

4th edition.
2020

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RESISTANCE

A DAILY STRUGGLE



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TUBA!

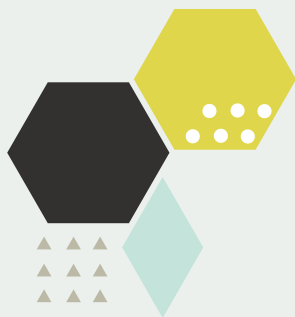
Report

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RESISTANCE

A Daily Struggle

4th Edition
June 2020.





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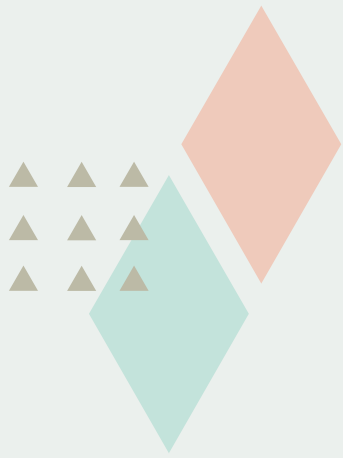
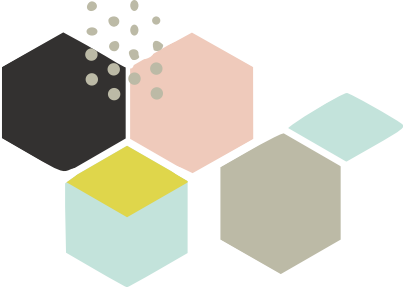


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Photograph by Indira Mateta



EDITORIAL

Women's Economic Resistance: a daily struggle

CECÍLIA JOSÉ KITOMBE

The economic rights of women are regulated by different international treaties, laws and existing national policies. Despite these policies, a large number of women survive with informal economy as well as with a series of local economic initiatives, as a way of resisting the impact of social and economic policies that do not benefit them, and that often do not exist in the places where they live. Data shows that, when it comes to access to the formal sector, women are at a high disadvantage, with only 34% of them aged between 15 and 64 years old being employed in that sector. When we transfer this data to the “informal” sector, we notice that 86% of women occupy it.

The context described above calls for a reflection on the economic resistance of women in a transversal way, not only by looking at the need for their integration in the formal sector, but mainly by rethinking their place and voice within their respective economic and

productive activities, given that those initiatives are completely invisible to the political and governmental spheres.

Therefore, this edition of the TUBA report focuses on the reflexion and problematization of women's economic rights, as well as on the economic measures that are currently in effect in the country. In this sense, through articles and interviews, we bring forward the practices, strategies and the ways in which women have been providing for their families, mainly during the current context of the national State of Emergency that comes as a consequence to the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus - COVID-19.

In terms of structure, the report presents articles and interviews with different women. We therefore start the present edition by seeking to respond to the following question: How are protective regulations regarding women's economic rights, suited to their current needs? The first article by Indira Félix on protective regulations regarding Women in the Informal Market, helps us respond to that question. The paper sheds light on the irregular and ad-hoc ways in which local social politics are implemented, which is reflected through the lack of specific budgeting for the total number of women working in the informal sector, as well as for other vulnerable groups in the country.

Furthermore, the present edition brings four interviews with women committed to the fight for survival, which we refer to as "Voices of Resistance". In these interviews, we seek to understand the dynamics of women involved in economic activities in the informal sector. Here, we listen to Nanda, a zungueira; we hear the words of Lídia, a woman focussed on developing economic solidarity, an activity commonly referred to as "sócias"; we hear Marta, a woman who practices Kixikila; and lastly, but not less relevant, we listen to the words of Maria, a farmer, who, apart from dedicating herself to family farming, started the process of caixas comunitárias for credit, to optimize her

agricultural activity. These four women inserted in different geographical spaces represent the voices of each one of the groups that they belong to. Their common ground is the fight for survival and the call for the right to exist through resilience in the context of the current economy and social crisis.

To understand these economic struggles and the visible resistance of the groups of women excluded from the “formal” economy, we talk to the economist and feminist Âurea Mouzinho, who pedagogically presents the challenges of the economic regulative measures outlined by the executive power in the last three years.

We also highlight the article by Maria Malomalo, who draws our attention to the sexual exploitation of women and girls in the diamond mining communities of Lunda-Sul. The paper brings forward the connexion with local economic realities by looking at how employees of diamond corporates take advantage of their financial power to sexually exploit the women and girls who live in those communities.

Following the entire reflexion around women's economic resistance, given the situation of the current political and health climate, we acknowledge the importance of the Coronavirus in our analysis and therefore, the question that we ask to close the present edition is: What are the challenges brought by Covid-19 to women who work in the informal sector in Angola? Once again, Indira Felix shares her thoughts on the matter, to shed light on the challenges of the Angolan government in ensuring women's rights in the current epidemiological context. It is nonetheless important to note that there is still a long road ahead in safeguarding the rights of women who work in the informal sector, not only economically, but also socially and politically.

With this fourth edition of TUBA, Ondjango Feminista has once again the intention to contribute to the production of knowledge around women's rights, given that this time, we highlight economic rights by emphasizing the systematization of experiences brought by different women through the amplification of their voices. Furthermore, our intention with this edition is to foster the debate around the struggles and resistances of women who show daily resilience before the constant invisibility to which they are subjected. Meanwhile, it is fundamentally important to us to look at the ways in which public policy can be directed to promote gender-based justice and ensure equality of economic opportunities.

Have a pleasant read!



Photograph by Selma Fernandes

Selma Fernandes, Kwanza-sul (Angola)

POLICIES OF PROTECTION FOR WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL MARKET

INDIRA LAZARINE C. M. FÉLIX¹

OVERVIEW

The present article addresses policies of social protection for women who work in the informal sector. The paper aims at contributing to the knowledge of policies of social protection for Angolan women working in the informal sector, with the intention of rethinking their

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position in society. It was written based on desk and bibliographic review, as well by using the technique of observation. The implementation of social policies in the country is irregular and ad-hoc. This is perhaps a reflexion of the lack of specific budgeting in regards to the total number of women working in the informal sector, as well as to other vulnerable groups in the country. Along with that, we question what programs and projects aim at the social protection of these women. Furthermore, we highlight how good politics of social protection for women must know the group that it is aimed at and fulfill its basic social and economic rights.

KEYWORDS: Social Protection; Woman; Rights; Informal Sector, Street Vending.

INTRODUCTION

The present article aims at bringing us closer to the politics of social protection for women working in the informal sector in Angola. Here, we understand that its point of departure and framework begins with legislation, following with the registration and state regulation of the most vulnerable parts of the Angolan society. However, in this analysis, we understand the politics of social protection as a service of state responsibility that focusses on meeting the demands (rights) of women working in the informal sector, by focussing on what legislation says about a disadvantaged and more vulnerable group that requires basic social protection. In this sense, the present article unfolds based on the following questions: what programs and projects aim at the materialization of women's rights in the informal economy? Their activities are protected by law as well as by social policies, however, informal workers do face resistance and are

oftentimes treated as criminals, as if they did not contribute to local wealth production.

With a particular emphasis on the reality of informal street vending, in this article we use the word « zunga » as a synonymous for street vending, which we use to refer to the activity of « zungar » - street selling.

In this sense, this article aims at contributing to the knowledge production on policies of social protection for women working in the informal sector. Our objective is to outline the actions, programs and projects in place for the materialization of their rights. As noted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, we may refer to the Government (State) or to the supreme administration, as one that holds the legitimate action of the executive power; and to the prince or magistrate, as the man or the body in charge of that administration that must aim for the preservation and prosperity of its members, which concretizes through the access to equal rights in its number and total population. The one where there is the majority of the population that multiplies is, undoubtedly, the best. The one where the population decreases and perishes is the worst (ROUSSEAU, 2011, p. 62 & 86).

The present article is aligned based on a documental and bibliographical analysis and is thus structured in the following manner: after an introductory note, it briefly contextualizes the reality of women, by looking at data from the 2014 Census, as well as at the legislation on the subject. It then retraces the policies of protection of women working in the informal sector, with emphasis on their rights in the framework of social protection. Finally, it brings some conclusions and study results and it explores different directions for future research.

SHORT CONTEXTUALIZATION

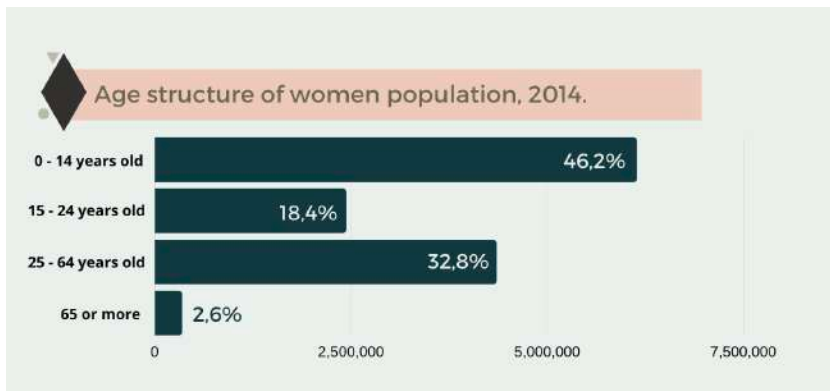
In an overview of women's condition in the Angolan society, we are taken back to *The Spirit of The Laws* by Montesquieu. When referring to the condition of women in different governments, the author states that « {...} in the republics, women are freed by the laws and held captive by customs {...} » (Montesquieu, 2005, p.113). In Angola, this materializes through difficult regulation as well as through the functionality of law.

In this sense, the 2010 Angolan Constitution determines social assistance as a public policy that is of State responsibility and that all Angolans have the right to benefit from it, shall they require it. However, there is no knowledge of the existence of specific policies for women who work in the informal sector. There are only programs, projects and ad-hoc actions as responses to their requests.

