



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE
T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: contact@chathamhouse.org
F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 www.chathamhouse.org

Charity Registration Number: 208223

Africa Meeting Summary

Higher Education in Angola: The Importance of International Partnerships

HE Adão do Nascimento

Minister of Higher Education, Angola

Discussant: Dr Emmanuel Gomes

University of Sheffield

31 January 2013

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s)/speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

INTRODUCTION

This document is a meeting summary of the event *Higher Education in Angola: the Importance of International Partnerships* held at Chatham House on 31 January 2013.

Angola's rapidly growing economy requires a better-educated workforce to raise the competitiveness of Angolan businesses and improve professionalism. Chatham House published a paper in 2011, *Education in Angola: Partnership Opportunities for the UK*, on the opportunities in Angola for education providers from the United Kingdom. This includes universities, English language training, and training for the oil and gas industry.

At this event HE Adão do Nascimento, Minister of Higher Education of Angola, presented his vision for higher education in Angola. One of the authors of the Chatham House paper, Emanuel Gomes, was the discussant.

The presentation and discussion were on the record, and the views expressed are those of the participants and do not represent those of Chatham House.

HE ADÃO DO NASCIMENTO

The minister started by stating that the policy priority in Angola is development. Resources are channelled towards the development of the country. The aim of this is to create a thriving economy and wellbeing for all. But there is still a long way to go.

Education and specifically higher education have a lot to offer.

Higher education has grown significantly in Angola: in 1979 there were 1,000 students, in 2002, after the war, there were 40,000 students, and in 2013 there are 150,000 students. Furthermore, there used to be only one public university. Now there are 18 public universities and 35 private universities. Higher education is growing, but the minister stressed that it is now important to focus on quality.

When Angola, and specifically the education sector, was initially developing the quantity/quality ratio was imbalanced. But that is currently being mitigated, and redressing that ratio is fundamental to the challenge of development.

There are a number of challenges on different fronts: academia, education, training and management.

The minister said that education as the provision and transfer of knowledge to the population requires good management, especially of academia. It requires financing higher education institutions, and providing the different material resources these institutions need in order to serve their constituencies.

The results of higher education efforts can be assessed by the number of grades. But the minister argued that there is a need to go beyond that and to assess the results of scientific research growth in grades and overall culture taking in mind input in different areas of commerce.

The minister outlined five major challenges to the assessment of higher education institutions:

- The need to strengthen the strategic vision of higher education. Making sure each player has a role in the framework of that effort.
- The need to strengthen institutional capacity in order to bring about that strategic vision. This implies strong, solid institutions, which fall inside the strategic vision. But he added that it also involves partners committed to the agenda development.

- The need to have an appropriate stance or posture. As a country undergoing development Angola may not always display the attitudes of development. The professional culture must be in tandem with the aspirations of development, which will allow the country to have a real academic attitude within higher education institutes.
- Identifying good examples that exist within the framework of Angola's current institutions. The minister said that this is crucial, and they should not lose sight of identifying good examples, underlining them, and using them to encourage development. He stated the need to identify and eliminate bad examples and that doing so requires courage.
- Assessment: There must be the ability to have an optimal assessment culture of institutions. A framework of factors that these institutions can go by. This requires reliable data. Such an assessment can identify strengths and weaknesses, and allow for the termination of that which is not properly done.

Finally the minister spoke about the number of scholarships being offered by the government. For four years student scholarships have been granted domestically and there are currently 12,580 students benefiting from these scholarships. There are also 3,600 Angolan students studying abroad.

DR EMANUEL GOMES

Dr Gomes started by saying that it was ‘music to [his] ears’ to hear the minister highlight key elements of success in higher education but also key challenges that Angola faces in its development.

He stated that he would use some of the findings of his study and corroborate them with what the minister said.¹

In terms of strategy infrastructure the importance of parties’ commitment to quality has already been highlighted. The report found that that was a key challenge.

Dr Gomes stated the need to build partnerships between UK and Angolan institutions, and that there was a need to bring this long-term educational commitment to education in Angola. It also requires recognition and accreditation from UK institutions

Another challenge that Dr Gomes identified is balancing technical and professional training on the one hand with education on the other.

He argued that there are high differences, but also common elements to bind cultural differences.

In relation to role models and good examples, Dr Gomes questioned the extent to which good examples can be identified, not only domestically in Angola, but also internationally. He argued that in this case some professional institutions in the United Kingdom can be good examples as well.

