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 **Comparative Educational Study**

I will examine the educational structures and policies of the following countries: Angola, Central Africa and Brazil in comparison with the United States. The following measures that I will analyze the differences between these countries is the extent of state support for education, curriculum, standard forms of instruction, and the aims of the educational systems. In addition, I will also provide some brief background and historical influences which have shaped the educational institutions of both Angola and Brazil.

Angola is a country geographically three times the size of California has been plagued by colonial rule since the 17th century until the 20th century (1975). Following the Portuguese rule of Angola, which is located in Central Sub-Saharan Africa, civil war broke out between insurgent forces and ended recently in 2002. These historical factors have to lead to the decrease in funds for governmental spending on educational funding. It was the focus of the newly formed democratic political system that education be a top priority for Angola’s population. In the late 1970’s, a push for a restructuring of Angola’s primary educational system occurred. As of 2006, approximately 107% of Angola’s children were enrolled in primary school.

Children begin school at 7 years old and attend for four years. Students take exams to continue schooling the second cycle of education. Secondary education which many students do not attend (it is not required) starts from the age 11-15. Then children enter vocational or university education depending on their selected course of study. According to recent studies, the literacy rate of the country is 70%. Angola has a population of 18,497,632 with 70% women are still illiterate compared to 50% of men. The people of Angola’s life expectancy are relatively low reported to be 48 years, 38years previously. Therefore, the percentage of literate population seems relatively high.

 The government’s role in providing education for Angolans is still a major issue in the country today. The war-torn country is striving to place more emphasis on educational spending, however according to the statistics provided by (<http://www.worldmapper.org/>) reported that Angola spend the least of most countries in the category of educational spending. Angola was noted to have spent only 30% of its funds in support of education.

In region of Central Africa, it was stated that these particular only spent 1.5% of their total gross income on educational efforts compared to the world’s spending. In relation to the educational spending, Angola’s curriculum is relatively basic. The adoption of the “Cuban” educational structure is being implemented in several provinces of Angola. This type of education consists of traditional teaching. Teachers and students rarely interact with one another. In a start difference with the United States educational structure facilitating students to participate in more hands-on assignments and activities is not a characteristic of Angolan educational practices.

 Furthermore, Angola’s instructional practices integrate the ideals of student community involvement and minimum teacher-interaction (a result of over crowding). There is a high teacher-to-student ratio resulting in minimum matriculation of students who enter Secondary education. Approximately 1 million students were enrolled in Secondary education and only 13% of the country’s total population. 27% of students who enter primary school only reach and successfully pass the 4th grade.

As a result, of the higher class sizes, teacher preparation for the primary and secondary grades is not sufficient and much more training for teachers are needed. At the Tertiary levels there are few students who reach this level. Most urban areas of the country are locations for Universities and Vocational Training schools. Approximately 0.01 million of Angola’s population is enrolled in Tertiary programs. Comparable to the United States 16.86 millions and Brazil 2.39millions enrolled in Tertiary educational studies. (<http://www.worldmapper.org/> )

 After analyzing data on the educational system of Angola, I found that the ultimate goals of the government and educational policy makers for the future education of Angola are primarily to end or decrease the percentage of people who illiterate in the country by the year 2014. ([www.wikipedia.com/Angola/education](http://www.wikipedia.com/Angola/education)) The country’s efforts are to prepare their relatively young population to be skilled workers for the workforce; be able to read and write.

 Similar to Angola, Brazil has endured a considerable amount of historical and political strife which has significantly influenced the educational development and policy of the nation. Brazil was a former colony of Portugal, has made strides in improving the educational access for its citizens. The educational system availability is has a direct correlation to its social and economic development. There is an overwhelming gap between the rich, wealthy and poorer citizens of the country. However the government has worked diligently to mandate that fundamental, primary schooling ages (6-14) is required for all students despite economic disparity. Brazil spends 5% of its GDP on education which is far less than the United State’s 5.5% of its GDP. Brazil’s educational system is comprised of three levels: Fundamental, Intermediate, and Higher Education. Fundamental education starts at age 7 and Intermediate ends at age 15. Beyond age 15, students can enter high school which lasts 3 years. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Education**\_in\_**Brazil**)

