considering its nature and objectives, it includes the following concrete matters, each with a special relevance in the life of the child (point 1 of article 49 of Law No. 25/12):

Table1.

The 11 commitments for the child

No. Ord.	Treaty	Designation/Area
1.	Commitment	Life Expectancy at Birth
2.	Commitment	Food and Nutritional Security
3.	Commitment	Birth Registration
4.	Commitment	Early Childhood Education
5.	Commitment	Primary Education and Vocational Training
6.	Commitment	Juvenile Justice
7.	Commitment	Prevention and Reduction of the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Families and Children
8.	Commitment	Prevention and Combating Violence Against Children
9.	Commitment	Social Protection and Family Skills

10.	Commitment	The Child and the Media, Culture, and Sports
11.	Commitment	The Child in the National Plan and the General State Budget

Source: self-elaboration based on Law No. 25/12

In the document, preschool education is ensured through the 4th commitment, encompassing four goals: expanding and improving "in all aspects, the care as well as the education of children aged 0-5 years, the continuation of the initiation class, the extension of programmes aimed at mobilising and educating families and communities," and creating initial and continuous training programmes for educators and child supervisors (11 Commitments to Children, 2011, p. 7).

Preschool education in government policies

In 2001, the Integrated Strategy for Improving the Education System was conceived and developed with the fundamental purpose of presenting the general and specific guidelines, as well as the short, medium, and long-term prognosis of the Education System, with a focus on its subsystems, levels, and modalities of education (Angola, 2001, p.10). The strategy was planned to implement its goals in three phases: 1st Urgency or Emergency - 2001-2002; 2nd System Stabilisation - 2002-2006; 3rd Consolidation and Development of the Education System - 2006-2015. The intervention strategy from 2001 to 2015 proposed, in the expansion and development phase from 2007 to 2015, a programme for the preschool sector with the central axis of "expanding access to early childhood education" through the "expansion of the network of Preschool Education Centres and the provision of non-formal educational opportunities accessible to children from modest families" (ibid, 2001, p. 41). To achieve this objective, two results were determined, each listing a set of activities (projects and programmes) to be carried out, as shown in the following Table 2:

Table 2.
Preschool Education Projects and Programmes/2001

Results	Projects and programmes	Description
Increase in enrolment rate	Preschool education centre creation project	Propose the creation of centres at the municipal level with the effective participation of the private sector, as well as provide credit facilities to private promoters
	Early childhood educator training programme	Train teachers with specific knowledge to "serve the State or the private sector."
	Development and dissemination of ludic and didactic materials project	Produce "pedagogical games" that are linked to the "local and national" context and ensure that the competent entities "prepare the necessary didactic resources."
Proper preparation of the child for integration into formal education	Community-based early childhood education centre creation project	"Non-formal modes of early childhood education will be encouraged through support for grassroots community initiatives [...] The organization and functioning of community centres will be the responsibility of local associations."
	Training programme for centre and day-care animators	Recruit and provide technical support for animators from the communities, with the Early Childhood Education Directorate providing technical support.

Source: Own elaboration based on the Integrated Strategy for Improving the Education System (Angola, 2001, p. 41)

The aspirations of this policy, particularly the projects and programmes for the creation of preschool education centres, teacher training, and the development and dissemination of ludic and didactic materials, have become goals of the Angolan State, integrated into strategic government plans such as the Long-Term Development Strategies for Angola (EDLPA) until 2025, the National Development Plan for Education (PNDE) "Educating Angola 2030," and the Development Plan (2013-2017; 2018-2022). These plans, in addition to having three-dimensional characteristics in terms of objectives, goals, and priority actions or projects (see MPL, 2007; MED, 2016; MEP, 2013; 2018), maintain the ideal of universalizing quality early childhood education, aiming to

contribute to equal opportunities for access by all children, especially those in vulnerable situations. Therefore, it is important to list the six projects until 2030:

