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Environmental Education to Preserve the Environment in Current Legislation in Angola

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ABSTRACT

In Angola, the environmental problem is manifested as an explicit concern, so that, in the Basic Law of the Environment, it is directed that all citizens have the right and the duty to receive environmental education for better understand the phenomena of environmental balance, an essential basis for conscious action in defense of the National Environmental Policy. The present study aims to identify the existing guidelines in the legislation in force in Angola for environmental education and the preservation of the environment, as well as the contradictions that occur in local community participation, in this context. In the investigation, the review of laws and decrees, interviews with local rulers and participant observation were used as methods. The study allowed us to conclude that in the legislation in force in Angola there are sufficient guidelines for environmental education and the preservation of the environment, but for the creation of a healthy environment there are weaknesses in local community participation, mainly due to the negligence of some of the local governments that aggravate the situation, due to the non-compliance with the norms for the preservation of the environment and the inadequacies in the incorporation of environmental education in the educational process that guarantees the local community participation in the defense of the national environmental policy.

Keywords: Community Participation; Environment; Environmental Education; Environment preservation; Environmental policy.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the environmental issue is among the main concerns of humanity, therefore, the United Nations pays attention to the organization of events that address this issue. In Angola, given the international pressure that existed in the 1990s on Environmental Education and Human Development, debates took place on environmental education and environmental management. In this context, the Environmental Basic Law was approved and published, which defined the concepts and basic principles of protection, preservation and conservation of the environment, promotion of the population's quality of life and the rational use of natural resources.

The aforementioned Law recognizes that “environmental pollution is one of the most serious problems resulting from human activity in its zeal to promote economic development, so strict measures must be applied to eliminate or minimize its effects” and guides that “ environmental education favors the protection of the environment through the progressive increase of the population's knowledge about the ecological, social and economic phenomena that govern

human society", therefore, "it must be organized on a permanent basis through the formal education system and the of social communication" [1].

To counteract the environmental problem in the country, the Basic Environmental Law guides that "all citizens have the right and the duty to receive environmental education for better understand the phenomena of environmental balance, an essential basis for conscious action in the defense of the Environmental National Policy" [1].

This guideline shows that in the country environmental education is recognized as a fundamental tool for environmental management, a criterion of relevance for the present study. Environmental education is a participatory and contextualized educational process that must be oriented to help solve environmental problems, with a view to preserving the environment to contribute to sustainable development. However, the current situation of inadequacies in environmental education converges to weaknesses in the preservation of the environment, which is aggravated by inadequate local community participation.

The Constitution of the Republic of Angola, approved and published in 2010, elevates the category of fundamental tasks of the State to the progressive creation of the necessary conditions to make effective the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, the promotion of well-being, social solidarity and raising the quality of life of the Angolan people, especially the most disadvantaged population groups and promoting harmonious and sustainable development throughout the national territory, protecting the environment.

In this context, the Constitution of the Republic, in article 39, points 1 and 2, establishes that "everyone has the right to live in a healthy and unpolluted environment, as well as the duty to defend and preserve it" and declares the following:

The State adopts the necessary measures for the protection of the environment and the species of flora and fauna throughout the national territory, the maintenance of ecological balance, the correct location of economic activities and the exploitation and use of all natural resources, within the framework of sustainable development and respect for the rights of future generations and the preservation of different species.

In the same article, point 3 determines that "the law punishes acts that endanger or harm the preservation of the environment" [2]. As can be seen, in the country there are sufficient guidelines for environmental education and environmental preservation.

The present study aims to identify the existing guidelines in the legislation in force in Angola for environmental education and the preservation of the environment, as well as the contradictions that occur in local community participation, in this context. In the investigation, the review of laws and decrees, interviews with local rulers and participant observation were used as methods.

The study allowed us to conclude that in the legislation in force in Angola there are sufficient guidelines for environmental education and the preservation of the environment, but the local community participation demonstrates weaknesses in the creation of a healthy environment, mainly due to the negligence of some of the local governments that aggravate the situation, for

the non-compliance with the established norms for the preservation of the environment and the inadequacies in the incorporation of environmental education in the educational process that guarantees the local community participation in the defense of the national environmental policy.

