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PROJECT "WE PROPOSE!" TERRITORIAL CITIZENSHIP AND CURRICULAR INNOVATION IN PORTUGUESE GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

Proyecto ¡Nosostros Proponemos! Ciudadanía territorial e innovación curricular en la educación geográfica portuguesa

Projet "Nous Proposons!" citoyenneté territoriale et innovation curriculaire dans l'éducation géographique portugaise

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Abstract:

This paper considers the strengths of the project methodology for the construction of a more innovative, active and problematizing geographical education among Portuguese secondary students, through the critical reflection on the applicability of the Project "We Propose! / Nós Propomos!", in the last five years. The methodological approach is based

on a review of the national and international literature, a simplified content analysis of the last three curricular reforms in Portugal since the beginning of this century, and recourse to the explanation and interpretation of descriptive memories of the project. The scholarly significance of this study resides in the demonstration of how students are placed in contact with real-life geographers from the municipalities and local associations beyond the institutional and economic fabric of their surroundings and learn to value geographic knowledge and how geography can help in solving land use problems.

Keywords:

Project methodology; geographical education; curricular innovation; territorial citizenship; Portugal.

Resumen:

Este documento considera los puntos fuertes de la metodología del proyecto para la construcción de una educación geográfica más innovadora, activa y problemática entre los estudiantes de secundaria portugueses, a través de la reflexión crítica sobre la aplicabilidad del Proyecto ¡Nosostros Proponemos! / Nós Propomos!, en los últimos cinco años. El enfoque metodológico se basa en una revisión de la literatura nacional e internacional, un análisis de contenido simplificado de las últimas tres reformas curriculares en Portugal desde el comienzo de este siglo, y el recurso a la explicación e interpretación de memorias descriptivas del proyecto. La importancia académica de este estudio reside en la demostración de cómo los estudiantes se ponen en contacto con geógrafos de la vida real de las municipalidades y asociaciones locales más allá del tejido institucional y económico de su entorno y aprenden a valorar el conocimiento geográfico y cómo la geografía puede ayudar a resolver problemas de uso del suelo.

Palabras clave:

Metodología del proyecto; educación geográfica; innovación curricular; ciudadanía territorial; Portugal.

Résumé:

Cet article examine les points forts de la méthodologie du projet pour la construction d'une éducation géographique plus innovante, active et problématique parmi les élèves portugais du secondaire, à travers la réflexion critique sur l'applicabilité du projet "Nous proposons! / Nós Propomos!", au cours des cinq dernières années. L'approche méthodologique est basée sur une revue de la littérature nationale et internationale, une analyse simplifiée du contenu des trois dernières réformes curriculaires au Portugal depuis le début de ce siècle, et le recours à l'explication et l'interprétation des

mémoires descriptives du projet. L'importance scientifique de cette étude réside dans la démonstration de la façon dont les étudiants sont mis en contact avec des géographes réels des municipalités et des associations locales au-delà du tissu institutionnel et économique de leur environnement et apprennent à valoriser les connaissances géographiques et comment la géographie peut aider à résoudre problèmes d'utilisation des terres.

Mots-clés:

Méthodologie du projet; éducation géographique; innovation curriculaire; citoyenneté territoriale; Le Portugal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the transition to the 21st century, Portugal has undergone an important curricular reorganization in the field of education, which is clearly based on the challenge of promoting citizenship, through the development in the students of cognitive, procedural and attitudinal skills, commonly understood as "knowledge in action". In the field of geography education are pointed out guidelines of the national curriculum towards territorial citizenship, multi-scale reasoning and critical spatial thinking. It is up to the teacher to identify, construct and apply educational experiences that allow – within an active teaching-learning and student-centered methodology and through a flexible curriculum development process adapted to the school context and the students – the creation of conditions for each one to construct a geographical knowledge that allows it to understand, problematize and act on its daily territory in a more critical and conscious way.

Aiming at the achievement of meaningful learning and the holistic and integral training of students as citizens prepared for the socio-spatial challenges of the 21st century, the "case study" figure officially appears in the Portuguese secondary school of geography curriculum. It is a work of a more practical nature and very directed to an active local citizenship. This "Case Study" is presented as an effective opportunity to introduce knowledge of reality in work in Geography and bring the World into the Geography classroom (Alves et al., 2001, p. 57). The "Case Study" is effective when students critically analyze problems that affect the region where they live, reflecting on possible solutions to the problems detected.

