

Globe
EDIT



João Viegas Fernandes · Filomena Maurício Fernandes

**Sustainable Development -
Education, Health, Climate Change
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Contributions by Authors from Lusophone Countries

Article 2

Education for Transformation: A Reality in São Tomé and Príncipe

Cláudia Luísa and Ana Baião

Abstract

Sao Tome and Principe is a tiny small island country with a very young population, 60% are under 25, of working age population with a voice to intervene in society and its transformation. Although there have been many improvements in education and health care, the truth is that there is a problem of deprivation, with many children and young people suffering from social exclusion, violence and lack of opportunities. Knowing that education is the most powerful weapon to transform a society, a cultured and educated population will have decision making power and the ability to defend themselves and fight for their rights.

Keywords: *Education; Social transformation; Empowerment; Sao Tome and Principe.*

1- Introduction

São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is considered the smallest country in Continental Africa, formed by two small islands, São Tomé and Príncipe and some islets such as: Rolas, Cabras, Bom Bom, Carço and Pedras Tinhosas islets. The islet of Rolas is crossed by the equator. The archipelago is located between the latitudes of 7° 44' North and 0° 1' South between the longitudes of 7° 28' East and 6° 27' West. Located in the Gulf of Guinea, 380 km off the coast of West Africa, the islands are bathed by the Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago covers an extension of 1001 km² between Ecuador and Gabon and has an area of about 850 km².

l climate, with an average annual tem-
g 75%. The country has only two sea-
n, which runs from June to September,
er to June (lasts nine months).

inces, as shown, each with its own ad-
. In São Tomé we have the district of
a, Mé-Zochi and in Príncipe the district

gh there are also other dialects spoken
and Cabo Verde Creole.

untry, which since the beginning of its
uese and later by other people, coming
Angola and Mozambique.

istics (INE, 2015) and according to the
abitants, in which the number of men
ulation (41.7%) is between 0-14 years
g, followed by the age group between
over 55s. The average annual popula-
ncy at birth is 65 years.

habitants is Água - Grande (39%), in
(25%) and then, with a lower percent-
10%), Lembá (8%), RA Príncipe (4%)
ié. These data demonstrate that there is
as and a great abandonment in the more

é and Príncipe is a country with many
t all have access to school, literacy and

health. "The poverty profile based on the cost of basic services, 66.2% of the popula-
tion of São Tomé and Príncipe is poor, that is, two thirds of the population live on
less than 30 thousand doubloons (1.22 euros) per day and per person" (Caixa Geral
de Depósitos, 2014, p.33)

The main purpose of this article is to provide information on the educational struc-
ture of the country, in different grades, and understand how the teaching of human
rights in education promotes social transformation and active citizenship.

2- Education as a tool for social transformation

Educating is, today, a rigorous and challenging task, which implies permanent up-
dating. The role of school reflects all the challenges of our society. However, it also
reflects the hope and desire for a more capable and responsible human being to dis-
cover new possibilities and prospective for sustainable education in the future.

The school must represent a democratic model that allows access to the entire
educational community, their rights and duties, especially children and young people,
in order to exercise their full citizenship.

Over several decades, education has been and will continue to be a concern and a
focus of investment by various Nations. Documents such as the Universal Declara-
tion of Human Rights (1948) proclaim in (article 26) that "education must aim at the
full expansion of the human personality and the strengthening of human rights and
fundamental freedoms" (ONU, 1948, p.6). Education must, therefore, ensure the de-
velopment of individuals, safeguarding their rights and duties. Also, the Declaration
of the Rights of the Child (1959), (principle 7), defends that all children should have
the right to an education "capable of promoting their general culture, and enabling
them to (...) develop their skills, their ability to issue a reasoned judgment and their
sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society".
(p.7)

In this case, the role of education of active and participative citizens in the enviro-
nment in which they live is highlighted. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

States must ensure an education that children for an active adult life in a 4).

faced with new challenges as a pro- h theoretical and practical thinking, acacity, as well as encouraging initiat-

educate to open minds to the continu- tion regarding know how to be and

al, Scientific and Cultural Organiza- n on Education for the 21st Century

ns, education must be organized around ighout life, will be, in some way, for ming to know, that is, acquire the tools e able to act on the environment; learn- nd cooperate with others in all human al pathway that integrates the three pre-

isformation. Through transformation ted into society, participate in social exercise their rights and duties. Edu- orts citizens in understanding the so- erted, recognizing and assuming re- others. Access to education enables

he education of the child/youth, we on and training is the family, where 1 is often mediated through culture,

family typology, political and religious ideologies and even the education of the fam- ily.

