

## Perception of the Kwenda project in the socioeconomic development of Hongo residents in the municipality of Humpata

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### SUMMARY

This article analyzes the perception of the Kwenda Project in the socioeconomic development of residents of the Hongo neighborhood, Humpata municipality, Huíla province. The relevance of this topic is justified by the need to understand how public social monetary transfer policies can reduce poverty and promote productive inclusion in rural contexts marked by social exclusion, lack of infrastructure, and fragility of basic services. The study seeks to demonstrate the extent to which Kwenda, a social protection program launched by the Government of Angola in partnership with the World Bank, has transformed the living conditions of vulnerable populations. The research followed a qualitative and quantitative approach, with a descriptive-exploratory approach, using literature review, analysis and synthesis, questionnaires, and forms. The purposive sample included 61 participants, 60 Kwenda beneficiaries and one technical manager. The data were processed using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and information triangulation. The results show that Kwenda is widely perceived as an instrument of social transformation, fostering financial autonomy—especially among women—by strengthening food security, increasing school attendance, and stimulating small businesses. However, challenges emerge related to low financial literacy, logistical difficulties in delivering support, and lack of local infrastructure. The conclusion is that Kwenda has a positive impact on reducing inequalities and improving living conditions, although it requires greater community support and long-term sustainability strategies.

**Keywords:** Kwenda Project; socioeconomic development; social protection; Angola.

### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the perception of the Kwenda Project in the socioeconomic development of residents of the Hongo neighborhood, Humpata municipality, Huíla province. The relevance of this topic is justified by the need to understand how public social monetary transfer policies can reduce poverty and promote productive inclusion in rural contexts marked by social exclusion, lack of infrastructure, and fragility of basic services. The study seeks to demonstrate the extent to which Kwenda, a social protection program launched by the Government of Angola in partnership with the World Bank, has transformed the living conditions of vulnerable populations. The research followed a qualitative and quantitative approach, with a descriptive-exploratory approach, using literature review, analysis and synthesis, questionnaires, and forms. The purposive sample included 61 participants, 60 Kwenda beneficiaries and one technical manager. The data was processed using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and information triangulation. The results show that Kwenda is widely perceived as an instrument of social transformation, fostering financial autonomy—especially among women—, strengthening food security, increasing school attendance, and stimulating small businesses. However, challenges emerge related to low financial literacy,

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Combating poverty and social exclusion is one of the main challenges faced by the Angolan state since the end of the armed conflict in 2002. Despite the progress made over the last two decades, Angola continues to experience high rates of multidimensional poverty, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, where precarious infrastructure and limited coverage of basic services limit the population's access to fundamental rights. This is the context in which the Kwenda Project fits in, an Angolan government initiative implemented in 2020 with support from the World Bank. Project Kwenda aims to promote social protection and productive inclusion for vulnerable families.

The Hongo neighborhood, in the municipality of Humpata, Huíla province, represents an emblematic case for understanding the impact of Kwenda in rural contexts. It is a predominantly agricultural community, composed of large families with low levels of education and dependent on subsistence farming as their primary source of income. The lack of basic infrastructure, such as well-equipped schools, functioning health units, potable water, and adequate access roads, contributes to the persistence of socioeconomic inequalities.

The academic and social relevance of this study lies in the need to assess the impact of public policies aimed at social protection in Angola, especially in marginalized communities. From a scientific perspective, analyzing Hongo residents' perceptions of Kwenda allows us to understand not only the immediate effects of social monetary transfers but also the program's potential to foster processes of productive inclusion and sustainable development. From a practical perspective, the study contributes empirical data that can guide political decisions and strategies for improving the program, strengthening its effectiveness in the fight against extreme poverty.

The choice to focus on the perception of the beneficiary community is justified because, in rural contexts, the effectiveness of public policies depends not only on technical implementation but also on social acceptance, the ability to adapt to local realities, and community ownership of the initiatives. According to Sen (2000), development should be understood as the expansion of individual freedoms, which implies recognizing the subjective dimension of social experiences. Therefore, assessing Hongo residents' perception of Kwenda means understanding the degree of social transformation experienced through access to the program's benefits.

