

Blink

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The magazine of Non Formal Education

Report

In Braga, a game tackles dating violence and human trafficking

International

How Ireland bet on on Non Formal Education. The case of Cork

Opinion

"And what can you do?"
The chronicle of Professor Alberto Melo

Augusto Santos Silva

“ WE NEED A NEW LITERACY:
THE DIGITAL ONE ”

INTERVIEW

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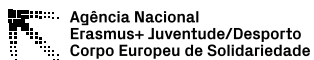
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Editorial

Luís Alves

You are holding the first issue of Blink - The Magazine on Non Formal Education. This is an editorial project by the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth/Sports and European Solidarity Corps, but it is also the embodiment of an agenda to value Non Formal Education and a corresponding central role both in the public agenda and in the educational strategies of the Country and of Europe.

Certainly, Non Formal Education is (still?) a flexible, diverse and plural concept. Unfortunately, its negative labelling also hinders its perception as an educational space with its own meanings and significances.

Therefore, we intend Blink to be the meeting point of the various realities, perspectives and approaches to Non Formal Education. Different areas of intervention, different actors involved, professionals or volunteers mobilised, all will find in this project not only a space for debate, opinion and joint reflection, but also for knowledge and expression of the multiple realities that make up the diversity of the sector. Overcoming dichotomies, which shall coexist here, is the path that will enable us to strengthen the acknowledgement of the merits, virtualities and potentialities of a sector that can increasingly make a positive contribution to the educational processes and paths of young people, as well as throughout their lives.

Meeting this ambition also requires us to be able to communicate beyond our bubbles and closed circuits. That is why Blink will simultaneously be a provider of rigorous, yet appealing, dynamic and attractive content. A publication with validated information, but with clear, accessible language and with an aesthetic and editorial care that favours different, enriching reading experiences for all readers. A magazine that aims to be readable by both experts and non-experts, truly able to appeal to and reach everyone. A project that will be presented both in Portuguese and in English. Which will be browsed through on paper or on the digital medium, and that will also be extended to debate, reflection and meetings. This is the learning journey that together we begin today!

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THE

Alberto Melo

Chairman of the Executive Committee
of Associação Portuguesa para
a Cultura e Educação Permanente
(APCEP)

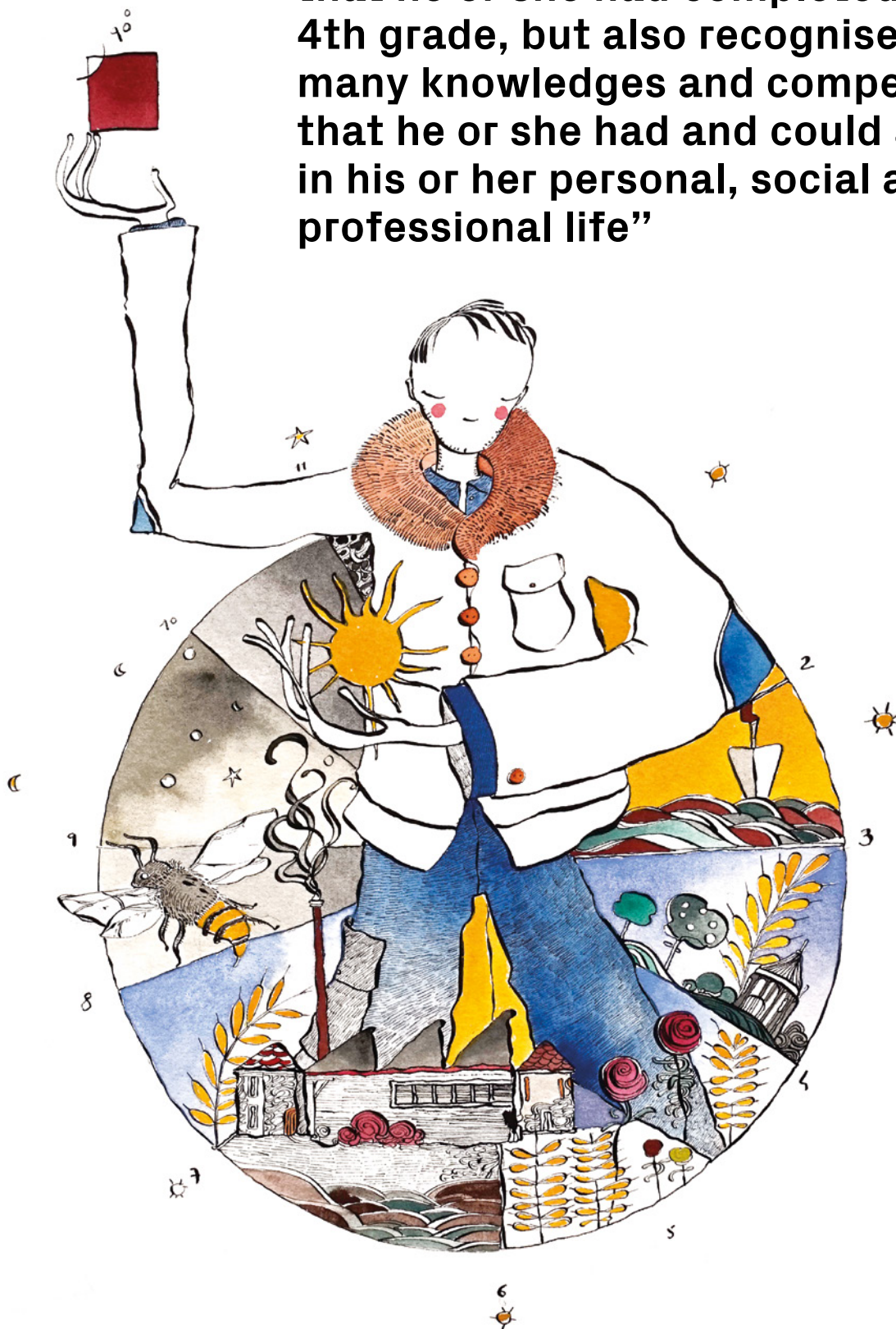
WHO KNOWS, DOES

When I arrived in Paris at the age of 22, I hastened to find a job to survive as an exiled. I managed to get an interview with an insurance company. 1st question: Qualifications? Law degree. 2nd question: And what do you know how to do? A long pause before I remembered that I had worked for the Students' Association, as a "sebenteiro", i.e., recording theoretical lessons to rewrite them on a typewriter and reproduce them on stencil sheets: I know how to type. And so I began working, filling in policies, and earning a salary thanks to a skill acquired parallel to my formal studies.

This situation left a lasting mark upon me and has been on my mind in several life and work situations. For example, in 1976, when the Directorate-General of Permanent Education, which I was coordinating, decided to radically revise the adult fourth grade exam, which deeply penalised the candidates, who were generally people with long and rich life experience but little or no schooling. Thus Ordinance No. 419, of 13 July 1976, was

issued. Instead of a test in which the examinee had to take a spelling test (an almost non-existent situation in real life) and then answer questions relating to the various school subjects, the new assessment for the Adult Basic Education certificate sought to check whether the learning process had achieved objectives such as: the ability to communicate through different forms of language: oral, written, through images, mimicry, etc.; the ability to calculate, in relation to the problems of daily life; capacity for analysis, thus enabling the understanding of reality and pursuing the necessary interventions for its transformation. What was important above all was to ensure that, on completion of the assessment, the adult not only felt that he or she had completed the 4th grade, but also recognised the many knowledges and competences that he or she had and could apply in his or her personal, social and professional life.

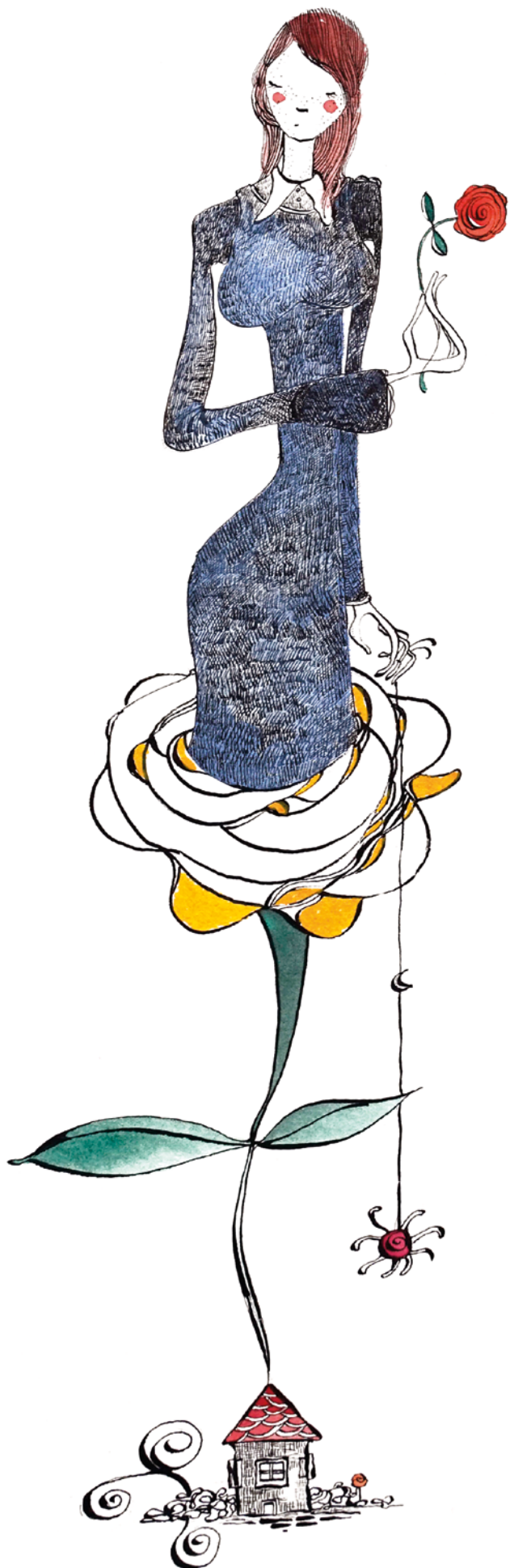
“What was important above all was to ensure that, on completion of the assessment, the adult not only felt that he or she had completed the 4th grade, but also recognised the many knowledges and competences that he or she had and could apply in his or her personal, social and professional life”



