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## **The recognition, validation and certification of key competencies system: a new way of promoting active citizenship?**

### **Keywords**

Lifelong Learning, Recognition of Prior Learning, Key Competencies for Live, Active Citizenship.

### **The evolution of the Portuguese Public Adult Education Sub-System**

Throughout last century Portugal went through four different types of political power organisations. We can place the final moment of Constitutional Monarchy at the dawn of the twentieth century. It would be replaced by the installation of the 1st Republic, on 5th October 1910.

These would be years of profound change as far as politics are concerned, accompanied by an excruciating economic crisis. Educationally speaking the situation was difficult, in spite of some efforts to fight illiteracy. We have a country with 75.1 % illiteracy in 1911 and 67.8% in 1930. The strong political instability of the period, bearing in mind that Portugal had 45 Constitutional Governments from 1911 to 1926, did not, however, keep the governments from taking what we could consider the first measures in educating the population, measures that would not have a special impact.

The military Coup that took place on 28th May 1926 marks the next political era that would become known in Portugal's political history as "Estado Novo", the New State. A military dictatorship presided by Oliveira Salazar that would endure for forty-eight years. It was this political regime's responsibility, in 1952, to carry out the first institutional measures in the area of the adult education. Or more precisely: (i) the "Plano de Educação Popular", the popular education plan and (ii) the "Campanha Nacional de Educação de Adultos", the national campaign for Adult Education. The main characteristic of these measures taken in the fifties, was to establish a school model that aimed at decreased illiteracy. It is accurate to say that these measures were

insufficient and in no way related to the contents of the concept of Adult Education that had already gained some significant tradition in other countries.

It would take another military coup, at 25th April 1974, to initiate the institutionalisation of a democratic political regime that would have, until today, its principles consolidated in the “Constituição da República Portuguesa”, the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, established in 1976. The nearly three decades since the Portuguese representative democracy was implemented are also the ones that were more intense in the production of scenarios in the area of adult education in this country.

It is during the last quarter of the twentieth century that we find the majority of the legislative initiatives concerning this sector in the public education system. It was during the same year that the democratic constitutional text was drafted, that a Decree, “Decreto-Lei” (DL. Nº 384/76) was also proposed, a law that would constitute the legal support for the adult education sub-system in Portugal. Throughout this period the responsible entity was the Board of Permanent Education, “Direcção Geral de Educação Permanente” (DGEP), a responsibility that lasted six years, from 1973 to 1979.

In the fervour of the post-revolutionary period of 74, DGEP and a certain excitement in social and popular associative movements took some concrete steps in turning an almost non-existent sector into something that was truly promising, from a social point of view. In 1979 the National Plan for Adult Education and Literacy (“Plano Nacional de Alfabetização e Educação de Base de Adultos”) (PNAEBA) was drafted, which is, maybe, the most ambitious project ever carried out in Portugal for this sector. For the first time it projected a political strategy of global character that foresaw creating a National institute for the adult education, among other measures. However this plan was never put to the test it was planned for, since the adult education sector as it was conceived by the PNAEBA turned out to be a secondary thing in the government political agenda.

A meaningful aspect of this panorama was the fact that, only in a decade, the eighties, the adult education sector was ruled by three distinct entities. First the “Direcção Geral de Educação de Adultos” (the Adult Education Board) (DGEA) from 1980 to 1987. Then the “Direcção Geral de Apoio e Extensão Educativa” (the Board for Educational Support and Extension) (DGAE), which would last less than a year, and finally the “Direcção de Extensão Educativa” (the Board for Educational Extension) (DGEE), that worked from 1988 to 1993.

Ten years after DL Nº. 384/76, already referred to above, what we can infer is that the adult education sector in Portugal was becoming ever more scholarly and fragmented.

From 1986 to 1995, when “Partido Social Democrata”(PSD)<sup>1</sup> (the Social Democrat Party) took control, a restructuring of the educational system would take place in Portugal, starting with the drafting of the “Lei de Base do Sistema Educativo” (LBSE Lei Nº 46/86, 14<sup>th</sup> October). In this context, a series of studies were ordered to be carried out by the newly created “Comissão de Reforma do Sistema Educativo” (the Educational System Reform Commission)(CRSE, Conselho de Ministros Nº 8/86).

