



Angola

UNICEF and EU-supported training for teachers boosts education quality in Angola

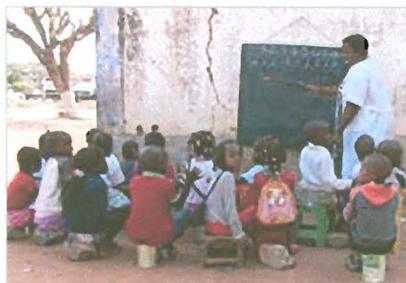
By Alex Duval-Smith

LUANDA, Angola, 17 January – Just off the main road, next to the ruins of a whitewashed chapel, a jacaranda tree is in bloom. Beneath the petals, children sit on brightly coloured plastic chairs, watching their teacher attentively. Lucrecia Agostinho draws apples and oranges to illustrate an arithmetic problem on a blackboard.



VIDEO: UNICEF correspondent Suzanne Beukes reports on a training program for Angola's teachers that is helping improve education quality. [Watch in RealPlayer](#)

big effort."



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Children study at a makeshift outdoor classroom in Lubango, Angola.

short supply.

A game of catch-up

Ms. Agostinho says education in Angola – which emerged from war a decade ago – is a game of catch-up.

According to the People's Well-being Inquiry ('Inquérito Integrado Sobre o Bem-Estar da População', or IBEP), a survey by the government, the World Bank and UNICEF, more than 21 per cent of children between ages 6 and 17 years old do not attend school, and only 9.3 per cent of children between ages 3 and 5 attend preschool.

There are too few schools, and those available lack sufficient equipment; many students carry their own chairs to class every morning. Despite an ongoing recruitment drive, teachers remain in

And ensuring a quality education is a major hurdle. Among existing teachers, training is limited. Anyone with a Grade 10 education is eligible to take the exam to become a teacher, but in Huíla Province, some teachers have completed school only through Grade 4. Classroom overcrowding and outdated curricula further erode education quality.



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Sister Cecília Kuyela, a teacher trainer, helps teachers in Huíla Province, Angola, better their methods and improve their own education.

"It is one thing meeting the Millennium Development Goal of getting everyone into school," said Justino Jerónimo, head of teacher training at the Ministry of Education in Luanda. "But it is an entirely different matter giving the children a good education."

Trainings are a priority

In 2009, to improve the standard of teaching and schools, the government commenced an ambitious project, the Programme of Assistance to Primary Education (PAEP), to train teachers across the country in modern teaching methods. The programme was facilitated by UNICEF and funded by a €4.1 million (approximately US\$5.2 million) contribution from the European Union.

Some 350 teacher trainers were recruited across seven provinces.

Sister Cecília Kuyela is one of 30 trainers in Huíla; she has helped boost the skills of approximately 100 teachers since 2009.

"It is not going as fast as we had hoped," she said. "We are still not reaching all schools – far from it. Communications are poor to the remotest areas."



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Children study at a makeshift outdoor classroom in Primary School 200 in Lubango, Angola.

But her assistance is making a difference to those teachers she has reached. "They need training to understand how to relate their subject to the child's life," Ms. Kuyela said.

"At times, you have to be creative. For instance, before teaching a child how to tell the time, you have to ask yourself whether he or she comes from a family that has a clock at home."

And despite the challenges, Ms. Kuyela stressed that enthusiasm within the profession is huge. "Some of these teachers are working long hours – teaching in the day and studying at night – to improve their skills. There is tremendous dedication. This programme must be extended and expanded."

"Teacher training should be the first priority of education. A good teacher can achieve results, even under a tree," said Mr. Jerónimo. "If you do not spend money on quality teaching, then the rest – the schools, the equipment – is for nothing. Who would think of entrusting a plane to an untrained pilot, or their life to a doctor who has not been to medical school?"

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