RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Country Report: Portugal

PORTUGAL COUNTRY REPORT

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1.   What reference is made to raising achievement in national policies? How is raising achievement defined?

The Portuguese government programme (p. 101) establishes combatting school failure as a priority.

Raising achievement is defined in different ways, such as:

- promoting pre-primary education for all children from three years old;

- developing an integrated basic teaching (first nine years), encouraging curricular flexibility and assuring all learners' integration;

- enhancing secondary education (10th to 12th year);

- diversifying the formative offer and enhancing professional and artistic education;

- mobilising School Social Action to combat inequalities and school failure;

- schools focusing on the teaching and learning of learners, enhancing the professional skills of their teachers.

2.   What national policies specifically target raising achievement?

National policies which specifically target raising achievement include several programmes:

National Programme to Promote School Success (*Programa Nacional de Promoção do Sucesso Escolar*) (PNPSE)

Development based on the principle that educational communities best know their contexts, difficulties and potentialities, and are best prepared to find local solutions and devise strategic plans of action. These are designed at the level of each school, with the aim of improving educational practice and learning of learners.

Priority Intervention Educational Territories (Programa Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária) (TEIP)

The TEIP programme is a government initiative, currently implemented in 137 school clusters. These schools are located in socially and economically disadvantaged areas,

marked by poverty and social exclusion, where violence, indiscipline, early school leaving and school failure are more evident. Its central goals are to prevent and reduce early school leaving and absenteeism, reduction of indiscipline and promoting the educational success of all learners.

This programme may include one or all of the projects listed below.

Phoenix Method (Metodologia Fénix)

This project is based on a school model that gives more personalised support to learners who demonstrate learning difficulties in Portuguese language, mathematics, or other subjects identified by the school, according to the success rate. Succinctly, this model consists of creating Phoenix Classes, or groups temporarily integrating learners who need greater support for learning. This allows a more individualised education and respect for different paces of learning. This has been (revealing to be) a successful strategy as learners gradually improve their learning and also their self-esteem.

Plus Class Method (Metodologia Turma Mais)

Turma Mais is characterised by using differentiated and diversified forms of pedagogical organisation of the class group, enabling collaborative work through educational partnerships. This is a preventive measure which acts or rewards, depending on the typology of each learner involved. This typology consists of temporarily adding learners from different classes in the same grade level who have identical difficulties in a particular subject into the same class. In this kind of 'turntable', each group of learners is subjected to a work schedule similar to their class of origin, with the same workload and the same teacher.

Integrated Programme for Education and Training (Programa Integrado de Educação e Formação) (PIEF)

The integrated programme for education and training (PIEF) is a temporary and exceptionally located socio-educational and formative measure of inclusion. It is applied to learners aged 15 to 18 who are at risk and/or in danger of school and social exclusion, after exhausting all other measures of school integration. It aims to promote the fulfilment of compulsory education and social advancement by giving a second or third cycle school qualification.

Alternative Curriculum Pathways (Percursos Curriculares Alternativos) (PCA)

PCAs are for learners in the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education with learning difficulties, those who are at risk of school failure or social exclusion and/or school leavers.

The range of disciplines in general training and the possibility of developing multidisciplinary projects in terms of further training allow for the acquisition of knowledge and the development of scientific, artistic, technological, social, or sporting skills. They also allow for the development of transversal skills arising from research work, information, registration of text production, oral and written communication, problem solving, spatial location, fine motricity and other skills required in the modern world.

National Reading Plan (*Plano Nacional de Leitura*)

The National Reading Plan aims to raise literacy levels in Portugal. The aim is to create conditions for Portuguese people to achieve levels of reading which allow them to be capable of dealing with the written word in any circumstance of life: interpreting information provided by the media, accessing scientific knowledge and enjoying great works of literature.

Eco Schools project (*Projeto Eco-escolas*)

The Eco Schools programme encourages the development of activities to improve the environmental performance of schools. It contributes to changing behaviour and the impact of environmental concerns in different generations and recognises and rewards the work developed by them. It also aims to create habits of participation and citizenship, with the main goal of finding solutions to improve the quality of life in school and in the community.

Schools for Health (*Escolas promotoras da saúde*)

Schools for Health aims to promote health in the school environment.