According to Maria Luísa Branco (2007), for “Rousseau, children should be edu- cated from an early age to values and behaviours that are beneficial to society”. It is important to highlight that the school will always be responsible for deepening the values and rights they acquired at home with their family. (p.33)

The school does not replace the family, it will be a complementary entity, a premise that is sometimes difficult to overcome, but necessary. In addition to its cur- ricula and contents, it’s a space that trains citizens and prepares them for life. School should be the place where everyone has a place. (Martins, 1991, p. 28), where every- one, in their individuality, builds their citizenship, according to their freedoms, their responsibilities and, above all, according to their life goals.

Teachers play a fundamental role throughout the path of their students, “the role of mediator of knowledge, of guiding learning and also of facilitating the development of relational and personal skills” (Santos, 2005, pp. 10). The challenges facing educa- tion and schools are, at the very least, challenging, the world is experiencing enorm- ous changes in terms of health, including the Covid-19 Pandemic and its con- sequences on education, environmental, social and policies, where inequality and so- cial exclusion, poverty and the violation of human rights are shared daily in the me- dia, in different parts of the planet, to which we cannot and must not remain indiffer- ent. The challenges, as already mentioned, are gigantic, but it is up to educational agents,

A fundamental change in the way we think about the role of education in global development, because it has a catalytic effect on people’s well-being and on the fu- ture of our planet [...]. Now, more than ever, education has a responsibility to align with the challenges and aspirations of the 21st century, and to promote the right kinds of values and skills that will enable sustainable and inclusive growth and peaceful co- existence (UNESCO, 2017, p.7).

To attain a sustainable development for the planet will imply a change in the way we think and act. The goals of education will be to provide individuals with the

will allow them to contribute to sustain-
ion.

for sustainable development (SDE) em-
ns and take responsible actions to ensure
nd a just society for the present and the
pment of skills that enable them to re-
current and future social, cultural, eco-
al and global perspective.

nderstood as a quality of education, in-
all educational institutions – from pre-
rmal and informal education - can and
ustainable development issues and pro-
s. SDE provides an education that mat-
day's challenges. (p.7). SDE is intended
changing the learning paradigm.

native pedagogy that supports self-learning,
i-solving guideline; inter and transdisciplin-
and informal learning. Only these pedago-
elop the core competencies needed to pro-
, 2017, p.7).

velopment clearly reflects this view of
response. Education is formulated as a
Goal 4, which aims to ensure quality in-
lifelong learning opportunities for all.

tive is to ensure that all students acquire
ote sustainable development, including,
able development and sustainable life-
moting a culture of peace and non-viol-

ence, global citizenship and valuing cultural diversity and the contribution of culture
to sustainable development (United Nations, 2015, cited in UNESCO, 2017, p.7).

Given the global importance of the development of an SDE, in the following point
we will analyse the educational situation in São Tomé and Príncipe, its characteristics
and challenges for the future, where all citizens are full of rights and equal opportun-
ities.

3- Education system in São Tomé and Príncipe

Education and training are a key factor in a country's development. In São Tomé
and Príncipe, reality is no different and the evolution of the educational system can-
not be disconnected from its history, which has been marked by different indicators,
from political, social, educational and economic issues.

Economic activity in the colonial era, mainly during the Second Colonization
period, was organized around the “roças”, large private agricultural companies,
linked to the monoculture of coffee and cocoa. These companies were, at the same
time, poles of organization of social life. The workers had housing, schools and hos-
pitals in them” (INE-STP, RGP-2016, p.1).

Education in São Tomé and Príncipe has undergone major changes since 1990,
when the country adhered to the principles of the World Conference on Education for
All. Education is no longer seen as a mere transmission of knowledge, but also be-
comes a tool for training and empowering populations, with decision-making power.
The education system in São Tomé e Príncipe underwent a transformation until De-
cree-Law No. 53/88 finally instituted the National Education System in São Tomé
and Príncipe. Currently, the educational system is structured based on the Basic Law
of the Educational System (BLES) – Law No. 2/2003 and comprises pre-school edu-
cation, school education and extra-school education (Diário da República São Tomé
and Príncipe, 2003).

Despite the commitments made to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),
the truth is that successive government programs reproduce their political promises,
such as the fight against poverty, invoking the improvement of education and health,

need of reforms and intervention. However, (significant external aid) and the weak capacity of the education sector are reflected in the absence of needs, whose State is a serious obstacle to the progress of the country and the fight against poverty (Martelo, 2011. p.186).

The National Education Policy (MECT) (2012) drew up a National Education Policy Charter of São Tomé and Príncipe, which defines the education system, according to Vision 2022. In São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), it is up to the education sector to ensure the well-being for the people of São Tomé and Príncipe. In São Tomé and Príncipe, the country is in a situation of economic stagnation and an impact on education. With an estimated population of 11) and a population growth rate that went from 1.5% between 2005 and 2010, São Tomé and Príncipe is facing a demographic transition. With regard to the population structure, there is a high percentage of primary (6-11 years old) and secondary (12-17 years old), there

the diagnosis made to the education system, shows a lack of progress in recent years, particularly in the areas of infrastructure. It is still much to be done in the fields of efficiency, management and the pedagogical training of

It is developed through quality education, the government is preparing the Education Policy Letter of 2012, which proposed some improvement strategies until

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the offer, through the construction and equipping of more rooms; the improvement of the quality of learning in pre-school through, namely, the training and capacity building of educators and assistants and a substantial increase in government investment in pre-school education.

