

VET Study visit Estoril, Portugal, 31 May – 2 June 2012

Visit details

1st day morning

Study visit participants:

- Liuda Radzeviciene (Expert from Lithuania)
- Egle Zybartiene (Expert from Lithuania)
- Dietmar Vollmann (Expert from Austria)
- Edgar Pereira (Expert from Portugal and host)
- Harald Weber (European Agency staff)



Edgar, Liuda, Egle, Dietmar (left to right)

1st day morning



Meeting at **CERCICA** with the policy makers that present Portuguese reality:

- Rosa Neto (CERCICA)
- Harald Weber (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education)
- Maria da Luz Pessoa (Vocational Training Centre of Alcoitão - IEFP- Ministry of Economy and Employment)
- Rogério Cação (Vocational Training Department - FENACERCI)
- Leonardo Conceição and Fátima Martinho (Center New Opportunities - Casa Pia de Lisboa)
- Ana Paula Freire and Filomena Godinho (School EB 2, 3 Alapraia - Ministry of Education)
- Carla Gouveia (VET Coordination Department - IEFP - Ministry of Economy and Employment)
- Filomena Pereira (Innovation and Curricular Development Department - Ministry of Education)

Short description of the Portuguese vocational education and training system and situation (excerpts taken from *Panorama – Vocational education and Training in Portugal – short description*; CEDEFOP *Panorama series 144, 2007*, online available at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5177_en.pdf)

One of Portugal's recognised structural deficits by comparison with most of the EU-25 is the low levels of general education and vocational qualifications held by most people of working age (see Table below). These levels have, however, been rising over the past few decades thanks to the entry into the labour market of a younger population which has benefited from the expansion of the education and training system and from the progressive expansion of education and training opportunities for adults.

Population aged between 15 and 64 by highest level of education in the Member States, Bulgaria and Romania, 2006 (in %; selected countries).

	ISCED 0 – 2	ISCED 3 – 4	ISCED 5 - 6
EU-25	33	45	20
Denmark	25	45	29
Finland	26	45	29
Malta	72	17	11
Portugal	71	17	12
Spain	50	22	26

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary education, including 3c short (preparatory vocational and vocational education of less than 2 years duration);

ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary education without 3c short, post-secondary non-tertiary education; ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Population and social conditions, online database, 2007.

(This data is consistent with the preliminary report from 2011 Census, http://censos.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=CENSOS&xpgid=ine_censos_publicacao_det&contexto=pu&PUBLICACOESpub_boui=122073978&PUBLICACOESmodo=2&selTab=tab1&pcensos=61969554)

The past few years have seen improvements in the Portuguese population's qualification levels and a reduction in school dropout rates. (...)According to Eurostat data, in 2003, public spending on education represented 5.61 % of GDP (5.20 % in the EU-25). Although investment in education is above the European average, educational uptake is below the desired level, particularly in terms of early school leaving rates. A range of programmes and measures are being implemented to counter these problems.

