WOMEN'S LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Introducing Women's Law into the legal curriculum in Angola, with reference to the University of Oslo's Law Faculty's experience

1. INTRODUCTION

Many universities are including or have included human rights in their curricula so that they may contribute to the promotion of a "human rights culture". Even though there is no clear definition of what a human rights culture is, there seems to be a common understanding that it involves changes from "bad" to "good" practice on human rights related elements, such as respecting the rule of law, being more tolerant and understanding, individual freedoms, minority rights, social and economic rights and how the human rights protection system works. In many ways, however, promotion of a "human rights culture" loses some of its full potential and value when training and knowledge on human rights related themes is implemented in a way that is no longer sufficient or broad enough to integrate or develop a deep knowledge of the different perspectives and branches of those rights.

The UN, academia and civil society institutions believe that teaching or conducting research on human rights is an important way of promoting them. In a similar manner, Mubangizi (2015) states that education is not only a right by itself but also a means to achieve a different environment and a set of human and social conditions to guarantee human rights and its prevention from violations.

Over the last 4 years, the Angolan government has demonstrated an interest in offering courses and conducting research on Human Rights in institutions for Higher Education. This interest appeared alongside a cooperation program between the Angolan and Norwegian Governments. The "Project of Education for a Culture of Human Rigths" by the Angolan Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, was launched in 2010 and aims to reinforce human rights capacity building in the government, civil society and higher education institutions, as an important part of Angola's international human rights obligations.

The higher education context in Angola is highly complex and faces a range of challenges. Structurally, there are public universities as well as private ones (mostly in Luanda), both types suffering persistent political control by government institutions and little or no culture for institutional evaluation. In terms of the students, most of their families live in poverty, yet there is a great demand to study as many of the students believe education is an important premise for social mobility. The universities are characterized by a lack of books and access to books produced by Angolan academics, as well as a lack of financial support to conduct research. The curriculum is not adequate for addressing the necessities of local social demands. Teacher salaries are low, policies to engage them in a reflective teaching- and research process is absent, and the universities have limited capacity to recruit and maintain qualified teachers or researchers as fulltime employees.

The mission of the Catholic University (Angola's first private university) is "*acting for the whole human development, through the communion of knowledge, engaged with quality, ethics, Christian values and seeking the truth*[1]". As part of this institutional commitment, the Catholic University has seen the need for a strategy for teaching and conducting research on human rights. In 2015, the first two years' protocol between the Angolan Justice and Human Rights Ministry and the Catholic University of Angola was signed. In 2017 it was renewed. Within this framework, the government has tasked Universities with implementing human rights as a discipline within their curriculum and to organize mutual activities relating to human rights. The cooperation is also based on a common understanding that, in a long-term perspective, providing necessary conditions and resources earmarked to human rights related work in Universities is essential to establishing a fruitful human rights sector in Angola.

This article focusses on how the Catholic University's Law Faculty could implement this. The hypothesis suggests that human rights as a subject in itself is no longer as innovative as it was in the early 90's, and no longer sufficient to deal with the diverse number of topics, such as: freedoms; social, economic and cultural rights, minority rights; sexual rights; inequality, women rights, development rights, national, regional and international protection systems and mechanisms.

The article argues that the Catholic University's Law Faculty must push forward by choosing to teach women's rights. The article will explore the reasons for why teaching women's rights in particular, is an interesting take on the traditional way of teaching human rights and why it can be both innovative and creative. A number of issues must be justified in choosing to examine how to teach human rights from a women's rights perspective and will be analysed throughout. These issues include the reason for choosing women's rights as opposed to others; how teaching women's rights and gender issues within the curriculum may be different; whether it will be taught as an integrated topic within law or an autonomous one; whether it will be mandatory; and how can human rights be taught through a women's rights perspective? Is it a good strategy for the Catholic Law Faculty to introduce women's rights as their first experience of teaching human rights? Will it be relevant to the current context of Angola? What relevance can the Oslo Law Faculty's experience in teaching a women's law course have, and what was the equality and non-discrimination mainstreaming within this process?

Part of the research for this article was a three-week visiting scholar program, for a visiting researcher from Angola to be hosted at the Department for International Public Law at the University of Oslo's Law Faculty. Through which, it was possible to understand the Oslo Law Faculty's legal education process reforms by integrating women's rights in its curriculum; interview relevant professors who were involved in this process; research how similar proposals have been conducted in Oslo and elsewhere, focusing on other African countries, conduct a critical analysis and come up with a proposal for the Law Faculty at the Catholic University.

[1] Available in: http://www.ucan.edu/www14/index.php/universidade/identidade-e-missao

The main research methods were interviews in order to understand the background directly from the relevant professors in the gendered curriculum reform process at the Oslo Law Faculty; researching Law curriculums in general and specifically women's law and human rights curriculums, in particular that of the Oslo Law Faculty. In addition, research into the academic literature on human rights education, women rights in education, and international conventions relevant to the subject was conducted.

