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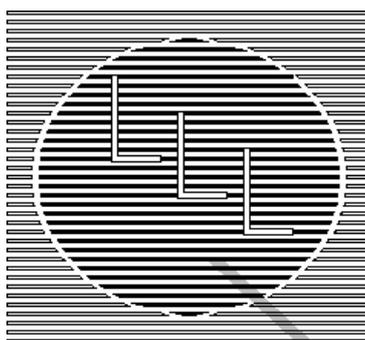
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTION DE L'ÉDUCATION
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Ministério da Educação
Ministério da Segurança Social, da Família e da Criança

The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning



Background Report for Portugal

September 2004

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Ministério da Educação
Ministério da Segurança Social, da Família e da Criança

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS IN PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING

Revised version

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Portugal em Ação

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INTRODUCTION

The study of qualifications systems and their impact on Lifelong Learning is a relevant activity carried out by OECD. It integrates several issues – plenary sittings coordinated by the OECD, three thematic workshops led by different countries, national reports prepared by countries that adhered to this measure and final synthesis report to be prepared by the OECD.

This document represents the Portuguese contribution, presented in the form of a national report, since Portugal is one of the countries that have adhered to this activity of the OECD.

Several services of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor have contributed to issuing this document, among which, Department of Studies, Forecasting and Planning (DSFP), the Directorate General for Employment and Labour Relations (DGELR) and the Institute for Innovation in Training (INOFOR). It also has the contributes from the services of the Ministry of Education, namely the Directorate General for Vocational Training, that took over ANEFA's tasks and competencies. We would like to refer the participation, as chief consultant, of Prof. Roberto Carneiro from the Portuguese Catholic University.

This report follows the profile outlined by the OECD either in terms of structure, or in what concerns the contents, including the approximate size of the document.

Beyond systematizing some themes that are being studied or public policies in Portugal scattered around public services and departments, this report required a deep reflection – mainly induced by the chief consultant of the work – during which a series of future research hits, essential for a real implementation of lifelong education in the framework of the knowledge society reinforcement, were set in prospective.

1 – NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS (SNQ)

1.1 CONTEXT

With a population of 10 355 824, Portugal covers a total area of 91 985 Km², distributed between a continental region (88 944km²) and two insular regions: the Autonomous Region of Madeira (794km²) and the Autonomous Region of Azores (2 247km²). The mainland is divided in 5 NUT II: North, Center, Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, Alentejo and Algarve.

The analysis of the inter-census population variation shows an increase of 5%, enhancing, however, a few contrasts: a significant rise of 15.8% in Algarve and a decrease in Madeira and Alentejo of, respectively, -3.3% and -2.5%.

The Portuguese population age structure, according to 2001 provisional census outcomes, is characterized by a prevalence of age groups corresponding to the active population, although it can be registered a significant increase of the population older than 65 years (13.6% in 1991 compared with 16.44% in 2001), as well as a decrease of the youth weight (20% in 1991 and 16.03% in 2001 in the

Table 1 – Resident population by age group and NUT II in 2001

NUT	Resident Population MW (individual)	Variation % 1991/2001	% Women	% de Population			
				0-14 years old	15-24 years old	25-64 years old	65 e + years old
PORTUGAL	10.355.824	5	51,72	16,03	14,26	53,28	16,44
Mainland	9.869.050	5,3	51,72	15,81	14,15	53,45	16,59
NORTH	3.687.212	6,2	51,65	17,52	15,11	53,32	14,05
CENTRE	1.782.254	3,5	51,93	14,98	13,8	51,58	19,65
LISBOA E VALE DO TEJO	3.468.869	5,4	51,92	14,91	13,64	55,05	16,4
ALENTEJO	535.507	-2,5	51,03	13,57	12,86	50,02	23,55
ALGARVE	395.208	15,8	50,48	14,63	13,12	53,56	18,69
AZORES	241.762	1,7	50,58	21,45	16,96	48,55	13,05
MADEIRA	245.012	-3,3	52,98	19,18	15,83	51,21	13,78

Source: Census 2001 provisional outcomes – INE 2002

group of 0-14 years old).

Throughout the first half of the XX century, compulsory school attendance seldom exceeds 4 years. The evolution towards a longer school attendance from 6 to 9 school years only occurs as from the 80s onwards (in 1979 conditions for an effective school attendance of 6 years have been established, and compulsory school attendance is extended to 9 years), showing a huge backwardness when compared with countries presenting a similar economic development.

Table 2 shows the population distribution by school attendance levels and regional asymmetries are shown in that distribution, with a clear positive trend in Lisboa e Vale do Tejo Region.

Table 2 - Resident population according to NUT II by education level

NUT II	Resident Population MW								
	Total	No Education Level	1st Cycle Basic Education	2nd Cycle Basic Education	3rd Cycle Basic Education	Sec. Education	Middle Education	Higher Education	Regularl. Attend. An Educat. Esta.
Portugal (individual)	10.355.824	1.487.958	3.620.755	1.312.297	1.115.033	1.652.906	67.200	1.099.675	2.106.292
(%)		14.4	35	12.7	10.8	16	0.6	10.5	20.3
Mainland	9.868.050	1.410.631	3.439.892	1.242.078	1.057.519	490.839	65.137	1.065.482	1.992.448
North	3.687.212	518.597	1.381.758	560.497	392.271	490.839	17.974	352.276	759.299
Centre	1.782.254	277.056	679.958	221.548	182.721	241.668	9.112	170.191	360.935
Lisboa e Vale do Tejo	3.468.869	443.350	1.051.020	356.359	382.629	708.975	33.334	493.202	699.213
Alentejo	535.507	112.216	191.888	59.966	53.821	74.560	2.234	40.822	98.103
Algarve	395.208	59.412	135.268	43.708	46.077	72.259	2.483	60.001	74.898
Azores	241.762	34.312	94.570	37.494	29.002	29.326	1.109	15.949	56.730
Madeira	245.012	43.015	86.293	32.725	28.512	35.279	954	18.234	57.114

Source: Provisional results from census 2001 - INE2002

These poor education levels have a more or less evident correspondence with low qualification levels. A cross analysis of qualifications with education levels still shows a low schooling level in all qualification levels, what points out difficulties in getting an easy and fast vocational retraining of the whole manpower. Thus, according to the National Employment Plan for 2002, only senior officials represent a significantly larger proportion of workers holding a "university degree" or a "bachelor degree" (64.5%); even in higher and middle staff there are high percentages of professionals whose qualifications do not go beyond the 9th year of schooling (19.4% and 32.5%, respectively); in the remaining levels of vocational qualification, namely in the case of qualified and high qualified professionals, the 9th year is the prevailing education level; those who have concluded the 9th year of schooling or less represent 76% of the whole full time employees.

Even so, the level of school attendance of the Portuguese population did improve significantly in the last decade, mostly because the population with the secondary education increased from 7.6% in 1991 to 16.0% in 2001 and the population with a university degree switched from 3.6% in 1991 to 10.6 in 2001.

This qualification structure is related to the productive specialization pattern of the Portuguese economy and currently, both the Government and the Social Partners, agree with the importance of Lifelong Learning (LLL) to the modernization of the productive system and to the recovering from the country's structural backwardness.

One of the main constraints to developing reforms and innovation at level of the education and training systems has been the productive specialization pattern adopted decades ago by the Portuguese economy, which was grounded on intensive production by a low qualified manpower, with low wages. Although this situation has contributed for the relatively low unemployment rates in Portugal, it has indeed proved to be rather gloomy for the global productivity evolution of the Portuguese economy.

Even so, it should also be pointed out the positive behavior of the labor market in Portugal in what concerns its participation in the economic activity, as well as in terms of employment growth. However, during the last year, it has been registered an increase of the unemployed population, which is obvious when reading the unemployment rates in table 3.

By analyzing the labor market at national level it should be taken into account the increase in the number of immigrants in our country, which since 1993 exceeds the number of those who leave the country, what can be translated in successive positive migrant flows that keep growing. In 2002 it attained 65 thousand people.

In the whole migrant population different types of migration can be identified: one, more labor-type, that includes people coming from the PALOPs (Portuguese Speaking African Countries), who settle down in urban areas willing to recruit cheap labor for the expanding sectors of civil construction and public works and the other designated by "professional", relating the immigration of technicians and entrepreneurs, usually European, but with little expression.

With the new eastern immigration and the growing flow of Brazilians, this foreign manpower is diversifying into new sectors and new regions where its presence, in the near past, was less significant. They can be found Eastern Europe workers in agriculture and industry and Brazilians and Chinese are mostly found in hotels and catering. With a few exceptions, the building sector is the one that more contributed to foreign manpower demand.

Table 3 - Population Indicators

PORTUGAL							Unit: (10³)	
		2003					2004	
		1st Qt	2nd Qt	3rd Qt	4th Qt	Average	1st Qt	2st Qt
Activity rate %		52,3	52,3	52,3	52,3	52,3	52,0	52,1
Men		58,3	58,2	58,5	58,4	58,4	58,1	58,1
Women		46,7	46,7	46,4	46,4	46,6	46,3	46,3
Unemployment rate %		6,3	6,1	6,1	6,5	6,3	6,4	6,3
Men		5,5	5,2	5,5	5,6	5,5	5,5	5,6
Women		7,3	7,2	6,9	7,5	7,2	7,4	7,2
Total population		10 417,9	10 431,6	10454,5	10 476,2	10 445,1	10 464,6	10 497,2
Men		5 036,6	5 044,6	5057,3	5 069,4	5 052,0	5 074,8	5 081,7
Women		5 381,3	5 387,2	5397,1	5 406,8	5 393,1	5 409,9	5 415,4
Working population		5 450,3	5 451,1	5465,7	5 474,0	5 460,3	5 454,4	5 471,9
Men		2 934,9	2 934,3	2959,7	2 962,8	2 947,9	2 949,0	2 953,5
Women		2 515,3	2 516,8	2506	2 511,2	2 512,3	2 505,3	2 518,4
Employed population		5 105,3	5 117,7	5130,5	5 118,3	5 118,0	5 107,2	5 124,6
Men		2 773,0	2 782,9	2796,9	2 795,5	2 787,1	2 787,8	2 787,6
Women		2 332,3	2 334,8	2333,6	2 322,8	2 330,9	2 319,4	2 336,9
Unemployed population		345,0	333,4	335,2	355,6	342,3	347,2	347,3
Men		162,0	151,4	162,9	167,3	160,9	161,2	165,9
Women		183,1	181,9	172,3	188,4	181,4	186,0	181,4

Notes:

- For reasons based on the rounding of figures the totals may not correspond to the sum of the parcial figures set up.
- Data now released were recomputed with reference to the population independent estimates and these were revised from the final results of Census 2001.

These recent immigration flows provide a definitely higher qualified manpower than the corresponding level of flows from Africa since they are interested in different economic activity sectors, what until then, never occurred in Portugal.

1.2- THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The year of 1986 is indeed a milestone in the evolution history of the education and training systems in Portugal, due to a broad consensus that emerged in relation to the education system, materialized in the approval of Law nº 46/86, of October 16 – Education System Outline Law (LBSE) (which extended

compulsory school attendance up to 9 years), and due to the public accounting balance and to the adhesion of Portugal to the European Community.

A new juridical framework defined accurately the education system, in its organic outlines, objectives and functioning principles. Conditions have been created for a greater stability of the system and its management, enabling further action to be, essentially, oriented towards its democratization and upgrading.

**Table 4 – Students Registered by level and form or type of learning
2002/2003 – Preliminary data**

Institutional Nature	Total	%
Level and form or type of learning		
Total	1677663	100
Pre-primary education	234707	14
Basic Education	1087274	64,8
1st Cycle	464571	42,7
Regular	464571	100
Recurent		
2nd Cycle	253786	23,3
Regular	251526	99,1
Recurent	2260	0,9
3rd Cycle	366917	33,9
Regular	345440	93,6
7 th , 8 th and 9 th years	342013	99
CEFPI	2879	0,8
Vocational Courses (level 2)	548	0,2
Recurent	23477	6,4
Secondary Education	355176	21,2
Regular	284296	80
General Courses	197574	69,5
Technological Courses	53118	18,7
10 th year – Occupational Path (level 2)	2952	1,5
Occupational Courses (level 3)	30652	10,8
Recurent	70882	20
General Course	53539	75,5
Technological Courses	17343	24,5
Technological Specialization courses	506	0,2

Source: Annual Schooling Census 2002/2003 – Preliminary Survey
Department of Evaluation, Forecasting and Planning.

The education system is based on a series of principles aiming at facilitating and assuring the right to education, as well as at ensuring equal opportunities of access and success. The LBSE organizes the education system in pre-school education, school education and extra-school education.

1.2.1 – Pre-School education

It is aimed at children between 3 and 6 years of age. Attending pre-school education is optional. Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Security and Labor cooperate in the promotion of the

development of pre-school education, being the first responsible for the pedagogical quality and the second for the families support. The financial support is the purview of both ministries. A call has been made to a broader participation of social initiative and local actors in the coverage of pre-school education needs.

1.2.2 – School education

It includes the basic, secondary and higher education, integrates special modalities and includes spare time activities.

Basic education (compulsory schooling)

It lasts for 9 years (starting with 6 years up to 15 years of age) and includes three sequential and progressive cycles organized as follows:

- 1st cycle, four years, general education, single-teacher scheme;
- 2nd cycle, two years, organized in inter-disciplinary areas;
- 3rd cycle, three years, organized by subjects, according to a unified curriculum plan.

The conclusion of basic education with success entitles to a diploma. Students who conclude compulsory schooling and want to carry on their studies may choose between the secondary education (general and technological), or other educational modalities, such as the Vocational Education and the Apprenticeship System.

In 1997, as an alternative, they were implemented “education-training” courses, aimed at youngsters with the 9th year schooling diploma, without any vocational qualification and who do not want to carry on secondary education, as well as at youngsters who, attended the 9th year of schooling but did not conclude it. These one-year long courses, enable the students with the 9th year to get a vocational qualification (level II) and the students who did not conclude the 9th year can get the diploma of the 3rd cycle of basic education.

1.2.3. – Secondary education

Lasts for three years and is optional for those who conclude the basic education with success.

It includes:

- General courses mainly oriented to the carrying on of the studies and other four pathways that give the youngsters a vocational training opportunity after the 9th year of schooling, that is:
- Technological courses
- Vocational courses
- Apprenticeship system
- Specialized artistic training courses

The accomplishment of secondary education with success entitles to a diploma that certifies the acquired training and, in the cases of courses mainly oriented towards active life, the qualification obtained with the purpose of carrying on certain occupational activities.

We would like to point out that the vocational training supply in the sphere of the Ministry of Education has also a relatively important weight on the general training supply, as it shown in the following table. This shows that, while the secondary level training supply (oriented towards the carrying on of the studies) represents 51% of the total secondary level training supply, the technological courses cover 32% and the vocational courses cover 17% of the total secondary education supply.

Table 5 – Training supply by Nut II in 2000/2001

NUT II	General			Technological			EP			Total	%
North	464	31%	51%	257	28%	28%	190	40%	21%	911	31%
Center	306	21%	50%	193	21%	31%	118	25%	19%	617	21%
Lisboa e Vale do Tejo	549	37%	52%	378	41%	36%	125	26%	12%	1052	36%
Alentejo	108	7%	51%	60	6%	29%	42	9%	20%	210	7%
Algarve	60	4%	56%	41	4%	38%	6	1%	6%	107	4%
Total	1487	100%	51%	929	100%	32%	481	100%	17%	2697	100%

Source: Ministry of Education

Note: the training supply considered in this table corresponds to the *training places*, that is, it represents the attendance opportunities of a specific course. This means that, in a school, they are accounted as many training places as the different courses provided therein, giving a better idea about the training opportunities available to the youngsters

1.2.3.1 – Technological courses

The secondary level training supply ensured by the Ministry of Education is also dominated by technological courses provided for in formal secondary education establishments. In 2000/2001 technological courses were distributed by 929 schools, and the most significant are those addressed to the Administration (22.9%), Informatics (18%), Communication (10.8%) and Electricity/Electronics (10.7%).

Table 6 – Technological Courses in 2000/2001

Technological Course	Nº of Schools	%
Design	63	6,80%
Arts and Crafts	56	6,00%
Communication	100	10,80%
Administration	213	22,90%
Commercial Services	69	7,40%
Informatics	167	18,00%
Mechanics	57	6,10%
Electricity/Electronics	99	10,70%
Chemistry	27	2,90%
Civil Construction	28	3,00%
Social Animation	50	5,40%
Total	929	100%

Source: Department of Secondary Education-Ministry of Education

In absolute numbers, 62 000 students did attend technological courses in 2000/2001, while about 30 000 students have attended vocational schools.

1.2.3.2 – Vocational Education

Vocational Education, provided in vocational schools, is a special modality of the education system as an alternative to the regular supply of the schooling system.

Table 7 – Distribution of Level III training supply in Vocational Schools, in 2000/2001

Area (Course)	Nº of Schools	%
Show business Arts	18	3,70%
Artistic Production Design and Technical Drawing	33	6,90%
Civil Construction	15	3,10%
	26	5,40%
Informatics	59	12,30%
Textiles, Garment, Footwear	4	0,80%
Electricity and Electronics	31	6,40%
Chemistry	3	0,60%
Metalwork	17	3,50%
Food farming	30	6,20%
Hotels, Tourism and Other Personal Services	62	12,90%
Environment and Natural Resources	7	1,50%
Social Action	34	7,10%
Information, Communication and Documentation	3	0,60%
Administration, Services and Commerce	123	25,60%
Others	16	3,30%
Total	481	100%

Source: Department of Secondary Education-Ministry of Education

Vocational schools, generally with a private statute, emerge from a contract between the Ministry of Education and other partners (public or private promoters), who get organized in order to provide vocational training courses within the education system. The courses provided by these schools are fundamentally secondary level courses (10th, 11th and 12th schooling years), whose access depends upon conclusion with success of the 9th schooling year or equivalent. These three-schooling-years courses award to those who accomplish them a diploma equivalent to that one of the regular secondary education as well as a vocational qualification certificate (level III). Students holding a vocational education certificate can carry on their studies at the university.

