

ASSOCIAÇÃO PORTUGUESA DE EDUCAÇÃO NAS PRISÕES

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INTERNATIONAL CYCLE OF CONFERENCES PRISON EDUCATION – PATHS AND CHALLENGES

Prison Education in Portugal: an overview

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STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

I. Prison Education in Portugal – main developments after the Revolution of 1974

II. Proposals for the development of Prison Education in Portugal

I

PRISON EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

A BRIEF FORAY

(the post 25th of April, 1974)

UNTIL THE END OF THE 1970s (20th century)

- Early 1970s – approximately 25% of the prison population couldn't read nor write
(Pinto, 2017)
- Prison Education (PE) dependent on a 'spirit of goodwill' of several actors
- **Prison Act of 1979** (Decreto-Lei n.º 265/79, de 1 agosto 1979)
 - i. Need for the **organisation of Education programmes** in prisons in Portugal
 - . Same syllabus to that of schools outside prison
 - . Similar evaluation system
 - ii. Active collaboration between the **Ministry of Justice** and the **Ministry of Education** with the aim of tackling the critical deficit of prisoners' qualifications
 - . **Ministry of Education** – organisation and provision of Education in prisons
 - . **Ministry of Justice** – the creation of conditions for its implementation

LATE 70s / EARLY 80s

➤ The beginning of a structured programme for Prison Education

- **Basic Education** (Despacho Conjunto n.º 211/MJ/ME/79, de 1 de agosto)
- **Secondary Education** (Despacho Conjunto n.º 112/MJ/ME/83, de 2 de novembro)
- **Prison Associated Schools**

FROM THE 90s UNTIL TODAY

- By the beginning of the new millennium, PE was already **developing at a rapid pace**
- In 1999, Basic and Secondary Education **consolidated** in a single piece of legislation, **still in force** (Despacho Conjunto n.º 451/MJ/ME/99, de 1 de junho)
- Currently, in a total of 49 prisons in Portugal, **almost all of them** offer education programmes
- **Higher Education** – signing of protocols with the Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP):
 - **Open University** (1998) – Distance Learning
 - **University of Madeira** (2012) – Teaching in the prison of Funchal
 - **Open University** (2016) – eLearning

EDUCATION LEVELS OF THE PRISON POPULATION IN 2019 (DGRSP, 2020)

➤ No. of inmates in Portuguese prisons in December 31 (2019): **12.793**

2019	
3.5% Can't read nor write	28.2% 3rd CBE
3.6% Can read	12.8% Secondary Education
23.4% 1st Cycle of Basic Education (CBE)	2.9% Higher Education
24.1% 2nd CBE	1.4% Other

➤ In the year 2019, **40% of the prison population** was enrolled in Adult Education and Training programmes, namely:

- **65%** in programmes aiming at awarding **school certification (SC)**
- **35%** in programmes aiming at awarding **professional certification (PC)**

➤ In 2019, **529 teachers** taught in prisons in Portugal

NO. OF INMATES ENROLLED IN ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN 2020 (DGRSP, 2021)

- Pandemic's impact: **15%** (1.874 prisoners) released as a measure to prevent the spread of Covid-19
- No. of inmates in Portuguese prisons in December 31 (2020): **11.412**

2019		
Prison population	12.793	
No. of inmates enrolled	5.144 (40%)	
	Programmes leading to SC	Programmes leading to PC
	3.332 (65%)	1.812 (35%)

2020		
Prison population	11.412 (-10.8% compared to 2019)	
No. of inmates enrolled	4.061 (35.6%) (decrease in %)	
	SC programmes	PC programmes
	3.261 (80.3%) (increase in %)	800 (19.7%) (decrease in %)

- No. of inmates enrolled in programmes leading to **School Certification and Prof. Cert.** in **2020**:
 - . SC **80.3%** (in 2019 it was 65%)
 - . PC **19.7%** (in 2019 it was 35%)
- In 2020, the prison population decreased by **10.8%** (compared to 2019) and also the number of inmates enrolled in **Adult Education and Training** programmes decreased by **4.4%**.

II

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRISON EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRISON EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

➤ Distance Learning (DL) – the need to develop a new strategy

Distance learning in Portuguese prisons at a time of pandemic (APEnP 2020)

Findings: The **asynchronous DL model** adopted in Portuguese prisons (few exceptions) relied mostly on **paper-based resources** causing several **limitations** to the teaching-learning process:

- a.** Lack of interaction between teacher and students – one of the main causes of inmates' disengagement in learning activities.
- b.** Process of acquiring/developing knowledge and skills – more difficult for inmate students.
- c.** Assessment of inmate students' learning – more complex.

Proposal – DL supported by **digital technologies** in a **secure and controlled manner**: (Rocha, 2010; Barros & Monteiro, 2015; Moreira, Machado & Dias-Trindade, 2018; APEnP, 2020)

- . **Teachers' know-how** (Prison Associated Schools)
- . In close collaboration with **prison administrations**
- . Already a reality in some (very few) prisons for **non-Higher Education** levels

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRISON EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

➤ *Digital Schooling programme*

Ministry of Education – providing schools (teachers and students) with computers, software licences and improving connectivity.

Distance learning in Portuguese prisons at a time of pandemic (APEnP 2020)

Findings – (In most prisons) IT equipment is **old** and **outdated**:

- . **Obstacle** to the development of the teaching-learning process.

Proposal – *Digital Schooling programme*

- . Prison classrooms **cannot be left behind** and should also **be included** in this programme;
- . New IT equipment would **facilitate** the implementation of a **digital strategy** for Prison Education.

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