2. LEGAL EDUCATION AT LAW FACULTY OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

The Catholic University's Law Faculty is the second oldest Law School in Angola. It was founded in 1999 by the Catholic Church and was the first private University in Angola. Beginning with Law and Economics, it was immediately given pride of place in Angola, putting it in direct competition with the public university, Agostinho Neto, in the same disciplinary areas. However, due to a lack of human resources, the law course was mainly run by the same group of professors in the public law faculty. For many years, both the course content, at the Catholic University and at Agostinho Neto University, was almost the same, apart from the inclusion of an ethics subject on each course at the Catholic University. In some cases, even the methodology, bibliography and other relevant academic resources were the same.

20 years later, the curriculum at the Law Faculty of the Catholic University, is still the same. The majority of the disciplines and lesson programs are similar to those running in some Portuguese universities. This colonial vestige could be explained by factors such as: convenience, lack of reforms, academic resistance; intellectual commodism or even, the incapability of making substantial changes on the education system by relying on the old way of thinking and doing things.

Teaching law has played a significant role for Angolan institutions, not only those which are in the administration of justice, but also for the Executive and legislative bodies. Many of the preeminent public officials have a law background. This has strengthened the link and the relations within the Law Faculties. In many ways, teaching law was in line with certain social and political necessities of a young country. However, with time it has become clear that socially and culturally there are many challenges and questions that have to be answered, such as the role of custom and traditional practices in regulating relations both in rural and urban areas; how to regulate or incorporate specific practices or situations relating to "strange" norms, such as: traditional marriage, called *alembamento*; the traditional succession process; and traditional political organization.

The current model of teaching is mainly formal and conservative, maintaining the professor's authority in the class as the one who dictates the knowledge. There have been few teachers who have tried to teach informally, whereby they are more of a mediator and a promotor of seeking knowledge. In many situations there could be conflicts motived by foreign experiences and the availability of knowledge on the internet, and students' access to that. The model has also been sustained by outdated lessons and subject programs, which do not respond to the

typical daily questions from students. However, teachers are free to decide the teaching program, how and which methods they will undertake to carry out their lessons[2].

The body of professors is male dominated. Among the 60[3] professors, only 12 are female. However, the Faculty's lead team is all female (the director and vice-director). There are older and younger professors, including among them some former students of the Faculty. Due to their high scores, these students were granted a scholarship for a master degree in the Law Faculty of the Catholic Portuguese University, by the master-teachers university program[4] in order for the Catholic University's Law Faculty to create its own body of professors. Thus, for the last ten years, this program has resulted in several graduated master students and provided the Faculty with some professors. This has further facilitated conditions to conduct the law courses with quality and to manage the turnover of some former teachers[5]. This changing process did not have a significant impact on modifying the subject's contents, methodology or teaching model until 2014.

The teaching conditions are marked by a lack of offices for teachers and heavy social and familial pressure on teachers to seek more economically attractive conditions. In this environment, teachers are more likely to maintain a routine and not be academically engaged or involved. Resulting in changes not happening quickly and potentially facing resistance.

Discussions about law studies in Angola are becoming more frequent[6]. Some criticize the colonial weight in the curriculum, others focus on the challenges on updating the curriculum. Since 2000, the impact of law on the Angolan reality has been questioned. Many find that there is a distance in time and space between the law and the reality. On one side, there is how the law functions in daily life, and the other is how the law is taught. In many aspects these two paths intersect each another. Thus, is it possible that the teaching of law in Angola is not able to keep up with the daily reality? If this is true, how can teaching the law help to promote a more updated system of laws that are suitable for the Angolan reality?

Legal education is the process of teaching, researching and other learning activities in the field of norms. Legal education helps to educate legal professionals in a way so that they get the

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[2] In the Private University, this freedom could be "pinched" by the high number of negative results by students. Many would say it is more for economic management reasons than academic concerns.

[3] It is an approximate number, based on the Faculty page (in http://www.ucan.edu/www14/index.php/2015-03-03-10-34-48/) and the knowledge that the author have as professor at this institution.

[4] By the Catholic University of Angola.

[5] Many of them were politicians or sitting in public offices, so many took political mandate in the Executive, Legislative or Judiciary

[6] https://www.makaangola.org/2018/09/pela-descolonizacao-do-ensino-do-direito-em-angola/, http://jukulomesso.blogspot.com/2009/06/o-ensino-do-direito-em-angola-do-ensino.html , http://jornaldeangola.sapo.ao/sociedade/universidade_debate_o_ensino_do_direito , https://www.uan.ao/conferencia-os-37-anos-ensino-do-direito-angola/

knowledge, skills and competence to deal with legal problems, and to find legal solutions for those problems. Law courses have one of the highest rates of applications and students, therefore showing a great interest among students and their families in the field of law. However, more often than not, the interest in studying law lies in the view that it will result in earning a higher income. Therefore, it is important to reform the legal education, not only to include new topics, but also to ensure a more significant and valuable education.