3. What information/data are collected at national level on attainment and achievement?

Data collected at national level comprises the results of national tests, such as final exams or benchmarking tests, the information regarding all learner assessments, school failure and school leaving. Information about learners with special educational needs or from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is also collected.

Data regarding learners' families is also collected, including parents' levels of education, social integration or disabilities.

The national Ministry also collects a wide range of data from the schools in the TEIP programme regarding discipline, teacher development, collaborative learning, schools networks, literacy and numeracy.

4. What information/data on attainment and achievement (including the wider areas outlined above) are collected at school level?

At school level, the collected data may be different from school to school.

TEIP schools usually collect data regarding parents' involvement, learner progress, teacher and staff training and learner satisfaction.

5.   What information/data are used for school evaluation and quality assurance at national/local level?

The self-evaluation process takes place on a regular basis (cycle of two years). It addresses all the data mentioned above, through surveys to learners, parents, teachers and staff, and school processes analysis. Curriculum, pedagogical and teaching approaches, assessment, leadership, collaborative learning and school organisation are some of the evaluated items.

National test results, benchmarking test results, retention rates, discipline rates, school leaving rates and success rates are used in school evaluation processes led by the General Inspectorate of Education and Science (IGEC). This also includes school visits, interviews with learners, parents, teachers, staff and partners and analysis of main documents.

6.   Are there any specific initiatives in place to support/enable teachers and/or school leaders to raise the attainment and achievement of all learners?

The National Programme to Promote School Success (PNPSE) includes training for school leaders and teachers to raise achievement for all learners.

Schools in the TEIP programme develop professional courses and training in identified areas. These may include pedagogical differentiation, supervision and collaborative work, cross-curricular approaches or conflict mediation.

7.   What other policies may influence levels of attainment and achievement for all learners?

Social policies regarding poverty eradication and the increase of technical staff in schools as social assistants, psychologists or health therapists are very important to increase the levels of attainment and achievement for all learners.

Learners with special needs need more facilities, including adapted facilities.

8.   Please provide a short commentary/critical reflection on the main policy challenges

The available national projects are enough to raise achievement *if* schools can improve their autonomy and increase their budgets. With school-based educational strategies supported by national policies and an enlarged budget to fulfil school needs, such as specific materials for disabled learners, levels of attainment and achievement for all learners will increase.

ANNEX 1. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE TO RAISE LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

Example submitted by: António Castel-Branco

Contact person: António Castel-Branco – head teacher

[Programme of the 21st Constitutional Government, 2015–2019](#)

## 1.	Location of school/learning community and short description of context

The Agrupamento de Escolas Ferreira de Castro (AEFC) is a school cluster that includes five different schools located in the suburban area of Mem Martins, Sintra, 20 kilometres from Lisbon.

The community is middle and lower class and many of the learners' families have severe financial difficulties caused by unemployment.

Algueirão – Mem Martins is a community with 80,000 inhabitants, and a density of 2,500 inhabitants per square kilometre. Therefore, there is overcrowding in the schools.

## 2.	Summary information on school/learning community

The Ferreira de Castro school cluster comprises:

- one kindergarten with four classes of 25 learners aged four and five;
- three basic schools including kindergarten. These comprise:
  - 35 classes of learners from six to ten years old (a total of 819 learners);
  - 7 pre-primary classes of learners aged four and five (a total of 156 learners);
- a 2nd and 3rd cycle basic school, with 50 classes of learners aged 11 to 15 (a total of 1,259 learners).

Over 9% of the learners have special needs, some with severe disabilities. Subsidies are received for the basic needs of 45% of the learners. With 169 international learners and more than 240 Portuguese learners from foreign families, inclusion is not an option: it is imperative.

To teach these 2,334 learners (1,201 of whom are boys), these schools have:

- 185 teachers;
- 74 non-teaching staff, including:
  - one psychologist;
  - two social assistants;

- one cultural animator;
- ten administrative assistants;
- 60 educational assistants.

Therapists work with learners with special needs, such as a psychotherapist, speech therapist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.

3. Summary of key feature/strengths of current practice

The Agrupamento de Escolas Ferreira de Castro's mission is defined as the education of all learners, giving them full training and contributing to their development as conscious citizens of their own rights and responsibilities, promoting their inclusion.