Concerning the responsibility of the State in supporting more vulnerable groups, in its article 21.^o, paragraph b-h, j, k and l, the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA) states that it must ensure fundamental rights, freedoms and guaranties; gradually create the necessary conditions to provide economic, social and cultural rights to its citizens; foster well-being, social solidarity and increase the life quality of the Angolan people, especially among disadvantage social groups; promote the eradication of poverty; promote policies that make primary healthcare universal and free and access to mandatory education; promote equality of rights and opportunities without prejudice and discrimination; promote equality between men and women by defending democracy and guaranteeing the participation of citizens and the civil society in the resolution of local affairs.

The Fundamental Law is more objective in article 38.^o, which grants the right to free economic initiative by emphasizing that: 1) the private economic initiative is free when executed with respect by the Constitution and by the law; 2) the right to free corporate initiative is granted to all, as long as it occurs within the legal framework; 3) the law promotes, disciplines and protects the economic activity and investments made by natural persons or legal persons, local or foreign, to protect the country, defending the Angolan economic and technologic development, as well as the interest of the workers.

The incursion on women's protection policies in the informal market is based on the understanding that the country is constituted by 18 provinces, 162 municipalities and 559 communes and that until May 2014 it had 25.789.024 inhabitants, amongst which 13.289.983 were women, representing 52% of the country's entire population, meaning that, until 2014, the majority of the Angolan population were women (INE, 2016, P27).



Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), 2014 General Census Statistics, p. 38

The chart above shows how observing the Angolan woman at all ages would lead noticing a real situation of generational inequality. Upon looking at all age categories, it is clear that the general majority are women. Reflecting on this reality based on statistics changes everything. We do not know exactly how many women and men work in the informal sector in Angola and, in this same category, how many work as street vendors. This also reflects the difficult struggle that many women go through in the informal sector in Angola, especially in the capital of Luanda. At its core, it displays an additional social non-protection.

This situation leads us to connect the rights to a person's lifecycle by viewing it as a crucial assumption to reflect on the instruments of social protection. In this dimension, it is important to think of women within the family and mostly in their informal workplace, whether it be in the streets, in the market or elsewhere. We must therefore take into account the need for these rights and guarantees to be included in policies of social protection for those who work in the informal sector.

POLICIES OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN WORKING IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR.

In this article, we view public policies of social protection as a variety of measures set to ensure basic life standards for all Angolan citizens, with the intention of building a fairer and more inclusive society.

In Angola, our concern is the ideological-partidary and politically hostile context that tends to immerse itself in the local social public policies in neoliberal times, as it is often mistaken as a sign of a socially active government, which leads to a certain lack of

sustainability when it comes to its intention to materialize social rights (PEREIRA, 2009, P. 163).

Based on the work of Pereira (2009, p.163), we call our attention to the conceptual inaccuracy of social policies, of its characteristics and particularities. A social policy must be clear in structuring itself as a mechanism for social protection to materialize social rights and human necessities whose focus should be a concern to improve services aimed at the poor, with the perspective of amplifying citizenship. We here refer to rights thinking about labour rights and the equal right to opportunities, to assistance for unemployment and precarious work, to establishing a national minimum income, right of association, of participation, right of circulation of people and goods, among others.

In Angola, the Law n° 7/04 of October 15 - Law of the Basics for Social Protection - organizes social protection on three different levels:

- Basic Social Protection;
- Mandatory Social Protection;
- Complementary Social Protection..

Although the majority of these actions are concentrated in the province of Luanda, it is important to reference them. By withdrawing its scope of application, article 5° of this law refers to people or families living in serious poverty; underprivileged women; children and teenagers with special needs; seniors in a situation of dependency and isolation; people with disabilities, at risk or who have been excluded; unemployed and at risk of marginalization. This is how we view the initiatives of social protection for informal workers and looking at Ngolo (2019), we retain the following:

1. The « **1st National Symposium on the Zungueira Woman** » organized on May 25th 2017, coordinated by the Observatory for Women's Rights (structure integrated by the Club of Angolan Women of Legal Careers and the Platform of Women in Action) and the Installation Commission of the Support Forum for Zungueira Women, with the intention of analyzing and finding solutions for the situation of zungueira women and their respective activity, with participation of different social actors and zungueira workers.

However, it is obvious that the subjects of this study are a part of the relative exceeding population, a stagnating one, the one with « irregular, eventual, marginal employment and part of those that inhabit the world of impoverishment », of unemployment (Braverman, 1977, p.328). The latter, who work occasionally, in a way that is irregular and « marginal », are easily mistaken for criminals and treated as such. Here, it is once again important to note the contribution of Telles (2010) when she refers to the thin and uncertain lines between the informal, the legal and the illicit.

2. In 2016, in the framework of its social responsibility, Coca Cola created the project « 5 by 20 » to promote the economic empowerment of 5 million business women in all their global branches until 2020. The project aims to:
 - Register the activities of these women in the legal Financial structure, in order for their revenues to serve as base for collectable resource;
 - Provide street vendor identification cards (interface with MINCO - Ministry of Commerce);

- Ensure that vendors are not chased by the Police or by Inspection Services for not carrying a personal identification document;
- Provide medical Check-up and vaccination.

When looking at priorities in the framework of Angolan politics of Employment and Working Conditions (PDN, 2018-2022), we particularly note the aim of promoting the formalization of the economic activity, with the intention to better structure the work market and create fairer conditions for competition - all of which is done through the Program for Promotion and Employment and the Program for the Reconversion of Informal Economy, whose results do not yet cater to the demand for social protection of many women working in the informal sector. It is important to mention that these programs are administered by the Ministry of Work and Social Security (MAPTESS) and that their execution is a priority to the National Development Plan through several initiatives, that requires one to consider the real need to protect women, who count as the majority of street vendors.

Informal labor alone generates disparity and social inequality that tend to be reproduced mostly in the way of trading benefits such as retirement, which are inexistent for the majority of subjects of the case study, perhaps because little is known about the mechanisms in place to adhere to them for individual contribution to social security.

It is important to understand that street vending is not considered a non-legal informal activity, given that it is recognized by law in paragraph 10 of article 4 of Law n.º 1/07, of May 4 regarding commercial activities, which we cite here:



Photograph by Selma Fernandes

« Street vending - is a non-sedentary commercial retail activity pursued by individuals that carry goods and sell them in their transit point, outside of urban or municipal marketplaces, as well as in places determined by municipal administrations.

Whoever decides to sell objects on public places or sell homemade food products for profit, shall request a license in advance from the province where it intends to pursue the activity, following payment of a prescribed fee, or a penalty of Kz. 300,00 may ensue.

The license to start the activity shall not be granted without pervious favorable information from the Provincial Health Directorate.

(Angola. Law n.º 10/87, June 2008, p.45)

O regulamento sobre o exercício da venda ambulante em Angola atribui à Administração Municipal a responsabilidade de autorizar o exercício da venda ambulante na sua circunscrição, mediante a emissão de um cartão de vendedor, cuja validade não deve ser superior a um ano. O mesmo regulamento (Artigos 3.º e 4.º) prevê também que para a emissão deste cartão os interessados devem reunir os seguintes requisitos:

- Develop an application process that is in accordance with the established norms, with the corresponding tax stamp;
- The application process shall include the identification of the applicant, hold a copy of their identity card, two photographs and a food health certificate in case food products are sold.

In practice, this entire legal framework appears to be time-consuming and, because the majority of the population does not seem to know about it, it does not seem to be the common route to start pursuing an activity, which leaves room for different types of abusive situations from the authorities, from public agents and even from fellow

workers. This does not cancel the fact that, in their daily activities, some street vendors respect the prescribed principles, as we can assess in the research carried by Monteiro (2012), Samba (2012) and others.

The International Work Conference held in Philadelphia in 1944 agreed on a joint statement currently attached to the Constitution that proclaims that « all human beings, irrespective of race, belief or gender, have the right to pursue their material progress and spiritual development in liberty, dignity, financial security and with equal opportunity ». The declaration also affirms that « wherever it exists, poverty is a danger to the prosperity of all ». (ILO, 2007, p.18).

Similarly to what is brought by Cecchini (2015), in Angola, despite the fact that the market is largely a part of people's lives, the State still plays a central role in the social matter as well as in the notion of rights as foundation for public policies, acquiring more strength, at least in speech, although not necessarily in the design, and in the regulation and implementation of the policy.

« The borders of social protection also expand: new problems and social risks are included in the acceptable spectrum of state intervention and new services are put in place, monetary transfers and regulations. Even if new breaches persist, the efforts to extend the coverage of the population become central and the efforts to decrease segmentation in access and the quality of the politics of social protection gain new supporters. Likewise, the extension of the eligibility and the coverage of the population within social systems, is followed by fiscal measures and improvements in the structure of those same systems. »

(CECCHINI, 2015, p. 26).

In this sense, in order to conceive social protection for women working in the informal sector in Luanda, we anticipate a necessary

expansion of the limits to social protection. The existence of new problems regarding this demand can create new services for the State, be it through cash transfers or through the regulation and taxation of the protection system.

Similarly to this type of help that must be studied and scheduled selectively, the focus here should be the fact that we are dealing with the lives of people who each carry a story to unfold; the search of a *zungueiro* or *zungueira* for family survival, as well as through their own autonomy and fulfillment. This may contribute to the daily struggle of this population segment for the « Right to have rights », so that they are not « deprived of a place in the world ». Without a culture of defense and effective implementation of rights, people become « exempted, not from the right to freedom, but from the right to action; not from the right to think whatever they wish, but from the right to an opinion » (TELLES, 2006:60).

The National Development Plan of 2018-2022 indicates that the average rate for unemployment from 2009 to 2014 amounted to 22,0%, which was very close to the objective set in the Strategy for the Development of Angola 2025 for 2015. The statistics of the 2014 Census indicate that the national unemployment rate amounted to 24%, with 25% for women and 24% for men. In 2014, the situation affected younger age groups more severely (in the 15-19 groups, the unemployment rates amounted to 47% for men, and 44,6% for women): for every two young people, one was unemployed, which can lead to a highly complex social situation. In the following age group (20-24 years old), in every three people, one was unemployed.