Law courses, in many universities, are taught as a mechanism of knowing the law, its interpretation and its application. Legal professionals are often formed in a system that assumes that simply learning about the law can be used as a tool for solving social problems. No other values are added to the law course, resulting in the legal professional realizing that the law does not adequately explain or solve the whole problem.

An international conference at a Law School in Brazil noted that, law courses mostly adopt dogmatism as a fundamental and central methodology of teaching law, but with time it has shown that the dogmatic approach is not sufficient to enable the legal professional with the capability of understanding the different perspectives of real life problems that they will need to deal with (Almeida et al., 2013, p. 19). The dogmatic knowledge itself does not promote the capacitation of professionals with the sufficient and necessary competence and ability, mostly in the component of critical analysis about the cause of the individual social or human problems. What it does is offer to the jurist the possibility to see and solve part of the problem, without understanding its real and whole origin. For some academics the course curriculum is lacking other disciplines or subjects outside of legal studies, such as history, psychology, sociology, political science, and so on. It is the interdisciplinarity that helps to bring value to legal studies, by putting other perspectives into the jurist's mind, providing them with the intellectual tools and conditions to understand issues differently and to criticize their own reality. Why does knowledge and criticism matter? It is what the university academic experience is about, questioning your own knowledge and reality in order to find and provide answers (Almeida et al., 2013, p. 21) so that change can happen.

There is a desire to reform at the Law Faculty. However, there are different ideas as to how. In general the movements are not aligned with the integration of substantial human rights subjects or to increase the number of subjects from other disciplines, in a way which could add value to the Law Course, and present different approaches and possible solutions to the same problems. There must not only be a desire to reform but also a desire to innovate.[7]

Educating people in an African context is also about changing the current social and human reality on the continent. In Angola it is no different. Due to this, innovation must come from contextualized professional problems. Instead of knowledge, it is about concreate realities and real life. To do that, the discussions of higher education project reforms have to point to the

[7] Innovation is a «process that results of having intentions with the purpose of introducing novelty, news techniques and technology (Cunha, 2001, p. 128).

necessity of a curriculum that promotes the integration and the interdependence of subjects from different areas of knowledge, and extension activities in line with the educative goals. That way, instead of isolating and fragmenting subjects and knowledge, they must choose interdisciplinarity. Innovation demands institutions to: be open to other areas of knowledge; rethink the teaching and research; be multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, increase human competence and professional skills and introduce technology. Being an innovative Faculty demands changes in the curriculum, in the teaching process, in the management, in the infrastructure and the philosophy behind the course. It is about giving value and meaning to what is being taught and learnt (Cunha, 2001, p. 129).

2.1 ASSUMING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN ANGOLA: WHAT IS RELEVANT FOR THE ANGOLA CONTEXT

There is no formal higher education human rights policy in Angola. However, it has been included as a specific objective in the Human Rights medium term strategy as part of the Executive Strategy (EEDH) for Human Rights by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (EEDH, 2018). From a strategic point of view, it misses the purpose and could result in an inefficient use of resources. There is a lack of a culture of planning, which blocks the political vision in driving a change. Some could see it as a lack of political will as well. Experience shows that, in a long-term perspective, education can play a significant role in changing human behavior and cultural and institutional practices, towards a more human rights based culture.

Angola has their own international obligations with human rights education (HRE), which stems from their ratification of international conventions and protocols. There is a discussion on which actors have the principal responsibility on HRE. The majority, including UNESCO and its World Plan of Education in Human Rights (WPEHR), indicate that the State has the principal responsibility. Several examples show that the State doesn't do enough, or needs the support of others, in developing HRE. In Angola, NGOs[8] have assumed an essential role and support many groups in doing HRE, or human rights advocacy, in areas such as political rights, women's rights or children rights.