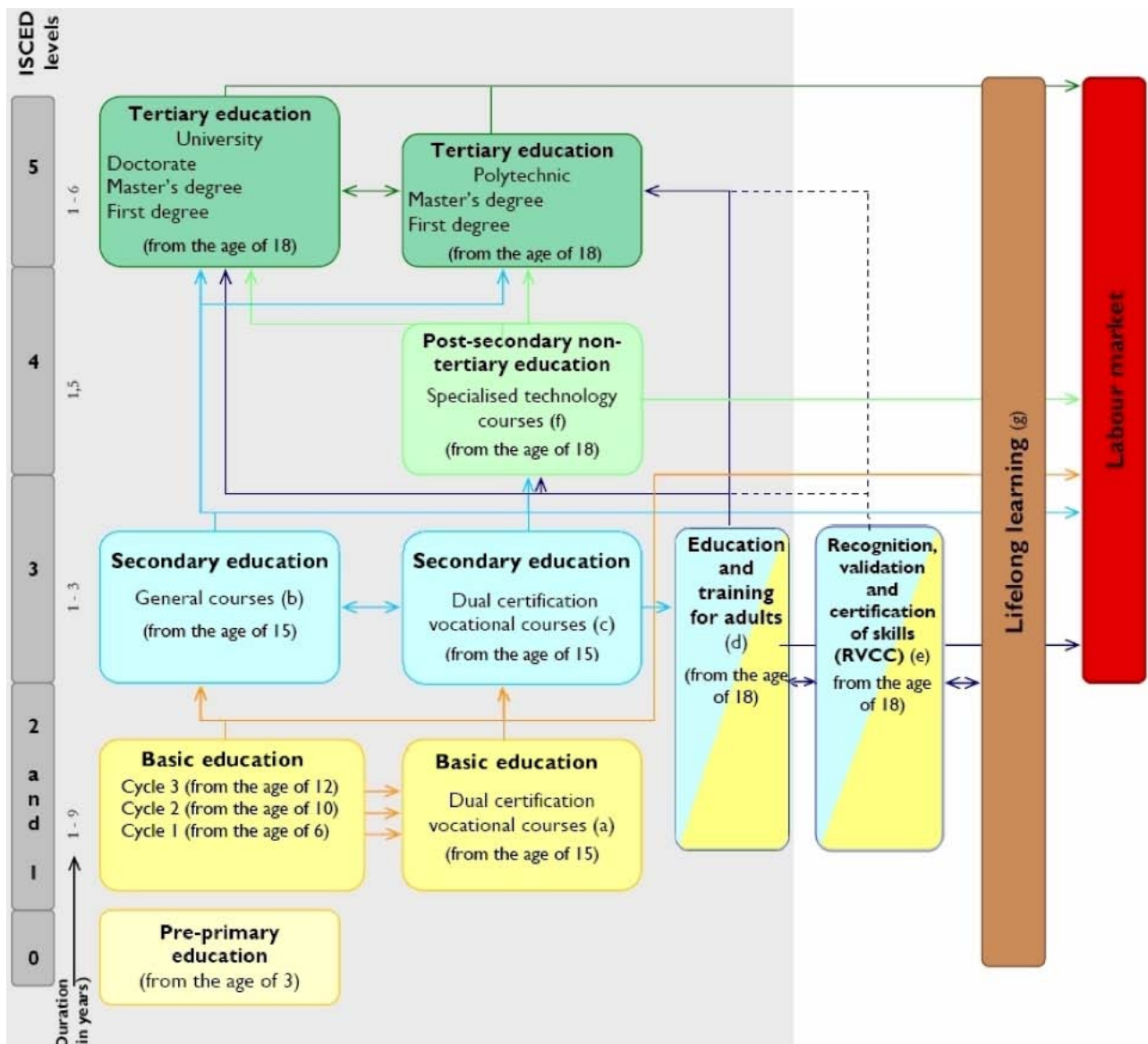
(...)

Over the past thirty years, a considerable effort was made to close the gap in average development standards between Portugal and the European Union, particularly regarding educational attainment. But more remains to be done: educational attainment of some 3.5 million people of working age is below secondary education, while some 485 000 young people (i.e. 45 % of the total) aged between 18 and 24 are working without having completed secondary education (Year 12 of school).

The *Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades* [New Opportunities Initiative] launched by the Government in 2005 aims to achieve a rapid improvement in the qualification levels of the Portuguese people, with Year 12 being set as the minimum reference qualification. This target is to be reached via a strategy focusing on two levels: (i) raising secondary education completion rates among young people, with strong measures to combat early school leaving and an investment in increasing the number of vocational training routes leading to dual certification of academic and vocational abilities; and (ii) improving the adult population's qualification levels via a combination of education and training for adults and a generalisation of the processes for recognising, validating and certifying skills.

(...) There are 268 of these centres in 2007, 170 more than in 2006.

