

The policy of initial training for early childhood educators in Angola: challenges of curricular harmonization

*A política de formação inicial de educador de infância em Angola:
desafios da harmonização curricular¹*

*Política de formación inicial de educación de la primera infancia en Angola:
retos de la armonización curricular*

Narciso Jorge Dumbo²
Higher Institute of Educational Sciences of Benguela-Angola CIEC

Teresa Sarmento³
Institute of Education of the University of Minho

Abstract: The social, political and economic dynamics of the modern world pose new challenges for early childhood educators, leading them to (re)think processes, curricula and practices. In the Angolan context, the scenario is no different, with constant changes in the field of teacher training policy underlying the implementation of recent guidelines. This text is therefore guided by the following question: what are the challenges of the curriculum plan for the pre-school education degree course proposed by the specialist group of the National Curriculum Harmonisation Commission? Based on the documentary analysis, the aim is to reflect on the plan from a holistic perspective of initial training for early childhood educators, identifying its weaknesses and proposing the challenges of the necessary approaches to enable professionals to meet the current challenges in the sector. The analysis found that the curriculum has limitations in its approach, a lack of conceptions of the child in daycare, a reductionist approach to the ‘socio-cultural context’ and ‘working with families’.

Keywords: Survery education; Primary teachers; Curriculum harmonization; Teachers’ initial training; Curriculum policy.

Resumo: As dinâmicas sociais, políticas e económicas do mundo moderno colocam novos desafios ao educador de infância que levam a (re)pensar os processos, os currículos e as práticas. No contexto angolano, o cenário não é diferente, verificam-se constantes mudanças no campo da política de formação de professores subjacente à implementação de recentes diretrizes. Assim, este texto é guiado pela seguinte questão: quais são os desafios do plano curricular do curso de licenciaturas em educação pré-escolar proposto pelo grupo de especialistas da Comissão Nacional de Harmonização Curricular? Com base na análise documental, procura-se refletir, a partir de uma perspectiva holística da formação inicial de educador de infância, o plano, identificando as fragilidades da mesma e propor os desafios das abordagens necessárias que habilitam o profissional para atender os reptos atuais do setor. A análise aferiu que o currículo possui limitações na sua abordagem, a falta de concepções da criança em creche, o reducionismo no enfoque do “contexto sócio-cultural” e do “trabalho com famílias”.

Palavras-chave: Educação pré-escolar; Educador de infância; Harmonização Curricular; Formação inicial de professores; Política curricular.

¹ Língua portuguesa angolana.

² PhD. Lecturer at ISCED, Benguela, (AO) and collaborator at CIEC - IE, Minho, Braga, (PT). E-mail: narcisodumbo@hotmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7709-4808>.

³ PhD. Associate Professor at IE-UMinho and researcher at CIEC, Minho, Braga, (PT). E-mail: tsarmento@ie.uminho.pt; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2371-399X>.

Resumen: Las dinámicas sociales, políticas y económicas del mundo moderno plantea nuevos desafíos a los educadores de la primera infancia, lo que lleva a (re)pensar procesos, currículos y prácticas. En el contexto angolés, el escenario no es diferente, se le notan cambios constantes en el campo de la política de formación de profesores que subyacen a la implementación de nuevas directrices. Por lo tanto, este texto se orienta por la siguiente pregunta: ¿cuáles son los desafíos del plan curricular de la carrera de Educación Infantil propuesto por el grupo de especialistas de la Comisión Nacional de Armonización Curricular? A partir del análisis documental, se pretende reflexionar, desde una perspectiva holística de la formación inicial de los educadores de la primera infancia, el plan identificando sus debilidades y proponiendo los desafíos de los enfoques necesarios para que los profesionales puedan enfrentar los retos actuales del sector. La reflexión ha demostrado que el plan de estudios tiene limitaciones en su enfoque, la falta de concepciones del niño en la guardería, el reduccionismo en el enfoque del «contexto socio-cultural» y «el trabajo con las familias».

Palabras clave: Educación preescolar; Educador de la primera infancia; Armonización curricular; Formación inicial del profesorado; Política curricular.

Recebido em: 06 de out. de 2024

Aceito em: 27 de nov. de 2024

Introduction

The expansion and development of the higher education subsystem in Angola in recent decades, in addition to projections that indicate significant structural progress (quantitative and qualitative) in different areas, reveals worrying situations. Mendes (2013, p.33) points out that the resizing of the Agostinho Neto University in 2009, resulting in the "creation of six more public universities, with national coverage" and the reproduction of private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has led to numerous problems, including "the opening of new courses, in many cases without taking into account the fundamental provisions taken as a reference for creation [...]" (Mendes, 2013, p.34).