The second phase of the World Plan of Education in Human Rights (WPEHR) defined HRE as "a set of activities of capacity and information dissemination, oriented to create an universal culture in the sphere of human rights, through the transmission of knowledge, teaching

[8] Although there is not a public policy of Education for Human Rights in Angola, it does not mean that nothing has been done. Since 1992, many NGOs took a main role in operationalising a set of conditions for laws and information about human rights. Some conducted short courses on human rights for several targeted groups. OSISA (Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa) funded a master scholarship in Brazil, in order to support the training of Human Rights professionals in Angola. 20 years later, there are some researchers, the majority of which received support from NGOs, mostly through international financing.

practices and behavior capacity building" (2012, p. 4). The UN system, mainly UNESCO, believe that a higher education human rights policy is a strategic element in areas such as security and justice. For specialists, human rights education is a tool which helps to transform the culture of peoples and institutions. It has to be, however, a process that works not only at the intellectual level, but as well at the emotional so that it could be integrated into knowledge, ethics, values, attitudes, behavior and measures (Benevides, 2000). That is why it is important to have teaching policies, political will, institutional desire, human resources, financial support, structural conditions and space for extension activities and investigation support (WPEHR, pp. 11- 13). There is a whole international framework that legitimized and established the general idea, principles and conditions for the implementation of Human Rights Education at national and local levels. This includes International conventions such as Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Human Rights Education is also a lifelong process. It is not only about formal education, but also other forms, such as informal. However, for methodological proposes, this article will only examine formal human rights education at the university level. As noted by Benevides, human rights education is a transformative action in daily lives through an education process, therefore it must be conducted in a way that is continuous, whole and with a direction for change. It promotes citizens who are prepared to question and face internal and external contraditions and conflicts (2000). It demonstrates that Universities have a crucial social and cultural role in the sustainability of human values.

Human Rights Education is more than providing availability, accessibility (non-discrimination, physical accessibility and economic accessibility), acceptability and adaptability, as recommended by the Dakar Education Plan. Human Rights Education is a tool for preventing as well as combating a culture of violations and denial of rights (Piovesan at al., 2017, p. 33).

For more than 20 years since the diversification of social actors in the field of Human Rights in Angola, HRE has never been established as a strategy so that state and civil society could benefit from having professionals that could support their work and ideas in thermos of developing more strategic work and informed interventions. The majority of professionals have been educated abroad, and for many a lack of English language knowledge has been a barrier. In addition, as a strategy to remove power from civil society, the former government used the policy of "fishing" the most active or interventive actors by offering them higher positions in a government office. With the international financial crisis, however there was no space for renewal or opportunity to do so. In the last 8 years, this lack of professionals with human rights competence has had an impact on the work of civil society. It is true that human rights work is about skills, competence and commitment. Notably, in an African context, where working in the human rigths sector is seeing as a "subversive" way of approaching social-political realities, by the ruling forces.

Having courses or institutions which dedicate their time and resources in putting together human rights expertise, would definitely help to change that scenario, by showing that human rights is nothing more that talking about human values, resources and how this interaction could be done to the benefit of all. In addition, it will help Angolans to have a place and a voice in the human rights systems, not only as "complainers" or "defendants", but also as significant contributors towards its continued development.

In 2016, the Law Faculty at the Catholic University proposed a curriculum modification to introduce Human Rights, named Fundamental Rights, as a mandatory discipline for a six month period during the second year of a law degree. Unfortunately, the Higher Education Ministry has not approved this proposal until now. Beside this challenge, there remains concern about how to build an innovative and relevant curriculum in Human Rights that can address local problems. This measure was a result of an insufficient internal comprehensive movement, to understand what teaching human rights means and why human rights are important for the Angolan context. For instance, the local agenda of human rights has an unclear timetable for many actors, who still act guided by the opportunities of resources or learning support from their donors. That is why it is important for academic institutions to assume their role in the process, so that they can help drive the process of developing a necessary and autonomous agenda that matters for the Angolan context.

At a time when social conditions are suffering, and there is a lack of economic opportunities and structures in order to combat this crisis, gender can play a transformative role in the social, cultural and local context in order to improve access to benefits, opportunities and rights via a comprehensive model of what it means to be a person and their legal status.

Introducing gender issues in legal education is already happening in Africa and in other parts of the world. Some african universities initiated the process in the 1980s, by pushing for a critical and African-contextual examination of the conservative and inherited normative culture at law faculties, that, in the majority of the cases, promote a normative tradition that is not gendered or equal for women and men[9] (Mbote at al., .). The world development agenda has demonstrated that there is no peace, justice, prosperity or development if women do not find the balance in their conditions, possibilities, rights and demands in the local agenda. The Northern European experience has demonstrated that a more equal society, is more progressive and cohesive.

How are women different to men in Angola? This question opens doors to many discussions. In general, women and men in Angola, as in another places, do not have the same conditions or daily life problems and situations. Whether a teenager, a teenage mother or father; a single mother or single father; a working mother or working father, experiences related to adolescence, parenthood or work conditions are different for men and women. These different views create an unequal system for the entire society. If there is only one objective of the Law, it is the pursuit of justice. This can be a moral justification for why gender has to have a place

[9] P. Kaameri-Mbote at al. In «Engendering and decolonizing legal education: south-south and south-north cooperation»

in the legal curriculum, so that law professionals are prepared to deal with all the negative consequences of inequality between men and women.