According to worldmapper.com, 24 million students are enrolled at the Secondary level and 72% of the population, this of course is an accomplishment which the percentage of students enrolled in Secondary education has increased since the late 1980’s. The country’s literacy rate is that og 90.2% a nearly 20% higher than Angola and 99% of Americans are literate. 7.2 millions students seek and obtain a formal education. (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>) Brazilian women are 88.8% literate and Brazilian men 88.4% of the population. The Brazilian educational curriculum consists of numerous hours of Portuguese history, Language (foreign languages English), Mathematics, Science, Biology, and Chemistry. Teachers are trained at Universities and have the opportunities to renew their skills.

Attendance is major concern for Brazilian educational officials, Ministry of Education. Increasing the attendance level of all students is vital in order to educate all students in the country. Brazil has six distinctive goals in which they have set to improve their educational system. Brazil is working to expand early childhood education; provide free primary and compulsory education for all citizens; promote learning life skills for adults and youth; increase their literacy rate by 50% and overall improve the quality and equalize education for gender groups. (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brasilia/education/education-for-all/education-for-all-goals/>) It is the hopes of the Brazilian government that the country works to make these goals reality for its people.

The last educational system I will discuss is that of the United States. One of the most developed and industrialized nations in the world. The United States according to the CIAworldfactbook.com has a 99% literacy for its citizens. There is an elementary, middle, Secondary (high school) and Higher education (Post-Secondary) levels offered in the United States. Students start at age 4 (earlier pre-school) until age 17, 18. It is mandatory that students here in the US attend school until they are 16 year s of age. Reported in 2002, 19 million children are enrolled in primary schooling; 36 million in secondary education, and 16.82 million enrolled in Tertiary education more than 4 times than that of Brazil and Angola.

In recent years, there has been discussion of increasing the drop-out age to 18. Unlike the educational systems of Angola and Brazil, the local, state, and federal governments have influence on educational policy. The US federal government enforces nation-wide educational laws such as drop ages, provides funding for teachers, administrative personnel. The US is tied for educational spending with that of Switzerland. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\_in\_the\_United\_States#Curriculum\_issues)

The United States curriculum consists of the basic core subjects: Math, Science, Social Studies (Variations of History, Geography, etc.) and Language Arts- English. Curriculum standards differ from district to district and state to state. Religion within public education is separate entities. Private schools have the authority to include or implement a curriculum center upon religious beliefs.

The Standards of Instruction are based on the distinctive goals and objectives that are designed for each subject matter. Students are expected to master these objectives along with end of grade, course, and summative assessments to be promoted to the next grade level. These assessments vary from districts and states. There have been major concerns with the structure of the educational system changes in discussion among the United States governmental educational officials. The “No Child Left Behind” legislation enacted in 2002 has placed accountability upon educators to prepare students be globally competitive in the 21stcentury.

In conclusion, when examining the educational systems of the countries Angola, Brazil, and the United States, historical events and governmental power has greatly influenced the educational systems among Brazil and Angola. The United States, having been an independent nation for over 300 years has allowed it flourish and expand its educational system substantially. However it is not with its problems. High school retention, increase literacy rates, and curriculum improvement are just a few concerns of these educational programs. It will be interesting to see what direction each country heads toward in preparing its children to become global citizens.

Resources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\_in\_the\_United\_States#Curriculum\_issues

(<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brasilia/education/education-for-all/education-for-all-goals/>) I

(<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>)

([www.wikipedia.com/Angola/education](http://www.wikipedia.com/Angola/education))

(<http://www.worldmapper.org/>)

<http://www.aeaf.org/papers/2001-05-12-wccee-abstract.pdf><http://www.international.ac.uk/resources/Angola.pdf>

http://www.cal.org/co/cubans/edu.htm

<http://countrystudies.us/angola/81.htm>

 By Inter-American Development Bank

<http://www.spainexchange.com/guide/BR-education.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\_in\_Brazil