



Volume 18

Dossier section e95964T

23rd December 2024

## **Educational Cooperation in Africa: an analysis based on Angolan educational policies and the counter-hegemonic potentials of the BRICS**

***Cooperação Educacional na África: uma análise a partir das Políticas educacionais angolanas e os potenciais contra-hegemônicos dos BRICS***

***Cooperación educativa en África: un análisis basado en las políticas educativas angoleñas y los potenciales contrahegemónicos de los BRICS***

*Filipe Joaquim Kalenguesa<sup>1</sup>*  
*Ivan Penteado Dourado<sup>2</sup>*

**Citation:** KALENGUESSA, Filipe Joaquim; DOURADO, Ivan Penteado. Educational Cooperation in Africa: an analysis based on Angolan educational policies and the counter-hegemonic potentials of the BRICS. *Journal of Educational Policies*. V. 18, e95964T. December 2024.



<http://10.5380/jpe.v17i0.95964T>

**Abstract:** This theoretical research, based on bibliographic and documentary analysis, presents results from a broader study entitled Critical Education, Work, and Emancipatory Subjectivity, conducted by the research group LUTE - Social Struggles, Work, and Education. The specific focus of this discussion aims to delve into the current context of international cooperation organizations in the educational field and the recent disputes for new agreements with African countries. To more specifically analyze the Angolan context, a historical recovery of Angolan educational policies focuses on their history of hegemonic educational cooperation programs with imperialist and neocolonial characteristics. In this process, we identify the potential established in the Angolan horizon for real counter-hegemonic possibilities in conjunction with the BRICS. As the main results, we identify a more pragmatic context for Angola with the

<sup>1</sup> Master's degree in education. Doctoral student in Education in State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC). Florianópolis, SC. Brazil. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1612-7693>, E-mail: [kfilipejoaquim@gmail.com](mailto:kfilipejoaquim@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Doctorate in Education. Full Professor in the Department of Pedagogy and and the Postgraduate Program in Education at State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC). Florianópolis, SC. Brazil. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4529-831X>, E-mail: [ivan.dourado@udesc.br](mailto:ivan.dourado@udesc.br)

BRICS member countries and the potential of the Brazilian government for a counter-hegemonic revival in the offering and expansion of educational cooperation projects, reviving the Freirean past in Mangope territory.

**Keywords:** BRICS; Educational Policies; Counter-Hegemony; Angola.

**Resumo:** A presente pesquisa de natureza teórica de cunho bibliográfico documental apresenta resultados de uma pesquisa maior intitulada Educação crítica, Trabalho e subjetividade emancipatória realizada pelo grupo de pesquisa LUTE - Lutas Sociais, Trabalho e Educação. Com o recorte específico da presente discussão busca-se aprofundar o atual contexto dos organismos internacionais de cooperação no campo educacional e as recentes disputas por novos acordos com os países do continente africano. Com objetivo de analisar mais especificamente o contexto angolano realiza-se a recuperação histórica das políticas educacionais angolanas no que diz respeito ao seu histórico de programas hegemônicos de cooperação educacional de caráter imperialista e neocolonial. Nesse processo identificamos o potencial estabelecido no horizonte angolano nas reais possibilidades contra-hegemônicas junto aos BRICS. Como resultados principais identificamos um contexto mais pragmático de Angola com os países integrantes dos BRICS e o potencial do governo brasileiro de uma retomada contra-hegemônica na oferta e ampliação de projetos de cooperação educacional retomando o passado freireano em território Mangope.

**Palavras-chave:** BRICS; Políticas Educacionais; Contra-hegemonia; Angola.

**Resumen:** Esta investigación teórica, de carácter bibliográfico y documental, presenta los resultados de un estudio más amplio titulado Educación crítica, Trabajo y subjetividad emancipadora realizada por el grupo de investigación LUTE - Luchas Sociales, Trabajo y Educación. Con el enfoque específico de esta discusión, buscamos profundizar en el contexto actual de los organismos internacionales de cooperación en el ámbito educativo y las recientes disputas en torno a nuevos acuerdos con países del continente africano. Con el objetivo de analizar más detalladamente el contexto angolano, se realiza una recuperación histórica de las políticas educativas de Angola, en relación con su trayectoria en programas de cooperación educativa de corte hegemónico, imperialista y neocolonial. En este proceso, identificamos el potencial de Angola para desarrollar posibilidades contrahegemónicas en colaboración con los BRICS. Como principales hallazgos, destacamos un enfoque más pragmático de Angola en sus relaciones con los países miembros de los BRICS, así como el potencial del gobierno brasileño para revitalizar proyectos de cooperación educativa contrahegemónica, retomando el legado freireano en el territorio de Mangope.

