

Exemplos de cursos de formação para a educação;  
Cursos de formação;  
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Last year, the average percentage of the population in countries of the OECD who did not go beyond the compulsory educational cycle was 29%. In Portugal, that percentage was an astonishing 73%. These numbers for the Portuguese case have not varied greatly: back in 1998, the population in our country with no more than the compulsory level represented 82%. In twelve years, an improvement of 11% was achieved – but in the last six years the levels have swayed little, from 74% in 2005 to 72% in 2006, to 73% in 2007, back into 72% in 2008, and again to 73% in 2009 and 2010.

What these percentages mean is that the majority of the Portuguese active population still enters the labor market largely unprepared, despite the measures taken by former governments to foster educational valuing. In fact, the programs developed over the last decade or two by the

Ministry of Education to implement and improve Lifelong Learning and Professional Proficiency, some of which have been in force for over ten years, have yet to bear their fruits.

**It is of the quality of these fruits that I want to talk to you in this conference.**

Today in our country, a 15-year old can pursue vocational education starting from the level of the first cycle. An 18-year old can choose from a number of vocational or professional courses, which assure him or her equivalence to the regular (scientific-humanistic) schooling of the pre-university level. Young people of 15, 16, or 17 can choose from what we call CEF (Education and Vocational Courses), corresponding to a completion of schooling up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (the 9th year of schooling); and what is usually referred to as CP (Professional Courses), which

amounts to completing the secondary level. Adults, on the other hand, have three paths to choose from, as alternatives to the regular (scientific-humanistic) schooling: EFA (Adult Education and Vocational Courses), FMC (Modular Vocational Courses), and CET (Technological Education, corresponding to the first university levels, in which pre-18 year olds can enroll, if they have completed the pre-university).

In either case, the main goals of the array of opportunities offered students and young professionals are:

- to guarantee a good preparation for the labor market;
- to improve the probabilities of their vocational as well as professional success;
- to foster the development of professional and vocational skills;
- to certify capacities, experiences and vocations.

These courses are directed for that part of the population with no higher education, which is either about to enter the labor market or already employed but wish to improve their qualification and do better at the present job, or even change jobs and search for greater professional fulfillment. But an analysis of the percentages presented earlier leaves us wondering why, even with all these educational and vocational offers, the population with higher levels of education, i.e., better prepared for the labor market, does not increase. The answer may not lie in the numbers – in quantities – but rather in the quality of these offers.

This government is engaged in assuring the quality of all levels of education. This means going through all efforts – at a time of serious contingencies - to optimize resources, making sure they are applied where they are most needed, and that students and professional can take

the best advantage. The obvious and desired consequence is stronger motivation of students and professionals and a better labor market, capable of facing the technological, social, and economical challenges of the present and the future.

The commitment to these goals implies an investment in the accurate analysis of the systems which are in force now, both in the regular schooling and in vocational and professional alternative paths. As I speak, inter-ministerial teams are engaged in assembling data, assessing and evaluating the different course offers in the Portuguese schooling system.

We are all gathering forces, in this government, to make sure the scientific-humanistic and the vocational-professional quality of the schooling paths are equivalent. Having a vocational and professional schooling where

students are required to reach as demanding goals as those pursued in the regular schooling courses is one of the ways to ensure mobility among vocations, professions, and skill proficiencies.

It is essential to assess and foster an accurate, and demanding, system of certification and validation of skills, which allows for the best valuing of professional experiences and capacities, not just in young people but also in professionals who might not have thought of specialising or having their best qualities recognised.

On the way to achieve this, we hope to instill positive collateral consequences in the profiles of the teachers in the scientific-humanistic schooling, as well as reach an also positive reinforcement of class authority and discipline.

It is essential to give young students as well as adults real

motivation, and the possibility to thrive, to make their major skills known and recognised, validated within one system capable of channelling them towards a personal betterment.

Only by achieving this we can level up with the best educational statistics, numbers that will mirror true national capacity for overcoming individual as well as collective hardships.