Within this (“Comissão”) Commission, a task force was created. Its mission was to study the best way to reorganise the adult education sub-system and to come up with a restructuring and development project focused on the concept of permanent education, the same that has been internationally consolidated by the UNESCO ever since 1965<sup>2</sup>. In this project, the emphasis was, among other things, the importance of a political perspective to adult education, as a strategic point for the country’s development. It insisted on some aspects already present in PNAEBA, such as the urgency in creating a national institute for adult education, which is regarded as an autonomous specialised centre that would convey unity, visibility and coherence to this sector.

This government reform impulse comes at a time when Portugal joins the European Union, then European Economic Community (EEC). The political power's major purpose was the modernisation of the country. The educational reforms at the time had a clearly neo-liberal inspired character, that can be seen by the way the politicians handled the adult education sub-system that was miles away from the recommendations of the “Comissão de Reforma do Sistema Educativo”(CRSE) task force.

Politically, this sector was compressed in an intensely reductive paradigm, from a conceptual point of view, that understands adult education as a mere second opportunity education or as vocational training. Regarding all this global process of intense reform in the Portuguese educational system, more precisely, the adult education sub-system reform, Licínio Lima wrote in a most enlightened way:

“the destination of the CRSE task force suggestions (...) were generically ignored by the various governments of the “Partido Social Democrata”. Indeed their political measures made sure of suspending any reform process in this sector, starting from a global project for adult education in Portugal (...) adult education was to become the object of a political and government action that made it to history for being precisely, non-reformist.” (Cf. Lima, L., 2001: 49)

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<sup>1</sup> With represent “the Right”.

<sup>2</sup> Consacrated seven years later , first in 1972 with E. Faure text *Apprendre à être*, nowadyas a classic, and the II International Conference on Adults Education, held in Tokyo.

It was during the government of the Social Democrats (Partido Social Democrata) between 1986 and 1995, that the impact of the so-called neo-liberal globalisation, which favours the markets instead of social politics, as in the Providence States, was more visible. In the latter, a special reference was made to education as means of public well being, in all its different steps.

This political orientation towards economic progress would get another dynamism and other criteria when the “Partido Socialista” (PS)<sup>3</sup> Socialist Party took over. It ruled from 1995 to 2002. The adult education sub-system, would, by then, get a new impulse. Without being a counter-reform or reform of the prior law, the government announces significant changes to this sector. From the very beginning it was obvious that an effort was being made at conceptual enlargement and a few innovation traits, in the essential of educational politics for the sector. Its redirected focus on permanent education suggests a practical articulation between vocational training and education and also between the formal educational system and extra-curricular educational activities with a not-so-formal character.

In order to study the strategic viability of these intentions, the government, through “Secretaria de Estado da Educação e da Inovação” (SEEI), the Secretary of State for Education and Innovations, creates a new task force to study the development of adult education (Despacho Nº 10534/97, 16th July). The study ended in a vast report, criticising the various setbacks in this sector, identifying specific problems, for which it would find coherent political measures, and for the global restructuring of the Portuguese adult education sub-system. Once again, the task force picks up the urgent idea of creating a public entity, devoted to this specific sector, the “Agência Nacional de Educação de Adultos” (ANEFA) the National Agency for Adult Education .

About a year later, the “Programa para o Desenvolvimento da Educação e Formação de Adultos” (PDEFA), a program for the development in education and vocational training for adults, with both (“Ministério da Educação”) the Ministry of Education and (“Ministério do Trabalho”) Ministry of Labour sharing responsibility. Its fieldwork was carried out by the group whose mission was Development of Education and Training for Adults, (“Grupo de Missão para o Desenvolvimento da Educação e Formação de Adultos”) (Resolução Nº 92/98, 25<sup>th</sup> June). Among other actions of this group, one was the creation, finally, of “Agência Nacional para a Educação e Formação de Adultos” (ANEFA), national Adult Education and Training Agency (AETA), meant to operate temporarily for a period of two years (ANEFA, DL Nº 387/99, 28<sup>th</sup> September).

