

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND
EDUCATION (ALE)**

National report of Portugal

by

**Agência Nacional para a Qualificação
(National Qualifications Agency)**

16 July 2008

I. General Overview

Over the last decades, Portugal has made a significant effort to qualify the general population, and the adults in particular, so as to make up the lag separating us from other developed countries.

However, the current reality is still far from the situation of many European Union and OECD countries as Portugal continues to have low qualification levels generally involving older generations and young people.

In line with the adult education concept adopted by UNESCO and established in the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (CONFINTEA V, 1997), the Agência Nacional de Educação e Formação de Adultos (National Agency for Adult Education and Training) was created in 1999 as a public institute under the joint superintendence of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity¹.

Aiming at ensuring all adults 9 years of schooling and level II vocational qualification as a passport to lifelong learning, the National Agency for Adult Education and Training developed and implemented an innovative adult education and training provision involving social partners, namely the national System for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences non-formal and informally acquired in various contexts throughout one's life and work experience, as well as Adult Education and Training Courses conferring double qualification (academic and professional).

In 2002, a structural governmental reform substituted the National Agency for Adult Education and Training for the Direção-Geral de Formação Vocacional (Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training) as a central department of the Ministry of Education to carry out integrated policies and systems addressed to both adults and young people².

Within the perspective of lifelong learning, the Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training pursued the development of adult education and training provision mentioned above, as well as promoted the increase of initial vocational education and training paths to qualify young people before entering the labour market.

Being insufficient and slow the recovery, the actual Government decided to do more, better and deeper to overcome the low levels of education and qualification of the Portuguese population and stated in 2005 the New Opportunities Initiative as a national strategy within the scope of the National Employment Plan and the Technological Plan³.

¹ Decree Law No. 387/99, dated 28 September.

² Decree Law No. 208/2002, dated 17 October.

³ *New Opportunities. It pays to learn*, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education, December 2005.

<http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt>

The strategy of the New Opportunities Initiative builds on two central pillars:

- The first one is to make upper secondary level vocational paths an effective option, providing **young people** with diversified opportunities to complete this educational level. While the Initiative remains in force, more than 650 thousand young people will be involved in technical and vocational courses. These courses provide both scholar and professional qualification. The objective defined in the Government Programme, and which the Initiative restates, is to have half of the upper secondary students enrolled in professional or technological education by 2010.
- The second pillar is to raise the basic educational level of the labour force. To provide all **adults who entered active life** with low levels of education with a new opportunity, enabling them to recover, complete and progress in their studies. The New Opportunities Initiative takes on a new strategy – to give priority to the basic education and training of active workers – and defines challenging objectives: to qualify 1,000,000 active workers by 2010, through the national System for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences, as well as through the Adult Education and Training Courses, and the new possibility through Modular Certified Training.

Achieving these objectives implies: *(i)* the profound and consistent development of the System for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences; *(ii)* the availability of suitable complementary adult education and training provision; and *(iii)* the implementation of a system of quality certification for the training entities that will ensure the highest standards of exigency and, most importantly, the strong commitment and involvement of both workers and companies.

To coordinate the accomplishment of the education and vocational training policies addressed to Portuguese young people and adults, as well as to ensure the development and management of the System for recognising, validating and certifying competences, the Agência Nacional para a Qualificação (National Qualifications Agency) was created in 2006 as a public institute under the joint superintendence of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity resulting from the restructuring of the Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training⁴ and the extinction of the Instituto para a Qualidade na Formação (Institute for Quality in Training).

Available statistical data are presented as follows⁵.

⁴ Decree Law No. 213/2006, dated 27 October.

⁵ Source: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (Statistics Portugal)
<http://www.ine.pt>

Population resident in Portugal (No.) by Sex and Age group (by life cycles) Data reference period 2006		
Sex	Age group (by life cycles)	No.
MF	Total	10 599 095
	0 to 14 years	1 637 637
	15 to 24 years	1 265 531
	25 to 64 years	5 867 310
	65 and over years	1 828 617
M	Total	5 129 937
	0 to 14 years	839 999
	15 to 24 years	645 506
	25 to 64 years	2 880 680
	65 and over years	763 752
F	Total	5 469 158
	0 to 14 years	797 638
	15 to 24 years	620 025
	25 to 64 years	2 986 630
	65 and over years	1 064 865
Statistics Portugal, Annual estimates of resident population <i>This data last updated: August 03, 2007</i>		

Active population resident in Portugal (No.) by Sex, Age group and Highest completed level of education
Data reference period – 4th Quarter 2007

Sex	Age group	Total	No level of education	Basic education (4 years of schooling)	Basic education (6 years of schooling)	Basic education (9 years of schooling)	Secondary and post-secondary education	Higher education
		No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)
MF	Total	5 627,7	285,3	1 519,3	1 109,3	1 067,5	835,4	810,9
	15-24 years	515,5	1,2 §	14,2	106,6	207,8	142,6	43,2
	25-34 years	1 472,1	13,4	101,6	341,0	345,4	324,1	346,6
	35-44 years	1 420,4	31,0	324,5	407,1	250,9	194,9	212,0
	45-64 years	1 890,4	108,8	910,5	247,4	256,8	168,1	198,8
	65 and more years	329,2	130,9	168,5	7,1 §	6,6 §	5,8 §	10,2
M	Total	2 986,3	123,1	860,2	656,6	599,2	420,0	327,3
	15-24 years	281,0	0,9 §	8,9	67,0	121,4	71,3	11,5
	25-34 years	759,6	8,0	57,2	204,4	206,6	157,5	125,8
	35-44 years	745,3	21,9	175,4	235,1	128,3	98,9	85,7
	45-64 years	1 018,7	41,0	512,3	144,2	137,5	87,9	95,9
	65 and more years	181,7	51,3	106,2	5,9 §	5,4 §	4,4 §	8,6
F	Total	2 641,3	162,3	659,2	452,7	468,3	415,4	483,5
	15-24 years	234,5	○	5,3 §	39,6	86,4	71,3	31,7
	25-34 years	712,5	5,4 §	44,4	136,5	138,8	166,6	220,9
	35-44 years	675,1	9,1	149,1	172,0	122,6	96,0	126,4
	45-64 years	871,6	67,8	398,2	103,3	119,3	80,2	103,0
	65 and more years	147,5	79,6	62,3	1,3 §	1,3 §	1,4 §	1,7 §