The social contexts in which schools operate can be constituted as enhancers of risk factors for failure in the normal education system. This is verified by the fact that in social and economically degraded territories, educational success is often lower than the national. Violence, indiscipline, abandonment, failure at school and child labour are some examples of how this degradation is manifested. For these reasons, the school cluster has been included in the TEIP programme.

The Ferreira de Castro school cluster promotes inclusive education by promoting the acquisition of key competences throughout the education and training system (language skills, mathematical competence, etc.).

This is achieved by:

- promoting social inclusion and gender equality in education and training, including the integration of migrants (gender equity, intercultural education, health education, etc.);
- developing strategies for lifelong learning and mobility, validating non-formal and informal learning and by implementing flexible learning pathways. Also by improving Individual Plans of Transition (PIT), providing early learning opportunities, personalised learning approaches, measures to prevent early school learning and equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups;
- supporting initial and continuous training for teachers, trainers and education and training institutions managers.

The group has sought to organise itself to respond to a diverse target audience. It has therefore been implementing measures including:

- curriculum reinforcement;
- one-to-one support lessons;
- adjustments in individual curriculum and in the evaluation process;
- organisation of the curriculum itself for the implementation of Individual Educational Curricula and assistive technologies.

Thus, four specialised units were created and constitute a specialised pedagogical resource which provides a differentiated educational response. These units consist of two

specialised support units for the education of learners with congenital deafness, blindness and profound disability and two structured teaching units for the education of learners with autism spectrum disorder.

In conclusion, the school cluster:

- reflects the community as a whole and does not reject, exclude or select learners;
- is accessible to all, physically (working towards) and educationally, through curricula, support and communication methods;
- works with, not against;
- puts democracy and equity into practice.

Some strengths:

- Partnerships with the school community
- Co-ordination between all the guiding documents within the group
- Activities/projects developed to meet the curricular requirements, educational needs and interests of the education community
- Integration of learners with different ethnicities and nationalities
- Analysis and critical reflection on the results obtained, adapting the methodologies used and support provided
- Adoption of preventive measures in the face of situations of abandonment
- Appreciation of and investment in art education, crossing several cycles of education and teaching
- Multiple educational responses for learners who show special educational needs
- A constructive and integrating group environment.

4.   Data/information available

Table 1. Internal assessment

Year	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015	
	AEFC	National	AEFC	National	AEFC	National	AEFC	National
1st year	100.0%	100.0%	99.4%	100.0%	97.4%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2nd year	91.5%	91.0%	86.6%	89.5%	91.1%	88.8%	89.6%	89.6%
3rd year	94.1%	96.0%	95.2%	94.4%	95.1%	94.7%	97.4%	95.6%
4th year	95.8%	95.1%	98.6%	95.4%	98.0%	96.1%	99.0%	97.4%
5th year	91.3%	90.1%	87.5%	89.2%	91.6%	88.2%	93.8%	90.7%

Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education

Year	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015	
	AEFC	National	AEFC	National	AEFC	National	AEFC	National
6th year	86.2%	86.3%	80.7%	83.8%	88.1%	86.6%	89.0%	90.1%
7th year	83.0%	82.1%	74.6%	82.7%	81.5%	82.1%	84.0%	83.7%
8th year	86.8%	86.9%	78.4%	85.5%	82.2%	86.0%	85.6%	89.2%
9th year	89.6%	82.4%	74.2%	81.2%	81.1%	83.6%	91.0%	88.3%
CEF education and training courses	85.7%	89.3%	–	–	–	–	–	–
Vocational	–	–	–	–	96.7%	85.1%	87.9%	87.9%
Basic	**90.6%**	89.6%	**85.2%**	88.6%	**89.1%**	89.0%	**91.9%**	91.3%

Table 2. National Examination results (success rate)

Subject and year	Results 2012/2013 (%)	Results 2013/2014 (%)	Goal 2015 (%)	Results 2014/2015 (%)
Portuguese – 4th year	39.9	81.0	85.6	91.6
Mathematics – 4th year	51.5	63.4	69.5	76.3
Portuguese – 6th year	51.9	68.7	73.6	78.6
Mathematics – 6th year	38.9	31.0	45.5	48.5
Portuguese – 9th year	38.5	58.8	68.9	74.0
Mathematics – 9th year	22.8	32.1	45.3	43.5

IGEC external evaluation reports:

- In academic and social results, as well as community recognition, the school cluster's performance is GOOD.

