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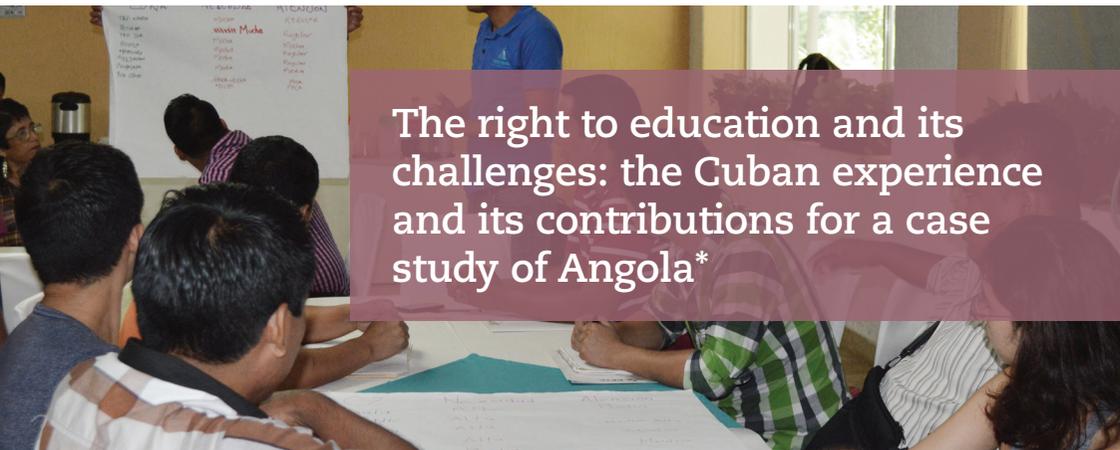


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## POLICY BRIEF - CLACSO SOUTH-SOUTH COLLECTION

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### The right to education and its challenges: the Cuban experience and its contributions for a case study of Angola\*

◆ **BÁRBARA YADIRA  
MELLADO PEREZ**

### ◆ Presentation

Doctor in Pedagogy. Sociologist  
and specialist in social labor  
and Full Professor of Sociology  
at UH Cuba. Post-doctoral stu-  
dent at PROCAM USP, Brazil.

The right to education constitutes the principle  
axis in the struggle for a better future. Its relationship to  
social change and contribution for the mitigation of vul-  
nerabilities places it on a relevant plain for transforma-  
tion and development.

E-mail:  
[yadira\\_mellado@yahoo.com](mailto:yadira_mellado@yahoo.com)  
[bbyadira@ffh.uh.cu](mailto:bbyadira@ffh.uh.cu)

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Challenges for the South”.

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## ◆ KEYWORDS

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- The Right to Education

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- Inequalities

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- Challenges

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- Socio-Historical context

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- Human development

It is necessary to deepen understanding of the right to education and its challenges, and situate the central aspects of right to education from the sociological perspective that focuses the relationship between education and society. The analyses of the context surrounding the right to education in Cuba, in Latin America, reveals the challenges and Cuban experiences, from which it is possible to interpret results from the case studies in other nations. This has contributed to approaching the African context, particularly Angola.

The data analysis about education in both countries which expresses the levels of human development, offers a relationship between social policy and the realities that are expressed starting with the analyses of the socio-historical context.

The scenario of the southern part of the globe shows a reality that demands more attention and invites society's researchers to focus their aim, detached from a Eurocentric focus, where adequate studies about the social context and its relation to the educational, cultural, political and economic reality in which it resides prevail. The analysis of the challenges for the right to education based on the Cuban experience make it possible to read the case of Sumbe, Angola.

Understanding the socio-historical context and observing the development of social policies in Cuba and Angola make it possible to examine and analyze the situation closely.

Responding to the following questions was central to the investigation: How has the international debate about the right to education and its relationship to the dimensions of gender and territory evolved? How have social policies and the socio-historical context determined educational



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policies and, at the same time, explained the conditions of inequality and development that nations demonstrate?

The political volition of governments, education and its protagonists, associated with an analysis of the context and the social policies for understanding the right to education are essential elements in our view.