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<sup>3</sup> With represent “the Left”.

Though it didn't quite perform as would have been expected of an agency that had been conceived by the various task forces throughout the years, ANEFA (AETA) came up with some actions that were truly valuable for this sector. To highlight but a few: (i) adults education and vocational training (efa degrees), (ii) all initiatives that led to the acknowledgement, validation and recognition of all skills learnt outside the formal education system, (iii) all actions from knowing more (s@ber +), (iv) the several editorial projects, etc.

One of the strongest critics ANEFA (AETA) has had to face was the fact that, although its conceptual scheme levelled and considered adult education and adult training at the same level, when it came to practice it always pinpointed the importance of training instead of adult education, in its different dimensions.

Another important criticism comes from the observed difference between this entity's very first political intention and the fact that it never had any clear and specific power to determine a joint national global policy for public adult education sub-system. In fact, neither with ANEFA (AETA) nor without it was such policy ever drafted, not at least until the end of the socialist government in 2002.

With such negative results in local elections and subsequent stepping down of the socialist government, the general elections saw ("Partido Social Democrata") the Social Democrats back in power. One of its first measures was to abolish several public entities and institutions, amongst them the ANEFA (AETA), and to create the "Direcção Geral de Formação Vocacional" (DGFV), the General Direction for Vocational Training (GDVT). Going through a very difficult economic crisis, the government's strategy highlighted the development of the economy and investment, thus social policies became a secondary thing. With the nomination of the Prime Minister to take the Chair of the European Commission in 2004 general elections took place again in 2005 and saw the "Partido Socialista" Socialist Party back in power. This political rotativity and the very delicate economic and social present moment in Portuguese context are not helping to allow visible developments in creating a global public adult education policy.

This historical retrospective and the political reality of adult education in the Portuguese context, allows us the conclusion that this has always been a neglected sector, in spite of the fact that political power rhetoric may sometimes have been more intense than other. The fact is, any breakthrough and maturing has had little impact in a sector with almost no political measures at all. What room is there left for adult education in Portugal, without a consistent and innovative national political background?

## National impacts of the European Educational Macro-Politics of Late Years

The new logic in Adult Education and Training emerged in the European political agenda mainly during the mid-eighties of the last century and became ever more significant and visible in European political and ruling production throughout the nineties.

The Lifelong Learning Memorandum<sup>4</sup> is, in a certain way, the document that initiated the educational policies for the XXI century, as far as European policies are concerned. Indeed it expresses a conceptual shift that had been around in the preceding few years and that which was thereafter consolidated. Thus the transition from macro-policy to "Lifelong and Lifewide Learning" was made definitive, as one can deduce from the very beginning of this document, in which, we can read the following:

"The commitment to lifelong learning should keep pace with a successful transition to an economy and society based on knowledge... lifelong education has ceased to be just an aspect of education and training and should become the guiding principle of demand and participation in a continuous learning process, independent of the context. The coming decade should see this vision put into practice". (2000: 3)

Although it will not be the object of this paper, the continuing debate that goes on at European level in this area<sup>5</sup> is having a very deep impact, both at the educational investigation level and as a conceptual debate related to the production of knowledge in this area and the regulations and political transposition to the national education and training systems of each and every member state.

We are especially interested here in focusing our analysis on the national impact of educational policies created in the European context of this sector. The political initiatives panorama and its respective investment and funding in Adult Education and Training in Portugal, shows that this sector received fresh impetus in 1996.

In this year, the "Conselho Nacional de Educação" (CNE) National Board of Education (NBE) analysed the situation and issued an Advisory Report that made some recommendations in order to develop the Adult Education Subsystem in Portugal. We believe this is the first national impact of Europe's decision to proclaim the year 1996 as the "European year of Education and Lifelong Learning". At a national level, the result of this initiative was, the creation of a Specialised Commission in this area, which

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<sup>4</sup> The Document was a result of the European Councils of Lisbon (March, 2000) and Feira (June, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Specially after the Jacques Delors Document of 1995.

amongst other activities would organise, a seminar entitled “Lifelong Education and Training” together with the CNE (NBE) and would also present a “Magna Carta” on it. In the second half of the 90’s in Portugal, some political initiatives in Adult Education and Training became visible. For the first time ever in the history of UNESCO’s Institute of Education’s International Conferences on Adult Education, Portugal had an official representation in the form of a Government Delegation at the V CONFITEA, held in Hamburg in 1997.