There is a relationship between law and gender, and more often than not, it is not a positive dynamic[10]. Mostly, law is part of the so-called "normative culture" (Petersen, 2012, p. 94) that informs several social, political and cultural practices that discriminate differently between men and women. For example, with regards to the right to custody of minors, in the family law custody is mostly given to women in the belief that mothers have the best "emotional conditions" to look after them; in these situations men are at a disadvantage and if the legal system is not prepared to question and have discussions on what the "best emotional conditions" means in practice, beyond gender stereotypes, justice will not be done. Another example could be taken from the field of criminal law with regards to violence by women and violence against women. For instance, the rape of a woman is often approached with a discriminatory view, in the sense that, women are subject to many kinds of moral and religious judgements on their behavior, for example by blaming her or justifying the act of the criminal agent.

There needs to be both a constructive and destructive approach between gender and law, so that the authority of men over women, and the ideal of the "perfect gender of women", can properly be addressed in the legal system, and questions raised in this pursuit, are satisfactorily answered by the justice administration.

3. INTRODUCING WOMEN'S LAW

3.1 THE OSLO EXPERIENCE

Part of the research for this article, involved a three-week program as a guest researcher at the Department of International and Public Law of the Law Faculty at Oslo University, where there is an Institute of Women's Law. The research took the academic experience of women's law as a starting point, drafting questions for interviews with relevant actors in the process, reviewing the bibliography and observing the context. The research mainly tried to capture the opinions, perceptions and the experiences of gendering a law curriculum, the resources that are needed for implementing such a policy and the results that have been seen. Potential interviewees including professors, those working in administration at the faculty, consultants, civil society leaders, and students who were involved in the process of establishing the Women's Law course were contacted. Semi-closed interview questions were adopted, and 10 interviewees were identified, 8 of them professors, one a civil society leader and one student. Effort was made to balance both gender and subject areas among the professors interviewed, however there were constraints related to availability. Therefore, snowball referencing was used in order to identify interviewees to ensure that it was not random. The main research approach used was qualitative.

[10] See more in Enciplopédia Jurídica da Pontíficia Universidade de São Paulo, disponível em: enciclopediajuridica.pucsp.br/verbete/122/edicao-1/genero-e-direito, acessado aos 21 de Janeiroro de 2019

The Law course is a master program degree of 5 years. The curriculum includes a set of traditional subjects, such as family law, criminal law, constitutional law and others such as bankruptcy law, human rights, equality and non-discrimination law, women's law and others. The teaching of the law course follows the development in the field in many areas. There are mandatory and non-mandatory subjects. Women's Law and equality and non-discrimination law are not mandatory. Thus, for those elective subjects, the law students are not obligated to take them, and students from other subjects/faculties may also apply.

In 1975, the Oslo Law Faculty launched a pioneer program by running a women's law course. This course involves examining women's life within legal education, in order to challenge and educate the legal professional on the current issues in the field of gender relations within different societies. It is drafted as an international course, so that students from abroad can also attend.

The first proposal for integrating gender in mandatory disciplines was presented in 2003, by a group of teachers and researchers in the field of gender, equality and law. Five years later, the Equality Board of the Faculty conducted an evaluation of the proposal, and the report found progress in areas such as family and tax law, but no progress in the large majority of others, due to weak leadership support and a lack of systematic measures.

In 2010 a new evaluation by the Equality Board was made, and this time more progress was noted, mostly due to the presence of new professors in the coordination of subjects with different research backgrounds and a different Education Board with younger members and an improved gender balance.

In 2018 the Equality Board decided to take measures to ensure the progress of the mainstreaming process. In this same year, the Dean of Education, professor Erling Hjelmeng nominated the Working Group for counselling the Education Board about what measures could be taken; what gender topics could be included in the subjects that relate with the learning outcomes. As part of their work, the group asked other professors for suggestions and plans about what topics could be adequate for the subject; they launched a website where practical cases could be found; and produced guidelines on how to mainstream gender into different subjects. The working group is currently working on an anthology of articles about gender perspectives in different legal field work, based on teaching and research experience.

The policy of integrating gender, equality and non-discrimination is not a one-sided measure. Instead it assumes three levels: teacher's composition; texts and reading material support; and lecture content. In other words, the professors must be balanced between men and women; the reading material must have a balance between male and female texts; and the content or the program of all subjects must include a gender perspective, so that questions about non-discrimination or equality can be raised and debated in the class.