Table 8 – Evolution of the number of registrations in Vocational Schools between 1990/1991 and 2000/2001

Training areas	1990/1991		1995/1996		2000/2001	
Administration, Services and Commerce	1844	31,10%	5965	22,90%	6097	20,80%
Food-farming	500	8,40%	2000	7,70%	1865	6,40%
Environment and Natural Resources	60	1,00%	1292	5,00%	845	2,90%
Show Business Arts	207	3,50%	1144	4,40%	1520	5,20%
Graphic Arts	172	2,90%	742	2,80%	697	2,40%
Civil construction	268	4,50%	1307	5,00%	1222	4,20%
Design and Technical Drawing	193	3,30%	789	3,00%	777	2,60%
Electricity and Electronics	242	4,10%	1611	6,20%	2117	7,20%
Hotels and Tourism	526	8,90%	3004	11,50%	3406	11,60%
Information, Communication and Documentation	427	7,20%	2073	7,90%	2087	7,10%
Informatics	741	12,50%	2361	9,00%	3154	10,80%
Personal and Social Intervention	160	2,70%	1549	5,90%	2669	9,10%
Metalwork	78	1,30%	740	2,80%	871	3,00%
Cultural Heritage and Artistic Production	295	5,00%	781	3,00%	686	2,30%
Chemistry	25	0,40%	334	1,30%	331	1,10%
Textile, Garment and Footwear	179	3,00%	359	1,40%	534	1,80%
Others	17	0,30%	41	0,20%	455	1,60%
Total	5934	100,00%	26092	100,00%	29333	100,00%

Source: Department of Secondary Education-Ministry of Education

Besides these courses, vocational schools can also provide other type of vocational training, namely courses equivalent to the 3rd cycle of basic education, with an occupation-related curriculum corresponding to a vocational qualification (level II).

Table 9 – Participation rate in vocational schools by training areas

Participants			
Training areas	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Administration Services and Commerce	59%	50%	43%
Farm-producing and Aquatic Production	83%	75%	85%
Environment and Natural	72%	71%	61%
Show Business Arts	61%	69%	42%
Graphic Arts	45%	35%	41%
Civil Construction	73%	65%	72%
Design and Technical Drawing	67%	69%	57%
Electricity and Electronics	50%	39%	40%
Hotels and Tourism	71%	59%	66%
Information, Communication and Documentation	44%	40%	38%
Informatics	38%	36%	31%
Personal and Social Intervention	38%	35%	36%
Metal Works	57%	42%	41%
Cultural Heritage and Artistic Production	73%	74%	53%
Chemistry	64%	81%	66%
Textiles, Garment and Footwear	94%	46%	51%
Others	59%	55%	55%
Total	54%	48%	43%

Source: Manuel Leão Foundation (2002)

To overcome this situation, and aiming at the reinforcement of the youngsters qualifications in a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective, the government has, since 2003, been making significant improvements in the system. Therefore, the new guidelines for the professional education curriculum revision point towards the extent of this training modality to the secondary schools and to the training centres (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training - IEVT), in order to guarantee a correct balance between demand and supply. Until now, the professional education has been followed mostly in private professional schools, often of small dimension.

1.2.3.3 – The Apprenticeship System

The apprenticeship system in Portugal is mainly aimed at the entry into working life of both female and male young candidates who are not covered by legal provisions concerning compulsory schooling, who are rather not over 25 years of age and who look for an alternative pathway to the entry into working life, acquiring simultaneously a school and vocational certification.

The apprenticeship or alternating training system, a specific program developed by the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEVT/MSSL) aiming the vocational training of youngsters who have accomplished the 6th or 9th schooling year, is an alternative for the youth who dropped out of school and want to enter into working life without having previously any qualification level. The alternating system, which includes components with a socio-cultural, scientific-technological and practical training feature in a working context, may award a double certification: a school certificate (a diploma equivalent to the 9th or 12th year of schooling) and a vocational certificate (a certificate of occupational aptitude (level I, II, III or IV, according to the education level of access) and it allows to carry on the studies. This is a training process developed alternatively by the Vocational Training Center – where the social-cultural, scientific- technological components take place, including, generally, the Practice in Training context – and by the Entity supporting the Alternating training where the practice component in work context takes place

Table 10 – Apprenticeship: Evolution of the Number of Trainees by Level

	1999		2000		2001	
	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
Level I	596	2,4	163	0,6	9	0,04
Level II	9.003	36,3	8.381	32,1	6.286	24,9
Level III	15.236	61,3	17.534	67,2	18.924	75
Total	24.835	100	26.078	100	25.219	100
Annual Variation Rate	50%		5%		-3%	

Source: QCQ II – Apprenticeship 2001 “Physical and Financial Execution”

These three-years-long courses are based on the alternation between a training center and a company (they were also developed pre-apprenticeship courses for youngsters with less than 6 years of schooling, which granted a level I vocational qualification).

A training contract between the trainee and the training entities (Coordination Entities and alternating training Supporting Entities) is established for the course duration period, which doesn't bind any of the parties to a future labor contract. This apprenticeship contract has a legal basis and shall be in writing, consigning rights and duties of the contracting parties.

The apprenticeship system has a core strategic importance in the framework of education-training-labor policies due to the fact that, as a deeply established instrument either at local or regional level, it can decisively contribute to:

- The upgrading of the vocational qualifications of youngsters who dropout of school, associated with an upgrading of the respective school qualifications;
- The re-orientation of significant groups of youth to occupational pathways, raising the capacity of new professionals, highly qualified, in order to respond to the companies need, particularly the SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), turning them into skilled middle managers, with a view to increasing competitiveness.

The duration of the training courses does not exceed 1500 hours a year and 35 hours a week. Daily timetable includes the hours spent with any of the training components and it is set between 8 and 20 00 o'clock, as agreed between the Apprenticeship Coordinating Unit and the remaining training entities, except in exceptional situations approved by the IEVT. The trainee has 22 work days leave by training year, without losing the aides the trainee is entitled to according to the contract. The total training duration depends on the courses type and level.

The Apprenticeship National Commission is a tripartite forum, which permanently intervenes, at national level, in the System's strategic orientation and follow-up. There are regional apprenticeship commissions in Madeira and Azores autonomous regions.

The curriculum structure and the programmatic development of the training within the Apprenticeship System are set by pedagogic teams specialized in different professional sectors. Their reinforcement and validation is carried out in close collaboration with a panel of experts appointed by Ministries, Social Partners and other relevant actors in the framework of the National Apprenticeship Commission. The programs development includes also the identification of practical activities to be carried out by the trainees during their training in the company, with a view to reinforcing the acquired competencies.

Apprenticeship is one of the initial training modalities of the national Education-Training-Labor systems. Its triple valence – vocational qualification, schooling progress and training in the company – allows the access to higher education, as well as the transferability, at the end of the cycle, to the Education System at level of Basic and Secondary Education.

1.2.4 – Other initial trainings

Other initial trainings outside the alternating regime, do also contribute to facilitating the entry into working life of youngsters who left the educational system, particularly of those who dropped out before concluding the basic education. These trainings also ensure the double certification (schooling and vocational).

Among these, it should be pointed out the educational and vocational training which grants levels equivalent to the 3rd cycle of basic education and a level II qualification.

In the framework of the Agreement on Employment Policy, the Government and the Social Partners agreed about the need to creating conditions to the youngsters between 16 and 18 years of age, who entered the labor market without a vocational qualification, so that they might conciliate the achievement of that qualification with the carrying out of a working activity. The introduction of a contractual clause ensuring a compulsory training period during the hours of work, which should not be shorter than 40% of the total working time, will lead to qualification profiles (level I or II), in accordance with the schooling level of access.

1.2.5 – Technological Specialization Courses (TSC)

In 1999 they were created technological Specialization Courses (TSC), which offer a post-secondary training and aim, among other objectives, at promoting a training pathway that includes qualification and vocational insertion objectives. These courses will also allow to carrying on the studies.

The TSDs award a technological specialization diploma (TSD) as well as a vocational qualification certificate (level IV). The TSD would also give access to a vocational aptitude certificate (VAC) issued in the scope of the National Vocational Certification System (NVCS).

The currently approved TSDs are only aimed at those who have a secondary education course or a qualification legally equivalent thereto, and at those who have a level III vocational qualification in an area akin to the TSD. However, the legislation foresees a possibility of access grounded on the recognition of the capacities and competencies acquired during the vocational practice.

The TSDs can be promoted by accredited institutions, which carry on vocational training level III and provide school education of secondary level or equivalent (public, private or cooperative secondary education facilities, vocational training centers with a direct or participated management or other entities). These institutions need to be legally recognized by a Joint Order by the Ministers of Education, Social Security and Labour and by the Minister who supervises the economic activity sector where training is inserted to.

Those holding a DET, after acquiring vocational practice in the respective training area, can apply to the enrollment in higher education through a special examination.

1.2.6 – Higher Education

It has a variable duration, includes the University Education and the Polytechnic Higher Education and it awards a university degree (4 to 6 years) and a bachelor degree (3 to 4 years) as well as the respective vocational qualifications (levels IV and V).

At level of post-graduations, they are awarded the master and doctor degrees.

Following the Declaration of Bologna, some recommendations were implemented, particularly those concerning the credit systems (ECTS), and it is under public debate the eventual change in the academic degrees in order to grant them a higher comparability, facilitating therefore the mutual

Table 11 – Enrolled Students, according to the modality and to the establishment nature

Modality	Total	University			Polytechnic			Mixed		
		Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
Portugal	396601	245126	176303	68823	131805	108486	23319	19670		19670

Source: General Directorate of Higher Education/Department of Evaluation, Prospective and Planning

recognition and the promotion of free mobility.

1.2.7. –Vocational and schooling information and guidance

The schooling and vocational information and guidance services have been mostly developed by the ME and MSSL, responsible for the supervision of most significant initial training structures.

In the scope of the Ministry of Education they were created in 1991 (DL nº 190/91) the Psychology and Guidance Services (SPO), as specialized units to the educational support, integrated in the education network. Each SPO has an “educational territory”, which may include several schools, as it is shown in the following table:

Table 12 – Psychology and Guidance Services

Schools	North			Center			Lisbon			Alentejo			Algarve			Total		
	total	Supported	%	total	Sup.	%	total	Sup.	%	total	Sup.	%	total	Sup.	%	total	Sup.	%
Total	4059	696	17%	2703	392	15%	1634	437	27%	633	129	20%	310	56	18%	9339	1710	18%
PGS	145			118			195			633			22					

Source: “Education Operational Intervention” PRODEP III 2001

The activity carried out by the Psychology and Guidance Services aims at reinforcing the conditions for schooling and educational success as well as at facilitating the youth social and occupational insertion process. They pay special attention to the final years of basic and secondary education, since its activity is directed to the schooling population.

The intervention of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor is traditionally ensured by the Employment Centers of the IEVT. The vocational guidance counselors are responsible for the vocational information and guidance aimed at youngsters and adults. The youngsters integrated, or not, in the education system, the candidates to training or first job and the unemployed adults who wish to change their occupation, show vocational indecisiveness or want to get training are target-public.

1.2.8 – Adult education and training provision

1.2.8.1 – Key competencies Framework for Adult Education and Training

The structuring lines for the intervention addressed to this public are: (i) the implementation of a national framework of key competencies, which leads (ii) to the accreditation of acquired competencies or to the construction of diversified training pathways for adults with a low educational level and with a poor vocational qualification, the diversification and differentiation of alternative education-training modalities to regular education, namely through the implementation of short duration, flexible and liable to be capitalized training supplies, combining schooling training with qualifying training. The late National Agency for Adult Education and Training¹ has been responsible (up to its replacement by the Directorate General for Vocational Training) for the implementation of this intervention through three core measures:

- The recognising and validating of knowledge, skills and competences, non-formal and informally acquired, carried out on the basis of a National Key-Competences Framework for Adult Education and Training Key-Skills Referential Framework² points to the certification of a certain education level. This process is developed through the National Network of RVCC Centres.
- Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA) aimed at adults (older than 18) without basic education and vocational qualification. These courses are based on a training model organized by competencies units, through which formally or informally previously acquired competencies are recognized and where basic training is articulated with qualifying training;
- *S@ber+ Actions*, short training courses aimed at adult people who wish to develop or improve competencies in specific areas, irrespective of the schooling education or vocational training they have got.

At the level of vocational training and taking into account the unemployed, they are foreseen different kinds of actions, namely qualification and retraining actions (low qualified), further training (qualified) and specialization (executives). Specific measures have been drawn taking into account the specificity of some publics, namely those who show cumulative factors of disadvantage (long term unemployment, poor qualifications, poverty), in a perspective of training towards development. In this case, training is part of an integrated approach, focused at level of personal and professional development of the socially disadvantaged individuals, and it aims at the acquisition of relational, inter-personal and technical competencies that offer the possibility of entering the labor market without significant difficulty.

1.2.8.2 – Second chance learning

Second Chance learning is also defined as an aspect of adults' education. It aims at providing with schooling the individuals who no longer have the normal age to attend basic education (up to 15 years of age) and secondary education (up to 18 years of age). There is a second chance learning to every non-higher schooling level. The second chance learning is organized in accordance with a studies plan, which is adjusted to the targeted age group level it is aimed at and it awards certificates and diplomas

¹ National Agency for Adult Education and Training Public Institute created in 1999 under the supervision of the Ministries of Education and Labor and Solidarity, with the objective of contributing to upgrading the educational and qualification levels of adult population through, (i) the recognition, validation and certification of competencies acquired throughout life experience and (ii) the flexibilization of adult education and training provision, which facilitate the access to educational, technological, cultural and occupational progression (DL n° 387/99, of September 28). As from October 2002, through Decree-Law n° 208/2002, of October 17, it was created, in the framework of the Ministry of Education, the Directorate General for Vocational Training, to replace the ANEFA taking over all its functions and competences.

² The key competencies areas are: Language and Communication, Mathematics for Everyday Life, Information and Communication Technologies, Citizenship and Employability.

equivalent to those that are granted by regular basic and secondary education: certificate of vocational initiation, (level I) and certificates of vocational qualification (level II and III).

1.2.8.3 – Continuing training

In the framework of the CSF III, it has been foreseen a set of public supports to the development of continuing training, which includes a range of actions-type for occupational qualification and further training of non-qualified or semi-qualified active population and for the specialization of qualified active population.

The Agreement on Employment, Labor Market, Education and Training Policy foresees a set of aspects relating continuing training:

- To promote information and advice mechanisms to the workers on the training plans of companies and non- entrepreneurial entities of the public and cooperative sector, making it compulsory to the access to public support;
- To promote a reliable, updated and localized information dissemination on the continuing, public and private training supply, whenever it gets public support, in order to guarantee better access conditions to workers and companies;
- To mobilize/motivate both the workers and the companies into training through incentives that give greater visibility to the relation between investments on training and their effects, namely through: (i) the reinforcement of the mechanisms of training accreditation and of the competencies acquired therein, in order to facilitate the demonstration and recognition, namely by companies, of the qualifications obtained that way; (ii) the divulging and majoration of good practices support;
- To develop trainers and tutors training, ensuring the strong commitment of several education and training actors to the qualitative and quantitative reinforcement of training;
- To advise Trade Unions, Sectoral Associations and Companies to take into account, in the framework of collective bargaining, the access to continuing training. To reinforce the implementation of training actions in the company and to favor the respective support thereto, whenever they are aimed at the companies productivity and competitiveness reinforcement and at changing the workers qualification and improving employment, with a view to their vocational development and retraining.

Box 1 – NETWORK PROGRAM – EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

NETWORK Program – Consultancy, Training and Support to Small Enterprises Management is an initiative developed by the IEVT with a view to reinforcing the competition capacity, modernization, sustainability, strengthening and development of micro and small enterprises (up to 49 workers) through innovating and integrated methodologies of training-consultancy and employment qualification adjusted to the reality of each company.

In the period between 1997 and 2001 (inclusive), it should be pointed out the reinforcement of the competition and organizational problems solving capacity shown in 2793 by small companies, as well as the management capacity of their entrepreneurs, specifically through the:

- Participation of 22 060 entrepreneurs in 473 Meetings/Training;
- Participation of 9 103 workers in 1 204 training actions (30% of the working population);
- 5 419 participants beneficiaries, in 1 415 specialized consultancy actions;
- Integration of 1 523 newly graduated, with higher education, with a final employability of 84%;
- Net employment global growth, at the end of the interventions, between 7% and 8%;

In 2002, and as a result of a provisory assessment, it should be pointed out the reinforcement of the competition and organizational problems solving capacity shown by 766 small companies, as well as the management capacity of their entrepreneurs, with jobs being kept in most of the companies and employment growth reaching about 50%, specifically through the:

- Participation of 3 474 entrepreneurs in 90 Meeting/Training;
- Participation of 3 556 working people in 491 training actions (51% of the working people in Line I and 29% in Line II);
- 1 904 participants beneficiaries, in 517 specialized consultancy actions;

Globally, it can be established that in 2002, on average, 52% of the workers of supported companies did directly beneficiate from training actions and specialized consultancy; 78% corresponding to Line I companies (several interventions throughout an year) and 33% to Line II (one intervention per year).

1.3 – ASSESSMENT, CERTIFICATION, EQUIVALENCE AND RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC DEGREES

1.3.1 - Certification

In the Education system, assessment is continuous and systematic and projects itself in the fulfillment of the general objectives of each one of the cycles of the basic compulsory education, as well as of the objectives of each subject or subject area. The students of the 3rd cycle who succeed at the end of the final summative assessment are considered to have concluded the basic compulsory education and they receive a basic education diploma delivered by the administrative body of the school they attended to. In what concerns secondary education, the students who conclude it with success are awarded a certificate (secondary studies certificate) where the entire course and the final classifications are specified). Those who conclude technological courses are awarded, both a secondary studies certificate and a vocational qualification certificate of level III. Vocational certification should take into account the nature of the actions, the work experience, the training recognition and the qualifications correspondence in the purview of the EU, as well as the treatment reciprocity with other countries.