As a result, the HEIs were characterised by a mismatch in the curricula of the courses, i.e. there is no uniform curriculum, there are courses with different names, but which basically pursue the goal of having the same trainee. An example of this is the kindergarten teacher training courses in higher education. In the Angolan context, an early childhood educator is a "teacher trained in educational sciences, prepared to attend to early childhood in crèches, kindergartens and primary schools" (Article 3(d) of Presidential Decree 160/18 of 3 July).

Again, in the case of early childhood educator training courses, public and private HEIs adopt different identities characterised by a nominal plurality, whose designations are: degree course in early childhood education; degree course in early childhood educator; degree course in pre-school education; degree course in early childhood education; degree course in pre-school education; degree course in pre-school (see MESCTI, 2017, 2021)⁴.

⁴ List of Private Higher Education Institutions and their Undergraduate Courses (2024). Available at: [Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate – v. 13, n. 2, p. 1-16, mai./ago. 2024](#)

Thus, in 2018, Presidential Decree no. 193/18 of 10 October created the general curricular standards for undergraduate courses in the Higher Education Subsystem, which establishes "the rules and procedures necessary for adequate curricular planning, as well as the permanent promotion of the essential conditions to ensure the organization and curricular management of undergraduate courses" (article 1, point 2). These regulations serve to solve the problem initially raised, and the policy of curricular harmonization emerged.

The aim of this policy is to homogenise the curricula of degree courses, as can be seen in the text below:

Bearing in mind the aim of strengthening the quality of training provided in the Higher Education Subsystem, it is imperative to approve rules on the structuring of curricula, which contribute to the harmonization of the curricula of undergraduate courses in the same scientific field, in order to ensure that, among other requirements, there is a minimum and compulsory curricular content, the definition of the workload, identical entry and exit profile, which must be observed by all Higher Education Institutions (in the preamble to Presidential Decree no. 193/18, of 10 October).193/18 of 10 October).

The problem is not just the nominal idiosyncrasy of the curriculum for early childhood teacher training at degree level, nor is it the standardization of the form. From the point of view of approaches to the area, international literature shows the same situations, such as the lack of consensus in training plans (Oliveira, Lopes and Pereira, 2019; Folque et al. 2016), in the designation of staff working in the sector (teachers, pedagogues and educators) and in the qualification criteria for exercising the function (UNESCO, 2002). These categories are not the focus of our approach because they substantiate the determinism of the ideological nature of the national curriculum (Apple, 1982).

We believe that the basis of the question, which is the subject of reflection in this text, is the knowledge that will be taught in the 4-year academic programme, which explicitly expresses the skills and abilities needed to perform the profession in the pre-school subsystem⁵. According to Folque et al. (2016) and UNESCO (2002), the pre-service training curriculum has gaps in various training areas, especially the "lack of specialised training for those working with babies and young children" (UNESCO, 2002, p.146).

From this perspective, we understand that pre-school education with a focus on inclusion and the integral development of the child (Zabalza 1998, p.26) and that fulfils the

<https://mescti.gov.ao/ao/documentos/publicacoes/>, accessed on 20/11/2024.

⁵ In this text, we take the concept of pre-school education as determined by Law no. 17/16, of 7 October, the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, amended by Law no. 32/20, of 12 August. It is understood to be the first level of education in the school system that caters for the care and education of children from 0 to 5 years old. It consists of two cycles: the crèche (from three months to three years) and the kindergarten (from three to five years), which must also include the initiation class (from five to six years).

assumptions of their rights (Sarmiento and Tomás, 2020), requires a holistic training plan that encompasses theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge of the area (Altet, 2001) sufficient to "[...] transform [...] a dynamic educational sector centred on the learning and development needs of children" (UNICEF, 2019, p.78).

The guiding question of our analysis is based on the following: what are the challenges of the curriculum plan for the degree course in pre-school education proposed by the expert group of the National Commission for Curriculum Harmonisation.

However, after analysing the plan, we tried to present the missing knowledge repertoire, that is, we identified its weaknesses and proposed, based on the literature review, challenges of the necessary approaches that enable professionals to meet the current challenges of the sector, as referenced in the Incheon Declaration (2015), that the training of pre-school education professionals should cover curricular knowledge focused on Information and Communication Technology, methodological and pedagogical preparation to assist children with special educational needs and from minority cultures, as well as involving family participation (UNICEF, 2019).

The text covers three main areas: firstly, we look at the initial training of early childhood educators from a normative point of view; secondly, we analyse the requirements to enter the career of early childhood educator; thirdly, we present the curricular harmonisation proposal; and finally, we list missing curricular approaches.

