

***Pessoa Programme: the contribution of Structural Funds to Human Resources
Qualification in Portugal - an Essay of Evaluation***

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1. The Programme

The Operational Programme Employment and Professional Training (Pessoa Programme) is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which assembles support to employment and professional training (in Portugal) in the period of 1994-99, representing 45,4% of the Domain Qualifying Human Resources and Employment of the Community Aid Framework to Portugal (CAF) in the period of 1994-99.

The Programme is composed by three Sub-programmes:

- a) Initial Qualification and Insertion in the Labour Market*, which groups mainly formation measures as the Education System, the Professional Initiation and the Technological Specialisation which target are young people with different level of basis qualification.
- b) Employment Level and Quality Improvement*, which groups support measures to the creation of employment, independent professional activities and continuous professional training measures to active people and unemployed people within a negative sectoral evolution;
- c) Support to the Training and Human Resources Management*, which groups as main intervention modalities the professional formation, the professional certification, the trainers training and the construction and adaptation of infrastructures, namely of support to the realisation of formation actions (ERDF component).

The following picture-frame performs a synthesis of the financial partition between Sub-programmes concerning the period of 1994-99.

	Amount (1000 Ecu's)	%
1. Initial qualification and placement in the Labour Market	773.301	42,7
2.Improvement of employment level and quality	755.924	41,8

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3.Human Resources Training and Management	279.789	15,5
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Source: DGDR.

2. Intermediate Evaluation Objectives

The main objectives of the intermediate evaluation, as defined by the European Commission and by the national authorities, were the following:

- a) In the domain of *conception and programming*
 - analysis of opportunity and pertinence of the Programme towards the starting point diagnosis;
 - analysis of the relations between the several Sub-programmes and measures and the supervision according to the objectives and target-population of the Programme.
- b) In the domain of *management and running of the Programme*
 - analysis of the model and proceedings of management (strong points and weak points)
 - critical analysis of the mechanisms of attendance, namely the information system.
- c) In the domain of the *results and realisations*
 - measurement of the levels of physical and financial realisations and deviation from the expected goals;
 - qualitative analysis of the realisations of the Programme concerning the processes of qualification and trainees placement.

d) In the domain of *effects*

- evaluation of the impact upon the demand of professional training, upon the qualification levels, and upon the level of employability concerning the trainees;
- evaluation of the construction and adaptation impact of the infrastructures upon the employment and training policies agents.

3. Intermediate Evaluation Methodology

The following diagram makes a synthesis of the main study stages of the intermediate evaluation, which occurred between August of 1996 and February of 1997 and was based on four main components of study:

- **Basis Study** - oriented to an *ex-ante* evaluation synthesis based on evaluation criteria such as opportunity and relevancy.
- **Diagnosis Study** - oriented to the analysis of the execution elements of the Programme based on the information system (effectiveness and efficiency criteria).
- **In-depth Study** - oriented to the development of the evaluation dimension related to: management and operating of the Programme; to the results and to the effects of the Programme measures towards promoters and potential beneficiaries.
- **Recommendations** - oriented, mainly, to the readjustment of the priorities between Measures, of the management model, of the information system and of the coordination of policies on the domains of education, training and employment.

The methodological development was guided by a framework which follows the next scheme:



- Conception / schedule
- Management and accompanying
- Realisations and results
- Effects

Strategic points to analysis

Orientation questions to the analysis

Study processes/Sources of information

Some synthesis-examples show the exercise made following this framework.

a) Domain of evaluation - conception

Strategic points to analyse

- Adaptation of the Programme structure to the diagnosis of the problem areas of the employment and qualification of human resources domain (criteria of *opportunity* and *pertinence*);
- Adaptation of the Sub-programmes structure and measures to the nature and dimension of the problems to solve (internal coherence criteria and global rationality);
- Articulation of the Programme with other Programmes and national policies, namely sectoral programmes (external coherence criteria).

Analysis orientation questions

- The Programme as it was conceived gives an adequate answer to the resolution of professional training and employment identified problems?
- Does it exist, on one hand, correspondence between the strategic objectives of the Programme, and, on the other hand, community orientations concerning competitiveness and employment and the national policy of human resources

valorisation?

