

PENDÃO SCHOOL IN LISBON: A POE IN PROGRESS

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***Abstract.** This paper presents the methodology and preliminary results of a post-occupancy evaluation, which is currently being conducted at the Galopim de Carvalho School in Lisbon. This school – which was reported in PEB Exchange (No. 38, October 1999, “Designing schools for the information society: Libraries and resource centres”) – was recently constructed, replacing an older school building, a “temporary construction” that had been in use for 15 years. The school is located on the outskirts of a Lisbon neighbourhood characterised by rapid new urban development. The POE aims to document the stakeholders’ experiences of the school to identify strengths and potential improvements to this and other schools.*

A recently rebuilt school, the Galopim de Carvalho School in Pendão, Portugal, has undergone a useful post-occupancy evaluation. The old school building, a temporary construction in use for 15 years, experienced constant problems with its installations and functioning. In addition, educational spaces were small, poorly resourced and generally discouraging for its students from diverse backgrounds and regions, including rural communities, ex-Portuguese colonies and socio-economically disadvantaged areas. The project to rebuild the school was presented in *PEB Exchange* no. 38 (October 1999).



The school was rebuilt in 2001 in collaboration with the school community to provide new learning opportunities to a disadvantaged student population. It was equipped with a multi-media resource centre – using audio and video projection areas and access to Internet – to support curricular activities, transversal projects and independent learning. A school-wide network was installed with information points in every classroom which allowed all students to access existing resources and data in different formats, including video. The introduction of the new equipment resulted in profound changes in the delivery of learning, producing innovative

teaching and learning strategies.

In May 2005, problems of ICT maintenance, shortage of space (the new school was designed for 600 students but now enrolls 800), insufficient teacher training in audio and video production, and difficulties with Internet access prompted the Ministry of Education to choose the school for a demonstration Post Occupancy Evaluation. The evaluation was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the new school facilities from the stakeholders’ perspectives. Its fitness-for-purpose approach allows stakeholders to negotiate performance criteria that change during the service life of buildings and vary with region, budget, government policies, social trends, building type and use. By assessing buildings in terms of actual use, rather than predicted use or briefing issues, the fitness-for-purpose approach affords independence. It also allows stakeholders to negotiate use and design simultaneously, as well as to sort out specific issues and relationships between design parameters.



The demonstration interviews at Pendão involved students, teachers and other school staff, parents, municipal and project staff, along with a ministry officer and university observers. The principal evaluator, Chris Watson, has used this methodology successfully on some 40 educational settings and

80 non-educational settings in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom since the 1980s. The method has the robustness to enable effective communication despite cultural and language differences. Recommendations from the evaluation entailed fine-tuning the existing facilities and the ways they are used, and lessons for future schools in Portugal. Issues included access to sports facilities, air quality, thermal comfort and safety.