Methodology

To construct the text, documentary analysis was used, which according to Digneffe et al (2005), can serve as a "method for collecting and verifying data", has the purpose of "accessing relevant sources, written or not", and is therefore an integral part of "research heuristics". Given that the aim was to narrate the curricular assumptions guiding the training of early childhood educators in higher education, within the scope of curricular harmonisation, at first we sought to select legal norms that set out the new guidelines for curricular policy, mainly Presidential Decree no. 193/18, of 10 December 2018. Presidential Decree no. 193/18, of 10 October - approves the General Curricular Standards for Undergraduate Courses in the Higher Education Subsystem; Presidential Decree no. 273/20, of 21 October - Legal Framework for the Initial Training of Early Childhood Educators, Primary School Teachers and Secondary School Teachers; Presidential Decree no. 160/18, of 3 July - the Career Statute for Education Agents.

Secondly, we used institutional documents as a source, such as the pedagogical project for the degree course in early childhood education, a proposal submitted by the Ministry of

Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation to the National Curriculum Commission⁶ in the field of education. The proposal was the subject of discussion in three sessions of the specialist group in 2024, which focused on the entry and exit profiles, the core curriculum plan, the distribution of credit units, the nature of the end-of-course work and the type of curricular units in the transversal training component. In general terms, the use of other sources (books and articles) was not neglected.

Initial training for early childhood educators: a normative perspective

The pedagogical meaning of the term training, according to Fabre (1994, ap. Pinto et al 2010), emerged in France in 1938, with the decrees that established vocational training. Thus, from a pedagogical perspective, the term refers to the idea of qualification through a course or diploma, or a teacher training system, or training programmes. And, as a process, it consists of training someone in something, by means of some knowledge, given that this process is part of a social and economic context, implying the acquisition of knowledge by subjects who are learning, with the aim of adapting them to changing cultural and/or professional contexts.

Based on Fabre's (1994) line of thought, it can be understood that the concept of training, from a pedagogical perspective, is polysemic, since the author first refers to training as a teacher training system and as a process. In this duality of concepts, one perspective of initial training and another of ongoing training stand out. Fabre's conception is in line with our approach, which focuses on initial training as a qualification that enables the individual to fulfil a social function. This concept is in line with a normative vision, which considers:

Initial teacher training, training considered legally necessary to obtain a qualification and licence to exercise the teaching profession, is normally considered the first stage in a continuous process of teacher training, of which the following stages are induction and continuous professional development (Article 4(r) of Presidential Decree 273/20).

In the Angolan context, the initial training of educators has gained prominence with the creation of new legal instruments and the creation of pre-school education courses in higher education institutions. In addition to the General Curricular Standards for Undergraduate Courses in the Higher Education Subsystem, formulated by Presidential Decree No. 193/18,

⁶ This commission was set up by Order no. 305/19 of 16 July, which creates eight National Curriculum Commissions by scientific field⁶, with the aim of organizing "the entire process of harmonizing the curricula of undergraduate courses" at a national level.

mentioned in the introduction, which establishes curricular harmonisation, there is a new regulatory guideline for initial teacher training created by Presidential Decree No. 273/20, of 21 October - Legal Regime for Initial Training of Early Childhood Educators, Primary School Teachers and Secondary School Teachers

The document is based on "promoting the improvement of the quality of education and teaching", by means of mechanisms that make it possible to invite and elect candidates with excellent performances to attend "this training and by guaranteeing that the qualification provided and acquired in the respective courses is appropriate to the demands of professional teaching performance" (art. 3)

According to this new system, initial teacher training organised in two ways: the integrated model and the sequential model. However, nursery teacher training is only organised in the integrated model (art. 8, point 4). According to Article 4(x), it is organised in this model,

when its curriculum includes, from the outset, general training in one or more subjects and professional training, both theoretical and practical, for the teaching of those subjects, general training being understood as the acquisition of in-depth knowledge in the subject(s) to be taught, in addition to an appropriate cultural contextualisation (Presidential Decree no. 273/20, of 21 October).

The pre-school education course takes place in specialised Pedagogical Higher Education institutions, which may be public institutions, as in the case of ISCED, or private institutions, with the aim of providing training and qualifications for teaching and teacher training in the pre-school education subsystem, including teaching the beginners' class (articles 6 and 7).

Identity to work as an Early Childhood Educator

There is a weakness in the level of requirements for a career as a kindergarten teacher. Article 3(d) of the Statute of the Career of Education Agents, Presidential Decree no. 160/18 of 3 July, states that an early childhood educator is a "teacher trained in educational sciences, prepared to attend to early childhood in nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools". For this, two fundamental elements are required: to have a minimum qualification of "II Cycle of Secondary Education in the Area of Childhood Educator or equivalent, certified by the Body responsible for the Education Sector" and to be proficient "in the Portuguese language" (art.13).