Project 1 - Construction and equipping of Kindergartens for the attendance of children in the Initiation Class, in residential conglomerates, prioritising rural areas lacking primary schools. Seek public-private partnerships in schools and kindergartens to provide the Initiation Class;

Project 2 - Construct and equip classrooms with appropriate dimensions for classes with a maximum of 36 children in existing or newly constructed primary schools, allowing for the attendance of the Initiation Class;

Project 3 - Hire certified teachers/educators with mandatory scientific and pedagogical training, in sufficient numbers according to the needs of the preschool education level;

Project 4 - Develop awareness campaigns among parents, guardians, and communities about the social and economic importance of children attending preschool education, as well as the positive impact on family living conditions;

Project 5 - Organise school transportation for children who live more than a thousand meters away from the school;

Project 6 - Create institutional and material conditions to ensure the mandatory and free provision of preschool education and free access to books and school materials.

The preschool education policies outlined in the 21st century reflect, from an ideal and prescriptive perspective, the Angolan State's concern to respond to and address the emerging situations of children aged 0 to 5 who are denied access to quality care and education services – a normative term that is "constructed in specific situations [...] a product of a particular nature and creation" (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p. 5) – which implies the "effectiveness of educational and socio-educational responses to support balanced child development" the "quality of pedagogical equipment functioning" and the "quality of technical infrastructural equipment and services provided to the child" (article 41, Presidential Decree No. 129/17).

The nature of the policy production mentioned imposes challenges in using lenses that enable adopting a critical perspective capable of questioning the implementation processes and their impacts on access patterns, especially for children from disadvantaged families, i.e., "To what extent did the policy contribute to improving access standards, opportunities, and social justice?" (Mainardes, 2006, p. 69). In this case, we resort to the official reports published in 2014 by the Ministry of Education (MED) on the national examination for education for all and in 2018 by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and UNICEF on "Children in Angola: A Multidimensional Analysis of Child Poverty."

Review of official data related to access and preschool education institutions

The recognition of preschool education as a subsystem and level of education, starting with the implementation of the 2nd Education Reform, and the reaffirmation of children's rights in various regulations, with children gaining centrality in public policies, gave the image of a competent welfare state able to practically respond to the problems affecting Angolan children in their daily lives, especially the lack of care and education services in early childhood. However, in practice, from a holistic perspective, child public policy continues to lack the necessary priority. According to the data from the report, "Three out of four children under the age of 18 experience three to seven deprivations at the same time 74.4% of children in Angola suffer from multidimensional deprivations in at least three dimensions out of a total of seven possible deprivations" (Neubourg, Safojan, & Dangeot, 2018, p. 21). The disparity between urban and rural areas is significant, where "the majority of children living in urban areas experience two or three deprivations simultaneously, while in rural areas, most children suffer from five or six dimensions of simultaneous deprivation" (ibid, p. 23).

The quantifiable data on nurseries, kindergartens, and/or community-based childcare centres built as part of programs to expand and develop early childhood education nationwide have stagnated over time. The MED report in 2014 showed that in 2012, there were only a total of 497 preschool education institutions, of which 401 (80%) were state-owned public institutions, 334 (67%) were Community Childcare Centres (CICs), and 67 (13%) were Childcare Centres (CIs), with 97 (20%) being privately owned Childcare Centres. Between 2016 and 2019, according to the report by the Education for All Network-Angola (2020), there was a decrease to less than 40 care institutions (total of 457 institutions). Until 2013, it was estimated that 10% of children aged 0 to 5 attended preschool (INE, 2017). In 2020, the number of childcare centres increased to 1.515, with 1.344 being private and 171 being public. Regarding the number of enrolled children, the data indicates a total of 87.589 children up until the referenced period. Therefore, there is a disparity in access related to the child's social group, where out of 10 children from medium and high-income families, 7 to 8 attend preschool, while out of 10 children from low-income families, only 2 children have attended (INE, 2017).