(...) Vocational education and training system in Portugal



- (a) Includes apprenticeships and education and training courses for young people who have not completed basic education.
 - (b) Includes courses in the sciences and humanities (science and technology; social and economic sciences; social and human sciences; languages and literature; visual arts).
 - (c) Includes vocational courses, apprenticeships, education and training courses for young people, technology courses and specialised art courses.
 - (d) Includes education and training courses for adults, leading to dual certification – academic ability and basic- level and secondary-level qualifications.
 - (e) System that provides adults with recognition, validation and certification of basic-level and secondary-level skills and leads to a qualification.
 - (f) Specialised technology courses allow people to pursue their studies, with training being accredited as part of the tertiary education course to which the holder of a diploma in specialised technology is admitted.
 - (g) Includes continuing training leading to skills that can be recognised under the RVCC system.
- Pre-primary education ■ Basic education ■ Secondary education
■ Post-secondary non-tertiary education
■ Tertiary education ■ Lifelong learning ■ Labour market

Source: DGERT, 2007.

Welcome by **Rosa Neto**, director of CERCICA, and short introduction.



Short introduction and overview to the VET project by **Harald Weber**.

Presentation by **Maria da Luz Pessoa**, Vocational Training Centre of Alcoitão - IEFP-Ministry of Economy and Employment. The vocational training centre started 1960. Until 2004 the focus had been only on people with disabilities and on the individual with

emphasis on the transition to the labour market. The main problem has been to find a job at the end of the training, as the environment was so protected and the programme was too much individualised.

Then the centre was allowed to open for all learners. Meanwhile a lot of professional areas in 75 courses are available for unemployed people, people with disabilities or from schools, aged 16 or older (only in a few exceptions students are 15 when they start).

New students are interviewed by a team of psychologists, physicists, nurses, social assistants, coordinators of vocational courses. The team tries to find a match with the professional areas. They have two major concerns: 1: not to lose the main goal to find employment at the open labour market (or to direct them to other institutions). All courses are certified with the National Agency for Qualification. All learners get the same certificate independent e.g. of a disability (i.e. certificates have the same value). 2: vocational training for social inclusion despite of disability, language etc.

Courses are structured according the National catalogue. The certificate is on an academic and a professional level (double certification), or only on the professional level. Duration is usually 1.5 years, maximum 2 years. Students go for practical phases to companies or other employers. For people with disabilities more practical phases are foreseen. Currently programmes start at January 1, but it is planned to open them throughout the year.

There is a offer on small courses for 50 hrs to improve on some areas for those who already got a job. All types of disabilities (except blind) are present in the organisation. Adapted curricula exist only until 9th level.



Presentation by **Rogério Cação**, Vocational Training Department – FENACERCI, the National Federation of Social Cooperatives. FENACERCI is the federation of 50 organisations for VET and assessment, mainly for people with mental disabilities, since 1975. The target group has only a small overlap with the group being able to study at Vocational Training Centre of Alcoitão, at FENACERCI organisations persons attend with more severe handicaps. The process is always an individualised approach. All organisations have strong links to the labour

market. They use adapted curricula for people with disabilities. There is also a service for assessment to employment, supporting people to find and get a job. They also support people after they got a job (for max. 2 years, but as there are strong links to the labour market, employers can also get support after the 2 years). Some of the courses offered are certified. A significant part of the training is on-the-job training.

The organisations have an inclusive perspective on education and training. They want to be a part of the mainstream system. Connection with mainstream education and training institutions need to be more strong. To find real jobs is a problem in the current economic situation.

There is sheltered employment available, but no investments in this field are available. Similar, supported employment exists, but there are no regulations on that yet.

Presentation by **Fátima Martinho** from the Center New Opportunities - Casa Pia de Lisboa. The public institution Casa Pia de Lisboa was founded in 1780 (after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755) and grow until today, providing services to more than 4.700 youngsters. In 2007, inside the Centre for Education and Development António Aurélio da Costa Ferrerira, the Center of New Opportunities was created, the first in Portugal focusing on deaf and deaf-blind adults. It has special facilities and teachers for this target group and is a reference to all other New Opportunities centres in Portugal.