The enormous difference between what qualifications do you have? and what do you know how to do? was confirmed later on when I took part, between 1985 and 1997, in territorial animation activities in Serra do Caldeirão, in the Algarve. Almost all the locals with whom I spoke told me "I'm ignorant, I barely went to school", and then, in response to my questions, they listed an immense and rich list of knowledge and competences that had enabled them to lead an independent life: Together with the family, we build these little houses; we take care of the trees, the vegetable garden, the animals; with the wool, we make blankets; with the milk from the goats, we make cheese; we have beehives producing honey and mead; every year we "slaughter" the pig, which is then preserved in a salting-tub, while the sausages are dried by the fireplace; every year, we harvest the strawberry trees and distil our brandy ...

The profound belief that each person, regardless of his or her schooling, has acquired and produced lifelong knowledge and skills of enormous value for his or her personal and professional day-to-day life has accompanied me in my presentations in the field of adult education. Besides the fact that we are all a source of knowledge and know-how, it is also easy to see that much of this knowledge and skills have an immediate correspondence with concepts and operations that make up the school curricula. Imagine the measurements and calculations a painter makes to buy the amount of paint he needs for a given wall. Think of the geometric notions a carpenter needs to have in order to build a table - square, rectangular, round...

“Almost all the locals with whom I spoke told me "I'm ignorant, I barely went to school", and then, in response to my questions, they listed an immense and rich list of knowledge and competences that had enabled them to lead an independent life”

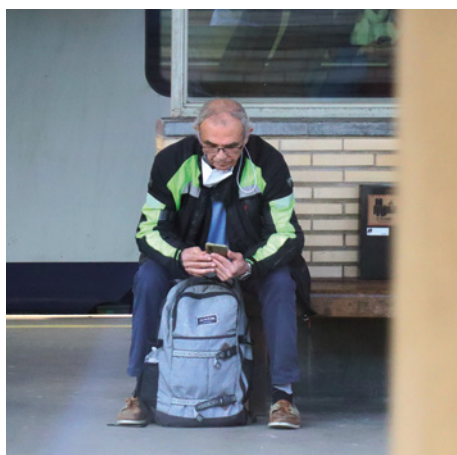


These were the foundations that led me, in a team effort with the people with whom I have worked, to lay the foundations of a system that would guarantee adults a process of identification, recognition and, eventually, validation and certification of the knowledge and competences they had acquired. This was something that initiated within the scope of a working group, in 1997, whose Final Report included, as one of the proposals for the development of adult education and training, "to define and implement a national framework for the personal skills assessment and validation of acquired professional or apprenticeship competences". The Task Force that ensued developed and refined this recommendation, building the foundations of a System of Validation of Acquired Knowledge and Competences. From the year 2000, the National Agency for Adult Education and Training launched the first Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences Centres. The national renamed New Opportunities Centres. The current Qualifica Centres are also the result of this renewal.

I spoke to numerous adults who had completed one of the levels of this process. The reaction I heard the most was "I'm reborn, I'm a different person! After all, I already knew so much!". Not because they had been granted a certificate, but rather because they realised how much they knew and could do, and so their confidence and will to always keep learning grew. That is why I see this as a fundamental instrument in the construction of an Educating Society.

*Fiz com muitos adultos que
tinham concluído um dos
níveis deste processo. A reação
que mais ouvi foi "Renasci",
sou outra pessoa!*

Portugal develops a survey on adults' Skills



The Adult Skills Survey fieldwork takes place in the first semester of 2023. This is the first study with these characteristics carried out in our country in this century. Five thousand adults aged between 16 and 65 will be polled in the different regions of the country. This survey is carried out in the framework of the International Programme for the Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC), a multi-cycle international programme for the assessment of adult skills promoted by the OECD. To address the invitation to participate in this 2nd PIAAC cycle, the Government created a Project Group, coordinated by Luís Rothes and João Queirós, professors at the Polytechnic of Porto. This team has the administrative support of ANQEP and the funding from POAT2020, and its mission is to develop the actions envisaged in this programme. The field work is carried out by a team led by Universidade Católica.

Digital Training



The Erasmus+ Youth, European Solidarity Corps and Sport Agency promotes a Training Course named "Creative & Tech Learning Mix - STEAM Edition" as part of its participation in the Strategic Partnership "Digital Youth Work", led by the Finnish Erasmus+ Agency. This training action is addressed to young people, youth association leaders, youth professionals and policy makers with responsibilities in the youth area and is intended to stimulate reflection regarding the implementation of good practices on "Digital Youth Work" combined with Creativity processes to encourage the development of this digital approach in Portuguese youth policies and practices. The Capacity Building Action is developed within the European framework of cooperation among Erasmus+ Agencies and is scheduled to take place in September 2023 in a location that is yet to be decided.

On a train trip across Europe



DiscoverEU is an action under the Erasmus+ Programme which gives young people from European Union member countries the opportunity to discover Europe through learning experiences. The programme stems from an idea of the European Parliament, fulfilled by the European Commission and it is delivered by train, providing insights into the landscapes and realities of a very broad range of cities. Every year, young Europeans turning 18 years of age can enrol and successful applicants receive a free travel pass. In Portugal, the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth/ Sports and European Solidarity Corps decided to innovate by creating for the first time a "PREDEPARTURE MEETING", which took place in 2022 in Alfândega do Porto, where the successful candidates are briefed and advised on the adventure they are about to undertake. This initiative, which was a success and was attended by hundreds of participants, is now an annual event.

The President of the Republic shares a space to think



The city of Braga played host in late 2022 to two initiatives of the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth / Sport and European Solidarity Corps, which brought together more than a thousand participants in the VITA Space. These were the conference "The Future of Participation seen by young people", integrated in the annual conference cycle "The Future has Already Begun", and the Agora EU event. The conference cycle was dedicated to the civic and political participation of young people, promoting thought on their most traditional and emerging forms of participation. The President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, concluded the session by sharing his views on the subject and allowing the young people in attendance a forum for discussion. In turn, the AgoraEU initiative brought together beneficiaries, multipliers and volunteers of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programs to exchange and build capacity regarding their various actions and measures. These were two days full of energy, but well worth it, for the debate, the sharing of testimonies and good practices and the enthusiasm from all participants and speakers, with relevant output of information regarding the Non Formal Education topic.

Mental Health in the Workplace with Youth



Can wellness be promoted through youth work? This was the motto for a major international event on mental health inspiring ideas, methods and practices that promote mental health in youth work. The end of May 2023 will be on the agenda for those who want to foster and educate themselves on raising awareness on the subject. How to promote one's own mental health and the mental health of others was highlighted as the main objective of the event that took place in the Algarve. The organization gave young people the platform to discuss how mental health should be approached by youth workers and youth organizations. Groups of young people from different countries were invited to share experiences on the subject.

European Year of Skills



In the framework of the European Year of Skills, the Youth@Work Partnership organizes the Forum "Delving into Southern Innovative Practices" in Cyprus with the aim of establishing a platform for learning and discovering innovative practices and initiatives that will enhance and develop the skills and competences of the youth. The European Year of Skills 2023 adds a new momentum to lifelong learning by supporting innovation. Stakeholders are encouraged to organize activities that improve or equip people with the right skills for quality jobs and at the same time help SMEs to bridge skills shortages in the European Union. This initiative will lead to a publication featuring relevant practices in the areas of youth employability, entrepreneurship and skills development. The National Agency Erasmus+ Youth/Sports and European Solidarity Corps also promotes, within this European Year, a study on the skills of young people and the contribution of Non Formal Education in the processes of acquiring such skills.

WE NEED A NEW LITERACY: THE DIGITAL ONE

Interview
to Augusto Santos Silva

Augusto Santos Silva received us in the visitors' room of his office, right next to the hemicycle of the Parliament he chairs. Between the signing of a protocol and a meeting with the President of the Republic, in Belém, he spoke at length with Blink magazine, and was the first to be interviewed by the magazine.