Taking advantage of this opportunity in the Portuguese national curriculum, the Project "We Propose" (PWP) arose more than ten years ago, which seeks to leverage geographic education to develop territorial citizenship in students of various levels of education. Nourished by a strong basist culture, of citizen participation and intervention in the social and natural environment, based on school research methodologies, PWP mobilizes thousands of students in Portugal and other countries and hundreds of

schools, in order to place geography service to active citizenship. The purpose of this paper is precisely to argue and reflect to what extent PWP really contributes to territorial citizenship, based on the curricular documents in force: Essential Learnings and Student Profile After Leaving Mandatory Schooling.

In addition to a review of the international literature on geography education and school geography, the methodological line is composed of qualitative methods and techniques (semi-structured interviews to the teachers, testimonies and opinions of students, and critical content analysis of social media and other documents of the PWP, beyond the laws that regulate the evolution of the Portuguese curriculum), crossed with a micro analysis of ethnographic fieldwork of the authors, taking into account the research-action work developed by them the last five years.

Specifically, we will start with a reflection on the presuppositions and theoretical principles underlying the contribution of geographical education to a territorial citizenship of our students. In a second point we will make a brief analysis of several Portuguese curricular reforms based on their potentialities to generate curricular innovation and facilitate the advancement of project methodology in geographical education with a formative value for citizenship. Finally, this paper considers the strengths of the problem based learning and the school project methodology for the construction of a more innovative, active and problematizing geographical education among Portuguese secondary students, through the critical reflection on the applicability of the Project "We Propose!", in the last ten years, emphasizing the role that real-life geographers and municipal technicians can play in helping students of the project learn with meaningful procedures and content to develop their geographic capabilities for a fuller territorial citizenship. The paper concludes with a summary of main findings.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION AND TERRITORIAL CITIZENSHIP: THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

A geographical education offers more than skills, subject knowledge and generic attributes. It also develops a set of discipline-specific capabilities that contribute to a graduate's future learning and experience, granting them special ways of thinking for lifelong development and for contributing to the welfare of themselves, their community and their world (Lambert, 2011; Solari et al., 2017; Walkington et al., 2018; Demirci et al., 2018). It´s the development of geocapabilities that enable students to think creatively and critically about themselves, their communities, and the world. The concept of geocapability is highly relevant for contemporary debates about the role of geographical education and in preparing students for life, work, and citizenship. These are the principles of the multi-national geocapabilities project. Using the idea of "powerful disciplinary knowledge",

the project asks what geography has to offer that helps young people develop the human capabilities they need in order to live a life that they consider valuable (Solem et al., 2013; Lambert et al., 2015; Uhlenwinkel et al., 2017; Brooks et al., 2017).

The social and natural environment is a valuable educational resource, in the sense that it is believed that outside of school we also learn. It is in the everyday experience of the student that he really learns to develop the critical spirit, responsibility, curiosity and originality, being the social and natural environment a source of stimulus for active learning and for the fulfillment of education for territorial citizenship (Hugonie, 1997; Lambert & Balderstone, 2000; Lambert & Machon, 2001; González & Donert, 2014; Claudino, 2014a, 2014b, 2019; IGU-CGE, 2015).

To educate geographically means to develop in students the skills necessary for them to be able to explain and think geographically and not just to describe the territory (Mérenne-Schoumaker, 1985; Brooks et al. 2017), because we´re also investing in the attitudinal aspects of learning (experimental contents with affective components, positioning, affective implication, explicit personal commitment) (Cachinho, 2002, 2012; IGU-CGE, 2015). In this way, we are also ensuring that school geography breaks with the transmissive school and is based on a constructivist paradigm, which presupposes that the student builds his own knowledge, valuing methodologies of school work supported by an active pedagogy (Benejam, 1992, 1996; Mérenne-Schoumaker, 1999, 2015; IGU-CGE, 2015; Cachinho, 2017).

