



Country Background Report Portugal

1. Background

Bases

- Portuguese Constitution
- General Education Law of 14th October 1986, which stipulates the overall framework of the educative system
- Decree Law No 115-A/98 of 4th May approves the autonomy, administration and school leadership
- Decree Law No. 7 / 03 of 15th January regulates the responsibilities, constitution and management of Boards of Education and the design, adoption and impact of the Charter of Education

Educational principles

- Generalization of education.
- Collaboration among all actors involved in the process.
- Comprehensive development of students, including job training and life in society.
- Democratization of education through the promotion of educational equality and access opportunities.
- Academic Freedom.

Objectives

- To improve the level of qualifications and skills of the population, priorities which fit the framework defined by the Lisbon strategy, making upper secondary education (15 to 17 years) the minimum qualifications of the population, through the expansion and diversification of Vocational Training.

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- To improve skill levels of the adult population through the recognition, validation and certification of competencies.
- To guide the education service through the principles of fairness and equal opportunity, and responsibility of students regarding the learning process.

Current Situation

- Need to improve educational outcomes
- Need to expand investment in education
- Need to correct the failure and dropout rates. At this time it is above the average of EU countries.

2. Context

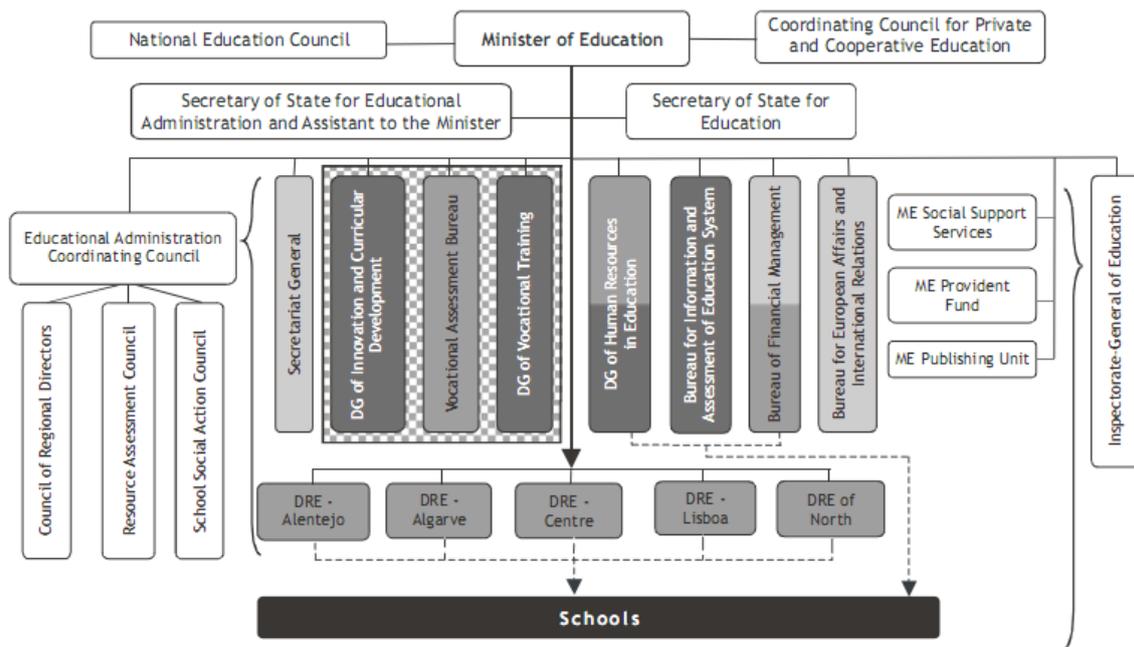
National context

Education in Portugal is a direct competence of two Ministries: the Ministry of Education, which manages Primary Education (Ensino Básico) and Secondary Education (Ensino Secundário) and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, which manages University Education.

The Ministry of Education sets overall education policy for the whole country. Its powers are the usual ones of a strongly centralized Department.

The Ministry's organizational structure is reflected in the following chart:

Table I – Organic Structure of the Ministry of Education



The Ministry also has a variety of services distributed at central, regional and local levels which guarantee the decentralization of powers in favour of local authorities and the autonomy of schools.

