

Adult education management in Porto and Catalonia: a case study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the organizational structure and educational methods of two training centers, namely the Professional School of Minho (Portugal) and the Association for Social and Occupational Promotion (Spain). Data collection included daily observation of and participation in the “departments” of adult education and training in both centers. We argue that training in these institutional contexts is based upon a permanent dialogue between learners’ home experiences and learning opportunities that allow them to acquire new professional, cultural, political and social skills. Therefore, the training process in these centers becomes a movement between prior knowledge and new experiences. This process is observed in the dialogue between learners, instructors, context and everyone involved in the educational process.

Keywords: Management; Adult Education; Portugal; Spain.

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Gestão da formação de adultos em Porto e Catalunha: estudo de caso

Resumo

Objetivamos a análise de dois centros de Formação, a saber, a Escola Profissional do Minho (Portugal) e a Associació per a la Promoció Ocupacional i Social (Espanha). Para tanto, nos valem da participação e observação diária nos “departamentos” de educação e formação de adultos nos referidos centros. Argumentamos que a formação, no contexto destes centros, figura como um permanente diálogo entre as *experiências caseiras* dos formandos e aquelas que podem impulsioná-los para aquisição de novas habilidades profissionais, culturais, políticas e sociais. Portanto, nestes centros, a formação passa a ser o movimento dado ao já conhecido que se modifica em contato com o novo. O diálogo estabelecido entre os formandos, os formadores, o contexto e todos os envolve a todos no processo formativo.

Palavras-chave: Gestão; Formação; Adultos; Portugal; Espanha.

Gestión de la formación de adultos en Porto y Cataluña: estudio de caso

Resumen

Objetivamos el análisis de dos centros de Formación, a saber, la Escuela Profesional del Minho (Portugal) y la Asociación para la Promoción Ocupacional y Social (España). Para ello, nos valem de la participación y observación diaria en los departamentos de educación y formación de adultos en dichos centros. Argumentamos que la formación, en el contexto de estos centros, figura como un permanente diálogo entre las experiencias diarias de los formandos y aquellas que pueden impulsarlos para la adquisición de nuevas habilidades profesionales, culturales, políticas y sociales. Por lo tanto, en estos centros, la formación pasa a ser el movimiento dado al ya conocido que se modifica en contacto con lo nuevo. El diálogo establecido entre los alumnos, los formadores, el contexto y todos los involucra a todos en el proceso formativo.

Palabras-clave: Gestión; Formación; Adultos; Portugal; España.



1 Introduction

One of the commitments of adult education and training is to enable students to act effectively in the labor market and pursue their own improvement. Among the goals of adult education and training are the preparation to occupy positions in companies already established through the exercise of a profession learned in the training center or acquire the ability to manage their own businesses.

Based on this assumption, this exploratory study aims to clarify the organizational structure and the theoretical and methodological mechanisms for managing adult education in two adult training centers, namely the Professional School of Minho (Espro-Minho) in Portugal, and the *Asociació per a la Promoció Ocupacional i Social* (APTOS) in Spain. Particularly, the ‘departments’ of adult education and training of each center will be examined.

2 Adult Education in the context of Spain and Portugal: remarks

Adult education programs are designed to fill a gap in formal education, because these programs often emphasize the so-called informal training or non-formal education, acquired by adults during their lifetime. These programs go beyond the mere certification of school knowledge acquired between grades nine and twelve, because it includes knowledge that adults have built in other contexts, not only in school or the so-called formal education. This knowledge, as part of adult education content, can enhance the necessary autonomy that values the educational process of individuals, and the context where it occurs.