In this context, it is necessary to summon the most useful didactic strategies to advance the critical geographical knowledge related to the main problems and themes of space organization that are also territorial problems and require the mobilization of specific analysis skills of critical spatial thinking. However, this approach stimulates and is corroborating an engagement of thematic anchors of the contents of School Geography in real social and urban problems. We are not only making sure that the student work is polarized into areas of significant interest for themselves but also celebrating the social utility of school geography in order to develop the skills necessary for territorial citizenship. A geography capable of mobilizing the students' previous representations and knowledge, in order to allow reflection on the problems that arise in the urban environment, by the way societies and their respective groups are using their space (Cachinho & Reis, 1991; Hugonie, 1989; Souto González, 2002, 2017; Cachinho, 2002, 2012; IGU-CGE, 2015).

According to Souto González (1998), for this it is necessary that the teacher perceive that the purpose that should regulate his practice lies in seeking to highlight the insufficiencies of the students' previous ideas and attitudes regarding the understanding of the contents/ thematic problems in order to explain them adequately. To the Geography teacher is required not to manipulate students' educational itineraries, but

rather creating interesting educational conditions and experiences that allow students to participate actively in the process of knowledge construction and to access progressively expressing more complex and integrated levels of cognitive and moral development. The teacher provides and guides the conceptual and attitudinal change of the student, providing learning experiences that reveal the need to modify their conceptions and even values in light of the changes that the community has shown. This can only be achieved by defining thematic contents in the form of problems or links that engage previous knowledge, which can cause cognitive and attitudinal conflicts in the student (My hypothesis of explanation is the correct one? Do I need to deepen my knowledge of this aspect? ...). The lack of resolution should lead to the recognition of the need for correction and reconfiguration of their ideas and previous attitudes. Students' learning can be improved by organizing activities whose contents are potentially significant or by mobilizing materials and didactic resources that can be actively manipulated and worked on by the students themselves – as is the case with the experience we will present below. The establishment of relevant relations between new information and prior knowledge should be promoted in order to achieve a personal representation of knowledge. When one shows them how the clear insufficiency of the prejudices that persist in their scheme of knowledge does not allow to explain and to intervene properly in the space of life.

In order for students to understand the spaces of their everyday life that have become extremely complex, they need to learn to look at both a broader and global context of which they are all part and the elements that characterize and distinguish their local context. We understand that, in order to achieve the objectives of this education, the place of the student should be taken into account, but with a view to enabling the student to construct a more general framework of references that allows him to make more critical analyzes of his daily space of life (Cavalcanti, 2008).

Thus, a management of the geography curriculum centered on the local environment as a didactic laboratory triggers interest in problematic training experiences of the real, that is, in the study of problems, of real and important questions that are posed to societies and spaces due to the consequences of their use of territory (Pinchemel, 1982; Hugonie, 1989). The problems will be all the more real and meaningful the closer they are to the students, the more they affect their daily lives and the society in which they live and enable them to establish relationships with what is happening in the space of the other (Hugonie, 1992, 1997; Demirci et al., 2018). A "problematic geography of the real" implies knowing how to think space and means putting key questions so as not only to know it, but also to discuss it, to think it, to understand it in order to be able to act in it.

And it is in this sense that the figure of "case study" appears in the curriculum of Portuguese secondary education. This methodological proposal has aim to develop skills such as: Interpret, analyze and discuss specific cases that highlight the interrelationships

between natural and human phenomena; Analyze specific cases of territory management that show the importance of preserving and conserving the natural and cultural heritage; Critically analyze problems that affect the region where you live, reflecting on possible solutions to the problems detected; Use appropriate research techniques and instruments in field work; Select, systematize and interpret statistical data, making the most of the use of graphic and cartographic expression techniques. The Case Study is, therefore, a methodological proposal / teaching strategy, which enables the development of instrumental, interpersonal and systemic skills. In the case of Geography, it is intended that students observe the space / area where they live, to select possible problems, to analyze them critically, to reflect about them and try to find solutions. It is a practical work, which all students must develop during secondary education, and if possible promote citizenship. However, not being subject to evaluation in the national exam, it ends up having an important relative in the learning of the discipline, when it is not even ignored or referred to a subordinate place; that is, to develop if there is time (Alves et al., 2001; Sousa, 2017).