Unfortunately, it is important to mention that, for this study, the informal worker is considered unemployed, the reason being that when it comes to profession classification in Angola, informal street vending is considered unproductive to the needs of capital.

Social protection presents itself as a set of measures that must be innovative, reflect the development of the country and, mostly, contribute to the materialization of beneficiaries' social, economic and political rights. To think about the beneficiaries of such social programs is to look at families with children, where the informal worker is a matriarch, a daughter, a niece or a grand-mother. When observing things in this matter, it is important to think about the diversity and quality of such programs, which must go beyond the mere transfer of income; we must rather think about this transfer as a mechanism to protect rights, to build citizenship among these women who are from families that benefit from it. This requires a research for synergy between sectors such as Masfamu², the Ministry of Commerce, of Education, of Health, the Ministry of Former Freedom Fighters, of Employment and the others that deal with Angolan social politics.

A glance at the Sustainable Development Objectives defined by the United Nations, draws our attention to the eradication of poverty (1), the fight for gender equality (5) and the reduction of inequalities (10), as it is impossible for it to happen without the implementation of social protection measures for informal workers..

« The social protection, public policy of strong human calibre, carries a genetic mark that makes it somewhat different from other social policies. Its field of action does not actually refer to providing conditions of social reproduction to restore the living force of human labour. The attentions that it produces are answers to necessities of dependency, fragility, victimization of universal demand because they are adequate for human condition. However, the way in which this demand is recognized and incorporated, the answers that it receives in the public

² Ministry of Social Action, Family and dedicated to the Promotion of Women.

or private context, ensue from values more or less equal of a society towards its citizens. (SPOSATI, 2013, 653).

In this sense, thinking of the social protection for informal women workers in the Angolan context, allows to gain insight into a patchwork of unequal responses, from the precariousness of their work and remuneration, depending on the daily income of an untied relation.

For Sholkamy (2017, p.24), informal workers are frequently exposed to gender discrimination and prejudice. They receive low wages and small benefits. In Angola, MAPTESS³ included « mandatory » protection for domestic workers. This initiative of social protection is a notable endeavor - perhaps more inclined towards the mitigation of uncertain income of vulnerable women of working age, but with limited effects for lacking the synergy with other politics of social protection that are already implemented. However, the social impact is still very small, given the limited functionality of safe unemployment.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following this analysis, we arrive to the conclusion that, in Angola, many women employed as domestic workers remain unregistered in the social security system, mainly because employers generally do not comply with the law. This is due to the fact that the coverage for domestic workers still depends on registration arranged by employers of the National Institute of Social Security (INSS). Without benefits of unemployment paid in the case of employment termination, when

³ Ministry of Public Administration, Labor and Social Security.

unemployed, many Angolan workers immediately fall into a cycle of social insecurity and lack of protection.

This article clarified that social protection is centered in the idea of guaranteeing the satisfaction of basic needs and providing assistance in the case of social risks ensuing from social problems. It also showed that social protection for working women needs to be implemented as a policy and must be capable of responding to risk situations such as unemployment and incapability, but also to structural problems such as poverty and inequality. Its construction must be in accordance with the social issues experienced by these women, given that, in situations of emergency, its materialization is unexpected, in the framework of social service, as a form of social assistance, as should be verified during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, it does not encompass all the areas of this social policy; this protection would solely be a component of this policy, similar to sector-specific policies concerning Health, Education, Social Service and Housing.

We arrive to the conclusion that these policies do not exist as such, but on an ad-hoc basis, extended through different ministry committees with seemingly disconnected actions inserted in different programs and projects, with many of them lacking ensured continuity or a follow-up system. In this sense, the point of this article to contribute to the knowledge of the policy of social protection for women working in the informal sector with the aim of rethinking her position in society, was achieved through allowing the identification certain programs and ongoing projects such as the program for restructuring the informal economy and others elements, the constitution of the policy of basic social protection, mandatory and special, with greater focus on the first, within the scope of assistance

to rights that respond to basic needs, which must take into account the life cycle of each woman.

It is therefore a brief essay that goes beyond theoretical approach and originates from the reality of these women. It is a seed, a way to stir the waters in favor of new research in this area.

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VOICES OF RESISTANCE

Photograph by Sheila Nangue

NANDA, ZUNGUEIRA

ENTREVISTA

Nanda¹ is a 52 year-old Angolan woman who was born in Malanje, but who has been living in the province of Luanda for some years, in the Cazenga municipality, in the Kalawenda neighborhood. She lives with her 4 children, she is a widow and is the only family provider. She has completed high school. In this interview, she answers to the different questions regarding her daily life and in this sense, she tells us about the challenges that she faces in the struggle for her family survival.

Ondjango Feminista (OF): Hello, Nanda! How are you?

Nanda: I am well, thank you.

¹ Fictional name.

OF: Thank you for doing this interview to share your story with us. Shall we start?

Nanda: Yes, we can start.

OF: Who is responsible for doing housework in your home (who takes care of the house, the children)?

Nanda: In my house, everybody is responsible for housework.

OF: How are house chores distributed?

Nanda: We all do chores. It does not matter whether you are a boy or a girl.

OF: How do you think that house chores should be divided between girls or boys?

Nanda: I do not think that there should be such thing as chore distribution between boys and girls - I say this because of my own experience at home. For instance, I only have one daughter and my other children are boys. If I made a distinction between what is housework for girls and boys, how it is commonly done, then my only daughter would be overworked. For this reason, in my house, the rule is that each one of us must do every kind of housework.

OF: How much time do you have left to take care of yourself and your personal matters?

Nanda: I usually do not have time for myself. Usually, the only time that I have is to tidy up clothes on Saturday, so that I can go to church on Sunday.

OF: How long have you been selling for, and why did you decide to sell?

Nanda: I sell since 1984, which is the year when I arrived in Luanda from Malanje. I decided to sell because the zunga was the easiest means of livelihood that I found. Through street vending, I also found loving people who do not need much to help you. Through this experience, I have learned that there is real solidarity among women. They help each other a lot, not only for the money, but for the love and kindness that they display for one another.

OF: Why did you choose this way of doing business?

Nanda: When I arrived here in Luanda, my priority was to study, but I had not managed to study because my parents had separated. I was 15 years old and came from Malanje with my four brothers, without my parents. I had to get by so that we could sustain ourselves and my first business was to sell onions and garlic in the streets.

OF: What are you selling at the moment?

Nanda: I have already sold many products; from onions, tomato, bread, butter to sugar, but now I sell soap.

OF: How do you get the soap? Do you have to pay for it immediately or can you pay after you have sold it?

Nanda: When I was selling bread, for instance, there were some ladies who knew me and would give me 100 breads without me having to pay for them on the spot. I would take the money the next day and would only keep 1000 kwanzas². As far as the soap is concerned, I team up with a group of women to buy the products to make the soap at home. Then, we sell it.

OF: How would you prefer to do it, and why?

Nanda: I would prefer for there to be someone specific to help me out. I would like to have someone to help me invest in my business somehow. That way, I would be able to grow more and make more profit. It is very hard to work with other people's money. You feel like a prisoner and tend to get really worried. When a street vendor sees that she has not earned anything, she ends up waking up at 3 o'clock in the morning to reimburse the money that does not belong to her.

OF: Do you sell in the place where you live? Or do you need to move around or travel ?

Nanda: I sell in the neighborhood where I live. People have even given me a nickname. They call me « soap and omo ». Street vending requires that we do

² Angolan national currency.

certain things and accept to play along so that people appreciate us. Otherwise, business goes slow.

OF: What is your daily income? And monthly?

Nanda: The income really is the one that we use to keep the fire burning, so that there is food on the table every day. But sometimes I make 1500 kzs in a day.

OF: What do you mostly spend your income on?

Nanda: On food and electricity because, here, the system is pre-paid.

OF: Do you manage to save money or to invest?

Nanda: Yes, I save a little. With the 1500 kzs that I earn, I do what I can to save at least 100kzs per day for future necessities (such as electricity).

OF: What main challenges do you face when you are selling?

Nanda: Because I am selling soap at the moment, the first challenge is buying oil, which is very expensive. The second one is the main raw material to produce soap, which is not being sold at the moment because since the State of Emergency caused by Covid-19, people are only allowed to sell food.

OF: How is the crisis that the country is going through affecting your business?

Nanda: It affected and continues to affect my business, but also my life and family in general. My sisters too, are street vendors, and they also count on me to help them. And in this reality, I have two fears, one is to die of hunger, and the other is to die from this disease. Since the beginning of this crisis, I lost a son who died from hunger. We got to a point where we had to take cassava leaves out of the trash, wash them and grind them with our own mouths to be able to eat them. This crisis is going to continue and it will affect street vendors a lot, them who constitute the lowest layer of society. The majority of our street vendors are poor.

OF: What alternatives have you found during this crisis?

Nanda: You just have to find ways to survive. I found two banana trees and planted them in my yard. I also planted potato leaves and that is what we eat sometimes.

OF: How do you face the challenges?

Nanda: The only thing that I keep on thinking about doing is really to produce soap.

OF: How would you like to sell it?

Nanda: I would like to be able to sell it at my door.

OF: What kind of support would you need from the government?

Nanda: The government should look for civil associations, register people with difficulties and help each family with at least basic products, because we are amongst the families and people who are really suffering.

OF: Are you satisfied with what you do? What would you like to do apart from that?

Nanda: I am very happy with what I do. I have also taught literacy classes and I would always tell the women that one needs courage to organize oneself. I would also like to have money and open a business where I could conduct a business activity. I have a sewing machine, I already know how to make soap. The only thing that I need is money to do those things.

OF: What do you have to say about the current inspection system? How do you think it should be carried through?

Nanda: The police has been proceeding in the wrong way. They should not be chasing street vendors as they have been doing. They should have more compassion and should come better prepared as pedagogues. They need training.

OF: Now more than ever, women have been fighting for their rights and have been resisting to all kinds of obstacles that they face as well as the violence. Do you think that this is good? Do you believe that these

struggles will bring change? What else do you think should be done regarding business in street vending, for instance?

