

2 Angola

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COUNTRY CONTEXT STATISTICS	
	<p>Population: 19.6 million (2011) GDP per capita: US\$6 000 (2011) Human development index: 0.486 Unemployment: >50% (2011 est.) Key economic sectors: oil and gas, trade and commerce, services, agriculture, forestry, fishing Principal exports: crude oil, diamonds, refined petroleum products, coffee, sisal, fish and fish products, timber, cotton HIV and AIDS prevalence: 2% (2009) Gross primary enrolment ratio: 124% (2010) Gross secondary enrolment ratio: 31% (2010) Gross tertiary enrolment ratio: 14% (2010)</p>
<small>Country context data were obtained from a variety of sources: CIA (2012), UNAIDS (2011), UNDP (2011), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011)</small>	

This profile summarises the higher education landscape in Angola in recent years as the country tries to consolidate the gains of a peaceful settlement of the protracted civil war and embarks on a process of national reconstruction and socio-economic development. The role of higher education in these processes was reiterated recently by the Angolan President, José Eduardo dos Santos, who defended the changes currently taking place in the higher education system, arguing that ‘the revision of the educational system that we implement aims to reorientate the courses according to the needs of development of the country and its provinces and regions’ (AngolaPress 2012c).

As economies across the globe join forces in forming regional blocs to address economic and financial challenges and opportunities, higher education institutions are also coming together to form more comprehensive regional bodies to jointly address challenges within and beyond the sector and to contribute to national and regional development imperatives (Oyewole 2009). This chapter provides an overview of the level of regional and international collaboration within the SADC higher education system with an emphasis on Angola.

As was discussed in the introduction to this collection of country profiles, the overall study made use of two questionnaires. The first was sent to the Ministry of Higher Education in Angola, and the other to the participating universities. Despite a comprehensive follow-up process, including an attempt to appoint an in-country researcher, no completed questionnaire was received from the Ministry of Higher Education and only one of the six universities included in the study submitted a response. The university response received was only partially completed and the data provided contained a number of inconsistencies. Secondary data and other relevant resources were therefore used to provide an overview of the general higher education environment in Angola. The fact that all but one of the universities are still very new, is likely to mean that they did not have adequate data to contribute to the study. As a result, the data were insufficient and could not provide a general overview of the different aspects of interest within the Angolan higher education landscape. A decision was therefore made to exclude the data in this chapter. The data were replaced by a

literature search conducted to track what has been happening within the higher education environment since the previous SARUA study (Kotecha 2008). General media and available governmental documents were used to gather information, on the basis of which an emerging picture of higher education in Angola could be presented.

National socio-economic and political context

The socio-economic and political landscape of Angola continues to recover from the 27-year civil war that plagued the country immediately after independence from the Portuguese in 1975. Caught in the Cold War struggles, anti-government factions fought against government troops. Each side was supported by local and international individuals, organisations and nations with different interests in the country and its natural resource deposits. Following the end of the civil war in 2002 and the signing of the memorandum of understanding, the country embarked on construction and resettlement programmes for the millions of people who were displaced during the war. One major socio-economic impact of the war is the poor conditions under which the majority of the population continues to live. Another is the huge number of academics and educated Angolans who were forced to flee the country during the war.

In the years following the war, Angola discovered huge oil deposits and in 2006 became a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Due to high production, the country quickly became the largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, the second-largest economy in the SADC region, and among the three fastest growing economies in the world (ADB 2011a). With close to 60 per cent of national GDP coming from oil and gas, exploration has supported the rapid growth of the non-oil sector, which has now out-performed the oil sector during the last couple of years (ADB 2011b). Angola currently has a population of more than 19 million people, about 4.5 million of whom live in the capital city Luanda. The country has a GDP per capita (in purchasing power parity terms) of above US\$6 000, making it one of the strongest economies in the region and the continent. Although Angola can boast one of the fastest-growing economies, more than two-thirds of the population live below the poverty line, with about 28 per cent living in extreme poverty and only 30 per cent having adequate access to healthcare services (CIA 2012). This is evident with malaria accounting for over 77 per cent of all deaths and a doctor-to-patient ration of about 1:10 000. The government has embarked on a programme to construct health and other social facilities for citizens (UNDP 2009).

Due to the high number of skilled Angolans who left the country during the war and the dire poverty levels that persist in the country, another key feature of the Angolan economy is the high rate of remittance received by Angolans. These remittances come from a range of countries, with South Africa and Portugal being two of the main sources, as they were the destinations of many Angolans during the migration. In a 2008 study of remittance flow into Africa, it was realised that Angola was the highest Central African country and the second-highest of four SADC countries in terms of remittances, receiving US\$969 million (2.2 per cent of GDP). South Africa received US\$1 489 million dollars (0.6 per cent of GDP), Lesotho received US\$355 million (24.1 per cent of GDP) and Swaziland received US\$89 million (3.4 per cent of GDP) (Tinajero 2009). Many families in Angola, and other SADC countries, depend significantly on remittances from abroad.