It can be said that the relationship between the context and the learner lies in the relationships established between training and socialization, as indicated by Rui Canário (1999). When analyzing the interplay between training and socialization, Canário (1999, p. 120-121), notes that “the ‘proximity’ between training situations (related or unrelated to school education) and socialization situations only becomes visible from the moment that the relationship in an educational situation,” moves to an interpersonal social relationship. According to Claude Dubar (1991, In: CANÁRIO, 1999, p. 120), socialization is “a process of individual internalization of norms, rules and values that make of each individual a socially identifiable being”. In other words, it is in the internalization and subjective interpretation of the social context that subjects become subjects, and can make their own decisions when facing a problem. This can be regarded as the touchstone to establish interpersonal relationships in the field of training. Understanding that the subjects can make their decisions based on their world experience when facing a problem should be the basic assumption for the autonomy of the subjects under training.

Avoid training homogenization can guide adult education in order to focus on the need for a general, cultural and political education, directed to the labor market according to the needs of students.

In labor relations, adults also develop the relationships that they establish throughout their lives, and their education and training cannot ignore this fact. However, it



becomes problematic when the offer of training is not accompanied by other policies of job offer and social inclusion. It is not worthwhile to invest in training and continue unemployed or get a job that does not value the employee's potential. Therefore, adult education should hold a dialogue with other approaches and dimensions of the working world by relating it to the real needs of the adults, thus developing a relationship of dialogue and not submission to an oppressive social logic (FREIRE, 1974, p. 69).

On the other hand, the growth of support for adult education and training programs focused on employability should be understood as a necessity demanded by this social stratum. That is, these programs are configured in a stress field in the search for practical solutions to a common issue: the need for public policies addressed to training and integration in the working world, while respecting the specificities of adults. Interventions cannot be done in isolation, because they would not take into account the complexity of social relations of those who need a minimum income, for example. Urgent measures are required to solve these people's basic needs and social marginalization. Clearly, education and adult training programs are not the panacea for the problems of this population. Therefore, the field of adult education is not the only one that requires clear and continuous public policies.

José Alberto Correia draws attention to “the pedagogical work seeking to deepen and modernize craftsmanship, admitting that the upgrading of professionals depends on the multifunctional use of their knowledge and experiences” (CORREIA, In: CANÁRIO; CABRITO, 2005 p. 69). Thus, it is critical that the centers which apply to receive grants from the European Union (EU) do not omit this feature of the “multifunctional use of their knowledge and experiences” that adult education demands. In this sense, it is important to state once again that adult training programs are considered a rich field of research and can help in the perception of the training devices engendered in society that tends to homogenize everything and everyone. From the field of adult education, we can see the gaps to be filled in the current non-formal educational structure. However, it is essential that these be filled permanently by seeking the denial of the idyllic character assigned to this field.

According to Agustín Requejo Osorio (In: TRILLA, 2004, p. 235), the end of World War II gave the greatest impulse in the development of adult education. It was during the following years that the successive world conferences, supported by UNESCO, highlighted different aspects and functions of adult education, the author says. According to H. S. Bholá (TRILLA, 2004, p. 235), the period between 1949 and 1985 is the most important in the recent history of adult education. In his brief historical overview of adult education, Osorio (In: TRILLA, 2004) points out the following conferences as opportunities to reflect on adult education: Elsinore Conference, Denmark in 1949; Conference of Montreal, Canada, 21st to 31st August 1960; Tokyo Conference, Japan, July 5th to August 7th, 1972; the International Conference in Paris, France, in 1985; and Hamburg Conference, Germany, in 1997. The Paris International Conference defined adult education as “a distributive project that tries to coordinate formal education and the working world to achieve a functional literacy.” The author emphasizes the proclamation of the International Literacy Year in 1990 as an important event for the implementation of a “social literacy that implies not only the mastery of writing, but also the



path of integration and participation of people in their cultural, social and political environment” (OSORIO, In: TRILLA, 2004, p. 235-236). According to Osorio (TRILLA, 2004), the General Conference in Nairobi (1979) is an important milestone for the design of guidelines to define adult education.

However, for adult education be taken internally as a field of tension between certain social groups and government devices, it should seek to exclude “initiatives that have no organizational characteristics, without determining, in a radical way, its content, level, or method,” in favor of promoting “formal, non-formal or informal activities, provided that they are targeted at the learning dimension” as a principle (OSORIO, In: TRILLA, 2004, p. 236). Adult education initiatives carried out in an organized way should focus on learning as a guiding principle.