Nanda: It is important that women fight for their rights. We cannot stay silent. Of course speaking up will bring change, and we already feel it. For instance, here in our association there are women who no longer cry, but now act. They no longer accept to remain silent before the problems. I think that there should be lectures relating to street vending; be it for the vendors or the authorities themselves, because many of them do not know how to act. It would be good to have lectures and leaflets containing information regarding how authorities should proceed and how street sellers should act in the workspace.

OF: Did you stop doing something that you liked because you had to sell?

Nanda: Yes. I had to stop studying in 4th grade to start off again as an adult. Some opportunities came up but I did not seize them because I had to go sell - hunger comes first.

OF: How do you see yourself in 5 years? How would you like to see yourself in 5 years?

Nanda: I would like to see myself as someone who helps people through words. I would like to give lectures and be a motivational speaker. I would like to talk about my experience to other women. I would like to share my experience with others so that it not only stays with me, because I think that talking in the market is not enough.



VOICES OF RESISTANCE

Photograph by Indira Mateta

LÍDIA, MEMBER OF A « SÓCIAS » CIRCLE.

ENTREVISTA

Lídia¹ is a 45-year old Angolan woman born in the province of Kwanza Norte, but who, for some years now, has been living in Luanda, in the municipality of Cazenga. She told us that she is in a relationship, but that her husband has other families, that is why she spends more time with her 5 children. She has studied up until 10th grade. In this interview, she answers to questions about her daily life as a mother and provider, as well as her experience as someone who practices economic solidarity with other women, a system also referred

¹ Fictional name.

to as « sócias ²». We found out about her story of resistance through this mechanism.

Ondjango Feminista (OF): Greetings, Lídia! How are you and your family?

Lídia: We are well, thank you.

OF: Firstly, we thank you for doing this interview with us to share a little about your daily life. Shall we start?

Lídia: Yes, we can start.

OF: Who is responsible for doing housework in your home (who takes care of the house, the children)?

Lídia: It is everybody's responsibility. But when it comes to food, my 17-year old daughter and I share the greater part of the workload.

OF: How do you do chores division in your home?

Lídia: Here, it really is everybody's responsibility. Everybody takes part in it.

OF: How do you think that chores should be divided between girls and boys?

Lídia: In my house, the workload is divided equally. I mostly spoke about my daughter and I because of the food, but my second son is already learning how to cook to help us with that as well.

OF: How much time do you have left to take care of yourself and your personal things?

² The modality of economic solidarity, commonly referred to as sócia is a form of financial income that consists in the following: two or more people put their respective incomes together to buy some products in certain amounts/quantities that they would otherwise not manage to buy with their individual income. After acquiring the goods, they divide them equally for their own consumption or to resell them, that is, it is also a manner of helping each other and of promoting financial inclusion as a way of making it easier to acquire goods and services. Through this way, citizens manage to acquire essential goods (oil, rice, meat, etc.), sharing them with one person or more.

Lídia: I rarely ever have time for myself. Just to give you an example, I have to braid my hair at night.

OF: Since when have you been developing this kind of economic solidarity/sócia?

Lídia: Since 2006.

OF: Why did you choose this kind of system and way of gaining access to products?

Lídia: Because goods are too expensive. In this circle with other women, I can make up to 20.000 kzs and then buy half of 4 or 5 products to have them all.

OF: What goods do you acquire through the circle with other people? Where do you get them? Are those products for your home as well?

Lídia: Usually the goods are rice, fufu flour, vinegar, tomato paste, pasta, sugar and soap. But we don't buy boxes, we buy it all in small quantities. And we purchase the products in Viana, in wholesale stores and in the kikolo market. I also take some of these products for my own consumption.

OF: Do you sell at the place where you live? Or do you need to move around or travel from a place to another?

Lídia: I sell at my door. I mounted a stall. I have back problems, so I usually do not travel.

OF: What is your daily or monthly income?

Lídia: I usually do not have income because I pay all my bills with that money, specially food. And sometimes, neighbors buy things off on credit, they say that they will pay at the end of the month, but they take too long to pay and it becomes harder to have an income. But the most important thing is that business does not slow down.

OF: What do you mostly spend your money on?

Lídia: I spend it on electricity and water because there is no running water. We always need to pay men who work around the streets to carry heavy

water recipients for us. I also spend money on my daughters' tuition fees; they work in a missionary school. I spend on food. Sometimes I also have to buy fish, meat or chicken.

OF: Do you manage to save money or to make any kind of investment?

Lídia: No.

OF: What are the advantages and drawbacks of practicing sócias?

Lídia: the advantage is that it helps us to cater for certain needs. When I collaborate with someone else, it also gives me the possibility to buy certain things. The drawback is that some women have two-faced: you give them money and they run through a door. They change personas so that you no longer recognize them. Unfortunately, some women only come to steal other women's money.

OF: How did the crisis that the country is going through impact your social activity?

Lídia: The crisis really affected our activity. We used to be two women and we would take more things at home, but today we must form a society of four to five women and we don't take much at home.

OF: How did the Coronavirus pandemic impact your business and your sócia activity?

Lídia: The Coronavirus made it harder to access public transportation. The State of Emergency brought limitations to the circulation. Minibus drivers are doing much shorter routes. That is why we spend a lot of money in public transport. Many times, we must walk with our goods after we have bought them, therefore facing great risks.

OF: How do you overcome the difficulties?

Lídia: I have been telling myself that I will not give up, and my friends who sell also help me a lot.

OF: With all these struggles, what world do you think women are building?

Lidia: Women are our hope for tomorrow! The world was always led by men and for men and we always see suffering. Women are building a prosperous and welcoming world, that is why I work and fight to be amongst these women that help build society, even if it is without acknowledgement.

OF: What type of support would you need from the government?

Lidia: They should meet with the most successful businessmen and find ways to help those that are the most in need. Those of us who have a more limited income suffer a lot, really a lot. Things are very hard.

OF: Are you happy with what you do? What would you like to do apart from that?

Lidia: I am happy because today I am able to buy things in a certain amount to put food on the table.

OF: What do you have to say about the current police control? How do you think they that should operate?

Lidia: The police is annoying. I sell at my doorstep and even so, they are always pestering me. That is why I want my cornershop to be done, so I can sell my products there. The police needs better training to know how to act with vendors. I think that they should talk more and be more compassionate.

OF: How do you see yourself in 5 years? How would you like to see yourself in 5 years?

Lidia: My vision of the future is not only for myself: In 2 or 3 years, I would like for us all to have electricity and running water without limitations; I would like to be able to move freely and to be healthy. I also hope that children can eat and be well, that they are able to build a better country without hunger.



Photograph by the Mwana Pwo Association

ECONOMIC INTERFACE

Mining Communities, Sexual Exploitation of young women and girls.

MARIA MALOMALO¹

OVERVIEW

Sexual Exploitation is a violation of human rights fueled by high levels of poverty, by the economic dependency of women, by patriarchal norms and the backward expectations of society. Although it is common practice in several communities inside and outside Angola, women and girls from mining communities are more vulnerable. This is due to the complexity of mining communities as terrains of confrontation between economic prosperity and significant human rights violations. Failure to regulate formal and informal

¹ Trained in Journalism, African Feminist, founder and director of the Mwana Pwo Association. Was a scholarship holder of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for young African leaders in 2018.

mining areas and the lack of suited political will to defend and respect human rights of women and girls that remain in mining communities, contribute for the rise of women's vulnerability, imprisoning them in a cycle of poverty. This article analyses the vulnerability of women in mining communities, the impact of Covid-19 as the possible prevention strategies to solve the challenges faced by women and girls. It is based on a research carried in 2019 by the Mwana Pwo Association in the province of Lunda Sul.

ARTICLE

Paulina² is an 18-year old girl who lives with her parents and six siblings in the municipality of Samulambu, near the province of Lunda Sul. She comes from a relatively poor family. Her parents are peasants and her two older brothers are miners. She recently tested positive for HIV. During an interview with the Mwana Pwo Association, Paulina recounted how she got involved in unprotected intercourse with a « boss » from the miners for financial reward. « I did it because I saw how my parents were suffering. We did not have food. And I needed hair extensions as well as clothes », she told the interviewer.

Unfortunately, Paulina is not the only woman who goes through this. In 2019, Mwana Pwo conducted a qualitative research to determine the extent to which women and girls are exposed to sexual exploitation in mining communities. Although the research mostly took place in mining communities, results showed that formal workers exploit women and girls who live close to mining companies. Girls are oftentimes sent to informal mining sites and formal enterprises to exchange agricultural products for basic goods such as

² Fictitious name to protect her identity

maize flour and dried fish. In exchange process of these basic goods, young women and girls are forced to have transactional intercourse with miners and are thus exposed to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, gender-based violence, undesirable pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

Although the research of the mining industry in the entire world is significantly based on its revenue potential, an approach based on rights is essential to identify and solve the social problems that emerge particularly in relation to vulnerable groups such as women and girls. Academics and professionals, including Katy (2014) in *Women, Mining and Development: An Agenda for Emerging Research*, argues that the extractive industry is a masculine environment where there are more male employees, whereas women work as supporting teams, specially in administrative sectors and as cleaning assistants. She also argues that mining areas reflect the capitalist objectives centered in the creation of an economy based on money and next to traditional areas such as agriculture. In their research on the impact of mining for women and young girls in Indonesia, Lahiri-Dutt and Mahy (2008) note that:

« A mine inevitably brings and spreads advanced capitalist economic models that cause great social transformations around the mine's local area, including in urbanization and modernization. These projects of globalized mining along with the intensive use of capital, are well-known for transforming the social and cultural fabrics in the areas where they operate across the globe. »

The influx of a mainly male workforce and the increase of income influx result in new dimensions of power and in the amplification of biased gender roles. While men mostly take part in heavy work, women depend on them mostly for their financial survival as relatives, spouses, girlfriends, concubines or sex workers. Apart from

that, because they depend on men, women hardly ever have social or political control, therefore limiting their influence in the operation of mines and in priorities of social responsibility in the communities where the mining area is located. Katy (2014) and Lahiri-Dutt and Mahy (2008) identify the main challenges found in the mining industry:

1. Marriages or transitional relationships;
2. Prostitution;
3. Spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS;
4. Gender-based violence;
5. Exploitation and sexual abuse;

In Sierra Leone, for instance, according to a report from the International Human Rights Clinic (2001), the extraction industry is marked by reports of trafficking of young women from other parts of the country, forced commercial sex and gender-based abuse.