Access is related to the children's place of residence since care and education services for children aged 0 to 5 are limited to urban and peri-urban areas, with no existence in rural areas (MED, 2014). This fact, for example, prevented Neubourg, Safojan, & Dangeot from including this element in their study, as "the possibility of access to education for 3 or 4-year-olds varies depending on the region. Additionally, 5-year-old children were excluded to avoid overestimation of deprivations associated with the effects of the year of birth" (2018, p. 31).

Based on the same report, "40% of children aged 5 to 11 experience deprivations in the Education dimension," and they "are two years (or more) behind in relation to the corresponding age class [...] This may be related to the fact that in Angola, a high proportion of children are enrolled late in the first grade" (UNICEF, 2015, cited by Neubourg, Safojan, & Dangeot, 2018).

Critical analysis of public policies for preschool education

Despite the production of legal instruments for the protection and development of children in Angola, idealising their rights - mainly universal access to education through compensatory programmes for one year in the initiation classes - the truth is that, in practical terms, preschool education development programmes continue to lack priority from the State (Education for All Network, 2020), and the social and economic issues faced by children are transferred from one plan to another without effective implementation.

The data presented indicate a contradiction between the intended plan and the practical national plans for early childhood education, often promising equity but promoting exclusion and inequalities in reality. One of the causes lies in the fact that we do not have a "democratic welfare state" (Santos, 2005) capable of asserting itself as the major investor in the social sector. Instead, we continue to witness a state that does not prioritise social programmes targeting children in its policies. This is one of the factors hindering the realisation of children's rights, as Bosisio & Ronfani (2020, p. 1) point out, "The scarce financial resources for the development of child and family policies, due to the systematic neglect of children's rights and family issues, which are not a priority on the political agenda."

Equal opportunity of access reflects the principle of universalisation of access, which implies eliminating "any kind of discrimination in its attendance and implies state action in guaranteeing said universalisation and non-discrimination" (Sarmiento, 2001, p. 142). The full access to early childhood education aimed to be achieved by 2030 is only possible, in the words of Rawls (2000, p. 307), if there exists a "set of institutions" that guarantee "similar opportunities for education" and " [...] that treats all students as equals [...], in which essential goods are distributed according to the rules of justice and that promotes cooperation on an equal footing" (Crahay et al., 2003, p.12; see Boliver, 2005, p. 44; italicised in the work).

The basic freedoms and mechanisms of collective redistribution in Angola, focused on public policies for childhood, centred on the rights of opportunities for quality education access, contradict a "system of basic freedoms" that includes or excluded children, as they favour children belonging to a minority of the economically privileged social class in the country. We do not want to disregard the progress made in access, especially through the provision of the compensatory one-year programme in the initiation class, but exclusion and multidimensional inequalities worsen each day, and preschool development programmes continue to remain in the Platonic cave without achieving the expected effects in both agendas or plans. Empirical data highlight a range of problems related to quality access, raising uncertainties about the achievement of the goals targeted for 2030.

In the current context, with many children living in poverty (48%), it seems that the existing programmes were not built through an "interventionist and differentiated nature" (Sarmiento, Tomás & Soares, 2004) and do not constitute a social justice anchored in the principle of universal access to quality education without discrimination. Social justice would require "social arrangements that allow everyone to participate as equals in social

life," capable of overcoming 'injustice.' This would involve "dismantling institutionalised barriers" that prevent children in disadvantaged situations from "participating on an equal footing with others as full partners in social interaction," so that they are not "prevented from fully participating by economic structures that deny them the resources they need to interact with others as equals" (Fraser, 2005, p. 92).

