

FOCUS GROUP WITH A WOMEN'S GROUP

Date: 24th of July 2014
Location: DW office, Luanda.
Participants: 13 ladies and 2 moderators. Ladies representing the Municipalities Cazenga, Kilamba Kiaxi and Sambizanga

Moderator (M): Mr. Joao Domingos | Auxiliar moderator (AM): Casimiro Costa

- 1. Moderator (Joao Domingos): Do you think that, in the last ten years, enough decent jobs have been created in your communities?**

Women1: Yes there some jobs here in our neighborhood and I can see that there are more acceptance and opportunities for women.

Women2 (representing Morro Bento): I don't think so. At least in my own community I don't think that enough decent jobs have been created. What I see is that they (women) fight among each other. In my community the majority of the women who work, do so in the informal market (selling goods in retail). Currently some women are participating in the program *Yes I Can*, but because of their occupation (the job that they have), not all of them participate. *Yes I Can* is an alphabetization program of the ministry of education that targets women, especially those who did not make it g did not go to school or went but still cannot write or read. The classes are free of charges and last for an hour, every weekday, from 6AM to 7AM. In addition I have noticed that they have very little information about the development of the country; if you talk to them you notice that they know nothing about.

- 1. (Moderator): Talking about unemployment. This kind of job you described (of selling good in retail) can be considered self-employment since it is their own initiative to buy goods and then resell them. Do you think there have been created other kinds of employment? What is the biggest occupation of the women in your communities?**

Women: Talking about my community, no decent job has been created for women. As stated previously their main mean of subsistence is the commerce, selling good in the informal market because there is no decent job created for them. They have to wake up very early to go to the market and do what they know/can to survive, otherwise their families will have nothing to eat.

If you talk with them about anything else that is not related with their business they know nothing about because they spend all their time in the market.

Women (representing Sambizanga): In my community, due to some courses that the women are having such as cooking, decoration, pastry and others, they (women) have created their own job. Now they make small home-made cakes and give to other ladies to sell them. From Monday to Friday the profit comes to the ladies who bake the cakes and on Saturdays the profit goes to the ladies who sell them. They have created a sort of net or group that way. In addition there also a group of babysitters which generates jobs to some ladies.

Moderator: How has these projects been financed. Has it all been due to women's initiative or has it had some institutional support?

W: Well, ten years ago the first women had an institutional support, however nowadays it has been using the means of each individual women.

Moderator: How is the security in your neighborhood? Has the criminality increased, decreased or has remained the same in the last ten years?

W (representing Morro Bento, Maianga): I think the criminality in my neighborhood has decreased slightly, however we still have some cases. For example, recently we had a case, in my street, in which a young man (who does not even live in our neighborhood) was stabbed by a group of criminals when he was accompanying his girlfriend. The criminality in our neighborhood is associated with prostitution. And one of the main factors for these kind of criminality is the lack of occupation.

W (representing Sonef, Cazenga): Talking about my neighborhood, there is a field in my neighborhood where they beat people, steal cellphone, money, everything, no matter if you live in the neighborhood or not. For instance yesterday they beat a man so badly that I think he may still be at the hospital even as we speak.

W: In my neighborhood there was a time that criminality was lower but now it has worsen. What I notice is that there is no police patrol in the streets and inside the neighborhoods. For example today a women was screaming because her house was being assaulted. I called the (commandant of the) police and his cellphone was turned off. Thanks to the formation that we had, I called to

Dr. Conceicao Inhanga who responded immediately and called to the (commandant of the) police and only then the police patrol came.

W: I think there were times in which the security was worse. I think they must be more persistent in the neighborhood, especially when there is no electricity or when there are raves (parties organized by young people)

M: What changes have you notice that has improved the security of the residents, in your neighborhood?

W (representing Calemba II): When I started living in my neighborhood criminality was very high, as if UNITA and MPLA were fighting. There were times in which the criminals came, knock at your door and then ask for money, if you don't give them then make you choose whether you want to change your mind or spend money in the hospital, because they would use their knives and cut your or hurt other member of your family. They don't kill you, they just hurt you and put you on the street. Thanks God, the police put there several police mobile stations and so these kinds of violence decreased significantly.

However, nowadays, in the taxi stations when the taxi-caller calls the clients and if the criminals notice that one of the client has money then they come to you, take you out of the taxi and rob you in front of everybody. Nobody does anything because they too are afraid if they say something it would end up negatively with them. Thus, I would like if the police could do the same they did before, by placing police mobile stations in the taxi-stops so that these kind of robbery does not keep happening because many times people cannot get to work because they are assaulted on the way.

W (representing Sambizanga): In Sambizanga criminality has decreased because the police is now collaborating with the young people in the neighborhood. The young people are the ones identifying the criminals. They tell the police and then the police comes and does their job. There are place in which the police does not go; they too are afraid but the young people can go. For example two weeks ago the young people were able to disarm a group of criminals (they got their AKM). The criminals were walking in order to assault other people and the young people got them.

AM (Casimiro): I would like to understand more how have the young man collaborated with the police. How exactly do they collaborate with the police? Do they go to the places where the police cannot go and do the job of the police or do they simply call or give information to the police?