The challenges mentioned above are equally true for mining companies in Lunda Sul. Mining Review Africa estimates that Angola has the potential to become the country with the biggest Diamond exploitation in the world, with an estimate of 180 million carats mostly found in Lunda Sul and Lunda Norte. According to the same evaluation, the Kimberley process reports that, in 2019, Angola extracted 8,4 million carats with a total value of 1,2 billion US dollars.

Despite the obvious financial potential of the mining sector, women and girls continue to be at risk. The province of Lunda Sul has the biggest pregnancy rate in the country, established at 59,7%, according to the Health Multi-Indicator report (2015-2016). Teenage girls are

exposed to these negative impacts for their health at a social level, because of their limited knowledge about rights as well as sexual and reproductive health, including the use of contraception and lack of information about the mechanisms in place to denounce cases of abuse or sexual exploitation.

The research conducted by the Mwana Pwo Association revealed that:

1. Violence against women (VAW) is predominant in mining areas in the form of sexual abuse, physical and economical violence (related to women's access to the earth), leading to psychological violence and perpetrated by formal miners, craftsmen, as well as the community in general. The employees of mining companies, diamond washers that move to Lunda Sul without their families, take advantage of the vulnerability of these girls and engage in sexual intercourse. The VAW in mining areas as well as in other communities is rooted in the power imbalances that exist between men and women.
2. There is a correlation between patriarchy in mining communities and other systems of oppression, including class. The majority of women and girls in mining areas are unemployed, mostly depending on their parents, spouses and partners. Although Lunda Sul is an area of extractive industry, there are two extremes in the communities related to the access to financial resources: the minority who has access to mineral resources and, consequently, to economic power, and the majority that is poor and depends on the wealth of the minority. This increases the vulnerability of women and girls, putting them at risk of sexual exploitation. Girls are forced to have transactional sexual intercourse for financial reward.

3. The informality of artisanal mining areas results in the lack of adequate social services such as secondary schools and well-equipped hospitals, what affects the access that women and girls have in the education service and health quality, which imprisons them in an endless cycle of poverty with bad health results.
4. The disputes over land in these communities affect mostly women, leaving them without enough land to cultivate, which constitutes their main economic activity. Despite the existence of laws and policies, the patriarchal nature of communities affects negatively women's access to land, resulting in economic violence.

The reality depicted above shows a gloom image of the future of women and girls in mining communities. Frequently, women and girls have limited access to educational institutions and limited opportunities, resulting in the options of early marriage and transactional sex as survival strategies. As seen in the statistics about pregnancy rates in adolescence in Lunda Sul, which is one cause and one effect of early forced marriage, 6 in every 10 pregnant girls become pregnant before 18 years old. Consequently, they are forced to abandon school, which destroys their chances of guaranteeing competitive jobs to escape the cycle of poverty. As a consequence from the exploitation that they have suffered from a young age, these adult women end up having a more limited power of purchase and become more dependent on abusive men.

It is in this context that the province is facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Although no case of the disease has been registered in the province until this day, the State of Emergency initially declared on March 27th 2020 and extended twice, brought with it mobility restrictions for all citizens, mostly for those that depend on the informal sector for survival. According to the UNDP report on the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19, 72,6% of Angolans (71,4% being men and 73,8; women)

are employed through the informal sector. The measures implemented to limit informal commerce increase the probability of a greater economic instability in the communities and are prone to cause financial insecurity among families.

Apart from that, due to the increased price of basic goods, the barter system that ensures access to other goods for rural communities, will decrease significantly, forcing other thousands of families into acute poverty and hunger. The communities that are close to mining activities formerly used a barter system to increase the access to other basic products.

The fact is that in the majority of African communities where patriarchy is predominant, young women and girls from poor families are often at risk of transactional sex, exploitation and child marriage. According to *Girls Not Brides* (2020) in *COVID19 and Casamento infantil e precoce: Uma agenda de acção*³, « highlight of humanitarian contexts show that poor families that loose their means of livelihood are in general more likely to force their daughters into marriages, with the intention of bringing relief to the family's financial difficulties ».

This observation is composed by the *Plan International* that conducted a research on the crisis of Ebola of 2014, in West Africa, and whose results indicated that the economic pressure linked to the interruption of education could result in an increase of the sexual exploitation of young women and girls.

What is the way to follow to guarantee that girls and young women from mining communities are protected from sexual exploitation?

³ Early Child Marriage : An Agenda Towards Action.

1. The policies and recommendations made on regional and international platforms must translate into tangible policies and actions on local levels. The emphasis must be in the development of practical local actions and in the guarantee that girls and young women continue to receive the support and care that they need.
2. The government must include mechanisms and interventions of social protection for the more vulnerable communities, including women and girls, as part of its response strategy towards Covid-19.
3. The government must establish legal frameworks to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation. Article 6 from the Convention on the Eradication of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which Angola is a part, notes that « Member States must take all the appropriate measures, including legislation, to eliminate all forms of women trafficking, exploitation and forced women prostitution. »
4. The government must establish legal frameworks to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation. Article 6 from the Convention on the Eradication of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which Angola is a part, notes that « Member States must take all the appropriate measures, including legislation, to eliminate all forms of women trafficking, exploitation and forced women prostitution. »
5. The local authority must increase the number and efficiency of health centers in mining communities and surroundings, to ensure that women and girls have access to information on sexual and reproductive health. It is also necessary to develop policy about health and sexual and reproductive rights of

adolescents that acknowledge their need to have access to extensive education on sexuality in schools and communities.

6. The supply of adequate learning interfaces for young people, mostly young women, is fundamental to guarantee that they have access to quality education and can therefore escape the cycle of poverty. We recommend that the government and mining companies supply primary and secondary schools that cater to the needs of locals. As an alternative, they may invest in the creation of boarding schools for young people from mining communities, to ensure that they receive quality education.
7. It is important that the government, the mining enterprises and the civil society organizations conduct ongoing research about the impact of the mining industry looking specifically at gender, in the sense of creating programs that cater for the specific needs of communities.

In normal circumstances, girls and young women in mining communities often run the risk of sexual exploitation due to poverty. The Covid-19 pandemic amplifies these deficiencies and challenges, putting them at greater risk and increasing gender inequality even more. In order to protect this vulnerable group, there needs to be greater political will from the Angolan government.

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VOICES OF RESISTANCE

Photograph by Sheila Nangue

MARTA, MEMBER OF A KIXIKILA CIRCLE.

INTERVIEW

Marta¹ is 53 years old and was born in the province of Kwanza-Norte. She has been living in the province of Luanda for some years, in the Cazenga municipality, in the Kalawenda neighborhood. She has 5 children and lives with 3 of them. She is the provider in her home. She has concluded 8th grade. In this interview, she answers several questions related to her home and economic activity. Through this exchange, we learn about her daily challenges and her story.

Ondjango Feminista (OF): Hello, Marta! How are you?

Marta: I am well, thank you.

¹ Fictional Name

OF: Thank you for doing this interview with us to share your experience. Shall we start?Marta: Yes, let's start. Who is responsible for doing housework in your home (who takes care of the house, of the children)?

Marta: My 12 year-old daughter and myself share the great part of the workload. The other ones are younger and only help sometimes.

OF: How is the division of labour carried out in your home?

Marta: In the morning I go to the warehouse, my older daughter stays in to take care of the house because she studies in the afternoon and the younger ones study in the morning. When the younger ones get back in the afternoon, all they have to do is wash the dishes that they have used.

OF: How do you think that housework should be distributed among boys and girls?

Marta: I do not have boys at home, but if I did, it would have to be collective work. If one sweeps the street, the other must sweep the yard and another must tidy up the home, without any distinction.

OF: What time do you have left to take care of yourself or your personal things?

Marta: I do not even think about that! For example, if I have money, I first think about buying some food and not do my nails or something else. I really don't have any time to take care of myself.

OF: Since when are you a part of a Kixikila² circle?

Marta: Since 1998, when I stopped working. I worked during the time of the single party and after that, I worked as a maid, but that last job didn't work out.

OF: As far as its functioning system is concerned, how does Kixikila work? How many people are involved in it? How much does each person give? How long does it take for people to receive their money back?

Marta: Kixikila works in the following way: 5 to 6 people get together and we choose someone as a leader. The amount that we give varies between 200, 300 or 500 kzs. It really depends on the products that we are selling. I for instance sell ice cream (and other small products), so I cannot commit to contributing with an amount of money that is beyond my capabilities. When it comes to the timeframe to receive the money, it only depends on the number of people who are playing (committed to the kixikila circle). For example, if we are 10 and everyone earns money weekly, sometimes, it can take up to a month for it to be my turn.

OF: Why did you choose this savings method/kixikila?

Marta: Because I cannot keep money on my own. Kixikila is both a borrowing and savings method: it is as if the money was kept in the hands of other people for a while, and during this time, it also grows.

² Kixikila is a form of financial contribution between two or more people that results in a savings fund and allows one to accumulate an income that is greater than one could have earned through formal employment or a regular source of income. The terms of the kixikila are usually determined by the group of people who form the circle. A kixikila agreement can be established for a daily, weekly or monthly basis. It works in the following way : people determine an amount to contribute, they appoint a leader to monitor the rules and have them be respected, and each time, they determine who will be receiving the money. Once the contribution has been made, the money goes to whomever's turn it is. This person uses the money for a given period and later gives the same amount to the next person in the group, who will follow the same process.

After a while, the money comes back, in a greater amount, and it helps me save as well as pay my bills. We do not make much, but it helps to keep paying for water and electricity. Sometimes, I manage to make between 1800 and 2000 daily.