In summary, this article proposes a sociological analysis of Kwenda no Hongo, highlighting its relevance as an instrument of social protection and productive inclusion, but also the persistent structural challenges. Reflection on local impacts and perceptions contributes to the debate on social policies in Angola and to the strengthening of strategies aimed at equitable and sustainable development.



## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Socioeconomic development: concepts and perspectives

Socioeconomic development is understood as a multidimensional process that simultaneously involves improvements in the social and economic conditions of a population. It is not limited to increased per capita income but encompasses access to health, education, housing, food security, citizen participation, and social equity. According to Sen (2000), development means the expansion of human freedoms, allowing individuals access to fundamental opportunities to exercise choices and achieve well-being.

Todaro and Smith (2020) emphasize that socioeconomic development implies structural changes in society that result in reduced inequalities and expanded opportunities. In Angola, this concept is directly associated with the fight against extreme poverty and the promotion of dignified living conditions, especially in rural areas where historical vulnerabilities persist.

The link between socioeconomic development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial. Among them, the following stand out: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). Therefore, programs like Kwenda should be analyzed not only for their ability to transfer financial resources, but also for their contribution to promoting social inclusion, equity, and community cohesion.

### 2.2 Public policies to combat poverty in Angola

After the end of the civil war in 2002, the Angolan state began to prioritize social policies aimed at national reconstruction and poverty reduction. The National Development Plan (NDP 2018–2022; 2023–2027) prioritized reducing regional inequalities and combating multidimensional poverty (Government of Angola, 2023).

Among the main policies, the following stand out:

Poverty Alleviation and Human Development Program (PCPDH), which combines social measures with basic infrastructure projects; Integrated Municipal Intervention Plan (PIIM), aimed at decentralizing services and investing in social infrastructure; and Kwenda, considered the most comprehensive social protection policy implemented in the country.

Despite progress, studies such as those by Amaral (2021) and Chilala (2022) point to significant limitations: dependence on the oil economy, institutional fragility, poor economic diversification, and uneven territorial distribution of policies. Furthermore, rural poverty in Angola is structural, marked by low educational attainment, informal labor, and lack of access to basic services, requiring consistent, long-term social programs.

### 2.3 Social protection programs: overview

Social protection in Angola, historically focused on contributory measures aimed at formal workers, has proven insufficient given the predominance of the informal sector. This



context led to the creation of non-contributory social protection programs, which aim to serve populations in situations of extreme poverty.

Campos and Sousa (2021) note that the COVID-19 emergency has exacerbated social vulnerabilities, reinforcing the importance of programs such as the Kikuia Card, which provides food assistance, and Kwenda, which prioritizes cash transfers to low-income families. The Ministry of Social Action, Family and Women's Promotion (MINFAMU, 2022) reports that more than one million families have been registered in the Single Social Registry (CSU), which has enabled greater equity in the distribution of support.

However, challenges remain, such as:

Low territorial coverage in some provinces, logistical difficulties in delivering support; limited financial sustainability and lack of robust complementary training and productive capacity building programs.

These limitations indicate that social protection in Angola must evolve towards policy integration, institutional strengthening and the appreciation of cultural and regional specificities.

#### **2.4 The Kwenda Project: origin, objectives and areas of intervention**

The Kwenda Project was officially launched in 2020 by the Angolan government, with support from the World Bank, in response to the socioeconomic crisis exacerbated by the economic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. The name "Kwenda" in Kimbundu means "to go" or "to walk," symbolizing a movement toward development and social inclusion.

According to the Social Support Fund (FAS, 2021), Kwenda is structured into four main components:

1. Social Monetary Transfers (TSM): periodic subsidies intended for families in situations of extreme vulnerability, to guarantee food security, education and health.
2. Productive inclusion: support for micro-enterprises, productive training and access to small credits.
3. Strengthening the Single Social Registry: to ensure transparency and avoid duplication of support.
4. Strengthening institutional capacity: decentralization of management and strengthening of local institutions.

With an initial budget of approximately US\$420 million, Kwenda had already benefited more than 1.6 million families in Angola by 2024 (World Bank, 2023). However, some municipalities were not included, revealing gaps in its coverage.

## 2.5 Sociological theories related to community development

The debate on the impacts of Kwenda should be interpreted in light of the main sociological theories of community development:

Functionalism (Durkheim, 2014): emphasizes social cohesion and solidarity as the foundations for community balance. Social programs like Kwenda help strengthen social order and reduce tensions arising from exclusion.