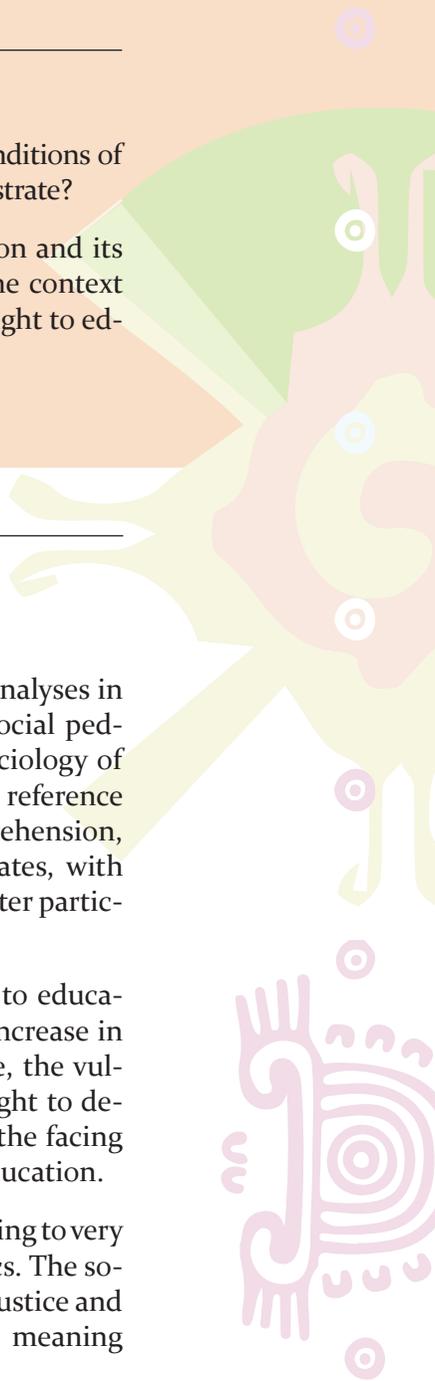
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## ✦ Political analysis

The right to education is linked to diverse analyses in the social sciences, law, economics, politics, social pedagogy, which subscribes to a logic that the sociology of education can explain and argue, serving as a reference and central argument for its defense and comprehension, aiming at a better reception in the nation states, with proposals that are more inclusive and with greater participation of the players.

The circumstances for exercising the right to education demand the taking of a position and an increase in the consciousness of the players. In the future, the vulnerabilities, the capacity to be resilient, the right to decent employment, the dignity of women, and the facing of geographic fatalism are directly related to education.

The Cuban context is its own reality, responding to very specific contextual and historical characteristics. The socialist social system defends public policies of justice and equality, and exercises the right to education, meaning



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one of the most relevant indicators of a nation's development. The economic bases of this project are more complex and consequently a culture with a local economic response predominates, which constantly seeks alternatives and which has been insufficient, marking in this way the material limitations of the quality of life of the Cuban people. This became more dramatic during the special period that began in the 1990s when it could be noted how the more complicated historical circumstances of the Cuban economy and with a series of consequences for society, starting with the measures and adjustments adopted. Social policy and the priority on education was vital for sustaining the most valued conquest, together with health care, that the Cubans enjoy, education for all. This step marks the rebirth of poverty and expressions of inequality in society. Education sustained high levels of quality, of inclusion, and guarantees in public policy. Not only in the national context, but it also continues to contribute, without cost. To the education of thousands of young people from countries in development, taking the hope of learning to read and write to thousands of human beings on all continents. This expresses a political volition, a priority, a strategy.

But the exodus of teachers to other sectors, the opening of emergent training programs, the displacement of the complete and specific attention of rural and local schools, national strategies for the sustainability of teaching, leaving spaces that were covered by informal educational practices, linked in many cases to services for reinforcing and complementing learning, essentially in the arts, foreign languages, and preparation for university entrance examinations. This implies distinctions from the inequality to access to resources that the family



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counts on in order to complete the educational process of its children. These are the most recent readings and challenges for Cuba.