Regarded as an authority in the field of non-formal education, the Professor and researcher has successfully blended both the man and the politician. Questioning what opportunities new generations can expect in such areas as the economy and employment, he is favourable to what he terms "a new literacy" that is able to mitigate the digital gap that exists between his generation and that of his grandchildren. And he addresses the importance of acquiring knowledge beyond the school domain, advocating its recognition and certification.



There is more than one school of thought about what non-formal education is. How would you define the concept?

The simplest way of defining what non-formal education is, so that everyone has a clear understanding, is to say that it is education that does not take the form of teaching. That is to say, it is education which is not formalised, in degrees, study cycles, granting the right to a diploma. We have Education, which is done in schools, which according to our System Act is organised into three fundamental degrees: Primary, Secondary and Higher Education. And they are chained together, so that an education pathway starts at primary school and goes all the way up to the third cycle of higher education, which is tantamount to a PhD. Beyond teaching but still in the field of education, we have two universes, a pre-school one (which, as the name implies, is education before children enter school) and non-formal education, which are all those educational activities that take place outside school.

And how is non-formal education developing in Portugal?

The tradition began with "literacy". Portugal, like other countries with the same level of development, had a fairly high illiteracy rate around the time of the 25th of April 1974. And then there was a first major endeavour to make the Portuguese, who had not fulfilled their right to school attendance during the Estado Novo, massively literate. And the literacy campaigns and the literacy processes consisted in this attempt to make up for this deficit. Meanwhile, school development in Portugal caused illiteracy to become residual. Then, there are other major movements of education outside school, the first one being, due to its importance, that of vocational training. This is done outside the education system or through vocational training schools and it is also a very significant education and training endeavour, both at intermediate and higher levels. Then there are the movements of second-chance education, i.e., the provision of education to people who did not manage to complete their schooling during adolescence and who have a second chance at adult education, which often means returning to school, and in other cases it does not, but which will always entail an educational offer that is appropriate to the interests, ages and knowledge of adults. Very often it is their experience, whether personal, professional or social, which helps to complete their educational pathways, but also to certify their knowledge and experience.



And so when we speak about non-formal education, we either mean one of these two things or both at the same time. Education that is done outside school and education that is offered in a different form than the repetition of the standard formalised school pathway, with a common curriculum for everyone. Therefore, either out-of-school or, even inside school, it must be an education on offer that is appropriate to the person who is learning, whether that person is someone who didn't even manage to get a first degree of schooling and who, in the strict sense, are uneducated and illiterate, or people who studied for a longer or shorter time at school, who didn't complete their education and are in the process of getting a second chance or upgrading.

“When we talk about formal education and non-formal education, we are not talking about two separate universes”

Should both the formal and non-formal worlds of education intersect more? Let us imagine someone who during his or her secondary education pathway chooses to have a relevant volunteering experience in another country, thus acquiring practical knowledge in a certain area which coincides with their formal education area. Such a student should, for example, be able to get a bonus in his or her admission grade to higher education?

In some countries and in some cases, such experience, for example participation in voluntary work, is valued, for example when considering applications for undergraduate or postgraduate levels in higher education.

In the Portuguese case, entry to higher education is defined fundamentally through a national competition, although there are specific public competitions for specific publics, but the fundamental is a national competition. But, for example, for admission to masters and PhD programmes, experiences that are not far from the ones you described are already valued. Both in the former "New Opportunities" programme and in the current "Requalifica" programme, there are already many pathways that mean starting from non-formal accumulated

knowledge and experience, namely in the professional world, and using them to complete schooling. Therefore, someone who, in his/her path as a teenager, left school through early drop-out (which is what we refer to as someone who left school before reaching the age of 24, without obtaining any full degree, secondary or higher), who in the meantime became employed, has grown up and become an adult, but is now returning to school, not to repeat, verbatim, the secondary school curriculum, but to gain an equivalent diploma to the 12th grade, through an education path that is adapted to him/herself or to his/her condition.

And this happens today, that is, there is already this virtuous crossing between teaching experiences through formal education and non-formal experiences, distinct terminologies such as non-formal education and informal education, to which certain inconsistencies are presented, such as the lack of distinction between these concepts, which allows conceptual errors as to the type of education that is considered formal and the type of education that is considered informal.



You spoke of a structural delay in education in Portugal until 25 April 1974. But this delay still continues to affect the older generations. Is this gap that we still feel a reason to further strengthen and value non-formal education?

Yes, because the reality now is very different from that which existed before the 25th of April. I can present a statistical picture or a more impressive one. I was born in 1956, entered the then called Primary School in 1962, finished this cycle of education in 1966, and of my Primary School class I was the only one who graduated in higher education. This picture clearly shows the narrow funnel that characterised schooling at the time of Salazar and Marcelo Caetano. What's more, I didn't even go to Primary School in a public establishment, but rather in a religious college. So, in a relatively favourable sequence within the framework of the New State. Even so, I was the only one to complete higher education. Today the situation is completely different.

So, we no longer have a problem?

We have a stock problem. But we no longer have a flow problem as regards formal education. That is, we are still experiencing the effects of the very low investment of the Estado Novo in schooling. Therefore, for my generation, for the generation that immediately followed mine and for all previous generations, the average level of schooling is still very low. For the younger generations, for the generation that is now at university, we already have average school attendance rates at par with the most developed countries. For example, the rate of 20-year-olds attending higher education in Portugal is now higher than the average in the OECD countries, which are the most developed countries in the world. And this means that we no longer have a flow problem, because when we look at the current generation, we see that there are now very comfortable levels of schooling compared to the more developed countries. But we still have the problem in the backlog, because of the older generations. And that's why in Portugal non-formal

“Portugal has a stock problem. But it no longer has a flow problem as regards formal education”



education was very much and still is very much adult education, i.e. for the older generation who were not able to have a full formal education at the so-called standard school age.

And should it be? We should look at non-formal education as an instrument of adult education?

It would be very contradictory and logically absurd if we looked at non-formal education in an overly formal way. If there is one area that needs a non-bureaucratic approach, it is non-formal education, because it is made up of many experiences. There are still places, albeit residually, where the one issue we face is literacy among the older generations. And these people still have the right to be educated, even if they are of a residual demographic dimension. There are other areas where we have very important experiences of adult education, which is performed at daily life level, in local communities, associations, parishes, clubs. This experience of education is very valuable and the knowledge and skills that come out of this experience

should be certified. We have important institutions that acknowledge, validate and certify the skills that people have acquired over their lifetime. For those who like acronyms, they are the old CRVCC. It is an important endeavour that enables people to appear before one of these centres, in the presence of specialised technicians and educators. I can turn up and say what my personal path was, for example, that I did all my basic education, that in grade 10 I enrolled in a humanities course, but didn't finish and stayed in grade 11 and went to work, I had such and such subjects, but now I feel the need to complete secondary education, so what do I have to do? The response of formal education is to tell the citizen to enrol in a school and complete the 11th and 12th that he or she has not completed. The response of non-formal, non-bureaucratic education is "let's see. With that schooling and with what you have learnt in your professional life, what do you still need to do to complete the 12th grade? Have you worked in a hotel, with foreign clients that prompted you to learn to speak English, Spanish and French? Well, then maybe you don't need to complete your foreign language training... let's see". The logic of not having a strictly formal vision has this advantage, which is to start from "Maria" or "Manuel" and see what they still need to do to develop their skills, but also to have the acquired skills throughout their lives certified and to be able to have a diploma.

It tells us that Portugal no longer has a flow problem in terms of formal education. But regarding non-formal education, we still have to make up for a certain delay, also with regard to the flow?

At the level of non-formal education it is very difficult to talk about lagging...

But, using your vast international experience and as someone who knows the world particularly well, even empirically, what idea do you have of the opportunities that Portugal offers the new generations, namely outside of school? Does it compare well with the countries in the centre of Europe?

I would say so. We have developed our own systems and I believe that the opportunities for non-formal education in Portugal are not very diverse today. But, I reiterate, when we talk about non-formal education it is very difficult to make an evaluation based on metrics, which are a template for the metrics we use in education. In teaching, to get a degree, what I need is to have completed the subjects of the course I have chosen. That is, I have to have a diploma that certifies that I have achieved everything I was set up to do. In non-formal education, we start from people's experience, which can be very rich, even if they have very little school education.



**“
One of the
fascinations
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”**



Would you like to tell us about your experiences in non-formal education?

In the 1980's I worked in a sort of ethnographic way, since I was involved in research into traditional Portuguese arts and it also involved fieldwork, interviews with weavers working for a cooperative, an association of weaving arts. I remember a conversation with one of them about the cultural promotion campaigns that were carried out immediately after the 25th April 1974, when young students like me, dressed in jeans and with long hair, went to the countryside to teach the people how to read and write. The elderly ladies who spoke to me during the interviews I conducted later recalled that "it was very funny, as they came because we were poor and illiterate, but they would come here with torn and scratched jeans, their hair was long and badly washed, they looked as if they were hungry and knew nothing about life, the rural world, agriculture or our knowledge, arts and traditions". I mention this as an example to say that one of the fascinations of non-formal education is that it allows us to tap into the tremendous richness of people's life experiences and, therefore, to the knowledge, capacities and skills that shape a person. And that cannot always be assessed according to whether or not that person knows the Pythagorean Theorem.

