



## Young Led Civic Initiatives Report EducAction - WP1

### ECOS

#### Introduction

The problems were identified by the students, in the school context, based on the following methodology:

- "Reference Scale for Participatory Citizenship Schools" - through contact and knowledge/appropriation of the assessment instrument and its application in the two classes, in small working groups;
- Analysis of the results obtained through the Reference Scale, in plenary (each group indicated the level of decision making and participation they considered they had in each of the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the Scale. These levels were noted on the blackboard and discussed among all. When the choices of decision making/participation levels varied from group to group, through structured debate, we reached a favorable consensus accepted by the whole class, in order to obtain a single result in each dimension/sub-dimension);
- Brainstorming;
- Work in small groups and then presentation in plenary;
- Guided discussions among students;
- Questionnaires for "external students"<sup>1</sup>.

#### Problems chosen by voting (results of the two classes and of the external students)

##### 1. Assessment methods too focused on written tests<sup>2</sup>

This problem was transversal to both classes and to the external students.

The students consider that the assessment methods are not appropriate for their progression in school and that they do not reflect the results of the teaching-learning process.

##### 2. Lack of inter-class tournaments/sports activities<sup>3</sup>

This problem (also common to classes and students outside of them), was pointed out as one of the reasons for the gap between theoretical classes and moments of leisure, of young people's healthy and integral development and as an obstacle to the acquisition of relational, social, and emotional skills.

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<sup>1</sup> By "external students" we meant students from Pinheiro e Rosa High School, that belong to other classes/school years .

<sup>2</sup> Learning Dimension, according to the Scale of Reference for Participatory Citizenship Schools

<sup>3</sup> Being part of a larger community Dimension (Scale of Reference for Participatory Citizenship Schools)



### 3. Need for greater integration of foreign students<sup>4</sup>

Although the school has a good offer in terms of classes, support and activities that guarantee the support of foreign students and intend to break barriers, namely language barriers and integration in the education system, the students consider that this problem needs to be better addressed.

#### Priority Problem identified

The first two problems mentioned above are out of students' control and ability to intervene. This was the students' general opinion, expressed in the School Labs sessions designed in order to tackle proposals of practical and feasible solutions for resolving the problems identified.

For instance, the issue of assessment methods is being addressed by the Ministry of Education in order to reformulate the way in which students are assessed, to make these methods more comprehensive and diverse, according to their suitability for what is currently expected in terms of the schooling and training of young people.

The lack of inter-class sports tournaments and activities is related to the social distancing measures and restrictions to prevent and fight the pandemic. In a regular/typical situation, Pinheiro e Rosa High School offers a range of sports-related activities, through which the school aims to promote physical and mental health and peer socialization.

Considering these arguments, the students decided to address the third problem that was highlighted: the need for greater integration of foreign students.

#### Why this problem and what are the most relevant issues

Although the school has a good offer in terms of guidance and assistance, adapted classes and activities that guarantee the support of foreign students and aim at breaking barriers - namely the ones related to language and integration in the education system - the students consider that this problem needs to be better addressed.

The students recognize that there are already support mechanisms designed and available for these students, but they need to be strengthened. From their point of view, the importance of support for foreign students is related to issues such as:

- difficulties in adapting to a new school and also to a new country, to a new city and a different language;
- everyone has the right to feel comfortable in the place where they live;
- school is a big part of students' lives, so if they are not well adjusted at school, they will not feel as "at home" in general;
- cross-cultural interactions: they allow foreign students to learn to speak the language, to get to know the culture and the lifestyle of the host country; but they also allow, in these exchanges, foreign students to provide Portuguese students a more global perspective of the world, as well as teach other languages and elements about different cultures, which are fundamental to the personal development of young people;

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<sup>4</sup> Inclusion Dimension (Scale of Reference for Participatory Citizenship Schools)



- inequalities in the education system among the various countries of Europe and the world: the structure of the portuguese education system and the variety in the educational offer may be obstacles, for example, in the choice of a course by foreign students;

- facilitate student adaptation and promote a multicultural and inclusive school environment.

### “The Young Led Civic Initiative”: practical and feasible solutions to implement

Considering the reasons why the students chose the abovementioned problem and since we are working on and with the school context in a holistic perspective, the implementation of activities as a way to solve it, should take into account the strategic areas and objectives of the School Educational Project (2019-2022) and contribute to its achievement in a participatory and democratic way. The three strategic areas on the School Educational Projecto (SEP) were: **1. Educational Sucess; 2. School Management and Organization; 3. School Culture and Educational Environment.**

The solutions proposed by the students were the folowing:

- creation of **work rooms** (online and face-to-face) - a more academic component, where students could clarify doubts, express difficulties, study in groups, etc;

- creation of a "**sharing club**" - a more peer-to-peer/informal and social component - to foster the inclusion and integration of new students, get to know each other and make friends, create a feeling of multi and inter culturality and of belonging to the community.

