

Arts Education in Portugal: National Curricula and Emancipatory Projects



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Abstract This chapter addresses the role played by arts education in the promotion of citizenship and human development, in the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Taking the Portuguese education system as a case study, we describe how arts education has been conceived in the national school curricula from the 1960s until today. We then discuss three emancipatory projects of arts education.

Keywords Arts education · Cultural diversity · Portugal · Human development · National school curricula · Emancipatory projects of arts education

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1 Introduction

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been defined as a major goal “to realize the full potential of high quality arts education, to positively renew educational systems, to achieve crucial social and cultural objectives, and ultimately to benefit children, youth and life-long learners of all ages”.¹

This chapter addresses the roles and meanings of the arts in the Portuguese education system, particularly in the primary and secondary school curricula. We discuss the presence of arts education in Portugal, both in the education system and in emancipatory projects, and we argue that arts education stands as a fundamental step towards the promotion of cultural diversity.

We start this chapter with a brief analysis of how arts education has been conceived and included in the national school curricula from the time of the dictatorship (“*Estado Novo*”), particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, through the revolutionary times of the 1970s, until the “normalisation” of the school curricula from the 80s on. Even though arts education never played a main role in the formal education system, we notice a trend going from a rigid arts curricula towards a more flexible approach with an emphasis on identity and creativity. From 2005 to 2015, there has been an increase in mathematics and Portuguese language subjects, based on methods and techniques to succeed in exams, while the arts were increasingly regarded as an expensive supplementary or even optional extracurricular activity. In the second part of the chapter, we analyse three different emancipatory projects, carried out in Portuguese schools, based on arts as a core subject for children’s education and development, as well as for social change: (1) a secondary public school in Lisbon devoted to artistic courses (*Escola António Arroio*) well known for its strong identity, community networks and artistic output; (2) a project of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (*10x10*) based on the collaboration between artists and teachers, in order to develop new ways of working and learning in the classroom; and (3) a project of classical music orchestras (*Orquestra Geração*), developed in schools located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with impressive results regarding student motivation and learning success. These three cases inspired new relationships between arts practice and formal education, promoting (inter)cultural development, equal opportunity and citizenship.

The chapter addresses arts and cultural education in Portugal, by analysing the main weaknesses and strengths of the formal curricula and presenting the three emancipatory projects mentioned above. We do not discuss the absence or existence of cultural diversity in the formal curricula or in the projects presented but rather the way they address arts and cultural education, as a seed to sustain cultural diversity.

¹The Second World Conference on Arts Education Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education. Online: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Seoul_Agenda_EN.pdf. Accessed at August 28, 2017.

2 Arts Education and Cultural Diversity in the Portuguese School Curricula: An Overview

The arts have been part of the Portuguese education system for a long time, although generally as a minor subject. In the nineteenth century, the liberal and romantic movements, led by intellectuals such as Almeida Garrett, promoted the importance of aesthetics in young people's education, and *Conservatoires* were built to develop specialised arts education (Sousa 2003; Raposo 2004). At the beginning of the twentieth century, progressive pedagogues, especially associated with the *Escola Nova* movement, introduced art-based innovations such as Adolfo Lima's use of theatre performance as a means for educational work in working class public primary schools (Silva 2014).

It was only in the 1950s that primary schools spread across the country and a model of dual secondary education was consolidated providing scientific and humanistic programmes for the privileged classes and shorter vocational programmes for the working class. At that time, the arts were included in the general school curricula to fulfil both practical and ideological purposes. They were seldom valued for themselves. Drawing and manual works were taught as a body discipline, using scientific principles and problem-solving techniques. Creativity was also found in the work of several teachers (Penin 2000). Choral singing was conceived as "governmental propaganda – a way to glorify Portugal and foster patriotic feelings" (Vieira 2013: 93) – in line with the study of history and Portuguese literature (Pintassilgo 2007).

Eight hundred years of history with unchanged borders and a weak regional autonomy stood as the background for the expansion of an education system strongly oriented by a nation-state affirmation plan until 1950. During the *Estado Novo* (the authoritarian regime ruling the country from 1926 to 1974), in alliance with the Catholic Church, the government banned progressive ideologies in education and imposed an educational system enforcing principles of nationalism (Mónica 1978; Nóvoa 1994; Teodoro 2001). The isolation of Portugal from European democracies, the fear of communist ideology and the will to preserve the idea of the Portuguese empire throughout Africa and Asia were supported by massive government propaganda. Cultural diversity was not recognised at schools or elsewhere – it was actually silenced and repressed. Under the myth of a Portuguese homogeneous culture, only some expressions of regional folklore were allowed, underlying the so-called uniqueness of the Portuguese soul and culture.