In Spain, for example, Osorio (TRILLA, 2004) mentions that “the General Education Law (art. 44)” has fostered “a specific policy for adult education” through the implementation of the Permanent Specific Program for Adults (known as EPA) in 1973. The author classifies the 1980s as the period in which “some Autonomous Communities acquire full competence in adult education” that was reinforced by “changes proposed by the book *White Paper on Adult Education*, published in 1985.” In Portugal, however, Law n. 3/79 symbolizes, to a certain extent, “the transition from social education mobilization to an attempt to build a system and a government organization for adult education.” As a consequence, “great importance was given to the concept and role of the State in providing education, particularly through the provision of adult education,” according to Lima (In: CANÁRIO; CABRITO, 2005, p. 39).

On the other hand, according to Florentino Fernández Sanz (In: GARCIA, 1997), it is important to note that at first the constitution of the European Union did not include education as part of the community’s concerns. It was only in 1972 that M. Janne, the former minister of education in Belgium, was assigned to gather information that would serve as the basis for the elaboration of the elements that would promote community educational policies (Fernandez, In: GARCIA, 1997, p. 86). This concern resulted in the implementation of different programs (*Comet, 1986; Iris, 1897; Petra, 1988; Helios, 1988; Now, 1990; Euroform, 1990; Force, 1990; Leader, 1991*). Then, new programs were launched, such as *Horizon, Youthstart, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Comenius, Erasmus, Eurydice, Arion* and others that had education, and especially adult education, as one of the main assumptions to “vivir y trabajar en Europe.” This concern for adult education or a general, political and cultural instrumentation of people at working age resulted in four conferences at the European Union level (Greece, 18-20 June 1994; Germany, 13-15 November 1994; El Escorial, Madrid, in 1995; and Florence 9-11 May, 1996) with adult education as a central theme.

One of the purposes of adult education is the commitment to enable the learners to be fully included in the labor market, both for the management of their own business (it is the responsibility of the training centers to develop the required skills and competencies), and for working in companies already established through the exercise of a learned profession in the vocational training centers. This comprehensive approach makes the educational provision for adults to be distributed, according to Osorio (2004, p. 238), “in three major areas: the academic area, the labor area, and the social,



cultural, political and economic area.” However, as the author warns, for “policies and experiences of territorial base to exist, (...) it is necessary to develop initiatives and processes that foster a community development in the very spaces of social collectives” (p. 244). Taking Spain again as an example, the author keeps emphasizing that the institutional space became an important element, especially the local space at the municipal level. According to Osorio (2004, p. 245), “the communities, like Andalusia, in 1990; Catalonia, in 1991; Galicia, in 1992; and Valencia in 1995, set the training for leisure and culture as priority, along with the already recognized basic and instrumental education, as well as the vocational education and training for the working world” (p. 245).

In Portugal, adult education can be seen from the 1974 revolution, according to Lima (In: CANÁRIO; CABRITO, 2005, p. 31). Then, adult education was taken as a result of convergence between discrete policies and lack of responsibility of the elites for the education of their countrymen, exacerbated by “the absence of major educational institutions or social movements that impact the education of adults.” One exception was the practical activism of associative and community sectors that offer active resistance to undermining policies of the popular social initiatives that strive for vocational, political, cultural and social development for the marginalized population.