**Palabras clave:** BRICS; Políticas Educativas; Contrahegemonía; Angola.

## Introduction

The increasing presence of the BRICS in Africa has sparked significant political, economic, and social responses. Concerns over the true intentions of these peripheral capitalist countries, as well as the reactions of global superpowers, have prompted numerous analysts, journalists, and intellectuals to explore what may truly unfold in the cradle of humanity. *The Economist* (2004; 2019) aptly describes the pursuit of the African market as "the new scramble for Africa". This term reflects the continent's growing importance in supplying raw materials (such as minerals and energy) to the global market, particularly oil exports to China. Furthermore, demographic projections underscore the continent's significance, with United Nations data<sup>3</sup> estimating that by 2050, Africa will be home to 2.5 billion people, representing a massive labor force.

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<sup>3</sup> See in: <https://population.un.org/wpp/> Access: Oct 02, 2022

Meanwhile, since 2000, Africa's economic growth has consistently surpassed 5%, accounting for 4.5% of global GDP in purchasing power parity terms [...] (SARR, 2019, p. 49).

As a result, the African market has become increasingly attractive, with economists and multilateral organizations projecting a promising future. One significant factor contributing to this optimism is the arrival of new *Players*, notably the BRICS. Molavi (2023) highlights an inherent irony in the emergence of the BRICS, noting that it originated from a "*White paper by Goldman Sachs*."<sup>4</sup> In essence, the core of capital introduced the BRICS acronym to the "Global South,"<sup>5</sup> which has been adopted and perceived as a counterpoint (horizontally) to the "Global North."<sup>6</sup>

In his 2001 article "*Building Better Global Economic BRIC*," Jim O'Neill examined the state of the global economy, focusing particularly on the relationship between the G7 and several of the largest emerging market economies (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), which he collectively termed BRIC. O'Neill argued that the size of these economies compared to some countries in the core of capital raises critical questions about the direction of global monetary, fiscal, and other economic policies. He suggested that for a truly global economic adjustment, international cooperation and policies must be based on a genuinely global perspective. If this occurs, "the representation [...] of global economic policy may need to be significantly altered" (O'NEIL, 2001, p. 5). Such an alteration would involve acknowledging that the diversity of economies and policies could improve global economic effectiveness (2001).

The author's insightful analysis of the BRICS countries' growing prominence on the global stage led to their first meeting in 2006, held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. In 2008, the group held its first formal meeting of foreign ministers in Ekaterinburg, Russia. The following year, Ekaterinburg also hosted the inaugural BRICS Summit, officially establishing the BRIC grouping (BAUMANN, ARAÚJO, and FERREIRA, 2010). In December 2010, South Africa joined the group, prompting the rebranding to

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<sup>4</sup> The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. is a financial institution (founded in 1869) that offers a wide range of financial services to a large and diversified client base. See in: <https://www.goldmansachs.com/>. Accessed on: May 4, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> According to Maihold et al. (2021), the Global South has been used to discuss not only the systemic inequalities resulting from the 'colonial encounter' and the ongoing reverberations of (primarily) European colonialism and imperialism, but also the potential of alternative sources of power and knowledge (MAIHOLD et al., 2021, p. 1928).

<sup>6</sup> The term Global North is being used symbolically to refer to forms of global hegemonic power (primarily by traditional multilateral organizations).

BRICS. Four years later, the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) was created, with Dilma Rousseff, former President of Brazil, serving as its president since 2023.