During the 1960s, still under the dictatorship, Portugal was influenced by UNESCO work on arts education, especially through Herbert Read's masterpiece *Education Through Art* (1943). Read's work was a key inspiration for the new Centre for Pedagogic Research of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. There, the psychiatrist Arquimedes Silva Santos and the educationalist Rui Grácio played a leading role in the studies and training of new generations guided by the principle of arts as a key dimension in children's education and development (Raposo 2004). These initiatives had the support of liberals and democrats and led to the

organisation of several training programmes at the National Conservatoire where a High School for Education Through Art was launched in 1971, running until 1981 (Meira 2015).

The 1974 democratic revolution in Portugal increased opportunities to incorporate education through arts in many schools. A national plan for education through arts was elaborated but never implemented. The increase of school institutions prevailed diminishing an internal transformation (Grácio 1985; Abrantes 2008). Although redundant by the early 1980s, the progressive ideas of this movement continued to influence many Portuguese artists and educators especially in pre-school, primary and informal education (Câmara 2007; Eça 2011), exploring the arts for creative, ludic and transversal learning experiences leaning towards identity and community development.

These principles were partially institutionalised in the Education Act (*Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*²), which was finally approved by all political parties in 1986, paving the way for an all-encompassing school curricula reform carried out during the 1990s (Sousa 2003). A key landmark was a new law concerning artistic education.³ It was the first time in Portugal that a new legal framework pushed forwards the development of artistic expression and creative imagination in the curricula. It also made a clear distinction between the goals of arts education in basic education for all and arts vocational training integrated in specific secondary education pathways. Visual arts, drama and music contents were introduced in the first cycle (first to fourth grade), *music* and *visual expression* were integrated in the second and third cycle curricula (fifth to ninth grade) and dance was included in the *physical education* course. In upper secondary, a specific programme on visual arts (leading towards higher education) and several technical courses in different art forms (leading to the labour market) were established. These courses were implemented in many public and private schools across the country, as well as in two public art schools (see following section).

In 2001, a Key Competences Framework for Basic Education (DEB-ME 2001) emphasised the importance of developing artistic literacy, including concepts of aesthetics, arts history, critique and production, in close relationship with other curricula areas, through interdisciplinary approaches and project-based methodologies (Eça 2011). In the following years, arts education, geared towards identity, creativity and citizenship awareness, was developed through several projects around the country, some of which are presented in the second part of the present chapter (Eça 2010; Valqauresma and Coimbra 2013).

The principles of *education through arts* became a key reference for educators at pre-school level, but the school time devoted to the arts in basic education remained all too short. At this level, school curricula, textbooks and practices remained traditional, based on the communication of content, including in arts education, not taking into account students' background, interests and ideas (Abrantes 2008; Vieira 2009; Eça 2011; Ribeiro 2013). Although references to cultural diversity and inter-

²Law 46/86, 14th October.

³Decree-Law 344/1990.

cultural relations were included in national curricula, technical and financial support for their implementation was very limited. Some schools in the suburbs with a high concentration of migrants have developed interesting projects, often in partnership with cultural institutions and benefitting from additional funding (see next sections of this chapter), but the majority of schools remained untouched by this kind of project.

In 1983, a new pathway in the Portuguese education system (*Ensino Articulado*) allowed students to combine basic education in public all-purpose schools with the arts in specialised schools. A vocational orientation towards this system remains poor, relying strongly on family support and cultural background. Curricula standards focus on technical skills with the relationships between general and artistic dimensions seldom explored (Vieira 2009; Ribeiro 2013). The arts are absent in many upper secondary education programmes. Specialisation is promoted by the *visual arts* programme which is included in the scientific-humanistic areas (leading to university) and by vocational programmes in different art forms (leading to the labour market).