“We need a massive movement of a new literacy. It is no longer a question of knowing how to read and write, but of being digitally literate”

There are authors who understand the digitisation of society in different ways. There are those who consider it interesting from the point of view of the swift dissemination of information and the fact that it can be a powerful tool for non-formal education, but there are also those who think that digitisation can further taper knowledge and remove us from real experiences like the one you have just described. What do you make of this?

Technically I do not know the answer. The historic experience and my life experience tell me that whenever changes occur, people tend to describe these changes in a negative way. Then they adapt to them and realise that these changes are actually positive. But, if I may use your question to my advantage, I am often told that non-formal education, adult education, literacy, all this was a very important movement in the 70s or 80s of the last century, of José Mariano Gago, Alberto Melo, Ana Benavente, people who were deeply committed to adult education. They deserve our gratitude for that, but that time has gone, as nowadays almost all 30 or 40 year olds have completed secondary education and many have a higher education degree, so those movements belong in the museum. They tell me this, but I reply that they are totally mistaken. Today we need a massive movement of a new literacy. It is no longer a question of knowing how to read and write, but of being digitally literate. Today, the big gap that we have - we the adults - is that we are truly digitally illiterate. We do not master the basic skills and tools of the digital transformation we are experiencing. Now, the effort we have to make, to mass disseminate digital skills - to master the essentials of IT, internet, digital platforms and means, which are now part of our economy, of our society - has to be made through non-formal means. We cannot wait for the school to be the only one to guarantee that, otherwise we will lose the generations that no longer go to school, like mine. And so, non-formal information is very current today, if we think that the challenge we have today is no longer illiteracy of not knowing how to read or write, but digital illiteracy.

And that can no longer be done at school, for those generations, so...

Yes, because the challenge we have today is to promote digital literacy for all. And this universalisation of basic digital skills can only be done through the tool that is non-formal education, which provides us with quick processes that take into account people's experiences, that are not addressed to teenagers and young people anymore, but to young adults and adults, and that ensure a rapid generalisation of these skills, without which people will not do the things that we usually refer to in English, such as "upskilling" or "reskilling", etc. Because they will not be able to adapt to the new demands of economy and of life.

“Life is multifaceted and all its sides must be filled in”

The generational gap is important, so. But there are parents who believe in limiting their children's access to these technologies, fearing an over-dependence on digital technology. What are your thoughts on this?

Today I don't have children that age, but I do have grandchildren whose education I follow as closely as I can and I support their parents 100% when they set limits. Like my wife and I used to do when our children were small and we didn't let them spend more than certain hours watching television. And so they watch TV, read books, write essays, play, run, help set the table... I mean, we always need a well-seasoned combination of various skills, various activities and various sources of access to information, because that is our life. A generation that came out with only fine motor skills because they were very quick to tactily use mobile phones would be as incomplete in the skills needed, as the generation that did not know how to do multiplication tables in the old days. Life is polyhedral and all its sides have to be filled in. But this is already me speaking as an opinionated person.

Do you agree with those who say that schools in Portugal are too inward-looking and have little interaction with the outside world? There used to be school trips, study visits... I don't know if it is accurate to say that this has been somewhat neglected.

I think it depends a lot on the schools. Here in the Parliament, for example, it is very unusual for there to be a week in which there are no visits by teachers with their students...

But should the school also play the role of a non-formal education developer, in addition to what it already plays in formal education?

Yes, of course it should. Non-formal experiences are very enriching from an educational point of view. And being a practical and straightforward person, from my perspective, this is very straightforward. Less time and resources should be spent on those trips for 12th year graduates, where young people go to hotels in the South of Spain to spend a few days of perfect alienation for no good purpose, and instead there should be more study visits, visits to monuments, voluntary work that also exist in school clubs; in other words, things that stimulate the awareness of our heritage, our collective life and the exercise of our citizenship. All of this is highly recommended and constitutes non-formal education.



“

The National Assembly is a good observation forum of what human life is like

”

You have a unique political career in Portugal, due to the many different responsibilities you have taken on, namely as a professor, also in various ministries and now as President of the Portuguese Parliament. What I ask you is in which of these roles did you learn the most?

[laughter]... my response is quite simple; I always learn more from where I am and at that time when I am there. For example, now it's here in the Parliament...

One learns a lot here?

One learns. You learn a lot. Firstly because this is a good source of information. We are very close to the information we need to develop our activity. Both at national and international level. Then, it is a place of participation par excellence, in the political debates, in the great social issues that we have to face and in the drafting of legislation, of which the Parliament is the number one source. It is also a good observation forum of what men and women are, of what human life is, of what the human psychology is, of group psychology. Then we also have a huge potential because what is most educational is not the long-term exposure to a single faith, a single belief or a single reference, that is, what is most educational is not the immersion in a single orthodoxy that is not open to discussion, but rather the access to different visions, to different proposals, to different literatures, to different ideas. Now, diversity is the Parliament's main identity. And so, one gets used to hearing... some think that this should go more to the right, others think it should go more to the left, others think it should go down the main road, some think that Christian democracy still is the best recipe we have for improving matters a bit, others think it is social democracy, others think it is radical democracy, others think it's Conservatism, and one gets used to the fact that truth will come from the debate between these, and that we should

not remain with just one faith, but should be open to confrontation with each other, and that confrontation, which is the very essence of democracy, a peaceful confrontation, of arguments, is extremely important because it is very educational.

And can you, Augusto Santos Silva, step out of here and look at the school, the hospital, the grocer's shop and the street like a normal citizen?

Yes, yes, I am very keen on that. I will continue my professional activity where it is legitimate to do so. That is, I cannot work both in the Parliament and in teaching, so I have suspended my activity as Professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto, but I can continue researching and publishing. So I maintain my research activity at a slower pace. I continue to study sociology and I continue to try to understand the country and the world with that cane that is sociology. Then, I lead an absolutely normal life. What I can interestingly tell people is that I go to the supermarket every weekend, I am with my family whenever I can, I have normal activities, like going to the theatre and the cinema, I go to countless bookstores, I go to shopping centres, I walk in the street, I go to the tobacconist in my neighbourhood and I do all this quite normally, without any issue.

“I'm not one to have a conversation about car brands or the comparative quality of wines. I don't understand any of that, nor do I want to”

But with a special interest in the cultural field, I believe...

Yes, with a special interest in culture and people. I have a great advantage, which is that things don't really mean much to me. I'm not someone to even have a 10 minute conversation about car brands or the comparative quality of wines. I don't understand any of that, nor do I want to. On the contrary, I can say, like Pico della Mirandola, that I am human and nothing that is human is indifferent to me.

Professor José Hermano Saraiva said in his last years of existence that the Portuguese always say " this is getting worse and worse", but that he, who lived a long life, could assure that it was a fallacy, because it was getting better and better. Now that he is no longer with us, it is said that the generation that is going to school today will be confronted with a step backwards as regards civilisation and opportunities. Do you agree with this pessimistic view?

To be intellectually and scientifically honest, I think it is still too early to answer that question. From the qualifications viewpoint, from the institutional and democratic environment viewpoint, from the technological possibilities viewpoint, from the cultural diversity viewpoint, from the personal freedom viewpoint, I have no doubts when I say that my children's generation is stronger than mine. They are better qualified, they have technological possibilities that mine did not have, they have a democratic regime that nobody questions, they have a more diverse cultural offer and a lot of it is free... But from the employment, income and security standpoints, and above all from the idea that well-being always increases from one generation to the next... I already have second thoughts. It depends a lot, because these new generations have the misfortune of living through crises that are almost continuous, uninterrupted. It was the financial crisis of 2008/2009; the sovereign debt crisis in Europe in 2010; the crises of the adjustment programmes in the countries where they were carried out, like Portugal; then the pandemic; now the war. So, if you are asking me if things are better? I will answer without hesitation that they are, for the parameters that I initially mentioned. As for the issues of welfare, income, security and job opportunities, it is still too early to say if they are or not for the younger generations.

We know that the Parliament certainly fulfils its political and legislative role. But it also plays a social and educational role with regard to the country? Is this also the responsibility of this Parliament?

It is a difficult question... I once said there in plenary that Parliament is not a school. What did I mean by that? I wanted to draw the attention of Members who were putting themselves in a professorial position, that this is not the place where PhD Professors, whatever they may be, explain things to graduates. Here we are all at the same level, we all have the same rights and the debate is among peers, not among professors and students. In that regard, Parliament is not a school. Of course Parliament should be and also is a school of citizenship. What we do here should also serve as a benchmark for our fellow citizens, who should be able to look up to us. Parliament carries out activities to foster citizenship that are truly non-formal education activities. For example, we have an exhibition about the 1822 Constitution, which is open to the people that visit the Parliament. And that is one way of trying to make people, the Portuguese, aware of the fact that this constitution, the elections and the parliamentary assemblies that approve the major laws is something that has been around for 200 years. It is no more than two centuries old in Portugal. Therefore, I cannot have a very clear answer to your question, as it will vary depending on the background in which we place ourselves.