Statistics Portugal, Labour force survey
This data last updated: February 15, 2008

Conventional signs:

§ Standard deviation of quality / high coefficient of variation

○ Less data than half of the used unit module

Activity rate of population resident in Portugal (%) by Sex, Age group and Highest completed level of education
 Data reference period – 4th Quarter 2007

Sex	Age group	Total %	No level of education %	Basic education (4 years of schooling) %	Basic education (6 years of schooling) %	Basic education (9 years of schooling) %	Secondary and post- secondary education %	Higher education %
MF	Total	62,7	26,1	56,9	76,6	67,6	67,3	85,6
	15-24 years	42,1	16,4 §	54,3	45,1	40,5	37,2	75,4
	25-34 years	89,5	40,0	83,0	90,9	93,1	85,7	95,0
	35-44 years	90,0	63,2	86,5	89,3	91,1	94,4	97,6
	45-64 years	70,2	53,0	66,3	76,9	77,5	76,6	82,0
	65 and more years	17,9	16,4	21,8	12,0 §	7,6 §	10,5 §	15,6
M	Total	69,5	35,4	64,8	81,4	71,9	69,5	85,9
	15-24 years	45,0	19,2 §	58,2	47,9	45,4	39,8	65,2
	25-34 years	91,7	42,5	91,2	94,8	96,7	85,6	94,4
	35-44 years	95,2	68,7	95,0	94,9	97,2	98,3	99,4
	45-64 years	78,6	63,0	76,3	84,0	80,7	81,0	88,9
	65 and more years	23,6	22,6	27,1	18,7 §	10,7 §	13,6 §	23,9
F	Total	56,4	21,8	49,0	70,4	62,8	65,2	85,3
	15-24 years	39,1	○	48,8 §	41,0	35,1	35,0	79,9
	25-34 years	87,2	36,8 §	74,3	85,7	88,0	85,7	95,3
	35-44 years	84,8	53,1	78,3	82,6	85,6	90,8	96,5
	45-64 years	62,4	48,4	56,8	68,7	74,0	72,4	76,5
	65 and more years	13,8	14,0	16,3	4,5 §	3,4 §	6,1 §	5,6 §

Statistics Portugal, Labour force survey

This data last updated: February 15, 2008

Conventional signs:

§ Standard deviation of quality / high coefficient of variation

○ Less data than half of the used unit module

Employed population resident in Portugal (No.) by Sex, Age group and Highest completed level of education
 Data reference period – 4th Quarter 2007

Sex	Age group	Total	No level of education	Basic education (4 years of schooling)	Basic education (6 years of schooling)	Basic education (9 years of schooling)	Secondary and post-secondary education	Higher education
		No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)	No. (thousands)
MF	Total	5 188,2	269,2	1 417,1	1 019,0	969,4	768,3	745,3
	15-24 years	428,8	1,0 §	10,3	86,2	176,9	123,0	31,4
	25-34 years	1 335,0	11,9	89,1	309,7	319,8	298,8	305,8
	35-44 years	1 327,0	26,9	303,7	383,7	226,3	183,7	202,7
	45-64 years	1 769,1	98,9	845,8	232,5	239,8	157,0	195,2
	65 and more years	328,3	130,5	168,3	6,9 §	6,6 §	5,8 §	10,2
M	Total	2 800,9	116,1	810,6	614,2	556,6	392,5	310,9
	15-24 years	244,4	0,7 §	7,1 §	57,4	107,3	63,5	8,4
	25-34 years	711,1	7,2 §	51,9	190,8	195,5	148,8	116,9
	35-44 years	705,6	19,5	166,3	222,9	118,6	94,4	83,7
	45-64 years	958,9	37,7	479,2	137,4	129,9	81,4	93,3
	65 and more years	180,9	51,0	106,0	5,6 §	5,3 §	4,4 §	8,6
F	Total	2 387,3	153,1	606,5	404,8	412,7	375,8	434,3
	15-24 years	184,4	○	3,1 §	28,8	69,7	59,6	22,9
	25-34 years	623,9	4,6 §	37,2	118,9	124,3	150,0	188,9
	35-44 years	621,4	7,4 §	137,4	160,8	107,6	89,3	119,0
	45-64 years	810,2	61,2	366,5	95,1	109,9	75,6	101,8
	65 and more years	147,4	79,5	62,3	1,3 §	1,3 §	1,4 §	1,7 §

Statistics Portugal, Labour force survey
 This data last updated: February 15, 2008

Conventional signs:

§ Standard deviation of quality / high coefficient of variation

○ Less data than half of the used unit module

Unemployed population resident in Portugal (No.) and rate (%) by Sex Data reference period – 4 th Quarter 2007		
Sex	No. (thousands)	Rate (%)
MF	439,5	7,8
M	185,4	6,2
F	254,1	9,6
Statistics Portugal, Labour force survey <i>This data last updated: February 15, 2008</i>		

Foreign population with legal status of residence in Portugal (No.) by Nationality Data reference period – 2006	
Nationality	No.
Total	332 137 &
Europe	124 901 &
Africa	129 806 &
America	58 708 &
Asia	17 870 &
Oceania	563 &
African countries of official Portuguese language	121 423 &
Brazil	42 319 &
Cape Verde	57 369 &
Ukraine	22 846 &
Statistics Portugal, Foreigners and Boundaries Department <i>This data last updated: March 31, 2008</i>	

Conventional sign:
& Provisional data

II. Adult learning and education (ALE)

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1 Legislative and policy frameworks of ALE

Investing in the qualification of Portuguese population has been a common bet to the various public policy cycles, namely since Portugal began to benefit from structural funds aimed at supporting the adjustment path to the development average standards in the European Union. The data presented up make clear the relevance of the New Opportunities Initiative in progress as a national policy valuing lifelong and lifewide learning based on a strategy addressed to those over 18 with low education and professional levels⁶.

The creation of a system to effectively recover the qualification levels of the adult population requires the mobilization, adaptation and reinforcement of the various instruments available. Of particular importance is the recognition, validation and certification of competences lifelong and lifewide acquired (which should be the starting point for adult training) and an occupational training offer addressed to adults with low schooling levels.

The recognition of competences lifelong and lifewide acquired is not only an important mechanism to reinforce individual self-esteem and social justice, but also a vital resource to promote adults' integration in new processes of formal learning. The recognition of competences makes it possible, at a collective level, to structure complementary training paths adjusted on a case-by-case basis. However, even more important is the fact that it induces the individual recognition of the ability to learn, which is the main motto for the adoption of a proactive attitude in view of new qualifications demand. The consolidation and expansion of instruments for the recognition and validation of competences is therefore a vital resource for the country development.

Since 2000, Portugal has developed the National System for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences (RVCC) carried out in the National Network of Centres for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences (now named New Opportunities Centres) hosted in public or private local bodies strongly established in their own community⁷. Having started with 6 Centres in December 2000, the Network has been progressively launched – 269 New Opportunities Centres at the beginning of 2007 and in 2008 we have 457 centres functioning.

With regard to the vocational education and training supply addressed to adults poorly qualified, the emphasis is placed not only on its rapid expansion and dissemination but also on the creation of conditions enabling its attendance by adults who are working. Without ignoring the importance

⁶ *New Opportunities. It pays to learn*, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education, December 2005.

<http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt>

⁷ Regulation No. 1082-A/2001, dated 5 September.

of continuing to give priority to those who are in an underprivileged situation in the labour market, enabling them to acquire competences that will promote their employability, it is increasingly important to pay attention to those who, although they are working, are in a precarious situation due to their low qualifications level. Therefore, the priorities of this action line are the importance of developing the ability to construct individual learning paths recognising the value of each person achievements, of promoting flexible models for organising the training and of intensifying training in a work context.

Since 2000, Portugal has implemented Adult Education and Training (AET) Courses provided by public or private local bodies strongly established in their own community⁸. These courses functions as complementary training options for the RVCC process, as well as specific offers adjusted to the different profiles of the adults.

The RVCC process and the AET courses are grounded on the Key Competences Frame of Reference for AET to obtain a formal certificate of 4, 6 and 9 years of schooling and on the specific Occupational Standards to get a level I and II of professional qualification⁹.

In 2006, a new Key Competences Frame of Reference for AET enlarged to 12 years of schooling the possibility of formal certification through the RVCC process and the AET courses, as well as a level III professional qualification according to specific Occupational Standards¹⁰.

In 2007, disabled people gained access to all adult education and training supplies grounded on both Key Competences Frames of Reference for AET in order to obtain an academic certification¹¹.

Lately, to improve attractiveness, flexibility and tailor-made paths, as well as to supply adults' qualification needs, particularly those employed, the AET courses are adjusted and short term modular training are ruled within the **National Qualifications Catalogue**¹².

The priority goals for ALE in Portugal up to 2010¹³ are:

- To reinforce the offer of occupational courses for adults – at the level of 9 and 12 years of schooling – so as to involve 350,000 adults in these training paths. This target will imply widening the offer of AET courses to secondary schools and to the headquarters of groups of schools, with strong emphasis being placed on the offer of courses on an after-hours regime. The underlying objective is to attract to these training paths individuals who traditionally seek recurrent education (since this type of training makes it possible to provide a response that is more tailored to the needs of such public).
- To reorganize the current model of recurrent education, with the training response being based on the AET courses format, since the latter make it possible to construct more flexible training

⁸ Joint Ministerial Order No. 1083/2000, dated 20 November.

⁹ Regulation No. 1082-A/2001, dated 5 September.

¹⁰ Regulation No. 86/2007, dated 12 January.

¹¹ Ministerial Order No. 29176/2007, dated 21 December.

¹² Regulation No. 230/2008, dated 7 March.

<http://www.catalogo.anq.gov.pt>

¹³ *New Opportunities. It pays to learn*, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education, December 2005.

<http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt>

paths. However, the traditional training courses that are more adjusted to the furthering of studies will be maintained.