The New Development Bank (NDB) funds infrastructure and sustainable development projects among BRICS members (BATISTA JR., 2016). The BRICS can generally be analyzed through three main dimensions: the economic growth of its member countries, their regional influence, and their ongoing socio-economic transformations. Furthermore, the demographic weight of the four members (Brazil, Russia, China, and India) relative to the global population underscores the BRICS' significant position on the world stage. According to Lechini (2012), the BRICS have emerged as a formidable group in economic and financial cooperation, operating under the motto "Broad Vision and Shared Prosperity," which has drawn many African countries seeking collaboration with BRICS nations. Nevertheless, this engagement encounters competition from established *Players* who use mechanisms that influence the growth and development of African countries.

In this context, the present discussion aims to review the recent history of international cooperation in Angola, identifying elements that sustain neocolonial traits (N'KRUMAH, 1986) in its relations with hegemonic multilateral organizations (e.g., IDB, IMF) and exploring prospects for establishing a cooperative framework enhanced by the strengthening of BRICS in global geopolitics. Specifically, it examines Angola's potential for advancing counter-hegemonic cooperation in educational policies with the BRICS.

According to Kiala and Ngwenya (2011), Angola may be entering a new era. The relative restoration of peace within the country has alleviated internal tensions, enabling the government to prioritize other areas such as economic growth and social development. Over the past two decades, there has been a significant shift in Angola's foreign policy, marked by a closer engagement with BRICS countries, particularly Brazil, India, and China.

In their research, Kiala and Ngwenya (2011) highlight Angola's emerging pragmatic foreign policy, characterized by political cooperation with various countries. A notable development is Angola's increasing engagement with India and China, given that its relationships with Brazil and Russia are older and more established. However, this engagement is not detached from the political and economic domination processes rooted in its colonial history.

In this context, understanding the changes occurring within Angola's educational system sheds light on the dynamics and updates that the government has implemented to align educational policies with global mobility, particularly about the Global North. A review of the history of international cooperation among African countries, and Angola in particular, reveals a form of neocolonialism marked by control and domination, which emerges as a hegemonic characteristic in their relationships with international organizations.

However, this historical condition shows signs of change and new possibilities, in light of the recent redefinitions of Angolan foreign policy and its rapprochement with the “BRICS”<sup>7</sup> In other words, by problematizing this new context, we seek to address the following issue: *is it possible to envision new levels of counter-hegemonic cooperation in Angolan education about the BRICS?* We now turn to understanding the Angolan educational context and the impacts that international cooperation agreements have had in this specific area of its recent history.

### **The four phases of the Angolan educational system**

According to the Ministry of Education of Angola (ANGOLA, 2016), the Education System in Angola during the period of independence can be characterized by four phases. The first phase (from 1975 to 1986) corresponds to the period when the government sought to promote educational policies that reflected the immediate needs of the Angolan population. The previous education system, characterized by exclusion and racism, had left a high “illiteracy”<sup>8</sup> rate estimated at around 85%. Furthermore, there was a significant shortage of teachers, as most Portuguese and mestizo (children of Portuguese descent) educators left the country following independence. Additionally, there was a pressing need to revise the curriculum and other structural elements of the education system.

Some of these issues reemerged during the second phase of the reform of the Angolan educational system. In this context, the new government (MPLA) developed an action plan known as the “National Action Plan for Education for All.” The plan was

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<sup>7</sup> In this text, we will not discuss the new BRICS format, that is, BRICS+ (with the inclusion of Ethiopia, Iran, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia); instead, we will focus solely on the five founding members: Brazil, China, Russia, India, and South Africa. Among these five, we will specifically consider Brazil and China.

<sup>8</sup> In the third section, we will show how Paulo Freire's contributions helped mitigate this issue in Angola's educational policy from 1976 to 1980.

approved in 1977 and aimed to address, from both a quantitative perspective and the principle of *free access*, the issue of access to primary education, "[...] especially for the first four years of schooling, which encompassed grades one to four, and this was to be provided free of charge" (NGULUVE, 2006, p.82, emphasis added). This first half of the second period will be revisited in the third section of this text, as during this period we observe some counter-hegemonic characteristics that predate the BRICS, inspired by the development of critical consciousness (regarding literacy) as conceived by the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire.

During the second phase of educational reform in Angola (1986-2001), the context underwent significant political and economic changes, which directly impacted the education sector. The shift from a single-party system to a multi-party system and the transition from a socialist economic model to a free-market model were pivotal changes that influenced the government's approach to education.