- Which are the key-domains of complementarity with other programmes oriented to the human resources valorisation in terms of objectives and target-population?

Study process

- Document analysis; interviews.

b) Domain of evaluation - effects

Strategic points to analyse

- Youth professional qualification;
- Youth professional placement ;
- Adaptation of labour force.

Analysis orientation questions

- Which is the coverage obtained by the initial formation devices towards the reference target population?
- What are the employment dynamics associated to formation devices in alternance, according to activity branches and regions?
- Which is the importance of the training realised by region, by formation domain, by professions, and by enterprise dimension?

Study process

Exploitation of the measures Database of the Programme; Inquiry to promoters; Inquiry to trainees.

The main methodological support elements, are, synthetically, the following:

- interviews with people in charge of the management and technical support structure at a central level and for the management at a regional level;
- case studies of the Programme key-promoters;
- exploitation of the data base of the various measures of the Programme, a task condemned by the organisation and management deficiencies of the ESF information system;

- Inquiry to promoters and trainees of the various measures.

The extensive methodologies, as the one briefly exposed, face problems not always easy to cross, like the following:

- Reliability and actualisation of data bases which record programme realisations;
- Promoters and direct beneficiaries adhesion to inquiry response;
- Evaluation exercises 'timings' which, for politics-administrative reasons have a short term according to the objectives;
- Scarce resources (of budget) disposed to evaluation.

In the case of intermediate evaluation of Pessoa Programme, these problems were crossed with resource solutions: data base reconstitution; telephone accompanying of mail inquired beneficiaries to rise answer rates; the reinforcement of investigation teams with negative consequences to work organisation of evaluation entities.

In terms of methodological options to this kind of evaluation, at present, we find most acceptable:

- a) To incentive people in charge / Support Technical Structures to consolidate the Programme execution Data Bases (according to Measures and Programmes/formation plans); this would allow to build reliable result indicators;
- b) Amplify case studies to comprise a representative sample of the Program (in terms of measures, promoters type, direct-beneficiaries, regional partition and so on).

This *study cases dimension* has the purpose of having a qualitative vision over the functioning and organisation of the Programme, to esteem effects and to project results until the end of the Programme.

- c) Work with people in charge of the public policies and national and community programmes (with effective complementarities with the Programme object of evaluation), aiming to co-ordinate selection criteria, to improve the coverage of target-groups and to improve the additionally of structural funds in the scope of human resources valuation.

4. Subject of the Evaluation

The main results of the Programme implementation, in terms of physical realisations comparable to the programmed aims, are presented in the following table.

***Distribution of trainees supported by the Programme Professional Formation
and Employment, by Sub-programmes and Measures (1995/96)***

	1995	1996	1995/96	Aims 1994/99
PROFESSIONAL FORMATION AND EMPLOYMENT	134.860	202.369	337.229	-
- INITIAL FORMATION AND INSERTION IN THE LABOUR MARKET	20.999	27.902	48.901	-
- Education system	10872	13.124	23.906	38.555
- Professional Initiation and initial qualification/other modalities	10.160	14.676	24.836	76.590
- Placement in the labour market	57	102	159	-
- IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY AND LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT	68.613	128.212	196.825	-
- Employment Supports	30.120	61.546	91.666	283.080
- Continuous professional training	32.916	55.255	88.171	190.787
- Professional training to unemployed people	4.203	9.372	13.575	45.691
- Training in terms of the negative sectoral evolutions	1.374	2.039	3.413	17.983
- TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	11.797	13.576	25.373	-
- General measures	-	284	284	-
- Trainers training and others	11.797	13.292	75.089	39.500

Source: DAFSE.

The analysis of the elements of physical realisation and of the qualitative information of the inquiry processes allows to point out the following Programme results:

- Great realisation capacity of the Programme concerning action lines which centralise a high percentage of the target-population of the Programme, in terms of aims;
- Institutional profile of the Programme with high number of major dimension enterprises and also enterprise associations, which makes easier the execution dynamic, but also allows the thoroughness of selection requisites and of entities certification.
- Relevance of the continuous formation of active people with origin, mainly, in the training organised by external entities;
- Conception (albeit late) of an intervention aiming the development of small and medium enterprises which intend to reinforce the capacity to promote the training action by this important segment of the enterprise tissue;
- Insufficient training promotion on two domains: intervention modalities which intend to answer to the most difficult target-population in terms of offer (young people with low school qualifications, lone women, social excluded); training offer to new kinds of unemployed people (e.g., active people in the middle age and unemployed people with a higher level of qualification in terms of school and profession).