- To widen the National Network of New Opportunities Centres involving several institutions, namely secondary schools or headquarters of groups of schools, training centres, companies, ministerial structures, etc..
- To guarantee that more than 650,000 people obtain a competences certification. The target is to issue approximately 75,000 certificates of 9 years of schooling and 125,000 certificates of 12 years of schooling.

Some tools are in place to implement the New Opportunities Initiative.

The SIGO – Sistema Integrado de Informação e Gestão das Ofertas formativas de dupla certificação (Integrated System for Management of the double certification training supplies) aims to accomplish three main objectives:

- to support the decision making on the training supply structure in order to prevent malfunctions at national territory and target public level and to optimize financial resources assignment;
- to strengthen the training supply legibility providing an informative, integrated and exhaustive tool for all stakeholders;
- to be a monitoring device of the New Opportunities Centres activities.

A wide information and awareness-raising Campaign was carried out via media in 2007 and also in 2008 with the objective of promoting the social valuing of the investment in adult education and training, from a lifelong perspective, and particularly of the recognition and validation device as an opportunity to formally certify learning outcomes non-formal and informally acquired and to stimulate the vocational education and training demand. Resulting from this campaign and directly linked with its objectives, a Call Centre remains in action.

A specialized Training Programme addressed to the pedagogical teams of the New Opportunities Centres and the AET courses is annually developed at national and regional level. Within each programme, the professionals involved (coordinators, personal counsellors, trainers, tutors, external evaluators) should reinforce their competences to deal with their own functions in these specific offers, initially before beginning to work and continuously reflecting on and sharing good practices. In 2008, a set of public universities with advanced knowledge in the field of ALE is developing the training for the New Opportunities Centres' teams, under the scope of a cooperation agreement with the National Qualifications Agency.

Together with this training programme, a model of monitoring the New Opportunities Centres Network and working with their pedagogical teams remains into practice to contribute to the RVCC system efficacy, efficiency and quality assurance. The same must be said related with the

AET courses. These activities are developed in a close cooperation with the regional structures of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity¹⁴.

The policy decision making on ALE in Portugal is supported on the dialogue with stakeholders and social partners, particularly employers and employees' organizations.

Other ministries are also involved in the scope of their specific areas, such as the Ministry of Economy and Innovation concerning touristic activities or the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Administration concerning the training of their own effectives.

Between October 2004 and September 2007, Portugal (coordination), France, Denmark, Italy and Switzerland (as silent partner) developed the MAPA – Motivating Adults towards Learning, a Socrates-Grundtvig Project¹⁵.

The MAPA project aimed to propose measures to encourage poorly qualified adults to become motivated towards learning through non-formal education activities, prior to or alongside formal training structures. In accordance with the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, it aimed to improve and reinforce the links between non-formal education pathways and formal education structures for this particular target group.

Throughout the project period, the field working and the local and transnational meetings led to share experiences and practices and to print two documents, being one a synthesis¹⁴ and containing the other detailed discussion and presentation (*MAPA: the project pathways*), both mainly addressed to the professionals carrying out non-formal education activities involving the referred target group.

1.2 Financing of ALE

Up to 2007, the National Network of New Opportunities Centres and the AET Courses was financed by the Portuguese State and the European Commission at a rate of 100%, being 75% of the funding covered by the European Social Fund and the remaining 25% covered by the national public contribution.

Within the III Community Support Framework, the application of the European Social Fund was negotiated under:

¹⁴ In Portugal, the ALE is centralized under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, coordinated by central departments or public institutes at national level and locally accompanied by regional departments.

¹⁵ MAPA – Motivating Adults towards Learning. Project Socrates-Grundtvig (2007). *Intersecting views of non-formal education: an examination of practices and recommendations*.
<http://www.anq.gov.pt>

- ❖ Measure 4, Action 4.1 – Recognising and validating knowledge and competences acquired throughout life, of the Programme for the Development of Education in Portugal (PRODEP III), concerning the New Opportunities Centres regulated by the Ministry of Education.
- ❖ Measure 4.2, Project 4.2.5 – Recognising, validating and certifying competences, of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Social Development (POEFDS), concerning the New Opportunities Centres regulated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.
- ❖ Measures 1.1 – Initial training with occupational and school certification, 2.1 – On-going vocational training, 3.2 – Lifelong training and adaptability, 3.3 – Qualification and occupational insertion of the unemployed, and 5.3 – Promotion of the social and occupational insertion of disadvantage groups, of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Social Development (POEFDS), concerning the AET Courses.

Pursuing the bet on strengthening vocational education and training for young people and adults, the New Opportunities Initiative is being funded by the National Strategic Reference Framework (QREN) 2007-2013 through the Thematic Operational Programme for Human Potential (POPH)¹⁶.

Available data are presented as follows¹⁷.

¹⁶ Ministers Council Resolution No. 25/2006, dated 16 February.