On the matter of assessment Dr Gomes pointed to the fact that the United Kingdom is used to having quality assessed. He then stated that efforts in Angola have already exceeded this, demonstrating that it is important not just to focus on quality assurance but quality enhancement.

¹ Gomes, Emanuel and Weimer, Markus (2011), ‘Education in Angola: Partnership opportunities for the UK’, Africa Programme Research Paper, AFP PP 2011/04, London: Chatham House.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question:

Regarding the scholarship numbers, do you take into account all those from companies as well or just government?

Question:

You have not spoken about the relationship between education and industry? Where would you put that in your five challenges?

Answer:

There is a national institution for scholarships but over time a lot of other institutions have also started giving out scholarships. It was recognized that there is a need for an integrated approach.

The minister observed the need for a unified global vision as a multiplicity of institutions can provide scholarships.

According to the minister this global vision is represented in the new name and mandate of what was formally the National Institute of Scholarships, and is now the National Institute for Management of Scholarships.

It was argued that the relationship between educational institutions and industry is vital.

Question:

Regarding the relationship between academia and professional training, how does the value-adding training in companies fit into that vision?

Answer:

The operations of the oil industry require specific knowledge that is developed within the industry. As such, a percentage of the revenue of each barrel of oil has a direct affect on higher education. There are also some educational institutions that coordinate directly with these industries to enhance training, such as geophysics and geology. The University of Agostinho Neto has classes in geophysics and geology that are funded by the oil industry.

Statoil, Total, and other companies fund scholarships. Some students are tutored by foreign experts who work for these companies.

The minister argued that this cooperation ensures the transfer of knowledge.

Question:

How much of the budget is allocated to higher education, and how does that compare to the pre-war years?

Question:

Are there any plans to introduce another language – such as English or French – into the curriculum?

Answer:

Last year the education budget was \$138 billion, and this year \$78 billion has been allocated for the same area.

The minister commented on the fact that often Angola is compared to other countries, but sometimes it is 'best to compare ourselves to ourselves only'. While investment may be low in international comparison, it is double what it used to be in Angola.

These funds need to be effectively managed and distributed to ensure their effectiveness.

There is a new unit devoted to foreign languages. This will help teachers be fluent in other languages and facilitate the access to scientific literature seeing as most of it is in English.

With regard to the political objectives of the ministry, it was noted that Angola is a country with 18 million inhabitants, seven million of which are in school – both primary and secondary. They are being taught by 118,000 teachers, and there is a literacy rate of 67 per cent.

The following policy objectives were identified:

- Quality: First, initial and on-going training of teachers; and second clear distribution of school and pedagogical material.
- Teachers: First, enhancing the status of teachers within society; and second increasing the salaries of teachers;

- Expanding the school network: This needs to be done at the primary level and then at the secondary level. The latter involves the development of general, technical, and pedagogical capabilities.

Industry is also responsible for training.

Training is linked to technical training for the labour market. It was stated that there are a number of technical schools and courses to meet the labour needs of the national economy in the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors.

In order to meet the needs of the economy efforts are being made in collaboration with the technical and commercial sectors.

Question:

How can UK universities go about finding suitable partners in Luanda?

Question:

How does research into history and society fit in your vision?

Question:

What is your point of view on diplomatic relations between UK and Angolan education institutions?

Question:

Other than oil, what other sectors benefit from scholarships provided by the Angolan government?

Question:

Over 15 years we have been encouraging the British Council to be involved in Angola. Have you spoken to the British Council?

Answer:

The minister said that the British Council left Angola in the late 1980s. There used to be a relationship with the British Council, which included higher education, but that is no longer the case.

He went on to say that it was not apparent why the British Council left Angola, but that the Angolans felt abandoned. The British Council was never asked to leave and their return would be welcomed.

It was stated that scholarships provided by the government are for all Angolans. They are available for all provinces and all Angolans are eligible.

As of next year there will be a new system of scholarships that are supported by banks. These will be reimbursable and represent a departure from the traditional model financed by the government.

There are a number of scholarships from other countries, although not from the United Kingdom.

The minister said that in dealing with the United Kingdom they often go through other institutions such as UNESCO or even oil companies. But there are no direct dealings with the UK government.

He went on to say that through the British Council Angola was able to train good teachers, and that these were some of the best teachers the country had.

In terms of areas of study the focus is on educational science, the arts, humanities and social sciences, medical and health sciences, and technology.