The autonomy of schools is enhanced during 2008/09 with the participation of families and school communities in school life and taking among others the following measures:

- Transfer of the management of non-teaching staff to municipalities
- School Social Action: implementation of social and educative support measures as management of the school canteens, student insurances...
- Construction, maintenance and furnishing of school buildings
- School Transport
- Pre-School Education: acquisition of teaching materials, non-teaching personnel management...
- Curriculum enrichment activities: activities to be performed outside school hours and teaching music, foreign languages...

- Residences for students: this includes the transfer of the patrimony and staff of these residences

Regional context

In Portugal, the system has established an intermediate level of management education policy establishing five Regional Education Directorates (DRE):

- Lisbon and Tagus Valley
- North (around Oporto)
- Centre (around Coimbra)
- Alentejo (Évora area)
- Algarve (around Faro)

The DRE are decentralized services, that is, regional bodies which carry out departmental policies, providing guidelines, coordinating and supporting all schools, except the third-level ones, which are autonomous institutions themselves. In the autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores, the administration of education is the responsibility of regional governments through the Secretariats of Education.

3. Concepts and practice of school leadership

Conceptual framework

Since 2004 leadership in schools is a relevant aspect and taken into account when considering the training of the candidates to management. Additionally, leadership is one of the basic criteria for external evaluation of schools. The aim is strengthening the leadership in order to transform schools into more efficient educative centres.

In each educative institution there is a head with the necessary authority to develop the educational project of the school and to run the educational measures of the Ministry, supported in his or her management by an assistant manager and as many adjuncts as it is considered according to the number of students and the type of school. The position of head teacher is a personal management individual and not a collegiate one. Its functions include the administration and financing and the pedagogical council presidency, which is why it must be a qualified teacher for the exercise of these functions, either for his or her training or for his or her experience in administrative and school management. The head teacher appoints the heads of the curriculum departments, which are the main coordination and pedagogical supervision structures.

Teaching and learning

The Ministry of Education provides the schools with a degree of autonomy that allows them to make strategic, pedagogical, administrative, financial and organizational decisions. The teaching and learning process is regulated by the following **institutional documents**:

The Educative Project defines the educative orientation of the school and is designed and approved by its administrative bodies every three years. It sets out the principles, values, objectives and strategies with which to develop the school educational action.

The Internal Regime Regulations defines the system of rules that govern school life, the administrative management and leadership

bodies and how to choose them, the educational guidance and the services and structures to support that educational action along with the rights and duties of the members of the community. This Regulation may be changed the year after it has been approved in accordance with the needs that may arise.

The Annual Activities Plan

Restructuring of school organizations

The law that regulates the autonomy, administration and management of schools establishes the following bodies of administrative and pedagogical management:

The School Assembly is the body responsible for defining the guidelines of school activities.

The educational community is represented in it (parents, teachers, students, non - teaching staff and representatives of different institutions and organizations or of economic, cultural, scientific and social activities...). The School Assembly passes the regulations of internal regime, the strategic decisions and the planning (The Educational Project and the General Annual Plan). It has competencies to elect and dismiss the head teacher who must present before the School Assembly the results of his management of the school.

The Executive Management which is made up of an executive board or just a head teacher. It is a collegiate or single-person body, which has management responsibility for either a school or group of schools, as it is defined in the Internal Regulations. The Head Teacher will have a number of deputy head teachers depending on the number of students.

Among its powers the most noteworthy are:

- to represent the educational centre
- to coordinate the activities of the executive team
- to evaluate the results of the teaching and non-teaching staff
- to exercise his/her authority mainly when it comes to discipline problems with students, teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Pedagogical Council, the body coordinating and providing the educational direction of the

school in the teaching and didactic areas, guiding and accompanying students, as well as overseeing initial and continuous training of teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Administrative Board, the body that discusses and takes decisions on administrative and financial matters.

Besides these bodies of management there are others like:

- **The teaching departments** where the teachers of the different areas are coordinated by the head of the department. They exist in the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic and secondary education
- The teaching staff
- **The Classroom Council** formed by the teachers and the students' representative of a class.

The mission of the General Inspectorate of Education is to supervise the educational system in order to enable it to reach the essential objectives to assure the quality of teaching and to defend the interests of the groups involved.

Establishing and negotiating the direction of school development

Decree-Law No. 7/03, of January 15th, regulated the responsibilities, make-up and management of the municipal education boards and the drawing up, approval and effects of the Education Chart, which aims to bring citizens and the education system closer together and outline their mutual responsibilities.