¹⁷ Source: Ministry of Education, Financial Management Office
<http://www.gef.min-edu.pt>

State budget allocated to education functioning (Euro and rate) by Actions and Year

Actions	2001		2002		2003		2004	
	€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%
Teaching (young people formal education)	5.632.974.936	97,1	5.882.699.565	96,9	5.093.341.072	96,5	4.873.889.285	95,5
Special education (disadvantage young people)	136.063.223	2,3	148.911.490	2,5	157.244.438	3,0	206.926.779	4,1
Adult education	34.250.088	0,6	34.544.152	0,6	27.892.305	0,5	20.627.679	0,4

State budget allocated to education functioning (Euro and rate) by Actions and Year

Actions	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	€	%	€	%	€	%	€	%
Teaching (young people formal education)	5.033.839.642	95,1	5.429.278.215	95,3	5.167.217.552	96,1	4.956.203.864	90,3
Special education (disadvantage young people)	236.943.867	4,5	249.360.705	4,4	190.545.550	3,5	187.231.000	3,4
Adult education	20.669.492	0,4	19.681.012	0,3	20.280.000	0,4		
New Opportunities Initiative:							345.098.451	6,3
▪ Young people education and training							317.970.800	5,8
▪ Adult education and training							27.127.651	0,5

2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1 Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

As a public institute under the double superintendence of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the Agência Nacional para a Qualificação (National Qualifications Agency) is responsible for managing and coordinating non higher ALE at national level since 2006¹⁸.

A similar solution was adopted between 1999¹⁹ and 2002.

Between 2002²⁰ and 2006, the Direção-Geral de Formação Vocacional (Directorate General for Vocational Education and Training), a central department of the Ministry of Education, was responsible for managing and coordinating non higher ALE at national level, which was shared with the Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training), a public institute of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.

The National Qualifications Agency is assigned to perform the following main attributions²¹:

- To coordinate, promote and manage the provision of the dual certification vocational education and training.
- To define the guidelines for funding models and for allocating resources required to provide qualifications.
- To develop and manage the system for recognising, validating and certifying competences, both academic and professional, ensuring the New Opportunities Centres Network coordination and the system monitoring and assessment.
- To design and bring up to date the National Qualifications Catalogue, with the support of the Sector Councils for Qualification, ensuring flexible, modular and capitalizing education and training approaches.
- To define mechanisms for integrated assessment and quality assurance of the vocational education and training provision.

The dialogue and negotiation with stakeholders and social partners on training organization and its costs sharing make feasible the access to and participation of active employed individuals and take into account the main role of lifelong learning to support competitiveness and employment.

Within the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training) continues to be the major public vocational training promoter and the Direção-Geral do Emprego e das Relações de Trabalho (Directorate General for Employment and Industrial Relations) is responsible for the accreditation and audit of the private vocational education and training providers.

¹⁸ Decree Law No. 213/2006, dated 27 October.

¹⁹ Decree Law No. 387/99, dated 28 September.

²⁰ Decree Law No. 208/2002, dated 17 October.

²¹ Decree Law No. 276-C/2007, dated 31 July

As requested, the table 1 below list and describe briefly the ALE programmes in Portugal.



Table 1 – ALE programmes in Portugal

Programme (name and brief description *)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below)			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one from below)			c) Target group/s	d) Progra mme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/State	CSO/NGO	Private	General competences	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			
National System for Recognising, Validating and Certifying Competences carried out by the New Opportunities Centres Network	Secondary Schools Training Centres Municipalities	Regional and Local Development Associations NGOs	Employers Associations Employees Associations Professional Schools Enterprises	Language and Communication, Mathematics for Life, ICT, Citizenship and Employability ¹ Culture, Language and Communication, Society, Technology and Science, Citizenship and Professionality ²	Specific qualification standard for each occupational profile ³	ICT Learning Reflexive Portfolio	Adults over 18 with low levels of vocational education and training, employed, unemployed or looking for a job	National Public Contribution and European Social Fund Private (case of the biggest enterprises)	

* This system consists of the recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences non-formal and informally acquired based on the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – basic education»¹ in order to obtain a school certification (4, 6 or 9 years of schooling) or to attend a training pathway.

Since the beginning of 2007, the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – upper secondary education»² has been established, enlarging the process for recognising, validating and certifying competences to 12 years of schooling.

Since the end of 2005, the system offers also every citizen an opportunity for the recognition and validation of previous professional experience based on «Vocational Training Frameworks»³ in order to obtain a professional certification (level I, II or III professional qualification) or to attend a training pathway.

Programme (name and brief description *)	b) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below)			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one from below)			c) Target group/s	d) Progra mme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/State	CSO/NGO	Private	General competences	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			
Adult Education and Training Courses	Secondary Schools Training Centres Municipalities	Regional and Local Development Associations NGOs	Employers Associations Employees Associations Professional Schools Enterprises	Language and Communication, Mathematics for Life, ICT, Citizenship and Employability ¹ Culture, Language and Communication, Society, Technology and Science, Citizenship and Professionality ²	Specific qualification standard for each occupational profile ³	ICT Learning Reflexive Portfolio	Adults over 18 with low levels of vocational education and training, employed, unemployed or looking for a job	National Public Contribution and European Social Fund Private (case of the biggest enterprises)	

* Preceded by a process of recognition and validation of competences non-formal and informally acquired, the Adult Education and Training Courses are flexible, modular and tailor-made pathways to obtain dual certification (school and professional) or only school one. They are based on the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – basic education»¹ in order to obtain a school certification (4, 6 or 9 years of schooling) and, since the beginning of 2007, on the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – upper secondary education»² to obtain a 12 years of schooling certificate. They are also based on «Vocational Training Frameworks»³ in order to obtain a professional certification (level I, II or III professional qualification).