Final considerations

The nature of the Early Childhood Education Development programmes in Angola reflects two global contexts of educational policy agendas: the Dakar agenda (2000), focused on Education for All, and the Incheon agenda, aimed at the "framework and action for the implementation of SDG 4." As a result of these agendas, legal instruments for the education system were created in 2001 and 2016, along with instruments for the protection and development of children's rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

However, the data related to the practical and multisectoral preschool development programmes implemented by the Angolan government, as reported in official reports during the period of 2001-2015 and beyond, are scarce, incomplete, and sometimes divergent, lacking precise quantitative mapping. This insufficiency prevents an assessment of the impact of the programmes in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of access, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Nevertheless, the extracted results indicate an unfavourable situation regarding public policies for early childhood education, which continue to remain idealised without receiving the necessary priority from the state, considering the lack of investment allocated to the sector, which amounts to less than 1% of the General Education Budget.

The description of the legal, normative, and political texts underlying children's rights to preschool education does not conclude the analytical scope of the intended public policy analysis for childhood. Instead, it provides substance for the continuation of our study through the collection of empirical data from supervisory entities and institutions providing care and education for children aged 3 to 5 years.

References

- Angola (2001). *Integrated Strategy for the Improvement of the Education System*, MED
- Angola (2014). *Implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: Initial Report 1999-2013*. Luanda
- Angola, Law no. 25/12, of 22 August – published in the *Diário da República I Series* – Law on the protection and development of children.
- Angola, Law no. 32/20, of 12 August – published in the *Diário da República I Série* – n.º 123 – Law amending the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System (Law No. 17/16, of 7 October).

- Angola, National Children's Council (2011). *11 Commitments for children: for a better future, let us take care of the child*. 3rd updated version, V National Forum on Children – June/2011
- Angola, Presidential Decree, no. 129/17, 16 June – published in the *Diário da República I Series* n.º 97 – Statute of Pre-School Education.
- Angola. Law no. 16/17, of 7 October - published in the *Diário da República I Series* – n.º 170 - Basic Law of the Education System.
- Angola, Law no. 32/20, of August 12 – published in the *Diário da República I Série* – n.º 123 – Law amending the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System (Law no. 16/17, of October 7).
- Azancot, M. de M. (2010). *A look at the implementation of the Educational Reform in Angola: A case study in the provinces of Luanda, Huambo and Huíla*. Luanda.
- Ball, S. J. (1993). What is policy? texts, trajectories and toolboxes, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13, 2, 10-17, DOI:10.1080/0159630930130203
- Binji, P. (2013). *The Educational Reform in Angola: the challenge of building a liberating school*. Dissertation of the Master in Pedagogy for school and professional training. Salasian Pontifical University in Rome – Italy.
- Bolívar, A. (2005). Equidad educativa y teorías de la justicia, REICE - Electronic magazine Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, *Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 42-69
- Bosisio, R. & Ronfani, P. (2020). *Children as Rights Holders, Current Debate and Challenges*. Les enfants comme sujets de droit. Enjeux et questions en débat, 60/20, p. 28-35, Available on: <https://journals.openedition.org/revss/4767?lang=en>, Accessed: 18/07/2022
- Bowe, Ch., Ball, S. J. & Gold, A. (1992, ED.2017). *Reforming education and changing school: case studies in policy sociology*. ROUTLEDGE
- Dye, Thomas R. (2000). *Understanding public policy*, 8th ed., USA, Prentice-Hall, ISBN 0-13-097411-0
- EPT-Angola Network (2020). *A look at early childhood education and care in Angola*. OSISA.
- Ferraz, A. S. L. (2018) *Skills Development in Preschool Education: A Study with Early Childhood Educators*. Master's thesis at the Institute of Education of the University of Minho.
- Fraser, N. (2005). reframing justice in a globalizing world. *Anales de la Cátedra Francisco Suárez*, 39, pp. 89-105.
- Mainardes, J. (2006). Policy cycle approach: a contribution to the analysis of educational policies. *Educ. Soc., Campinas*, vol. 27, n. 94, p. 47-69, jan./abr. Available in <http://www.cedes.unicamp.br/>
- Minister of Education (2015). *National Education Development Plan "EDUCAR - ANGOLA 2030": final report*. MED.