The result of this participation was what we believe to be the second most visible and decisive national impact on this sector, namely the creation in the nineties of a Task Force, dependent upon the Secretary of State for Education and Innovation, which led to the production of a Strategy Document with some recommendations towards the Development of Adult Education in Portugal. From this Document<sup>6</sup> we highlight the third recommendation entitled “defining and enforcing a national scheme of balance between personal skills and validation of the ones acquired through learning and training” as well as the ninth recommendation entitled “Creating an organisational structure, exclusive, but widely involved in Adults Education”. In the same year, 1998, the government set up a Mission Group for the Development of Adult Education and Training, which would have a double fundamental objective. On the one hand to start the process that would lead to the formation of a National Agency for this area, and on the other hand to develop the necessary work to set in motion the Programme known as “Projeto de Sociedade Saber +” Society Project: Knowing +, which had been part of the National Employment Plan (NEP) as a strategic action for the improvement of employability in Portugal.

Thus, for the first time in the history of Adult Education a Public Institute entirely devoted to this area would be created, namely “Agencia Nacional de Educação e Formação de Adultos” (ANEFA) the Adults Education and Training Agency (AETA). In the introductory text of the law that created ANEFA (AETA) in September 1999, which refers to the definition of Adult Education and Training as established in the Hamburg Declaration, one can read the following:

“A policy of Adult Education which aims at simultaneously correcting a past marked by a delay in this area while preparing for the future by assuring an effective and adequate answer which generates equal opportunities and prevents social exclusion through reinforcement of access conditions at all levels and to all kinds of knowledge. Through this perspective, the Adult Education and Training strategy

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<sup>6</sup> Edited in 1998.

should combine a public service and a programme logic... thus the present diploma has created ANEFA (AETA)... conceived with the aim\_of creating intervention methodologies, projects and programmes promotion as well as support for civil initiatives in the area of Adult Education and Training and the phased building of a recognition and validation system for informal knowledge os adults".

After this political step had been asserted a long time ago in some Advisory Reports and Recommendations that came about in democratic Portugal, it is possible to observe some national dynamic that, in spite of everything, seemed promising in this area. In 2000, more or less a year after ANEFA's (AETA) creation and when it was still working on installation regime, four Project Teams were created to develop structures and concrete action that would lead to the implementation of objectives and goals established for this area. Of all teams we highlight the «Recognition and Competences Validation Project Team».

This National Agency, specific to the Adult Education and Training area, would cease its installation regime and would be disbanded in 2002, by which time a "Direcção Geral de Formação Vocacional" (DGFV) General Direction for Vocational Training (GDVT) was to have been created, with several responsibilities in all the vocational training area. This gave us the impression of moving backwards in the Adult Education and Trainig specific area and visibility given space.

From this new public entity, the DGFV (GDVT), we emphasise the work done that still made possible the continuation of previously done work with the objective of creating a National Network of Recognition, Validation and Competences Certification Centres (RVCC Centres) in Portugal.

### **Politic Motivations to Implement the RVCC System in Portugal**

The main political purpose for implementing RVCC Centres in Portugal was to level the school certification indexes of the Portuguese working population with the average indexes of other European Union member sates. In 2000, according to National Statistics Institute data, 64.2% of the active population of mainland Portugal (3 138 500 adults) had not finished nine years basic education. The weakness of learning levels in the active population was characterised by the following: 33.9% had only 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of basic education (four years of learning) while 21.4% had only 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of basic

education (six years of learning), values that together total 55.3% of active population and show that one of the most evident problems of the state school system in Portugal had been students dropping out. To these data should also be added the 8.9% of the population that have had no formal education at all.