From 2005 to 2015, we have noticed two distinct trends. On the one hand, arts education in schools and in cultural institutions has increased, especially as extra-curricular activities. The development of dance education is particularly impressive (Moura and Alves 2016). 90% of primary school students are involved in full-time school programmes, where arts workshops have a key role (Eça 2011; Reis 2012), and many students participate in arts programmes run by many institutions during school holidays. The awareness of the benefits of arts education in young people's development, the quantity and quality improvement and the promotion of equal access to art have been strongly stimulated in recent years. This is largely due to action research projects (e.g. Leandro 2015), digital platforms (Rodrigues and Moreira 2012) and institutional programmes such as the UNESCO Club for Arts Education (Marques 2012) (see also the next section of this chapter), as well as reports, conferences and journals which provide important places for analysis, discussion and collaborative work between teachers and academics. On the other hand, reintroduced austerity policies have restrained the role of arts in compulsory school education, especially since the Key Competences Framework (Moura and Alves 2016) was removed in 2011 and the emphasis was put on core subjects and national exams. School work and students' assessment kept focused on the assimilation of key content, especially mathematics and Portuguese language, reducing the importance of other school activities.

Interviews with 25 experts in artistic education in Portugal underlined the ambiguity of this picture (Esteireiro 2014), considering that in spite of many innovative and creative projects being carried out in the arts field, there are still many concerns about the ability to change the dominant traditional school culture and the school curricula, a situation that is aggravated by the lack of articulation between formal and informal educational practices.

The recent launch of the *Student's Profile at the End of Compulsory Education*, in 2017, developed by an independent working group of experts, provides a new framework for school practices and it was the basis for the new curricula

framework (Decree-Law nº 55/2018) approved in 2018. The emphasis on key competences, including critical and creative thinking, aesthetics and artistic sensibility, raises new expectations about the recognition of artistic education as a central part in the Portuguese education system. By the time this chapter was written, there was not yet evidence about the impacts of this new legislation on school practices, so we decided to not include it on the analysis.

Furthermore, there is a growing movement in Portuguese society – taking into consideration the number of NGOs involved and their prominence with the media – demanding recognition of cultural diversity in Portugal, as well as the role of minority groups throughout Portuguese history and at the present time (e.g. Ferro et al. 2016).

3 Emancipatory Projects

In Portugal, arts education projects stand as an example of good practices supported by private and public institutions with institutional profiles. To illustrate it, we have chosen three heterogeneous projects, quite different but complementary in their specific aims, areas, target audiences and practices. They share an emancipatory goal and the aim of promoting arts education. The projects are also different in length, allowing us to reflect and discuss different formats of arts education with an impact on sustainable development. We define as emancipatory, social processes of education which have as their main objective to raise participants' awareness in their field of possibilities and constraints, giving them autonomy to decide about the orientation of their actions, in their own terms. The analysis and discussion of the three projects are based on secondary sources according to the research conducted by the authors cited in the text.

3.1 *The Secondary Arts School António Arroio, Lisbon*

The secondary arts school *Soares dos Reis*, located in the city of Porto, and the secondary school *António Arroio* located in Lisbon are both public school models of arts education in a formal context. The arts school *António Arroio* developed from the *Industrial Design School Faria de Guimarães do Bonfim*, which opened in 1884. In 1934 it became the *Escola Industrial de Arte Aplicada António Arroio* (Industrial School of Applied Arts António Arroio), named after an engineer who fought for the cause of autonomous teaching and learning of applied arts. After the education reform of 1948, during *Estado Novo*, the school was renamed *Escola de Artes Decorativas António Arroio* (School of Decorative Arts António Arroio). The school went through recurrent problems related to the limited space available for classes, and it was only in 1927 that the government bought new land in order to provide better conditions for the school. In 1955 the school opened on its current site.

After the revolution, on April 25, 1974, the division between general and technical education ended, and unified courses were introduced. In 1980 two branches of learning were created: a theoretical branch leading to higher studies in the arts and a second one leading to skills in audio-visual and graphic arts, ceramic design as well as industrial and textile design.⁴ In 1993, the “Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo” (Education Act) defined formal education in the arts, and the school received its new designation: *Secondary Arts School António Arroio*. The school now gives courses in arts production, audio-visual communication, communication design, product design and, recently, a course in visual arts. The school has 1100 students and has faced many changes throughout the years. Together with the *Soares dos Reis* school, in Porto, it is a model of arts education at the upper secondary level in Portugal. The school has improved its academic results by reducing the number of dropouts and bettering students’ performance in the national exams.⁵