In 1992 and following the Agreement on Employment, Labor Market, Education and Training Policy, it was created the National System of Vocational Certification (NSVC), concerning training integrated in the employment market. Regardless of the articulation with the education system, this certification sub-system is coordinated through the Minister for Social Security and Labor in cooperation with other competent ministers or with the Autonomous Regions and with the participation of the Social Partners. The IEVT/MSSL are responsible for the implementation and coordination of the process, in the framework of a management model grounded on a tripartite basis (Public Administration, employers and

employees associations). The structure is managed by a Standing Commission of Certification (SCC), which defines the guidelines for the system's development, approves occupational profiles and specific rules for certification. The Standing Commission is supported by Specialized Technical Commissions, which propose, for each activity sector, specific rules and give advice on occupational profiles.

Vocational certification, as defined in the legislation, certifies the training, the experience or the vocational qualification. It also checks out, eventually, other conditions required for the carrying out of an occupational activity and it might be awarded by two kinds of certificate: the vocational training certificate and the vocational aptitude certificate.

The Vocational Training Certificate (VTC) certifies that the holder reached the objectives defined in the vocational training courses or actions programs and it is issued by the training entity. The CFP should indicate the vocational activity, the qualification level and the equivalence to the schooling qualification the certified training corresponds to.

The vocational aptitude certificate (VAC) certifies:

- The aptitude to carrying out an occupation, based on training certificates, professional experience, or on certificates or akin titles issued in other countries, namely in other Member States of the European Union;
- The qualification level;
- The equivalence to schooling qualifications, whenever necessary;
- The verification of other conditions, beyond the vocational preparation, likely to be required to carrying out an occupation.

The CAP is issued by the IEVT or by other public entities with recognized competence for that purpose, on the basis of an assessment carried out by a jury after curriculum assessment or examination.

Besides the National Vocational Training Certification System, there are since 1999 the RVCC Centers, which allow the validation and recognition of the know-how acquired either in a formal or informal way, as it was referred in the point 1.2.8 of this chapter.

1.3.2 – Qualifications Equivalence/Recognition

1.3.2.1 – Basic and secondary education

The equivalence of qualifications obtained abroad is established in legal diplomas, where are integrated lists referring the following countries: Germany, Zimbabwe South Africa, France, Brazil, Spain.

If there are no lists of equivalences published, it prevails the criterion of the number of schooling years.

The equivalence of qualifications is the purview of both the former Department of Basic Education and the Department of Secondary Education (currently Department of Innovation and Curricula Development of the Ministry of Education).

If the qualifications were attained in France up to the 9th schooling year and the objective is to carry on the studies, the equivalence can be granted by the management body of the school the student is applying to.

The equivalence granting might imply an examination (“exame ad hoc”) on Portuguese Language and Culture, with specific programs.

1.3.2.2 – Higher education

In Portugal, the equivalence or recognition of foreign qualifications in higher education is regulated by Decree Law n° 283/83, of June 21. In accordance with this decree, the applications are analyzed one by one by the higher education institutions where similar courses are provided. There are no automatic equivalences.

The equivalences granted under this legal diploma have the same value and effects as the holding of the corresponding degrees or diplomas.

The granting of equivalences does not exempt its holder from fulfilling all the other conditions required by the competent vocational authorities in order to carry on an occupation.

1.3.2.3 – Mutual recognition of titles required to carry on a vocational activity

Within the European Union, the recognition of diplomas, certificates and other titles certifying a vocational training, obtained by nationals of the Member States of the EU and of the States that have signed the Agreement on the European Economic Space willing to carry on an occupation in Portugal, is regulated by Community directives that establish general recognition systems and by directives specific to certain occupational areas, as well as by national legislation transposing Community instruments. A fundamental condition for recognition lies on the fact that the corresponding occupation must be regulated in the national territory.

The Directive 89/48/CEE, of December 21, concerning a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas, ratifies the vocational training with a minimum duration of three years and it was transposed to the Portuguese legal system by Decree Law n° 289/91, of August 10. This diploma contains: the definition of addressees, a list of the considered occupations, the authority responsible for each one of them. It also establishes the juridical procedures in relation to the applications.

The Directive 92/51/CEE, of June 18, concerning a second general system for the recognition of vocational training, which complements the first one, is applied to those who hold diplomas, certificates or competence certificates that certify a training not covered by Decree Law n° 289/91, of August 10, and who are willing to carry on, in the Portuguese territory, an occupational activity as independent workers or employees in the scope of a regulated occupation. It was transposed to the Portuguese juridical system by Decree Law n° 242/96, of June 18.

Besides these two directives, there are still specific directives relating 7 occupations (Architect, Dentist, Nurse, Pharmacist, Doctor, Midwife and Veterinary).

1.4 FINANCING

It is undeniable the contribution of the structural funds to the development and strengthening of the training systems in Portugal, whose effects reached the GDP growth and the creation of new jobs. Public expenditure in Education-Training is, nowadays, about 8.5 billion euros per year, about 6.8% of the GDP.

The training systems are supported, either by Community financing, or by national public financing granted by the national budget and social security (part of the contributions paid by workers and employers) as well as by the trainees.

The main financing source of the education system is the national budget, either for current or capital expenses. Extra-schooling training, in what concerns the national component, is financed by Social Security, and some sectors, as tourism and health, have their own capital.

It has been tried to complement public financing with an increase of private contributions, with direct contributions from companies and with the reduction of direct trainees subsidizing.

1.5 LIFELONG LEARNING

The Lisbon Summit, held in March 2000, marked a new stage for the European Union, with a view to transforming it in the most dynamic and competitive space of the world, based on the knowledge society and able to guaranteeing more and better jobs with greater social cohesion.

Carrying on these objectives goes through a strategy in which people are the “core European trump”, what requires the greatest investment in human resources, the adjustment of educational and training systems to the requirements of the knowledge and innovation society, as well as to the need of a higher level and quality of employment and to the creation of training opportunities for all, with the objective of building an European space all along the life.

In this context and following the Luxembourg process, the 2001 employment guidelines did clearly translate the conclusions of Lisbon and Feira Summits when attaching to education and training a core role in the implementation of the European Strategy for Employment, which is oriented to the full employment objective. So, those guidelines embody (i) a horizontal objective, to be assumed by the Member States, concerning the development of “global and coherent lifelong apprenticeship strategies” (...); (ii) a specific line connected with employability, which in its several components aims at improving the quality of the education and training systems in order to respond to the demands arisen from lifelong learning with a view to:

- Providing youngsters with basic and relevant aptitudes for the labor market, which are needed for participating in lifelong learning;
- Reducing youth and adults illiteracy and reducing significantly the number of youngsters that drop out of school;
- Promoting conditions that provide a better adults training access;
- Improving qualifications, know-how and competencies recognition system;
- Developing e-apprenticeship for all citizens.

In Portugal, the Lifelong Learning strategy is carried out in a triple perspective of:

- The establishment of conditions that allow the extending, in terms of time, of the access to education and training for all, in a duration that merges itself into the people’s cycle of life, since they are born until they die;
- The dissemination of Lifelong Learning in all domains of life, from family life to spare time, vocational life and, naturally, to the education and training institutions, persuading people that teaching and learning are roles and activities that could be changed and exchanged in different moments and spaces (lifewide learning);

- A global framework of prospective reflection and systemic approach of Lifelong Learning and Training integrated in the new Knowledge and Learning Societies.

Extending education and training to the adult population is, in Portugal, an issue of the utmost importance, differentiated from most European countries. The stakes are, either the acquisition of know-how, or the creation of conditions for social recognition, validation, certification, acquisition or development of basic competencies by a significant part of the population who didn't have the opportunity to have a longer education. In order to respond to these demands and challenges, it was defined, on the one hand, a new strategy for Adults Education and established the National Agency for Adults Education and Training – and, on the other hand, it was reinforced the bet on the role played by companies and social partners in the promotion of continuing training, according to the established in the Agreement on Employment, Labour Market, Education and Training Policy, signed on February 9, 2001.

Besides the specific effects of Lifelong Learning in relation to the participation of everyone in all life aspects, the adaptability of the national production system to the demands for economic competitiveness, namely the upgrading of production levels, goes through a bet on active adults education and training sustained by the dialogue with the civil society and the economic initiative, in the framework of which a core role is played by the companies' policy on human resources, namely in the continuing training area.

The non-recognition and certification of many competencies acquired in informal and non-formal contexts by most of the Portuguese, namely in a labor context, reinforces the need for a national effort towards recognition, validation and certification of those competencies in the framework of lifelong learning, with a view to defining individualized education and training pathways in accordance with each particular situation.

In Portugal, the situation concerning the qualifications classification doesn't include the whole personal and labour learning experiences. The existing system leans mainly on the identification and regulation of formal education and training curricula and diplomas, despite the steps already taken towards non-formal and informal learning recognition. Sometimes, companies, resorting or not to collective bargaining with the social partners, grant and recognize a qualification that, in a way, is specific of the activities those companies develop. Thus, we should not talk about a monopolistic system to obtain qualifications.

2- THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS IMPACT AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS' ROLE

In this point an analysis is made of some of the follow-up studies carried out in both education and training systems in Portugal, as well as on data relating to school achievement based on research made at national level. It should also be pointed out that available data show the pecuniary benefits resulting from the lifelong learning recognition.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour have been implementing some observation and follow-up mechanisms, allowing thereby the monitoring both education and training systems. The information made available further on, is the result of some analyses and observations carried out under the referred bodies. However, the results refer to some years only, being impossible at this moment to provide a significant data series.

In what concerns the impact on the labour market it is possible to provide some data based on trajectory surveys that have been carried out regarding former students of the secondary and higher education, as well as regarding former trainees.

2.1- IMPACT EVALUATIONS

2.1.1. Training at the secondary education level

The available data refer to the secondary education graduates in 1997 and to their situation in 1998 regarding the transition to the working life. Most of these graduates (65%) have attended Higher Education being their choice influenced by the course type. Almost all the graduates from General Courses (93%) had proceeded with their studies towards the vocation of the course completed (proceeding with the studies). Also the majority of graduates in the technological courses graduates (68%) have acceded to Higher Education although they have attended a secondary course mainly oriented to the working life. The qualifying character of the Vocational Courses is proved by the fact that the great majority of the graduates (76%) have not proceeded with the studies choosing to enter the labour market.

Comparing the courses attended with the vocational training carried out later, it is found out that only 19% of the graduates in general courses have attended vocational training after having completed the course. In relation to the technological courses and the vocational courses, the situation is comparatively more favourable since 33% and 42% of the inquired of each course type, respectively, have carried out vocational training.

The articulation between the school education and the vocational training is supposed to make it easier for the young students to enter working life. It is noticed, however, that the percentage of graduates who, having attended vocational training after the conclusion of the secondary education, are performing a professional activity, is reduced, mainly in what refers to the General Courses (10%) The situation is similar for 25% of the former pupils of Technological Courses and 35% of former pupils of Vocational Courses, showing the latter a closer relationship between both types of education. For the majority of the graduates, the knowledge obtained in school education has a "Medium" degree of use throughout their professional activity. Although the number of pupils of the General Courses that have attended vocational training is reduced, the fact is that they are who, just like the pupils of technological courses, show a higher use of the knowledge acquired.

Most of the youth who do not proceed with higher education are employed one year after having completed the secondary education.

**Table 13-employability of secondary education graduates
(October 1999, one year after the conclusion of the course)**

	With an Occupation	Unemployed	Other situation
General courses	52%	18%	30%
Technological courses	68%	19%	13%
Vocational courses	78%	15%	7%

Source: ME/OPES

Considering the total of students, the majority classifies as “satisfactory” the course they have completed. However, there is a difference in the ranking of the different training areas, being the most favourable appreciation for the “Contents of the general/socio-cultural component”. In general, the “Co-ordination between theoretical and practical training” and the “The Contents of the specific/scientific component” are the areas with less favourable appreciations, mainly regarding the Technological Courses graduates.

In general, school education gets a favourable appreciation for the development of capacities it allows, mainly on the part of the Vocational Courses graduates. Most of the graduates think that school education was a “Good Contribution” for the development of the “Capacity for teamwork” considering that this capacity has a “High” relevance for the professional life.

2.1.2- Vocational schools: a proposal for youth initial vocational training under the Ministry of Education

One of the specific modalities of the education system is the training provided by the vocational schools. Some illustrative data on this system are presented farther on.

Box 2- Creation of the Vocational Schools

One of the most interesting initiatives carried out in Portugal was the recent creation of the institutions designated as “Vocational Schools”, which are an alternative to the education and vocational training system for the youth. These schools are intended for the age group that usually attends the secondary education and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. However, their structure is rather different from the regular secondary schools structure. Vocational schools are generally managed by private, regional or industry-related bodies that establish agreements with the Ministry of Education. (OECD Thematic Review “Transition from Initial Training to Working Life”. Note on Portugal. 1999)

The creation of Vocational Schools in 1989¹ has three main goals: (i) to diversify the school education supply following the compulsory education, providing training paths as an alternative to the formal secondary education which is mainly oriented to the preparation for the access to higher education;(ii) to structure the initial vocational training for youth, by opposing an institutional model to the variety of short training actions financed, generally, by the Social European Fund: a proposal for initial training that is consistent, organized and has a educational framework and objectives; (iii) to build an alternative subsystem, from the institutional and organizational point of view, which appeals to the initiative of different promoters, to the schools autonomy and to the new curricular and pedagogical mechanisms (Report on the Evaluation of the Vocational Schools System,1996).

¹ Decree-Law no.26/89, January 21st

The vocational schools have resulted from the need to implement an initial training network that has to be diversified and particularly oriented to the qualification requirements of the production social fabric. They are distributed all over the country and have recorded a fast growth, being initially 50 schools that have started providing vocational qualification to 2 000 pupils. After 3 years that number had increased significantly: 167 vocational schools provided qualifying training of level III to 17 095 students. Since 1991, the creation of new schools has slowed down, however, the number of students keeps increasing. Thus, in 2001-02 about 30 000 students attended the vocational education (Annex 1- Evolution of the number of vocational schools and of the number of students enrolled)

2.1.2.1- Transition and integration into the labour market

The genesis and private nature of this subsystem, involving partnerships between local, social and economic institutions, has made it easier the integration of the youth into the working life. In fact, the organization of the system and the curricular framework seem to be better adjusted to the objectives of a qualifying training that promotes a successful transition and integration into the labour market. (Annex 2-Example of a Vocational School).

Vocational schools provide qualification of level III and school certification equivalent to the 12th grade of secondary education, leading to access to Higher Education. The vocational courses are organized in three components (socio-cultural, scientific and technical and practical, including the latter a practical training period in a real work context (Annex 3- Courses organization and students assessment)).

The training areas provided by these courses are rather variable². However, such courses are particularly successful in the emerging markets, such as Tourism, Information and Communication Technologies, for which the traditional qualifications are not so much adequate. It should be pointed out, however, that the training area associated to traditional sectors as the textiles, the clothing and footwear kept presenting up to 1999 the highest average employment rate (Annex 4- Employability rates of the vocational schools graduates per qualifying training area-1995-1999).

BOX 3- Vocational Schools and Labour Market

With an average of 120 pupils, the vocational schools are much smaller (and maybe for that reason they are more entrepreneurial and personalized) than the regular secondary education schools, with an average of more than 500 pupils. The vocational schools dimension is advantageous mainly because their programmes are centred on specific occupational areas and do not provide the comprehensive curriculum generally provided by the regular secondary schools. It is also significant the high motivation of the pupils attending vocational schools, as well their clear objectives in the vocational area (OECD, Thematic Review, Transition from Initial Training to Working Life". Note on Portugal.1999).

A survey launched by the "Departamento de Programação e Gestão Financeira " of the Ministry of Education, on the vocational schools' graduates, in 1993, shows the reasons that led the students to attend a vocational school at level of the secondary education. Available data show that 64% of the youth that chose to attend a vocational school, believed that the vocational qualification of level III would improve their perspectives of access to the labour market. On the other hand, only 10% chose

² Administration, Services and Commerce, Agribusiness, Environment and Natural Resources, Performing Arts, Graphic Arts, Civil Construction, Design and Technical Drawing; Electricity and Electronics; Hotel Industry and Tourism, Information, Communication and Documentation; Informatics, Personal and Social Intervention, Metallurgy, Cultural Heritage and Artistic Production, Chemistry, Textiles, Clothing and Footwear; Others

the vocational schools because they believed they could obtain better school results (compared to the regular secondary education schools) towards the access to higher education.

About one year and an half after having completed this vocational course, 52% of the graduates had got a job, 8% were looking for a new job and 19% were still looking for the first job.

The economic activities that stand out as the main employers of these graduates are: building, education, social and personal services, public administration, defence, social security and the wholesale and retail commerce. 28.5% of the graduates who had a job at the time the survey was carried out, were working for small enterprises with fewer than 10 workers. (In OECD; Thematic Review "Transition from Initial Training to Working Life" National Report, 1997)

In what refers to the results concerning the social and occupational integration of vocational courses graduates, it should be pointed out that about half of them refer a total or partial correspondence between their job and the course they have completed, and 25% do not find any correspondence ³.

The social and occupational integration of vocational schools' graduates point to significant percentages of employment stability that range from 50% to 72% according to the different studies carried out (data collected by "Fundação Manuel Leão" ⁴ and by the Observatory on the Entries into Higher Education, respectively).

The most outstanding features of vocational schools that explain the results obtained are, according to the mentioned Joaquim Azevedo' s study:

- A multidimensional curriculum, designed on a theoretical-practical basis with a view to a good vocational performance;
- Vocational schools provide qualification in areas and levels required by the production fabric, thus making it easier for the social and vocational integration of their graduates;
- Vocational schools are generally created as a result of the initiative of local promoters, and therefore they are immediately integrated into their territory, that is, into their social, economic and entrepreneurial dynamics.

2.1.2.2- Student achievement in vocational schools

Beyond other dimensions, the students school achievement along their three-year course, as well as the graduates' employability are considered as a measure of the social performance of vocational schools.

Thus, starting from the concept of educational achievement ⁵ that corresponds to the capacity of a school to graduate its pupils after a three-year course. Three years is the foreseen duration for every vocational course. Having checked the number of pupils enrolled for the first time in the year 1 and, then, it is estimated the number of those who after three years have completed their course. This measure can also highlight the efficiency of each school different from each other, are located in different places and welcome different populations.