Norway is a good example of gender equality policies and development. However, it took more than 40 years, since the first edition of Women Law's, for a gender perspective to start being implemented into the legal education, in one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions. For several years, this policy was in the Faculty agenda but few measures were really effective. We asked the Dean of Education at the Law Faculty, Professor Erling Hjelmeng[11], the reasons for this:

> *"It was because it does not implement concrete measures. So requiring responsible teachers to do something but also recognizing that maybe not all teachers were prepared to take the necessaries steps, so they might need to be provided assistance as well".*

The gender and equality process, currently referred to as "the mainstreaming process", can be defined as a set of discussions, decisions, measures and resources with the goal of integrating a gender perspective into the legal education system at the Oslo Law Faculty, which refers not only to the teaching process.

Professor Anne Hellum is a researcher and plays a central role in the gender perspective process within legal education. She was the coordinator of the working group which gives advice to other teachers, and is the director of the Women's Law Institute. She was part of the group of PHD candidates that founded the Women's Law course, in 1975, with the purpose of studying and understanding "*the position of women in the law and in the society*[12]", and she is still a guest professor at the Women's Law Master Program in African Universities. For her, another reason for such late action relates to resistance in the Faculty, and she explains:

> *I think many elderly professors were resisting it, lacked the insight, or the knowledge or the competence. I think also it was the case that in our Faculty, it was a very monolithic and hierarchic institution, because once you were appointed as the academic responsible teacher for one subject or discipline area, you could be for whole lifetime, and you would decide what the curriculum should be or what should be taught. And also, your teaching book would become the curriculum, so there was a lot of money on it, because it was why older professors made an enormous amount of money on revising their text of books, and having the monopoly of what was taught all these years, because once you change the text book, all the students have to buy the new one.*

[11] **Professor Erling Hjelmeng interviewed on 12th December in the Department of Private Law**

[12] Professor Anne Hellum, interview on 03th of December 2018, at Women Law Institute, Oslo (our griffs).

Among professors, there are different opinions and perceptions about the mainstreaming process. For most of the professors interviewed, it is seen as positive because it generates a "*general awareness*"; one interviewee stated that it is important because it "*opens legal education to new perspectives and new understanding*" and others saw the importance in the possibility of more "*gender and diversity balance*". Although all agreed that it is a positive process, many also argued that it may not be necessary in all subjects.

One of the questions was how to integrate a gender perspective into one subject. It is clear that each subject must find its own way, but ultimately it is up to who teaches to decide how. Many are taking support from the working group by putting up legal hypotheses and texts to support gender mainstreaming. For instance, there was one case in criminal law, where a female professor was invited to teach in order to mainstream gender into the course. Professor Ragnhild Helene Hennun is an example. She teaches criminal procedure and is the Chairperson of the Norwegian Women's Lobby Group, an umbrella of women associations in Norway. For her, simply using female professors can be an easy option, but is not the best solution:

> *(…) I think the best way to mainstreaming is if we could, sort of, to include a gender perspective in the teaching in a way that the teachers who are actually teaching the lectures in a course, also talk about gender perspective. That would be a more, better mainstreaming. Because now, drag in a female professors, who had been interested in gender perspective my whole career, is a sort of, an easier solution than actually including it in.*

However, there is still a long journey to go, and it is only the very beginning. Many of the measures suggested have not been implemented yet. In the long term it seems also a political goal, after the Norwegian government approved the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombuds Act in 2018, which demands public and private institutions to take measures to ensure equality not only between men and women relations, but also between minority and majority groups in society. So, as well pointed by the Chair Person of Equality and Non-discrimination Committee, professor May-Len Skilbrei, in the interview, it is also about diversity[13]:

> *"There has, for many years, in Norway, been a focus on lifting perspectives in gender and diversity. But in the last few years there's has been more emphasis on mainstreaming. In Norwegian society, as a whole, that development came much sooner, but here at the Faculty we start the processes about mainstreaming, not only taking care of gender and diversity into particularly courses, but to ensure concerns about gender and lack of*

[13] Interview of Chair Person of Equality and No-discrimination Committee, professor May-Len Skilbrei, on 10th December of 2018, in the Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law

gender equality and diversity are reflected in different areas."

The majority see it as a transformative process in the legal education and the most important legal education institutions in Oslo, which are responsible for 70% of the working force in the legal field in Norway[14]. However, changing the regular way of doing things is neither immediate nor fast. In addition, the teaching process can be a complex one, if we look at the rules behind it. It reveals the need for balance between desire/will and bureaucracy; human time and institutional time; personal or group decisions and political interventions; power and vision; competence, values, knowledge and financial resources.

3.2 WOMEN'S LAW: WHAT IS IT?

The concept of women's law is to question and understand the position of women within society and within the law itself. For Professor Ingunn Ikdahl it must adopt a "*combined legally-dogmatic analysis with empirical work and interdisciplinary work*". It is not only a dogmatic approach but also assumes a mainly "person-directed and juridically interdisciplinary" approach, with a basis in legal science, as it is mostly composed by legal doctrine and the theory of law as the source of its foundation (Dahl, 1987, p. 30).

