

Native languages in the Republic of Angola, taking the initiative at schools could actively contribute to a formal language integration and preservation policy.

The Republic of Angola presents a varied scenario in terms of the existence of many national languages, including: Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kikongo, Tchokwe, Kwanyama and Nganguela. These native languages are spoken in different regions of the country, specially in the most isolated ones. This country has always lived in a coexistence between Portuguese (the official language) and the many native languages, however, there seems to be an inexistent real integration language policy unlike many african countries, such as South Africa and Namibia. On the one hand there is a lack of language integration, on the other hand, there is a real opportunity to give the first steps towards a change in this paradigm.

In other words, Angola has to understand the importance of a real coexistence between the official language and the native ones. But the question that arises here is, is there a real benefit? Perhaps the real challenge here is to find a real application or maybe a justification to promote native languages. It seems that the main reason can be a “social and cultural preservation”. When we say this, we mean that there has to be a solid reason for the existence of native languages, the concept of social and cultural preservation aims at connecting us with our own roots, by doing this, there will be a real language and social integration.

But how can we give the first steps?, how can we take the initiative?, what if we consider starting from the basis?, it means, that a way to take the lead could be to establish a school policy to promote and teach native languages. The question that arises here is, could schools create and implement native languages programs?, or perhaps, could schools integrate native languages into the school curriculum?, the answer, perhaps, could be yes, on condition there is a practical application, specially for children. School authorities have to understand that modern societies need and have to integrate everyone , which means, that we all have to interact and communicate with everyone, in other words, this means we have to learn how to integrate concepts like bilingualism and multilingualism. Here at Colegio Crystal de Talatona, there is actually a school policy on this, in fact, teaching Kimbundu as part of our school curriculum will have a positive impact on the development of our students' view of modern societies, apart from Kimbundu our students learn English and Spanish as a second language, by doing this, we are not just aiming at promoting 21st century skills, but also, we are providing language tools so they can become active social inter-actors and communicators.

As a result, We strongly believe that the lack of a formal language policy cannot be the excuse to avoid taking the initiative, schools have a responsibility to provide school children with the opportunity to take part in native language programs to enable them with the tools they need to become active members of modern societies.