³ According to the main results of Joaquim de Azevedo's study «O Ensino profissional em Portugal. Uma estratégia para o seu desenvolvimento)

⁴ idem

⁵ Data presented are based on a survey carried out by Joaquim Azevedo, "Rendimento escolar nos cursos das escolas secundárias e das escolas profissionais : resultados de uma amostragem" ("School achievement in secondary schools and vocational schools:results of a sample survey")

Such indicator provides us with a valuable information as to each school's capacity to fulfil its basic objectives, considering its specific features: to graduate its pupils within the number of years foreseen for each course, avoiding thereby wastages. Besides, this indicator also allows the evaluation of the situation regarding an "eventually great disparity of results among the different types of courses, general, technological and vocational courses, and the eventual raising of dropouts at the 10th grade level.

As an example let us present some data relating to one of the three-year cycle that has been for the object of an evaluation (1998/2001). The school achievement rates in vocational schools vary greatly. Such values vary from 4% to 100%. From a total of 131 schools, 29 have an educational achievement under 50% and 38 present an achievement rate of 75% or over. Considering such variation, it was formulated a hypothesis according to which the differences would result from the different development levels of the populations that attend such schools (in municipalities with higher social development rates, mainly in its economic and cultural aspects, it is expected a better school achievement while the worst achievement levels are associated to schools located in disadvantaged social contexts).

The study under question has also made a comparison between vocational schools and secondary schools, drawing our attention to the need to be careful in this kind of analysis since the two types of schools are rather different from each other, from its management and administration to their pedagogic, assessment and certification methods.

The first conclusion to be drawn regards the great disparity as to the achievement of secondary schools and vocational schools and within the secondary schools, between general courses and technological courses. The latter present an average achievement rather lower than the other ones. There are many variables that explain such differences as to the school achievement such as: the school size, the pedagogic model, the certification system, administration and management, links to the community and to the enterprises. The vocational schools indicators are comparatively better than those of the technological and general courses of the secondary schools.

The improvement of vocational schools achievement requires, according to the study's author the availability of a stricter system of permanent external evaluation as well as more explicit improvement plans.

2.1.3- Apprenticeship, qualifying courses and continuing training

The OEVA (Observatory of Entries into the Working Life) is a mechanism of permanent observation of the vocational integration of the population who have completed vocational training. Such mechanism allows the obtaining of detailed and updated information on the relationship between training and employment in what refers to **initial training** actions (apprenticeship system and qualifying courses) and to **continuing education**.

On analysing a six years period (1995-2000) it is found out that the entry into the working life has been achieved at the cost of the students who, after training, have got a job (23.9%, in 2000) and whose percentage has increased in the last two years (1999 and 2000); on the other hand, the number of individuals who were unemployed and became employed after training has been decreasing since 1997, being presently 12.7%.

It is still found out that these training actions have not contributed much to a sectoral mobility. In fact, throughout all the period under analysis, on average, 54% of the individuals remained in the same sector and 21.3% changed to another economic activity.

On analysing the 2001 period and, in global terms, the occupational situation after the training (at the date of the survey) keeps pointing to a good integration into the working life: most of former trainees of the three modalities were employed at the inquiring date (on average, about 70%). In the

Apprenticeship System, employment has reached 64%, in the qualifying courses 61.1% and in the Continuing Training 83.5%. Regarding the former trainees of the Apprenticeship System and Continuing Training it was recorded a not very significant unemployment rate 11.1% and 6.8%. It may be concluded that most of the former trainees who are at work, didn't stay in the enterprise where they had their practical training. Most of the former trainees already employed, work in a full time scheme what may point to some professional stability, mainly at level of the Apprenticeship System where it reaches 91.7%. In fact, this system is intended to fulfil the goals of the employment/training policy and it is an adequate model since its training supply is: an alternative to unemployment; an effective contribution to the reinforcement of the compulsory schooling of the youth who leave the regular education system prematurely; the promotion of the enterprise as a training context par excellence.

Table 14-Apprenticeship-Integration of youth into the Active Life
Table-synthesis 1999-2001

	1999	2000	2001
Certified	3503	3427	3542
Placed	2279	2203	2134
- At the enterprise	995	963	1045
- At another enterprise	1284	1240	1089
Other Situation	325	333	333
- Carrying out of studies	108	189	223
- Military Service	217	144	110
Unemployed	224	335	459
- Level I		8	
- Level II	108	109	127
- Level III	116	218	332
Unknown situation	675	556	617

Source: CSF III (2001) "Apprenticeship- Physical and Financial Execution"

More than half of the former trainees consider that the training received has contributed to the job they have got (53%). The training was more decisive in the obtaining of a job for those coming from the Apprenticeship System (70%) and from the Qualification Courses (64.2%).

The impact of training on the integration of former trainees into the working life was very positive since about 70% of the inquired declared they were employed at the inquiring date. The most relevant features of the employed group allow us to outline the following profile:

The occupations that are common to the three modalities tend to be clerical workers, personal and private services personnel, security and protection personnel, metalworking and metallurgy workers and similar. The jobs obtained by the former trainees tend to confirm their qualification level (27% for the three modalities). Other typical situations are those relating the apprentice and trainee level. More than half of the former trainees tend to earn between 334€ and 549€. From all the modalities, the Continuing Training is the one that leads to higher remunerations (21% of the former trainees earn between 599€ and 748€). The former trainees in situation of employment make a positive evaluation as to the training received and recognize that it has contributed to get the present job (53%).

A great part of the former trainees agree that the time assigned to the components theoretical/general training, technological training, simulated practical training and practical training in a work context, in the case of the Apprenticeship System, seems to be adequate.

According to the courses, the Apprenticeship System awards in a cumulative way certificates of Vocational Qualification of level 1,2 or 3 and a Certificate of School Equivalence to the 2nd and 3rd Cycle of Basic Education or to the Secondary Education. A high percentage of the people who have

completed a training course declare to have been awarded a certificate or a corresponding diploma (79.6%).

In the last years, the development of Apprenticeship and its framing, as a priority, within the National Action Plan for Employment, has tended to make of that System a true qualification alternative through a diversification of means that may contribute to its promotion and credibility and to improve the training quality.

2.1.4 – The *Acções S@ber+*

Assessment of *Acções S@ber+*

The *Acções S@ber+* have been the object of an evaluation carried out by an independent agency ⁶. The assessment was based on a multifarious and well-structured methodology for dealing with the reality, combining both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

In this context a series of recommendations were drawn, which may be taken into account for the continuation of this sort of actions and for the improvement of their results.

► Recommendations regarding the supply:

- In view of the positive results obtained by the *Acções S@ber+*, this sort of investment in adult education and training should be continued and, if possible, increased. It should follow an open perspective, not a merely utilitarian one, of adult education and training. In fact, the promotion of lifelong learning should be centred on a triangle of complementary purposes: the promotion of personal development, the cultural enrichment of each citizen; social development, the promotion of close-knit local communities as well as dignified citizenship; finally, the employability of each citizen and the promotion of their capacity to actively contribute towards the productivity of organizations.
- The training offered by *Acções S@ber+* through the existing channels (Regional Boards of Education and schools/learning centres) should be maintained, allowing a wide range of public to be covered, both in urban and rural areas, without disregarding the possibility of this kind of training be also provided by other entities with experience in this field and which are closer to particularly fragile populations from a social perspective (namely, Local Development Associations, Charity Organizations, Social Solidarity Private Institutions, etc.), with the explicit objective of reaching “poorly schooled adults”.
- To help improve the processes and results of the actions undertaken by the promoting entities not only through the analysis and disclosure of good practice, which does not yet happen, but also through encouraging regional meetings of promoters where it would be viable to present these more successful experiences as well as to extend reflection on the new paths of adult education and training.
- To strengthen the ties between the promoters of these actions, their trainees and the RVCC Centres. One should not, however, seek to subordinate *Acções S@ber+* to any necessarily utilitarian perspective of the qualifications obtained. The strengthening of these ties should therefore consist mainly in the creation of opportunities, in total freedom, and not in the imposition of certification mechanisms.

► Recommendations regarding pedagogy:

- The basic features of the educational model which has already been developed and applied should be maintained, i. e. the thematic organization, its short duration and sequence, the

⁶ CEPCEP, Catholic University of Portugal

modular system, the qualification of teachers and trainers and the environment of stimulating apprenticeship provided by duly accredited organizations.

- The flexible and non-constraining model of attendance for the actions should also be kept, leaving the responsibility for the results to those attending them. The public funding, which assures zero cost, should be sufficiently motivating for individual efforts of active citizenship.
- The range of training options must be flexible but at the same time avoid excessive dispersal. At stake is the funding, by the State and the European Union, for which reason it should be selective, without hindering local promoters from undertaking the training initiatives they find most suitable. The focus attributed to ICT should be continued, together with other initiatives with the same public funding model, such as POEFDS and POSI. At the same time, learning in the fields of Mathematics for Life, Expression and Communication and Languages should also be privileged.
- A widening of the prime fields would be useful, bearing in mind the urgent need to improve the professional performance of the active citizens as well as work productivity, which involves not only the problems related to personal development, such as self-esteem, but also others relating to organizational integration, such as teamwork or the elaboration of projects, and those involving the entrepreneurship - autonomy and the creation of one's own occupation/business, such as accounting, for example.
- ICT learning should be encouraged, not only in the general user's perspective but also in the perspective of employability, which leads to the need for the preparation of a co-ordinated and sequential system of modular training with the award of the respective certifications. A certification system organized by sequential levels, from basic to complex, taking advantage of knowledge already possessed while stimulating further learning would be desirable. The knowledge acquired could, by the adding up of credits, lead the citizens who so wished, to more complex and demanding certifications. This co-ordinated system of certifications in the area of ICT would not have to follow the concept of 50 hours modules, but rather a much more flexible model with modules of short and variable duration.

► Recommendations in general:

- The *Acções S@bER+* are a training scheme adequate for a wide range of different publics, at the service of the employability of citizens, of their personal development, as well as the improvement of the quality of life of local populations.

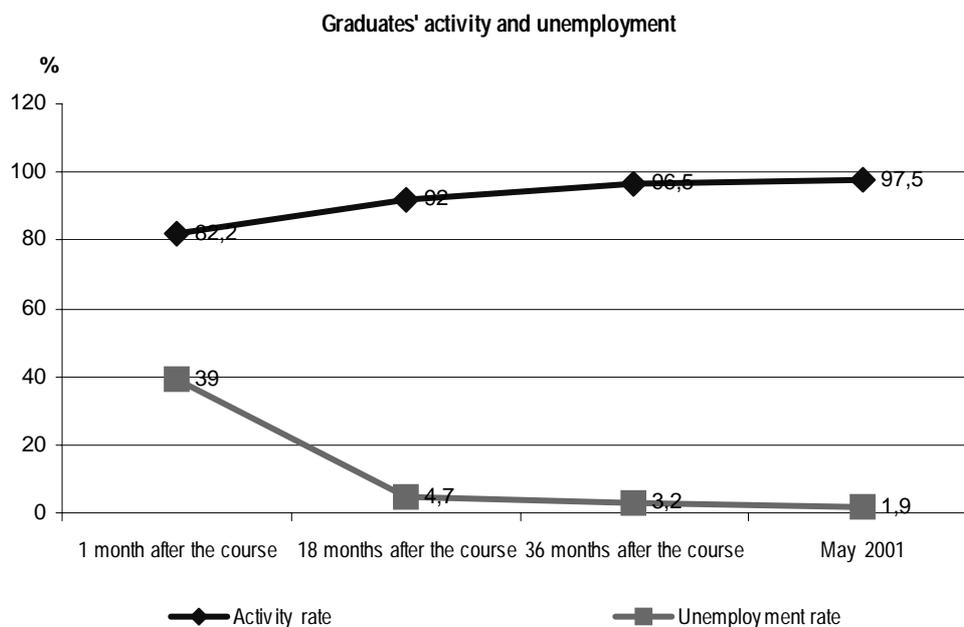
The strengthening of these Actions consists mainly in the creation of new opportunities at regional and local level, accessible for all, on an ongoing basis. In this context, the local authority dynamics are improving mechanisms for the mobilization of organisations, communities, wider society, and the population in general, stimulating demand for learning, as the *Acções S@bER+* have a positive influence on their private and professional lives and increases their ability to solve problems.

Local authorities are, for that same reason, playing an important role as the coordinators of these adult training and education efforts. Moreover, bearing in mind the promotion of social cohesion, local authorities have a key role in developing, at local level, highly integrated education / training / employment strategies, and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning to all.

People, their knowledge and competences are the key to Europe's future.

2.1.5- Higher education

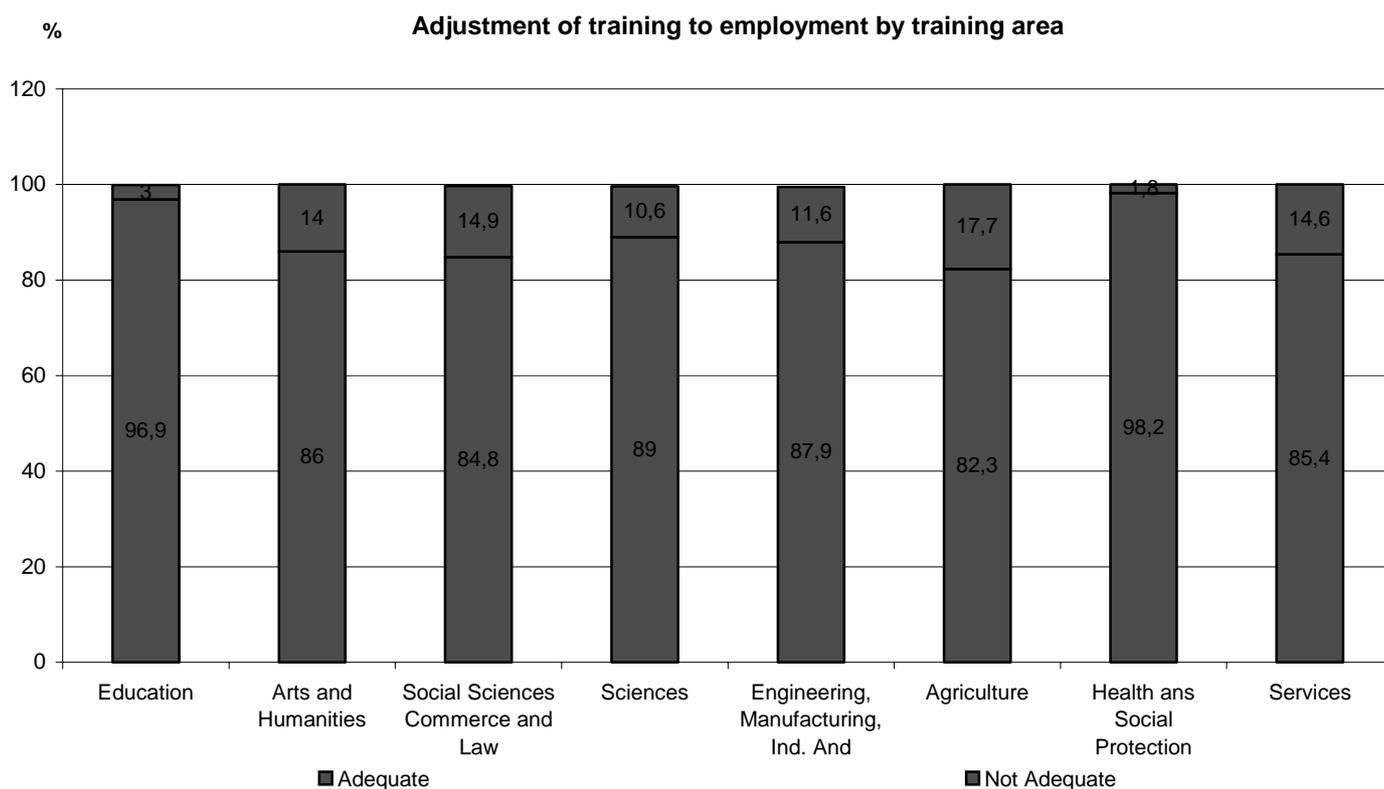
Some data, obtained with basis on the ODES initiative ⁷, relating to the higher education graduates are presented next. These data result of an inquiry to a sample of 10,000 graduates of all training areas who have completed the course in 1994/1995 and lead to conclude that such graduates have a high employability level. About 50% of the graduates of 1994/95 had got a job one year after completing the course.



Most of the graduates who were unemployed 5 years after the conclusion of the course pointed out as reasons for their situation: "that they had not yet been able to find a job." and " they hadn't been able to find a job adequate to their qualifications".

76% of the total of graduates have attended vocational training actions. Generally the number of women attending such training actions is higher than that of men. The main reasons for attending such training actions were: "adjustment to technological changes or updating of knowledge", "need for vocational training for promotion in the career" and "for personal interest".

⁷ The follow-up system developed within the scope of a partnership between the MTS ((Ministry of Labour) (through the INOFOR-Institute for the Innovation in Training- and the DETEFP- Department of Labour Statistics, Employment and Vocational Training) and the Ministry of Education(through the DGEsu-Directorate-General for Higher Education and the DAPP-Department of Evaluation, Forecasting and Planning) that aims to collect, analyse and disseminate information relating to the Higher Education graduates in the period between the leaving of Higher Education (University and Polytechnics) and the entry into the working life. The data to be collected and analysed has three main sources: the Higher Education institutions, the graduates and the enterprises.



2.2- SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND ITS IMPACT ON TRAINING

At a more global level and trying to stress the benefits resulting from the recognition of prior learning and to assess its impact through collective bargaining it should be referred that, in February 2001, the Government and the Social Partners signed an Agreement on Employment Policy, Labour Market, Education and Training. Strategic goals were established such as the promotion of the vocational training role as an instrument to be used for raising the enterprises' competitiveness and for the vocational upgrading of their workers.

The implementation of such agreements has been monitored as to their translation in the collective bargaining, being possible to identify a set of new collective agreements where it is reflected the concern with the promotion of the workers' training and, consequently, with the articulation between the workers' qualifications improvement and the development of their professional careers.