The low levels of professional training, of schooling and literacy levels are often seen as obstacle to economic sustained growth in today's society and have been a central focus of concern to a growing number of countries as well as to international organisations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the European Union itself. In the introductory text of the law that created RVCC Centres Network, one can read:

"The Recognition, Validation and Competences Certification Centres (RVCC Centres) are set in the European strategy for employment and in the National Employment Plan framework with the aim of being both a stimulus for and an effective support to the search for certification and new training opportunities... This priority was again established in the Agreement on Employment Policies, Labour Market, Education and Training, signed by the government, management and labour, in February 2001... This new service, which will be parallel to the National System for the Professional Certification, will be upheld by public or private entities..."

Today the National Network Centre of RVCC Centres is five years old and has 70 Centres, whose territorial distribution follows two main criteria: first, the levels of demographic density; second, considerations about geographic dispersion. This Network was built gradually with co-funding by the European Social Fund (ESF), its progressive expansion being planned for the next few years<sup>7</sup>. There is already a ranking of entities dependent on the General Direction for Vocational Training (GDVT) as potential sponsors to the RVCC Centres, which will soon enlarge the present National Network. In RVCC Centres's Quality Chart, one can read:

"The RVCC Centres Network has been built as a privileged means for communication, co-operation and excellence in the area of Recognition, Validation and Competences Certification of Portuguese citizens, in permanent co-operation with identical networks in the European zone and fitting into a broader system of relations aiming at social cohesion and innovation as the driving forces behind personal development and organisational competitiveness".

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<sup>7</sup> The National Network had 6 Centres in 2000, 28 Centres in 2001, 42 Centres in 2002, 56 Centres in 2003 and 70 Centres in 2004, according to GDVT.

## National RVCC Centres Structure and Function

The basic assumption that led to the creation of RVCC Centres for adults who did not complete compulsory school years, just like it was said by António Firmino da Costa (2002), was: "deducing the consequences of the realisation that if amongst the adult population there is an enormous deficit in basic skills of formal learning, then this population will also have a big deficit in certification of competences learnt informally, throughout their various working and creative experiences" (p.8). So in a phase prior to the Centres' implementation it was necessary to create means of support that allowed clarification of the way in which their mission should be enforced in field. Thus there came about two basic tools that were to be the foundation of RVCC Centres work: the «Referential Key Competences in Adult Education and Training» and the «Structure Script for the Recognition, Validation and Competences Certification Centres».

The Referential Key Competences adopts a concept of key competence that "leads to a capacity to act and react in an adequate way in potentially complex situations, through mobilising and combining knowledge, attitude and personal proceedings, meaningful and values oriented in a specific context"(p.9). It is officially organised in three levels: level B1 is equivalent to 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of basic education; level B2 is equivalent to 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of basic education and Level B3 is equivalent to 3rd cycle of basic education. These include four general areas of key competences: Language and Communication (LC); Mathematics for Life (ML); Communication and Information Technologies (ITC); and Citizenship and Employability (CE).

In Portugal, the RVCC Centres were created to act in three axes of action that are considered essential and priority, if active population and their characteristics and national context are to be considered. These are recognition, validation and certification, which represent the structural functions of these Centres and are based on the «Referential Key Competences in Adult Education and Training». These three axes of action hold together the logic of the "Recognition, Validation and Certification Process" (RVC Process), which is in itself presented as the innovative answer in the National Adult Education and Training portuguese scenario.

The RVC Process seems to be designed to allow the adults to evidence the competences acquired throughout their lives, their "learning experiences"<sup>8</sup>, which they have not been able to appreciate and value in a conscious way, because it is mostly about competences that are directed to social interaction. This is exactly where the Centre's teams direct their intervention to, in the sense that they should get the adults

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<sup>8</sup> See Chené and Theil (1991). Also Germain (1991).

to be aware of their own competences, by realising that there is already a previous “learning process throughout life and in all areas of life” (Lifelong and Lifewide Learning) in which the result is “acquisitions” or “competences” and that this process can be stimulated and upgraded on a permanent basis.