According to professors, the experience of teaching women's law has been positive, mostly because of the number of students who attend the elective course. Professor Ingunn Ikdahl who has taught women's law for many years, also noted the large amount of interest, as well as a connection that many students feel between their own life and the issues the course touches upon:

Mainly the students are interested, and most of them come with a personal interest in women's law and non-discrimination, which is part of what make this course a very fun one and interesting to teach. And is very easy to get the students active and engaged. Instead of some of others courses that feels dis-attached from their own personals lives, I think most of the students have some kind of experience what it means to be a women or a man, and how that shapes their life experiences. So part of the purpose of the course is trying to link the reality with the law.

These courses are being run in two different ways, the norwegian and the international. As Professor Hellum says, the experience of implementing a gender perspective into legal education shows that:

"(…) separate courses weren't sufficient to deal with the breadth of issues that is related to the position of women in law and in the society. And the reason is that women's

[14] See more

law, or gender and law or women's human rights, they cut across all legal areas".

There is a dominant female student presence in the Women's Law class, however there is also an increasing number of male students. Professor Ingunn sees it as a scenario with new questions and concerns not only about the social importance of understanding womens rights, but also the necessity of studying gender relations and law and how men meet the law:

> *Firstly, it is a good sign from society, generally that increasingly men understand that gender is not only a women's topic, that it is important for everyone in the society. But also it brings in new types of questions, also asking how gender influences how men meet the law. And might come in different ways, one example is concerns about how fathers are seen as less important for their children, than mothers and it means that men are in disadvantage in custody cases. And the reality on that is something that, I think that we could spend more time in research on, but it shows the importance to understand the question not only women's rights, but about gender relations and how we can understand law in a way that it can bring in relations rather looking at situations of women as individuals.*

The history of the course goes back to 1975, when a strategy was set in a way so that women's rights could be taught in academia, mainly in the most important law school of Norway. This pioneering and innovative initiative inspired other universities, also in Africa, for example at the University of Zimbabwe, which is currently running a Master Program in Women's Law, supported by the Womens Law Institute in Oslo, [15] and has inspired other researchers to initiate and explore subjects in law that were previously not traditional and uncommon.

From a student perspective, the mainstreaming process is more about better education for legal professionals. Legal professionals are part of the justice system, as they assist others in protecting their rights:

> *In order to be able to do that, you have to know all of the different issues that arise from the legal field, and of course, one of those issues could be gender related. So by putting a women perspective into that field of study or into that subject in law, you make them better legal professionals, not just putting only female relations or women perspective or women law in it. So it has to have a, sort of, learning outcome.*

15

JURK[16] (Free Legal Advice for Women), a civil society organization that works with issues related to violence against women, was also interviewed. The leader, Frodys Patturson, highlighted that they receive students from the Law Faculty to work on their programs of legal aid and support for women victims of violence:

> *I think that what have been the best way is that many of the cases that we work with are in some way covered by courses on the law Faculty, but they seem to teach them very general so that the women perspective in one way is lost there. So I think the best way could be that every course have an women perspective and they are able to talk about what it means. Ok the law is neutral, but also because women and men live different lives, also in Norway, these will affect men and women differently or these rule is many important for women because they experience a lot of abuse, and that could be a part of every course. (…)*

With their work in supporting women victims of violence, JURK also writes shadow reports on the CEDAW convention. They consider themselves part of the legal education system as they receive 24 students annually to help them with concrete cases in exchange for course credit:

> *We can also say that from working with the cases, and all students come from the legal general studies, I notice that they do not learn so much about these things at Law school. It would be better if they learn more…the university have this intention to include women's law into the general program in so many years…they have so many plans, but the implementation has been very hard. So I think it could improve a lot.*

The majority of students, however, choose to not get credits from practice in JURK, potentially hindering their ability to learn and gain special skills in order to deal with specific gendered legal issues. This is where universities and Faculties can ensure that all legal professionals gain the competence to do so.

3.3 WOMENS LAW IN THE ANGOLAN CONTEXT: the national law and local practices

[16] https://jurk.no/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/november-engelsk.pdf

As we propose to introduce women law as an initiative to reform legal education at the Catholic University's Law Faculty, it is important to question why it is necessary for legal professionals and their education. The normative culture in Angola is marked by having a different group of rules and different levels of interventions of those rules. There is the formal and the traditional system and there is the civil and the religious system.