Box 4- Development in the Professional Career

- **Collective Agreement between the ANIL and the FSIABT** that establishes that the advancement in the career shall be based on the competences through the attendance of vocational training courses (BTE no.21/98);
- **Collective Agreement between the Dairy Industries and the Trade Union of the Dairy Workers** that establishes that the advancement in the career shall be based on the competency and on the performing capacities demonstrated in the vocational training courses or through the experience obtained (BTE no.6/99)
- **Collective Agreement between the APICER and the FEPCES** that establishes that the employer should foster, whenever possible, the vocational training and further training of its workers as well as, when deemed necessary, to promote retraining actions(BTE no.8/2000);
- **Enterprise Agreement between PT Comunicações and the SINDETELCO** establishes that it falls to the enterprise to promote the training of its workers in order to ensure high professional standards, trying to make compatible the individual expectations with the enterprise needs (BTE no.11/2001);
- **Enterprise Agreement between VIAMAR and the Trade Union of Inland Water Transport, Coastal Navigation and Merchant Marine**, establishes that the ship-owners should ensure the vocational training considered necessary to the vocational upgrading and to the advancement in the career, as well as to foster the maritime registration, namely through adequate education al establishments and, preferably, in co-operation with the trade union (BTE no.21/2002)

However, in spite of the efforts Portugal has been making, the number of collective agreements concerned with the workers' training keeps being reduced when compared with the number of agreements established (Table 15), although in the last years there has been a slight increase.

Table 15- Percentage of collective agreements containing clauses on vocational training in relation to the total of collective agreements published

	1998*	1999	2000	2001	2002**
CCT	3	0,8	4,9	3,8	5,2
ACT/AE	4,7	4,9	11,2	6,6	12,4
Total	3,5	2,1	7	4,7	7,9

Source: Tables annexed to the evaluation of the reflex of the Joint Declaration of Social Partners to the National Action Plan for Employment, DEPP/MSST, Report on the Collective Bargaining activity-DGCT/MSST.

* They are analysed only the months from May to December.

** They are analysed only the first 9 months of 2002

As in Portugal it is in force the affiliation principle ⁸ concerning the agreements scope we can conclude that the percentage of workers covered by the respective agreements is also reduced although there in the current year a trend to an increase (Table 16).

Table 16 Percentage of workers covered by agreements containing clauses on vocational training in relation to the total of workers covered

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CCT	3,3	5	20,1	2,3	43,9
ACT/AE	0,8	12,2	5,4	0,4	1
Total	3,1	5,7	18,8	2,1	39,7

Source: Tables annexed to the evaluation of the reflex of the Joint Declaration of the Social Partners annexed to the National Action Plan for Employment, DEPP/MSST; Report on the Collective Bargaining activity- DGCT/MSST.

It should, however, be pointed out that the number of workers covered may be higher since we are dealing with first agreement being difficult to know the number of workers covered.

In what refers to the contents of the clauses of these agreements we can conclude that they deal mainly with the definition of mutual responsibilities between enterprises and workers, as well as with the co-ordination between the qualifications improvement and the advancement in the career. The next table shows the reduced number of clauses focussed on the co-ordination between the qualifications improvement and the development in the career.

Table 17- Number of clauses concerning the co-ordination between qualifications improvement and development in the career

	1998*	1999	2000	2001	2002**
CCT	4	1	4	3	5
ACT/AE	5	-	1	1	1
Total	9	1	5	4	6

Source: Tables annexed to the evaluation of the reflex of the Joint Declaration of the Social Partners annexed to the National Action Plan for Employment, DEPP/MSST Report on the Collective Bargaining activity- DGCT/MSST.

Notes: *They were analysed only the months from May to December

** They were analysed only the first 9 months of the year 2002

⁸ This principle derives of the article 7, Decree-Law no.519-C/79 of December 29, according to which the collective agreements oblige the subscribing employers as well as those employers who are members of the signing employers' associations, as well as the workers employed by them, to be members either of the signing associations or of the union associations represented by the signing union associations

Based on the analysis of the table above we may conclude that 1998 had the highest number of the referred clauses and as an example they are presented next the following collective agreements dealing with the co-ordination between the qualifications improvement and the development in the career, namely in the sectors of woollen goods, dairy products, Communications and Transport.

Box 5- Remuneration Advantages

The clauses dealing with the **training pecuniary advantages** are rare and they do not even exist in most of the agreements. However, and according to the Report of the Directorate-General for the Working Conditions (DGCT on the Collective Bargaining activity they should be pointed out the following agreements:

- **Collective Enterprise Agreement between the Association of “Beneficiários do Mira” and others and the SETAA-** the worker who concludes successfully a vocational training course and gets a certificate of occupational aptitude is entitled to a wage supplement whose amount to be agreed and, eventually, to a promotion (BTE no.23/2000);
- **Collective Labour Contract between the Nat. Association of Forestry, Agriculture and Environment Enterprises and the SETAA-** the workers who complete a vocational training course successfully, obtaining a certificate of vocational aptitude, are entitled to a wage supplement to be agreed by the contract signatory parties (BTE no.25/2000);
- **Collective Labour Contract between ANEFA and SETAA** where it is established that the workers who complete successfully vocational training courses and obtain a certificate of vocational aptitude are entitled to a wage supplement of 3% over their base wages beyond the eventual promotion (BTE no.29/2002);
- **Collective Labour Contract between the Association of Farmers of the Evora District and the Trade union of Agriculture, Food and Forests** that grants to the workers that complete vocational training courses and obtain a certificate of vocational aptitude a supplement of 5% over the wage rate (BTE no.29/2000);
- **Enterprise Agreement between CMP and FETESE** that provides for the sharing of the transport costs whenever the educational establishment is located in other place than the worker's workplace or residence place and the distance makes impossible the effective attendance of the course (BTE no.22/2002);

Enterprise Agreement between CPM and FETESE that provides for the sharing of the transport costs whenever the educational establishment is located in other place than that the worker's workplace or residence place and the distance makes impossible the attendance of the course

3- MAIN OPTIONS OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS

In this chapter we will try to examine the dynamics of the national qualification systems. We will attempt an analysis of the factors that are in the origin of the changes and innovations in the qualifications systems and of the factors liable to favour changes in the future- namely the lifelong training requirements. Such debates may reflect the contradictory requirements to which the qualification systems are submitted and the new requirements in the qualification area that are to be expected in the future.

3.1- LIFELONG LEARNING AND RE-QUALIFICATION OF THE WORKING POPULATION

In order to try the reinforcement of the educational system results, some evaluations and restructurings have been made with a view to change the qualifications systems towards a Lifelong Learning strategy of which the Apprenticeship revision, the debate on the reform of Secondary and Higher Education, the bet on Adult education and training and the creation of a system of recognition and certification of competences are some of the examples.

Being urgent the fight against the low literacy and certification levels of adults, in Portugal, today, the option has to be, mainly, for integrated approaches to education and training that recognize the relationship between personal development and the individual's global training. In what refers to the re-qualification of the working population, Portugal has to make efforts in terms of investment in education and training according to the scenarios prepared (see box 6)¹

Box 6 – Lifelong Learning Scenarios

Scenario 1- rather conservative in its ambitions- would consist in reaching, in 2002, the present status of the most advanced European countries such as Finland, Denmark and Netherlands in what concerns the educational structure of its 25-64 years old population. To reach that goal Portugal would have to train and/or qualify about 2,5 million active adults of which about an half had the secondary education level or equivalent. The training of that half would imply a total financial effort – to cover direct and indirect- or opportunity costs – of 0.93-1.34% of the GDP at current values.

Scenario 2- more ambitious- that would set as a goal to converge towards the educational structure of the population of Finland, Denmark and Netherlands by 2020. Portugal will have to meet the need for education and/or qualification of about 5 million active adults of which about 1/3 have the secondary education level or equivalent.

The implantation of an Educational Society in our country can't be dissociated from a generational effort to overcome definitively, in the next 20 years, the gap between our country and the European countries referred in the mentioned study. In other words, only the 2nd scenario- training of active population- matters. In such case, considering optimistic assumptions as to the productivity of the system to be introduced it would be necessary to have permanently about 500 thousand trainees each year and to assign to such objective public, private or mixed financing- estimated in about 2.42%-2.47% of the GDP at current values, including direct and indirect training costs. This implies a bet on the certification of knowledge and skills obtained by informal way.

In this framework, the creation in 1999 of the National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA), replaced by Directorate General for Vocational Training, has consolidated the co-ordination between the Ministries of Education and of Social Security and Labour and also between the public and private sectors, the education and training bodies and the community, the educators and the social partners with more relevance in territorial terms.

¹ Carneiro, R. () «20 Anos Para Vencer 20 Décadas de Atraso Educativo», DAP/ME, Lisbon.

Together with the reinforcement of the requirements for the access of a population with low education and qualification levels to second chance education and training, the Directorate-General for Vocational Training former ANEFA- is presently responsible for the development of the National System of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences acquired by the adults throughout their personal, social and professional life.

It is a landmark in the policy of adult education and training that is expected to contribute effectively, at short term, to raise the levels of school and vocational certification of the population, as well as to improve their employability and to encourage, at any time, their return to the education and training process.

3.1.1 The National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences and the National Network of RVCC Centres

In the framework of the European Strategy for Employment and of the NAP's guidelines, Portugal is mobilized for the conception and implementation of the National System for Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC system).

The Recognition, Validation, and Certification of Competences gives the opportunity to all adults over eighteen, without the basic schooling of 9 years, to obtain the recognition – in personal, social and official terms – of the competences and knowledge acquired in different contexts throughout their life, promoting and facilitating education and training paths with a compulsory school and (vocational) certification.

This new service - provided by public and private entities duly accredited by the Directorate General for Vocational Training is implemented through the *National Network of Centres for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC Centres)* which in the framework of the CSF III will be composed of 84 centres to be created gradually until 2006. Presently the Network has 56 centres and in 2004 it will have 70 RVCC Centres.

This Network is set up starting from the accreditation of entities of different nature, public and private, and strongly established in the community to which they belong. They are among others, enterprise associations; associations for local /regional development; associations of municipalities; Institutional social partners (CAP, GTP-In, CCP) and public institutions (IEVT, basic and secondary schools/CFAE, INFTUR) (Annex - Number of adults covered and number of RVCC Centres operating).

Although the RVCC Centres mission is the school certification of all the adults who do not have accomplished the nine years of basic schooling, it is expected that this service will respond adequately to the real expectations and needs of the population. Thus, beyond the activities inherent to their three intervention axes, the Centres have other functions, such as information, counselling, complementary training, purveyance and local animation.

3.1.1.1 The RVCC Centres model:

The RVCC Centres are organized on the basis of three intervention axes

1.Recognition of competences: represents a first moment of identification and assessment by the applicant adult himself/herself of his/her previously acquired knowledge, skills and competences through a set of activities based on such methodologies as biographical approaches (applying individual or collective interviews) and competences audit (having recourse to practical activities, role-play demonstrations, etc.).

As a result, the adult will construct his/her personal *Portfolio* containing the documentary proofs of the competences held by him/herself. In this process he/she will be supported both by his/her mediator/advisor and the trainers of the four key-competence areas.

To compensate for some detected deficit in the documentary proofs presented, the adult will be referred to a short training allowing him/her to achieve certifiable learning paths.

Counselling and guidance are to be regarded as a core component of this phase of the process, in so far as they are designed to (i) inform the adults of the locally existing education and vocational training offers; (ii) assist adults in preparing and submitting their applications for actual validation; (iii) refer adults to short term training most suited to their individual needs; (iv) assist adults in defining and implementing their subsequent career and personal projects.

2. *Validation of competences*: is designed to support and coach the adult to self-assess his/her recognised competences, on the basis of the four defined key-competence areas and the three certification levels as stated in the national Key- Competences Framework for AET (see above).

Firstly presenting his/her *Request for Validation of Competences*, the adult then presents his/her Portfolio before a *Validation Jury* (composed by the adult's advisor, the trainers of the four key-competence areas and an external assessor from the local community duly accredited for this purpose).

The *Validation Jury* analyses and assesses the adult's Portfolio, compares the documentary proofs with the referential framework of key competences and, whenever necessary, asks for the demonstration of the competences not clearly described/documentated in the Portfolio.

Finally, the validated competences are registered by the Jury in the adult's *Personal Key Competences Card*.

3. *Certification of competences*: the process that confirms the validated competences with the issue of a Certificate equivalent, in legal terms, to one of the three levels of lower secondary.

3.1.1.2. Quality criteria: the Quality Charter, the Strategic Plan of Intervention and the Monitoring and Evaluation System

The innovative character of the *Systema Nacional de Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências* requires high standards of quality to ensure transparency and accuracy to the recognising and validating device in order to give credibility to the validated competences and to the certificates awarded.

Thus, based on the proposed model of a *Quality Chart*, the RVCC Centres are to produce their own *Quality Declaration* (and keep it on a place accessible to their collaborators and their clients) enunciating their commitment as to the values and principles that regulate their activity and their partnership network with a view to a permanent improvement of the quality of the services to be provided.

The *Strategic Action Plan* – to be drawn up yearly by the Centres – should be a guarantee of the Centres' performance quality and their dynamics on defining the performance indicators enabling further improvement of their weaknesses and reinforcement of their perceived strengths.

As the regulating body, the Directorate General for Vocational Training is entitled to carry out a *Monitoring and Assessment System* (Decree nr. 1082-A/2001, September 5th) of the whole RVCC process outcomes as well as of the RVCC Centres performance results.

The monitoring of the RVCC Centres' practices is locally assured by the national team, according to specifically designed guidelines.

Furthermore, a *Guide on Self-assessment for the RVCC Centres* has been recently designed, and is actually being implemented in 2004, in 42 RVCC Centres, on an experimental basis, focused on common criteria and indicators for quality in the RVCC process.

It is our understanding that self-assessment is to be performed as (i) a learning process; (ii) a mechanism of internal control on the management and performance of the RVCC Centre; and (iii) it may serve purposes of external control of the RVCC Centres.

The proposed Guide will serve as well assessment purposes at national level.

Box 7 – The SNRVCC: AN INNOVATIVE INTERVENTION

The National System for Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (SNRVCC) is within the scope of the Portuguese Education and Training System as a innovating intervention at the level of the conception and of the practices. Moreover, adult education and training became a goal for all society by promoting the participation of different public and private entities and mobilizing for that area the reflection and coordinated action of different actors: researchers, teachers, trainers training managers, policy decision makers.

So, considering the diversity of the intervening actors, it is specially important the Training Institutions Accreditation System of the RVCC and its co-ordination with the Training Institutions Accreditation System managed by the Institute for Innovation in Training (INOFOR), allowing thereby that the network may bring together entities with the logistics and human resources to carry on this national commitment that is the improvement of the qualification of the Portuguese active population.

“ Nowadays, the importance of the certification of the acquired competences

- Formal, informal or combined—derives from the fact that the wide movement of people and their multiple professional involvements or others make that often it not possible to know directly the life history and experience of the people with whom we have contacts or with whom we will eventually co-operate in a certain activity. That requires credible, easily identifiable and socially recognized certifications. In a society of constant flows and extended social relationships, an institutional certification.
- At the same time, such certifications tend to appear less and less as a symbol of status, an emblem of restricted minorities. In face of a society that, in its daily life, is full of symbols, languages and cognitive tools of formal character, involving, then the massive diffusion of the competences required to use them daily, what is important to be accredited are the effective competences, liable to be activated in the situations of pertinent social use, being such situations, professional or playing, cultural or civic situations, or new learning situations (Firmino da Costa" Um processo de Desenvolvimento Social de Competências e Certificações" *in Educação e Formação de Adultos :Factor de Desenvolvimento, Inovação e Competitividade 2002*)

3.1.1.3. Financial support and Costs

The *national network of RVCC Centres* is financed by the Portuguese State and the European Commission. Within the III Community Support Framework, the application of the European Social Fund (ESF) was negotiated, under Measure 4, Action 4.1 – *Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Conhecimentos e Competências Adquiridas ao Longo da Vida* (Recognising and validating knowledge and competences acquired throughout life), of the Programme for the Development of Education in Portugal (PRODEP III).

This intervention is co-financed at a rate of 100%, being 75% of the funding covered by the ESF and the remaining 25% covered by the national public contribution (NPC).

Financial support to the National Network of RVCC Centres operating in 2002

Source	Amount	Beneficiaries
ESF	€ 2 237 048,13	Public and private local promoters of the 42 RVCC Centres operating in 2002.
NPC	€ 745 682,72	
Total	€ 2 982 730,85	

Source: Direcção-Geral de Formação Vocacional, Ministério da Educação. 2004.

Table 18-System Costs

Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences- 2001

Region/No. RVCC Centres	ESF	National Public Contribution		Total
		SSB	Other	
North:10 RVCC Centres Centre:6 RVCC Centres	273860,97 19492,55 181931,8	89134,5 2930,51	2152,48 2930,51	365147,95 25990,06
Lisbon and Tagus Valley: 8 RVCC Centres	60566,45	36951,99	23685,94	242551,73
Alentejo: 3 RVCC Centres		19763,79	425,03	80755,27
Algarve: 1 RVCC Centres	564,89	0	188,3	753,18
Total 28 RVCC Centres	536,398,65€	149,417,29€	29,382,26€	715,198,19€:

Source: Direcção-Geral de Formação Vocacional, Ministério da Educação, 2002

3.1.2 – The Acções S@bER+ : A training model within a Lifelong Learning Approach

The *Acções S@bER+* represent an innovating policy for adult education and training in Portugal. Aimed at members of the adult population over 18, who intend to acquire, develop or strengthen their personal skills in specific areas, professional or academic, regardless of their school levels or vocational qualifications, the *Acções S@bER+* attempt to offer an adequate and flexible answer to the challenges faced by adults at different moments of their life.

The goals of the *Acções S@bER+* are:

- to promote the development of learning projects for adults, independently of their level of schooling, geared towards the development of skills, the enhancement of knowledge and the acquisition of qualifications in certain specific areas, with particular emphasis on the use of new technologies and the learning of foreign languages;
- to mobilize primary and secondary schools, as well as other public and private entities with the capacity to do so, to participate actively in the creation of a lifelong learning society, creating new opportunities for permanent learning;
- to encourage the emergence of far-ranging partnerships between schools, learning centres and social organizations, with a view to making the most of resources and generating a culture of cooperation with and dedication to the permanent development of the human resources of the country.

According to the initial concept, the *Acções S@bER+* are flexible and certifiable actions, consisting in short training actions and are organized into three modules (50 hours/module), corresponding to three different levels of proficiency (*Annex - Initiation, Development, Consolidation*).