OF: What do you do or what did you manage to buy with the money that you make with Kixikila?

Marta: I already did a few things. For example, it is also thank to Kixikila that I built the house where I live today. With the money that I was making, I could buy 1 or 2 sacs of cement and I would keep them. When things were not that expensive, the money earned through Kixikila was really helpful. Apart from that, today I have a freezer where I can keep the ice cream and kissângua³ that I sell. I got the freezer with that money.

OF: What business do you do apart from Kixikila?

Marta: I sell ice cream, kissângua, soap and OMO, because in order to be able to pay for Kixikila, you have to sell something.

OF: Are you able to do any savings or to invest?

Marta: When I receive the money from Kixikila, I keep 2000kzs for me and for emergency situations. We also manage to pay for electricity with those savings.

OF: What are the advantages of Kixikila?

Marta: The advantages are that if I do not have money when I speak to the mother of kixikila (the leader) to receive the money first, even if it is not my turn, she gives me some. After that, I can use the money and comply with the reimbursement rules. The main

³ Beverage made from corn.

drawback is that many people receive the first payment and runaway because they end up not having the money to pay back.

OF: What are the main difficulties that you find to practice Kixikila?

Marta: During this pandemic, we had to suspend it because not everyone is working. We are getting by with the little that we have at home.

OF: How has the crisis impacted your business?

Marta: The crisis impacted my business because prices changed; things got really expensive. We are not managing to make ends meet.

OF: How has the pandemic impacted your business?

Marta: Firstly, I must say that we are really scared to walk in the streets because things are not going well and we must protect ourselves. The main consequence of this disease has been the obligation to stay at home, without the ability to go sell. Many times, our business involves leaving the house, going to walk, to zunga, but we haven't managed to do it lately.

OF: How do you overcome the challenges?

Marta: To overcome challenges, I have been trying to spend less. Before, I was spending 1000kzs a day, now I only have to spend 800kzs or 500kzs.

OF: With all these struggles, what world do you think women are building?

Marta: I think that women are becoming victorious because, even in the face of adversity, they stand firm and strong. In the future, we will have a fraternal world built by women, because they keep their head

up. They are always ready to take care of their children, despite the many difficulties.

OF: What type of support should the government give you?

Marta: The government should be open enough and help the many existing women's associations, with financial and food support, so that all of us can overcome difficulties.

OF: Are you satisfied with what you do? What would you like to do apart from that?

Marta: Despite the difficulties, I am satisfied and I feel good. If I did not have the little that I have, I do not know where I would find support for me and for my children. I only thank God for everything. But it is true that I would also like to have a more stable business of my own.

OF: How do you see yourself in 5 years? How would you like to see yourself in 5 years?

Marta: In 5 years, I would like to have my own institution and thus help somebody else as well. Sometime ago, I started building a kiosk to sell my things, but I am not managing to finish it because I do not have enough money. But I hope that, with my age, in 5 years, I can have my own structure to employ other people as well.



VOICES OF RESISTANCE

Photograph by Casimiro Znau

MARIA, PROMOTER OF THE CAIXAS COMUNITÁRIAS

INTERVIEW

Maria¹ is 54 years old and comes from the Huambo province, where she currently resides. More specifically, she is from the Ulembe village, situated in the Longonjo municipality. She has 6 children but lives with only one daughter and her grandchildren. She has completed 5th grade. Through her voice, in this interview, we get to know about the different aspects of her daily life regarding household care and her economic activity. Here, we share her story.

¹ Fictional name.

Ondjango Feminista (OF): Greetings, Marta! How are you and your family?

Marta: We are well, thank you.

OF: Before we go forward, we want to thank you for agreeing to do this interview with us to share a bit of your daily life. Shall we start?

Maria: Yes.

OF: Who is responsible for doing housework in your home (who takes care of the children)?

Marta: My 15 year-old daughter and I take care of the house. But my grandchildren also help washing the dishes, the clothes and they help in the farm.

OF: How do you think that chores between girls and boys should be distributed inside the house?

Maria: Well, I only live with one daughter and my grandchildren, so I would like for them to keep helping out with housework, as they already do.

OF: What time do you have left to take care of yourself or personal things?

Maria: I have little time left. Sometimes, I have to miss farming to take care of myself. For example, I only manage to braid my hair at night so that it does not disrupt the other activities that I do.

OF: Since when are you involved in actions for access to caixas comunitárias²?

Maria: Since 2018.

OF: Why did you choose to be a part of the caixas comunitárias?

Maria: To take care of expenses related to the house, while I wait for the harvest in the fields.

OF: In which way do you contribute to the growth of the caixa comunitária of your association/co-operative system?

Maria: I make reimbursements in due dates, without delays, to support its growth. I comply with regulations.

OF: What results did you obtain since you started taking a part in the caixas comunitárias?

Maria: With part of the money that I have made with the caixa comunitária, I already bought kitchen utensils, 5 hens, 1 goat and a head of cattle. I also managed to buy school supplies for the children, and medicine.

OF: What kind of agricultural products do you grow? Do you manage to sell them?

Maria: I grow corn, groundnuts, beans, sweet potato and soy. I manage to sell them in the village's market. Sometimes, I also go to

² The caixas comunitárias are known as a community bank of financial management among communities. Their main aim is to secure financial resources through the contributions of members of a community organized in associations or agricultural cooperative systems. It functions as a means for social inclusion by offering financial services to those who are excluded from the regular banking system for lack of physical assets, or because they live in areas where those services do not exist. Through the caixas comunitárias, many rural women gain access to financial services and optimize their agricultural activity.

the market in Huambo to sell and buy first necessity goods to resell them in the village.

OF: What is your daily income? And monthly?

Maria: I only usually calculate the monthly income and not the daily one, because the goods that I sell do not finish on the same day. But when it is finished after a month, I have had an income amounting between 5.000,00 and 10.000,00 kzs.

OF: What do you mostly spend your income on?

Marta: I usually buy food, school supplies and medicine.

OF: Are you ever able to save money or make any investment by using the caixas comunitárias?

Maria: Yes. As I said, sometimes I manage to by animals (such as hens or goat) and that ends up being my way to save.

OF: What main difficulties do you encounter when farming?

Maria: The main difficulty in production are the lack of fertilizers and, sometimes, the plagues and diseases that attack the crops.

OF: How has the crisis that the country is going through impacted farming?

Maria: The crisis impacted farming greatly because the prices of fertilizers and seeds went up. The prices of many products that we use in our business. Limited circulation does not help either.

OF: How does the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus, impact your business?

Maria: This disease has impacted our businesses negatively. These days, it is not easy for us to leave the village to go to the city, whether it is to sell or to buy certain products that we usually resell in the

village. The prices of goods sold in bulks went up a lot. It has become very hard to survive in the village. We are already feeling the lack of staple products such as soap, salt, oil, sugar, among others.

OF: What alternatives have you found?

Maria: I have only been working more in the fields, really.

OF: In what ways has the mechanisms to mitigate the Coronavirus impacted your family life?

Maria: The preventive measures of this disease created distancing within the family because now we can no longer hug. We cannot visit family members. For instance, when there are deaths, people cannot go to wakes as they used to. It is also difficult to have masks. All this affects family life.

OF: How do you overcome the challenges?

Maria: I have invested more in agriculture, despite the problems that we encounter in that sector.

OF: What kind of support should the government give you to improve the caixas comunitárias as well as your farming activities?

Maria: Increase credit opportunities.

OF: Are you happy with that you do? What would you like to do apart from that?

Maria: I like what I do and I am happy with, but I would like to see my business grow.

OF: How do you see yourself in 5 years? How would you like to see yourself in 5 years?

Maria: I would like to build a house with permanent foundation. If the value of the caixa comunitária increases, it will be possible to fulfill that dream and have a large business.



Photograph by Indira Mateta



BEYOND SURVIVAL

Economic Policies For Equity And Justice

A CONVERSATION WITH ÂUREA MOUZINHO¹

WHAT IS DEFINED AS ECONOMIC POLICIES?

Economic policies are all the interventions made by the government in the economy that aim at influencing economic fundamentals such as the production of goods and services, unemployment, inflation rates, among others. As a rule, economic policies may be divided into main categories: macroeconomics or microeconomic policies; the last ones being those that refer to the government's direct intervention to

¹ **Âurea Mouzinho** (MSc.) is an economist for political development educated in the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies, SOAS).

influence the performance of the economy in general, those being financial and monetary policies. While financial policies are related with changes in expenditure, monetary politics correspond to changes in interest taxes, in the cash flow, in exchange rates, among others, with the aim of influencing the value of the local currency.

HOW ARE ECONOMIC POLICIES RELATED WITH MATTERS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Despite those technical divisions, economic policies are interdependent and even complement each other. This means that governments cannot only depend on one or the other to reach its economic, social and even political goals. In this sense, economic policies are never neutral; not in their principal nor in their impact.

For example, the amount of support provided to different sectors or economic agents through programs of tax relief or assistance, reflects the government's perspective on the importance of each sector or group in the economy. In a similar vein, the more progressive the tax tariff of a State – that is, the bigger the amount of taxes paid by richer fringes of society compared to the poorer, in general, – the more the government has chances of combatting economic inequalities through indirect means of wealth distribution. Moreover, ceasing to control exchange rates, for example, tends to be based on the understanding that the State must minimize its intervention in the economy, acting mainly as promoter for private initiative.

The impact of each one of these policies varies depending on the group and its demographics (i.e. class or specific group that the policy intends to protect), be it through the interaction of economic policies with structural aspects with gender inequalities, class or geographical disparities, among others. For this reason, whether they are macro or

micro, financial or monetary, economical policies always mirror the political priorities of the government and its vision on what constitutes a fair society and economy.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE MAIN ECONOMICAL POLICIES DETERMINED BY THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST THREE YEARS?

