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COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT ON DISTRIBUTED EVALUATION AND PLANNING IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Revolution of April 25, 1974, brought about a radical change in the social, cultural, political and ideological spectrum of Portuguese society and, consequently, in the structure of the formal education system.

Following the so-called democratic management of schools that followed the revolution (Lima, 1998), the legislative effort progressively tended towards the standardization and stability of the system, focused on rebuilding the model of centralized administration.

The Comprehensive Law on the Education System, approved by Law no. 46/86, 14th October (subsequently amended by Laws no. 115/97, 19th September 19, 49/2005, 30th August, and 85/2009, 27th August), established the general framework of the education system. According to this Law, the education system operates through structures and actions of the initiative and responsibility of different public, private and cooperative institutions and organizations, with a centralized educational policy. The Ministry of Education (ME) is responsible for general non-higher Education in Portugal. The existing vocational and professional paths are the joint responsibility of the ME and the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (MTSSS).

There have been consecutive changes to the Comprehensive Law on the Education System, particularly from the end of the 20th century when the cycle of normalization had been closed and consensus had been reached on the idea of reforming the System. The changes have been based on the need to contribute to the development of democracy through the adoption of participatory structures and processes in the definition of educational policy, in the administration and management of the school system and in the daily pedagogical experience.

The autonomy and decentralization discourse of the System, invariably expressed in its relation with the participation of different actors in the planning and execution of the work of the schools, has been sustained on the basis of a continuous development of the national public school network.

The school network is currently organized in school clusters or groups constituted by schools of all education levels from pre-school education (3-6 years old) to secondary education.

This process started in the 2000's and from 2012 the administrative units became larger by aggregating existing groups of schools and non-grouped schools forming mega groupings of schools.

From 2003, there has also been a continued transfer of competences to the local administration, namely in the reorganization of the network of primary schools and the management of non-teaching staff. The decentralization measures via municipalities were based on the creation of the Municipal Education Council and the Municipal Education Chart.

The Portuguese education system is, still today, very centralized in terms of organization and funding. It includes the whole of Portugal – mainland and autonomous regions – and it is expected that it has a sufficiently flexible and diverse nature to include all countries and places where Portuguese communities live. In the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, the regional governments are responsible for defining the education policy, based on national policy, in terms of a regional plan.

The report presents a short overview of compulsory education in Portugal, from which we highlight the diverse pathways for students and the administrative school groups/clusters. The second part describes the school evaluation system, identifying how in both self and external evaluation there is involvement of parents, students and other stakeholders. The third section of the report looks at the different levels and areas of participation in the school system. Finally, some of the challenges regarding distributed evaluation and planning are reported in the last part of the report.

1. Brief overview of compulsory education in Portugal

Compulsory education lasts for 12 years, starting at 6 and ending at 18 years of age or with the conclusion of secondary education (ISCED 3).

The Portuguese non-higher education system is divided in pre-school education (from 3 years old until the start of basic education), basic education (6 to 15 years old) and secondary education (15 to 18 years old) (see Image 1).