METHODOLOGY

In the investigation, the review of laws and decrees that guide environmental education and the preservation of the environment in Angola was used as a method. In addition, interviews were carried out with local governments and participant observation was carried out to verify the local community participation in creating a healthy environment, as stated in the legislation in force in Angola.

With the revision of laws and decrees, the existence of guidelines for environmental education and the preservation of the environment in the Basic Law of the Environment, Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, Law of Territorial Planning, Land Law, Law of Environmental Defense Associations, the Industrial Activities Law and the Constitution of the Republic.

The mentioned documents guide environmental education and the preservation of the environment as fundamental factors for the creation of a healthy environment, which promotes the population's quality of life[1] and the quality of the environment[2].

However, it is observed that the aspiration declared in the legislation in force in Angola is not fully fulfilled, due to the weaknesses of local community participation that exerts little influence on the positions of local governments, all over the country, who authorize irrational deforestation, apply insufficient resources financial resources in the management of urban waste, construction of infrastructures for the treatment and distribution of drinking water and wastewater sewage, thus contributing to the emergence of the respective dysfunctions that cause damage to people's health and the environment.

Interviews with local government officials allowed us to obtain information that the fires that take place in localities, especially in the central and western regions of the country, are part of the culture formed in colonial times when there was a need to protect themselves from the guerrillas who fought to the country's independence. Currently, fires are carried out to facilitate hunting and the preparation of farmland, without taking into account the resulting environmental damage, such as the emission of greenhouse gases, calcination of the soil, the destruction of flora and fauna.

Information obtained from interviews with local government officials corresponds with the results of participant observation in many locations across the country. It was found that fires are more frequent and extensive in the central and western regions than in the north and east

[1]Quality of Life is the result of the interaction of multiple factors in the functioning of human societies, which translates into physical, mental and social well-being and the cultural formation of the individual [1].

[2]Environmental Quality is the balance and health of the environment, including the suitability of its components to the needs of man and other living beings [1].

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of the country where subsistence production is cassava and coffee and, in the south, where vegetation is necessary and well protected for pastoralism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first formulation of legislation that generally defines individual and collective responsibility for citizens in Angola to understand and make an effort to materialize the country's environmental policy [3] is limited to Decree 495/73 of 1973, which declares "prohibition", except for a special permit for spilling, in areas under the jurisdiction of the maritime authority, of water and waste substances, as well as any other waste that in any way could cause contamination of waters, banks or beaches [3].

The Decree referred to arose due to the influence of international pressure on environmental management that was carried out in Europe in the 70s. At that time, the legislation referred to was part of the guidelines of the Portuguese government that had power over Angola as its overseas province. After independence, in order to comply with the United Nations guidelines on Environmental Education and Human Development, several events were held aimed at creating a healthy environment in Angola.

In 1976, the Environment Week was decreed, which is celebrated from the 26th to the 31st of January, and the 31st was set to commemorate the National Environment Day, with the aim of raising awareness of the interdependence between man and the environment. In this period, the purpose of environmental education did not materialize in the country, due to the war that prevented the continuity of facing the environmental problems imposed by the context.

In 1987, the Permanent Commission of the People's Assembly, with a view to promoting the health of the population, approved the Health Regulations [4] which is expressed in Law No.5/87 of February 23, 1987, Ordinance No. 6,392/48 of August 9, 1948, of the General Regulation of Urban Health and of the Sanitary and Mortuary Police of the Colony of Angola, in the context of the province of Portugal.

Law No. 5/87 constitutes an important milestone for understanding Angola's efforts to protect the environment and promote people's health. As for its objectives, the Law refers, for example, to environmental sanitation, in particular human agglomerations, enclosures and dwellings; the application of measures aimed at protection and hygiene in the workplace; the application of prophylactic measures and measures to combat communicable diseases, especially those of an epidemic nature; and hygiene of food and drinking water.