Students join for about 8 months a year, with several classes per week. Crediting competences is the main aim.

Technical staff supports people with low vision, but also assesses the needs of the people to support their teachers. Deaf people have strong problems in the Portuguese language, so they have problems in normal schools. But they have very good vocational / professional skills. There are about 400 deaf people in the centre. Also there are about 200 blind who are in the level of the 6th year. They have problems to adapt to the new technologies. Finally, there are 16 deaf-blind people of which 2 are certificated, yet this is very difficult to achieve for this target group. People with disabilities need more time e.g. to learn how to operate the new technologies or to learn the Portuguese language.

The centre has partnerships with other institutes in Portugal, esp. Ministry of Education, Labour Institute, National Qualification Agency, National Institute for Rehabilitation, Deaf Association, Portuguese Association of the Blind.

Also short formations are available. Additionally, courses for basic skills like reading are available.

Presentation by **Filomena Godinho** and **Ana Paula Freire** from School EB 2, 3 Alapraia - Ministry of Education. This is a public school for teenagers around 16 years. School attendance in Portugal is required until 18 years. They offer two educational training courses with 2 years duration, with practice trainings on the labour market: teacher assistants and computer technology. All courses cover the following 4 areas:

- socio-cultural: Portuguese, English, IT, citizenship, sport
- technological: skills for the specific technological area
- scientific: for computer technology mathematics and chemistry; for teacher assistants mathematics and psychology
- practice: 10% usually, for people with disabilities up to 50%; 6 weeks in Kindergarten for teacher assistants, in companies for computer technology

At the end students can get 2 certificates, an academic and a professional, for the 9th grade (double certification). During the 6 weeks of practical training, a teacher plus a trainer from the company evaluate the students on a weekly basis. The exam at the end is

practical and theoretical, evaluation is done by an external, from the practical field. The certificate allows students to study afterwards (this was different in the past).

Teachers send students to these courses because they have failed in the past or will most likely fail again. Most of them continue after the course to study a profession. The pedagogical team meets every two weeks to make a follow-up on each student.

In principal there are two options:

- Educational training courses
- Studying with adaptations

At the end the certificate is considered a basic level education. The referentials are always the same. They can e.g. continue to go to a centre to finish secondary level and after that they could have another 9 months practical training if required.

1st day afternoon

Visit to **School EB 2, 3 Alapraia**. Visiting of a class of educational training for teacher assistants in their 1st year, 17 students of which 1 is a wheelchair user (because of Osteogenesis imperfecta). While other courses have 3 years, all takes place here in 2 years plus practical training. The number of hours per week is 36. All students presented themselves, their view on the course and their plans for the future:

- Student 1. Age 15. Likes to work with children. The curriculum is easier for him. He wants to continue in arts / theatre.
- Student 2. Age 16: Appreciates that nobody is left behind. She also highlights that the curriculum is easier. Wants to become an artist / drawing.
- Student 3. Age 16. The curriculum is different, each student gets more attention. She did not yet made up her mind what to do later. She will get support by a psychologist in the second year to develop an own perspective.
- Student 4. Age 16: Curriculum is easier, and more attention is given to the individual. Afterwards she wants to make a massage course.
- Student 5. Age 17: Next year she will do 6 weeks of practice and is anxious about to work 8 hours per day. Her plan is to work after the certifications, as she will be 18 by then.
- Student 6. The curriculum is easier, but he is more interested in cars. Afterwards he wants to become a car mechanics.
- Student 7. Age 15. She's a wheelchair user. She did not make up her mind what to do after, but to get a job later it will be helpful to finish this course.
- Student 8. Age 15: The course is easy. However, it was not the prime option. She doesn't know yet what to do after.
- Student 9. Age 15: Very shy. She likes children, but she is also happy to finish 9th grade. She is not clear yet what to do afterwards.
- Student 10. Age 14: Likes to work with children. After getting the 9th grade certificate she wants to make a model course.
- Student 11. Age 15: She is not very happy. She would like to study VET in arts and does not like to work with children, but no other options were available.
- Student 12. Age 17: She does not see herself in the future working with children. She knew that already before, but there were only two options to choose from.
- Student 13. Age 14: The curriculum is easier, but she has to study more. Not sure what to do afterwards.
- Student 14. Age 16: The curriculum is not easier, but she is more motivated to study, so we study more. Wants to continue secondary education for working with children.
- Student 15. Age 15: Likes to work with children. She want to continue studying afterwards, but not sure yet in which direction.
- Student 16. Age 16: Easier, but also more difficult. You need to get deeper with the subject. She was in the 8th class and decided to change to this course to be able to work with children and to learn more. She wants to continue to study in the same field.