Another aspect of the reform more effectively involves the establishment of certain multilateral organizations, which, in the process of International Development Cooperation (CID), embedded a series of recommendations into the assumptions of the reform of the new educational system. Among these organizations, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank (WB) stand out. Specifically, regarding the WB, the first educational project took place in 1992, presenting Angola as "potentially one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of natural resource endowment (oil, iron, manganese, and diamonds)" (WORLD BANK, 1992, p. 4). However, the WB also points out that Angola is simultaneously one of the most distorted economies on the continent.

Therefore, in an attempt to mitigate or "assist" the Angolan government, the bank's project proposal aimed to prepare a strategy for the rehabilitation and revitalization of Angola's educational system. It was in this context, now in 1993, that the government held a roundtable discussion to debate the draft of the Basic Law of the Education System, which, among other issues, needed to address the policy of education for all, proposed by UNESCO as one of the challenges of the millennium.

Thus, in 2001, the National Assembly, under the provisions of Article 88(b) of the Constitutional Law, approved LAW No. 13/01 of December 31, which established the Basic Law of the Educational System (LBSE). Parallel to the approval of the LBSE/2001 and in the years following the peace agreement (April 2002), the government launched a series of programs and projects aimed at addressing the deficiencies in the educational

system and ensuring that its public education policies aligned with international agendas. This marks the beginning of the third and fourth phases.

The third phase (2001-2015 - Integrated Strategy for the Improvement of the Education System) and the fourth phase (2015-2030 - National Development Plan - Educate Angola) can be analyzed together, as both have similar characteristics. Additionally, projects initiated in the third phase continued into the fourth phase with new elements. Noteworthy educational projects include the *Education for All Plan* (PET), developed in partnership with UNESCO and approved in 2004 to address the Millennium Development Goals; the *Strategy for the Improvement of the Education System* (2001-2015); the *Literacy and School Delay Recovery Strategy* (2006-2015), approved in 2005; and the *Long-Term Development Strategy for ANGOLA* (ELP 2025), approved in January 2007.

In turn, during the fourth phase, after analyzing the reports and evaluations concerning the effectiveness and robustness of the educational system following the second reform, the subsequent conclusions led the National Assembly to pass a new Law, replacing LBSE/2001. Thus, on October 7, 2016, the National Assembly approved Law No. 17/16, the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System.

Consequently, the government launched another round of project and program approvals during this fourth phase, with particular emphasis on the following initiatives: First, the National Education Development Plan (2017-2030), approved in 2016 (ANGOLA, 2016, p. 1); second, the National Program for Teacher Training and Management (PNFGPD), approved in 2018; third, the Learning for All Project (PAT I) from 2014 to 2021, in partnership with the World Bank; fourth, the Girls' Empowerment and Learning for All Project (PAT II, in collaboration with the World Bank), approved in 2021 with a projected five-year duration (ANGOLA, 2021, p. 42); and fifth, the National Development Plan (PDN 2018-2022), approved in 2018 (ANGOLA, 2018, p. 74).

When examining the projects, the centrality/hegemony of partnerships with traditional multilateral organizations in shaping Angolan educational policies is striking. This positioning is evident in the national education development plan, where the Ministry of Education (MED, 2016) identifies five international cooperation partners: UNESCO, the World Bank, the European Union, UNICEF, and the Development Aid from People to People (ADPP). These organizations play a major role in shaping Angolan educational policies (PAXE, 2014).

While a deeper discussion of International Development Cooperation (IDC) is beyond the scope here, Milani (2018) reveals numerous strategies to mitigate neocolonial practices through the use of terms such as “educate, humanize, and civilize” employed by international organizations in these educational cooperation projects. These terms reflect colonial models and processes of domestication in the guidelines adopted by countries dependent on external resources and aid (MILANI, 2018).

The notions of “international cooperation” and “development” are true contemporary avatars of practices related to colonial enterprise and that [...], their reincarnations have accompanied the history of the capitalist interstate system and the ostensibly universal project of modernizing societies deemed backward (MILANI, 2018, p. 21).