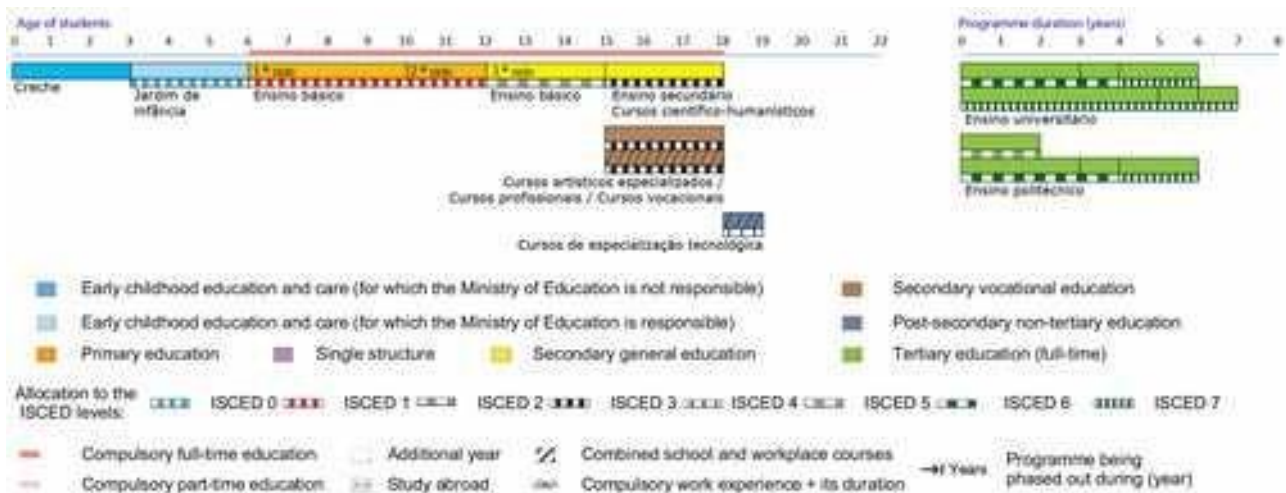


Figure 1 - Structure of the Portuguese educational system
 (from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/File:2016_diagram_PT.png)

Public education is free and universal. Attending pre-school education is optional, however, it is universal for children from the year they celebrate their 4th birthday.

The system establishes the specialised support to be provided for special educational needs of students with major disabilities in pre-school education and basic and secondary education in the public, private and cooperative sectors. For those pupils whose problems require highly skilled human and material resources, the possibility of clusters of schools to organize specific responses is foreseen (example: specialized support units).

1.1. Stages of the education system

The Portuguese education system is divided in pre-school education (from 3 years old until the start of basic education), basic education (6 to 15 years old) and secondary education (15 to 18 years old).

Basic education has three sequential cycles:

- first cycle of 4 years (6 to 10 year-olds);
- second cycle of 2 years (10 to 12 year-olds), corresponding to ISCED1;
- third cycle of 3 years (12 to 15 year-olds), corresponding to ISCED 2.

Basic Education can also be concluded and certified via different pathways adapted to each student's profile and individual characteristics, such as:

- Alternative Curricular Pathways (APC);
- Integrated Education and Training Programme (IETP);
- Education and Training Courses (ETTC).

Secondary Education is a 3-year cycle for 15 to 18 year-olds (corresponding to ISCED 3) and includes four types of courses: scientific-humanistic, technological, specialist artistic and vocational.

In Basic and Secondary Education there are some organizational variations, designed to successfully meet pedagogical needs that occur in different circumstances: Face-to-face teaching for mobile school children, Distance Teaching, Home Schooling and Individual Tuition, Educational Priority Areas Programme, *Mais Sucesso Escolar* Programme and *Escolhas* Programme are some of the alternatives.

1.2. Curriculum and teaching staff

The curriculum is determined at the national level by the ME. The curriculum is centred in the knowledge and the skills that students are expected to acquire and develop by the end of each school year or cycle of education. The following curriculum documents reference support the curriculum for basic education, defined at central level and are mandatory:

- Programmes - designed for all basic education subjects;
- Curriculum Standards – consistently define the essential knowledge and capacities that students should acquire in the different school years or cycles;
- Programme Guidelines – designed for extra-curricular activities in the 1st cycle of basic education in relation to English, music and sport. Schools can manage the curriculum, within the boundaries set by the standards.

There is a single professional career for teachers of all non-higher education levels, which requires candidates to have a second cycle degree (ISCED 7 – Master), in Education. Teacher's continuing professional development is ensured as a right and a duty in its ongoing education format. Teachers can also opt for specialised training, that allows them to gain qualifications in other educational functions (supervision, special needs, administration, etc.).

1.3. Portuguese education system in numbers

In the school year of 2015/2016 there were 2 027 483 students enrolled in the system, from pre-school to secondary education.

In the same year, 8 786 schools were working (see table 1), with a total of 57 588 teaching staff.

Table 1 – Schools (Portugal) – 2015/2016

Public	6078
Private	2708
Total	8786

The schools are mainly grouped administratively in clusters (see table 2).

Table 2 – Grouped and non-grouped schools (public) (Portugal) – 2017/18

School clusters/groups	731
Secondary schools (non-grouped)	70
Professional schools (non-grouped)	17
Artistic schools (non-grouped)	9
Total	827

More statistics: <http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/estatisticas/>

2. Brief overview of School Evaluation in Portugal

The education system in Portugal foresees an Evaluation program framed as organizational evaluation that intends to be a relevant contribution for the development of schools. Law no. 31/2002 approved the system of evaluation of pre-school and primary and secondary education establishments, defining general guidelines for self-evaluation and for external evaluation. The same system is valid for all schools either public or private.

Evaluation is valued as an instrument to improve teaching and learning and student achievement, therefore self-assessment practices are encouraged, as well as social participation in school life. From the aims of the evaluation system, as a central instrument in the definition of educational policies, two are highlighted: a) raise awareness/sensitize the educational community regarding participation in the educational processes and b) value and enhance the role played by various members of the educational institutions, in particular teachers, pupils, parents, local authorities and non-teaching staff.