I think that in the last three years, the main economic policies carried out by the Angolan government can be found in the Program for Macroeconomic Stabilisation (PEM), that since 2018 has motivated the implementation of several policies of financial and monetary reconstruction. Among those, for me, those are the ones that stand out:

- (i) the introduction of the value added tax (VAT)
- (ii) the liberalization of the exchange rate that resulted in the rapid devaluation of the Kwanza, and
- (iii) the adjustments of the prices of water and electricity and the imminent cuts on fuel; whether it be in the construction of a radical shift in the way that the government has conducted the economy until now, as well as for the impact that they have had in the lifestyle of citizens, specially the most vulnerable ones.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO THESE POLICIES RESPOND TO THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN, SPECIALLY FOR WOMEN WHO OPERATE IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ?

When we combine and put together the historical lack of investment in social sectors, these policies have worsen the economical precariousness of several families and women who were already in a situation of economical precariousness, because they have caused the

stagnation of real incomes, exponential increase of the price of basic goods, of basic services, of the cost of transportation, etc.

While the government shows a certain intention to mitigate these negative effects through policies such as the Program of Monetary Social Transfer, it is important to note that, at the moment, the program does not reach the entire vulnerable population (only about 6 thousand families in experimental phase), and even less the value of assistance (about 8 thousand Kwanzas) is enough to cater for the basic needs of the average Angolan family, where in general, the informal sector is mainly constituted of women (zungueiras, market sellers, hairdressers, etc.) who find their main source of income through those activities.

The pandemic of the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) has worsened the state of precariousness of many of those women, mostly because many of the informal activities have been limited as a way of controlling the spread of the virus. In this context, what is worrying is the lack of an inclusive system of social protection that guarantees alternatives of income for all families, without any stress. It is as worrying that among the 21 economic measures aimed at mitigating the impact of the crisis, the response to informality is vague and marginal if compared to the support given to companies and to informal workers, essentially summing up to the prerogative of continuing the process of transition of informality to formality.

In my opinion, the Program of Reconstruction of Informal Economy (PREI), despite being supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and by the International Labor Organization (ILO), is flawed in three main ways. Firstly, because it suggests a homogeneity in the informal sector, mainly because it purports that all informal economy is self-employment: when in reality, the informal economy is composed of multiple work relations and situations of capital

detention, meaning that not only are there « micro-enterprises », but there are also workers who are employed by somebody else. Secondly, what worries me is the intention to formalize to allow the increase of the State's financial base, assuming that the actors in the informal sector do not pay taxes at all, when in reality, they contribute direct and indirectly through the VAT and usage fees, cleaning fees, etc., that many times are charged for one to pursue an activity in a certain place. Lastly, PREI is based on the idea that automatic formalization implies social protection capable of absorbing the entire informal sector and that the informal sector exists separately from formal economy. These guessworks overvalue the relationships of complementarity between informality and formality (ex. For the distribution of products to the final consumer); the growing lack of formalization of the processes of production and precariousness of working relations in the so-called formal sector; as well as the little capacity of the economy to generate on a short and medium term employment capable of reaching millions of people that depend on the informal sector.

WHAT ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC POLICIES COULD HELP OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?

For me, talking about economic policies that guarantee rights, justice and equity is not only a technical question, but it is also ideological.

I see myself in heterodox economic currents of thought that suggest that economic policies do not need to have economic growth as their main objective (although it is illusionary manner defined as inclusive and sustainable), but it does guarantee a decent life for people with free access to quality public services, jobs, social security, among others - all this in the framework of the social state. All around the world, and particularly on our continent, this perspective has been

more and more marginalized from the public debate and even in academia, in detriment of a thought that defends the consolidation of market economy, which translates as a minimum State and the strengthening of the private sector as main promoter of economic and social development. This wave tends to defend that « there is no alternative », just as declared by Margaret Thatcher, former British prime minister for the Conservative party in the 80s. For this reason, discussing alternatives of economic policies is also an important act of democratic resistance.

In general, I believe that any economic policy must respond to the historical responsibility of real distribution of wealth and the implementation of socioeconomic rights. In terms of financial and monetary politics, there are many possibilities to reach this goal, such as: the prioritization of income tax and priority as a way to deepen the financial base of the state, instead of the implementation of generalized and regressive taxes such as the VAT; the revision of generous tax benefits guaranteed to foreign enterprises in the framework of policies of promotion of foreign direct investment (that result in the substantial loss of revenues that could be used to fund larger social programs; implementing control in exchange rates, as a way of preventing the rapid depreciation of the local currency without the compensation of real incomes. There are still more ambitious options, such as determining a minimum wage that is sufficient and adjusted regularly to ensure the survival of families as well as a minimum of basic jobs as a way to correct the negative effects of inflation control policies.

It is important to emphasize that nothing is undoable or unfounded in these options regarding economic policies. From what I understand, its non-realization comes from a policy that prioritizes the interests of certain elites, be it at a national level as well as

internationally, that tend to resist the processes of wealth distribution. I therefore think that it is important to demand alternative economic policies as part of a larger advocacy aiming for social and economic justice, based on the understanding of different structures, processes and sectors that hinder the realization of rights and the promotion of equity, and the different effects of each policy in the different social groups.



Photograph by Selma Fernandes

COVID-19

Challenges With Focus On Women Rights In Angola

INDIRA LAZARINE C. M. FÉLIX

OVERVIEW

This essay about Covid-19 and its challenges in Angola is a brief reflexion that focusses on the situation of zungueiras, they who are informal vendors. It aims at understanding the Covid-19 and its challenges in the lives of populations, taking a particular outlook on the situation of the informal working woman. In this sense, we enquire: what challenges does Covid-19 bring to the informal working woman in Angola? It shows how a good emergency policy in response to the pandemic, must understand the disease as well as its beneficiaries, mostly aiming at materializing basic rights besides the

safety restrictions imposed by the declaration of the state of Emergency. This text was made based on a documental and bibliographical research with current data on the disease issued by MINSA. It aims at challenging other researchers from socioeconomics to the production of deeper studies on the pandemic, understanding that the discovery of the vaccine is greater than the challenges of this moment.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19 Pandemic; Woman; Rights; Informal Labour; Street Vending.

INTRODUCTION

When talking about Covid-19 and about its ensuing challenges for the informal working woman in Angola, we are dealing with a current matter regarding a highly contagious disease that was firstly identified on December 2019 in Wuhan, in the province of Hubei, in China. In this sense, the present article aims at recognizing the Covid-19 pandemic and its challenges in the lives of populations, especially thinking about women working in the informal sector in Angola.

Prevention from this disease starts with knowing what it is about, using protection mechanisms as well as raising awareness to the greater use of technology, Internet, teleworking, social networks as selling spaces for street vending, with home delivery services, the confinement, social distancing, among the other creativities that came along with informal work that we have observed in the daily lives of many *zungueiras* - and not only.

It is worrying that the measures of prevention that restrict the rights and freedoms of this working informal population, apart from aiming at protecting from the disease, also bring to light other problems. For

example, many families do not have access to drinking water because their income is too limited to buy water bottles or in basins at the neighbor next door. There are cases of hunger, of restriction in hospital service for other diseases, among others. This reality leads us to the following question: what are the challenges faced by women working in the informal sector in Angola, in the face of Covid-19?

This article was written based on a documentary and bibliographical research by using works and documents that helped us realize the objectives of this reflection. It is structured in the following way: it brings an introductory note followed by a general approach on the challenges found in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, there are some conclusions as well as research results and notes that point to future research.

Angola is shown as a country considered to be rich but completely dependent on oil, whose price has gone down during the pandemic. The economy has weakened with the impact of the disease and given the preventive measures taken by the government across all 18 provinces, 162 municipalities and 559 communities; whose challenge is for those measures to benefit all 25.789.024 inhabitants, from which 13.289.983 are women, representing 52% of the total population in the country, that is, until 2014, the majority of the Angolan population were women. (INE, 2016, P.27)

COVID-19 AND THE CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN WORKING IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN ANGOLA

When referring to the crisis of the new Coronavirus, Davis (2020) shows how, although it is fed by the capitalist system, it embodies a coup to capitalism in a situation that implies resorting to anticapitalist practices.

For this reason, the author refers to the Coronavirus as « an old film that we have watched repetitively since the book by Richard Preston, *The Hot Zone*, from 1995, which presented to us an exterminator demon born in a mysterious cave with bats in Central Africa, known as Ebola ».

In reality, the understanding of this monster in Angola requires great questioning on the size of the local population that survives from street vending and other informal jobs, such as housekeeping, women who iron, women who take care of retiring homes and many others that work without a formal working contract, without an employing link, without social protection, be it basic or mandatory, as well as special, with emphasis on those whose income depends on the daily sales of their products in the streets.

The indicators on Employment and Unemployment 2018/2019 published by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) say that, for the period of reference, the percentage of economically active people in informal activities in Angola was of 72,6%, and was higher among people aged 25-64 years old (INE, 2019, P.12)

In reality, it is only another set of new diseases that interrupt on the « virgin ground » of the unexperienced immune system of humanity. Ebola was followed by the avian influenza that spread among humans in 1997 and by SARS, that started at the end of 2002. Both cases appeared first in Guandong, the centre of global production. Of course, Hollywood intensely embraced those outbreaks and produced a series of films to provoke and scare us (*Contagion*, by Steven Soderbergh, release in 2011, stands out for its precise science as well as for the terrifying anticipation of the current chaos). Apart from the films and the countless horror novels, hundreds of books in series and thousands of scientific articles have responded to each outbreak,

very much emphasizing the terrible state of global preparation to detect and respond to these new diseases (DAVIS, 2020, P.5)

The present article focusses on the lack of experience of humanity's immunological system, mostly looking at Angola, where the population experiences the constant fragilities of a health system that, instead of welcoming an ill person, is more interested in taking from them the little that they have to survive, many times expecting them to purchase material for hospital treatment, being yelled at, queuing infinitely, respecting the absences of professionals that prioritize the private sector over state-owned hospitals.