- Student 17. Age 15: Easier to finish 9th grade, but no intention to work with children. Plans to join a VET course on tattooing and piercing.



Back at **CERCICA** a meeting with teachers and students took place.

“CERCICA

MISSION

Promote the quality of life and inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and impairments, in a professional context of excellence and sustainability, as a strategic partners for families, public entities, entrepreneurs and other actors of our society.

VISION

Being a reference centre, to enable and empower people with intellectual disability and impairment, creating inclusive opportunities for the independent exercise of full citizenship.

VALUES

Trust, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Respect, Responsibility, Transparency.

PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

Customer Focus, Education, Inclusion, Continuous Improvement, Sustainability.”
(from the centre’s leaflet, translation into English)

All students attend vocational training courses: cooking assistant, bartender and waiter, administrative assistant, cleaning assistant, laundry operator, graphic arts assistant, nursery gardener, gardener, animal handler. Teachers are class teacher, Portuguese, mathematics, IT, citizenship. There is also a so-called “technician”, who finds practice places and does all the follow-up of students; it is a term used here for social workers with that specific task profile. Also here, all students presented themselves and their views on the training:

- Student 1: Practice is different, has to deal with customers. It is better to have practice than to stay in the centre.
- Student 2. Practice helps to get more responsibility. He worked before, but decided to get new competences.
- Student 3. He has had specific responsibilities in the company and is very proud about that.
- Student 4. He was also given specific responsibilities, and he was the representative of all learners at CERCICA. When he came from school to VET he felt that he learned to do something, but at the practice training he faced that he has to do the things also in time.
- Student 5. Practical phases are better, but also harder. The rhythm is hard.
- Student 6. Participated in a Leonardo-da-Vinci exchange with a French company for

3 weeks. Teachers attended this exchange. She learned to wrap food, as it was more a factory than a kitchen. Outside she noticed that she needs more autonomy, as there is nobody to correct her.

- Student 7. Likes her practice outside. She did not practice a lot at the institute but had to do it at work. She even taught others at the company something she had learned at the institute, and is very proud about that.
- Student 8. He learns to become an administration assistant with practical phases outside, because he enjoys doing real work.

At the entry students try out different professions to help them to choose what they want. One of the students, however, wanted to study gardening but there were no vacancies, but he is happy now with his new choice. One student joined a different school but the curriculum was too difficult. Then he came to CERCICA and chose the closest profession to the one he didn't manage. Another student tried 6 areas and chose 2 of them; meanwhile she prefers one of the two. Another student was before at school and experimented several professions. For his 1st choice he did not get good evaluations, so he chose gardening. Another one had two options and made his mind up for one of them with the help of the technician. Finally, one student liked two courses very much. Her main goal is to work with children, but there are no options at CERCICA, so she plans to do that afterwards.

Teachers highlighted that although a referential is available, there are no hints about what scales to use even if the evaluation is described in the Methodological "Guide for the access of disabled and impaired to the process of recognition, validation and certification of skills – Basic Level" [Guia Metodológico para o acesso de pessoas com deficiência e incapacidades ao processo de reconhecimento, validação e certificação de competências – Nível Básico" (ISCED 2) in

http://www.avaliadores.ang.gov.pt/np4/?newsId=10&fileName=guia_metodologico.pdf].