The assessment of schools is carried out according to two categories: internal or self evaluation and external evaluation. Self-evaluation is carried out by the school itself, in a systematic way, and is the basis for the external evaluation, done periodically by the Inspectorate-General of Education and Science (IGEC).

IGEC has the mission of ensuring the legality and conformity of the actions carried out by all the bodies, services and institutions of the governance areas of Education and Science, Technology and Higher Education, as well as to contribute to the quality of the education system in its whole. It pursues these tasks namely through control, auditing, follow-up and assessment actions, proposing measures that aim to improve the education system and participating in the external evaluation of Basic and Secondary Education schools. School evaluation has been part of Portuguese educational policy in the last decades, as the first projects and programs are from the 1990's (Fialho, 2009). After the Integrated Evaluation of Schools, led by IGEC, in 1999-2002, it took four years to have a pilot with 24 schools that tested the model that had been developed. Therefore, the full public system evaluation only started in 2007 (until 2011), including over 1110 schools and groups. This was the first cycle of evaluation. The second is finishing in 2017 and the third cycle is being prepared by a working group that has the following mission: a) to analyze the different studies on the existing model of External Evaluation of Schools; b) to define: i) the scope of education establishments to be covered in the external evaluation; (ii) the reference points and fields of assessment, the methodologies, the classification scale and nomenclature, the actors involved in the process, including the establishment of evaluation teams and the frequency of cycles.

2.1. Internal/self-evaluation of schools

School self-evaluation is compulsory and should be systematic. It is an instrument whereby the school's progress and accountability are examined, an annual written report on the activities and the (financial) management accounts drawn up (Law no. 31/2002). The school's self-evaluation report is an in-house document that evaluates different aspects: a) degree of completion of the educational project and how education, teaching and learning of children and pupils are prepared and implemented, taking into account their specific characteristics; b) level of execution of activities that provide educational environments capable of generating the affective and emotional conditions of school experience conducive to interaction, social integration, learning and the integral development of the personality of children and students; c) performance of the administrative and management bodies of schools or school groups, covering the functioning of school management structures and

educational guidance, resources and the inherent vision of educational action, as a project and action plan; d) school success, evaluated through the capacity to promote school attendance and results in the development of pupils' learning at school, in particular the results identified through existing assessment schemes; and e) culture of collaboration among members of the educational community, in order to plan an intervention towards the improvement of the quality of services provided.

The three bodies of the school's leadership, management and administration responsible for carrying out the internal evaluation are: the General Council, the Director and the Pedagogic Council. The Director should initiate the process by nominating the self-evaluation team. There are no fixed members for the team, and usually teachers, students and non-teaching staff are included. Some schools/groups also include parents and the local authorities in the self-evaluation teams. A critical friend was included in many teams for the first cycle of evaluation, particularly from higher education institutions. There are principles defined for the self-evaluation, but not a model. In the second cycle, it was reported that many schools/clusters took the external evaluation framework as frame of reference for the self-evaluation (Afonso, 2015).

From the discussion of the self-evaluation results, a plan for improvement should be drawn, which will then be evaluated, in a cyclic process. Self-evaluation is presented in the Portuguese system as based on a culture of responsible and ethical discussion that involves the educational community. *2.2. External Evaluation of Schools*

The IGEC is in charge of the external evaluation of schools in the non-higher education. The external evaluation framework contemplates three domains, each one with three fields of analysis:

1. Outcomes: academic and social results, and acknowledgement by the community;
2. Educational Provision: planning and articulation, teaching practices, and monitoring and assessment of learning;
3. Leadership and Management: leadership, management, and self-evaluation and improvement.

Based on the self-evaluation, the external evaluation team analyses information (the self-evaluation report, the educational project, annual plan, several other documents), analyses statistical data, applies questionnaires to students, parents, and staff, and visits the cluster, visiting several schools and interviewing different actors, including students, parents, local authorities, community associations, etc. The evaluation team is made up of

two inspectors and an expert external to IGEC (a Professor or a researcher), and gathers evidence in the cluster/school for 3 or 5 days during the visit.

The schools/school clusters are classified according to their performance in each domain in a five level scale: Excellent/Very Good/Good/Sufficient/Insufficient. A report is handed over for discussion, focused on improvement measures. All schools that were evaluated are given the opportunity to comment on the external evaluation report. The evaluation reports, as well as the contradictory documents, when they exist, are available in the website of IGEC.