W(representing Sambizanga): They work as if they were people from SINFO. For example less than 5 days ago they helped to capture a young man who assaults cars and houses (also called batuqueiro). He used to disappear from the neighborhood and we thought he worked at the sea because those works stay some time there and another in their houses but no, he used to go to other provinces and even neighborhood to steal things.

M: What about domestic violence. Are there many cases of domestic violence and/or violence against women in your neighborhood?

W: Yes, a lot! For example, less than a month ago in my neighborhood a women was found dead. She was taken away from our neighborhood (in Cacuaco) and was killed and thrown away in our neighborhood.

W: I also have recently witnessed a neighbor who beat his wife to death this week.

W: In addition to that there is also psychological violence that sometimes can be even worse than the physical one because the person stays there dying slowly because of the (male/female) partner.

W (representing Sambizanga): I think most of the times are due to social problems. Some girls hung out with guys in the parties, drink at their expenses but then they don't accept to get involved with them sexually and then sometimes they either rape the girls or ask others to do it.

M: Can you describe it a little more?

W: Yes, of course. Offenses, undermining what the woman does, considering that he is the one with better education and that his women is worth nothing. Sadly when the woman complains then there comes the physical violence.

M: In your communities do men accept normally that a woman assumes a leadership position (in a church, in an organization, in a political party, etc.)?

W: In Kilamba-Kiaxi we are doing a great work in favor of participation of the woman in society and I thank a role of DW in helping us developing certain topics. Despite all, in Kilamba Kiaxi women have a hard time when they assume leadership role. The main factor I think is the culture. Men, there, are not accustomed to be led by a woman. I feel this on my own skin because as I am part of the leadership of Kilamba-Kiaxi and had to overcome certain problems that men would not have to deal with. The first difficulty, in my opinion, is the circulation of information. There are information that men don't tell me because I needed to be with them in order to get them and when they get the information they often close it for themselves and don't share it with me. I have to work extra hard and sometimes participate on meeting without the necessary briefing and pretend that I am understand what they are talking about so that I keep on the same path of information.

However, there are some leadership roles that men welcome in a woman such as in the church. They often accept that because they think that women has the pure sanctity, but for other leadership roles they object totally.

W: I totally agree with what was said. I would like to add that this problem arises even in forum when one would expect that men would be more open minded. For example in the conference where we talked about the participation of the women in society, many men were saying that women is always women and she must always be behind.

In addition, the same kind of discrimination also happens at home. For instance my husband is a politician and he often undermines the role of the woman, saying that we can/won't go far. Another proof, in the administration of my neighborhood they wanted to add a coordinator for the sector where I live and they thought of putting me, a woman, as the coordinator. I wasn't there but most of the men that were there objected to that with irrelevant arguments.

M: Do you think this discrimination is due to a machismo culture or due to ignorance?

W: It is due to the lack of knowledge and a machismo culture.

W: I agree it is due to both causes but I think it is more due to ignorance because if they knew better (like other men do) this machismo culture would have changed long time ago. Women hardly like to share information with women. Even in organization and companies men don't like to share information with women.

W: There are cases in which men don't allow their wives to work. They want to be the providers even though most of the time they can't even afford to maintain the house alone.

W: For me it is not really ignorance. I think it is just pure machismo. Men like to think that they are more important than women and if a women is in charge they simply don't accept. Men want to be the only one, the leaders, the guides, the one.

AM: I have a commentary to make. I would most likely be right if I said that roughly more than 60% of Angolan families are raised by single mothers, so women (the mothers) have this power to educate the children until they become teenager or even during their youth. So, in your opinion, what have mother done (or should do) to revert this scenario of extreme machismo? For example, in my street, I know of a young lady with three children and the smallest has less than two years old. She got a job and because of that she made her older daughter quit school with the justification that she needed her to take care of the younger brothers. My question was if the elder sister wasn't a girl, if she had a son, would she still ask the child to quit school and her answer was no. With this, I was to say that yes we have a long rooted machismo culture but maybe, due to the current structure of our society, where the mother has a huge influence in the education of the children maybe starting from there wouldn't we at least be able to eliminate this machismo in the next generation? If mothers (yes fathers too) educated that their daughters telling them that they are not inferior to their male siblings and if they educated their sons telling them that their female siblings deserve respect and that in no way are inferior to them wouldn't it change something? What do you think is missing for that to happen?

W: You are right. I think our mission (I don't know if I will have more children) but our mission is to transmit equality. I think we have a great work to do with our sons and daughters our nieces and nephews wherever we are because part of this crime (discrimination) is ours. We are the ones who decide who does what at home. We allow our daughter to wash the dishes but not our sons, we put stereotypes that were given to us by our ancestrals and this situation (discrimination) never stops.

M: So what can we do to revert this scenario?

W: To revert this scenario we need training. We need to give tools to women so that they don't promote discrimination at home. Because most of the women belong to a church I think we should give training in these group so that women are better equipped to fight against discrimination and to better educate their children because it is truly right that sometimes we are the ones who exclude ourselves starting at our homes. We must to strengthen the dialogue in our homes, and in the churches. We must open alphabetization's schools and fight against it.