Based on Article 12 of the decree, early childhood educators must have certain skills, which considered profile requirements:

- i. Know the physiological, psychological and social nature of pre-school children.
- ii. Have the competence to identify children with special educational needs or specific care needs.
- iii. Mastering specific pedagogical methods and techniques for caring for children in crèches and kindergartens;
- iv. Have the skills to teach primary school;
- v. Master the profiles, objectives, curriculum plans and teaching programmes established for early childhood;
- vi. Know the legislation, regulations, methodological guidelines and other instruments relating to pre-school education;
- vii. Planning activities in line with the child's age group; encouraging the child's ability to communicate through various forms of expression (verbal, musical, plastic and dramatic);
- viii. Promoting children's responsibility, autonomy, coordination and creativity;
- ix. To understand the child's development process in its biopsychosocial aspects and to encourage discovery and the construction of knowledge through action;
- x. Enforcing the rules of hygiene and balanced nutrition; setting specific objectives based on education programmes, the conditions of early childhood institutions and their environment;
- xi. To initiate the promotion of national culture based on civic, moral and ethical values.

These requirements, especially the academic qualification, are lower than those required in many countries, such as Brazil and Portugal, which have higher education qualifications. In Brazil, the candidate must have a degree in Pedagogy, while in Portugal, in addition to a degree in basic education (3 years), postgraduate training is essential, a master's degree of three or four semesters in the area (Oliveira, Lopes and Pereira, 2019; Folque et al. 2016).

Quality pre-school education, anchored in lifelong learning and the holistic development of the child, requires qualified professionals with specific and multidisciplinary knowledge. It is in this context that we consider whether the approach taken by the curriculum of initial training for early childhood educators prepares them so that, at the end of the course, they have the qualification profile prescribed by Article 12 (Presidential Decree 160/18 of 3 July).

Proposal for curricular harmonisation for initial training as an early childhood educator

The term curriculum is seen in different ways, with various meanings depending on the object. For example, from a broad perspective, it can be understood as "a problem-solving text of representation, which interconnects the processes of production and reproduction, encompassing the selection of content, the organisation of knowledge and skills and the orientation of transmission methods" (Pacheco, 2002, p.14); or from a narrower perspective, usually used to "refer equally to the programme of a given subject and a given grade, the programme of a given subject for an entire cycle of studies or the total programme of different subjects for an entire cycle or even for all cycles" (Ochs, 1974, referenced by Lewy, 1977, p.6).

Furthermore, the curriculum can be understood as a "permanent construction of practices, with a marked cultural and social significance, and an instrument" (Pacheco, 2001, p.19). Thus, according to the author, the curriculum is seen as a "project, whose process of construction and development is interactive, which implies unity, continuity and interdependence between what is decided at the level of the normative plan [...] and at the level of the real plan" (idem, p.20).

In our context, the normative meaning of the curriculum corroborates the first by stating:

The curriculum as a structured teaching-learning plan encompassing objectives, content and processes and which acts as a guide for pedagogical action, providing indications of what to teach (content), what to teach for (objectives), how to teach (sequence), drawn up in accordance with the course's exit profile (Article 3(v) of Presidential Decree 193/18 of 10 August).

These concepts, whether in their broad or narrow view, take a macro (curriculum policy) or micro (content, objectives and methods) approach, and require a hermeneutic approach to curriculum analysis. Although our reflection is based on curricular policy, aimed at instrumentalising the implementation of "explicit and objective norms", i.e. laws and decrees (exempting the examination of normative orders; interpretative and subjective norms, as well as guidance and support documentation, Pacheco, 2002), we will not focus on all the dimensions included in the curriculum of initial training for early childhood educators.

According article 12 of the same decree, the curricula for initial teacher training, organised according to the integrated or sequential model in higher education institutions, include a set of dimensions: the entry profile, the professional teaching qualification profile, the curricular structure, study plan or curriculum grid, the programmes for each subject or curricular unit, the guidelines for the learning assessment system, the grading procedures and the systems for year transition, repetition and course completion.

In Higher Education (integrated model), the degree course in pre-school education lasts 4 (four) academic years, totalling 4,800 hours equivalent to 320 Credit Units, of which 3,600 contact hours are dedicated to theoretical, theoretical-practical and practical classes and the supervised professional internship. The course consists of 8 semesters; in each semester, the workload adds up to 600 hours, equivalent to 40 Credit Units.

This document stipulates that the early childhood education curriculum should encompass five approaches: the first focusing on cultural contextualisation; the second, on training in the language of instruction and the subjects to be taught; the third, general educational training; the fourth, specific teaching methodologies and pedagogical practice; and the fifth, supervised professional internship (point 1 of art.15).