Two months after the external evaluation, the cluster or school has to submit an improvement plan based on the report of the external evaluation. This plan has to be made public (website, etc.).

The IGEC evaluates the external evaluation process through a questionnaire answered by the schools and the evaluators in the end of the process.

2.3. Other evaluations in/of the education system

The National Council of Education has the competence to issue opinions, statements of opinions and recommendations and it is its special duty to make an appreciation of:

- the rules governing the self-evaluation process;
- the annual plan comprising external evaluation activity;
- the outcomes of both in-house and external evaluation processes.

The Continuing Professional Centres, based in schools, are externally evaluated by IGEC using a model based on the school external evaluation.

3. Overview of DEAP strategies

System level

The wide participation of actors in the educational system can be traced to 1982 when the National Council of Education was created. It foresaw the participation of higher education institutions, teachers' unions, research centres, youth and parents' associations, cultural associations, private and cooperative schools associations, in analysing educational policy and more specific measures, making recommendations and proposals and also researching different aspects of the system and its dynamic. There is also a established participation of the national confederation of parents' associations (CONFAP) in the discussions about educational policy, both at the Minister level and other levels.

Recently, integrated in a participatory approach to policy making, several key documents for education and schools have been made available for public discussion through the Ministry

of Education website but also through the Government platform for public consultation. There has been wide and active participation of higher education institutions and academic staff but also bloggers, civic platforms and several associations in the discussions. Last year, students were invited to discuss the "Profile for the XXI Century" with the Minister himself in a event organized with over 100 students from primary to secondary education. First in focus groups then in a debate chaired by the Minister, the contributions were heard.

Municipal level

A structural change in the processes of participation in educational planning arises with the tendency towards a certain municipalization of education, which has led to the reinforcement of the participation of local authorities, with the creation of Municipal Councils of Education, conceived as structures of participation of the various nontraditional agents and social partners, aiming at the articulation of educational policy with other social policies of a local nature, namely in terms of socio-educational support, organization of activities of curricular complement, school network, schedules and school transport.

The participation of the municipalities has experienced interesting advances with DecreeLaw no. 7/2003, (with the changes introduced by Law no. 41/2003), that presents the responsibility of developing a Municipal Education Chart. Something that, more recently, has resulted in the transfer of financial responsibility from the State to the municipalities and to a transfer of competences in the elaboration and control of the educational project and management of non-teaching staff. In addition, the representatives of the municipality retain the right of representation in the General Council of the cluster of schools.

These changes have had stronger impacts on the pre-school and primary schools. The disconnection between the Municipal Chart and the clusters/schools' Educational Projects have been highlighted.

School/Cluster level

After the Revolution, there have always been provisions for student and parental participation. Also early on after 1974, parental associations were recognized and expected as forms of participation in schools (and from the 1990's in educational policy).

Currently, the Decree-Law no. 75/2008, establishes the General Council as the strategic senior management body, responsible for defining the guidelines of school activity, ensuring the involvement and representation of the educational community, and electing the Director/Head. The General Council is made up by: teaching and non-teaching staff,

parents, students, local authorities, organizations and associations of the local community (scientific, cultural, economic) - none of the groups can have majority (maximum of members is 21). Only students over 16 years old can be part of the General Council (with the clusters this does not prevent representation in most schools, but the law foresees solutions for situations when there is no-one over 16 yo).

Parents and students also participate in the Class Council, specific to each class: two representatives of parents and one of the students (from the 3rd cycle onwards) are involved in the organization, monitoring and evaluation of the activities to be carried out with students and between the school and the families. The parents and students have to leave the meetings when assessment of specific students is discussed by the teachers.

Finally, in terms of school evaluation, both students and parents are expected to participate both in the self and the external evaluation. This participation can happen by integrating the self-evaluation teams, as does for other actors. More commonly, students, parents and the local community have a voice in the critical portrait that is drawn of the school in the self-evaluation - but this is decided locally by the team. The external evaluation foresees students and parents' participation in two formats: a) as part of the preparation for the external evaluation, there is a questionnaire sent out to parents, students and teaching and non-teaching staff (see annex); and b) the external evaluation team carries out panel interviews with:

- students (between 5 and 10 from 4th grade onwards)
- members of the Council (include parents and students and local community)
- Director and members of the Board
- representatives of the local authorities
- representatives of the parents and the parents' association
- representatives of the students' association
- curricular department coordinators and other pedagogical supervision structures
- technical-pedagogical services
- self-evaluation team (might include parents and students) - eventually, local cultural and economic associations.