PROFILE

Augusto Santos Silva

He was born in Porto in 1956, and is married, a father of three and grandfather of two granddaughters. He graduated in History from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto in 1978 and got his PhD in Sociology from ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, in 1992, with a thesis titled "Tempos cruzados: um estudo interpretativo da cultura popular", which was published in 1994. He got his PhD in sociology at the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) and his aggregation in social sciences at the Universidade do Porto. He has also taught at secondary school and university level, and is a full professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto and a researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the same university. He also works in the fields of epistemology and methodology of the social sciences, sociology of culture and political science and theory. He has held a number of senior positions at the University of Porto, including Dean and President of the Scientific Council of his Faculty. He has been a columnist for the newspapers Público, Diário de Notícias and Jornal de Notícias, and a commentator for TSF, RTP and TVI24. From 1999 onwards, Mr. Santos Silva has held public functions, including Member of Parliament and Minister of Education, Culture, Parliamentary Affairs, National Defence and Foreign Affairs. He is currently the President of the National Parliament.

CAN THE UNIVERSITY BE A BRIDGE TO NON FORMAL EDUCATION?

Ireland's second city is very different from the vibrant capital Dublin. With just over 200 thousand inhabitants, peaceful and discreet, Cork has its university as one of the main pillars in the formal education process. University College Cork draws on the experience of non-governmental organisations, but also benefits from a national policy that values other types of education, other than the formal.



Should formal and structured education organised into successive academic levels be complemented by non-formal education experiences? The answer is obviously yes, as everyone agrees that non-formal education is fundamental for working on such aspects as the social self and even for contributing to the professional skills of young and old alike.

The question is, then, whether the Academy is contributing to the stimulation of non-formal experiences, by being involved, measuring, and valuing the pathways outside the higher education system. And on this point the answer is not as clear-cut. But in Cork there is no doubt. Neither as to the value of the complementary relationship between the two types of education nor as to the practice of University College Cork (UCC).

The reality we got to know in Cork, 250 km south of Dublin, with the help of Léargas, the Irish agency that manages youth work programmes, which includes Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, is not, however, coincidental. Ireland has been developing national policies focused on youth work and non-formal education for over two decades.



FROM PRISON TO POLITICS AND WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

As soon as we arrive at Cork's urban centre, we see evidence of UCC's involvement in civil society. At the top of one of the city's most conspicuous towers, the main performance house and cultural centre, there the UCC logo stands, as a partner in the ongoing artistic process.

Cork does not boast great architectural splendour and it is at the UCC Campus where we find one of the most interesting and modern areas of the city with an extensive library, a museum and an art gallery, bookshops, homes, and buildings that combine both the contemporary and the ancient, all embedded in a green and well-tended urban park with gated open areas.

Outside its walls, far away from the constant bustle of the university community, we came across several institutions where non-formal education processes take place, almost always with important links to the UCC. One of them, the Life Centre in Cork, highlights one of the harshest social contexts, as it caters for young people who have fallen, in some form or another, into addiction or criminality processes and are not properly monitored at school or do not attend school at all.

They often come here traumatised by relatively disastrous events in their lives and do not have the means to join an educational system with relatively rigid parameters. The Life Centre works to ensure that as many young people as possible achieve their potential by assuring they receive vocational training, by stimulating their taste for arts and crafts which they could not imagine they could perform, and by trying to re-insert them into the formal system.

Don O'Leary has been director of this institution for almost two decades, but his past is also a story of drastic events and of rehabilitation, after he was sentenced to five years in jail for an alleged involvement with the IRA. In fact, he says he was only politically involved with Sinn Féin and not its armed wing, but unusual circumstances eventually linked him to an attack.

After getting out of jail, he took on jobs where his past was an obstacle, ending up working at the school where his wife was teaching. From that point on, teaching followed in the twinkling of an eye, and he soon found himself leading the Life Centre and grasping the real situation of everyone. Until a few years ago he was still a Sinn Féin leader, an activity he left when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

"They ask me why I left politics and why I am still at the Life Centre. I reply that I am really doing politics here," he explained as he guided us through the workshops, the art studios and the stories that intertwine with the troubled lives of the many young people who find shelter there.

"I'm happy to say that I haven't missed a day since I got the news that I was going to die soon of cancer," says O'Leary. "I was told I had eight to eleven months to live, but it's been years and here I am, with my children. There are things, like cancer, that I cannot control, but there are others that I can. What I want to do, who I want to be with and where I want to be, these are things I can control. And what I want now is to do politics in this manner. To teach and to guide my children, trying to build on the reality of each one."

Though Life Centre and O'Leary's activities are of the most non-formal education nature, in 2021 the UCC has acknowledged his contribution to education by awarding him an honorary doctorate. "I never expected to become a doctorate, I never expected this recognition for myself," he asserts, admitting that this distinction bestowed on him by the city's main institution of formal education has ultimately created a bond between the Life Centre and the University, which is important for its children.

In fact, hearing Don O'Leary speak is hearing the word child, repeatedly, even when their ages indicate teenage years and their lives have been driven by adult behaviour. Always the children. "I wish society would be less hard on children and realise that education is every child's right, whatever their circumstances," he adds.

The recognition and acknowledgement of Don O'Leary's work in non-formal education by UCC is just one aspect that characterises the role of Cork University in non-formal education in the city.

“I fully focus when I go to work. I carry myself along”

In the various institutions working with young people in Cork, we have always seen close relationships with the University and almost all those who get involved in non-formal education processes also benefit from being linked to university education, either occasionally or more regularly.

One of the professors we interviewed on campus, who was also involved in non-formal education processes beyond the UCC, pointed out the need not to disconnect university education from real life.

"I fully focus when I go to work. I carry myself along", says Cindy O' Shea, drawing attention to the need to maintain humanised



At The Cork Life Centre

art is a means for the resocialization of young people

links with students in the formal education environment. At the same time, like O'Leary, she recalls the need to "love and respect children" in non-formal education processes.

In another charity, the Youth Work Ireland Cork, we also saw this capacity to care for children. Part of the National Youth Council of Ireland, which is the representative body of voluntary youth organisations in Ireland, a team provides free addiction counselling for young people and their parents. There is a focus on young people aged 11 to 18 whose parents have problems with alcohol or other addictions.

This institution also guides and mediates the relationship with formal education institutions, namely schools and UCC. Nadia Mousseid, a Moroccan national working in the inclusion process, says she seeks to "raise awareness while assisting young people in their active involvement in regard to where they are. My commitment is to work as a catalyst to magnify the voice of marginalised young people so that they can be heard."

Youth Work Ireland Cork
Joe Curtin and Nadia Mousseid



As a Diversity and Inclusion Trainer, she has developed and conducted workshops on human rights to build cultural competence in various organisations. Her activity addresses themes such as anti-racism, intercultural dialogue for change and LGBTI+ awareness. Nadia, who also didn't have an easy life until she settled in Cork, now teaches at UCC, while developing her non-formal activity. "It was working with young people that saved my life," she states alongside Joe Curtin, the centre's director.

Joe points out that it is necessary to contextualise youth work and that this is what non-formal education has most to offer to formal education. "We are too formatted by pre-set ideas. We should look better and more carefully at each person's story

and try to understand their education from the individual's perspective," he asserts. And he recounts a story: "If I tell you that a taxi driver was moving up the wrong side of a street, and a policeman saw him, but did nothing, and you ask him why, he probably wouldn't be able to tell you. But if you think a little you can answer that the taxi driver was not driving his taxi, but on foot, and therefore he was not committing any offence".

Understanding the real world outside the walls of the Academy and transforming the non-formal education experience into something that can be articulated with non-formal education also includes placing this type of experience within the campus context. And in Cork that's what's already happening.



INCLUSION BY ART

In the heart of the university campus
antiracism is tackled through
non-formal education

In the heart of the university campus, we find the magnificent museum and art gallery The Glucksman and in its basement we meet Fionnuala O'Connell. She is a board member of the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), a post-graduate in International Development and Food Policy, founder of the Youth Initiative Against Racism and an artist.

At the service of Cork Migrant Centre (CMC) she carries out psychosocial integration and wellbeing work, by creating safe spaces for migrant families, including, young people to build their capacities (physical, social, emotional, cognitive, cultural).

The UCC welcomes and supports her projects, and, through these, it contributes to the migrants' integration, by applying non-formal education tools.

Creativity and art are part of those tools and in the gallery at The Glucksman we found an exhibition that covers the themes addressed by the Cork Migrant Centre.



The ultimate link between University College Cork and non-formal education is the curricular valorisation it gives to voluntary activities and so on, beyond the campus and the scope of higher education, by awarding academic credit for extra-curricular activities, valuing non-formal education experiences and perceptions.

Fionnuala O'Connell explains: "We work with young migrants in educational support projects in collaboration with UCC, such as the "Homework Club" or "StudyClix", which help them to reach an understanding of the contents of formal education. But we also have a dance and music club and art classes with Crawford Art Gallery or a drama workshop in collaboration with UCC in Millstreet, as well as facilitating work placements, lectures and developing anti-racism projects."