Research on human development indexes argues that Angola is plagued with a high corruption level, poor human rights and limited freedom of speech. Transparency index ratings ranked Angola 160th out of 180 countries surveyed. This has been confirmed by a survey by the Heritage Foundation, which ranks Angola as 153rd out of 179 countries. The government has been quick to enact policies to clamp down on corruption, leading to a number of high-profile cases and indictments (Tinajero 2009), but Human Rights Watch recently denounced high levels of government restrictions on the freedom of expression around the Head of States Summit in Angola in 2011, during which journalists and other media representatives were deprived of rights of expression and other basic rights. The African Director at Human Rights Watch called on the country and the region to address the situation, stating that 'the obstructive behaviour highlights the restrictive and repressive environment in Angola, which itself should be on the SADC's agenda' (Human Rights Watch 2011).

From a policy perspective, Angola has initiated a number of policies and strategic papers to address national socio-economic development. One of these policies is the Plan for Sustainable

Development 2009–2013, a national development plan whose overall objective is to ‘achieve growth with diversification, to fight hunger and poverty and the reduction of poverty’ (Plan for Sustainable Development 2009–2013). The plan outlines eight priority sectors as the focus for national development, but does not include education (or higher education), focusing instead on the macro-economic aspects of society. A World Bank study (Bloom et al. 2006) observes that no reference is made to higher education in the country’s Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs). From a higher education perspective, there is therefore a disconnect between national development planning and the higher education sector, despite some recognition of the role of higher education in national development.

One of the main higher education policies in Angola is the ‘Lei Nº 7/03 de 17 de Junho, 2003, Diário da República, I Série nº4717.06.2003’ which establishes three main structures for post-secondary education: the Council of Higher Education, the National Directorate for Technical and Professional Education and the Directorate for Higher Education. A close study of the objectives of the council and the directorates reveals that only the Directorate for Technical and Professional Education states an expectation to make an active contribution to national socio-economic development. The Council and the Directorate of Higher Education are expected to ensure quality in the higher education system (SARUA 2009). With the increasingly important role that higher education has to play in national transformation and development (as acknowledged in Angola), there is a need for policy reconciliation between national development policy and higher education policy to strategically situate higher education, recognising the national and regional contribution it can make in a country which is fast becoming a major role-player in the region and the continent.

There are a number of government efforts aimed at improving the access, quality and relevance of higher education in national development in Angola. There is, however, lack of evidence of a clear policy-steering and co-ordination between sectors and within the region.

Higher education landscape

Recent developments and debates in higher education

Due to the protracted civil war that not only limited the development of higher education, but also forced many academics to leave the country, higher education in Angola can be considered to be in its defining phase. A significant milestone is the importance that the current government is placing on higher education and the level of growth the sector has experienced (and continues to experience) in less than a decade.

At the practical level, Angola has witnessed a significant rise in the number of secondary and post-secondary or vocational colleges. Starting with only two universities in 1998 – the University of Agostinho Neto (UAN) and the Catholic University – the Angolan President recently highlighted the fact that there are over 17 universities and 44 higher education institutions across the country. This has been supported with government spending over US\$480 million in the establishment and running of 53 new schools and technical professional training (SARUA 2009).

In 2012, more spending is expected by the Angolan government through the provision of student scholarships and bursaries to support the growth of higher education. This was announced by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, who stated that ‘the Angolan government is to create 6 000 new bursaries in 2012 as part of its policy to promote education’. This new figure will add to the 2 405 students who are already studying abroad (1 965 studying towards bachelor’s degrees, 146 for masters and 294 for doctoral degrees in different countries).

On 12 September 2012 a media report indicated that the government had identified an urgent need for all Angolan citizens to participate in higher education, as this plays a pivotal role in ‘harmonious’ sustainable development in the country (AngolaPress 2012a). According to the report, a top official at José Eduardo dos Santos University stated that:

the quality of wealth and poverty depends on the quality of education ... The economic and social development of a country requires firstly to develop university education, based on a strong scientific and academic performance of students (AngolaPress 2012a).

He argued that the development of higher education is the responsibility of every Angolan citizen, and not just some executives.

With gender being a significant factor in higher education access and throughput, the Angolan government has taken significant policy initiatives not only to increase access for women in higher education, but also to facilitate access to scientific research and innovation. On the occasion of the 28th National Science and Technology Innovation (CTI) policy, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology emphasised that the specific objective of the policy was to address 'issues related to promoting and ensuring women's participation in the activities of the CTI,' reiterating that this policy and new path will 'open the road to increasing the number of Angolan women in scientific careers, producing scientific knowledge and enriching national scientific community at regional and international levels' (AfricaSTI 2012).

Still in a bid to situate higher education in its development efforts, Angola is hosting the newly established Centre of Excellence for Science Applied to Sustainability (CESSAF). The University of Agostinho Neto, based in Luanda, will be hosting this first African centre for sustainable development. The centre is expected to provide research and training opportunities for scientists throughout sub-Saharan Africa through expert training and sharing of cutting-edge knowledge between different countries (Makoni and Sawahel 2011). The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology also recently inaugurated a new polytechnic in the Southern Huíla Province.