- The Ferreira de Castro school cluster shows mainly strengths in planning and curricular articulation, teaching practices, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning as a result of effective organisational practices, which justifies the attribution of the rating of GOOD.

- In leadership, management, self-assessment and improvement, the report stands that the group is run by a leadership with strategic vision, which undertakes effective practices for school management. The school organisation reveals self-regulation capacity and improvement. There is, clearly, a predominance of strengths in all fields, which justifies the attribution of the rating of VERY GOOD.

The Multi-Year Improvement Plan covers the following areas of intervention:

- support the improvement of learning;

- prevention of abandonment, absenteeism and indiscipline;
- school-family-community partnerships relationships.

This document was prepared with the involvement of the entire school community and the following were defined for each axis:

- General targets which are monitored semi-annually and evaluated annually that constitute a commitment to the Ministry of Education by the group.

- A set of strategic actions with specific objectives, annual and success criteria for each possible critical success factor; whenever compromised, they are always solved by the group. All success criteria are monitored every six months with consequent adjustments to intervention.

- Systematic internal balances made in class council of present teachers, technicians and, in some situations, learners and carers allow the implementation of adjustments and strategies that will improve the quality of teaching and learning.

5.   Focus of example/work to raise achievement

- Strengthening the fundamental disciplines: For learners in the first four years, the aim is to strengthen and improve learning in the disciplines of Portuguese and mathematics as fundamental structuring in junior high school, using one of three methods:
  - o   Individualised and/or small group support
  - o   Second teacher in the classroom
  - o   Study support.

- Maths intervention plan: Create groups of learners on the basis of their levels of learning throughout the year, with assistance where possible, either in the classroom and/or at a Maths Lab. Optimise school study support and create links between 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles and different disciplines, such as Portuguese, visual education and technological education.

- Reading and writing: In the first approach, this action aims to improve learners' reading and writing skills at the end of the second and third cycles. It will support the streamlining of tasks, leading to the improvement of learning through differentiated pedagogy in the classroom and a second teacher in one of the classes.

- Class X: Class X is based on the existence of learners with low levels of educational attainment, at risk of retention and with a lack of motivation for school activities. These classes have two teachers working together in some subjects to prevent retention and potentiate learning.

- Pedagogical 'inter-vision': Observation of classes with the supervision cycle application to share and reflect on practices, pedagogy and school methodologies in order to improve the teaching-learning process. Pedagogical meetings between teaching cycles allow articulation between cycles. Pedagogical conversations are

informal moments of sharing and reflection on different topics and pedagogical experiences. Collaborative mural of reflection and sharing allows the dissemination of practices, strategies and methodologies. Training the teachers that wish to attend.

- The Bridge: This project aims to intervene with learners who show inappropriate behaviours, inside or outside the classroom, through the use of a mediation office and the opening of mentoring processes.

- Affections: Diagnosis, prevention and intervention on absenteeism and early school disruption in the school cluster throughout the school year.

- Animate 'Know, Be and Know to Be': This action targets learners and is implemented in recreational spaces. It develops daily activities to enhance the personal and social development of learners, while contributing to the prevention of indiscipline outside the classroom. The organiser acts primarily to streamline the recreational space, seeking to involve learners in activities/projects, playful character journals and training. They identify and intervene in potential disruptive behaviours and/or risk, accompanying learners at risk of absenteeism and early school leaving and consulting with those responsible for the school projects that complete the scope of this action.

6. Summary information about developments/current work in this area

The learner is the core of all strategies. Each and every learner is the target of the school cluster's pedagogical effort.

Together with regular therapies, three new projects for learners with special educational needs are beginning this year: horticultural therapy, music therapy and donkey-assisted therapy.

With horticultural therapy, learners act as monitors to help their peers with special educational needs in a process that uses plants and plant-related activities to improve their well-being through active or passive involvement.

Music therapy is an established health profession, in which music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address individuals' physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs. After assessing the strengths and needs of each learner, the qualified music therapist provides the indicated treatment, including creating, singing, moving to and/or listening to music. Through musical involvement in the therapeutic context, learners' abilities are strengthened and transferred to other areas of their lives. Music therapy also provides avenues for communication that can be helpful for those who find it difficult to express themselves in words.