It is certain that in almost all the organisations' activities such as the Cork Migrant Centre, we have the University's intervention, which, besides giving support, provides facilities and values activities such as the arts in this case.



Migrants
deserve special attention in Cork

HOW

IRELAND HAS INVESTED
IN NON-FORMAL
EDUCATION



Sinead McMahon

is a Professor at Maynooth University, where she lectures Social Policy, Youth Work Policy and Praxis, and she is also a contributor to the Limerick Institute of Technology, where she also lectures Social Policy. She sits on the Tipperary ETB Youth Work Committee. Joining us on our visit to Cork, Sinead explained that the interaction between Irish universities, youth work and non-formal education also happens in other cities, such as in Maynooth, the small university town in the North of Ireland where she was born.

“Yes, our diploma in Community and Youth Work is very much connected with youth work practice.” Our students spend 50% of their time doing fieldwork internships, acquiring valuable practical experience. In such settings, they are supervised by qualified youth workers, many of whom are graduates. In addition, we invite practitioners to participate in the classroom as guest speakers. Our aim is to ensure that there is a strong connection between theoretical and practical learning and between informal, non-formal and formal environments,” she clarifies.

Seaned goes on to explain that the focus on non-formal education is a national commitment: “the Irish state has prioritised non-formal education in a number of ways, particularly at the beginning of this century. Ireland has a Youth Work Act (of 2001) which defines it as a form of education, and this was reiterated in a more recent piece of legislation called the ETB Act of 2013. The state supports youth work and non-formal education through funding for youth clubs, youth projects and youth participation initiatives. Currently the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth provides around €67 million to support this type of work.”

“Yes, our diploma in Community and Youth Work is very much connected with youth work practice. Our students spend 50% of their time doing fieldwork internships, acquiring valuable practical experience”



Dublin

All around Ireland we observe the outcomes of a youth work policy



P

POLAND. ANOTHER REALITY

In the visit to Cork, we were joined by Joanna Podgórska-Rykala, Polish fellow at the Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, a degree in Law, Political Science and Administration and a PhD in Social Sciences in the discipline of political science. She liked what she saw in Ireland, which contrasted with the reality of her country.



In Warsaw
there is a green light to progress
solely in Formal Education



"Volunteering should be a natural path, alongside academic training. Our students do internships, which are a kind of volunteering, because they are not paid, although they are compulsory. However, they only last a few weeks. This is very short-term", says the scholar, drawing attention to a system that, she believes, is not favourable to Non Formal Education programmes.

"Students are very limited to the internship of their degree, which when completed, often makes them frustrated." Joanna Podgórska-Rykala explains that in Poland "students can choose either full-time or part-time studies" and are exempted from school fees if they take the first option. "In the old days those who studied full-time did not work professionally and had time for social engagement, for volunteering experiences", in other words, for Non-Formal Education. But today this is not the case and most students are choosing full-time, but are forced to work to support their accommodation and other expenses. "Most of my full-time students

work and there is no time left for other activities in parallel to formal education. They work in shops or restaurants or at shop counters, sometimes both and they still study full time."

The professor explains that, in Poland, non-formal education is severely hampered: "there are times when we cannot find a date to meet with students outside the regular timetable because everyone is busier than I am! For the university professor there is a kind of green light to easily earn a master's degree, but this does not mean that young people are getting a comprehensive education in civic and professional aspects, because Non Formal Education is lacking.

"Young people are the ones who will be full citizens of the country in a few years' time. They will empower public institutions, offices, hold political positions. They will manage our country, they will decide on the economy, on social policy, on environmental protection. In their hands is our future

and that of future generations. This is why I believe that involving them in non-formal education activities is of paramount value, because this moulds their personality and their approach towards the world. It teaches them about tolerance, about dealing with difference. This will help them to face adult life, which is often painful, as well as the horrors of the world, such as wars and armed conflicts that are happening right before their eyes. Non Formal Education teaches far more than the textbooks. It teaches life, relationships, how to deal with problems, conflicts and emotions. It teaches through experience and interaction, for which there is simply not enough room or time even in the best formal schools."

S



TREET FOOTBALL

Gonçalo Sequeira dos Santos
Project Coordinator
Street Football, CAIS Association

Non Formal Education in the advancement of Social Inclusion, the practical case of the Street Football Project.

In the Street Football Project, addressed to young people in social vulnerable situations, many of them NEETs, NFE is effective in the promotion of values, personal and social skills, where most other training processes have not been successful.

This is a bold statement, but it is backed up by over 10 years of NFE implementation and with very significant results in promoting social inclusion.

Launched in 2004 by the CAIS Association, the Street Football Project promotes access to sports practice and the development of values, personal and social skills through a set of complementary educational activities, which have NFE as their methodology.

A youth target audience, living in precarious social circumstances and with life stories that very often lead to a withdrawal from the various traditional learning processes and hinder their personal development and social inclusion.

Nonetheless, the activities implemented using NFE methods make it possible to work on a framework of 20 values, personal and social skills, and provide these young people with the fundamental building blocks for their empowerment, autonomy and active citizenship.

“Is Non Formal Education the only valid learning process for young people's personal development in a situation of social fragility and their respective social integration?”

Not at all, yet it is the most effective!”

Over the last decade, more than 1,000 young people benefit every year from the workshops of the "Move-te, Faz Acontecer" initiative, developed in partnership with NA Erasmus+ JD/ CES, in the context of the Street Football Project. Of those, over 80% have further improved their values and personal and social skills such as motivation, self-esteem, resilience, self-awareness, flexibility, conflict resolution skills or assertiveness, and over 75% have reintegrated into the education system or the labor market.

During the course of this project, all across the country, the young beneficiaries re-organized their lives, became an active part of civil society, and also took on new roles in the local and national structures of the Project, in a process of ongoing learning, always supported by different learning processes and using NFE methods.

The NFE is, in this context, a powerful tool in the learning process, for empowerment and autonomy, which often, as a result of complex life experiences, had not previously

been possible to gain in a different context. “Is Non Formal Education the only valid learning process for young people's personal development in a situation of social fragility and their respective social integration? Not at all, yet it is the most effective!”

The results of the Street Football Project, and the youth empowered by the different communities all across the country, give evidence of this. NFE has enabled learning, in a simple, flexible, accessible, and appropriate way to fit their complex life stories, to build the pillars for their personal development process, to allow them to re-approach formal education, the labor market, the exercise of active citizenship, and full social integration.

IN BRAGA, WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT THE WAY WE PLAY

Can a game become a form of education? In Braga, the Portuguese Red Cross creates games that address issues such as dating violence or trafficking in human beings. It all started in 2016, with a board game, but the latest project is digital and also addresses gender equality.



Ana Sofia Oliveira, from the National Youth Office; Beatriz Neto and Luís Saldanha, from the Braga delegation of the Portuguese Red Cross, are passionate about a game that, while still a game, prompts conversations on serious issues such as gender equality, dating violence or human trafficking.

The idea, which is now in the pilot phase and undergoing impact assessment, was conceived in 2021 and has benefited from an application to the KA2 programme, through the National Agency Erasmus+ Youth/Sports and European Solidarity Corps. The objectives of risk prevention and identification are achieved by building on the players' experiences, young people who often fail to realise that they are involved themselves in processes of violence, discrimination or trafficking.

The game, designed by a consortium which, besides Portugal, includes teams based in Italy and Estonia, also incorporates the important participation of the Psychology Association of the University of Minho.

"This didn't start here", Ana Sofia Oliveira first said, adding that, around 2016, the Portuguese Red Cross Youth realised that, if it wanted to catch young people's attention, it would have to find other ways and couldn't continue to formalise everything". Until then the organisation was doing more expositional things, when trying to approach young audiences and raise awareness of issues that have an impact on the generation.

"We would go to schools and present the contents in a more formal way", explains the technician from the National Youth Office, adding that this posed difficulties when one wanted to really impact the younger generation.

"Based on studies that had already been done at the time, we understood that games could be a great way for us to convey information and carry out non-formal education. Competition is far more stimulating in terms of attention".

And so, starting in 2016, the first application to the European "KA2" programme was devised. At the time, they opted for a board game in which the aim was to work on the "Youth Goals" of the European Union. "We made a European consortium with other countries and the project went very smoothly", he explained.

THE PANDEMIC HAS HELPED TRANSITION TO DIGITAL

Beatriz Neto reveals, however, that it was the 2020 pandemic of COVID-19 that made them switch their focus to a digital model of the concept and develop a new game, this time addressing more socially critical themes. "The pandemic made it complicated to develop the project from 2020 and we started thinking in terms of digital and in developing the current project based on the prevention of dating violence, gender equality and human trafficking", something that often also takes place in a digital environment.

The game is called PLAY4EQUALITY and addresses increasingly current issues that need to be dealt with from a preventive perspective. "The Internet offers young people dreams that they believe in and that are often mirages, they do not exist", she explains, adding that "probably when someone is playing the game they can identify themselves with one of the situations and realise

that they may be victims or at risk of being one".

The offer of a free photo shoot in Indonesia can be a human trafficking trap, but sometimes young people find it hard to understand that they may be on the verge of becoming victims.