The local context of women and women's problems in Angola are largely related to a patriarchal culture, lack of political attention, and a lack of access to social and economic resources for women. This is why women still constitute the majority of those in poverty in Angola, and in the realities associated with it such as informal work, social vulnerability and violence (CEIC-CMI Report, 2018). According to the Angolan national census of 2014, women constitute more than 52% of the population. However, many reports and official documents recognize that besides their numerical majority, women are in the minority when it comes to political representation, and access to social and economic resources.

In particular, the curriculum has another implication among professors and students and the difference between them. For example, regarding what was planned, what has been taught and what is being learnt and how this can actually be applied, so that the knowledge learned can be of use. For example, to break social prejudice and privileges for majority groups.

Many academics point out that multicultural realities tend to have "multirules", which are different from each other, resulting in what is referred to as normative pluralism.
Mariana and Machado call attention to the fact that "pluralism could be understood as a characteristic of the democratic State in combating the single thought, but multiculturalism could be understood as the coexistence of different cultures and traditions in the same territory. So, there could be pluralism inside of multiculturalism, if there is motivation for dialogue between the different cultures» (CRUZ at al., 2013, p.356). For these academics, pluralism is not self-preservation or changing supremacy regimes, but the coexistence of juridical productions from diverse sources. That said, it could only reach a pluralist normative order through the recognition, autonomy and respect between the differences (CRUZ at al., 2013, p. 377).

In Angola there are different cultural groups, but legal professionals are educated using European legal tradition, so in many cases there is no link between the norms that they are taught and the norms that the students and professors know from their own cultural belonging. This rupture has occurred due to the colonization process whereby the education system was structured by a colonizer perspective, with the goal of eliminating the traditional or native cultures, practices or vestige in the colonized individual. There was, in fact, an act called «Indigenous Status», that defined those who were regarded as the 'civilized' and those who were not, and from that point, only the civilized would have access to certain social benefits, such as; official documents, education, employment and frequency in some places of leisure as well other «superior» categories of people. For the native to be considered civilized, they had to dress, speak, eat, and appear as Europeans. It was a loose cultural process and had a significant impact on the urban socialization process, until now. 44 years later, in many ways,

those rules are still having an effect on some levels of socialization. It is strongly felt in the education process in the obligation to master Portuguese. Portuguese is the official language for teaching in the universities and therefore students must be able to both speak and write it.

In the law field, it is also strongly felt because the legal culture is based on the Portuguese legal culture. In the education process, manuals, professors' references, dressing, rituals and tradition in the Law School are mainly a heritage of the Portuguese legal education. However, in the rural areas, law comes from local traditions and customs. Thus, the traditional authority may have the most power and local recognition. However, legal and traditional laws are also crosscut by religious rules, practices and beliefs. These three systems in many cases coexist in the same individual, family, community and society.

The current constitution recognizes customs as a source of law, as well as the civil code, since these customs do not go against the legal norms. It is true though that research has found the traditional law to be a source of bad norms against women, in questions regarding: equality, family, heritage; social protection; and access to economic resources. There are a plenty of reasons why Women's Law could be a significative starting point for innovation in the Angolan legal system, allowing professors and students to access a different Angolan reality and to approach problems differently.

The Law Faculty has two professors that are specialized in Human Rights, with master and PhD studies. This could be enough to start the movement. However, it will not sustain the project for reform and in a longer term perspective without a plan of concerted strategies to increase the number of professors with competence on human rights and women's law.

4. CONCLUSION

This article has discussed how the introduction of a women's law course at the Catholic University's Law Faculty could help transform the Angolan legal education system. It highlights that to do so there must be institutional will. Its introduction and implementation will demand leadership, competence, responsibility, resources, evaluation, and concrete measures and steps. The Oslo experience has shown that it must be a contextualized process. The Angolan context, however, may entail risks related to a lack of political support from governmental institutions or religious criticism.

There are, therefore, political elements that must be taken into consideration, such as an institutional predisposition for its support and sufficient human resources to implement the program. Once the Women's Law course was introduced at the Oslo Law Faculty, a legal discipline was invented and demonstrated how a new approach to the law could be an important instrument of education.

It is also important to consider how a Women's Law course in Angola could be implemented. For example, having it as a separate and non-mandatory course, separate but mandatory, or mainstreamed. In Angola, there are currently no elective courses, however in the near future the Ministry of Education may approve a credit-based education system whereby the curriculum will have both mandatory and non-mandatory subjects.

For human rights education defenders, curriculum reform is not only an education process, but also a measure towards social transformation. Transformation itself takes time, patience, competence and human and financial resources. There needs to be social pressure and influence from academia and civil society. It can be a positive interaction if the purpose is clear and the leadership are sure on what needs to be transformed.

In a broad perspective, without the involvement of universities, and education in general, in the government's human rights plan, the goal of "Angola becoming an international reference in the Human Rights system" will not fully be achieved.

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