

## TRAINING TO INCLUDE the promotion of inclusive practice through training in context

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### INTRODUCTION

The project "Training to Include" was aimed at promoting inclusive practices through training in context of professionals from various educational levels. It was also intended to enable the development of curricular, pedagogical and organizational innovative interventions, sustained in scientific knowledge and reflection on practice. This project was conceived by a group of teachers of Instituto Superior Politécnico de Santarém - Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém, in the framework and mission of its Centro de Apoio Pedagógico (Educational Support Center) and establishing partnership with the training Centre of Lezíria do Tejo. It obtained approval and funding by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as part of the Gulbenkian Qualification New Generations Program - Special Education 2014. It involved teachers of all groupings of the coverage area of that training center.

### I – CONTEXTUALIZING & OBJECTIVES

In a first phase of the project, the team established three lines of intervention corresponding to the requests initially formalized by the Schools involved: early intervention, special education and regular education. Through the co-construction of knowledge about the reality of inclusive education in these schools, we intended to:

- Create opportunities to generate a network of collaborative work between professionals working daily in the identified areas;
- Implement a dialectic of questioning, intervention and evaluation, ie, research focused on professional practice, capable of configuring and Straighten, both the training itself in context such as that collaborative network;
- Design projects and materials to support training in inclusive education in order to replicate and spread to other realities and institutions of the first participants in the next phase of the project.

The prospect of engaging educators involved in inclusion, regardless of its scientific origin and / or level of education and position or function, was carried out with the following assumptions and purpose:

- To provide moments of participation, communication and joint learning, facilitating the awareness of professional practices and culture, as well as identifying aspects to change and strategies to implement these changes;
- Create conditions for the design and collaborative ways to educate and train educators and teachers in promoting inclusive practices in their groups and classes. The contextualized knowledge of the potential and needs of each school, leveraging the knowledge and resources of the group itself, provides the best adaptation of plans and training materials to build.

The project expresses the theoretical conceptions and beliefs and practices of the responsible team, which assumes and advocates:

- An inclusiveness paradigm in education, where equity, cultural diversity, cooperation and solidarity values underlie all educational policies and practices (Ainscow et al., 2012);
- A paradigm of critical reflexivity in training, supervision and professional development of teachers.

### II - METHOD

The first group of training / reflection, consisted of 21 teachers participating in the training workshop (3 teachers appointed by each grouping in the geographical area covered by the training center project partner). Teachers belonged to different levels of education and various recruitment areas /scientific background.

With this group of teachers a Training Workshop (credited by CCFCP) was developed in order to enhance partnerships and the training of participants to develop in a next phase, aimed at the training in context for teachers involved in the inclusion of children with special educational needs.



In this first workshop, completed in July 2015, we privileged moments of confrontation and reflection on inclusive practices developed in their school setting. Likewise it was intended to promote an extensible collaborative approach to autonomous working sessions of the trainees, essential in the construction of the implementation of proposed new training and materials to produce for the second training cycle.

The progress of the project was accompanied by moments of diagnostic and procedural evaluation, mobilizing instruments such as questionnaires, field notes, evaluation forms and a final focus group interview (still to be done).

### III - CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the project is still ongoing, however the set of evidence gathered so far allows us to identify some strategic actions, considering the central idea of recognizing and valuing diversity as an enriching element of the processes of teaching and learning. These actions imply investing in:

- Continuing specific and contextualized teacher training on curriculum management, differentiation, strategies and specific educational adaptations;
- Improvement of material and human resources (suitability of spaces, specialized technicians);
- Organizational strategies (intermediate structures and administrators in monitoring the functioning of Special Education, protocols and partnerships with other institutions, municipalities, etc.);
- Interaction, decision-making and coordinated work among all stakeholders (teachers, coaches, school principals, operational assistants, parents);
- Effective participation of all students in everyday school life, including interdisciplinary activities and cultural and social initiatives;
- Training and awareness of students, parents and professionals to the difference and for inclusion;

The emphasis in the **decision, contextualized management and evaluation** of many paths and process improvement identified as relevant (realized and yet to be implemented) seems to indicate that, effectively, this project can be an important contribution to the achievement of these changing paths.

#### REFERENCES:

- Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., & Weiner, S. (2012). *From exclusion to Inclusion: a review of international literature on ways of responding to students with special needs in schools*. Berkshire: CIBT.
- César, M. (2003). *A Escola Inclusiva enquanto Espaço-Tempo de Diálogos de Todos para Todos*. In David Rodrigues (rg.), *Perspectivas Sobre a Inclusão: da Educação à Sociedade* (pp. 117-149). Porto: Porto Editora.