Social Capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2006): highlights the role of networks of trust and reciprocity. By offering minimal resources, Kwenda enables greater community integration and strengthens bonds of solidarity.

Critical Approach (Freire, 2019; Santos, 2008): understands development as structural transformation, requiring popular participation and redistribution of power. Kwenda, from this perspective, will only achieve lasting impact if it overcomes relationships of dependency.

Endogenous Development (Sen, 2010; Santos, 2010): argues that development should begin by valuing local capabilities. Kwenda has potential in this regard by fostering community-based productive initiatives.

African Perspective (Mbembe, 2016; Gyekye, 1997): emphasizes communitarianism and Ubuntu as African cultural foundations. Programs like Kwenda must combine social protection with community solidarity to ensure cultural legitimacy.

## 2.6 Social impact indicators

The literature on social impact assessment (Esteves, Franks & Vanclay, 2012; Barbieri, 2011) defines indicators as fundamental tools for measuring changes brought about by social programs. In Angola, authors such as Mulanga (2015) and Samuel (2019) emphasize that income transfer programs impact not only economic variables (income and food), but also self-esteem, citizenship, and community cohesion.

Among the main indicators applicable to Kwenda are:

Variation in family income; school attendance; access to health care and housing; food consumption and nutritional security; women's empowerment; beneficiary satisfaction and community participation.

These indicators allow us to evaluate both objective results and subjective perceptions, providing a broader analysis of social impact.

## 2.7 Social impacts of Kwenda: evidence and limits

Recent studies confirm that Kwenda has contributed to improving family nutrition, increasing school attendance, the emergence of small businesses, and strengthening women's financial autonomy (ANGOP, 2024; FAS, 2023). However, the benefits are not uniform.

with reports of dissatisfaction due to delays, low coverage and lack of community monitoring (Fonseca, 2020).

Thus, Kwenda represents an innovative and promising policy in the fight against poverty in Angola, but it still faces the challenge of overcoming welfare dependencies and consolidating sustainable productive inclusion strategies.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research into the perception of the Kwenda Project in the socioeconomic development of the residents of Hongo, municipality of Humpata, followed a qualitative and quantitative approach. This choice is justified by the need to understand both the measurable effects of the program—such as income, school attendance, and food security—and the beneficiaries' subjective perceptions of the transformations in their lives. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative-quantitative approach enhances analytical robustness by integrating statistical data with interpretative narratives.

From a typological perspective, this research is classified as descriptive-exploratory. It is descriptive because it sought to characterize the socioeconomic reality of the Hongo neighborhood, presenting empirical data that portray the situation of residents before and after the implementation of Kwenda. It is exploratory because it aimed to gather information that is still poorly systematized on community perceptions of the program, generating information for future research and the improvement of social policies in Angola (Gil, 2008).

Both theoretical and empirical methods were used. The former included a literature review, which allowed for the systematization of concepts of socioeconomic development, poverty, and social protection; analysis and synthesis, which organized the theoretical frameworks and collected data; data triangulation, which enabled cross-referencing of bibliographic sources, questionnaires, and forms; and the historical-logical method, which helped understand the historical context of poverty in the municipality of Humpata and the evolution of Angolan social policies.

At the empirical level, two data collection instruments were applied: a questionnaire survey and a structured form. The questionnaire was addressed to a technical manager of the Kwenda Project, aiming to gather institutional information about the program's objectives, challenges, and results. The form was administered directly to beneficiaries, allowing for the collection of socioeconomic data and individual perceptions of Kwenda's impact.

The sample was intentional, including 60 beneficiaries residing in the Hongo neighborhood and a project technical manager, totaling 61 participants. This intentional selection was justified by the need to work with individuals directly involved in the program's implementation and experience.

Inclusion criteria included families residing in Hongo, direct beneficiaries of Kwenda, and having been in the program for at least six months, to ensure a minimum level of experience with the benefits received. Residents who had not received Kwenda support or who had cognitive difficulties that prevented consistent responses were excluded.

Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis, using percentages and graphical representations to illustrate the distribution of variables such as gender, age, household composition, and use of resources received. Qualitative data were subjected to content analysis, as per Bardin (2011), to identify categories of meaning related to perceptions of the program. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative results allowed for greater validity of the conclusions.