The methodological process of recognition and perceptibility/valorisation of competences put into practice in the RVCC Centres is the “Balance of Competences” (Bilon de Competences), and the “Biographic Approach” and the main product is the “Personal File or Portfolio”, which the GDVT (2005) sees as a dynamic file of personal accounts where all documents that confirm the knowledge and competences learnt throughout life are organised in a way that reflects life's course and make a redefinition of personal projects easy” (p.2). Regarding the recognition process of competences, Maria do Loreto Paiva Couceiro (2002) says:

“Putting together a file that shows the course of one's life, both personal and professional, is a way of stopping, rethinking and reuniting the elements of an existential itinerary... the act of putting together these elements allows them to be framed in time, emphasising the various skills applied in several contexts... To tell one's own history, because of the process that it demands of the subject, becomes time-space privileged and decisive for self-assessment and, at the same time, helps one become more aware of the skills life has enabled one to learn”. (p.57)

The Personal file or Portfolio itself and the organisational process it involves, allow us to show that there is a logic behind the RVCC Centres work teams<sup>9</sup>, that consists of starting from the competences the adult already has, and then promoting and highlighting his or her most positive aspects. Their work, especially that of the RVCC Centres professionals, can be considered a work of proximity focused on the idea of promoting an “experiential training”<sup>10</sup> whith each one of the adults participating in RVC Process. Generally speaking, this RVC Process consists of a succession of several phases of different duration, that we can define this way: the process starts the moment the adult “enrols” in the Centre<sup>11</sup>, which is then followed by a “personal interview”, after which the adult is usually assigned to a group, in order to start the “competences balance collective sessions”. From this point on they move to the “individual follow-up sessions” and, in case they need it, to a “supplementary training”.

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<sup>9</sup> The RVCC Centres working team is composed with: 1 Centres's Director; 3 RVSC Professionals; 4 Teachers; and 1 Accountant.

<sup>10</sup> See Landry (1989). Also Bezzola (1991).

<sup>11</sup> Since the start moment until 2004 there were 85 858 adults enroled in all the RVCC Portuguese Centres, 19 232 of them were allready certificated. The Centres have a present goal of 300 adults certificated/year.

The process ends up in a “public session held in the presence of a validation jury”, after which they will carry out the respective “competences certification” and, eventually to an “individual service of purveyor”, where the adult can find support in defining or reconstructing his personal or professional project.

## **RVCC Centres: New Transformative Spaces of Adult Education for Active Citizenship?**

In Portugal, Adult Education and Training in the past three decades consists of a total of three main working scenarios in this area: the first scenario involves several initiatives from civil society, the second includes the formal offers of the Education National System itself<sup>12</sup>, while the third includes the Recognition, Validation and Competences Certification National System<sup>13</sup>.

The RVCC Centres have no doubt become a new scenario in Adult Education and Training in Portugal, which is also related to a new logic both in the working tradition of all field actors involved in this sector, and in the traditional conceptual theory and methodology regarding education investigation itself. The impact of the RVCC National System calls for a deep and thoughtful analysis, since the implications of the introduction of the so-called “new paradigm of lifelong and lifewide learning” are too numerous and too complex in this sector of political orientation. Luís Areal Rothes (2002) alerts us to some which he considers more pertinent to this new process. In his text we can read:

“We will set in motion new practices that will demand a re-evaluation of, specifically the relationship between basic education and continuous education and between formal and not-so-formal education; the relationship between competences that have a professionally oriented character and those which have a more technical, cultural and scientific character, in spite of the fact that they also have an obvious influence on professional practice; the way we articulate the promotion of competences for citizenship and employability; the relationship between recognition, validation and promotion of competences and employment policies, and more specifically, the wages policy and issues related to workers' mobility”. (p.154)

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<sup>12</sup> Which offer a second opportunity formal education.

<sup>13</sup> With three major Initiatives: 1.RVCC Centres; 2. AET Courses (Adult Education and Training Courses); 3. Knowing + Actions.