The idea of the game is not meant to be entirely digital. In fact, the game is hybrid, in the sense that it provides personal contacts. Ana Sofia explains: "Let's imagine a situation where, during the game, a young man shares the experience of having posted a picture of his girlfriend in a bikini on social networks and that it made her upset and angry and he doesn't understand, because he thinks she looks good in the picture. At that point, the game process can stop and a debate can be promoted with the players, outside the game environment, in order to understand

what the limits of sharing content about third parties, image rights and privacy should be. And so the issues are broken down, which allows young people to come to their own conclusions about what is or is not legal or what precautions they should take, for example, regarding consent or even legal consequences.

The game is already in the pilot phase, and its creators are already conducting studies in schools, and measuring the impact on those who are playing it: "We've already had our first outing on the streets", Beatriz Neto tells us - and she assures us it went "very well". The preliminary phase went perfectly, and involved around 120 participants".

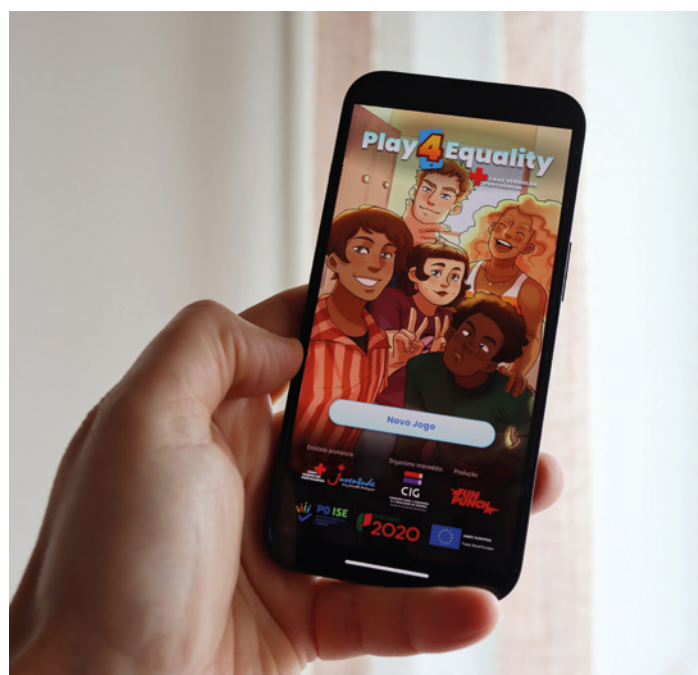
The experience was very positive, with the young players focusing on the themes", she adds, remembering "the collaboration of the Psychology Association of the University of Minho, on the more theoretical and conceptual part of the game".

However, the team that designed it attaches enormous importance to the testing and piloting phases, since the game was fundamentally designed by adults, and it is necessary to fine-tune languages and questions so that the terms used are as close as possible to those that young people use nowadays. "We are still young... but not that young", he admits with amusement. The participation of that association was also important in the results assessment, because it is fundamental to measure results.

Therefore, mental health is one of the aspects being worked on in this game, as well as the relationship with others and with the environment. And it is important that young people's knowledge on these matters is assessed before and afterwards. This example of how non-formal education can achieve results in terms of knowledge and awareness in performance areas where formal education finds it otherwise difficult to operate, refers to the question of complementarity. Are the two processes overlapping or complementary?



“With non formal education it is the individual who seeks knowledge”





Ana Sofia Oliveira explains that "the objectives of formal education and non-formal education end up being the same. What changes are the methods. With non-formal education we try to break out of the box. It is the individual who seeks knowledge and we are merely the facilitators," she says.

"Formal education is very well structured, with non formal education things seem to happen by chance. But that's not the case. Often, everything is planned to happen that way", she explains, considering that "one system is complementary to the other". Beatriz Neto agrees and adds: "when we enter a room they don't see us as the teacher who comes to teach boring things. They feel more secure and confident. We are among peers. There are no wrong answers in non formal education. The facilitator has to ask the right questions though".

But this begs a legitimate question: because it is not formal, doesn't it create insecurity? "No. We are used to managing the process," they assure us. "Non formal education doesn't have to be less elaborate. We work better on building trust. But this is not a war between formal and non formal education, on the contrary."

Even so, there is still one conflict, that of the available time. "We need formal education to give us more time so that we can work on non formal education", assures Ana Sofia Oliveira. "In Braga we are active in many schools with different projects. The groupings in Braga have understood that we have the capacity to intervene and they ask a lot for the involvement of non formal education in the formal educational process. We have had a great response from Braga schools, provided that our processes fit into the objectives they have. Unfortunately, the trust that the Braga Red Cross has gained with schools does not always prevail in the rest of the territory. There's still a lot of ignorance, and the country does not all work in the same way," she explained.

One question that can be raised is whether it is easier or more difficult to develop projects like this in larger environments and if the scale makes it difficult. The technicians who responded to our report have no doubts: "schools in Lisbon and Porto are more open and there are more organisations. In smaller environments, there are not as many organisations and there is not as much 'openness'". The municipalities can play an important role. When the game is ready, there will be meetings with local authorities to disseminate the project and the aim is, through local authorities, to get to schools: "we want to disseminate the power of non formal education as much as possible".

WE USE RED CROSS'S
INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES





This consortium with Estonia and Italy was important for the Portuguese Red Cross. Luís Saldanha, from the Braga delegation of the institution, explains that this international context provides it with scale and allows the game to be played by any young person from any country, as, besides the languages of the three countries involved, it is also in English.

But how do you get to play this earnest game? "We have made an announcement in the local Red Cross network, but it will also be available in the shops of mobile phone operators, Android and IOS. "Right now we are in implementation and studying, that is, it is in a pilot phase in Portugal and Italy," he says.

The aim of the pilot phase is to reach 700 young people within two months.

We at the Portuguese Red Cross have a youth participation strategy that stems from international guidelines. And these topics are international priorities of the institution. From our experience on the ground we also realised that this rationale made sense. Talking about mental health and COVID was important in the interpersonal relationships of young people. The social EU, the environment, the climate crisis are also themes that we want to address".

Luís Saldanha further adds: "all our tools are developed in collaboration with young people. We have the international guidelines, but all of this is also done together with them. And these are issues that interest young people and so we work with them".

The issue of funding is also important. The authors of this project recognise the crucial importance of the financial boost that is key to the start-up. "Sometimes we have ideas, but it is impossible to get them to work, because the pilot is essential. If we have funding to test, then the tool will be a better tool."

THE

ROOTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE

Jo Claeys
Non Formal Educator

“The Power of Non Formal Education”

2006:

an international youth work trainers' meeting in Bonn - Germany. With a few colleague trainers we engage in a chat about the upcoming changes in the European Mobility Programmes. And particularly about some of the emerging "new" terminology. Especially when much of our work became labeled 'Non Formal Education' (NFE). Not a new word at all back then, but still very little used in our context.

In search to find more clarifying synonyms, neither "learning by doing", "experiential learning" or even "gamebased learning" were satisfying. Non Formal Education was a more complete conceptual terminology for our pedagogical flow and approach.

And yet ... even nowadays, almost 20 years later, many of us still struggle to explain in clear words what Non Formal Education really entails.

Trainers team:

Denis Morel (France)
Jo Claeys (Portugal)
Simona Molari (Italy)

Coordinator for the NA Network:

Thierry Dufour (Belgium)

2009:

the international training course 'The Power of NFE' was launched. It would not focus on 'joy and pleasure' in an international bubble. It would be an 'annoying questioning' course. No focus on tools and methods, that's too easy. There is a much bigger and more important path before such a choice: the very meaning of education.

Some ingredients of the course:

The diversity in understanding concepts, similarities, symbioses and differences between 'non formal education', 'formal education' and 'informal learning'. The coherence of each one as an educator and as a person. Should we have different values when it comes to one role or the other? How relevant is our transparency towards young people we support in their growing role as future community builders? Or can we simply swap different hats according to the occasion.