Supported by points 1 and 4 of article 16 of the same diploma, in undergraduate courses 50% of contact hours are allocated to curricular units that cover approaches to contextualisation and training in the language of instruction and in the subjects to be taught; and 30% to those that encompass approaches to general educational training and specific teaching methodologies and pedagogical practice. In secondary courses, 40 per cent of the hours are dedicated to the first two components and 37.5 per cent to the third and fourth. Based on point 3 of article 27 (Presidential Decree 193/18), pre-professional practice must correspond to at least 15 per cent of the total teaching load, and in the case of the bachelor's degree course, the supervised professional internship occupies 1,200 hours. The approaches include a set of curricular units belonging to the different areas, i.e. the curriculum grid expresses a multidisciplinary approach with or without interdisciplinarity and transversality. By way of example, the bachelor's degree curriculum is structured in semester-long curricular units, from the first to the fourth year, with a supervised internship in the final year (see article 16 of Presidential Decree 193/18). The structural design of the programme contains 52 curricular units.

The first level, cultural contextualisation, addresses "knowledge from each specific teaching area to other areas of culture, knowledge of the cultural, social and economic context" (p.4143), incorporating subjects such as: Angolan history and culture, hygiene, health and nutrition in childhood, entrepreneurship education, environmental education and sustainability.

The second level, training in the language of instruction and in the subjects to be taught, deals with "knowledge and skills in the language of instruction and in an area or subjects [...] that the course qualifies and qualifies". This category includes subjects in the areas of languages (Portuguese, local, foreign), information technology (ICT), and specific subjects (pre-school pedagogy, childhood sociology, education and human rights).

Regarding, general educational training, it refers to the "knowledge, skills, attitudes and values relevant to the performance of all teachers in the classroom, at school and in their relationship with families and the surrounding community". This includes subjects from the educational sciences (pedagogy, psychology, developmental and learning psychology, anatomy and physiology of early childhood development, ethics).

As for the specific teaching methodology and the corresponding pedagogical practice, it integrates knowledge related to "an area or subjects in the syllabus for which each course qualifies and qualifies", as well as "experiential knowledge" that allows them to carry out "activities of observation and analysis of the school context and the surrounding community where the future" educator will carry out their duties. Supervision and the professional internship are incorporated into these methodologies.

The question that can be asked is whether this "dispersion" of curricular knowledge (Mucuenje, 2020) provides the knowledge bases that the profession requires. Based on the legislation in force (Presidential Decree no. 273/20), it is considered that at the end of their training, future educators should have a set of repertoires to represent their professional identity, known as a qualification profile, which concerns "professional knowledge of the educational reality, professional skills and professional values and attitudes" (point 2 of article 14 of the decree).

In these terms, it is essential that educators during their initial training have knowledge related to the "organisation of the Angolan education system; knowledge of the characteristics of childhood development and learning; knowledge of curricular guidelines, guiding standards and programmes for pre-school education; organisation of educational. Environments in pre-school education; management of learning in pre-school education; assessment to monitor learning; active participation in the educational community; appreciation of principles of non-discrimination and educational inclusion; self- responsibility for educational action and professional development.

The curricular units in the project under analysis partly provide this knowledge, which in our opinion is part of the classification of knowledge that a professional teacher should possess. Altet (2001) proposes two types of knowledge: theoretical, declarative knowledge, made up of knowledge to be taught and knowledge to teach; and practical knowledge, known as "empirical or experience knowledge", which brings together knowledge about practice and knowledge of practice (this is developed in the process of professional development).

In summary, the curricular proposal for initial training in pre-school education in higher education emphasises a general educational training approach, with a tendency to correlate the approach to training in the language of teaching and the subjects to be taught

and the specific teaching methodology, reinforcing the importance of "academic training in the context of teaching practice", subsidised by practices pedagogical from the 2nd year and at the end the curricular internship, as well as an affirmation for a transitional approach between pre-school and primary education.

Curriculum challenges for pre-school education in higher education

The challenges we intend to pose have their roots in the perspective of conceiving holistic pre-school education, which explains the approach to care and education. This approach perceives the child as integral (holistic), corroborating Zabalza's (1998, p.22) view that "the young child is a global whole and that the training work to be carried out with them must always be globalised". In another vein, Formosinho, J. (2021, p.13), based on the framework of the specific characteristics of the profession of early childhood educator formulated by Oliveira-Formosinho in 1998 and 2001, argues that their training must be based on "the characteristics of the young child, the characteristics of the work contexts, missions, the characteristics of the process and the tasks carried out by the educators".