Participants were informed of the study's objectives and assured of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Participation was voluntary and consented to, ensuring respect for the dignity and autonomy of respondents, in accordance with social science research guidelines (Lakatos & Marconi, 2017).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Characterization of the study site

The Hongo neighborhood, located in the municipality of Humpata, Huíla province, is an agriculturally based community, marked by a strong presence of the Nyaneka-Humbe population. The local economy is based primarily on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism, with limited involvement in formal commercial activities. Basic social infrastructure—such as schools, health centers, access roads, electricity, and drinking water—is scarce or insufficient. This situation reflects what Chilala (2022) calls "structural poverty," where the lack of effective public policies perpetuates historical exclusions.

It is in this context that the Kwenda Project was introduced as a government response to social vulnerability, seeking to guarantee a minimum level of social protection and foster productive inclusion. Thus, studying residents' perceptions allows us to assess the correspondence between institutional objectives and the reality experienced by beneficiaries.

#### Beneficiary profile

The study sample comprised 61 participants: 60 direct beneficiaries of Kwenda and one social action technician linked to the project. Of the beneficiaries, 53.3% were women and 46.7% were men, revealing a slight female predominance. This proportion is consistent with FAS reports (2023), which highlight the prioritization of women in social protection programs due to their central role in managing family resources.

Regarding age, half of the beneficiaries (50%) were between 31 and 43 years old, 25% were between 18 and 30 years old, and 25% were over 44 years old. This data demonstrates that Kwenda benefits, to a greater extent, individuals of economically active age, but also reaches older people, which confirms the inclusive nature of the program.

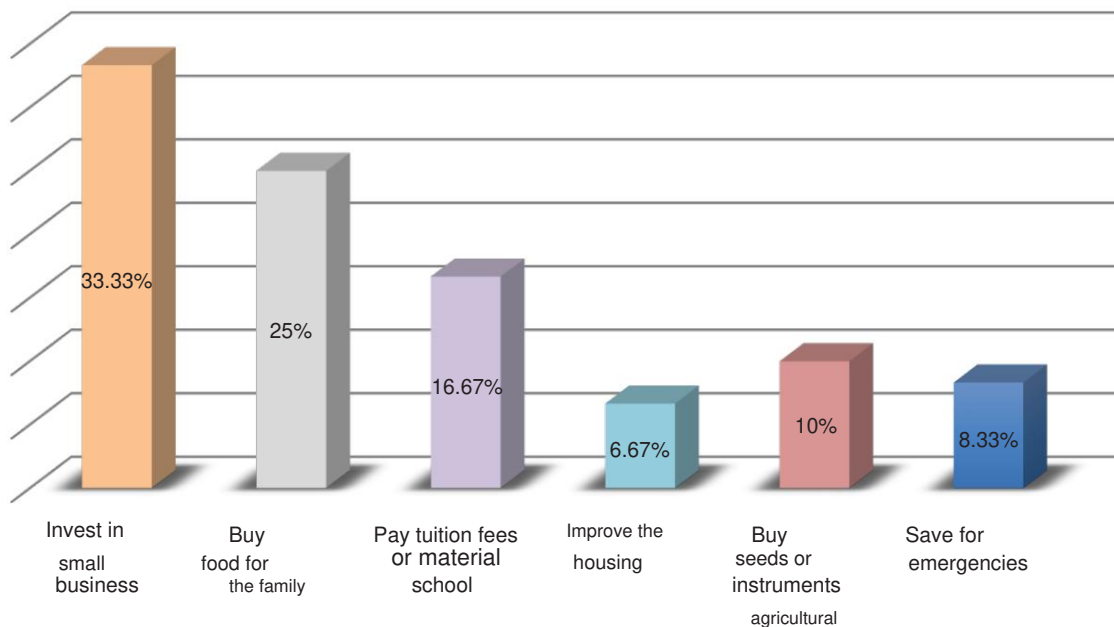
Regarding economic activities, 41.6% were engaged in subsistence farming, 30% in small-scale trade, 18.3% in temporary informal work, and 10% had no fixed income. The almost absolute dependence on the informal economy reveals the structural precariousness of the local labor market and justifies the need for redistributive policies, as highlighted by Amaral (2022).