Today 22 of the 264 qualifications published

(<http://www.catalogo.angep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes>) have these adapted curricula as a referential. At the centre the courses time is divided in practical technological training and social skills and basic academic training, plus also 1/3 to 1/2 of practices outside in the labour market. Only if all disciplines are managed, students can get the 9th grade certificate (ISCED 2). Teachers at the centre are regular teacher plus a specific training.

A kind of assessment takes place when learners want to join the centre. This is done by a team of social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, teachers. They mainly evaluate the learner's ability to work. There is a validation meeting at the end of this process with the learner and the family. Only in rare cases learners are forwarded / recommended to occupational centres.

There are three different study patterns:

- A: regular pathway, up to 2900 hrs [Learning with autonomy (40 hrs); Basic academic training (800 hrs = 4 x 200 hrs); Technological training (around 850 hrs), Practices in the labour market (from 120 to 1200 hrs)]. Not used at the moment in the centre;
- B: same referential, but adapted to people with disabilities, 3600 hrs [Social skills for the integration (200 hrs); Basic academic training (600 hrs = 4 x 150 hrs); Technological training (1600 hrs), Practices in the labour market (1200 hrs)];
- C: up to 2900 hrs, but individually designed; does not lead to a double certificate, often only a partial certificate [Social skills for the integration (405 hrs); Technological training (up to 1600 hrs); Practices in the labour market (up to

1450 hrs)].

Technician (here: sociologist) has past experiences with other difficult target groups, always supporting to find a job. She gives also feedback to teachers what is going on on the labour market. She also takes technological teachers with her when the students are in practical phases. Theoretical topics (like mathematics) are explained in terms of its application in each respective profession.

2nd day morning

Visit to Vocational Training Centre of Alcoitão



The premises were shown to the study visit team, with several visits into classrooms. Per year the centre hosts about 1700 students who are all aged 16 or older. The courses cover basic, secondary and adults levels. The grouping per course is done based on the educational level.

Hotel maintenance course includes all repairs that are typical in hotels

Computer course for hairdressers. The class we visited aims at the academic level only, as learners work already. They study 6 hours per day for almost 8 months, so they have the opportunity to work in parallel. For those students who aim at both exams, it lasts for 18 months with 6 hrs/day.

Mechatronics course (15 – 24 years old), educational training course. Referentials are the same, but different specification. The basic education is finished, here they are finishing their secondary education. Afterwards they can study at a University. For the final examination, a member of the chamber of the union comes to check, but the final word is always with the institute. Both exams take place at the same time. They have practical phases in companies 3 times (300 hrs + 500 hrs + 600 hrs). During the 2 years of studying, they have 3000 hrs in total.

Only few people with disabilities are studying at the centre as it is secondary education.

Floral decorators course, for double certification 9th grade, lasting 1.5 years. 1 student with a handicap aims only at the academic part of the course.

Electric technician course, visit during their practical examination while the Jury president is present. 3rd day of the exam.

Managing / accounting course, all adults with +21 years. Students have to find their practical phase employers themselves. One of the students doubts that the referential reflects the labour market needs, e.g. not enough statistics but too much legislation. Companies do not pay anything for practical phases.

Manicure / pedicure / cosmetics courses are the most expensive courses as materials and technology is expensive. Double certification secondary education.



Technicians for computer repairs course; double certification course to receive the 9th level; learners aged 16 – 19; plans: mechanics (2 x), software (2 x), mechatronics, event management, not decided

Gardening work: in this course some people with disabilities take part.



New opportunities centres (this name will change during 2012) are also validation centres. Employers are obliged to hire persons only if they have the 9th grade academic certificate; if not they have to ensure that they get it soon. This has implications on C-path students e.g. of CERCICA; exemptions are needed then, which is a complicated procedure for each individual case. People who already work can come to the centre to learn in modules. A set of modules can make up a whole course.

