

Harnessing ICT for social action, a digital volunteering programme (Spain, 25 March 2014)

Social Inclusion – Some Portuguese actions¹

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1. What are the current situation and the recent trends regarding digital inclusion policies in your country?

Portugal aims conjoint efforts, from official and private institutions, government and society itself, towards the digital inclusion of all or most of its active members.

It's not enough to mobilise only parts of the variables of the equation. This subject has to be a relevant topic, on everyone's agenda.

Some of the initiatives are:

- a) The first Digital Inclusion Centre – CID (Centro de Inclusão Digital) was inaugurated in 2013, with the purpose of providing computer and Internet access to 1,200 people with less economic resources.
- b) With a Microsoft funding of \$100,000 – one hundred thousand dollars – from the Microsoft YouthSpark Programme, the main goal was to provide the necessary start-up tools, favouring job recruitment and supporting creativity and entrepreneurship.
- c) In the context of the Portuguese Digital Agenda (Agenda Portugal Digital) in the initiative named Promoting digital inclusion and regular use of the Internet (Promover a inclusão digital e a utilização regular da Internet), aim to promote the use of ICT for social inclusion (ICT and Society), to allow a wide penetration of technologies and Digital Economy in the population and enhance digital citizenship, including citizens in remote areas, low educational levels, elderly or with special needs, in a logic of lifelong learning.
- d) Incentives to digital inclusion through recognition and certification of digital skills with the Certificate of Basic Skills in Information Technology (Diploma de Competências Básicas em Tecnologias da Informação), whose coordination is done by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT).

On the context of ICT and Society, some of the powerful resources for building eSkills up, are

- Develop digital literacy and e-inclusion policies;
- Facilitate access and empowerment of citizens through ICT;
- Bridge the digital divide;
- Expand talent and training through ICT, by reaching out to the local communities, Polytechnic Institutes, NGOs.

¹ Prepared for the Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion programme coordinated by ÖSB Consulting, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Applica, and funded by the European Commission.

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Some examples:

- CID's do Programa Escolhas (102 inclusion centres from the ACIDI (High Com. for Immigration) – "Choices Programme - Programa Escolhas";
- RUTIS (Seniors universities network) enhance integration of ICT in senior universities curricula;
- Acesso Team - working on accessibility for special needs citizens, usability and web-accessibility
 - How is the **reporting** on national digital inclusion policies, its **implementation** and **target areas** organised?

The implementation and target areas are ruled by 3 intervention guidelines:

- 1) Online services
Goal: provide better and more online government and enterprise services;
- 2) Qualification
Goal: provide basic knowledge of IT and Internet usage;
- 3) Access
Goal: provide basic access conditions to online services.
 - Which **data** that links digital inclusion initiatives to social inclusion are collected?

The available data is the one related to the Information Society in Portugal 2010, compilation of data, publication coordinated by the Knowledge Society Agency (UMIC), in collaboration with the INE – National Statistics Institute, within the National Higher Council of Statistics, with data gathered by the following entities: Knowledge Society Agency (UMIC), INE – National Statistics Institute, ICP-ANACOM – National Communications Authority, GEPE – Office of Strategy and Planning of Education, GPEARI-Statistics – Office of Planning, Strategy, Evaluation and International Relations of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, 01. 07. 2011.

More information at:

http://www.english.umic.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3026&Itemid=167

2. What are the most important tangible social outcome areas for digital inclusion policies?

- Globalise fast and easy information access;
- Employment;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Bureaucracy reduction;
- Access to special credit conditions.
 - How are ICT awareness, motivation and engagement supported in relation to specific social outcomes in national policies?

As stated above, government, private enterprises and the society itself are committed to the necessary effort, regarding the short and long-term benefits.

The fulfilment of the 3 main objectives defined in the intervention guidelines is the central goal.



On the other hand, Portugal, through the Network ICT and Society program encourages partnerships in ICT (e.g. companies in the ICT sector and business associations). We would also emphasise the national coalition for digital jobs linked to the European Initiative Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

What has been done to stimulate multi-sector partnerships in relation to digital inclusion? What are the barriers?

The main initiative is described in question 1. But the Agenda Portugal Digital initiative is the main driver.

There are also some working groups on digital inclusion managed by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT).

The barriers are, essentially, economics wise and concerning IT know-how.

3. Which target populations should be emphasised in digital inclusion policies that aim to tackle the social challenges as identified for example by the Europe2020 strategy and the Social Investment Package?

In Portugal, for example, the digital inclusion programmes have been repeatedly used as a way of training academic and professional individuals from socioeconomic disadvantage communities – for example: literacy training for adults with the use of information technologies – Programa Escolhas (Choices Programme). This is a nationwide government programme, created in 2001, promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and integrated into the High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue – ACIDI, whose mission is to promote the social inclusion of children and youth vulnerable in socioeconomic contexts in view of equal opportunities and strengthening social cohesion. Currently in its 5th generation, which will run until December 31, 2015, the “Choices Programme” maintains agreements with consortia of 110 local social inclusion projects in vulnerable communities, with the option to fund over 30 projects, many of which are located in areas with a focus descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities.

In our opinion, target populations that should be emphasised in digital inclusion policies are:

- 1) Unemployed with low skills;
- 2) Unemployed youth.

Websites

www.seg-social.pt
www.fct.pt/index.phtml.en
www.fct.pt/dsi/index.phtml.en
<http://portugaldigital.pt/index/>
www.diploma.fct.pt/
www.ajudastecnicas.gov.pt
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