According to a survey conducted by Santos (2016) of António Arroio students, at that time 85.5% of the participants were girls and 14.5% were boys and 95.5% had Portuguese citizenship, 4.5% had double nationality (Portuguese and others) and 4.5% were from other nationalities (mainly Brazilian, French and British). Only 31% lived in the city of Lisbon and many came from the suburbs. This school is the only option in the centre and south of Portugal for students who want to study arts at secondary education level. A considerable number of students face long daily trips from home to school. Other young people interested in this kind of education, especially those living far away and from lower social classes, have little access to formal education in the field of the arts. It is possible to study arts at regular schools, but if students want to study arts in a specialised school, they have only two options at national level – *António Arroio* in Lisbon and *Soares dos Reis* in Porto. Because most of the students live outside Lisbon, they do not have time or other resources to access arts and cultural activities that are mainly located in the city. Santos’ study (2016) showed that most students do not participate in artistic activities. Only a few go to the cinema or visit museums. They engage in formal arts education often because of an early contact with the arts and especially when encouraged by family members.

The students’ evaluation of the school is quite positive, as they consider that it meets their learning expectations. After completing the upper secondary level, the majority of the students want to work in the arts and cultural field but often consider emigrating, due to limited opportunities to engage professionally in the arts and cultural labour market in Portugal.

The school teachers have both theoretical and practical training, and they understand the student development process. They are able to find both the tools and the conditions they need to develop their activity as art teachers at the school. However, some teachers have pointed out that the connection between the school and the community is not strong enough and consider that reinforcing this connection could

⁴<http://www.antonioarroio.edu.pt/about/>, accessed on August 21, 2017.

⁵ Education Project of António Arroio, accessed on August 22, 2017 in URL: http://www.antonio-arroio.pt/docs/ProjectoEducativo_Mai2011.pdf

contribute very positively both to the school and community dynamics. The school has worked on external relations, at an international level, encouraging student participation in the Erasmus+ programme, but the liaison with the school neighbourhood and the local arts community still needs to be improved.

To sum up, a diverse population living mainly on the outskirts of Lisbon attends this secondary school on a daily basis, yet the sustainability of the arts education programmes needs further development, as the students do not have (or do not perceive they have) opportunities to work in the field of arts and culture in Portugal. In order to benefit from the efforts made in arts education at school, the country should focus on the sustainability issues beyond education, including the labour market.

3.2 *10×10: Artists and Teachers' Collaboration*

For the last 15 years, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – FCG) has been promoting a dynamic cultural educational programme for schools using its museum, orchestra and gardens as pedagogical resources. The Foundation's close collaboration with schools has made it possible to better understand the educational reality in situ, as well as the frequent complaints teachers make about their working conditions. When attending the cultural activities promoted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation educational team, students are challenged to share their views of the artwork and to express themselves through creative exercises proposed by artists. Teachers are often surprised by student's motivation and commitment as well as the quality of the work they produce when involved in these activities. 10×10 was conceived as a pilot project, involving artists, teachers and students, in work designed to enhance the secondary school curricula content (beyond the arts content), stimulating an exchange of perspectives, knowledge and creativity from each participant. In particular, the project was designed to act as a stimulus for teachers by contributing to a renewal of their range of teaching tools and communication strategies inside the classroom.

Lasting for 5 academic years from 2012/2013 to 2016/2017, this action research project included three steps. The first was a 6-day residency at the FCG where the artists and teachers involved in the project developed a close relationship based on sharing their knowledge and experiences in an informal environment. The second step took place at the schools (from September to December). It involved two teachers and one artist working together in each classroom on a pedagogical project. In the context of the subjects being taught (such as Portuguese language, mathematics, physics or history), they engaged in devising alternative pedagogical strategies inspired by the tools and methodologies explored during the residency. The students were called upon to participate actively in the process and to contribute by expressing doubts and suggestions. At the beginning of the second term (January), each artist helped their partner teachers to develop a way of sharing this experience with the education community – teachers, artists, social workers, researchers, parents and guardians – by holding a “public lesson” at the FCG and at the school itself.

There are many ways of combining art and education, and, in the case of the 10×10 project, what was at stake was, above all, the possibility of engaging in creative activity by involving artists in a school environment. Though creativity is inherent in the human condition, artists need to constantly use their creativity. Each new project is a new page for exercising imagination, for being bold and for experimenting with new paths. It is in the confrontation between the creative practices that are particular to artistic production (in any of its disciplines) and the pedagogical practices that are subject to formal rules and measurable impacts that the 10×10 project positions itself as a vehicle for dialogue and freedom. This creative work, developed by the artists together with the teachers (in this case from secondary schools), enhances the ordinary curricula and also adds to it unusual features, separating the subject from conventional didactics. Conversely, the use of different artistic languages is also put on one side, separating artists from the production of an artistic project. Art is neither reduced to pedagogy nor is pedagogy reduced to art. Instead, it is a question of placing the creativity implicit in artistic practices at the service of the problems faced by the teachers and students of a particular class. In this way the pedagogical strategies undertaken together may become an integral part of the teacher's repertoire as they do not call upon the specific techniques of the different artistic languages.