Over and above the huge oil, gas and natural minerals with which the country is endowed, the Angolan government and the higher education system have made significant efforts to align their development and reconstruction process to knowledge, higher education and innovation. However, most of these efforts are initiated by different ministries and sectors and there is little co-ordination by the government through a central body or framework.

Regionalisation

Angola, with Portuguese as its official national language, is making significant strides in forging partnerships of academic and scientific collaboration with institutions and countries within and beyond the African continent. CESSAF was created to bring together experts, students and academics from different parts of Africa and Europe (in particular the UK) to share cutting-edge knowledge on environmental management. The centre will serve as a base for regional collaboration through international conferences and workshops. Furthermore, a central database of information on issues relevant to African earth sciences research will be initiated, aimed at promoting networking and collaboration between various research centres in Africa.

A number of collaboration activities exist with other universities, including the memorandum of understanding which was recently signed between the Danish Hydraulic Institution (DHI) and the UAN. According to the document, 'the agreement will enable the Angolan institution to have access to the technologies produced by DHI used in the training and academic research' (AngolaPress 2011). Elsewhere, there has been an agreement between higher education in Angola and the Paraguay higher education system to admit and attract more Angolan postgraduate students. This was announced by the President of Angolan students in Paraguay, who noted that 'over 50 Angolan citizens are attending masters and doctoral studies in Paraguay as there are better study conditions'. Hence it appears that there is a sense of the value of collaboration within the higher education system in Angola.

In the SADC region, besides being a signatory to the SADC Protocol on Higher Education and Training, Angola forms part of the SADC Open and Distance Learning (ODL) project which was initiated in 2007. The project aims, among other things, to emphasise the need for a multi-faceted approach to capacity-building in ODL, such as in the areas of developing policy frameworks, training and the establishment of institutional structures to enhance collaboration.

Angola also has close collaboration with universities and higher education systems in the SADC region. Major collaborators are South Africa and Mozambique with whom there have been agreements of co-operation. While this co-operation falls within the SADC Protocol on Higher Education and Training, no clear policy statement has been made to align Angolan higher education policy and planning to the SADC Protocol.

In an extraordinary meeting of SADC ministers of education and training, which top representatives from the Angola education sector attended, the 'urgency to expand the enrolment and access to higher education' was underscored. This included expanding the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and enhancing their quality and relevance for higher education as well as the socio-economic and human development demands of the SADC region (Press Release 2012a). The Angolan government has also stressed the role and importance of higher education in national development, albeit with less emphasis on collaboration with regional institutions and systems.

At the start of the 2012 academic year the vice-president of Angola used the slogan 'Higher education: towards quality teaching and research for national development' to stress the importance of higher education in achieving national development (AngolaPress 2012b). While Angola in its reconstruction and development process has significantly increased the number of higher education institutions reflecting SADC's policies and objectives for increased access to quality higher education, there is little evidence of clear national or institutional policies aimed at aligning higher education planning with SADC protocols and targets. This can also be attributed to the weak higher education regulatory system in Angola which is still under development.

Enabling and hindering influences on regionalisation

Looking at the hindrances to regionalisation, a major actual and potential hindrance to the level of collaboration and partnership between Angolan higher education, academics and other universities in the region is the language barrier. With Portuguese as the main language of communication in a region that is dominated by English-speaking academics, policies written in English and the majority of the universities speaking English, it becomes challenging (if not intimidating) to engage in any significant collaboration. Coming from a context of recent socio-political unrest, the country also faces significant development challenges which could be the reason for an initial focus on structuring and consolidation of the national higher education sector before opening up to regional collaboration and harmonisation. This concern has been echoed in a recent study which concludes that for Angola 'the main focus and priority is – and has to be – domestic reconstruction and development. There is still a long way before Angola can fully benefit from and contribute to regional co-operation and integration' (Tjønneland 2011:21). While the focus of the study was on infrastructure, it can also be observed in other areas of the economy and society, including higher education.

Conclusions

The growth of higher education in Angola, from only two universities (one public and one private) in 1998 to more than 60 institutions (including 17 universities) at present is a clear indication of the importance that has been placed on higher education. The increase in the number of institutions has been closely followed by an increase in government spending through bursaries and scholarships, providing academic support facilities aimed at situating higher education in the development role it needs to play in the country's recovery and development pathway. But in spite of the rapid development in structures, higher education in Angola continues to lack the human capacity to carry the national structures needed to govern higher education. There is therefore a need to establish policies of quality, control and co-ordination of the higher education sector.

It can be argued, based on the information available, that there appears to be a fair level of collaboration between Angolan institutions and other universities, institutions and higher education systems across the globe. This shows a conscious effort to break the language barrier and seek to communicate, share knowledge and scientific resources with other academics across different socio-cultural barriers. However, there appears to be less effort to collaborate with African universities, and particularly those in the Southern African region. This lack of regional commitment might also be evident in the poor level of response from the universities which were contacted as part of this study.