- Ministry of Economy and Planning (2018). *National Development Plan (2018-2022)*. Vol. 1, Government of Angola.
- Ministry of Education (2014). *2015 National Examination of Education for All: Angola*. Luanda.
- Moss, P. & Dahlberg, G. (2008). Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care – Languages of Evaluation. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, Volume 5, Issue 1, 03-12.
- National Institute of Statistics (INE). Ministry of Health (MINSÁ), Ministry of Planning and Territorial Development (MINPLAN) and UNICEF. (2017). *Survey of Multiple Indicators and Health in Angola 2015-2016*. INE, MINSÁ, MINPLAN and UNICEF
- Neubourg, Ch., Safojan, R., & Dangeot, A. (2018). *The child in Angola - A multidimensional analysis of child poverty*. INE and UNICEF.
- Ozga, J. (2000). Research on educational policies: ground of contestation. Porto: Porto Editora.
- Rawls, J. (2000). *A theory of justice*. Trad. A. Pisetta & L.M.R. Esteves. Martins Fontes.
- Sarmiento, M.J., Thomas, C.A., Smith, N. F. (2004). Globalization, Education and (Re)Institutionalization of Contemporary Childhood. VIII *Luso-Afro-Brazilian Congress of Social Sciences*, Coimbra 16, 17 and 18 September
- UNESCO (2002). *Early Childhood Education and Care: major challenges*. Translation by Guilherme João de Freitas Teixeira. – UNESCO Brazil, OECD, Ministry of Health.
- UNESCO (2016). *Incheon Declaration and SDG 4 – Education Action Framework 2030*. ED-2016/WS/28
- UNESCO and MED. Ministry of Planning (2007). *Long-Term Development Strategy for Angola (2025)*. Vol. III. MINPLAN.
- Vilarinho, E. (2013). The right of children to quality public preschool education. critical analysis of the implementation of the education and childcare model in Portugal. *Pedagogical Magazine*, Chapecó, v.15, n.31, p. 281-300, jul./dez.
- Zabalza, Miguel A. (1998). *Quality in early childhood education*. Trad. B. A. Neves. ArtMed
- Zau, F. (2002). *Angola: rails for development*, Universidade Aberta.

Funding

This work was financially support by Portuguese national funds through the FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology) and conducted within the framework of the CIEC (Research Centre on Child Studies of the University of Minho) with the references UIDB/00317/2020 and UIDP/00317/2020.

Bionotes

Narciso Jorge Dumbo has a degree in Educational Sciences, specialisation in Teaching Pedagogy, from the Benguela Higher Institute of Educational Sciences (ISCED-Benguela), is studying for a PhD in Child Studies, specialising in Childhood, Culture and Society, at the Institute of Education of the University of Minho, and is a lecturer at ISCED-Benguela, teaching Scientific Research Methodology, Research Methodology in Education and General Pedagogy. In recent days he has devoted her interest to public policies for children, children's rights, educational policies and teacher training policies.

Email: narcisodumbo@hotmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0001-7709-4808

Teresa Sarmiento is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Education, University of Minho, in the Department of Social Sciences of Education and the Research Centre on Child Studies, where she has dedicated herself to teaching in teacher training, as well as research into early childhood education, teacher training, life stories of education professionals, school organisation and school-family-community relations; she has developed studies as an external expert on gender conditions at European Union level, and has collaborated in the preparation of preparatory documents for the legal framework for pre-school education and inclusive education in São Tomé and Príncipe, as well as studies on children in Angola. Her studies have been published in numerous scientific journals and books, both at home and abroad.

Email: tsarmiento@ie.uminho.pt

Orcid: 0000-0002-2371-399X

Received: July 2023

Published: December 2023