The first two 10×10 projects attracted the attention of other cultural institutions that also engaged in creative partnerships with schools. This meant that the project extended beyond Lisbon with Porto, Guimarães, Oeiras and Loulé, following the same model, but with the necessary adaptations for each context. As the project is based on a small-scale approach, this programme expansion made it possible to increase the number of schools, teachers and students involved. All in all, the five instances of the project in different localities involved 22 schools, 48 teachers, 756 students and 43 artists/mediators as direct participants. The dissemination of the pedagogical strategies through workshops for teachers involved over 500, and the public lessons, open to a wider education community, reached nearly 6000 people.

In order to assess the quality and impact of 10×10, a team of researchers from the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (Pires et al. 2017) compiled and analysed data from multiple sources: direct observation of meetings and public lessons, written accounts by the participants, reports written by the project evaluator, as well as questionnaires distributed to teachers 1 year after having participated in the project. The analysis had as one of its aims to understand whether “the central idea [of the project] lies in the opening up of work processes or in the search for and confirmation of pre-defined effects and impacts” (Pires et al. 2017: 96). Data shows that the 10×10 practices and exercises are relevant, meaningful and bring pleasure to both students and teachers, enhancing group cohesion and individual motivation in their commitment to school activities. The close partnership between teachers and artists and the use of artistic devices and rationalities promoted teachers' deeper connection with the subject they teach and with pedagogic reasoning. The experiences inhibited somewhat the teachers' use of pedagogical automatism and of mass produced materials. Furthermore, by exploring a transdisciplinary field of work

between pedagogy, art and the curricular subjects, teachers' autonomy and a sense of authorship were stimulated.

The researchers' analysis showed a direct connection between the artist's approach to pedagogy and the promotion of the student voice, the use of creative methodologies, growing empathy between teachers and students, and transmedial (use of different platforms and formats such as mobile phones, Google Earth, QR codes, film, etc.) and transdisciplinary approach to learning and underlined the relevance of curricular contents by establishing links to the real world.

The project afforded the renewal of scholastic technologies, the interruption of pedagogical automatism and the introduction of new teaching possibilities. These new possibilities had a disruptive effect on the established school criteria of objectivity and predictability and hindered the use of standardised materials. For example, the project allowed the use of the body as a pedagogical tool, alternative ways of using the school space and classroom furniture, the use of prohibited materials such as mobile phones and the Internet, as well as the use of autobiographies and cartographies to promote the construction of the self and awareness of others (Pires et al. 2017: 106).

The involvement of teachers in the design and implementation of these alternative strategies promoted their sense of authorship and professional commitment as agents of change.

Although these conclusions are quite promising, it must be said that the research was based on an experiential approach to pedagogy. The duration and scope of the project did not permit validation through impacts on test results or school leavers' rate.

Other limitations of the project are inherent to the duration of the evaluation process and to its microscale. Since it was not possible to carry on working with the same teachers/classes over several years, it is difficult to assess whether the transformation of their routines lasted. On the other hand, the influence on other teachers at the same schools was reduced to short-term workshops. These were important to raise their curiosity about and awareness of alternative pedagogical strategies, but did not permit an in-depth approach.

10×10 findings were compiled in a book (Assis et al. 2017) which includes a corpus of small pedagogical activities given the name "micropedagogies"; this was conceived as a guidebook of practical ideas that teachers can adapt and explore. Another outcome of the project was a post-graduate course intended for teachers and artists, promoting a cross-fertilisation between artistic practices and pedagogical processes through collaborative work.

3.3 *Orquestra Geração*

The Venezuelan National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras, known as *El Sistema* (ES), is generally considered an emblematic example of musical practices that promote social inclusion through music. The ES programme was initiated in

1975 by the Venezuelan maestro José Antonio Abreu and subsequently attracted the attention of various countries that initiated programmes that adopted and sometimes adapted the ideals of ES. In most cases, the programme is described in highly celebratory terms which emphasise its status as a social project that gives a preeminent role to musical value. Eric Booth, one of ES's most outspoken international supporters, wrote on his first visit to Venezuela: "I had to feel how excitement grew in the poorer neighbourhoods in which each 'nucleus' is implanted". Furthermore, Booth emphasises the ES's social inclusiveness objective, describing the programme as being totally successful in inclusion, in addition to its impressive musical quality.