In this direction, it is possible to consider the need for people to join efforts in the struggle against the deterrence imposed by governments and wealthy social strata. In discussing the methodological guidelines for the institutions to provide adult education, Paolo Federighi (1992, p. 56) states that “el principio asociativo es un factor que funda las perspectivas de transformación de las relaciones entre las instituciones y la sociedad civil”, because common efforts will allow intellectual development that can lead members to resist deterrence, “puesto que es a través de los grupos y los órganos que se producen por la praxis asociativa como se podrá conseguir la creación de un nuevo tipo de estado generado por la experiencia asociativa”, adds Federighi. Forming an association creates a milestone in the relations of individuals, as they start to choose who they want to live with, i.e., “a través de asociarse, se pasa de la naturalidad de las relaciones entre las personas a relaciones elegidas por propia voluntad.” (FEDERIGHI, 1992, p. 56). However, the mere fact of forming an association does not guarantee immunity against the internal and external threats to the whole group. Forming an association is just one alternative of resistance in the hopes of the implementation of another type of relationship between the social groups and the political devices of other groups. In other words, it might be an opportunity to “transformarse de usuario en sujeto de los procesos educativos” (FEDERIGHI, 1992, p. 61).

3 The Professional School of Minho (EsproMinho)

The Technical School of Minho (EsproMinho) is supported by Decree-Law no. 4/98 of January 8, from which it draws up its internal regulation aimed at organizing their respective departments to work better. The statute consists of seven items that govern the activities. Its regulations are reflections of an institution that must have a faculty in tune with the labor market, among other things.



The school is based in Braga and Viena de Castelo. These two cities are in northern Portugal. The department of adult education and training is an extension of EsproMinho embedded in the hierarchical structure of the school as a whole. Although this department has relatively large range autonomy, it is legally subjected to the general hierarchy of the institution. It is this autonomy that leads us to name this part of the school as a ‘department’, although it is not referred as such in the school documents. EsproMinho has the following structure:

Figure 1. Organizational structure of EsproMinho.

1st	Entrepreneurs’ cooperative in the northern region (GRULA)	
2nd	Educational Director and course promoter	Financial management
3rd	Educational Vice Director	Coordination of the Department of Adult Education and Training
4th	Other departments and faculty of EsproMinho	

One of the educational assumptions of the Professional School of Minho is driven by environmental education aimed at developing capacity and motivation among the students to engage as citizens in problem solving, decision-making and implementation of concrete actions that, by ensuring an improved environment, can also ensure a high quality of life. This process will be referred to as competence for action (ESPROMINHO, 2006-2007). It is from this type of concerns, for example, that EsproMinho, through its department of adult education and training, contributes effectively to local development supported by the European social fund managed by Portugal. The country has applied to the National Strategic Reference Framework (*Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional - QREN*). In the various plans provided by this body, the courses fit into “the program that embodies the thematic agenda for the human potential inscribed in the National Strategic Reference Framework, a programmatic document that frames the implementation of the community policy of economic and social cohesion in Portugal in the 2007-2013 period” ([HTTP://WWW.POPH.QREN.PT/index.asp](http://www.poph.qren.pt/index.asp)). The EsproMinho courses for adult education and training are part of “Priority 2 - Adaptability and Lifelong Learning” that meet the “Qualifications: status, progress and weaknesses” of the Portuguese state regarding manpower classification.

The EsproMinho center considers education and training of learners as one of the guiding principles for their full development as social beings. In other words, its educational project states that “the concept of class does not prevail to the detriment of the learner, since it is always possible to organize tasks and enhanced subject recovery when there are major progression difficulties, ensuring maximum learning” (ESPROMINHO, 2006-2007). However, the school must always be in line with the guidelines of the market, since as a vocational school, it seeks to prepare the learner for a more adequate integration into the labor market. It means that for the instructor of this institution, “the objectives of each module must be clear and precise, so that the instructor can always make the proper approach to knowledge concerned with the social and vocational reality of the past, present and future” (ESPROMINHO, 2006-2007). The school, therefore, seeks a permanent dialogue with the local businesses, i.e., the school does not isolate the students from the socioeconomic context.



3.1 Department of Adult Education and Training (EFA)

The unit of adult education is located physically remote from the youngster education unit, which has advantages and disadvantages. It is located in a small space, and apparently more comfortable than the counterpart unit, but suffers from a certain isolation that encloses the female students in a commercial center limited to an interaction among them, very distant from other people of different age-groups.

