

Youth – Actor of Social Change

“Moinho da Juventude”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people's agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	Moinho da Juventude (Mill of Youth Association)
Location	Portugal
Main theme	Civic Participation Transition of young people with an ethnic minority or immigrant background
Practice/Programme-related keywords	Social Integration; Civic Participation; Empowerment; Intercultural Dialogue
Summary of programme/ practice	The association is the result of informal work with children, women and the fight for basic sanitation during the first years of the 1980 decade. Nowadays, the Association “Moinho da Juventude” is a community project. It was build by the residents of Cova de Moura, a “self-built” neighbourhood in the outskirts of Lisbon, which can be traced back to the year of 1974, when the first residents arrived, most of them returning from the former Portuguese colonies. The population of Cova da Moura increased since then, as well as the number of residents of immigrant origin, mainly from Cape Verde. In 1987 the association was formal and legally recognised. The activities of the association operate at a social, cultural and economic level and involve children, young people and adults. They intend to improve the living conditions of the neighbourhood; to promote and disseminate the residents’ culture, to provide a number of services that respond to people’s needs (e.g. kindergartens, activities for children); to improve their level of education and different skills by promoting several training courses.

Target	1) Target area: Residents of Cova da Moura (neighbourhood on the outskirts of Lisbon) of every nationality, age, social and economic background 2) Target groups/issues/problems addressed: Children, young people and adults living in Cova da Moura. Social Integration, intercultural dialogue and negative images on Cova da Moura and its residents. Living and housing conditions in the neighbourhood; social integration of the residents, following mainly an empowerment philosophy.
Objectives of programme/ practice	The Association “Moinho da Juventude” global objective is to improve the living conditions of the population of Cova da Moura, promoting at the same time the residents’ social integration. Specifically about this point, they promote training courses to improve the population level of education, skills, and knowledge of their rights and duties as citizens; cultural activities that intend to disseminate African culture and stimulate intercultural dialogue. The association activities also intend to demystify some stereotypes and prejudiced images regarding the residents of Cova da Moura. All of the association activities are based on the following set of principles: Intercultural: Respect and value the culture of origin and other people’s culture. 1) Stimulate dialogue: Communication is a core value 2) Stimulate joy and good mood 3) Gender: developing male and female characteristics of every person 4) Respect people’s political and religious orientations 5) Stimulate cooperation 6) Empowerment: value own and other people’s abilities; to participate reflectively in decision making processes and in the process of reflecting itself 7) Respect the environment. Handle materials and equipment carefully 8) Stimulate creativity 9) To be persistent. Not give up when facing the first obstacles 10) To carry out activities with quality, efficiency and efficacy 11) To be solidary, mainly towards more vulnerable people.
Content of programme / practice	The Association provides a wide range activities and programmes for the residents of Cova da Moura Social Level: The association “Moinho da Juventude” has a support group for residents that fights for better housing and living conditions of the neighbourhood, namely in terms of cleaning and hygiene, but also in terms of the regularization for those who need to legalise their situation as immigrants in Portugal. This group also provides sup-

	port regarding health by promoting and disseminating information and prevention campaigns. Other activities and programmes include a kindergarten for 88 children; a programme of extra curricular activities for 80 children. In this programme children have help with their homework; they can participate in summer “campings” and training courses on crafting, gymnastics and computers. Around 40 residents Cova da Moura are also responsible for a group of activities for young people (“teenagers”), namely the “Youth Information Centre”; the “Youth Space”; “Debate Sessions”; “Youth Library”; school support for teenagers; training courses on computers; a “Sports Group”, where 300 young people participate in the following modalities: Football; Basketball and Gymnastic; and an African dance group. Cultural Level: One of the goals of the association is to promote and disseminate the culture of the residents of Cova da Moura. In this vein, two cultural music groups have been created: "Kolá S. Jon", and “Batuque Finka Pé”. The groups have been performing on several occasions in events outside the neighbourhood, such as EXPO 92 in Seville and EXPO 98 in Lisbon. Also the association, supported by the Book Cape-Verdean Institute, permanently sells books edited and published in Cape Verde by this Institute. Training: The association has also been promoting and lecturing several training courses, which main intent is to increase people's abilities and competences and, therefore, empower them. Some of these courses have been alphabetisation courses for residents who had not the opportunity to study. Also, and since 1986, the association has closely been working with the women living in the neighbourhood, who mainly work as domestic employees either for companies or in private houses, many of them in informal and vulnerable situations. So, groups of discussion were first established to discuss their situation and later on training courses on labour legislation were established. Also since the beginning of the 90's the association has been organising professional training courses for women and young people in more vulnerable situation, working closely with Employment Centres and the European Social Funding. The Association is formally and legally recognised as a training institution.
Time scale	The Association “Moinho da Juventude” was born in the early 80ies (formally constituted in 1987) and has been developing its mission since then.