This structure allows the trainees to take part in one or more modules according to their knowledge and/or availability. The training actions provided are determined by demand, which is dictated by the economic, social and cultural framework of the local and regional communities where they take place and also by the concern with the promotion and maintenance of the employability of active citizens.

This is how the *Acções S@bER+* should be seen: as an initiative aiming to accomplish the concept of "lifelong learning" as a multifarious process which enables individuals to be more adequately integrated into society, into culture, into work, indeed, into citizenship. In modern society, lifelong learning is not only a right but also a duty that every citizen should always keep active.

BOX 8 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACÇÕES S@BER+

During 2001,

452 *Acções S@BER+* took place, involving 8 180 trainees:

most are women,
aged between 25- 44
and are employed.

The most common level of schooling attained differs according to the region: secondary school (North, Alentejo, Algarve); 9th grade (Centre); 6th and 9th grade (Lisbon and Vale do Tejo).

During 2002,

957 actions were approved, for a foreseeable total of 18 517 trainees:

The trend is to a greater participation of women
aged between 25- 44

and employed continues. In as far as concerns the schooling of trainees, there is a predominance of trainees with secondary school and a growing number of people with higher education. CEPCEP "Acções Saber+, Final Report"

In 2001 and 2002, the *Acções S@BER+* took place through the initiatives of ANEFA/DGFV, schools, and the Regional Boards of Education.

These have mainly concerned the following areas of training: Technological literacy; Internet; Languages (including Portuguese as a second language); Mathematics for Everyday life; Expression and Communication.

3.2- REINFORCEMENT OF THE INTERMEDIATE MANAGEMENT

In spite of the developments occurred in the nineties in the area of the qualifying education and training secondary level, the shortage of qualified and highly qualified professionals of intermediate level persists³. The most recent official survey on the enterprises' training needs⁴ shows clearly that the major and more pressing qualification needs emerge at that occupational level.

The increasing demand for intermediate level professionals is a result of the emergence of a set of functions and new forms of enterprise organization where the demand for a higher production specialization implies decisively the reinforcement of the position of qualified and highly qualified workers at middle management level of all economic sectors in general. The priority given to the middle management qualification may be considered as a strategic measure in the framework of the modernization process that is so often referred as essential for the competitiveness and development of the national economy.

³ Azevedo, J (2003) "O Ensino Profissional em Portugal. Uma estratégia para o seu desenvolvimento", ANESPO

⁴ "Inquérito às necessidades de formação profissional das empresas, 2000-2002, Lisboa: MTS/DETEFP

Table 19- Foreseeable evolution of the number of students attending vocational courses

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Technological courses	57.000	53.000 ¹	53.000	55.000	58.000	60.000
Vocational courses	31.000 ²	34.000	37.000	40.000	45.000	50.000
Alternating training courses	17.000	17.000	18.000	19.000	20.000	21.000
Specialized artistic training courses	2.500	2.600	2.900	3.500	3.900	4.500
Total	107.500	106.600	111.900	117.500	126.900	135.500³

¹ If there is a concentration of the supply in schools that provide technological courses, a initial reduction of the total number o students may be expected

² In the first year of vocational courses there will be about 8 000 students not admitted

³ Considering the expected decrease in the global number of secondary level students this number is estimated as reaching 50% of the total

Source: Azevedo, J (2003) "O Ensino Profissional em Portugal. Uma estratégia para o seu desenvolvimento", ANESPO

3.2.1. The Technological Courses Reform

In the present Government's Programme and concerning the policy on the secondary technological education it stands out as a main guideline:

"The construction of a coherent model of secondary level technological training, starting with the coordination between the supplies of technological and vocational education, including also the lifelong learning aimed at the consolidation of a new balance between general secondary education supply, on one hand, and the technological and vocational education of secondary level on the other hand, having in mind the professional achievement models required by the modern societies.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has just published the final text of the Curricular Revision for the secondary education⁵ to be implemented from the school year 2004-5 onwards where it is reinforced the idea of a strategic alliance among the several types of qualifying education and training.

Such co-ordination should be oriented to an active response to the labour market needs without prejudice to the individual's global training required to the carrying on of studies, promoting mainly the capacity of adjustment to new schooling paths and to dropout itself. The Portuguese school should adjust its structures to the lifelong education and training principle recovering and reinforcing the idea of alternation, by reconciling classroom, training space and work environment. It is not enough that the diversity of the supply is ensured by the system. Such diversity should be implemented at the school, namely by overcoming divisions and specializations among secondary schools, vocational schools and public and private training centres.

The proposal for a compulsory period of practical training in the technological courses reflects that concern, since it invites the schools to promote the relationships and co-operation with local and regional economic, social and cultural activities. The Technological Project should be understood in the same way since it should be implemented with the school contribution and in a work context.

The technological courses are then qualifying courses with a double perspective: the integration into the labour market, favouring the sectors with more needs and/or the emerging sectors where there is an intense use of the new information technologies, and the advancement of studies mainly in the area of the polytechnic education and post-secondary courses of technological specialization. This kind of education provides competences in a specific vocational area leading to a vocational qualification of level III.

⁵ *Reforma do Ensino Secundário, Documento orientador da Revisão Curricular*, Lisboa: Ministério da Educação, 10 de Abril de 2003

The curricular matrix and arrangement of the technological courses are based on an education concept that includes the acquisition of competences towards the carrying on of studies together with the learning process and the qualifying training with a view to the enhancement of learning in a real work context. The curricular arrangement of such courses aims at the relationship between school and labour market throughout the student's schooling period, so that an added value results for both parties. Their curriculum is a solution that combines the three main training components: the general education, identical in terms of curricular design to the scientific-humanistic courses, however, different in what refers to the contents (versions more adjusted to the teaching particularities), the scientific and technological.

Scientific Training Component - The subjects of the scientific component together with the technological subjects are intended to provide a broad training, allowing the development of a set of basic competences of the respective course.

Technological Training Component-The technological training component is composed of two subjects of a technical and technological nature (three year subject), a subject of practical nature or theoretical-practical nature (two-years subject) and an integrated technological area (12th grade) covering a specific subject, the technological project and the practical training period. As described above the technological subjects are co-ordinated with the scientific training subjects providing to the student a broad training that at the 12th grade leads to a curricular specialization translated in the integrated technological area that allows the strengthening and development of the competences previously obtained with a view to prepare for an occupation

Integrated Technological Area- The integrated technological area that is of the responsibility of the teacher of the specific subject, aims at the co-ordination between the learning obtained through the scientific and technological subjects in the 10th and 11th grade and the more specific learning in this stage of curricular specialization (12th grade). On the other hand, this curricular area allows a reciprocal flow of information and learning between the school and the work context. In fact, the organization of this integrated technological area allows a close relationship between the learning at school and the learning in a work context (enterprise, institution, etc.) The specific subject and the technological project require 21 weeks of the school year. The remaining 12 weeks shall be devoted to the practical training.

Specific Subject and Technological Project- the management of the annual teaching time (147 teaching units of 90 minutes each) of the Specific Subject and of the Technological Project shall be of the responsibility of the school, ensuring the teaching time corresponding to 7 teaching units a week for the two areas, being the annual teaching time for the Specific Subject of 120 teaching units and for the Technological Project 27 teaching units. This kind of arrangement tries to meet the needs of the Technological Project that, at end of year, may eventually need more time (for the elaboration of the work to be presented to the PAT) and therefore, the school should define the distribution of the teaching time throughout the 21 weeks, in co-ordination with the Specific Subject.

Practical Training – The practical training shall have a total duration of 160 teaching units corresponding to 240 hours and an average of 20 hours of teaching time a week. The total number of the referred hours includes a total of 24 hours of flexible management of the responsibility of the teacher-tutor and of the pupils-trainees. That total should be used for the elaboration of the Practical Training Plan and for the different guidance and assessment meetings. The number of weekly hours the teacher-tutor devotes to the support to the trainees of the class during the practical training period shall be of 10,5 hours (7 teaching units). The practical Training shall be regulated as to its organization and functioning by the services of the Ministry of Education.

In short, the basic matrix of the technological courses is based on three training components:

- a) The general education, including Portuguese (triennial subject) Foreign Language (biennial subject, starting at the 10th grade), Philosophy (biennial subject, starting at the 10th grade)

- Physical Education (biennial subject, starting at the 10th school year) and the Information and Communication Technologies (annual subject, at the 10th grade);
- b) The scientific and technical training that includes for each course two structuring subjects being one triennial and the other biennial (starting at the 10th grade);
 - c) Two subjects of technical and technological nature (triennial subjects), a subject of practical or technical-practical nature and an integrated technological area (12th grade that covers a specific subject, the technological project and the practical training).

Some of the technological courses may present a common core that includes general training and scientific training subjects being different at the level of the technological component.

3.2.2 –Vocational Courses

The instability emerged after 1994 relating to the definition of a policy concerning vocational schools as well as their financing model has created an atmosphere that doesn't help the efforts made daily towards a better training.

The Vocational Training revision ⁶ carried out by the present Government has two main dimensions: the curricular revision and the financing model. In what concerns the **curricular revision** of the vocational education, the following guidelines should be pointed out:

- The rationalization, co-ordination and transparency of the qualifying training supply, namely through the creation of a National Catalogue of Skills and a Catalogue of Modular Vocational Training to be updated regularly.
- The design of Training Reference Lists that may ensure the acquisition of transversal competences that are specific of the vocational profiles considered.
- The priority for the supply of courses of vocational qualification of level 3, being the courses that provide vocational qualification of level 2 and/or equivalence to the 9th schooling year provided within an Education-Training context.
- The co-ordination between Vocational Training and the Specialized Arts Education particularly in the areas of Theatre, Visual Arts, Audiovisual and Multimedia in order to ensure a convergence of the training paths towards the carrying on of studies or the immediate entry to the labour market;
- Rationalization of the Training Supply Network through the strengthening of the complementariness and diversity of trainings and training institutions enabling the supply of vocational courses and/or training in a dual scheme - Apprenticeship, on one hand, and, on the other hand, in areas/courses not covered by the technological courses supply, in vocational schools and training centres and secondary schools. This would allow the youth to follow the training paths desired as well as the use of the resources available. As in the case of the alternating vocational courses, any of such modalities may be provided in secondary educational institutions provided they have the adequate equipment and preparation. The youth will have then the possibility of changing to another modality more easily.
- Conception of a Curricular Matrix for a minimum curriculum, based on the following assumptions:

Distribution of a total number of training hours throughout the three years training in order to optimise the global modular management and the training in a work context ensuring the equilibrium of annual teaching hours and reinforcing the pedagogic autonomy of each school.

Breakdown of the training into three components: socio-cultural, scientific and technical: (1) the first one includes a set of subjects that are common to all courses, providing a general training that

⁶ *Reforma do Ensino Secundário, Documento orientador da Revisão Curricular*, Lisboa: Ministério da Educação, 10 de Abril de 2003

covers a range of personal, social and cultural learning that crosses all training pathways, (ii) the second one includes a set of scientific basic subjects that support similar vocational profiles (maths, chemistry, psychology, history...), (iii) the third one incorporates either instrumental subjects that are transversal to similar vocational profiles (drawing, financial calculation...) either structuring subjects of technical and practical profiles (technologies and workshops) as well as the training in work context. This component includes still modules of Occupational Health and Safety. The training in work context, taking into account the dynamics of each School/ Course. Updating /Restructuring of the study plans and programmes in accordance with the revision of the vocational education proposed.

Reinforcing the modular structure as a feature of the training reference lists, that is, its organization in modules, which are considered as autonomous learning units integrated in a coherent whole.

Process of student assessment in a modular structure that is continuous, permanent, transparent and flexible, essentially oriented to training and diagnosis, non-selective. Process that includes the carrying out of Vocational Training Examination (PAP) that has a final global character and mobilizes the know-how and competences obtained throughout the training and with an evaluation made by an external jury with a tripartite composition.

In what refers to the new **financing model**, contained in this proposal for the Secondary Education Reform, it shall be launched on an experimental and provisional basis in the Lisbon and Tagus Valley region. That model sets an Attendance Scholarship to be granted to the students as well as other aids and socio-educational supplements, in order to allow free choice as to the school and the training pathway to follow under conditions similar to those of the secondary education.

Although safeguarding the vocational training subsystem features, this new financing model provides for alternative self-financing mechanisms, namely through the rendering of services to the community and partnerships with the organizations (enterprises) that directly benefit from those different vocational pathways, encouraging the local and regional institutions to obtain the scholarship.

It falls upon the Ministry of Education to define, each year, the number of scholarships for each training area as well as the amount for each training area. On the other hand, it is also responsibility of the Ministry of Education the monitoring of the student's school progress through the central and regional services.

The scholarships whose amount is different from that of the fee (to be set by the school) and that are not granted by the school social services, shall be paid directly to the school chosen by the student in three quarterly fractions, and the student shall pay the eventual amount that exceeds the fee set by the school.

It is considered desirable, however, that the vocational schools try that local bodies and institutions, public or private may be willing to grant other complementary support.

3.2.3 – Apprenticeship Courses

The Apprenticeship System was introduced in Portugal in 1984 and in the recent years has been object of an evaluation by means of a set of studies that point to the potentialities and weaknesses of the System configuration. Thus, an organizational and pedagogical reform was proved necessary and its legal framework came in 1996 through the Decree-Law no.205/96 of 25 October that started to be regulated in 2000.

That reform was intended to maximize the advantages of the dual training, pointing out the importance of training in a work context, to make use of positive practices and to avoid difficulties

that had to do with the way the alternating model as a juxtaposition of components was made operational.

The following innovating factors should be pointed out:

- Identification of new training areas to be covered and of the respective training profiles, reformulating the training profiles in force and the training contents according to the technological development, the new forms of work organization as well as of a prospective socio-vocational framework extended to the European space. The sectoral studies carried out and the vocational profiles set under the National System of Certification were taken into account.
- Types of courses and qualification levels granted:
 - a) Guidance courses of level I;
 - b) Apprenticeship courses of level II;
 - c) Apprenticeship courses of level III
 - d) Post-secondary training courses of level IV

There is, then, a new chance for the development of courses of level IV, corresponding to the so-called courses of technological specialization (CET).

- Revision of the sectoral regulatory acts on the system with basis on the establishment of a basic training reference list that sets a significant reduction of the total training time trying thereby to make the system flexible towards:

- The capitalisation of the know-how acquired out of the system through an access diagnostic assessment;

- The definition of training profiles for different access levels leading to the same final level.

- Apprenticeship as a modality of initial vocational training where the alternation is obligatory and training in work context – performing of professional activities by the trainee in the framework of structured training pathways - is necessarily an integral part of the process of acquisition of competences and goes beyond the putting into practice of knowledge (vocational training dual model)

- Reinforcement of the role played by the National Commission for Apprenticeship (CNA), a body that manages the system in its broad guiding lines, as well as, of the coordination between the two ministries involved, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Education, what is translated namely in the possibility of creation of new courses through a plain joint order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour and the Minister of Education after approval by the CNA beyond the courses created under the regulating decree.

- Reinforcement of the transferability between the different training subsystems available, mainly those managed under the Ministry of Education and the Minister of Labour, being ensured a greater coordination at both ministries' regional delegations level towards a greater sustainability of local and regional training network.

3.3 HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

The Ministry for Science and Higher Education (MCES) has announced a vast reform of the Portuguese higher education under the motto "A Higher Education of Quality,"⁷ that is inspired by the idea of promoting permanently the education, research and experimentation quality.

In that document it is recognized the free movement of people in Europe and the European dimension of the labour market as an important element for the restructuring of higher education. To avoid any prejudice for the graduates from Portuguese higher education institutions, the duration of the studies cycles can't be in Portugal substantially different from that of other European educational systems. On the other hand, the quality requirements should also be of identical level but not allowing that the free movement of people may serve as a pretext to reduce the cultural and scientific level of the referred cycles.

The response to the new challenges of internationalisation and construction of a higher education European space presupposes the adjustment of the higher education system to the Declaration of Bologna. In order to achieve such objectives, the MCES proposes several measures towards the reform of cycles of studies and grades system, as follows:

First cycle of studies:

- the first grade referring to higher education is designated as graduation;
- it is generally a four year-course and in some exceptional cases it may last for more one to four semesters;
- the bachelor's degree is eliminated;

Second cycle of studies:

- it includes the master's degrees provided by higher education institutions, universities and polytechnics, provided they have qualified teaching staff;
- it is foreseen the creation of master's degrees with a more scientific or vocational profile;
- the courses leading to the master's degree have a two semesters duration;
 - it includes the granting of post-graduation certificates after two semesters of specialization;

Third cycle of studies:

- The doctor's degree is a degree reserved to the Universities that have a qualified teaching staff and accredited research centres with a sustained activity;

-It is foreseen the introduction of doctorate courses with a maximum duration of four semesters where there is a large number of doctors with a research activity. It is foreseen the emergence of a joint doctorate programmes among different institutions."

It is still foreseen the establishment of lifelong learning by setting credit units and resorting to new learning methods, namely the e-learning.

According to the spirit of the reform proposed, the contractual scheme between the State and the Universities and the Polytechnics shall be a guiding rule for the strategic development of the institutions: "It shall be privileged the establishment of contracts with higher education institutions that are liable to contribute to:

- the development of strategic excellence areas;
- the correction of regional asymmetries;
- the qualification of the working population;

⁷ *Um Ensino Superior de Qualidade – Documento de Orientação*, Lisboa: Ministério da Ciência e do Ensino Superior, 22 de Abril de 2003.

- the operation of research units under the institutional policy of State Administration and of the enterprises modernization”.

3.4 OTHER ISSUES UNDER DEBATE CONCERNING THE REORIENTATION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The debate on the reorientation of the education and training system is presently focused on issues of different nature and that have to do with the institutional aspects on one hand and with the information society on the other hand.