In EsproMinho, adult education should prepare individuals to (re)enter the labor market and develop socio-cultural skills. Despite being subjected to the general hierarchy within the school, the EFA department of EsproMinho enjoys management freedom to meet the needs presented by those to whom it is intended. This freedom, in a way, may differentiate EFA's courses from others that are more attached to a pre-determined curriculum.

4 Association for the occupational and social promotion (APTOS)

The contextualization of the so-called APTOS will be described from what we might call the political pedagogical project of the center, i.e., based on the *Realizació d'itineraris d'Inserció Sociolaboral* (RIISL) project. This project refers to the group of people attended by the minimum wage integration program (*Renda Mínima d'Inserció - RMI*). Our reference for this contextualization is the project approved by the Director of the Center on June 30, 2008, which was prepared by two pedagogical coordinators of the center. Along with these professionals, the APTOS has human resources composed of various professionals from different areas, such as pedagogy, psychology, social education, experts in welding, industrial cleaning and social integration, as well as clerical personnel. The center also has several material resources and three vehicles to transport students and serve other purposes.

The project that guides the activities in the APTOS states that the main objective of the center “consisteix a potenciar i millorar el perfil d'ocupabilitat de les persones mitjançant l'adquisició d'eines, habilitats i competències que els facilitin la inserció sociolaboral” (REALZACIÓ D'ITINERARIS D'INSERCIÓ SOCIOLABORAL, RIISL, 2009, p. 3). Despite being based on the “estructura formativa bàsica que ens plantegem, seguint els paràmetres establerts pel Departament de treball [de Catalunya]”, the project is always, as far as possible, flexible according to the students' needs. It is important to state that this program refers to the attendees of this center as students, different from EsproMinho that referred to them as learners. From the etymology of the word “student” in Latin “*a-lumni*”, which means lack of light and requires the master to illuminate him or her, it can be said that this is a perspective that sees adults as people who must be guided to (re)encounter their way guided by masters. When they are referred to as learners or “trainees”, like in the EsproMinho, it may mean that they are regarded as people seeking education or are graduates-to-be.

The APTOS center organizes its courses and activities in accordance with the distribution of time in the multi-year planning, which starts at “no màxim en dos mesos a comptar des de la data de la resolució i finalitzarà el 31 de Desembre de 2009”, and was expected to begin in December 2008. (RIISL, 2009, p. 15). The industrial cleaning



group, for example, began in December 2008 and ended in December 2009, and is regarded as a multi-year plan. The same happened to other courses, such as gardening, metal structures (welding) and motivation. Each course follows a given workload and has specific objectives, rationale and methodologies in accordance with existing laws in Catalonia and the RIISL project of the APTOS. However, all course designs seek to meet labor competencies. The student activities are planned individually in some cases.

The center serves people with basic literacy needs; people with lack of motivation and social skills; people lacking adequate training at occupational level, and even people who have an appropriate professional level, i.e., people that can get a job right away.

Labor integration derives from direct training activities subdivided into four groups: (1) “accions relatives a l’anàlisi i diagnòstic de l’ocupabilitat (DIAGNOSI); (2) accions de formació bàsica instrumental, habilitats socials i tecnicoprofessional; (3) acció d’inserció i acompanyament laboral; (4) acció de seguiment de l’itinerari” (RIISL, 2009, p. 7). Each of these phases is developed following methodologies that facilitate their implementation. In other words, they are developed according to their own methodologies. The students are selected and distributed according to their profile, which is defined through semi-structured interviews and individual questionnaires. Before students are admitted, they must demonstrate the need to “respecte els seus objectius formatius i laborals, basats en les capacitats reals del moment” (RIISL, 2009, p. 25). When we were observing the activities of the center, we were able to conduct an interview with one of these students who were participating in the selection to enter the APTOS. This was an important and a ‘palpable’ experience to get acquainted with the RIISK guidelines.

Once admitted, the adults are classified as **Ocupable** i **No-ocupable** to follow specific patterns. After attending the specific activities, they still go through a phase called “accions de suport” (support actions) which consists of monitoring students in the workplace after their actual job integration. This action is divided into two phases that comprise the “anàlisi dels punt de partida pel disseny de formació i elaboració del projecte; seguiment i avaluació de les accions”. (RIISL, 2008). However, before that, the process of student training includes mandatory basic and additional content, based on needs identified for each student.