Setting this system in motion in Portugal is at an early phase, very much directed at a population that has prematurely dropped out of the education system, before concluding the compulsory basic education and who represent a percentage of the active population, but also the unemployed who are more exposed to the phenomenon of exclusion, and therefore, are a more vulnerable group. In this area the official position has been mainly the introduction of the RVCC System for active employment policy on one hand, and as policy for prevention of professional, schooling or social exclusion, on the other hand. Here there is a new logic in the introduction of Adult Education scenarios that is more related to political, economic and social policies, which, in our point of view, is necessary, although it should not prevent the gradual development of other permanent and complementary educational working methods, for adults, in which the emphasis is not so firmly on "improvement in employability" and "social cohesion" as means to increase access, but also on recognising, validating and developing other fundamental dimensions of the human person, which may be more subjective and less certifiable, but equally important from the personal and social point of view as well as the professional point of view.

The innovative intervention model that the RVCC Centres are already working with in the field in several countries is, in our view, directly related to a broad and wide dynamic restructuring of various national education systems of each European Union member state. The various education and training reforms in progress are, at this point, highly related to the multiplicity of questions that have arisen from the introduction of this new "competences logic" in the official systems, which imply a more personal approach to the training trajectory, which goes against the currently existing logic. Even in RVCC Centres we can see ambiguities and paradoxes between the rhetoric's of adult RVC Process and Methodologies and RVC efective practice.

In the internal politic panorama it is also essential that we can achieve some stability in the recent guiding policies that have been established for Adult Education and Training in Portugal despite the political Party's rotativeness, strengthening the role of the institutional actors created to develop the sector and scientifically investigate the real impact of this new educational competence based logic, which is ever more present in today's youth and adult education and training, both formal and non-formal scenarios.

The continued sustainability of this RVCC National System also involves the knowledge that the present financial model is related with the Europen Social Fund (ESF) conjuncture period and that other models should be introduced. Models that can guarantee the continuity, broadening and deepening of the work, without it necessarily

meaning leaving the present public logic that is the main characteristic of the RVCC National System, the AET Courses and the Knowing + Actions.

In the end, we highlight that in no way do we think that the sustainability of the existing RVCC National System and the new education and training that have presently risen in the national panorama should be exclusively dependent on legislative initiatives, but rather that it should be dependent in some way on the actors involved and their capacity to assert and promote in a democratic way what is best for the sector as well as for all citizens who should be directly or indirectly involved in the challenge of the Permanent Education and the Learning for Active Citizenship.

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#### About the author

Rosanna Barros, born in Caracas, Venezuela, and lived there until 1984.  
 From 1984 and 1991, lived in the family home in Funchal, Madeira.  
 Moved to live in Coimbra from 1991 to 2000, (residence: sorority of Rosa Luxemburgo, 1991 - 2000)

Lived in the city of Paços de Ferreira from 2000 to 2001.  
 Resident of Faro from 2001 to the present.

#### Academic qualifications

2003 and the following years: IEP-UM (Institute of Education and Sociology, University of Minho)

**Doctorate Candidacy in Educational Sociology** (Guidance of: Professor Doutor Lícínia Lima / Area of Research: political sociology in the field of adult education in Portugal).

2003: DTHEPS-US (Department of Theory and History of Education and Social Pedagogy, University of Seville)

**Post-graduate in Adult Education and Community Development**.  
 Scientific Direction: Professor Doutor Emílio Lucio-Villegas Ramos.

2002: FEUC ( Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra)

**Masters in Sociology**

(Area of specialization: Sociology of Development and Social transformation/ the masters programme: National Societies facing the Process of Globalization).

-Final grade obtained: A+ (very good), unanimously awarded, under the tutelage of Professor Doutor Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

2000: FDUC ( Faculty of Law, University of Coimbra )

**Post-graduate in Human Rights and Democratisation**

Scientific Direction: Professor Doutor Vital Moreira.

1998: FCTUC (Faculty of Sciences and Technologies, University of Coimbra)

**Degree in Anthropology**

(Specialisation in Social and Cultural Anthropology).