3.4.1- Institutional Issues

The challenge for a strengthening of the co-operation between the education/training systems at European level requires a set of measures at national level which are being developed, namely:

- Greater co-ordination between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in the different modalities of initial training.
- Setting of a school and vocational information and guidance system, namely at local and regional level (it is the core of the debate about the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and about the Agreement on Employment Policy, Labour Market, Education and Training) in order to approach the citizens (mainly those who are not familiar with education and training), eventually through mechanisms of mediation - the guidance/counselling procedures should be friendly and adjusted to the target-public.
- Consolidation and co-ordination of the competences and qualifications certification systems;
- Quality Management of the training subsystems through accreditation of the training bodies, trainers certification and application of the quality standards to public and private establishments;
- New legal framework of vocational training towards a redefinition of the roles to be played by the different types of public and private actors involved in the vocational training system, namely the State, the social partners, the enterprises, the training institutions and the individuals;
- The redefinition of the financial support by the State to vocational training developed by the enterprises or by employers or union associations.

3.4.2. The information society and the deriving challenges

The promotion of the information and knowledge society is a national priority and its implementation has been carried out through the co-ordination of a set of sectoral policies that assumed jointly the transversal character of the objective. The RCM no.135/2002 of November 20, defined the new institutional framework of the Government's activity in terms of innovation, of information society and electronic government.

The promotion of the digital literacy is one of the great objectives of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning and considering the variety of contexts where the e-learning can develop and the need to create conditions of access to such competences for all age groups, this aspect may be viewed as truly paradigmatic in the framework of the referred Strategy whose contents it crosses.

In the mentioned document, where it is established the definitive framework of the Curricular Revision of the Portuguese secondary education to be started in the school year 2004-05, they are also established the new guidelines to be adopted by the educational system to respond to the new technological challenges derived from the emerging Information Society.

Thus, according to that document, a strong political priority shall consist in looking for an unequivocal response to the Information and Knowledge Society challenges, what will be only possible through a sustained investment in the information and communication technologies training.

Box 9-Goals and Targets under the EES and the Tripartite Agreement

Most of the goals established under the EES aim to reach the population in general and they show how structuring this issue is for the Portuguese population and that, although recognizing the importance of digital literacy for employment, its relevance, in what regards the citizens, crosses almost all the areas of their daily life and so, literacy is also a determining element for social inclusion in a broader sense. The goals are:

- To certify, using different modalities, about 2 000 000 citizens up to 2006;
- To provide schools with computers: a computer for 20 students in 2003 and a computer for 10 students in 2006;
- To connect all the schools to the Internet up to 2001 and the nursery schools of the public network up to 2006;
- Acquisition, by basic and secondary schools, of, at least, a product per subject and per year up to 2006;
- Participation of 150 000 teachers in lifelong learning actions up to 2006;
- To introduce ICT contents in 50% of the lifelong learning actions, with a minimum of 20 hours and a weight on the actions duration of at least 10%
- The development of competences and promotion of the methodologies related to the use of ICT by trainers and individuals of all age groups

In what concerns the provision of schools with computers, the goal set for 2003 had already been reached in 2001 (1 computer per 20 students) and in the 1st semester of 2002 the training actions covered 155 677 teachers.

Within the scope of the Tripartite Agreement, signed in 2001, on employment policy, labour market, education and training, a special attention was given to the information technologies issue what was translated in different measures that have been implemented under the EES and among which we should point out the following:

- To launch the IT competences certificate which any citizen should have access to (also related to the 9 years of compulsory education);
- To set up a system of certification of IT competences for professional purposes;
- To privilege the acquisition of basic competences in the technological literacy areas, namely in the information technologies field (mother tongue, maths and foreign language, fundamental competences for raising productivity and quality);
- To promote the development of education/training systems that should be open and flexible and adjusted to the target populations and to the local contexts, favouring the resort to the new technologies starting from the lowest education and training levels;
- To promote the general resort to the Internet in the school learning process

The principle according to which this training is transversal to all curricula applies to situations of general access to this kind of knowledge and training. Unfortunately, this is not the case of Portugal. It is important to ensure that all students master a minimum set of know-how and techniques in order to allow that, starting from that stage, they can develop the related competences. However, the transversal nature favours the inequality in the access to education and the educational development, and it benefits those who have a more cultivated family environment, pushing the socially and culturally disadvantaged to a digital illiteracy. Therefore, the compulsory teaching of the ICT is an educational, as well as a social and cultural imperative. It is not enough to have access to the Internet, to replace the typewriter for a text processing or to draw a graph starting from a calculation sheet. The techniques and the mastering of information systematisation and processing, of the applications associated to computer assisted design or the capacity to produce contents for the Internet, are strategic knowledge fields we shouldn't ignore. We shouldn't be limited to the training of potential information consumers. On the

contrary, the challenge of the school of the future lies in the ability to train for information production, processing and dissemination.

In short, the bet on the Information Society implementation, within the formal educational framework, will develop two complementary approaches as to the new curricular structure of the secondary education:

- The obligatory teaching of a subject related to Information and Communication Technologies, with a weekly teaching time of two learning units of 90 minutes, incorporating the general education component. This subject shall combine two objectives: awareness raising as to the computer science and training on the productivity tools such as the files management, text processing, calculation sheet, presentations, navigation in the Internet, electronic mail or Image processing.
- Provision of a subject on Informatics Applications as a follow-up and development of the basic training subject, namely in the field of databases, networks management and maintenance, computer assisted design, "webdesign", projects or multimedia management.

4 - THE PRACTICES AND USERS OF THE SNQ (NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS) – TWO EXAMPLES: AET COURSES AND THE “REDE” PROGRAMME

4.1 – ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES

4.1.1 – An Innovative Approach

Adult Education and Training Courses (AET Courses) are methodological programmes run by the late ANEFA, presently the Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training). They are based on the integrated provision of education and training, awarding double certification, both academic and vocational, and aimed at adults who are academically and professionally underqualified (Annex- Profile of the population attending AET Courses).

As a matter of fact, approximately 3.2 million active adults over 18 (representing 64.2% of the active Portuguese population) did not complete the nine years of basic schooling, demonstrating, *a priori*, a low level of literacy. This fact represents an enormous weakness and vulnerability for the country, not only from an internal point of view – in that it undermines social cohesion, individual employability and the competitiveness of the economy, impacting negatively upon participative and responsible citizenship – but also from an external point of view, within the European Union enlargement context and in the international framework of globalisation.

BOX 10-CONCERNS AND AIMS OF THE MODEL

In terms of education policy, AET courses are an original and innovative form of providing basic education to adults that have broken away from the system of “recurrent education” pursued in recent decades, who are confined to the periphery of the schooling system, with the limitations and constraints that are well-known. This rupture with the system is expressed in the nature of the organising bodies, the curricular content of the courses, the institutional framework (under the double supervision of the Ministries of Education and Labour), the means of financing and the nature of the regulation exercised by the State. (Rui Canário “Pós-facio”. In Adult Education and Training courses “em observação” 2000-2001 – National Report.2002)

The investment in institutions able to implement this new model could be seen as a sound option. This is because the institutions are rooted in the community and possess knowledge in relation to the individual community needs. They have a background of technical and multifaceted infrastructural support, community partners on various levels and provide close co-operation that encourages learning throughout one’s life.(Fernão Mendes Pinto Association, promoter of an AET course.2002)

A model that is organised according to competences acquisition is the most suitable method for training adults who, although having received little formal education, possess life experience that enables us to hope that everyone, to some extent, is competent, from a practical, technical or expressive point of view. With this model, the adults’ experiences are the text and the pretext for the acquisition of skills, guiding the training towards and according to the resolution of practical problems that the trainees face in their everyday life..(Olivia Santos Silva “ A methodological orientation to AET Courses” in Saber+ Journal , n°14, July-September. 2002)

These are the concerns that arise from the AET model, which has enabled a closing of the gap between the education and qualification of adults. In this context, the possibility was developed to create and recreate tailor-made training and education. This is because, with the life skills that each of the trainees has, it was possible to construct, with each trainee, their own educational project. Each project, thus constructed and reconstructed throughout the training period, fostered in each one, in overall terms, their own independence and responsibility throughout their life’s journey. Fernão Mendes Pinto Association 2002)

Using flexible solutions that articulate education and training – through organised programmes based on processes of recognition and validation of skills, based on the Key-Competences Framework for Adult Education and Training, and modular training systems - the Adult Education and Training Courses (AET Courses), the courses are aimed at adults over the age of 18 not having accomplished the basic schooling of 9 years, who have no professional qualifications, are employed or unemployed, enrolled at IEFP (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training) Job Centres or indicated by other organisations, such as companies, ministries, trade unions and others.

BOX 11 – MONITORING OF THE MODEL

If, in the pilot year of the AET Course model (2000-2001), it was possible to implement a methodology of monitoring and training of the professionals on the 13 AET Courses then “under observation”, which enabled the involvement of almost all the pedagogical teams, the exponential growth in the number of courses places new demands and sets new challenges for the whole process. (Annex – Growth of the National AET Course Network).

The creation of AET courses is original and innovative, and, as such, fragile. It went from a dozen or so courses, monitored very closely and attentively, to, two years later, hundreds of courses. This growth makes it very difficult to learn through experience and to exercise a minimum of control over the situation. The trend will be towards education for the masses, worsening all the initial problems, which leads me to underline the observation – and it is in this sense that the work is directed – to implement course monitoring procedures. It is very important to have an accurate picture at each stage: how it is working in terms of attendance, cancellations, people giving up, completion rates, results of learning. A fundamental task is to create assessment and monitoring devices that, at the same time, enable one to know what is happening, intervene in terms of regulation and learn from experience. (Rui Canário. In Saber+ Magazine, Saber+ Journal, nº14, July/September 2002

The plan for AET Courses is based on a medium-term training model that is organised into training units created in accordance with the Key-Competences Framework, which previously recognises and validates the skills acquired by adults throughout their life. This training blends a Basic Training (FB) component with a Vocational Training (FP) component (Annex-- AET Curricular Organisation).

BOX 12 – CURRICULAR ORGANISATION

It is intended that, for the two central components of the courses – basic training and vocational training – there is dialogue and unity against a pedagogical background that allows for the creation of bridges and the toning down of differences between the concepts contained in each of the facets, with distinct curricular organisations: basic training is built around an approach to skills, whilst vocational training follows the accumulative unit model proposed by the IEFP. Olivia Santos Silva “A methodological note to AET courses” in Saber+Journal, July/September 2002

Any curricular formula must incorporate the life experience of each trainee, including his or her needs and personal and professional requirements; it will have to suitably cope with different realities experienced by the subject. One of the most innovative aspects of this new type of training scheme is the possibility of cross-pollination between a basic training component and a vocational training component. This link marks a break from the traditional divorce between the academic and professional realms, making it easier for the creation of a positive feeling, on the part of the adults, in relation to the learning situations that are available to them, enabling communication through experience-based learning, through strategies that improve means of alternating between formal educational scenarios and contextualised procedures of vocational development.

The question of knowing how to develop vocational training and the way in which it articulates with basic training thus arises as an essential issue, whose importance for the future will undoubtedly be crucial. The overcoming synthesis will only be possible if, in the development of AET course strategy, the aim of exerting a transforming influence in regards to current practices of vocational training and schooling for adults is kept in the front line (.Rui Canário, “Pós-fácio” In AET Courses “em observação”, National Report, 2002

BOX 13 -TESTIMONIES

“The proposal that was made to us was in response to our needs; because we were on the ground, we know that the majority of people, particularly those that live in rural areas, only reached their 6th or 4th year of schooling – not only in the rural areas, but sometimes in industrial areas. Therefore, it was important to carry out a project that allied the “more” academic knowledge with the vocational component.” (José Brás, member of “Solidários”, a body running an AET Course, level B2).

“After having completed the 6th year, around nine years ago (the qualifications that I possess), I reached the conclusion that it is not enough in today’s day and age. So, I decided to enrol in the course that I am now attending, even though at the beginning I was not sure how it worked. Beginning then with the Recognition and Validation of Skills, and continuing with the basic training, I reached the conclusion that it is a system of learning that is very well suited to adults, in order for them to adapt to the norms of today, seeing that computers are now used for everything, and it is one of the subjects that we are taught the most.” (José R. de Almeida, Trainee on an IT AET Course, level B3).

“The learning process on AET courses is innovative and encourages creativity, participation and initiative. Their flexibility makes it easy to learn with independence. This is also a reason that explains the success of these courses. ... With AET courses, we are not only acquiring training, we are also living!” (Group of Trainees from the Fernão Mendes Pinto Association).

Trainee assessment includes three significant stages: (i) *recognition and validation of the trainees' prior acquired skills and competences*, placing them at a determined stage along the training route and providing guidance concerning the respective curricular development; (ii) *formative assessment*, with effects on the training process and not exclusively on the results, allows insight into learning progress, forming the starting point for the (re)definition of the strategies of recovery and/or deepening of knowledge; (iii) *summative assessment*, as a synthesis and consequence of the conjugation of all the stages and instruments of assessment used throughout a determined training process, based on decisions about the *certification* of the trainees.

BOX 14 - ASSESSMENT

Assessment is essentially formative because, whilst it clarifies and improves learning, it offers the trainee a way of clarifying and guiding the processes achieved, recommending adjustments, the alteration of strategies, proposals for recovery and specific means of support. Accordingly, assessment should be regular and systematic, taking place in a logical and coherent continuum that, giving more emphasis to the processes, without however neglecting the results, is organised into three inter-linked and interdependent sequences. Initial, continuous and final.

Within the scope of the education and training of adults, in which the subjects have their own history and culture, assessment centres on each trainee, being individualised and differentiated in nature. The trainee will have to keep systematic records about the evolution of each training course, the individual rhythms, possibilities or difficulties, conditions and personal, professional or family conditioning factors, methods of learning, doing, being and acting. Olivia Santos Silva "A methodological note to AET courses" in Saber +Journal, July/September 2002

Once the training period has finished, the adult sees registered in his or her *Personal Key-Competences Portfolio* not only the validated and certified skills through this process, but also those that he or she may acquire in other formal or informal contexts, providing that they are duly assessed and accredited on a central level.

In parallel, he or she is issued with an *Adult Education and Training Certificate* that corresponds to the level (academic and vocational) attended, and, for all due legal purposes, it is equivalent to the certificates issued by the Ministry of Education and the IEFP.

4.1.2 - The impact of the qualification granted: the standpoint of those in charge of the training and trainees

In September 2001, *Espaço t*, Association for the Support of Social and Community Integration, a social solidarity private institution located in Porto, began a vocational training course in the area of IT; "Computer Operator Course" – level B3.

"Gaining qualifications is undoubtedly a guarantee of achieving better integration into the labour market, and even more so when we are talking about deprived and underprivileged communities.

Sensitive to this reality, Espaço t runs adult education and training courses, with academic and vocational certification. In aiming its education and training activities at underprivileged groups, providing them with professional skills, this Association operates with one prime aim: the combat against social exclusion in favour of professional integration.

We believe, in this way, that this is only possible when we believe that providing trainees with added competences and means that allow them to seize new opportunities provides them with new life prospects. As proof of what we have just stated, we print some testimonies of trainees who have recently finished our first AET course of Computer Operator, level B3." (Isabel Marques, Head of Training, Espaço t – Department of Training and Projects)

Augusta Carvalho, 27, is employed as a secretary. The trainee believes that her attendance of the Course provided her with an incentive to further her studies. Her main aim is to continue studying until she achieves a degree in languages. In personal terms, the Course helped her to feel calmer, more confident and as though she had more working tools. She also believes that the qualification obtained facilitated her reintegration into the labour market.

Carlos Sousa, 26, is attending a vocational training course in the area of fiscalization/accounting. He feels that the qualification obtained may provide him with better opportunities in his search for employment. He also states: "*I started believing again that it is possible to make a living from my work*", "*I gained self-confidence.*"

Cristina Basto, 30, shop assistant, is of the opinion that the qualification obtained provides her with new employment and training opportunities. She aims, above all, to specialise in the area of IT.

Daniel Miguel, 58, is unemployed and looking for work in conjunction with the employment department of Espaço t for placement in the labour market or in terms of further vocational training.

He says that attending the Course and the resulting qualification encouraged him to attempt to gain other qualifications in the area of IT, increasing his self-esteem and improving his self-image: *"Now I feel able to continue..."*

Isabel Pereira, 33, is unemployed and actively seeking employment, enrolled in the 'Web Designer' vocational training courses and enrolled at UNIVA (Active Life Insertion Unit) in Custóias/Sr^a da Hora. She believes that attending the Computer Operator Course helped her to acquire useful knowledge, in particular concerning the area of administration and the fact that she has increased her level of schooling has contributed towards the broadening of her perspectives. The trainee reported that she feels motivated to attend other qualification levels in the area of IT. She adds that with the qualification obtained in this Course, she may one day fulfil her wish of specialising in computer-aided fashion design, having worked in textiles (as a seamstress) for most of her life.

Paulo Barros, 33, is in charge of a sales department of a computer material company. He believes that attending the Course and the qualification obtained were crucial in his social reintegration. The fact that he currently has the 9th year of schooling allowed him to join a beginner's educational training trainer's course, which he successfully completed. In the future, he aims to provide training in the area of IT.

Questioned about the impact of the academic (9th year of schooling) and vocational qualification (level II) awarded after attending the 'Computer Operator' AET Course, in terms of the employability of his trainees, one of the course tutors states:

"Basic schooling and vocational qualification are important as they represent added value in relation to other applicants who do not possess these qualifications but, for underprivileged communities, the advantages also centre on the interpersonal skills, the discipline for attendance and punctuality that they gain throughout the training period." (3 Infor – AET trainee welcoming body)

4.2 – INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES - REDE PROGRAMME

4.2.1 –Description of the Programme⁴

The "REDE" Programme– Consultancy, Training and Management Support for Small Businesses is an initiative run by IEFP that aims to strengthen competitive capacity, modernisation, sustainability, consolidation and growth of micro-enterprises and small businesses (up to 49 employees) through innovative and integrated methodologies of consultancy-training and the qualification of employment adapted to the reality of each enterprise, with special emphasis on:

- The promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit and an improvement in the managerial capacity of businesspeople and company directors;
- Staff training and the availability of specific consultancy, primarily guided towards organisational skills in response to their specific needs and the impact on the company's overall capacity;

⁴ Expression of significant success in terms of the results achieved and their effectiveness, recognised by end clients and external institutional observers, both national and international, that, in addition to having honoured us, in 1999, with a "Good Practice" from the European Union, distinguished us in 2002 as one of the 5 Good Practices in the support of Small Businesses, as part of the Support Services for Micro Enterprises, Small Businesses and One-Man Businesses study, undertaken within the scope of the European Commission Enterprise Directorate General, of 335 public support services to small businesses in the European Union and Norway.