Milani's (2018) response partially aligns with Sogge's (2013) argument that the current model of foreign aid retains a similar dual mandate to that of the colonial era. On one hand, it upholds the pretense of civilizational guardianship/modernization/development, while on the other hand, it harbors intentions of economic exploitation through the extraction of natural resources and labor.

However, with the emergence of the BRICS, a window of opportunity opens that could serve as an alternative to the model of cooperation offered by traditional organizations in the educational sector. The relationship between Angola and some of the founding members of BRICS (Brazil, China, Russia) enjoys certain privileges within the scope of bilateral cooperation. The proximity to such countries, and more recently India, as well as the longstanding partnership with the leftist governments of South Africa, offers the Angolan state a viable possibility for the current political, economic, and social context.

### **Angola and the horizon of counter-hegemony within BRICS**

In her opening speech at the welcome dinner for the BRICS Academic Forum (held during the fifth BRICS summit in Durban, South Africa), former South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane posed the following question: “Do BRICS represent a genuine paradigm shift, or are the new actors merely adopting traditional power-balancing roles?” (NKOANA-MASHABANE, 2013). This inquiry into BRICS' involvement in Africa highlights the ongoing debates regarding South-



South relations, particularly the notion of "South-South solidarity as a panacea for African development," as reflected in BRICS statements (PLAGEMANN, 2015).

As previously noted, the Angolan educational system primarily engages with educational cooperation partners from the Global North. Criticisms have been directed at the prescriptive, ideological, and directive nature of these key multilateral partners operating in Angola, who often present their unilateral perspective on education as the sole truth (KALENGUESSA, 2023). However, with the increasing influence of BRICS in Africa, there is a promising opportunity to establish new educational partnerships.

In this context, we can illustrate two key aspects that position Angola as a favorable space for the epistemic modality of the Global South. The first aspect concerns its demographic characteristics, infrastructure, and migration issues—specifically, the explosive growth of the youth population, the shortage of higher education institutions, and the compulsory migration of young people seeking education abroad. The second aspect relates to the lack of partnerships with higher education institutions in the Global South (GARCIA et al., 2023; KHOMYAKOV et al., 2020).

These characteristics are evident, for example, in the ICEF<sup>9</sup> Monitor<sup>9</sup> report (2019), which highlights that African students have been the fastest-growing student demographic globally in recent years. However, this growth is not uniform across African regions, especially when considering language. Francophone territories have experienced the most significant growth, followed by Anglophone territories, and lastly Lusophone regions (DEVELOPMENT REIMAGINED, 2020).

This observation, which identifies four countries (China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States) as popular destinations for students, with France being the most favored despite China's rising prominence, suggests that the paradigm of the center as the benchmark for what is universally efficient and valid continues to resonate in the African imagination (KALENGUESSA, 2022).

On the other hand, the data highlights a significant opportunity for educational partnerships aimed at strengthening the PALOP (African Countries of Portuguese Official Language) nations. Brazil, with its rich academic experience and its role as a founding member of the BRICS, alongside its partnership with Angola since 1975, is well-positioned to serve as a central player in the educational agenda. By offering cooperation projects

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<sup>9</sup> Market Intelligence for Recruiting International Students.

and educational partnerships similar to those China extends to various African countries, Brazil could provide a valuable alternative. This strengthened partnership would offer Angola and other PALOP countries a new approach to developing their educational policies, considering their specific contexts and sharing cultural connections with Brazil that might be more profound than those with Portugal.

To illustrate our proposed counter-hegemonic vision within the BRICS framework, we can examine two examples. The first example is the World Bank's approach to shaping Angolan educational policies, particularly regarding the choice of partner institutions for training. The second involves a comparative analysis of bilateral cooperation projects with Brazil and China. In the third section, we will explore how Paulo Freire's legacy in literacy has influenced the Angolan government's literacy initiatives from 1976 to 1980, and we will present an emerging opportunity for Brazil to take a leading role in the educational field.

Of the educational projects undertaken by the World Bank in partnership with the Angolan state, three stand out: the first in 1992, the second in 2013 (PAT I), and the most recent, ongoing as of 2021 (PAT II), as previously discussed.