The first weakness is the lack of approach to children in daycare centres, children aged between 3 (three) months and 3 (three) years old. There is a need to equip future educators with knowledge of the characteristics and ways of life and socialisation of children in their first years of life, since they are being prepared to work in institutions such as crèches and childcare centres. For this reason, Zabalza (1998, p.26) suggests incorporating the disciplines that cohabit in this area, since "these are still very unsocialised, lively and dynamic children who find it very difficult to focus their attention on their activities".

The second weakness has to do with the reductionist approach to the "socio-cultural context". The subjects of Angolan history and culture, with a workload of 60 hours, and local language (I and II), with 45 hours in each semester, both in the 1st year, do not enable the future educator to develop precise skills to deal with the different cultural contexts in which Angolan children are born.

Cardoso and Flores (2009), in their analysis of the curricula of teacher training courses at the Higher Institutes of Educational Sciences, distinguished this as one of the shortcomings, stating that: "The course does not provide them with spaces to get to know, with due rigour, depth and criticality, the historical - social conditions of the concrete educational process in which they are going to act, which ends up leading to their teaching practice becoming merely technical and mechanical" (p.661).

If the curriculum qualifies the future professional to teach the beginners' class in primary school, given the growing evolution of access to this class throughout the country, he needs to have knowledge of the reality of children in community areas, especially the mastery of the mother tongue - in these areas the children have mastery of the mother tongue and not the Portuguese language.

Census data showed that of the 71 per cent of the population who speak Portuguese, 85 per cent live in urban areas, while only 49 per cent live in rural areas. There are 8 ethnolinguistic groups, with their linguistic specificities (Fiote, Kikongo, Kimbundo, Chokwe, Umbundo, Muhumbi, Kwanhama and Nganguela), with Umbundo being the second most spoken language, with 23% of speakers, followed by Kikongo and Kimbundu, with around 8% each" (Instituto Nacional de Statistic, INE, 2016, p.51).

For this reason, we suggest a curricular proposal in initial training for multicultural pre-school education, as we have stated in another text (Dumbo, 2024). In the Angolan context, there is a cultural plurality, made up of different *ethnolinguistic* peoples (Zau, 2005), or ethnic groups (more than eight), typified by their customary values and spaces that are so different from urbanity. Knowing that children are marked by their cultural childhood experiences, there is a need to (re)define curriculum policy from the "bottom up", integrating a horizontal view of children, which in the words of Stoer (2008) represents an *ethnographic* perspective.

Our proposal, firstly, reveals the paradigm of a quality pre-school education policy, accessible and adaptable to all, which includes accessibility measures for children with special needs, and children from different cultural and social backgrounds, *i.e.* using the local language with minorities, migrants and multilingual trainers who assist (Barry, 2022).

This reinforces the importance of fostering an initial training curriculum policy focused on multiculturalism, centred on post-critical curricular currents that recognize and build on children's differences and representations of identity (Canen, e Oliveira, 2002; Silva, 2000; Pacheco, 2002), and which looks at the culturally constructed image of the child, with a hybrid childhood approach in order to understand "the diversity of childhood, from an "intersectional perspective that crosses generational status with class, gender, ethnicity, religious orientation, sexual orientation and urban or rural status, insertion in the world space" (Sarmiento and Tomás, 2020, p. 26).

Finally, there is a weak approach to "working with families" in the initial training of early childhood educators, which is why, as Folque et al. (2016, p.30) state, it is important to guarantee "early childhood education with a dual focus: the child and their learning; and families and the exercise of the parental/family role in a truly educational

community context". Training professionals need to be made aware that 'the strong relationship between families and schools is particularly significant at pre-school level' (UNICEF, 2019, p.88). The impacts of this relationship are beneficial for the child's development, as it produces 'a better transition between the learning they bring from home and their pre-school experience', in such a way that it establishes 'patterns of interaction between home and school that can continue throughout the educational experience [...], significantly improving overall school achievement'.

Final considerations

The reflection imbued in this text does not close off the hermeneutic intricacies of the curriculum policy for initial training in pre-school education, but rather opens space for new bodies of analysis that can serve as dimensions for both theoretical and empirical studies. One of these, for example, is the political process of drawing up and implementing this new policy, to understand the context of international and national socio- historical influence. The other could be the subject programmes to understand the quality of the content and whether it meets the objectives of the course. It is also necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis of the initial training in pre-school education that takes place in Secondary Pedagogical Education to assess its methods and the extent to which it provides the foundations for exercising the function. However, we consider this to be an initial analysis that will serve as a basis for future research in this area.

The framework for pre-school education professionals also raises political challenges in terms of employability and raising awareness, fostering the conditions for men to enter careers.

The new social contexts, impregnated by the dynamics of a globalised world, impose challenges on pre-school education and the work of educators, especially with the evolution of information technologies, the growing migratory situation resulting from poverty and wars, and the resistance movement of minority groups.