- Prevailing of a logic of training offer instead of a logic of construction of training demands which may induce answers dynamically adjusted on the offer side.
- Smaller response and execution on measures with a high level of novelty in relation with CAF I, specially from the ones that are most distant from the classic intervention typology concerning employment and training .
- The delay in implementing the general character measures (e.g., production and development of didactic resources and the organising of the certification system, represents an important constraint to develop several strategic aims of the Programme: (i) adjusted training to the demand necessities of the several target-population; (ii) training quality improvement; (iii) competences certification.
- The supports to Construction and Adaptation of Infrastructures did not accomplish, still, in a reasonable way its specific aims: supported investments to employment centres were not oriented to the reinforcement of public service of employment in areas of less income; high investment concentration on the formation units of the public service, combined with a scarce promotion dynamic of training entities and external promoters.

The estimation of *formation measures effects* is somehow difficult because the predominating long- -term courses and established gathering tools, even of continuous training measures, are no longer satisfactory.

From the analysis made we can stand out the following synthesis aspects in terms of obtained effects from the formation measures:

- The co-financed training has contributed to improve the relation between trainees and employment, lowering the percentage of unemployed trainees and inactive people.
- The transition unemployment/employment goes to two-thirds of the trainees included in the Measure Training to unemployed.
- For the larger number of the trainees the main effects of training are mainly felt in terms of the improvement of qualification/competences and professional performance improvement, and less at the level of their situation in the profession.
- The promoters give special emphasis to the contributions of training to professional performance improvement.
- The effects of the financing of the Programme are positive in several domains of the promoters formative structures (installations and, above all, in the trainers recruiting).
- The contractual tie of the formation beneficiaries has developed towards precariousness with the raising of the percentage of ex-trainees with term contacts and lending services.
- Concerning the difficulties on labour market integration stands out the lack of

experience, above all on ex-trainees of the Measure Initial Qualification.

- Training tends to turn easier the immediate placement of young people in the labour market, but the competences acquired do not assure job steadiness.

5. Key results of evaluation

Concerning the intermediate evaluation works, were identified two dimensions of global production of effects from support to training and employment carried out by operational interventions directed to the valuation of human resources, admitting that a very important part of these effects is owed to supports from Pessoa Programme by the diversity and density of target-beneficiaries within this Programme.

- Impact over unemployment indicators of specific target-beneficiaries groups from support measures to employment and training (the attendance of training actions has effects on the immediate reduction of unemployed);
- Impact over the structure of qualification levels of personnel in service on enterprises (the frequency of training actions improves trainees competence);

The main unemployment groups evolution between 1993 and 1996 was positive in the younger population segments of unemployed people and on short-term unemployed, an effect associated to active measures of employment policies including training supports.

Evolution of the unemployed relative importance of some specific groups in the period of 1993-96

Groups	Years	1993	1996	Variation 1993/96 (%)
Unemployed young people under 25 years of age, on total unemployment (%)		36.85	33.07	-3.78
Over one year unemployed, on total unemployment (%)		29.32	41.95	+12.63
Unemployed women, on total unemployment (%)		53.24	51.22	-2.02
Under one year unemployed, over 25 years of age, on total unemployment (%)		40.84	33.55	-7.29
Unemployed young people (15-19 years) on total unemployment (%)		14.42	9.51	-4.91

Source: INE.

The reduction of young people aged between 15 and 19 years also marks a positive result connected to measures offered by PRODEP (Education - Professional Schools) and by Pessoa (Education System and Professional Initiation).

The long-term unemployment behaviour is the most negative element in the period of 1993-96, having 1996 a value similar to the one ten years before. The difficulty on insertion of these unemployed (specially in the women case) appears simultaneously associated to the greater difficulty in promoting and organising formation to this target-population.