An analysis of these documents reveals a common constraint across all projects: the emphasis on education serving market demands. In this framework of instrumentalization and capitalist logic lies the core purpose of education (World Bank, 1992, 2013; Angola, 2021). According to PAT I, the most successful teacher training programs "avoid theoretical approaches and follow the model adopted by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries" (World Bank, 2013b, p.32). This reflects the document's political and economic orientation. In other words, any model outside this framework is deemed unsuitable.

Ironically, this premise implies that successful teacher training programs in much of the Global South would be nonviable unless they adhere to the OECD model. Extending this logic further, one could conclude that, among the 38 current OECD members, no African country possesses an eligible or effective teaching and learning model. Consequently, any pedagogical knowledge produced within this context would be considered unviable.

Hence, the pragmatic nature does not obscure the preferential/unilateral focus but instead underscores the strategies and tactics of the dominant class in the contemporary world (Kalenguesa & Morais, 2023). In line with this approach, the Calouste Gulbenkian

Foundation (FCG – European Union) managed the project and benefited from technical and methodological support for continuous teacher training provided by the School of Education at the Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal (ESS/IPS – Portugal).

Compared to the BRICS countries, particularly Brazil and China, their involvement in the educational sector remains modest. For instance, in Brazil, a key initiative includes student exchange programs such as PEC-G for undergraduates and PEC-PG for postgraduates. Another involves scholarships provided by the Federal University of International Integration of Lusophone Afro-Brazilian (Unilab), alongside vocational education initiatives previously implemented by Senai (*finished*), which has since been phased out (Garcia et al., 2023, p. 14, emphasis added). According to Garcia et al. (2023), Senai had conducted similar operations in Angola, albeit on a smaller scale, mirroring those now undertaken by Chinese cooperation with several African countries.

Senai's operations in Angola also involved providing educational and technical services to Brazilian companies, linking technical cooperation with business interests. For example, in 2007, Senai assisted Odebrecht in establishing the Integrated Technological Training Center (Cinfotec) in Luanda, in collaboration with the Angolan government (Garcia et al., 2023, p. 39).

However, as Odebrecht's operations in Angola decreased, the availability of such training sharply declined. Consequently, educational cooperation between Brazil and Angola remains notably weak (Garcia et al., 2023).

This deficiency manifests in the limited number of students currently enrolled in the PEC-PG program, which has only 70 participants (MEC, 2024). Recently, a new partnership was announced (02/2024) between Brazil's Ministry of Education and Angola's Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, focusing on professional training at the postgraduate level. This initiative aims to enhance South-South cooperation and benefit both nations (MEC, 2024).

In contrast, China has become Angola's largest trading partner, with Angola serving as a key energy supplier to China. In terms of educational cooperation, China established a scholarship program that increased from 20 to 60 scholarships annually in 2010 (RPC, 2010), enabling Angolan students to study at top Chinese universities. In 2024, China reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening cooperation with Angola, focusing on technical and vocational education and technology (MED, 2024).

The re-engagement of BRICS countries China and Brazil as partners underscores the limited impact of their educational cooperation with Angola. This situation highlights the necessity for a shift in approach. According to our central hypothesis, achieving meaningful progress will require both maintaining the current favorable context and Brazil adopting a more proactive and leading role.

### **ANGOLAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND THE LEGACY OF PAULO FREIRE**

Supporting Brazil's Role in This Area, We Can Now Demonstrate How Paulo Freire's Educational Proposal Contributed to the Development of the "*Victory is Certain*" Series in the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) Government's Literacy Policy.

As demonstrated through the four phases of the Angolan educational system, illiteracy in Angola, both before (1968) and after independence (1975), affected a significant majority of the population. To address this issue, the Angolan government developed two educational tools: the Literacy Manual and the Victory is Certain Literacy Guide, with editions released in 1968, 1970, 1974, and 1980. These tools aimed to achieve both literacy and rapid political education. According to Pepetela (2010), overcoming colonial education required a radically different approach—one that was people-oriented.

Therefore, while the Literacy Manual provided learners with detailed guidelines to aid their reading and writing acquisition, it also fostered the development of critical thinking skills. In contrast, the Victory is Certain Literacy Guide was designed for educators. This guide effectively introduced concepts and contradictions of the capitalist system, elucidating class antagonisms, modes of production, and strategies for the subalterns to confront the injustices of colonialism, a facet of imperialism.