Programme (name and brief description *)	c) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below)			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one from below)			c) Target group/s	d) Progra mme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/State	CSO/NGO	Private	General competences	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			
Modular Certified Training	Secondary Schools Training Centres Municipalities	Regional and Local Development Associations NGOs	Employers Associations Employees Associations Professional Schools Enterprises	Language and Communication, Mathematics for Life, ICT, Citizenship and Employability ¹ Culture, Language and Communication, Society, Technology and Science, Citizenship and Professionality ²	Specific qualification standard for each occupational profile ³	ICT	Adults over 18 with low levels of vocational education and training, employed as target group	National Public Contribution and European Social Fund Private (case of the biggest enterprises)	

* Particularly addressed to employed adults as continuing training or to conclude a qualification path from a recognition, validation and certification process, the Modular Certified Training are organised into training modules of short duration (25 and 50 hours) and based on the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – basic education»¹, on the «Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training – upper secondary education»² and on «Vocational Training Frameworks»³. The training modules are certified autonomously and capitalised throughout a qualification / dual certification.

Aiming at to integrate all qualification systems and sectors, as well as to improve qualifications access, progression and quality to the labour market and the civil society, the **National Qualifications System**²² adopted the European Qualifications Framework principles concerning to describe the national qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and to follow the descriptors connected to each qualification level.

At non higher education level, the strategy going on in Portugal is to revise the national qualification systems and sectors in order to integrate all in the National Qualifications Catalogue, as a device to qualifications management for both enterprises competitiveness and updating personal and social development. At the moment, this Catalogue includes about 240 non higher education level qualifications, covering 41 education and vocational training areas and defining for each one of them the occupational profile and the modular training and validation standards.

2.2 Participation in ALE

Widening and strengthening the New Opportunities Centres Network and the Adult Education and Training Courses have contributed to improve the response ability of the education and training system structures.

In 2006 and 2007, the *New Opportunities* Initiative has included 352 563 adults, 150 542 of whom demanding an upper secondary level qualification.

Adults included in the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (No.) by Supply – 2006 and 2007		
	Up to lower secondary level	Upper secondary level
New Opportunities Centres	174 759	148 708
Enrolled	42 518	80 331
In diagnosis	19 014	47 721
Guided to training options	3 359	2 710
In recognition and validation process	59 068	17 778
Certified	50 800	168
Adult Education and Training Courses	27 262	1 834
Total	202 021	150 542

352 563

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

²² Decree Law No. 396/2007, dated 31 December.

Adults enrolled in the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (No.) by Supply – 2007		
	Up to lower secondary level	Upper secondary level
New Opportunities Centres	130 578	143 032
Adult Education and Training Courses	13 718	1 834
Total	144 296	144 866

289 162

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

Adults enrolled in the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (%) by Gender – 2007		
	Up to lower secondary level	Upper secondary level
Female	55 %	53 %
Male	45 %	47 %
Total	100 %	100 %

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

Adults enrolled in the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (%) by Employment situation – 2007		
	Up to lower secondary level	Upper secondary level
Employed	64 %	79 %
Unemployed	31 %	18 %
Other	5 %	3 %
Total	100 %	100 %

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

Adults enrolled in the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (%) by Age group – 2007		
	Up to lower secondary level	Upper secondary level
18 – 24 years	10 %	15 %
25 – 34 years	25 %	36 %
35 – 44 years	36 %	29 %
45 – 54 years	22 %	17 %
55 – 64 years	6 %	3 %
65 and more years	1 %	-----
Total	100 %	100 %

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

Adults certified within the <i>New Opportunities</i> Initiative (No.) by Date and Supply	
2001 – 2005	59 040
New Opportunities Centres	44 253
Adult Education and Training Courses	14 787
2006 and 2007	83 970
New Opportunities Centres	76 922
Adult Education and Training Courses	7 048
TOTAL	143 010

Source: SIGO, December 2007.

To mobilize learners, a wide information Campaign was carried out via media in 2007 and also in 2008 with the objective of promoting the social valuing of the investment in lifelong learning. As a result of this campaign, a Call Centre remains in action being operated by the National Qualifications Agency.

2.3 Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes

The quality of ALE programmes and learning outcomes has been assured using two different methodologies and tools:

- monitoring regularly providers through a working together methodology, such as professionals initial and continuous training, monitoring activities and peer learning activities;
- assessing programmes and learning outcomes through an evaluation methodology, combining providers self-evaluation, regulator bodies evaluation and external evaluation.

An external evaluation on the impact of the recognition, validation and certification process on certified adults up to 2003²³, made by a private specialized entity selected through a public contest, underlined the following outputs of the certification effects:

Personal dimensions	Very important contribution	Important contribution
Reinforcing self-esteem and self-improvement	52.3 %	44.3 %
Developing self-knowledge	42.8 %	52.1 %
Definition/construction of professional project of life	36.2 %	45.7 %
Definition/construction of personal project of life	36.1 %	55.1 %
Greater personal assets	42.9 %	50.6 %
Better ability to adapt to change	28.6 %	54.2 %
Increased employability	28.2 %	38.1 %
Occupational insertion or progression	31.7 %	40.5 %
Insertion into society	24.2 %	45.8 %

Expectations in terms of career progression				
Employees	At time of enrolment		In November-December 2004	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Private sector	48.0 %	52.0 %	55.2 %	44.8 %
Public sector	69.5 %	30.5 %	62.4 %	37.6 %

²³ CIDECE – Interdisciplinary Centre for Economic Studies, *The impact of the Recognition and Certification of Lifelong Learning: updating and improvement*. Lisboa, National Qualifications Agency, March 2007.
www.anq.gov.pt

Expectations in terms of lifelong learning			
Gender	Continuing education and training		
	Done	Maybe	No
Female	10.0 %	68.6 %	21.4 %
Male	10.3 %	71.3 %	18.4 %

Created, presented and published in October 2007, the *Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres*²⁴, aims to improve and promote quality assurance in the validation of non-formal and informal learning process and the activities performance carried out by the network.

