

Portuguese Refugee's Report^[a]

(report about: (1) What the educational system foresees regarding the adoption of measures of reception of foreign citizens and refugees; (2) What the school does and plans to do; (3) What the community does and plans to do; (4) Current situation of refugees and foreigners - perceptions

Contribution of the Portuguese government and society

According to a source from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Portugal received until the end of October 2016 a total of 1,100 refugees under the European Union program, with up to 4,500 people receiving this status. They were distributed in more than 100 of the 308 different national municipalities, according to the same source. On July 25, 2016, a National Immigrant Integration Support Network (RNAIM) was created, under the authority of the High Commissioner for Migration, to support "the complex and demanding process of reception, resettlement, relocation and integration of refugees", through a decree of *Diário da República*, the official journal of the Portuguese Republic. (https://dre.pt/web/guest/home/-/dre/75025066/details/maximized?p_auth=8YFiDwDc).

The Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR), constituted on September 20, 1991, is a non-profit, independent and pluralistic non-profit organization based on a humanist culture of tolerance and respect for the dignity of other peoples. Its main objective is to promote a more humane and liberal asylum policy at national and international level. It is the national entity responsible for the reception and resettlement of refugees arriving in the country, ensuring support and integration strategies. This entity was responsible for the creation of the so-called refugee kit, consisting of a dictionary of words, common expressions, a pendrive with digital content in different languages, a t-shirt, a copy of the Portuguese constitution, a mobile phone card, a Map of Portugal and diverse information (<http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/kit-de-acolhimento-aos-refugiados>).

Contribution of the Educational System

On March 1st, 2016, the Portuguese Ministry of Education created, through an internal circular, the measures to be implemented in the education system, as a consequence of the European migration agenda, regarding the integration of children and young people included in the refugee contingent: equivalent of school qualifications, provide mechanisms to respond to the effective needs of pupils in the field of language learning in the host country, in order to allow a systematic contact with the educational community, in particular with the students in the class in which they will be integrated.

It is important to emphasize the need for schools to promote a progressive integration in the curriculum, based on the sociolinguistic profile and the students' school progress, in order to reinforce the learning of the Portuguese language and its development as a vehicular language of knowledge for the other disciplines of the curriculum and, at the same time, comply with the weekly timetable defined in the national curriculum; develop other modalities and / or intervention projects approved by the school, with a favorable opinion from *DGE (Direção Geral da Educação)*. In addition, a Pre-school, Basic and Secondary Education Reception Guide is available at http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Projetos/Agenda_Europeia_Migracoes/Documentos/agendamigracoes_guiacolhimento_dge.pdf

These measures call on schools to create multidisciplinary teams with the mission of analysing, proposing and developing strategies appropriate to concrete situations. In this regard, whenever possible, school psychologists should articulate with the Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education (CQEP) the integration of students between the ages of 15 and 18 who follow a career path.

The School's contribution

The Grouping of Schools in São João da Talha is a reference point for the reception of foreign students and refugees over the years, especially since the 90's, when the Portuguese Refugee Centre was created near the Secondary School.

At the moment it welcomes 150 foreign students from Colombia, Ukraine, São Tomé, Cape Verde, Brazil, Angola, Moldavia, Romania, Iraq, Somalia, Guinea Bissau, USA, India, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Rwanda and Eritrea, not counting the students born in the national territory children of foreigners, and 10 students with refugee status, from Colombia, Ukraine, Angola, Ghana and Rwanda. The number of different nationalities in this school year is around 20, with predominance of Portuguese speaking countries.

Mostly they are students in need of economic support, and with different needs of integration, for whom the direction and the multidisciplinary teams created for the purpose focus their special attention, promoting integration in different classes, through equal opportunities and taking into account the specificity of the difficulties presented. In addition there is an EPIS team especially dedicated to promoting school success that collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to support integration strategies for these students. However, students and teachers in general have difficulties in dealing with foreign students and refugees in a classroom situation, and each case is always different from the other, requiring permanent attention and adaptation of practices and adaptations to the teaching and learning process that sometimes limit school success.

The point of view of refugees and foreigners

Amie, from Rwanda

"I left my country because I didn't feel safe; it was as if I could be attacked at any time. When I arrived one of the most difficult things for me was the language and being far away from my friends but I think Portugal is a very nice place to live. Nevertheless, one day I would like to go to Australia, mainly because of the language and I think that the Australians are very kind and respectful. In Portugal I didn't experience any racism but I know people who felt it."