## Benefits received and how to use them

The data show that 90% of beneficiaries reported receiving support from Kwenda, mostly in the form of cash transfers. All participants reported receiving benefits exclusively in cash, confirming that the program's strategy focuses on direct cash transfers.

## Regarding the use of resources, the results show a diversity of applications

Chart 1



The data collected shows that 33.33% invested in small businesses, opening or strengthening businesses selling food products and household goods; 25% used the support to purchase food, responding to immediate food security needs; 16.67% invested the funds in education, covering tuition and school supplies; 10% allocated them to agricultural production, purchasing seeds and inputs; 6.67% invested in housing improvements; and 8.33% preferred to save the resources as an emergency fund.

These results confirm Tavira's (2022) thesis that cash transfer programs can have a dual function: meeting immediate needs and simultaneously fostering productive activities. Its use in commerce and agriculture demonstrates Kwenda's potential for structural transformation, going beyond welfare.

## Perceived impact on socioeconomic development

One of the study's central objectives was to understand residents' perceptions of Kwenda's impact on their lives. For 83.33% of beneficiaries, the program contributed positively to socioeconomic development, improving living conditions and

offering new income opportunities. Only 16.67% said they did not notice any significant impacts, particularly due to irregular payments or limited amounts received.

Among the main impacts highlighted, the following stand out:

**Food security:** families reported greater ability to purchase a variety of foods, reducing episodes of hunger. This finding corroborates the literature of MASFAMU (2022), which presents nutritional improvement as one of the immediate effects of Kwenda.

**Education:** Financial support made it possible to pay tuition and school supplies, resulting in a reduction in school dropout rates, especially among girls. This dimension is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (quality education).

**Female empowerment:** Many women reported greater financial autonomy, beginning to manage small businesses and actively contributing to family income. Nzaji (2021) notes that female empowerment is one of the most significant impacts of social protection programs in African contexts.

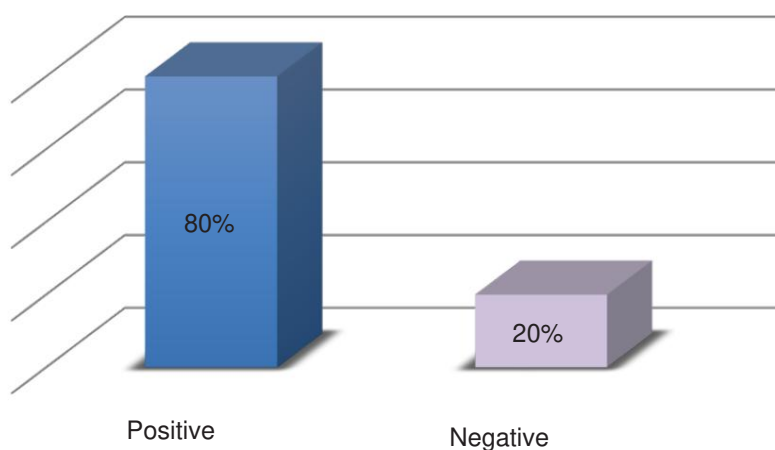
**Housing:** some beneficiaries used the resources to improve their homes, purchasing construction materials or durable goods, such as mattresses and stoves.

**Community participation:** some beneficiaries became more involved in collective activities, strengthening local social capital, according to Putnam (2006).

These results demonstrate that Kwenda addresses multiple dimensions of socioeconomic development, articulating immediate effects and potential medium-term impacts.

### Critical insights and limitations

Graph 2



Despite the largely positive evaluation, 20% of beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction. The main criticisms were related to three factors:

1. Delays and irregularities in payments: some residents reported receiving subsidies only once a year, which compromises financial predictability.
2. Low financial literacy: beneficiaries with little education have difficulty managing resources, which limits the productive effects of transfers.
3. Structural fragility: insufficient local infrastructure—schools, health centers, roads—prevents financial resources from having their full impact.

These limits point to the need to associate monetary transfers with complementary policies of financial education, productive training and investment in basic services.

Fonseca (2020) argues that the effectiveness of social programs in Africa depends on the dialogue between redistributive and structural policies, otherwise the impact tends to be partial and short-lived.