As a result, the Angolan government emphasized adult literacy by drawing on “the educational principles of Paulo Freire” (Bonifácio, 2020). According to Bonifácio, the methodologies used in these adult literacy programs were closely aligned with Freirean ideas (Freire, 2011; Faundes, 1989; Gadotti, 2012), particularly in promoting critical thinking and encouraging active citizenship (Bonifácio, 2020).

In turn, Maciel and Rocha (2023), following Bonifácio, highlight the possibility of establishing similarities between the components of the Angolan government's literacy

manuals from 1976 to 1980 and Paulo Freire's pedagogical principles, considering that, as Pepetela points out, the country's first literacy manual was adapted, directly inspired by Freire's pedagogical ideas.

To substantiate their assertions, Maciel and Rocha present a 1969 letter from the Centro de Estudos Angolanos (CEA), which elaborates on the importance of Freire's 'method.'<sup>10</sup> Additionally, they analyze a 1973 document titled *Alfabetização* from the *Lúcio Lara Archive Fund of the Tchiweka Documentation Association*, where it is affirmed that the literacy work conducted by the liberation movement draws on Paulo Freire's 'method.' Finally, the authors map both the statements (and photos with Freire) of 'Pepetela'<sup>11</sup> regarding Freire and assert (based on Figueiredo, 2022) that Paulo Freire<sup>12</sup> 'served as an advisor to the Ministry of Education and held meetings in Angola, where he gave a lecture at a colloquium on "Culture and Revolution," organized by the Angolan Writers Union in Luanda,' in which he explained his 'literacy method [...]' (MACIEL; ROCHA, 2023, p. 8).

This aspect highlights the role played by the Brazilian intellectual in aiding the fight against illiteracy in 'Mangope'<sup>13</sup> lands and illustrates how the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2014) understood the maxim 'learning is a revolutionary duty.' As Neto posited, alignment with the Angolan cause reinforced such narratives. Therefore, we can indeed affirm that there are alternative focal points in the Global South for debates on the educational agenda, and Freire's proposal is, among many, one of the significant examples that has offered and continues to offer Angolan educational policy counter-hegemonic levels of cooperation. It is grounded in sharing and a dialogical character, rejecting unilateralism and providing the worker's education with tools for critical engagement with reality.

## Conclusion

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<sup>10</sup> Despite the recurrent use of the term method preceding Freire's proposal, this definition does not fully capture his approach, as it is not a technical or pre-defined methodology. Instead, it represents a pedagogical and philosophical framework of principles and foundations that must be reconstructed and reinterpreted, respecting the characteristics of each person and culture in the process of literacy and liberation.

<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that Pepetela (Angolan writer) served as Deputy Minister of Education from 1976 to 1982.

<sup>12</sup> It is important to highlight that this international recognition (MARCON and DOURADO, 2023) is due to Freire's forced exile during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964 to the early 1980s), which led him to a third phase in his intellectual production. In this phase, Freire further radicalized the political dimension of his pedagogical proposal and social activism (DOURADO, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> This is a popular term that refers to being Angolan or to the land of Angola.

As observed, there remains a significant path ahead for educational cooperation to become a priority action area for BRICS countries in Angola. In pursuing a counter-hegemonic future for BRICS partnerships within Angola's educational framework, it is crucial to consider recent examples of collaboration between the two nations. Emancipatory principles and practices aimed at liberating the Angolan people from oppression, colonialism, and illiteracy are central to this vision. Reviving these Freirean-inspired initiatives, which constituted a form of intellectual cooperation, along with Angola's favorable current position within BRICS, creates an opportunity to shift knowledge and acknowledge the epistemological potential of the Global South.

As a founding BRICS member with a history of counter-hegemonic intellectual cooperation, Brazil has a key role in proposing educational cooperation projects in Angola. In the short term, this renewed approach would expand the modest current efforts, developing new metrics and educational models based on epistemic frameworks initiated in the recent past between Brazil and Angola.

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*Received in June 2024*  
*Approved in August 2024*  
*Published in December 2024*

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