Having the monitoring activities during the last years as background, this charter was conceived as a tool to set the quality standard and clarify action strategies and service levels, as well as to contribute to the working procedures valuation, to the working teams mobilization and to the funding efficiency.

In 2007 and 2008, the technical teams of the National Qualifications Agency, jointly with the regional departments of the Ministry of Education and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, held meetings at the New Opportunities Centres, at least one per year, to monitoring: (i) the centres organization and management; and (ii) the development of the processes for recognising, validating and certifying competences.

In the beginning of 2008, the National Qualifications Agency signed a protocol with the Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Portuguese Catholic University) in order to make the external evaluation of the *New Opportunities Initiative*.

The aims of the evaluation study are to assess the political measure, its intervention structure and the procedures implemented, as well as the quality of the outputs and the satisfaction level of the adults involved. These studies aim also to produce or improve monitoring tolls to assess permanently the system procedures and outputs.

The main issues will be analyzed according two different and complementary axes:

- I. A *systemic evaluation* axe guided to the production, deal and analysis of functioning indicators of the New Opportunities Centres within the policies and objectives of the Initiative, as well as in terms of the concrete and potential demand and its impact in the social and professional life of the active population involved.
- II. A *monitoring and self-evaluation* axe of all implementation network of the Initiative, able to provide detailed information about the performance level of the New Opportunities Centres and the whole system.

²⁴ GOMES, Maria do Carmo; SIMÕES, Francisca – *Carta de Qualidade dos Centros Novas Oportunidades*. Lisboa, Agência Nacional para a Qualificação, I.P., 2007.

It should also be mentioned the participation of Portugal in the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

PIAAC will assess the level and distribution of adult competences in a coherent and consistent way across countries. It will focus on the key cognitive and workplace competences that are required for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century. It will be administered for the first time in 2011.

PIAAC will also gather a range of other information including the antecedents and outcomes of competences, as well as information on usage of information technology and literacy and numeracy practices generally.

The administration of the survey will occur in 2011, with results being released in early 2013. Working back from 2011, a field trial will need to be held in 2010 with development work occurring over the period 2008-2009.

2.4 Adult educators/facilitators' status and training

The New Opportunities Centres activities integrate three dimensions to carry out the strategy for qualifying the Portuguese adult population:

- the adults enrolment phase;
- the phase of diagnosis, establishment of personal path and guidance to a supply, through negotiation with the adult and his/her approval;
- the phase of making concrete the guidance agreed upon, e.g. the development of the recognising, validating and certifying competences (RVCC) process or the enrolment in adequate education and training pathway.

To accomplish the function referred, each centre has a technical-pedagogical team knowing the RVCC process methodologies and having experience in the field of adult education and training.

This team integrates:

- The **Director**, who
 - represents the centre and ratifies the validation jury decisions;
 - can also be the pedagogical coordinator.
- The **pedagogical Coordinator**, who
 - assures the Centre pedagogical and organic management;
 - is responsible of the Intervention Strategic Plan of the centre and the activities report, both with the contributions of the other technical-pedagogical team members;
 - increases and coordinates the centre activity in order to serve the local community;
 - promotes the continuous training of the technical-pedagogical team members;
 - guarantees the centre permanent self-evaluation;
 - makes available the information needed to centre monitoring and external evaluation;
 - has a higher education degree obligatorily.
- The **recognising and validating competences Counsellors**, who
 - inform, counsel and guide the adult defining his/her personal pathway, being a RVCC process or an education and training course;

- coach the RVCC process interpreting and facing the appropriate Key Competences Frame of Reference, closely linked with the trainers;
 - support and go along with the adult building his/her own reflexive learning portfolio;
 - identify complementary training needs during the RVCC process, guide the adult for residual training or other training actions adjusted to the his/her own profile and expectations;
 - must have a higher education degree, being main conditions the knowledge of competences balance and life stories methodologies, the occupational experience working with adults and the concrete connexion with the local reality where the centre operates.
- The **Trainers** of the different Key Competences Areas of the Key Competences Frames of Reference for Adult Education and Training (basic and upper secondary levels), who
 - support the recognition process and validate the candidate competences interpreting and facing the appropriate Key Competences Frame of Reference, closely linked with the RVC counsellor and the other trainers;
 - assure the residual complementary training adult need to comply with a certification;
 - must have, in general and according to the laws in force, (i) qualification as a teacher in the specific Key Competences Area of each Frame of Reference and (ii) certification as a qualified trainer.

In 2007, the National Qualifications Agency provided the following training actions:

1. Implementation of the Key Competences Frame of Reference for Adult Education and Training (upper secondary level), involving about 2 225 trainees.
2. Deepening knowledge and sharing practices on RVCC process at basic level, involving about 572 trainees.

These training actions were addressed to the technical-pedagogical teams of the New Opportunities Centres network, namely those beginning their work in 2006.