The Portuguese Public Employment Service IEFP - Employment and Vocational Training Institute (http://portal.iefp.pt/portal/page?_pageid=297,1&_dad=gov_portal_iefp&_schema=GOV_PORTAL_IEFP) tells the centre which

courses are needed, as they also put together all the labour statistics. Curricula for new courses can be proposed to the institute of Carla Gouveia (VET coordination department – IEFP – Ministry of Economy and Employment), which can be acknowledged then. Employer organisations, chambers etc are involved in the process of developing the referentials. Anyone can propose changes to the referential, no matter of your background.



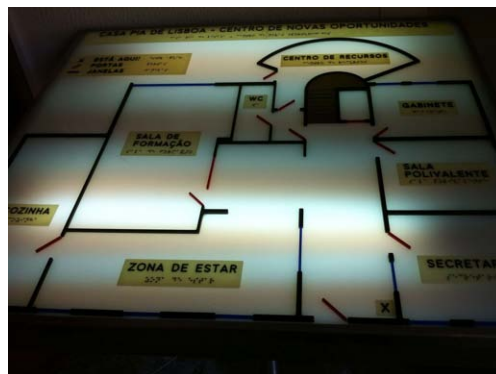
Visit to CERCICA vocational training centre for SEN students

75% of the learners at CERCICA are aged 16 – 25 years. Visiting the cleaning assistants during their practical work in the centre. They follow the C-path. The whole centre is cleaned by them. Same for the laundry, where learners follow the C-path. CERCICA offers only B- and C-path courses, no A-path. The centre is not allowed to accept non-disabled learners.

Visit of the gardening and nursery gardening groups. Path-B learners in gardening have 200 hrs of social skills for integration, 600 hrs of basic education, 1600 hrs of technical training and 1200 hrs of practical training. Path-C nursery gardening learners have 2900 hrs in total, of which 405 hrs are dedicated to soft skills and basic education (without certification).

2nd day afternoon

Visit to Education and Development Center António Aurélio da Costa Ferreira (CNO - Casa Pia de Lisboa)



The study visit team saw the centre and all its facilities. A teacher for mathematics and informatics explained that she had to change the way of teaching and to become a facilitator, i.e. to help people to communicate their experiences and wishes instead of doing it for them. It is important what they have to tell. Teaching does not mean to teach knowledge. Rather learners are required to communicate their knowledge, which at first is strange to them but is appreciated later by all.

80 % of all sensory impaired learners are getting their certificate from the centre, 20 % are getting it outside. For them, the centre is the reference centre. It is also a resource centre for computers, Braille printer, enlargers.

The school for deaf is just in the neighbourhood, ranging from Kindergarten to secondary school, with trainings for architectural design, technical drawing etc.

Blind students follow the normal training programme (referential) but attend a module that deals with using screen readers. What is taught depends on the student, e.g. Braille, screen reader, voice recorder. They even provide big Braille for people with low finger sensitivity.

There are 8 – 10 students in a classroom, while in regular schools this is about 20 – 25.



The centre also has participated in the National guide that provides a methodology how to adapt teaching and the referential to the needs of particular disabilities (http://www.avaliadores.anq.gov.pt/np4/?newsId=10&fileName=guia_metodologico.pdf).

Academic certification is done at the centre in areas where specific skills are missing. While for deaf the class needs to be quite homogeneous, for blind the class can be more diverse, even including people without disabilities. In all double certification courses, students should have portfolios. For a certification of basic level education learners have to be at least 18 years old; for the certification of secondary level learners have to have worked for at least 3 years and need to be older than 21 years. Success rate of the acknowledgement of these levels: 15%.

With regard to sign language, all students in Portugal have to learn now basic gestures, and all deaf students have to learn written Portuguese. Both sides move towards each other. It's a philosophy to treat sign language (invented about 200 years ago in this institution) as an own, legitimate language.