One factor that may facilitate placement in the labor market is the fact that this center has a group of companies that encourages work training, i.e., “entitats per a la inserció Laboral de Tarragona”, which includes more than 27 companies, together with the APTOS, also characterized as a company. Similarly to what happens in EsproMinho, students who are studying in the APTOS are not from these companies, but it can be said that these companies are more likely to introduce them in the labor market.

Therefore, the employability plan addressed to APTOS graduates has as one of the key points

la millora del perfil ocupacional dels/les alumnes mitjançant una actuació formativa integral de caire motivacional i professionalitzadora, que conflueixi amb una inserció sociolaboral efectiva, recolzant-se en un projecte especialment dissenyat per assolir aquesta fita. (RIISL, 2009, p. 69).



Among many other forms of perception of the impact of its training activities on the labor market, the APTOS has a system that consists of performance assessment by a specialized team while students are still in the education process.

5 Contexts, differences and similarities

To examine the activities performed over a year between Porto and Tarragona is a salutary exercise to evaluate really how we are acting as education professionals, especially considering the fact that the activities occurred in the context of a Master's program (*Mundusfor*) intended for educators, i.e., more qualified professionals already working as educators. The Master's program offers five different special programs under the responsibility of each of the five consoriated universities - University of Akershus (Norway), University of Granada and the University of Rovira and Virgili (Spain), University of Porto (Portugal), University of Reims (France). In our case, we work with the special programs offered at the University of Porto, Portugal (Local Development and Adult Training), but we were hosted by the University of Rovira and Virgili, in Tarragona (Spain). Our analysis is focused on adult education and training, once we understand that society can limit the extent of its development if it does not value and enhance those who acquire knowledge throughout life.

This, somehow, is our background and rationale that led us to focus on adult education (APTOS) and training (EsproMinho). The two centers where we conducted our research in both countries were targeted at adults. EsproMinho was concerned with the certification and revalidation of skills for job reintegration, whereas APTOS was directly concerned with job reintegration and basic training.

It should be noted that adult education should respect contextual idiosyncrasies; consequently, the idiosyncrasies of the personnel involved in the education process. Although these centers are similar to each other, they have their particular mode of operation.

From the observations made throughout the course of this study, it could be said that the idea of competence is understood as strategies that each learner develops from the political, social and cultural devices that are triggered in the face of situations they are subjected in their daily lives as well as in the training centers. The notion of competence in this case boils down to how adults deal with what they have previously dominated in the face of situations experienced in daily life. Therefore, how they deal with the training content suggests that acquiring new motor or psychological skills cannot be confused with acquiring new skills that "should maximize the response capabilities of individuals" (VAZ, 2007, p. 411). These, in turn, become an efficient operational practice for the new learned skill. However, it is known that "work performance based on skills contains, in addition, contractual arrangements that tend to neglect the importance of the collective agreement (...) because it questions the very articulation of training courses and career paths," as Henrique Vaz (2007, p. 411) warns in his doctoral dissertation.

Education and training is perceived in both the EsproMinho and APTOS centers as an exchange between knowledge experienced during life time and knowledge acquired from the contact with instructors and other trainees. That is, education and training



within the context of EsproMinho and APTOS is taken as the permanent dialogue between students' home experiences and those that can propel them to acquire new professional, cultural, political and social skills. In other words, education takes what is already known and transforms into new knowledge when in contact with the new, the unknown that is given to know. On the other hand, the education process needs the learners' competence to place it in a context so that it meets the expectations. Therefore, our observations showed that management, competence and education become crucial for the attendees of the mentioned adult training centers.

When we seek to understand the methodologies implemented in adult education at EsproMinho, for example, the observations indicate that it is necessary to differentiate what is meant in that context by education and training. Education refers to the content that is taught by the instructor in a vertical transmission process, whereas training allows student participation in the construction of his or her new knowledge, taking what is already known into consideration in a rather horizontal relation.