At present, this aspiration continues to demand special attention from the government, taking into account that the supply of quality water allows benefits for public health, such as cleaning common areas, preparing food, eating, among other uses, and contributes to the promotion of human development [4].

[3]Environmental Policy is the articulation of citizens' ideas and attitudes, which determine a course in the life of human society, with a view to increasing the Quality of Life, without jeopardizing the biogeochemical cycles essential for the maintenance of biodiversity, which includes the survival of the human being [1].

In 1998, the Basic Environmental Law, in article 3, established the general principles, among which in point 1, it is expressed: "All citizens have the right to live in a healthy environment and to the benefits of the rational use of natural resources of the country, hence the obligations to participate in its defense and sustainable use, respectively" [1]. In order to fulfill the obligations to participate in the defense and sustainable use of natural resources, it is essential to raise the population's awareness of a conscious environmental action, an issue that must be incorporated into the educational process through the different ways of environmental education.

In Angola, in the 1990s, in the face of international pressure in favor of Environmental Education and Human Development, debates were held on environmental education and environmental management[4], which contributed to the approval and publication of the Base Law for the Environment, which defined the concepts and basic principles of protection, preservation and conservation of the environment, promotion of quality of life and rational use of natural resources [1]. In the aforementioned Law, it was recognized that "… the degradation of the environment is one of the most serious problems resulting from human activity in its zeal to promote economic development, so strict measures must be applied to eliminate or minimize its effects" (1). The aforementioned Law recognized that "environmental education favors the protection of the environment through the progressive increase in the population's knowledge of the ecological, social and economic phenomena that govern human society" and clarified that "environmental education must be organized on a permanent basis through the formal education system and the social communication system" [1]. In addition, the Angolan population recognized the main damages to the environment at that time, so the Basic Law on the environment stated that "Environmental Education campaigns should reach all strata of the population, considering the organization of special projects, namely for the Armed Forces, leaders and officials of the State apparatus" [1].

Based on the general principles provided for in article 3 of the Basic Environmental Law, the specific principles that must be observed were established in article 4, among which, within the scope of this study, the following are mentioned:

- ✓ "From training and education environmental: all citizens have the right and the duty to receive environmental education in order for better understand the phenomena of environmental balance, an essential basis for conscious action in the defense of the National Environmental Policy".
- ✓ "Prevention: all actions or actions with immediate or long-term effects on the environment must be considered in advance, in order to eliminate or minimize any harmful effects".

  In the pedagogical scope, the practice of Environmental Education for the protection of the environment is based on the relationship between instruction and education based on previous knowledge and experiences of students on environmental problems and their particularities in the communities where they live. The existing weaknesses in its application derive from the insufficient integration of environmental education in the educational teaching process.

[4]Environmental Management is the management and rational and sustainable use of environmental components, including their reuse, recycling, protection and conservation [1].

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The Basic Environmental Law, in article 20, guides that "environmental education is a measure of Environmental Protection; it must accelerate and facilitate the implementation of the National Environmental Management Program through the progressive increase of the population's knowledge about ecological, social and environmental phenomena, and economic factors that govern human society" [1].

The aforementioned Law, in article 21, guides: "all citizens have the right of access to information related to the management of the country's environment", and in article 22 of the same law, it is clarified: "All people have the right of access to Education Environment with a view to ensuring effective participation in the management of the environment". Environmental education is essential for community participation in preserving the environment.

Despite the holding of international events for the recognition of environmental problems, during this period, it was found that Angola had little participation in the adoption of guidelines that could contribute to the preservation of the environment, because on the one hand the country's economy was weak and on the other the war prevented the analysis of environmental problems. Thus, the environmental legislation was only general, without regulations that could impact the educational process and it is possible to point out that the educational system, at this moment, did not pronounce itself in favor of Environmental Education for the preservation of the environment.