How does each one, as an educator, deals with the 'power' one has? Are we really aware of how -even well intended and/or unconsciously- we actually might be abusing that power. Like it or not, ignore or reject it:

“With great power, comes great responsibility”

Quote popularized by the uncle of Spiderman

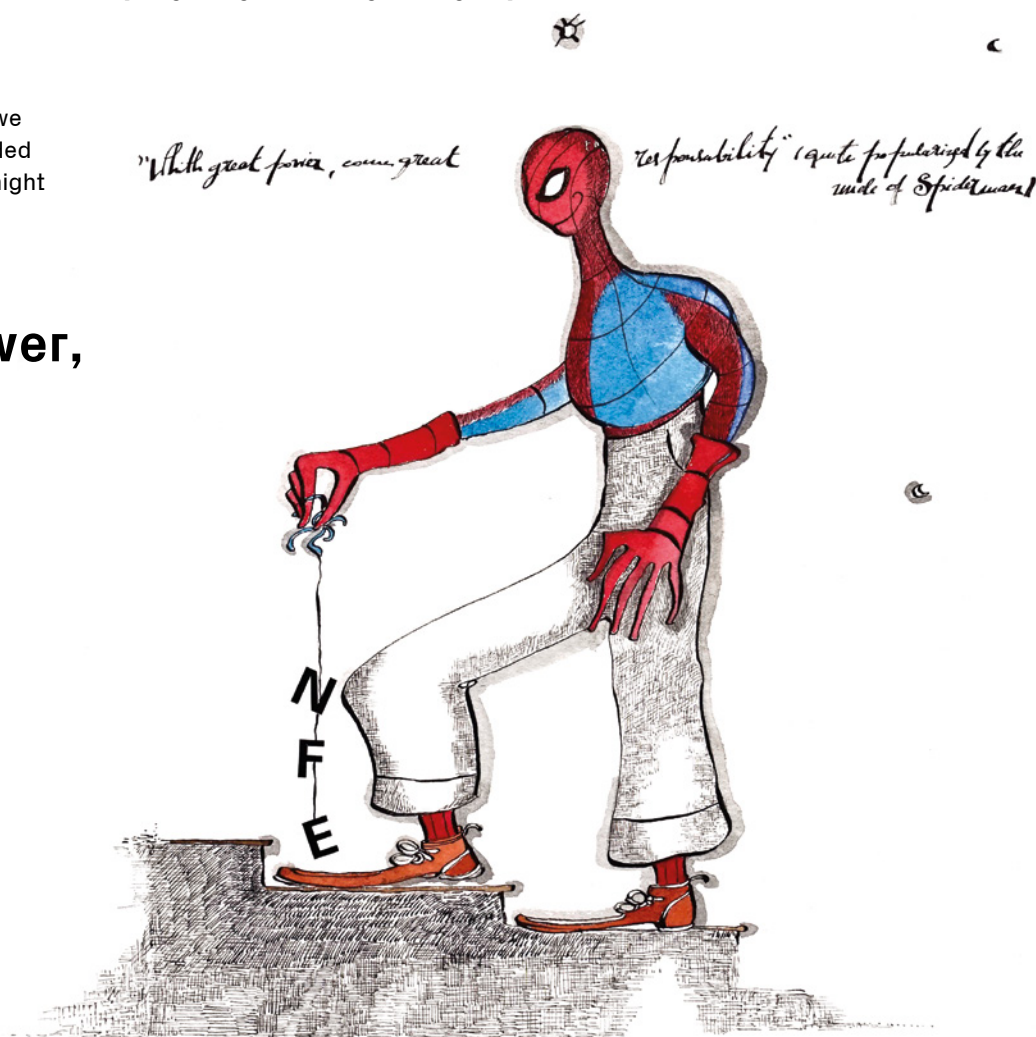
The next edition of 'The Power of NFE' in Portugal will take place from 13th to 18th of June.

Keep an eye on the website juventude.pt

for Erasmus+ Youth & Sport has strongly supported this training course by hosting 10 editions of the past years and sending 78 Portuguese youth workers and educators. Since 2022, also other educational sectors have expressed their interest. In January 2023, the first edition for educators in the Adult Education Sector took place. Non Formal Education is a transversal given which creates 'powerful' learning and empowerment opportunities for all. Regardless age or context.

Are you ready?
We are!

Let's however not go too much into detail and keep most of the spicy juice open for discovery by you, one day or another. So far, 44 residential editions and 4 online adapted versions, in different languages (English and French version) took place. At this moment, 1300 educators coming from 45 different countries have dived into this educational adventure. From the very beginning, the Portuguese Agency



OPEN DOOR ART





The Old Town of Funchal underwent a decisive artistic intervention 12 years ago which boosted urban regeneration, the economy and life in that part of the city. Sveta Azernikova is Russian and has led for more than 13 years an association that owns the only art gallery operating there and was our guide through the painted doors of the narrow streets, streets that were once abandoned but are now bustling with colour and life.

ArteM welcomes projects and is one of the engines of non formal education in Madeira Island.



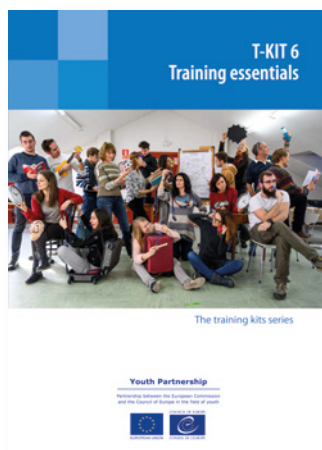








Snežana Bačlija Knoch,
Sabine Klocker,
Stefan Manevski



Published by the EU CoE Partnership and available on the Youth Partnership website between the EU and CoE, this is a publication from the T-kit series, a toolkit" publications on European Youth Policies

Epale Resource Kit Young Adults



Available at https://epale.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/EPALE_ResourceKit_YoungAdults.pdf proposes some selected items to give you an idea of the debate you will develop as part of the European Year of Youth. This short kit brings together reflections and, on the grounds of some projects, tools to support the development of non formal education practices.

ObCig Newsletter

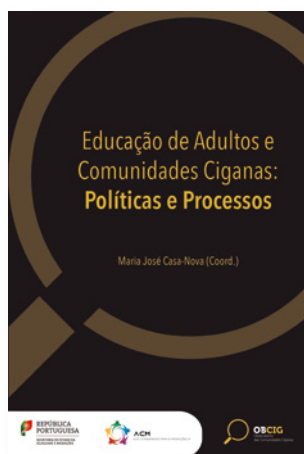


Observatory of Roma Communities (ObCig)/High Commissioner for Migrations, I.P. (ACM)

The ObCig Newsletter has 17 issues, published between April 2018 and December 2022, focusing on various current topics (Education in times of pandemic times, Racism, Gypsy Associativism, Gypsy Music, Local Participation, among others) and aimed at scientific dissemination and reflection, the deconstruction of stereotypes, the promotion of the knowledge of Gypsy people, the dissemination of the work of Roma associations, intercultural mediators and other civil society actors and organisations, as well as information on relevant national and international events and reports. It is available in digital format for free disseminated through the ACM, I.P.'s main communication channels of the ACM, I.P. and ObCig (websites and Facebook pages). Subscription to the Newsletter ObCig Newsletter by sending an email to obcig@acm.gov.pt, if you wish to receive it in your account after the launch of each issue. <https://www.obcig.acm.gov.pt/newsletter>

Adult Education and Roma Communities: Policies and Processes

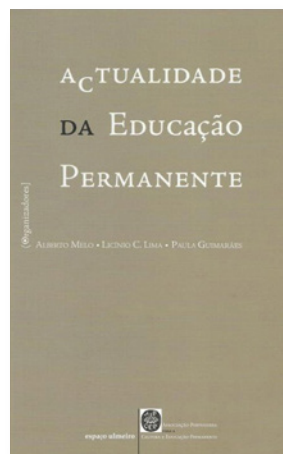
by Maria José Casa-Nova



The Observatory of Roma Communities (ObCig) published, in 2022, within the ObCig Studies Collection, the book "Adult Education and Gypsy Communities: Policies and Processes", bringing together the contributions presented by Licínio Lima, Luís Capucha, Cláudia Pereira, Cristina Milagre, Alejandra Ortiz and Ramón Flecha, at the International Seminar held in 2021, on the importance of education for Gypsy adults. Roma adults. The book also includes with an initial contribution from Maria José Casa-Nova. The novelty of the work in the Portuguese panorama. It is a publication in digital format free access online and in paper format (freely paper format (available free of charge by sending a request to obcig@acm.gov.pt). Published by the High Commission for Migrations, I.P. (ACM), this publication is available at <https://www.obcig.acm.gov.pt/documents/58622/201011/Educa%C3%A7%C3%A3o+de+Adultos/d65ac04a-a15a-4191-927f2e3371468f9d>

A@tuality of Continuing Education

by Melo, A., Lima, C. Licínio, Guimarães, P.
Espaço Ulmeiro & APCEP




Published by Espaço Ulmeiro & APCEP is compulsory reading for anyone interested in the education sector. Despite the most recent trends that seek to link it to formal schooling and training for employment, continuing Education maintains its relevance as a proposal for problematizing education. Today, more than ever, it has an important role to play in problematising education. Today, more than ever, it has an essential role in resisting new vehicles of oppression and obscurantism and in the creation of regenerating alternatives. This is the central message that the authors of the book entitled A@tuality of Continuing Education (from Portugal, Catalonia, Brazil, Slovenia Slovenia and the Netherlands) put across their texts. It costs 15 euros (postage and packaging included) and can be ordered at espacoulmeiroassoc.cultural@gmail.com

Radicalism prevention



Following the Paris Declaration, adopted in March 2015, on the promotion of citizenship and the shared values of freedom, tolerance and non discrimination through education, the European Commission adopted, in June 2016, a "Communication from the Commission" on supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and proposed the establishment of a network of inspirational role models. The Agency Erasmus+ Youth/Sports National Agency and European Solidarity Corps reports, on a section of its website, some of the stories that stemmed from this action, seeking to further inspire young people. www.juventude.pt/pt/pages/rolemodelspt

Blink

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Erasmus+ Juventude/Desporto
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www.juventude.pt
www.europasolidaria.pt