Thus, we have created a pratical framework that can show the relation between the strategic areas of the Educacion Project and the relevance of the solutions proposed by the students (tackling both SEP and solutions general objectives).

SEP Strategic Area	Strategic Area Objectives	Solution	Solution Objectives
1. Educational Success	Improve the academic results in Secondary Education	<b>Work rooms</b>	Promote academic success throughout the student's educational path
	To value attitudes that promote citizenship	<b>Work rooms</b>	Encourage the personal, social and civic development of school community, as well as the the sense of belonging to the community
2. School Management and Organization	Promote practices of organization and management of the curriculum and learning for an inclusive education	<b>Work rooms</b>	Provide guidance and support to foreign students
3. School Culture and Educational Environment	Promote the personal development and well-being of the educational community	<b>Sharing Club</b>	Guarantee a culture of accountability among the school community
	Take responsibility	<b>Sharing Club</b>	Promote a culture of co-responsability among the school community
	Valorization of students sucess	<b>Work rooms</b>	Foster school engagement through the valorization of school results



	Valorization of social results	<b>Sharing Club</b>	Foster school engagement through the valorization of social and relational results
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In this regard, it seems that the students' proposals are accurate and in line with the educational goals of the school.

Solution	Common Actions	Specific Actions	Tools and activities	Timetable
<b>Work rooms</b>	<b>A.</b> Mapping of foreign students (number of foreign students in the school, age, school year, nationality, mother tongue, knowledge of portuguese and other languages)	<b>(Work rooms)</b>  Regular online meetings on school learning platform scheduled for academic/educational purposes	Meetings  Non-formal interviews Mentoring Group work and study	<b>Implementation and dissemination phase:</b>  March 2021 - June 2021
<b>Sharing Club</b>	<b>B.</b> Mapping of doubts needs, expectatives, aspirations/dreams and interests (both academic and personal levels)  <b>C.</b> Understand students doubts, needs, expectatives, aspirations/dreams and interests regarding their sense of belonging to the community  <b>D.</b> Mapping of local cultural organizations that could strengthen the relationship between the students, their knowledge, interest and curiosity about each others culture,	<b>(Sharing Club)</b>  Creation and management - by the "host" student - of the sharing club social media page and is dissemination on school's website	Meetings, chat room, games, sports and other ludic activities  Share of information about the country, the city, the school, local events, local organization, etc.	
				<b>Monitoring and evaluation phase:</b>  March 2021 - until the end of the EducAction project  <b>Management phase:</b> March 2021 - after the end of EducAction project (depending on the autonomy, responsibility and level of involvement of the students responsible for the management of both proposals)



	traditions, way of living			
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In order to implement the two proposals, we present the following framework<sup>5</sup>:

## Expected results

Através destas propostas esperamos alcançar os seguintes resultados:

- minimize the difficulties in the adaptation of foreign students;
- promote in this students the sense of belonging to the entire community and ensure that they feel comfortable in their surrounding environments;
- raise school and community awareness about the role of the school as a central element in promoting students' adaptation to a "new life", a new reality;
- promote cross-cultural interactions and multicultural and inclusive school environment;
- minimize the difficulties experienced by the foreign students due to inequalities in the education system among the various countries of Europe and the world;
- engage the local community in this adaption process;
- through a better inclusion and support, facilitate the participation as well as strengthen the social and civic engagement of this students in both school and community life.

## Actors involved

The actors involved in the design and implementation of the above actions (both commun and specific), tools and activities will be:

- students from Pinheiro e Rosa High School;
- school board;
- teachers;
- parents;
- local organizations, institutions and stakeholders from the community.

## Conclusions

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that this framework is a draft version that will be improved later and along with the school community.



The entire process inherent to school labs, from identifying problems to finding solutions that solve them, can confirm the idea that it is a mistake to believe that young people do not have the capacity to be actively involved in society, to have an active voice and role in transformation processes. And it's a mistake that many adults make: to devalue the impact of the ideas of young people, just because we think "they are young". And notice how this bias is obvious in sentences that are formulated with a derogatory or discrediting sense of opinion: "You're still too young to talk about that" or "when you're older you'll understand". But contrary to what some adults may think, today's youth are very informed and enlightened. And assuming that information is the basis of participation, the better our capacity and curiosity to get coherent and solid information, the better we will be in counteracting these bias and prejudices and, consequently, develop more integrating spaces, where age is not a limit to promote the participation and empowerment of all citizens.

Beyond the school, the truth is that any context in which we intervene always offers room for more - to go from "real to ideal". Therefore, room to dream and to achieve. However, it is necessary to listen to all voices, to share decisions and responsibilities and take into consideration: problems, potentials, and solutions. Through the School Labs we manage to bring together different perspectives and generate transformation. And in this particular case, that transformation is intended to drive increasingly active, integral, and empowered youth participation.