In 2008, up to the moment, also addressed to the technical-pedagogical teams of the New Opportunities Centres network, were held the following training actions:

1. Methodologies of diagnosis, establishment of personal path and guidance of adults, involving about 618 trainees and aiming at
 - to provide information on the methodologies referred;
 - to provide information on the support tools to the intervention methodology development;
 - to monitor the implementation of the intervention process in the centres;
 - to clarify the applicant procedures of the methodologies referred, based on the doubts and questions previously issued;
 - to increase competences linked to the expertise profile.
2. Training provided by seven higher educations institutions at national level, organized into 5 modules and held the first 3 modules, involving about 1 056 trainees and aiming at
 - Module 1
 - to deepen the mission included in the *Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres*;
 - to know and distinguish the centres intervention dimensions;
 - to understand the role of the RVCC System in the adults education and training;
 - to share professional practices according to the similar functions daily performed;

- to know and use the SIGO;
- to identify and put into practice the RVCC process methodologies.
- Modules 2 and 3
 - to know and understand the principles of adult education and training;
 - to recognize the value of the different learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal), within a lifelong learning perspective;
 - to put into practice correctly the life stories methodology in the RVCC processes;
 - to know and use correctly the Key Competences Frames of Reference for Adult Education and Training;
 - to put into practice the competences balance methodology to recognize competences and build the reflexive learning portfolio;
 - to know and put into practice evaluation know-how in the RVCC process;
 - to structure and organize a validation jury;
 - to build jointly with the adult his/her personal development plan project, within a lifelong education and training perspective.

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1 Research studies in the field of adult learning

In Portugal, the latest research developments in the field of ALE integrate many key studies undertaken recently (within the last five years).

Firstly, it should be mentioned the participation in the IALS – International Adult Literacy Survey on literacy competences of the Portuguese adult population (2001-2002) through the data of an inquiry by direct assessment questionnaire.

At national level, the research studies in the field of adult learning are mainly thesis for a higher university degree on literacy and competences, recognising, validating and certifying competences and adult education and training, such as the following PhD thesis:

- ♦ ALCOFORADO, Luís – *O modelo da competência e os adultos portugueses não qualificados*. Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra, 2001.
- ♦ Ávila, Patrícia – *A literacia dos adultos: competências chave na sociedade do conhecimento*. Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, 2005.
- ♦ QUINTAS, Helena – *Construção e desenvolvimento curricular em educação e formação de adultos*. Évora, Universidade do Algarve, 2006.

Finally, several academic researches have been developed in the adult education and training field, at higher education degree and master levels.

The main themes and methodological orientations are:

- on the conceptual point of view: discussion of the key competences concept in relation with others, such as literacy against illiteracy, competences, key competences, knowledge, learning, skills;
- on the point of view of the searching contexts in the adult education and training area: formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, national system for recognising, validating and certifying competences, adult education and training courses;
- on the point of view of the scientific methodologies: linking large scale quantitative studies with more contextualized qualitative studies;
- on the point of view of the methodological tools for intervention: defining two main tools for adult education and training: the key competences frame of reference (upper secondary level), building the National Qualifications Catalogue, the methodology to build the professional RVCC referentials.

3.2 Innovations and examples of good practices

The main innovations developed are:

- the creation of the National Qualifications Agency²⁵ to coordinate and manage integrated policies of adult education and training;
- the institutional cooperation between public and private bodies, education and labour, national and regional levels;
- the flexibility and modularity of adult education and training through the National Qualifications Catalogue;
- the adults' adherence to the qualification paths.

As examples of good practices, it can be referred:

- the *New Opportunities* Initiative as a public policy of adult education and training;
- the National Qualifications Catalogue;
- the national system for recognising, validating and certifying competences and the New Opportunities Centres network;
- the RVCC processes at upper secondary level and the reflexive learning portfolios of competences;
- the campaigns mobilizing adults to raise their qualifications;
- the cooperation protocols within the *New Opportunities* Initiative, linking public and private enterprises, public entities, associations and federations, being more than 500 protocols involving about 600 000 individuals.

²⁵ Decree Law No. 213/2006, dated 27 October.
www.anq.gov.pt

4. Adult Literacy

4.1 Literacy is the competence to read, write and count, called the last one numeracy.

However, living and working in the actual knowledge and information society and economy the individuals also need ICT competences to search, produce and process information and knowledge, on a lifelong and lifewide perspective.

4.2 The policies adopted and implemented have been extra scholar education courses, in articulation with adult education and training courses and RVCC processes.

4.3 Effective practice and innovative literacy programmes have been addressed to old people, immigrants, such as Portuguese as second language and accessing nationality examinations, as well as to disadvantageous groups promoting equal opportunities.

Despite the high levels of recovery, as the starting point was too low, Portugal need to reinforce the efforts to grow up adult literacy.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE

5.1 The outcomes expected from CONFINTEA VI are:

- Dissemination diffusion of Portuguese good practices in the field of adult education and learning, such as:
 - on the programmatic and institutional point of view, the *New Opportunities* Initiative and the National Qualifications Agency as a public institute under the education and labour double superintendence;
 - on the conceptual point of view, the National Qualifications Catalogue and the double/ /integrated certification principle;
 - on the intervention lines point of view, the system for recognising, validating and certifying competences, namely at upper secondary and occupational levels, and the double/ /integrated certification supplies for adults, particularly adult education and training courses and modular certifying training;
 - on the device point of view, the New Opportunities Centres national network.
- The *New Opportunities* Initiative will decisively contribute to decrease the qualification deficits of the Portuguese adult population through the intervention tools and devices implemented.

5.2 The future perspectives for ALE are:

- to assure the accomplishment of the proposed results up to 2010;
- to put into action the structural funds for qualification up to 2013;
- to fight the qualifications structural deficit of the Portuguese population, namely the scholar drop-out and failure, as well as qualifying adults through double/integrated certification pathways.