It is in this context that in the period of March 2018 until February 2019, the unemployed population aged 15 or more counted 3.583.143, among which 1.557.394 were men and 2.005.749, women. The country's employment rate during that period was of 28,8% (information for the Objective of Sustainable Development_ODS_8.5.2), with 26,6% being for men and 30,9%, for women. The unemployment tax of the urban area (36,5%) is 2,2 times greater than that in the rural area, which amounts to 16,2% (INE, 2019).

« So the Corona enters through the front door like a family monster. It was easy to track its genome (it is very similar to its well-researched about sister, SARS), but we still lack a lot of information. Because they work day and night to characterize the outbreak, they face three main challenges. Firstly, the permanent lack of testing kits, especially in the United States and in Africa, have prevented precise estimate of key parameters such as the reproduction tax, the size of the infected population and the number of benign infections. The result has been a numerical chaos. Secondly, similarly to yearly influences, this virus mutates as it circulates amongst populations of different ages and with different health conditions.

The variation of the disease that Americans will probably catch, is already slightly different from that of the original outbreak in Wuhan. Additional mutations can be benign or can alter the current dissemination of the virus, which increases drastically after 50 years old. The Coronavirus is at least a mortal danger for the elderly in America, they have weakened immune systems or chronically breathing problems. Thirdly, even if the virus remains stable and a little mutable, its impact on younger age groups can be radically different in countries that are poorer and amongst poorer age groups. Take the global Spanish influenza from 1918-19, for instance, that is said to have killed 1 to 3% of humanity. In the United States and in Western Europe, the H1N1 killed more young adults. An explanation has been found by looking at their immune system, which is relatively stronger and reacted to the infection unreasonably by attacking pulmonary cells, leading to pneumonia and to septic chock. » (DAVIS, 2020, P. 6).

The Covid-19 disease was firstly identified in Wuhan, in the Hubei province, in China, on December 1st 2019, but the first case was only reported on December 31st of the same year. Until then, several countries ignored this monster that tore down borders in a familiar way by invading markets, weakening economies, decimating families, demanding new hygiene practices, imposing care measures, determining States of Emergency for/to nations, demanding social distancing, solidarity, attention to the Other as potential transmitter, spreading fear among families, pressuring the rise of domestic violence by imposing interaction between couples before separated during in daytime because of work. Nowadays, whoever is not in quarantine and is not using a facial mask, is not considered trendy, nor modern.

Psychologists, social assistants, sociologists, academics and other professionals shall get ready, because we are dealing with the break of

a series of demands that have a string and differentiate impact on people's lives, which requires the full attention of professionals. This is not just a phase that will pass, it is a moment of social transformation, the continuation of lives that have experienced teleworking, more vigorously, quarantine for more than a month, the death of thousands of people from hunger and lack of social assistance.

As shown by the data of this author, the world, especially Africa, will face great challenges, not only in the transparent necessary management, but also when it comes to the sensitivity brought towards valuing human life in the Angolan health system that, despite the mobilized efforts, has been staggering in the fight against permanently limited stock provision for testing kits, which has made it more difficult to really know how many people are infected, the level of gravity of the infection, as well as the possible virus mutations. This author highlights that for countries such as Angola, that have a young population, the death risks are smaller. However, the impact on more vulnerable people, such as people who live from informal work, representing roughly 72% (INE, 2019) of the active population, constitutes a challenge to guarantee primary health care, food, sanitation, drinkable water and other basic services to the entire population, specially in these times of State of Exception or Emergency. We here put forward this preoccupation with illusionary statistics that do not reflect the reality. And they do not provide realistic strategic responses.

Looking at the national system of basic social protection: there needs to be a greater focus on women, more organization, more effectiveness, greater response to the real needs of Angolan women. Less communicative, we understand that there needs to be greater clarity and guarantee of interaction with the participating agents (not

only executioners). This is one of the greatest challenges of the current context for the country and the world, at a time when they are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, an infectious disease caused by the Coronavirus that causes a serious health condition that has already affected more than two and half million lives around the world, a number that increases daily. Today, the country lives in a state of emergency, the economy has lost momentum with the closing of air, sea and land borders and with the limitation of citizens's freedoms and rights.

Looking at real social demands such as is the case of poverty, of hunger, of lack of drinking water for consumption, the fight for security, amongst others, today, because of Covid-19, all of them converge towards the struggle for life.

The President of the Republic is indeed the one who has the power to proclaim the State of Exception and, by suspending the validity of the law, he points the lack of distinction between violence and rights. In this situation, the police always acts [...] in a similar « state of exception ». The reasons of the « public » order and of « security » that must be decided in each unique case, display a lack of distinction between violence and right that is in perfect symmetry to that of sovereignty (Agamben, 2017, p.98).

In this perspective, this moment of State of Emergency can be justified, proclaimed by the Angolan sovereign state since the second half of March 2020, as a mechanism to prevent from the spread of the disease in the country. At that moment, Angola did not officially have any acknowledged case, when it was declared that classes were going to be suspended, followed by the state of emergency; today the country has 50 official cases of Coronavirus infections, amongst which there are 3 deaths, 11 recovered and 30 active.

In this sense, PNUD Angola describes this pandemic as a health crisis, as well as a humanitarian and development crisis that is carving profound social, economic and political scars that will carry on until the next years, mainly in countries that have already been burdened with fragility, poverty and conflict, such as Angola. The psychological and social impact of the quarantine on the families, is also worrying. Many families are being decimated, extinct, houses may be locked down due to the deaths of the inhabitants, companies may go bankrupt, fear is seizing the population, which also tends to paralyze their dreams, to mutilate the education of children and the youth, whereby many have shown fear to leave the house.

The UN recommends that the national plans put money in the hands of women: if the country has a program to respond to the pandemic or to poverty, it is important that it is directly managed by women; for example, the programs of conditional transfer of income using mobile banking. These programs must be amplified.

Another recommendation from the same source consists in introducing methods that may be implemented with low transaction costs (such as the temporary suspension of electricity bills for poor consumers and ensuring the access to drinking water to these populations).

The UN also recommends: the implementation of already-existing national programs of social protection, as well as the use of direct methods to ensure income for groups affected by Covid-19, mostly where women are in higher numbers (education, informal market, health, restaurants, hospitality, etc.); extend basic social protection to informal workers; introduce methods to monitor the tax burden on companies that belong to women; resort to women's networks and civil society organizations, including micro finances and savings collectives/kixikila, to communicate about profit; integrate gender

monitoring in all countries to understand the impact of Covid-19 among women and girls, including the economic impact, and how to deal with that effectively (UN, 2020, p.9).

The Covid-19 pandemic is having devastating social and economical consequences for women. António Guterres, the UN secretary-general, launched the alert on the day that the UN released a report that shows how Covid-19 can reverse the progress made in the field of gender equality and women's rights.

According to this report, about 60% of women in the world work in informal economy and are exposed to the risk of falling into poverty. The pandemic has also lead to a significant increase of the violence against women. In the entire world, about one in every five women has suffered violence in the past. Many of them are now in quarantine, locked down at home with their abusers.

In the same vein, António Guterres has called all countries to « take urgent measures to protect women ». Street vending services are intercepted and limited by the police and armed forces, with jail registrations and, in certain cases, aggressions; informal markets and commercial institutions open from 6 AM to 4 PM on Tuesdays. Informal activities take place on Thursdays and Saturdays from 6 AM to 4 PM, from Monday to Sunday for informal economy, but now with a certain openness apart from food product sales and basic goods.

We need to think of assisting measures apart from the soap and masks that are handed out without any criterion to certain vulnerable families by administrative offices as well as by members of the civil society. These fragmented initiatives need to be coordinated by a central organ and handed over in a manner that is planned to understand the real needs of the more deprived families that live off

street vending, and who, because of limitations, do not have the minimum to eat on each day that street vending is authorized.

In this way, the greatest form of protection is the knowledge that the protection from Covid-19 cannot be the foundation for a woman working in the informal sector in Angola, given that it was possible to better understand the disease and its impacts in the lives of populations, especially when thinking about the informal working woman.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article showed that knowing the disease is very important for the compliance with protection mechanisms against it, a mechanism for implementing rights for a sick population and one that does not want to fall ill.

It showed the acknowledgement of the effort of the Government in having centers available for part of the population that lives in the streets, as well as guaranteeing certain rights. However, it is not possible to see direct supporting actions aimed at women working in the informal sector who were affected significantly by the State of Emergency, having the right to work, firstly 3 times a week for half a day, and later, for a longer period, but with clients not being able to leave their homes due to quarantine. Without any work or food for their family, between death, hunger and death caused by the pandemic, the state's social assistance to families is urgent.

In the majority of the countries, social protection is a citizen's right, and therefore, the state is responsible for its implementation.

A visible result of this topic goes around the fact that basic social protection as actions of social assistance, aim at materializing basic

rights such as those regarding the satisfaction of food, work, dressing, housing, security, education and health needs, translated in rights in the Angolan Constitution.

This study shows how this pandemic may serve as a lesson of experience for us to perfect our public services since, in times of a pandemic, it has been impossible to travel to see a doctor abroad, or even for tourism. Instead, we stay in our house, in our country. The pandemic comes to show the fragilities and strengths of the institutions, revealing its capacity for regeneration, resilience, as a simple act of washing one's hands well.

To summarize, apart from being a theoretical construction, this essay is also a provocation for new research in this field that depart from the concrete reality of this pandemic.

Therefore, as noted by Davis (2020), in a year, we will be able to look back in awe to China's ability to successfully control the pandemic, but with the horror of the failure of the USA. The incapability of our institutions in keeping the Pandora Box closed is, of course, a surprise. We have seen many failures in the forefront of the healthcare system.

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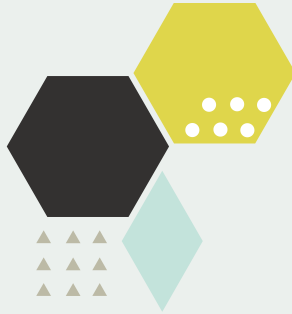
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Ondjango Feminista is an autonomous collective of activism and education whose work of consciousness-raising, mobilization and advocacy for women's rights and feminism in Angola, is executed from a perspective of social justice, solidarity and freedom.



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