Concerning the evolution of qualifications structures in the last decade improvements are observed in the most high levels of the qualification structure:

- Upper management almost duplicate between 1990 and 1996
- Middle management and highly qualified people (+5%)
- An increasing of more or less 6% on qualified people.

Distribution of Workers, by sex and qualification levels

	1986	1990	1994	1996 (%)
Upper Management	2,0	2,0	2,4	3,6
Middle Management	1,7	1,8	2,5	2,8
Managers, chiefs	3,8	3,9	3,9	4,5
High level skills workers	3,7	4,0	4,5	5,3
Skilled workers	39,1	39,8	40,9	45,6
Half- Skilled workers	19,5	18,6	16,7	17,3
Non Skilled workers	11,1	11,4	11,9	10,9
Practitioners and apprentices	10,2	11,4	8,9	8,0
Unknown level	8,9	7,1	8,3	2,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: DE/MQE.

Still in the domain of key results of the intermediate evaluation study, stand out the recommendations. These, trying to rationalise elements of the evaluator reflection and also the results of investigation of the eight months of work.

Following the evaluation model adopted, the recommendations were presented by the following domains: Conception/programming and management and support devices (including the information system)

a) Conception/programming

(to improve the answer condition of the Programme towards the coverage aims of the measures target population)

- Creation of a new action line to support unemployed people with medium and high qualifications, under the shape of apprenticeship for professional development (intervention modality to frame a problem area which stands out with bigger intensity after the Programme conception in 1993);
- Financial reinforcement of the Measure Employment Supports (in a Programme in which the training measures have a great importance); this reinforcement should be

oriented, namely to the Local Employment Initiatives, to the employment supports on the insertion enterprises and temporarily employment scholarships.

- Creation of a Training Programme / Short Term Employment (to reinforce the objectives development conditions)
- Development of a *regular function*, in the domain of articulation between strategic orientations/priorities of the employment and training policies of the several interventions with ESF (namely, sectoral programmes)
- Rationalisation of the information devices of support to management, attendance and Programme evaluation
- Creation of co-ordination devices to stimulate demand and structure the offer of training to target-groups not reached by market dynamics
- Dinamization of programmed realisations concerning Measures of General Character (methods and didactic resources, certification, institutional net of consultants on small enterprises)

a) *Management of support devices*

Some operational orientation recommendations are indicated as an example:

- Development of dissemination devices proper to the needs of the target population with less contact with formation (e.g., social excluded, ethnical minorities, unemployed people connected to negative sectoral evolution)
- To correct the great scope of selection criteria and valorisation of criteria directly connected to training quality
- Reconstructing the attendance function, to assure improvement of the training quality level co-financed though the gradual autonomy of the function and the technical and human qualified resources
- Promoting the evaluation of effectiveness and rationality of the existing measures on employment, to know the obtained results and to improve their coherence
- to assure the attainment of data to effects evaluation of the Programme towards the final targets involved

6. Use of the results

The difficulties concerning the institutionalisation of evaluation policies in Portugal have consequences in the utilisation profile by the evaluation results clients.

The regulating and administrative vision of evaluation processes does not help the utilisation

of results in a perspective of management and Programmes development.

Meanwhile, at present, many decision-makers and people in charge of management started being sensitive to the contributions of evaluation, namely aiming to clarify objectives, the coverage of target-population, action priorities, and so on.

In the case of Pessoa Programme, it exists a group of elements, which allows to think a positive use of evaluation results:

i) In the domain of Programme reprogramming for the period of 1998/99

The technical foundation document of the reprogramming proposal, refers that it had present, on one hand, the priorities defined by national authorities concerning human resources qualification, and on the other hand, recommendations from the evaluation process of the Programme.

This attitude has as consequence, a reinforcement of continuous training and unemployed people training, specially of the most difficult target groups (long time unemployed, minorities, social excluded) and a reinforcement of the support to unemployment measure.