- Final grade awarded: Good with Distinctions

-Conducted an end of Course Research Seminar, with grade A+ (thesis developed on the field of Studies of Art, Performance and policies of Cultural Identities)

- Cultural Sociology as an extra curricular subject, with grade A.

*Awards*

2003: Received an **Honours Mention** for the Essay: *The Culture of the Chameleon - The Portuguese Guitar and the Limits of Representation* (the Masters Dissertation). Attributed to the award winning works of Francisco Costa - Historic Essay, the Contemporary Studies Centre of the Ferreira de Castro Museum.

1998: Distinguished with the **Bernardino Machado Scholar's Award**(1997-98) Award for the best final year student in Anthropology Degree, Coimbra University.

*Academic career*

2001-2005: **School of Further Education, University of Algarve** (Faro).  
Assistant Teacher.

2000-2001: **School of Further Education of the Instituto Superior Jean Piaget** (Vila Nova de Gaia).  
Assistant Teacher.

1999-2000: **School of Further Education of the Instituto Superior Jean Piaget** (Viseu).  
Assistant Teacher.

*Participation in university management*

Member of the Scientific Council of the School of Further Education, University of Algarve, since 2003.

*Papers presented at scientific meetings*

**Barros, Rosanna (2005). 'The New Logics of Adult Learning Policies and Practices in Portugal: The Recognition, Validation and Certification of Key Competences System Case'.**

[Presentation at the VII International Summer School in Lifelong Learning. Graduate School in Lifelog Learnig. University de Roskilde. Danmark].

**Barros, Rosanna (2004). 'The Genealogy of Concepts in Adult Education: ideas in context'.**

[Presentation at the Iberian-American and African Congress II on Adult Education and Community Development: University of Algarve/University of Seville, Portugal].

**Barros, Rosanna (2003). 'How Adult Education Thinking and Contemporary Educational Policy in Portugal Affects Current Issues in Learning and Motivating Adults'.**

[Presentation at a Midterm Conference Europe 2003 of the International Sociological Association (ISA). Universidade Lusófona of Humanities and Technologies. Portugal].

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[Presentation at the IV Iberian Seminar on Adult Education and Community Development/ University Meetings on Social Pedagogy. University of Seville, Spain].

**Barros, Rosanna (2001).** *'The Fado and the Portuguese Guitar in Porto European Capital of Culture 2001. The Production of Knowledge in the Information Society'*. [Presentation at the V Conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA). University of Helsinki, Finland ].

*Presentaions at scientific meetings – reports published*

**Barros, Rosanna (2005).** *'The New Logic of Education and Adult Training: The process of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies Acquired throughout life'.*

[Presentation at the VIII Congress of the Portuguese Society of the Sciences of Education, the Polytechnic of Castelo Branco. Portugal].

**Barros, Rosanna (2004).** *'Contributions to a Sociology Policy in the field of Adult Education in Portugal'.*

[Presentation at the V Portuguese Congress of Sociology by the Portuguese Association of Sociology, University of Minho Portugal].

*Critical appreciations published in science magazines*

**Barros, Rosanna (2003).** [critique on: Fernandes, João Viegas & Mónica Tomaz. (2002). *A better world is necessary and is possible - educational contribution*. Lisboa: Plátano Edições Técnicas], Magazine *Interacções – Sociedade e as Novas Modernidades*, number 4, April 2003. Coimbra: ISMT (Instituto Superior Miguel Torga) / quarterly 154-155.

*Books published*

**Barros, Rosanna (2005).** *The Chameleon Culture? The Portuguese Guitar and the Limits of Acting: an Ethnographic Essay on 'Porto, European Cultural Capital 2001'*. ( printing in progress: Estratégias Criativas Publishers)

*Scientific associations and international organizations*

Member of **ESA** (European Sociological Association)

Member of **ESTG** (European Social Theory Group)

Member of **APA** (Portuguese Association of Anthropology)

Member of **APS** (Portuguese Association of Sociology)

Member of **CES** (Social Studies Centre)

Member of **IPFP** ( (Paulo Freire Institut in Portugal)

**Founding Member of NA-IPFP** (Paulo Freire Institute in Portugal –Office of Algarve)

