

## Chapter Fifteen

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# *Curriculum Development for the Licenciatura in Sociology*

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### Introduction

This chapter contextualises and outlines the curriculum of a post-graduate Sociology degree that was introduced at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique in 2002.

UFICS – the Unit for Training and Research in Social Sciences – was established in 1995 when the Bachelor’s degree in Social Sciences was introduced at Eduardo Mondlane University. As a matter of fact, while different disciplines in the areas of Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science have been taught for years at UEM, UFICS is the first unit ever to offer university degrees in these fields in Mozambique.

The BA in Social Sciences is a three-year degree, and includes the areas of Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science. The BA in Social Sciences is designed to lead either to the ‘world of work’ or to further studies at the *Licenciatura* level. The *Licenciatura* is an advanced two-year qualification following on the BA degree. In 1998, UFICS introduced Anthropology and Public Administration at *Licenciatura* level.

### Process

The curriculum proposal for Sociology is a collective effort of the Sociology Department at UEM and results from a series of debates and workshops. These debates and workshops have also benefited from several individual contributions (some of them in writing), both from faculty members and visiting professors. The proposal has gone through different stages and drafts. The difference between the

first draft, produced in mid-2000, and the final draft (as of March 2002), is an illustration of the richness of the discussion and productivity of the process itself.

## Context

Curriculum Reform at UEM implies a number of ‘transformations’. The most important shift is from objective-based to competency-based curricula,<sup>1</sup> and from current content to a search for compatibility with other Southern African university programmes.<sup>2</sup>

## Aims of the New Curriculum

While the BA in Social Sciences gives a general overview of areas like Anthropology, Politics and Sociology, the *Licenciatura* aims at building a focused disciplinary competence in the field of Sociology.

Sociological knowledge in Mozambique is still very limited. A variety of topics have not been studied by the handful of sociologists in the country. Taking that into account, the *Licenciatura* in Sociology is an attempt to respond to the need for scientific knowledge in this field, which can contribute to elucidating the complex and multiple reality of the country while contributing to the training of professionals.

Concerning the development of professional skills, the proposal makes a special effort to sustain faculty interest in the development of broader thinking skills rather than just particular job-skills. Our assumption is that students with skills in thinking and writing, are best prepared to analyse and to create new knowledge. It is our opinion that these kinds of skills will be more valuable for the person in the long run. Furthermore, there is the question of high rotation of careers. We believe that by emphasising broader thinking skills, graduates will have greater flexibility to change careers, a phenomenon that seems to be more and more the case in contemporary societies. Because society is becoming more dynamic and complex, it demands flexibility from professionals to respond to new situations and problems.

## Professional Profile

What demands do the ‘working world’ place on the sociologist, and how can the curriculum respond to these demands? In addressing this question, our exercise concluded that the Sociology curriculum should address these demands by emphasising the production of students capable of analytical and critical thinking,

as well as taking initiative, including entrepreneurship and self-employment. Part of the exercise therefore required constructing a profile of a sociologist, as demanded by some typical social settings. Table 15.1 illustrates the kind of activities a sociologist might be expected to undertake.

**Table 15.1: The role of a sociologist in different social locations**

Social Setting	Sociological Function
<b>Academic Institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Teaching</li> <li>▀ Research</li> </ul>
<b>Research Institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Design and participate in research projects</li> <li>▀ Elaborate on research reports</li> <li>▀ Write articles and monographs</li> <li>▀ Participate in conferences (in the field of Sociology and related disciplines)</li> </ul>
<b>Parliament and other Government Institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Contribute to the conceptualisation and evaluation of public policies</li> <li>▀ Produce statements and comments, and undertake studies on development in its different aspects</li> <li>▀ Conceptualise and evaluate social intervention projects</li> </ul>
<b>Political Party</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Provide assistance to political leaders</li> <li>▀ Undertake public opinion surveys</li> <li>▀ Assess sociological character of a particular social domain in order to propose the relevant political discourse and action</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Analysis</li> <li>▀ Applied research</li> <li>▀ Public debates</li> </ul>

<b>Urban/Rural Development Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Diagnosis of the situation</li> <li>▀ Recommended intervention strategies</li> <li>▀ Programme Implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Programme evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Non-profit Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Sociological analysis of conditions and possibilities for intervention</li> <li>▀ Monitoring and evaluation of interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Co-operative or as a Freelancer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Consultancy services that require sociological analysis</li> <li>▀ Public opinion surveys</li> <li>▀ Co-ordination of activities</li> <li>▀ Assure quality of services to clients</li> </ul>

## Graduate's Profile

Based on a wide application of sociological knowledge, the graduate in Sociology must exhibit a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Table 15.2 illustrates an interpretation of these categories that should be considered.

**Table 15.2: Considerations for the graduate in sociology**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▀ Identify the specificity of a 'sociological' perspective and its relationship with other fields in Social Science</li> <li>▀ Develop sociological analysis</li> <li>▀ Apply basic concepts of Sociology</li> <li>▀ Use adequate research methods and techniques</li> <li>▀ Apply statistical packages for Social Sciences whenever relevant in sociological research</li> <li>▀ Understand social change factors</li> </ul>
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<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▀ Write essays and scientific reports</li><li>▀ Design research projects</li><li>▀ Apply methods of sociological research</li><li>▀ Undertake research and data analysis, including the use of statistical packages for sociology</li><li>▀ Produce institutional development diagnosis</li><li>▀ Produce recommendations for development projects</li><li>▀ Engage in critical thinking</li></ul>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▀ Show ability to work in teams</li><li>▀ Pluralist in one's analysis and consideration of other perspectives</li><li>▀ Communicative</li><li>▀ Receptive to differences</li><li>▀ Collaborative</li><li>▀ Respect ethical principles in Social Sciences and Sociology in particular</li></ul>

In order to promote the profile above, the curriculum is constructed as follows:

- ▀ The student is the central actor and constructor of his/her own knowledge, and not a non-critical recipient of knowledge.
- ▀ The curriculum comprises a range of core focal points grouped in three areas:
  - 1 Sociological Theory;
  - 2 Methods and Techniques in Sociology Research; and
  - 3 Optional disciplines, which include specialised areas of Sociology and other relevant courses in the Social Sciences.
- ▀ Teaching content must be organised under the principle of acquisition and development of skills.

## Conclusion

We are still in the preliminary phase of developing more advanced Sociology graduates who could creatively and critically contribute to the Mozambique context. This curriculum project was only a starting point, and will be critically evaluated as we move forward.

## Endnotes

- 1 The concept of ‘competencies’ was introduced in the Curriculum Reform Project at UEM. The idea behind it is that a teaching process based on competencies can contribute to the training of graduates better prepared to respond to the necessities and demands of Mozambican society.
- 2 The debate on the curriculum for Sociology revealed that at least in terms of the duration of the course, compatibility with other Southern Africa programmes requires broader thinking and debate, which must include the other programme areas at UFICS. This matter is still under discussion.

## References

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