It is necessary that the policy for training early childhood educators gives visibility to the symbolic administration of the child, reflected in the image of the holistic child focused on their rights and their life contexts, and that it is the practice of action for the child's right to a quality education. It is also important to ensure the right of professionals to carry out their work in a dignified and well-founded manner.

Bibliographical references

ALFREDO, F. C.; TORTELLA, J. C. B., Teacher training in Angola: the profile of primary school teachers. *EccoS - Rev. Cient.*, São Paulo, n. 33, p. 125-142, Jan./Apr. 2014. doi: 10.5585/EccoS.n33.3511. Available at: <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=71531141008>.

ALTET, M., The competences of the professional teacher: between knowledge, schemes of action and adaptation, knowing how to analyse, In: Paquay, L. et al (org.), *Training professional teachers: which strategies? What competences*. Translation: Murad, F. and Gruman, E. 2nd ed. Revised. Porto Alegre: Artmed Editora, 2001, ch. 1, p.23-35.

ANGOLA, Presidential Decree no. 160/18, of 3 July. *Approves the Career Statute for Education Agents - Repeals Decree no. 3/08, of 4 March, article 4(c) and (f) of Presidential Decree no. 188/12, of 21 August, Dispatch no. 5/98, of 9 January, Dispatch no. 209/06, of 3 April and Dispatch no. 270/06, of 29 May*. Diário da República: I Série, n.º 95, Luanda, p.3719-3733, 2 Jul. 2018.

ANGOLA, Presidential Decree no. 193/18, 10 August. *Approves the General Curriculum Standards for Undergraduate Courses in the Higher Education Subsystem*. Diário da República: I Série, n.º 119, Luanda, p.4136-4145, 26 Apr. 2018.

ANGOLA, Presidential Decree no. 195/23, of 11 October. *Approves the Legal Framework for the Pre-School Education Subsystem*. - Repeals Presidential Decree no. 129/17, of 16 June, and all legislation that contradicts the provisions of this Decree. Diário da República: I Série, n.º 193, Luanda, p.5440-5456, 3 Oct. 2023.

ANGOLA, Presidential Decree no. 205/18, 3 September. *Approves the National Training and Management Programme for Teaching Staff*. Diário da República: I Série, no. 135, Luanda. p.4395-4400, 13 Aug. 2018.

ANGOLA, Presidential Decree no. 273/20, of 21 October. *Legal framework for the initial training of kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers*. Diário da República: I Série, no. 168, Luanda, p. 5193-5220, 13 Oct. 2020.

ANGOLA, Law no. 17/16, of 7th October. *Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, which establishes the general principles and bases of the Education and Teaching System*. - Repeals Law no. 13/01, of 31 December and all legislation that contradicts the provisions of this Law. Diário da República: I Série, no. 170, Luanda, p. 3993-4014, 27 Sep. 2016.

ANGOLA, Law no. 32/20, of 12 August, amends Law no. 17/16, of 7 October - repeals Law no. 13/01/ of 31 December, and all legislation that contradicts the provisions of this Law, adds articles 124 A, 124 B and 124 C. Diário da República: I Série, no. 123, Luanda, p.4423-4453, 27 Sep. 2016.

ANGOLA, Ministry of Planning. *National Development Plan 2023-2027: sustainable socio-economic impacts*. Luanda: Government of Angola, 2023, 2009 p. Available at: [https://www.mep.gov.ao/assets/indicadores/angola2050/20231030\(3\)_](https://www.mep.gov.ao/assets/indicadores/angola2050/20231030(3)_)

APPLE, M. W. *Ideologia e currículo*. Translation by C.E. F. de Carvalho, Brazil: Editora Brasiliense, 246 p.

BINJI, P. *Educational reform in Angola: the challenge of building a liberating school*. 2013, p153. Dissertation (Master's in Pedagogy) - Salasiana Pontifical University. Rome, 2013, Cappuccini Missionary Centre.

CANEN, A.; OLIVEIRA, A.M.A. Multiculturalism and curriculum in action: a case study, *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, [s.l.]: n.21, p.61-74, dec. 2002. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-24782002000300006> . Accessed on: 16 July 2024.

CARDOSO, E.M.S.; FLORES, M.A. Initial Teacher Training in Angola: problems and challenges. In: *Proceedings of the X International Galician-Portuguese Congress of Psychopedagogy*. Braga: University of Minho, 2009. ISBN- 978-972-8746-71-1.

DAHLBERG, G.; MOSS, P.; PENCE, A. *Quality in early childhood education: postmodern perspectives*. Translation: Magda F. Lopes. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2003. 264 p.

DALE, R. Specifying globalisation effects on national policy: a focus on the mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy*, v. 14, n.1, p. 1-17. nov. 1999. DOI: 10.1080/026809399286468. Disponível em: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/026809399286468>. Accessed on: 9 Sep. 2024.