The context of Angola has important connections with the history of the African continent, the sequels from war and planning that losses centrality and objectivity as far as there is only imprecise data on necessity, demands and available resources. This constitutes limits on the right to education, impacted by the lack of knowledge of the local context and the absence of an integrating project that closes the cycles of education, which includes training, the relationship of social players and the reduction of gaps from gender inequality and territory. These constitute characteristics of the educational reality of this nation. They express strong sequels from the social precariousness faced in a recent historical stage and require a multidisciplinary focus to distribute efforts and obtain more objective, higher quality results.

Upon observing the behavior of the indicators that show the allocation of the GDP for education or the political decisions made in times of crisis, the consideration that education's fortune is related to social policy and the socioeconomic context is formalized. Therefore the most important analysis responds by placing into the debate the responsibility of the government into the design for a sustainable educational policy, which at the margins has the possibility of the transformation to lose objectivity.

The reality in Sumbe serves to show testimonials and data that are converted into representations, expectations and reading from teachers and students, valid for similar studies and that can get participative strategies to correspond with the local and territorial realities of the country.



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## \* Proposals

Education is the only form of transforming reality, of creating change, of returning dignity and consciousness of what it means to live with equality and justice. Sadly, this is associated with political volition, priority and management in order to sustain, at the very least, basic levels of access, teachers, materials, whatever is needed to reach people. Insisting on an education that orients change and prepares the subject to interpret his reality would be one of the most objective alternatives to attenuate the the situations and vulnerabilities of daily life. For this reason, the association of education with the reduction of poverty is not sufficient for achieving this. The focus on mitigating poverty is the invisibility of human rights, the absence of one, and condition for another. Without education, there are fewer opportunities for employment, greater precariousness for making a living and there are serious consequences for one's health, creating a situation with no exit, which tends to be reproduced.

The proposal is to leave the generalizations and begin to put in place solutions for the impossible and mobilize governments and social movements in defense of guarantees to eliminate illiteracy and the social compromise to make it possible for boys and girls to have access to schools and teachers. The work developed demonstrates that despite the economic situation and levels of development in the country, if there is political volition and if priorities are laid out with education as a social patrimony, it is possible. The example of Cuba is capable of translating the overwhelming message to the region and the world.

### **Short term proposals:**

- Identify national and local strategies that attend to

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the needs and demands of the social context, considering history, culture and the level of development.

- Maintain programs of solidarity and training that Cuba offers, promoting the Cuban experience as much as possible, in order to contribute to getting more opportunities to access to no-cost education, primarily in Angola.
- Strengthen the exchange of experiences in the area of education at all levels, especially in the preparation of teachers.
- Recognize that education is the principle form of institutionalizing the socialization of children and concentrate there the principle efforts that develop in virtue of childhood and its rights.
- Assume that the transmission of values between generations occurs fundamentally through education and that it is essential for society.
- Declare education as essential in the struggle against exclusion and in the prevention of conflicts.
- Reconcile the rights of parents to choose the education for their children, with elements that contribute to an understanding of the complexity of the relationship inclusion – exclusion.
- In the case of Angola reveal the statistics related to access to private education, as a paid service, that distort the reality of access to education as a human right.

### **And in the long term:**

- Deepen awareness, starting with the studies in the social sciences about of the right to education, in order to attend to and observe the expressions and limitations starting with the vulnerabilities and inequalities.



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- Identify qualitative and quantitative methods that can be adequate for the reality and characteristics of the national context, attending to its territorial aspects and to human development.
  - Apply strategies for the dissemination at the national level the scientific results of studies as a way to provide space for analysis and study about these theme through the inclusion of this theme in a program of studies.
  - Provide for the dialogue between academics in the social sciences, local authorities, the government and the population. In Cuba as much as in Angola, this would facilitate the debate that reveals the impact, positive and negative, on the development of the nation.
  - Meet the conditions necessary to assimilate and incorporate the new educational practices suggested as alternative and changes in the current Cuban society.
  - Combat the structural causes at the national level in each country that create conditions for and determine the limitations of the right to education.



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