This last point, very emphasised in the evaluation recommendations, became a reinforcement of the global value of the Measure 'Supports to Employment' on about 30 MECU's to the years of 1998 and 1999, and centred on giving more financial support to active employment measures:

- *National Scholarship Recipients Plan* (to young graduated and bachelors, and young people with the II and III qualification degrees, is given practical training in work through apprenticeship for professional development which turn easier the insertion in the labour market - 4000 young people / year);
- *Support to workers in enterprises in process of recovery* or with professional reversion processes (support to contract to employing entities who admit workers from these enterprises and supports to own job creation);
- *Insertion enterprises* (support to social and professional (re)insertion units of unemployed people through the development of activities who satisfy social needs which promote employment in normal labour market).

i) In the domain of articulation between horizontal and sectorial interventions oriented to human resources valorisation

The General Direction of Employment and Professional Formation developed an analysis study de complementarities of the several operational interventions with ESF component which are distributed for several Axis from the CAF I to Portugal (1989/93).

Axis 1. *Qualifying Human Resources*, which includes programmes in the Education area (articulating investments ERDF and ESF supports to scholarships recipients), Science and Technology (with support to scholarships recipients), Training and Employment (Pessoa Programme), Professional Training in Public Administration.

Axis 2. *Improvement of Competition Factors*, which includes support to professional training connected to projects on sectoral modernisation (e.g., agriculture, fishery, industry, tourism).

Axis 3. *Life Quality and Social Cohesion*, which includes interventions of human resources valorisation in the domains of health and social integration.

Axis 4. *Reinforce the Regional Economic Basis*, which assembles interventions, above all, on the autonomous regions (Açores and Madeira) in the regard of Programmes assembling all the Funds.

The work accomplished had for main purpose to assure compatibility between objectives and measures to identify complementarities and over-position areas and of collision on the coverage of target population of the measures of all these programmes.

This is an exercise of reduced impact until the end of CAF II, due to the installed dynamics, the relations between promoters, and the predominant management logics. Nevertheless, it represents an important utility of the intermediate evaluations in two perspectives:

- To rationalise the interventions financed by structural funds with the aim of raising levels of efficiency and effectiveness of the invested resources;
- To assure an adequate articulation between financed interventions and strategic priorities of human resources valorisation national policies with the purpose of reinforcing the aims of additionality of structural funds and to enlarge the effects of interventions towards promoters and direct beneficiaries.

7. Evaluation Impacts

While external entities, evaluators don't have a rigorous notion of nature and attainment of impacts of an intermediate evaluation.

The notes of several elements maybe will help us to figure some conclusions:

(i) Since the beginning of the intermediate evaluation exercise - and towards the non-existence of reliable data execution - the Programme's management has developed efforts to assure the network functioning of the several measures data bases of the main execution entities of the Programme;

(ii) The activities attendance of promoters of training which haven't been made in the

period 1994-96 is now in course allowing to know execution data (trainees involved and respective characteristics, immediate results on competence, ...);

(iii) The General Direction of Professional Training and Employment) has been structuring a system of attendance and evaluation of human resources evaluation policies with public, national and community finance; this system setting has been benefiting from the work of several evaluation studies, namely the intermediate evaluation contributions of Pessoa Programme;

(iv) A set of needs of studying the technical support to policies redefinition (for instance rationalisation of active employment measures, reorientation of the mission and aims of the training centres of the public net), identified in the intermediate evaluation recommendations where, meanwhile, turned into new *ex-post* evaluation studies;

(v) In the intermediate studies of the Community Initiative Programmes in the Human Resources area (ADAPT and Employment) the ordering entity (GICEA - Community Initiatives Office) privileged an idea of evaluation cycle contracting at the same time the intermediate evaluation, the on going evaluation and the *ex-post* evaluation; this is a novelty in the problematic approach of evaluation on portuguese authorities which, once adopted by other management entities, can contribute to develop the evaluation function in methodological and operational terms.

In *synthesis*, and also reflecting the noted observations in point 6, the intermediate evaluation could have contributed to: (i) improve the information system allowing to create conditions to develop with greater effectiveness the monitoring and the Programme *ex-post* evaluation; (ii) to support reprogramming activities of the Programme concerning the CAF II; (iii) to reinforce the need of co-ordinate measures and programmes oriented to the human resources evaluation which reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness of public means (national and of the Community); (iv) to spread methodologies and evaluation practices helping to consolidate an evaluation system of policies in the employment and professional training domain.