It was only in the second cycle of evaluation that the questionnaire was set up, recognizing the importance of different perspectives about the school and the quality (Duarte, 2015).

The panel interviews are an integral and important part of the external evaluation that take up a lot of the time of the visit but produce relevant information.

Education process level - individual action

On a more individual level, parents are called upon to collaborate with the school in the implementation of the Student Statute (Law no. 51/2012) that imposes some responsibility on parents for the behaviour of their children in the school. This participation is focused on a smooth functioning of the schools, therefore more on the duties than on the rights side.

Parents are informed by teachers about the learning of their children through parentteacher conferences and meetings at the school. This frequent contact with the teacher (pre-school and primary) or the Class Director (from 2nd cycle onwards) is usually perceived as a means to facilitate the exchange with parents, provide information, change their perception of school and ultimately encourage them to take a more active role in their children's schooling. In the case of children with special needs, parents have a strong voice in decisions regarding adaptations of the teaching process and education pathways.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The decentralization impetus that recent legislation suggest has been de-constructed showing that both at municipal and school level the central government expects compliance more than innovation. The evaluation of schools, for example, has shown that the possibility of creating a framework and a methodology of self-evaluation is perceived as unnecessary or useless, since the external evaluation has its own framework that can be adopted (Afonso, 2015). That isomorphism is one example of how participation of different actors is drastically reduced in relevance and creativity or rendered a simulation of democracy.

Studies about the last cycle of evaluation of schools show the growing involvement of different actors in school management activities but also that the participation processes are not consolidated in the same way in different school organisations and in the different territories in which they are located (Veloso, Craveiro, & Rufino, 2013). The presence and involvement of different actors in the schools studied is congruent with a larger understanding of the school community including pupils, teachers, parents/guardians and other actors from the local community to which the school belongs. This perspective is coherent with the goals of the law involving the autonomy, administration and management of schools of encouraging the families and the communities to participate more actively in school leadership strategies thereby ensuring not only the right of the agents, namely the teaching staff, to take part in the educational process, but also enable everyone who has a

lawful interest in the activity and in the life of each school a more effective capacity of intervention.

The variable and limited participation in school evaluation is accompanied by similar results regarding participation in school life. Results from a study on 13 European countries show that Portugal is one of the countries in which the educational system is more open to parents' involvement and participation, although its population has one of the lowest levels of trust and participation (Gonçalves, 2017). This could be interpreted that parents do not have appropriate forms of involvement and participation instruments at their disposal.

A visible trend in the way the Portuguese system opens for participation at school level is the reliance on representatives - of parents, students, local authorities, associations, etc. According to Gonçalves (2017), most parents do not participate in schools and class councils because: i) they don't know about the existence of Parents' Representatives, ii) are unable to communicate with them, iii) they rather solve problems or give suggestions to teachers by themselves. In many schools, parents' representatives seem to be a merely bureaucratic figure in schools. They do not really participate because many are just appointed by other parents to be the class or school representative but lack the motivation and/or the capacity to play that role. Families/parents' representatives in the Portuguese system tend to fall under the partners, domesticated parents or teachers helpers categories (Silva, 2003), not fully taking on the stakeholder with a voice role.

Students' participation is also not very relevant, neither formally in the spaces created for it nor informally (Pedro & Pereira, 2010). It is perceived as an ideal of the system, something that should be achieved but is not fully implemented.

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Legislation

- Law no. 46/86 - Comprehensive Law on the Education System, amended by Laws no. 115/97, 19th September 19, 49/2005, 30th August, and 85/2009, 27th August.
- Law no. 31/2002, of 20 December – approves the evaluation system for non higher education, developing the regime foreseen in the Law no. 46/86, of 14 October (Comprehensive Law on the Education System) (together with Decree-Law no. 75/2008, 22nd April, amended by Decree-Law no. 137/2012, 2nd July).
- Law no. 51/2012, of 5 September – approves the Student Statute and School Ethics, which sets out the rights and obligations of students in basic and secondary education and the commitment of parents or guardians and the rest of the educational community to their education and training, revoking Law no. 30/2002, 20th December.
- Decree-Law no. 75/2008, of 22 April - approves the regime of autonomy, administration and management of public establishments of pre-school, basic and secondary education (amended and republished by the Decree-Law no. 137/2012, of 2 July).
- Decree-Law no. 7/2003, 15th January - regulates the powers of the municipal boards of education, as well as the preparation, approval and effects of the Education Chart (amended by Law no. 41/03, 22nd August) .