The existence of the Basic Education Law – Law nº 13/01 – of December 31, 2001, had little influence on Environmental Education for the Preservation of the Environment due to the weaknesses imposed by two important factors that are the consolidation of peace, which reached only on April 4, 2002 and the creation of regulations that allowed the materialization of the aforementioned Law and the Basic Environmental Law.

The implementation of the Basic Law on Education only became a reality in 2004 when the Educational Reform Process appeared in Angola and regulations emerged for the application of environmental legislation, which favored Environmental Education for the preservation of the environment. With peace and economic reforms, the transition process from a socialist-oriented economy to a market economy was consolidated, which favored the development of consumerism and excessive waste production [5]. Demographic growth and its concentration in urban centers, the uncontrolled consumption of natural resources and the degradation of the environment demand actions by society in the short, medium and long term in order to raise citizens' awareness to minimize or solve environmental problems.

In 2004, the Territorial and Urban Planning Law was approved and published – Law nº 3/04, where it was established that "the use of territorial space must preserve the environment, the quality and organization of rural and urban spaces and all that is related to it" [6]. The implementation of this guideline influenced Higher Education Institutions to incorporate in the curriculum of the geography specialty, the subject of Spatial Planning, which allows the study of environmental problems and favors the materialization of the obligations of community participation in the defense and sustainable use of environmental components.

In the same year of 2004, the Law on Industrial Activities was approved and published – Law nº 5/04, of 7 September 2004, which established the general principles and rules applicable to industrial activities of any nature, carried out in the national territory and the prevention of the risks and inconveniences resulting from the activity of industrial establishments, the safeguarding of public and workers' health, the environment and the quality of national industrial goods, where the need for adequate environmental management is highlighted [7].

The Land Law – Law nº 9/04 – approved and published in 2004, in article 16, point 1, expresses: "… the occupation, use and possession of land are subordinated to the norms on environmental protection", and guides "the protection of landscapes and species of flora and fauna, the protection of ecological balance and the right of citizens to a healthy and uncontaminated environment" [8].

The aforementioned Law reinforces the need to work for the preservation of ecological balance, and compliance with its guidelines is reflected in the treatment given to environmental problems, especially those created in urban centers, among which the need to minimize the negative impacts of inadequate waste management.

In 2006, the Law on Environmental Defense Associations was approved and published – Law nº 3/06, of 18 January 2006 – which regulates the participation and intervention rights of the aforementioned Associations in environmental management. Article 5 of the aforementioned Law declares: "Associations for the Defense of the Environment have the right to participate and intervene in the definition of environmental policy and in the main legislative guidelines in this field" [9].

In practice, it appears that the participation of Environmental Defense Associations, currently, exerts little influence on the positions of local governments, all over the country, who authorize irrational deforestation, apply insufficient financial resources in the management of urban waste[5], construction of infrastructure -structures for the treatment and distribution of drinking water and waste water sewage, with the respective malfunctions that cause damage to people's health and the environment.

The Constitution of the Republic of Angola, approved and published in 2010, elevates the category of fundamental tasks of the State to the progressive creation of the necessary conditions to make effective the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, the promotion of well-being, social solidarity and raising the quality of life of the Angolan people, especially the most disadvantaged population groups and promoting harmonious and sustainable development throughout the national territory, protecting the environment [2].

In this context, the Constitution of the Republic, in article 39, points 1 and 2, establishes that "everyone has the right to live in a healthy and unpolluted environment, as well as the duty to defend and preserve it" and declares the following:

[5]Urban Waste - waste from housing or other similar waste, by reason of its nature or composition, namely that from the service sector or commercial or industrial establishments and from units providing health care units, provided that, in any in most cases, daily production does not exceed 1,100 liters per producer [10].

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The State adopts the necessary measures for the protection of the environment and the species of flora and fauna throughout the national territory, the maintenance of ecological balance, the correct location of economic activities and the exploitation and use of all natural resources, within the framework of sustainable development and respect for the rights of future generations and the preservation of different species.