The first prominent figure, Maestro Gustavo Dudamel, is the principal conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, having achieved an international status as a star, far from his neighbourhood in a small town where he played the second violin as a child (Booth 2009: 2). This is what makes ES so interesting; it is not just a national programme that involves hundreds of thousands of children at risk, but it also produces art.

ES was taken up in Portugal through the *Orquestra Geração* (OG) project, created in October 2007. Focused on social inclusion through music, it has as its main target children in primary schools and adolescents in situations of great risk and educational and social vulnerability. A significant part of the school's student body consists of young immigrant people from the former Portuguese colonies, particularly Cape Verde, Angola and Guiné-Bissau.

The first nucleus of OG was supported by the EU programme EQUAL, involving students from the *Miguel Torga* School in Amadora, a town located in the outskirts of Lisbon. In 2008/2009, another offspring of the project, Casal da Mira (also in Amadora), emerged, and in the period 2009/2010 to 2011/2012, it expanded to five more schools in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and one in the north of the country, in Mirandela. This project, which at the very beginning involved only five teachers, was also supported by the High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, local churches and social movements, as well as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The additional populations have, like the initial nucleus at Amadora, the same social characteristics, marked by a context of local segregation. As with the other centres, this is a community of musical practice (Wenger 2006) in a non-formal context.

A recent survey (Mota and Lopes 2017) of ES participants concluded that the family integration of the young participants improved as a consequence of the involvement of families, in particular through participation in school performances and concerts. These public events are seen as exceptional moments of overcoming stigma and of gaining public recognition, as belonging to OG also means attaining public visibility. In addition, ES participation appears to reinforce domestic gains, namely, direct and/or implicit incentives for learning and particularly in families that support learning routines at school even without a high level of education. The experience of OG can be seen to produce a dispositional effect, creating competences favourable to school attainment (self-discipline, organisation of space and time, coordination, mutual aid, ethos of collective learning, etc.). These embodied

characteristics may be transferable into the work sphere facilitating integration in qualified positions.

In short, the dynamics of family and school mobilisation both contribute to avoiding objective and subjective situations of exclusion and social disqualification, and even the possibility of distinguishing oneself from stigmatised contexts of belonging (neighbourhood, groups of peers), favouring the emergence and/or the consolidation of social mobility projects. Being a member of OG has helped participants to develop networks of sociability in spheres of life external to the orchestra (school, neighbourhood, family). By enlarging the range of possibilities of the children and adolescents' future trajectories, facilitating the access to positions in the social and socio-professional space, these dispositions and competences are resources that increase the activity of these young people, promoting possibilities of social mobility and breaking the chains of social and ethnic discrimination.

4 Conclusion

Arts education in Portugal has a secondary role in formal education. The political context of the authoritarian *Estado Novo* from the 1930s until 1974 had an impact on the role of arts education in schools. Interesting pedagogic ideas were developed in this period but had hardly any effect on the education system. After 1974, access to education has remained stigmatised by processes of social selection and reproduction, and the access to arts education cannot be separated from this wider reality. Hence, when discussing arts education, it is necessary to discuss the projects, the tools – methodologies, approaches to art, etc. – and the structure of the education system in general. The peripheral space occupied by arts education in the education system raises important concerns related with the lack of preparation of the Portuguese schools to face cultural diversity. Although cultural diversity must not be addressed exclusively by mobilising the arts, they prevail as a privileged domain for activating social and cultural integration, namely, by promoting perspectives of seeing and accepting strangeness and difference.

Considering the scarce presence of arts education in the formal education system, the existence of projects where the arts take a central role stands as a productive path towards the promotion of cultural diversity both inside and outside the national context. The three case studies presented allow us to consider different ways and different partnerships in the conception of arts education projects that promote democratic values and sustainable development, connecting formal and non-formal settings.

Furthermore, the coexistence of different initiatives in the same country allows politicians, educators, parents, students, teachers and artists to play an active role in the development of arts education and its integration in the learning process. These projects emphasise the role of arts education, not merely as arts subjects, but in parallel with other subjects, such as language, mathematics, history, etc. This

approach to arts education is a form of citizenship and a contribution to democracy and as such a major step towards the promotion of cultural diversity.

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