The Municipal Education Board coordinates policy at municipal level, coordinating the work of education professionals and stakeholders and proposes action to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the educational system.

At municipal level, **the Education Chart** is the instrument used for the planning and organisation of the educational network, with the aim of improving education, teaching, training and culture, encouraging the process of school grouping in a context of decentralised administration, a strengthening of management

models and the value of the role of educational communities and projects in schools.

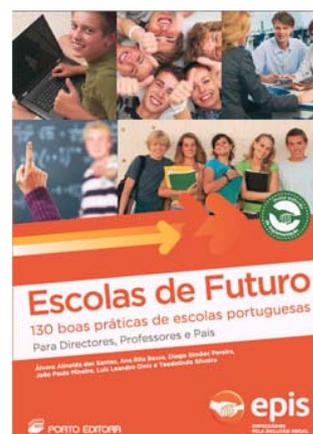
The leadership system and cooperation in networks

In Portugal there is a national network of Training Centres for School Associations (CFAE). These centres are the responsible for the continuous training of teachers. The network is available on the electronic pages of the Regional Directorates.

Examples of good practice

There are some studies on the good practices that several managing teams have carried out. The most outstanding examples of good practices experienced in several schools can be seen on the internet page:

<http://www.epis.pt/epis/homepage.php>



4. Recruitment and qualification of school heads

Recruitment

The head teacher is elected by the School Assembly.

He/she must be a teacher with experience, at least five years, and must have training in administrative management, especially in areas of educational administration. They must hand in a managing project and a CV and they can be teachers of the same or of a different school. A head teacher from a private school who has been pedagogical head teacher can also stand for the post in a state school. A training course is required

for the qualification unless they have been head teachers or deputy head teachers for at least a year.

When the decision must be taken, the most important aspect is the project presented by the candidate, and he/she can be called for an interview.

It is the elected candidate the one who distributes the responsibilities and appoints the heads of the different departments and the coordinators of the teams. The school leader must present the results of his administration before the school Assembly, which is the body that supervises his/her managing function and can propose his/her dismissal.

Attractiveness of being a school head

In general school head teachers feel economically rewarded. Teachers who assume the managing function have a bonus which depends on the number of students in the school, as it can be seen in the numbers of following table (amount received monthly):

| Economic bonus | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Schools or groups of schools | Head teachers | Deputy heads |
| More than 1200 students | 750€ | 400€ |
| From 801 to 1200 students | 650€ | 355€ |
| Less than 801 students | 600€ | 310€ |

As far as teaching time is concerned we may observe that the head teacher and the deputy head are exempt from teaching time, unless they want to teach the subject they are qualified for. The rest of the managing team must teach at least one class of students. If the deputy head teachers belong to pre-school or to the first cycle of primary education, they must have five hours of teaching time.

National pre-service structures, introductory courses and in-service education for school heads

The training of teachers who carry out an administrative and managing function in a school is established in the Education Bill. The qualification required for the post is a post graduation course in School Management and Administration, which can be obtained at University or technical Schools following a course which lasts for two semesters and whose plan of studies are acknowledged by the Scientific Council of Continuous Training.

There are specific courses for people who have these posts and which prepare them to carry out their functions and duties as pedagogical and administrative managers.

Coaching and other forms of support

The continuous training of head teachers and teachers is ensured by the different organs of the Ministry of education through the different training courses and training centres.

5. To sum up: Challenges, areas of innovation and underlying evidence

The main challenges and areas of innovation that the Ministry of Education is working on can be summarised in the following:

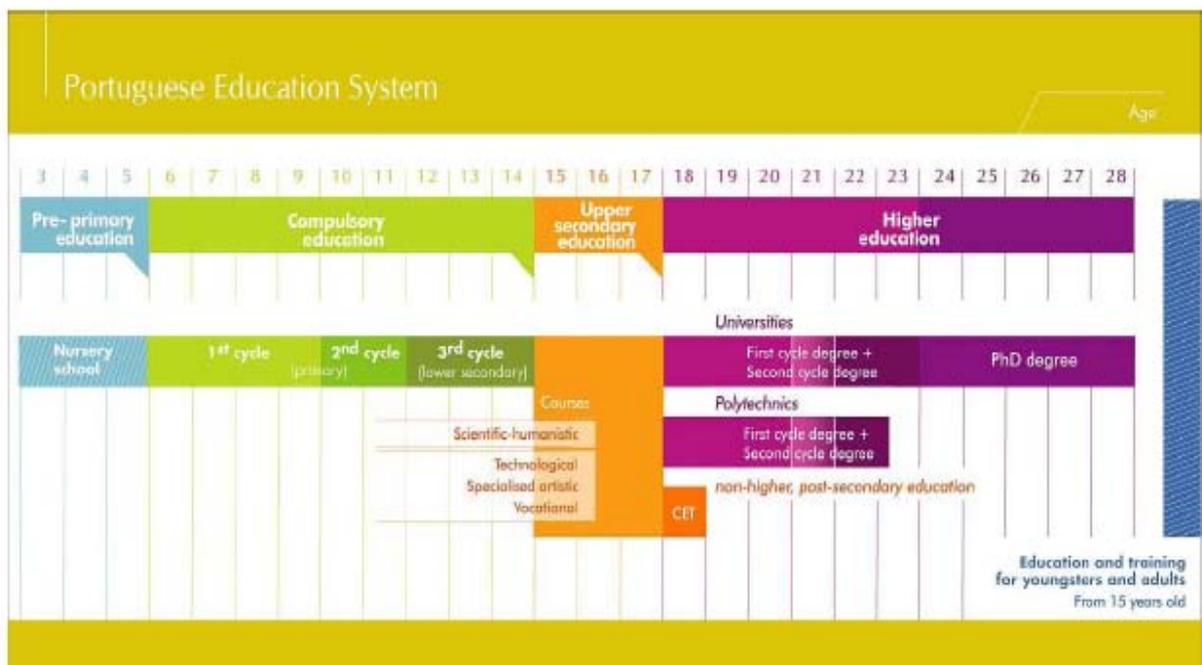
- Reorganization of the network of first-cycle schools in collaboration with local authorities
- Construction of new schools
- Provision of the extended hours for extracurricular activities such as English classes, study skills, sports, music ...
- Improved management and organization at school, in order to optimize the conditions for teaching and learning and to combat school failure through the following measures:
- total use of instructional time of students, ensuring they can participate in other activities if they have no class
- early detection of academic difficulties together with the introduction of appropriate

- measures as recovery plans or alternative learning pathways
- action plans for improving performance in mathematics and the national plan to promote reading, which involves the creation of new habits to guide students in improving their skills in reading and writing
- concretion of the Technological Plan for education and the program of modernization of school buildings
- revision of the work of school management teams, and implementation of external evaluation of schools
- restructuring of the teaching profession into two categories, giving the teachers who have more experience and competence increased accountability
- enhancement of the autonomy of schools

Appendix

Portugal (2006/07)

ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PORTUGAL, 2006/07



In accordance with the Education Act, Law No. 46/86 of October 14th, compulsory education is universal, and lasts for 9 years. It is obligatory for all children from 6 to 15 years of age and can be taught in state, private or cooperative schools.

Compulsory Education is divided in three cycles:

- First cycle: from six to ten. It is the longest cycle lasting for 4 years.
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- Second cycle: a two - year cycle, from ten to twelve.
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- Third cycle: lasting for three years, it starts at the age of 12 and moves on to the age of fifteen.

The first cycle in Compulsory Education is taught in primary schools, the second and third cycles are taught in preparatory or secondary schools. This last cycle corresponds to secondary education at a basic level. Children who are six before the fifteenth of September can start the first cycle.

Students who pass their global evaluation of the third cycle get a certificate of Basic Education issued by the administrative organ of the school they have attended, without taking any final exams.

Once they have finished Compulsory education, they are offered two different types of studies in Secondary education:

A. Studies in Secondary Schools

They last for three years (from the age of 15 to the age of 18) and they are organised in just one cycle of studies which comprises the tenth, eleventh and twelfth year of schooling)

These studies are divided into two types:

Secondary studies oriented towards the continuation of the studies (CSPOPE in Portuguese)

Technological studies (CT in Portuguese) mainly oriented towards professional life.

Every school must offer the two types of studies although one type can have a priority over the other. Students can also change from one type to the other.

B. Studies in Vocational Schools

Vocational schools, whose students get a Certificate of Technical Studies at mid grade, offer an alternative to the traditional system of education. Students who have completed the nine years of schooling have access to the different types of studies of Secondary Education but they must be at least 14 years old.