In the aforementioned article, point 3 determines that "the law punishes acts that endanger or harm the preservation of the environment" [2]. The Constitution of the Republic guides the competent bodies to apply environmental policy and citizens to contribute to the protection of water, atmosphere, soil conservation, flora, fauna and all its rich potential [2].

As can be seen, in the country there are sufficient guidelines for environmental education and environmental preservation. These postulates allow us to recognize that environmental education is fundamental for environmental protection. Bearing in mind that the environmental problems that most affect the country are related to the deficient management of waste that causes damage to people's health and the environment, in 2012 the Regulation on Waste Management was approved and published - Presidential Decree nº. 190/12 of August 24th – which establishes the general rules regarding the production, deposit, treatment, collection, storage, and transport of any waste, except those of a radioactive nature or subject to specific regulations, in order to prevent or minimize negative impacts on people's health and the environment with a view to establishing rules for the reduction, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal of waste [10].

In the same year, 2012, the Strategic Plan for Urban Waste Management (PESGRU) was approved and published, recognizing that it is necessary to ensure "the awareness of the population to benefit from the correct management of waste. The progressive introduction of training on solid waste separation and treatment methods was also recommended (…) to facilitate the selective collection, recycling and composting system" [3]. To achieve the awareness that is guided by the Strategic Plan for Urban Waste Management, environmental education has a leading role. Hence, the mandatory implementation of environmental education in a transversal way, in the different subsystems of Education and Teaching, through formal, non-formal and informal means. With these legal instruments, sufficient legal support was created to support Environmental Education for the protection of the environment. Therefore, the weaknesses that exist in the preservation of the environment result from the weaknesses existing in the incorporation of environmental education in the educational process.

In Angola, in the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System, among the general training objectives of the Higher Education Subsystem stated in article 63, paragraph b) it is expressed: "To carry out training in close connection with scientific research oriented towards the solution of local and national problems, inherent to the development of the country and inserted in the processes of development of science, technique and technology" [11].

When environmental problems are dealt with in class, they are based on critical reflection, on the pertinent analysis of causal relationships and their effects and on the resulting dialectical contradictions. The use of productive pedagogical methods that derive from well-defined objectives, the contextualization of teaching and the objectivity of the educational teaching work

are aspects that provide the success of environmental education for the protection of the environment.

In this study, the problematic approach of teaching is assumed, the application of which is oriented towards critical and active reflective learning, to increase students' motivation, in themes of environmental content. Problematic teaching is an effective way to develop students' personality because it combines the systematic independent research activity of students with the assimilation of conclusions obtained from science.

The Basic Law on the Environment and the Strategic Plan for Urban Waste Management guide the population's awareness of sustainable development, which is defined as "development based on environmental management that satisfies the needs of the present generation without compromising the ecological balance of the environment and the possibility of future generations to satisfy their needs" [1;3].

The participant observation made it possible to observe the fires in extensive areas of the territory, especially in the central west of Angola, where hunting is carried out regularly in the winter months, with the danger of extinction of several species of flora and fauna, due to lack of control and inspection of the national use of natural resources. The fires, in addition to extinguishing several species of Angolan tropical fruit and medicinal vegetation, also put in danger of extinction several species of animals in danger of extinction.

CONCLUSION

In the environmental legislation in force in Angola there are sufficient guidelines for environmental education and the preservation of the environment as factors for the creation of a healthy environment that promotes the quality of life of the population and the quality of the environment. However, it is observed that the aspiration declared in the legislation in force in Angola is not fully fulfilled, due to the weaknesses of local community participation that exerts little influence on the positions of local governments, all over the country, who authorize irrational deforestation, apply insufficient resources financial resources in the management of urban waste, construction of infrastructure for the treatment and distribution of drinking water and waste water sewers. These dysfunctions cause damage to people's health and the environment.

The environmental legislation in force in Angola requires the implementation of environmental education in a transversal way, in the different Education and Teaching subsystems, through formal, non-formal and informal means. The shortcomings in the incorporation of environmental education in the educational process are reflected in the weaknesses of local community participation and preservation of the environment.

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