In Basic Education, it is the Government's proposal to consolidate the results obtained in Basic Education in the field of school access, on the one hand, and to guarantee the required quality and efficiency, on the other. The actions also involve the improvement of physical resources, training of human resources, an extension of learning time in Basic Education, going from the current 17.5 hours a week to 25 hours. The principles in the Salamanca declaration (1994), that plead for a school for all, is an important goal to achieve, where Special Education in all teaching cycles and the training of teachers and educators specialized in Special Educational Needs can be a reality.

In Secondary Education, the Government of São Tomé intends to guarantee universality and free access to Secondary Education, up to the 12th grade, a major challenge, given the limited resources existing in the country. In Technical professional secondary education, the challenge will be to train human resources with acceptable standards of scientific and technological knowledge capable of responding to the demands of a growing economy, especially in the tourism sector.

In Higher Education and Training, the government's commitment will be to reverse the current trend towards higher education being carried out essentially abroad, on the one hand, and to develop opportunities for local training that consider the real needs in labour market of the people of São Tomé and Príncipe. In this way, it is the Government's responsibility to guarantee a sustained offer of quality higher education, diversified and adjusted to international recognized standards, capable of providing human resources that meet the challenges of sustainable development in STP.

sense of improving education in the the National Strategy for SPT Educa- tudes improved but many requirements visible in the domains of access and improve significantly the domains of school management and teacher train-

several world entities, concerned with ration and investment agreements.

benefiting from a large number of sup- assistance in the area of education and within the framework of protocols and São Tomé government and the govern- organizations. For historical and cultural had a very important weight in the con- go, namely in supporting the educational (185).

ment are access to education for all s face more difficulties in accessing it. o Tomé and Príncipe, Jean-Christophe s for the project on Quality Education nd Príncipe archipelago referred to em- velop and will bring long-term benefits le may not have immediate effects, but can make, as it promotes development likely to be unemployed than men, and ent years, it remains high among teen- d between 15 and 19. years, which cre- l-being and the emotional, physical and ra. 3 and 4).

Jean-Christophe Carret, in the same statement, said the project will support efforts to ensure safe spaces for learning, through the implementation of plans to overcome gender-based violence in schools and water and sanitation infrastructure, working with families and communities to empower girls in the context of social norms and traditions.

The testimony of the President of the Cooperative Uê Té Lá (2014) is quite clear regarding the roles of men and women from São Tomé and Príncipe:

Men have more time to devote to study. The child belongs to the mother. Women have many obligations. Children are always with their mothers. Women are more present in the cooperative. With the cooperative, girls can study and earn a living. (quoted in Gonçalves, 2015. p. 36).

The objective is to change erroneous paradigms, the dissemination of know- ledge, experiences and resources to populations. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) - Global Development Network of the United Na- tions System, the efforts of São Tomé and Príncipe to fulfil the Country Trans- formation Agenda – 2030, in articulation with the Sustainable Development Goals must be a priority. Ensuring quality and inclusive education for all reaffirms the belief that education is the most powerful tool for sustainable development. This goal ensures that girls and boys complete free primary and secondary schools by 2030. It also provides equal and low-cost access to vocational training, to elimin- ate the wealth gap, and achieve universal access to quality education SDG 4 - Quality education (UNDP, 2021, para.3).

According to Luísa (2021), being in the world necessarily implies making choices, taking decisions and intervening in reality, where education should be assumed as a commitment to the development of societies, a right and a duty of active and particip- atory citizenship. We all must assume that education is not only an obligation of the school, but of the whole community, after all "Nobody educates anybody, as nobody educates himself: men educate themselves in communion, mediated by the world" (Freire, 1983, p.9).

significant. More than that, the criteria for access to scholarships, the conditions and impact of the youth's return to the country are not completely clear.

These are the general conclusions, not to mention micro situations that children/young people in STP face and that restrict their educational progress, such as the fact that schools are distant, school transport is paid and not permanent. In the communities we won't find libraries, or facilities for photocopies, or access to internet for conducting research. Up to grade 6 access to school is free, after which there is payment of a frequency fee. (Gonçalves, 2015).

Despite all the aforementioned difficulties, STP has been investing significantly in the development of education, enhancing human capital development to sustained economic development. In order to respond the SDGs, all educational institutions must consider their responsibility to work intensively on sustainable development issues, promote the development of sustainability competencies and develop specific learning outcomes related to all SDGs. Therefore, it is vital not only to include SDG-related content in curricula, but also action-oriented humanist pedagogy.

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