- The promotion of qualified employment, namely encouraging the integration of young graduates; and
- The consolidation of emerging companies resulting from entrepreneurial initiatives run by the IEFP (ILE's – Local Employment Initiatives and others).

The REDE Programme, whose aim is to only make support services available to its public-consultancy-training, the “bespoke” training of employed individuals, specialist consultancy, etc. – for the solving of their specific problems, and not financial support, began its operations (1997). Initially it handled small businesses based on a single intervention model – in-depth intervention throughout one year – but now has other intervention models available, which are adapted to the different types of situation and needs, aimed at sustainability and consolidation of the entrepreneurial initiatives run by the IEFP and which aim to respond to company's urgent periodic small needs.

The REDE Programme is designed as an innovative mechanism for the support of small businesses and as an alternative to traditional systems, possessing means and intervention instruments that are adapted to the reality of each company (consultancy-training centred on the businessperson and the company, based on a diagnostic assessment of the company's situation, the definition of a strategy, aims to reach and actions to develop in order to attain them, accompanied by the consultant and complemented by specific “bespoke” interventions involving the specialist consultancy and training of employees for the addressing of problems, with entrepreneur meetings, etc.), characterised by an innovative dynamic that is able to stimulate significant levels of access to training and human resources development in these organisations, which are marked by business models and realities that do not allow their insertion into current training support models.

The REDE Programme operates as an “*in situ*” support mechanism for companies, in other words at the companies themselves, through the following Lines of Intervention:

I – REDE Annual (In-depth intervention for Small Businesses in order to strengthen their competitive capacity) Since 1997.

II – REDE Express (Resolution of urgent small problems for Small Businesses) Started in January 2002.

III – REDE Short Term (Support for entrepreneurial initiatives supported by the Incentive Programme for the Supply of Employment – ILE and other companies that have left company groups) Since 1999.

4.2.1.1 - Line I - Annual

Specific Aims

With the implementation of this Line of Intervention it is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the management of small businesses (up to 49 workers) in strengthening their competitive capacity, sustainability, consolidation and growth;
- Provide advice and training services for entrepreneurs / directors and the staff of small businesses;
- Provide training to workers, primarily guided by organisational skills and the solving of concrete problems;
- Promote qualified employment of young graduates; and
- Promote the multiplying effect of using external consultancy training services for small businesses and reinforce the role of Subsidised Management Centres, Business Associations, Local / Regional Development Associations and Other Bodies in the support of their development.

Intervention Model / Organisation and Functioning

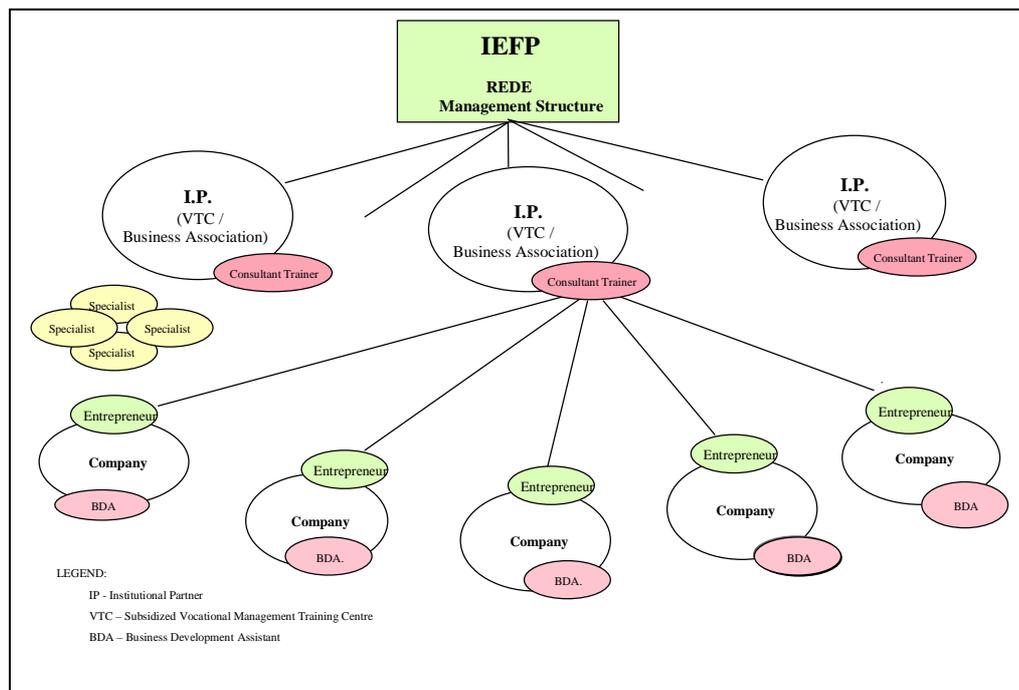
The intervention model presupposes the introduction of innovative features in the relationships to be established with small businesses.

Accordingly, it is important to develop flexible intervention strategies that are adjusted to the reality and the concrete needs of each company. It may be said that the interventions are based on a strong model, but operate in a flexible fashion as they are adapted to the individual needs and characteristics of each company.

In overall terms, an integrated intervention is recommended for small businesses, supported by the Consultant-Trainer services and perhaps by Specialists, based on the following stages/activities:

- Well-founded request by the company to the respective Institutional Partner, to the local Employment Centre or directly to the REDE Management Structure via the Internet;
- Assessment of the company's situation by the Consultant - Trainer and selection of the interventions to be made by the Institutional Partner;
- Strategic diagnosis of the company;
- Action and annual training plan designed to meet the needs identified, including training needs;
- Management Training Cycle for entrepreneurs;
- Operational interventions and training workshops for staff, previously set out;
- Recruitment and integration of a young degree / tertiary level graduate with an academic profile suited to the specific needs of the company, with a view to hiring them;
- Themed Meetings of entrepreneurs and senior staff, structuring in terms of management training;
- Exchange of information and communication through the Small Business Information Support Network (via Internet); and
- Teaching Material adapted to the reality of the Small Business.

Operational Diagram



Duration

A period of one year per company

4.2.1.2 - Line II – REDE Express

Specific Aims

Generalised use of REDE Consultants to meet the following aims:

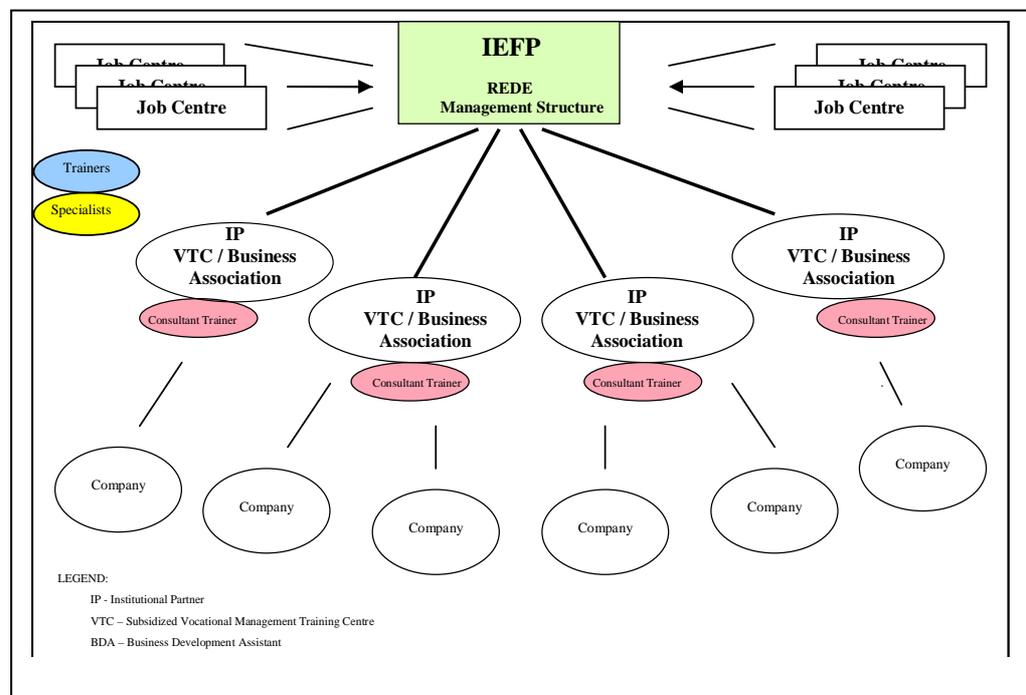
- Provide consultancy and small-scale training services to small businesses, with special emphasis on micro-enterprises, which seek support for the solving of concrete and occasional problems that can be dealt with via a quick and brief response, namely through the individual staff training or small groups of trainees; and
- Promote the multiplying effect of using external consultancy training services for small businesses and reinforce the role of Subsidised Management Centres, Business Associations, Local / Regional Development Associations and Other Bodies in the support of their development.

Intervention Model / Organisation and Functioning

This line of intervention's model assumes the rapid response to concrete problems of staff consultancy and training in micro-enterprises and small businesses, on a small scale, namely when they cannot be fitted into the framework of the current support systems for these types of situations:

- Well-founded request by the company to the respective Institutional Partner, to the local Job Centre or directly to the REDE Management Structure via the Internet;
- Assessment of the situation of the company by the Consultant – Trainer;
- Drafting of a short/summary diagnosis;
- Solution/ intervention proposal to be developed;
- Execution of the intervention with possible recourse to a Specialist; and
- Final Report /Assessment of Results.

Operational Diagram



Duration

One intervention per company per year.

4.2.1.3 - Line III – REDE Short Term

Specific Aims

REDE Short Term aims to consolidate emerging micro-enterprises emerging from employment incentive programmes run by the IEFPP – ILE and other similar - executed through the rendering of consultancy-training services supporting the management of business initiatives that request them.

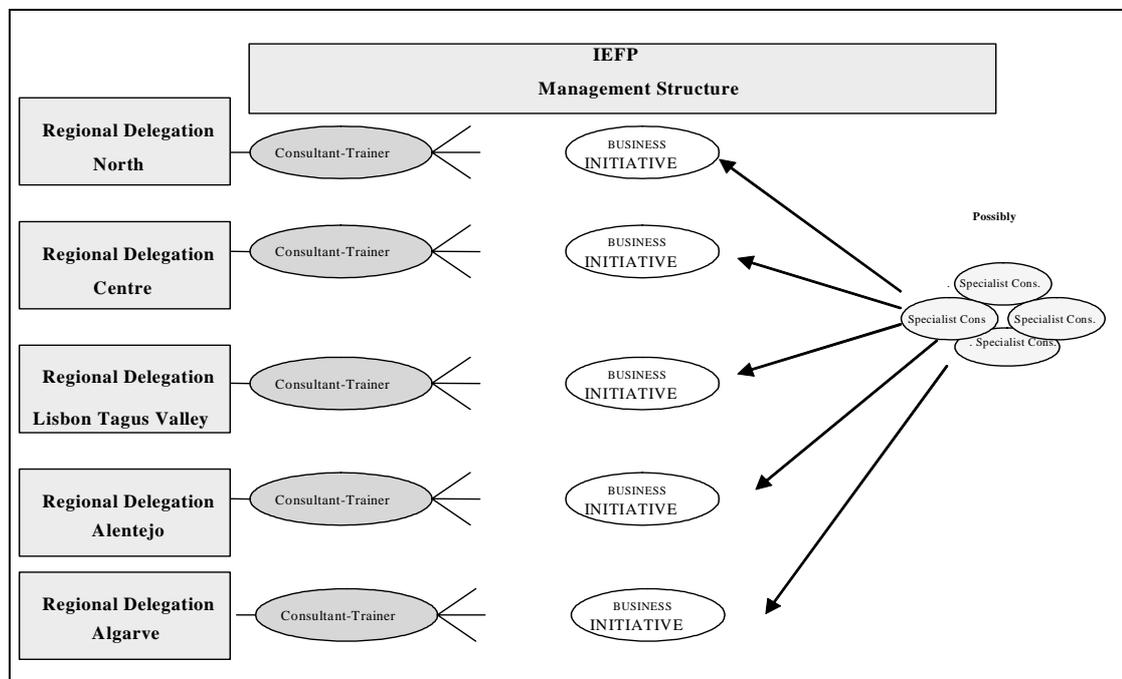
Intervention Model / Organisation and Functioning

REDE, through the intervention of Consultants-Trainers connected to the Regional IEFPP Delegations offers advice/training and support services for the management of micro-enterprises and small businesses created within the scope of employment support programmes.

This Line of Intervention functions in the following way:

- Request for the support of the Consultant-Trainer, by the organiser of the business initiative or at the proposal of the respective Job Centre and with the agreement of the organiser;
- Monthly Plan of the Consultancy-Training visits;
- Record of the business project status;
- Assessment Report of the state of the company with an indication of the measures to be taken;
- Action and Training Plan;
- Consultancy-training support for the introduction of adjustments in the management of the business project;
- Programming of necessary action;
- Operational interventions by Specialists and training workshops;
- Final/Assessment Report on the Support Intervention.

Operational Diagram



Duration

One intervention per business initiative for up to six months, with possibility of follow-up action through other REDE Lines of Intervention.

5- CONCLUSION

In the last 30 years, Portugal has witnessed an extraordinary development in the structure of its population qualification.

Starting at the end of the 60s with an accumulated deficit resulting from decades of poor investment in human resources, the democratisation of education and the reinforcement of the vocational training systems appear as the keynote of public policies in this field.

The great priority to the investment in education and training has been a concern of parliamentary majorities, governments, political cycles and economic situations. This is, certainly, the most outstanding structural change in the public policy towards the democracy that has been restored in the country since the 25th April, 1974.

So, the "picture" of the national qualification system provided by the present document, although being detailed and objectively rigorous, can't translate the strong change that occurred before. This is, even, to a great extent, the expression of a turning point in a long way that has still to be defined.

This "late modernisation" of the education and training systems has allowed the regulation of the schooling requirements of the Portuguese young generations, levelling them with the average standards in force within the European Union. However, this accelerated development of the system has had "side effects". The near future should be seen as an opportunity to make adjustments to the way to be followed and to select the efforts to be made. The challenge that is the participation in a new stage of the European construction would be enough even if no other reasons exist.

The Lisbon Summit, held on 23-24 March 2000, has set the outlines of a great European dream for the present decade: *"to become the most dynamic and competitive economic space of the world, based on knowledge and able to ensure a sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs and a stronger social cohesion"*.

The fulfilment of such ambition means a great demand on people and on their know-how. Therefore, in the light of the challenge that is the Europe of Knowledge and the Lifelong Learning, the responsible entities can't help proposing new issues and re-evaluating the present policies for the qualification of the youth and of the working population.

However, considering the referred in Chapter I, the introduction of reforms and innovations regarding the education and training system, namely in what refers to adults, will be effective only if, simultaneously, other interventions are launched to change the production profile of the national economy towards the modernization of activities and work organization forms that may allow to boost the global productivity and the competitiveness of the national economy.

So, the restructuring of the education and training system, in Portugal, can't be dissociated from a set of other reforms which are directly related to the production system and may contribute to make it more dynamic and modern. The Programme for the Productivity and Economic Growth (PPCE), the amendment to the labour law, the basic law on vocational training and the new arrangement of higher education, are four strategic pieces of the present Government towards the national development. Their results are interdependent and each one needs the contribution of the others to achieve its goals.

The added mobility of the human resources in the framework of an enlarged European space of 25 Member States and the substantial reduction of financial transfers coming from the European structural funds shall also have a great impact on the strategies for the implementation of such reforms.

The development towards high levels of self-sustainability of the national education and training systems is a prime goal, taking into account, however, that the strong changes in economic, financial, technological and employment situations are closely and permanently related to such systems. The

development towards a sustained economic model of innovation, differentiation, intangible assets, openness to the global markets and of high added value of the production chains brings also new demands as to the quality and usefulness of the know-how obtained in formal, non-formal and informal context.

The better use of the added value that results from diversity and from the conviviality with new "imported" qualification - intense flows of contingents of immigrants coming mainly from Central and Eastern Europe - brings also original issues concerned with the intelligent management of the qualification systems and the full use of the human resources supplies.

In this context, the priorities of the public policy in education and training field will be aimed certainly at the quality, at the raising of the know-how competitiveness (according to international measures), at the fight against wastage and ineffectiveness, at the improvement of the organizations' structural capital and at the transition to the knowledge era. The achievement of such priorities that are a great challenge for Portugal's commitment regarding the implementation of a true lifelong learning and the reinforcing of the Educational Society foundations, implies a wide range of policy measures, among which we should point out:

- ❑ Development of a Lifelong Learning plan that may allow the re-qualification of the "stock" of Portuguese working adults in order they may obtain a medium level of certified know-how similar to that of their peers of more advanced European countries;
- ❑ Continuing and reinforcement of the qualitative measures on the school flow, within the scope of formal education, namely in the fields concerned with evaluation, new competences, training for an active citizenship and the general use of new technologies;
- ❑ Strengthening of the qualifying secondary education that includes new competences;
- ❑ Diversification of the higher education institutions, opening them to new publics;
- ❑ Incentive to the professional management of education and training institutions;
- ❑ Setting of clear educational standards for the various cycles of studies and training subsystems which may be the basis for an independent evaluation of educational and vocational institutions towards a regular information flow to the public concerned;
- ❑ Creation of an unified system for the certification of competences with a view to an added mobility of the working population at national and international level;
- ❑ Reinforcement of the use of information and communication technologies as a catalyser of the necessary restructuring of the education/training system – Portugal should be ambitious in the definition of the goals to be established in the framework of the programme *e-Europe*;
- ❑ Incentives to the creation of excellence units/centres.

For this old nation with eight and an half centuries of history, a small territory with poor natural resources, people have always been its strategic value, its main reason for self-assertion among the other nations.

So, the awareness of the history of this country is the key to understand the challenge that is the qualification of the Portuguese population and the upgrading of their know-how

The new cycle of qualification and re-qualification of the Portuguese population is open.

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