### **Institutional contribution: the Kwenda coach's view**

The questionnaire administered to the social action technician reinforced the results presented by the beneficiaries. He believes the main impacts of Kwenda no Hongo include improved family nutrition, increased school attendance, women's financial autonomy, and the emergence of small businesses. However, he also highlighted challenges such as a lack of financial literacy, logistical difficulties, and problems updating registration data.

This institutional vision demonstrates that there is consensus regarding the positive impact of the program, but also recognition of the limitations that need to be overcome to ensure sustainability.

### **Critical discussion in light of theory**

The results largely confirm the theoretical assumptions presented in the literature review. From a functionalist perspective (Durkheim, 2014), Kwenda contributes to social cohesion, reducing tensions caused by extreme poverty. According to social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2006), the strengthening of community networks and trust among residents is observed.

However, a critical approach (Freire, 2019; Santos, 2008) warns of the risks of dependency and the reproduction of unequal relationships if the program is not accompanied by community participation and power redistribution. In this sense, the dissatisfaction of some beneficiaries reveals that Kwenda's effectiveness depends on more inclusive management and complementary policies that structurally transform local conditions.

On the other hand, the endogenous development perspective (Sen, 2010; Santos, 2010) reinforces that Kwenda should value local knowledge and practices, encouraging productive activities rooted in Hongo culture. Reports of investment in small businesses and agriculture confirm this possibility, but require greater technical and institutional support.

Overall, the research shows that Kwenda is widely perceived as a transformative program, capable of generating significant improvements in the living conditions of Hongo residents. However, it also demonstrates that the impact is uneven and conditioned by structural factors, such as poor infrastructure, limited financial literacy, and logistical failures.

Thus, Kwenda must be understood not only as a redistributive policy, but as part of a broader system of community development, which articulates social protection, productive inclusion and structural investments.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyze the perceptions of residents of Hongo, in the municipality of Humpata, regarding the Kwenda Project, a public social protection policy aimed at combating extreme poverty and promoting productive inclusion in Angola. The research demonstrated that Kwenda has been widely recognized as a tool for social transformation, capable of improving the living conditions of vulnerable families and creating new possibilities for community development.

The results confirmed that most beneficiaries use the funds received strategically, whether to meet immediate needs, such as purchasing food, or to invest in education, agriculture, and small businesses. This diversification of uses highlights that Kwenda is not limited to a welfare function, but can contribute to the development of alternatives for local economic sustainability. One of the most notable aspects was the strengthening of the role of women, who gained greater financial autonomy and a leading role in managing their households.

At the same time, significant limitations emerged. Many beneficiaries reported delays and irregularities in payments, low financial literacy, and a lack of adequate institutional support. Furthermore, the lack of basic social infrastructure in Hongo compromises the effectiveness of the support received. These challenges reveal that, while Kwenda is a fundamental step in combating poverty, it still lacks complementary long-term policies capable of structurally transforming the socioeconomic conditions of communities.

From a theoretical perspective, the research engaged with different sociological approaches. Functionalism helps understand the role of Kwenda in social cohesion; social capital theory highlights the strengthening of community networks; and the critical approach warns of the risks of dependency and the need for effective community participation. The endogenous development perspective reinforces the importance of valuing local productive initiatives as a path to sustainability.

Given these findings, the study suggests some recommendations: (1) strengthen the regularity and predictability of monetary transfers; (2) implement financial education and productive training programs aimed at beneficiaries; (3) coordinate Kwenda with investments in social infrastructure, especially health, education, and access roads; (4) promote greater community participation in the management and monitoring of the program, ensuring that policies are sensitive to local realities.

Therefore, Kwenda represents an innovative and promising public policy in the Angolan context, contributing to the reduction of social inequalities and the strengthening of social protection. However, its impact will only become sustainable if it is integrated into broader economic and social development strategies that simultaneously consider structural challenges and enhance the endogenous capacities of communities. Thus, Kwenda does not

should be seen as an end in itself, but as part of a more comprehensive process of building social justice, citizenship and equity in Angola.

The study had limitations related to the sample size, limited to the Hongo neighborhood, and the lack of longitudinal indicators. Future research is recommended to broaden the territorial scope, include comparative analyses between municipalities, and incorporate in-depth qualitative methods to capture the cultural and subjective dimensions of beneficiaries.

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