In the classes or meetings involving instructors and learners in APTOS, we could observe that education as a change process was evident, except for the welding course, which required much training due to its technical aspects in teaching how to use welding equipment. In the courses of motivation, industrial cleaning and gardening, the relationship between what students learned and what they already knew, a dialogue method could be used, with a significant participation of students in meetings. In the motivation group that was encouraged explicitly.

The dialogue between the orientations included in the internal statutes of the APTOS was very straight, i.e., the instructors had a clear view of what was recommended for job reintegration, because their actions in class would meet the main guidelines of that project. As it can be seen in the items previously presented in the text, in all four groups students' participation in the construction of their knowledge, identification of possible job offers resulting from the training provided by the center, and enhancement of the cultural particularities of trainees were prioritized. Taking cultural particularities into account is of paramount importance since the center catered to a particular cultural group which included gypsies, blacks from the African continent and other immigrants. Based on our observations, it could be said that there was no other way to teach these students, should their cultural differences not be respected. The way they dress and speak revealed that they were different and in need of government subsidies.

There was also a close relationship between the orientations present in the internal project design of EsproMinho and the team that coordinated adult education and training. For example, the coordinator team conducted periodic meetings with the instructors. These meetings had as one of the goals to verify if the project objectives were being met in all classes. Another way to accomplish this fulfillment was the responsibility of the mediator, a sort of coordination assistant who surveyed the student learning process in accordance with the objectives previously outlined in the project. There was a strong control over class time and other activities at EsproMinho. Scholarships could be cut or reduced if the student did not comply with the schedule. Adult education in the two centers was granted by European funds and a small percentage from the government in each country.



In the EsproMinho center, the hierarchical structure is composed of the entrepreneurs' cooperative of the northern region (Grula), education directorate, financial management, and coordination of adult education and training. The center is clearly linked to the labor market, which can be perceived in its hierarchical organization and because of the influence of the *Grula* that provides financial support. Adult and young graduates are integrated into the labor market directly. In other words, EsproMinho serves as a kind of training center for the labor world. That is why its schedule corresponds to the working hours, and jobs are offered to its students upon graduation. This is a short description of the work performed by the coordination team that manages the adult education and training program at EsproMinho.

In the APTOS center, the structure is composed of a director, two pedagogical coordinators and instructors. There is flexibility for compliance with the schedules for both teachers and students. Teachers could be away from the center, when previously justified, and have their classes canceled or replaced by other activities. In some cases, each student had a different schedule to stay in the center, according to the justification presented to the social worker and approval by the center.

6 Concluding Remarks

The observations performed over a one-year period in the two centers showed the organizational structure and the management process of a training center for adult education and training (EsproMinho) and an association for the occupational and social promotion (APTOS). An analysis of these institutions reveals that, even though high-quality education is provided, there is a need for greater appreciation in the implementation of adult education and training programs. The funding, despite meeting the basic material needs, does not cover all the demands of adult education programs.

A way to funnel financial support might be suggested, based on prior consultation in the community to be served to know what their real training needs are, as suggested by the centers investigated. However, this consultation should be extended to the students involved, so as to encompass the two instances, i.e., the program design and the identified needs. This can be derived from students' reports, for instance.

Job opportunities, such as those offered by EsproMinho, do not guarantee success if the offer is not accompanied by financial support to pursue the career learned. For example, provide funding for graduates to start their own business or include content in their training to enable them to ask for funding or get themselves a job would be recommended. After all, they will be assigned responsibilities for their employability after graduation. By supervising students in the APTOS center, it was found that the identification of job opportunities in the surrounding area alone is not sufficient to motivate adults to learn. There is a need for really attractive programs that actually make sense in seeking to empower adults to exercise labor autonomy. Just providing a training program is not enough, since these adults will face the requirements of modern times and have to compete with young people considered more suitable for the updated technology involved in today's labor world.



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