Donkey-assisted therapy consists of donkeys visiting learners with special educational needs in schools. The donkeys provide great stimulation and valuable assisted therapy to learners. The emotional and physical benefits of companion animals are now being established and there is well-researched evidence that spending time with animals can

have a direct calming influence. The donkeys also love the warmth and affection from vulnerable learners, so the animal-assisted therapy goes both ways!

All learners aged between six and ten practice yoga once a week to improve their skills and artistic education is offered to all learners. Music, theatre and ceramics are curricular subjects in the schools. A wide range of different sports, music, orchestra and theatre clubs are offered to learners as extra-curricular activities. Sports include adapted sports, swimming, gymnastics, skating or badminton, among others, and are very important to raise achievements.

As seen before, the outcomes of the implemented strategies are improving, raising consistently each year.

The Ferreira de Castro school cluster was distinguished twice with the Intercultural School Stamp, assigned by the High Commissioner for Migration and the Ministry of Education, recognising their work on the inclusion of learners from other countries and cultures.

7.   Key learning points from this example

The Ferreira de Castro school cluster has the following features:

- Learning environment: atmosphere of trust and openness, ordered and secure. Risk-taking is encouraged. Innovation, climate of collaboration and mutual aid.

- Emphasis on teaching and learning: maximize learning, focus on learning, pedagogical differentiation, strategies of diversification.

- Teaching with intention: clear definition of the learning objectives (essential and secondary), disclosure (negotiation) of learning objectives with the learners. Establishment of 'bridges' with learners' previous knowledge, knowledge of other curricular areas and daily life, giving meaning to learning.

- High expectations: teachers with high expectations of their learners convey that attitude (intentionally or not) and, in general, these learners achieve better results than those of teachers whose expectations are low. Aspirations and shared success criteria, establishment of commitment, transmission of confidence and encouragement: no learner should be left behind.

- Monitoring of progress: systematic collection of information about the learners' learning – formative evaluation. Use of various assessment tools and techniques, involvement of learners in the evaluation. Auto, straight and co-evaluation (use of headings).

- Family-school partner: learning increases when schools encourage parents to stimulate the intellectual development of their children. Parents need to hear their children's success stories.

- Learning organisation: systematic reflections on teaching and learning, identification and sharing of good practice models. Note pairs' lessons, training that responds to identified needs, teachers become learners.

- Monitoring, (auto-) regulation and improvement of work in the classroom: co-operative work, reflexion and supervision.

8. Supporting materials (web links, papers, presentations, etc.)

AEFC website

Article: *Xadrez, ioga e esgrima já estão nas escolas públicas* (Chess, yoga and fencing are already in public schools)

Video: *AEFC Final de ano 2012 2013* (AEFC end of year 2012/2013)

Video: AEFC 2014/2015

School Project 'Intervene to Achieve': Multiyear Improvement Plan 2016–2018

1. Intervene in Learning

1.1 Preschool

- Developing skills necessary for the 1st year
- Articulation with 1st year teachers

1.2 1st Cycle

- Curriculum re-enforcement
- Intervention class (2nd year)
- Study support
- Educational support
- Second teacher in the classroom

1.3 2nd Cycle

- Curriculum re-enforcement
- Two intervention classes in 5th year
- Maths intervention plan
- Assistant teacher inside and outside the classroom.
- Study support with strengthening of essential learning
- Reading and writing
- Repeat to advance – intervention with retained learners

1.4 3rd Cycle

- Curriculum re-enforcement
- Two intervention classes in 5th year
- Maths intervention plan
- Assistant teacher inside and outside the classroom.

- Study support with strengthening of essential learning
- Reading and writing
- Repeat to advance – intervention with retained learners

2. Intervene to Prevent

Student and Family Support

2.1 Affections

- Intervention of a social worker

2.2 The Bridge

- Mediation office
- Tutoring

2.3 Animate 'Know, Be and Know to Be'

- Partnerships
- Health promotion
- Inclusion Pages
- Psychology and guidance office

3. Reflect to Intervene

3.1 Pedagogic 'Inter-vision'

- Collaborative work and horizontal supervision

3.2 Class Plan

- Articulation between teachers on the class council
- Intervention of the class director, educator, year or cycle co-ordinator
- Use Inovar software in school – family communication