Programme/ practice design

1) Development of programme/practice:

The association resulted initially from the work of Cova da Moura residents in the early 80's. Due to the poor living conditions and the lack of infrastructures of the neighbourhood, the resident population was able to mobilise some initiatives that later on resulted in the association.

2) Decision-making actors and process:

The decision-making actors are the residents of Cova de Moura and the people involved and working in the association

3) Management and leadership of programme:

The association is currently managed by three specific groups: the General Board; the Supervisory Board and the Board of Directors.

General Board

President	Rosa Castelão Rodrigues
1st secretary	Hortênsia Maria da Luz
2nd secretary	Joana dos Reis Sessé
Alternate member	Eunice Delgado
	Domingas Moreira

Supervisory Board

President	Antónia Duarte Ramos
Secretary	Carla Lopes Medina
Rapporteur	Fátima Cabral Marques
Alternate member	Maria do Ceu Lopes
	Luís Martins da Cruz
	Emídio Nascimento Tavares

Board of Directors

President	Anabela Lopes Rodrigues
Vice-President	Godelieve Maria Aloysia Meersschaert
General Secretary	Maria Isabel Cabral Marques
Treasury	Vitalina Tavares Monteiro
Councillor	Eduardo José Azeredo Pontes
Alternate member	Ester Filomena de Pina Tavares
	José Manuel Sousa Prazeres
	Lucinda Semedo
	Carla Sofia Ferreira Vicente dos Santos Marques

4) Implementation:

The management boards of the association are responsible for all the activities undertaken by the association and to promote an articulation of the association with other institutions, of the state or not, so as to implement new activities and projects and to improve the ones that already exist. Most of the activities promoted by the association are implemented and maintained by the population of Cova da Moura and volunteers.

Resources involved

	The Association “Moinho da Juventude” aims to improve the living and social conditions of the residents of Cova da Moura. Labelled by some groups in Portuguese society as a “slum area”, a lot of stereotypes and prejudiced images exist regarding the residents of this neighbourhood. Initially, Cova da Moura was mainly composed by Portuguese people returning from the former Portuguese colonies, during the period of “descolonisation” that began in 1974. During that period around 500 000 people returned to Portugal, and the country was not prepared to accommodate this number of people, nor the ones that increasingly began to migrate from the rural areas to the cities. Several “self-built” houses emerged around Lisbon, resulting in areas with very low living conditions, mainly regarding hygiene and sanitation. At the same time, an increasing number of immigrants mainly of African origin, namely from Cape-Verde, Angola and Mozambique arrived in the country. Due to their more vulnerable social and economic conditions, they would find housing in areas such as Cova da Moura. The Association resulted from the work of residents of Cova da Moura and also volunteers. Nowadays, its work is fundamental for the population of Cova da Moura not only in terms of improvement of living conditions, but also in terms of “breaking” stereotypes regarding the population of Cova da Moura and developing action programmes that intend to empower people, focusing particularly on young people and the development of their potential. The association has been receiving public funding from national and European open tenders.
Evaluation	No information
Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	Your own judgement: strengths, weaknesses, sceptical comments, transferability, prerequisites, which aspects are good practice?, etc. The work undertaken by the association “Moinho da Juventude” is amazingly diversified and has made a significant impact on the housing and living conditions of the neighbourhood, but mainly in people’s lives by following a line of intervention based on the principles of empowerment and agency. In fact, the concept of agency could be used to define the philosophy of the association, which is the result of the initiative of residents of Cova da Moura, and in turn the association keeps promoting initiative and proactive attitudes among its residents.
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