DUMBO, N.J. Ch. *Políticas públicas e o direito da criança à educação - uma imagem dos jardins-de-infância no município de Benguela*. 2024. 272 p. Thesis (Doctorate in Child Studies) - Institute of Education, University of Uminho, Braga, 2024.

FOLQUE, A. M. (coord.) et al. Thinking about early childhood education and its contexts. In: Silva, M. et al (cord.) *Pensar a educação: temas sectoriais*. Lisbon: Educa, 2016. chap. 1, p.9- 46.

FORMOSINHO, J., & OLIVEIRA-FORMOSINHO, J. (2012). Early childhood education in Portugal: an overview and the evolution of educational policy. In M. J. Cardona & C. M. Guimarães (Eds.), *Evaluation in Early Childhood Education*. Psicosoma.

GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA. *Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation*. Luanda: INE, 6th ed. [2019], 2021, p. 304.

LEWY, A. A natureza da avaliação de currículo, in: Lewy, A. (org.), *Avaliação do currículo*. Translation: Paoli, S.M.C. and Bonato, L.R. São Paulo: EPU/Edusp, 1979, chap.1, p. 3-36. Ministry of Education. *National Education Development Plan - PNDE "Educar - Angola 2030": Final Report*. Luanda: MED, 2016, p.23.

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, Science, Technology and Innovation. *Statistical Yearbook*. Luanda: Edições MESCTI, 4th ed., 2017. p.264.

NATIONAL STATISTICS INSTITUTE. *Integrated survey on the well-being of the population. Report of tables*. V.2. Luanda: INE, 2011, 335 p.

NGULUVE, A. K. *Angolan Educational Policy (1976-2005): Organisation, development and perspective*. 2006, 218 p. Dissertation (Master's in Education) - University of São Paulo - FEUSP, São Paulo, 2006.

OLIVEIRA, M. P. C.; LOPES, D.M.C.; PEREIRA, M.T.J.S. The initial training of early childhood teachers/educators in Brazil and Portugal. In: *Luso-Afro-Brazilian Congress on Childhood and Education*, 2, 2019, São Paulo. Communication Childhood, city and democracy. São Paulo: Faculty of Education at USP. Available at: <https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/68341>. Accessed on: 16 July 2024.

OLIVEIRA-FORMOSINHO, J.; ARAÚJO, S. B. (eds.). *Pedagogical Models for Daycare Education*. [S.l.]: Porto Editora, 2021, 198 p.

PACHECO, J.A. *Políticas curriculares*. Porto: Porto Editora, 2002, 160 p. Pacheco, J.A. *Currículo: teoria e prática*. Porto: Porto editora, 2021, 2070 p.

PINTO, C.L.L; BARREIRO, C.B; SILVEIRO, D.N. (2010). Continuing Teacher Education: Broadening our understanding of this concept. *Revista Thema*, Pelotas, v. 07, n. 01, n. p.1-14, Available at: <https://periodicos.ifsul.edu.br/index.php/thema/article/view/19>. Accessed on: 15 June 2024.

SANTOS, B. S. The processes of globalisation. In: Santos, B. S. (org.) *Globalisation: fatality or utopia?* Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2005. ch.1, p.1-105.

SARMENTO, M. J.; TOMÁS, C. "Is childhood a right?" *Sociologia: Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto*, [S. l.], p. 15-30, 2020. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.21747/08723419/soctem2020a1>. Accessed on: 16 July 2024.

SILVA, T.T. *Teorias do currículo: uma introdução crítica*. Coimbra: Porto Editora, 2000, 149 p.

UNESCO *Education 2030. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of the 4th Sustainable Development Goal*, UNESCO, UNICEF, WB, UNFPA, UNDP, UN and UNHCR, 2016.

UNESCO. *Early Childhood Education and Care: major challenges*. Translation: Guilherme J. F. Teixeira. Brasília: UNESCO Brazil, OECD, Ministry of Health, 2002, 314 p.

UNICEF. *A World Ready to Learn: Prioritising quality early childhood education*. New York: UNICEF, 2019. 160 p.

UNITED NATIONS, *Report of the National Consultation. Summit on the transformation of education*. Luanda: Government of Angola, UNESCO, UNICEF, United Nations Angola, 2002, p.46.

ZABALZA, M. A. *Quality in early childhood education*. Translation: Beatriz A. Neves. Porto Alegre: ArtMed, 1998. 285 p.

ZAU, F. *The Primary School Teacher and the Development of Human Resources in Angola: a prospective vision*. 2005. 868 p. Thesis (Doctorate in Educational Sciences) - Universidade Aberta. Lisbon, 2005.