In this sense, Cavalcanti (1998, 2008, 2012) states that the purpose of teaching Geography must be to help form broader and more critical thinking and conceptions about the space category, within a critical-social didactics, in which teaching-learning becomes a process of knowledge by the student, mediated by the teacher and by the content of the subject taught. It is also argued that learning is investigating. It adopts the concept of research to designate the learning process, based on the development of ordinary knowledge and investigative strategies of students. Research emerges as a key concept in the teaching-learning process and in the experience we bring here, when we encourage local consultation by students of works, reports or other documents of interest to the history and geography of their city. The approaches to school research are based on the principle that knowledge is operative, that is, the student constructs his knowledge from his experiences and the concepts he already possesses, from the so-called previous ideas (Souto González, 2016).

In the context of the development of the paradigm of constructivism, the development of the transcalar, reasoning, based on the thinking of Yves Lacoste (2003), it´s definitely very useful for the preparation and formation of "geographically competent citizens" (to adopt the language of the "Curricular Guidelines" of the subject of Geography, for Portuguese basic education – Câmara et al, 2001) for the reading, description and interpretation of spatial problems from a systemic and complex approach. It is also important to prepare citizens in general and young people, in particular, for intercultural dialogue, through a transcultural knowledge of local cultures.

The conceptual assumptions of geographical education and its didactic impelled the creation of a formative offer valuing an active territorial citizenship; we prefer this concept to that of "space citizenship", inspired by David Harvey (1973) and Edward Soja

(2010) and adopted in the teaching of Geography by González & Donert (2014), because the territory is directly related to the appropriation, transformation and identification of and by the communities (Claudino, 2005, 2019). This territorial citizenship stimulates critical spatial thinking and promotes cognitive and attitudinal skills concomitant with the pluralscalar spirit and local-global dialogue. These benchmarks reinforce the paradigm of the valuation and validation of the learning acquired in diverse cultural contexts, from a perspective of lifelong learning, and guarantee that any learning, in a formal or informal context, can be validated and capitalized, respecting the forming their own education and training path.

3. "ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS" AND THE NEW PROFILE OF THE STUDENT IN A CURRICULUM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE POTENTIAL OF A NEW CURRICULAR REFORM IN PORTUGAL

The Curricular Reorganization of Basic Education arises through Decree Law no. 6 of January 18, 2001, which introduces a concept of curriculum as a set of learnings that students should carry out and competences to be developed by them throughout elementary education, and in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Basic Law of the Educational System. Thus, the concept of curriculum was not identified with a set of disciplines, nor with a syllabus for each cycle or year of schooling, nor the syllabus of each subject was reduced to a list of contents and methods to be taught within each one of them. On the contrary, however, it is defined by a set of competences considered essential and structuring in the scope of the development of the National Curriculum for each one of the cycles of basic education, the profile of terminal competences of this level of education, as well as the types of educational experiences that should be proportionate to the students. It is therefore assumed that the National Curriculum is configured at the central level, which encompasses the major learning objectives of students, the skills to be developed and the type of educational experiences that should be provided to all students, but it is recognized that their achievement implies a flexible process, which requires, at different levels, the interpretation of each school work context. This conception of the curriculum implies that adequate responses are found to the characteristics of schools in different places and regions, but above all, responses to the characteristics of each class and each student (Esteves, 2010; Martins, 2017).

At the beginning of this second decade of the 21st century, the concept of the National Curriculum is changed again with the promulgation of Decree-Law no. 139 of 2012 and, according to the Ministry, this is understood as the set of contents and objectives that duly articulated, form the basis of organization of teaching and evaluation of students' performance. In this legal document it was established that the curriculum is materialized

in study plans and in the knowledge and skills to be acquired and developed by the students and has as reference the programs of the disciplines and the learning goals to be reached by each year of schooling and cycle of teaching, in a closed and isolated way (Martins, 2017).

The curricular goals are organized in each school year, by domains, subdomains that materialize in general objectives and descriptors in a hierarchical and prescriptive way in the sense in which the teachers, as mere executants, should comply, with very little room for maneuver. We are faced with a political discourse regarding the conception of curriculum different from the previous discourse and the focus is again placed on the cognitive development of the students, having as reference the objectives and formal contents of learning established by the curricular programs.

According to Alexandre et al. (2015), the analysis of these curricular goals reveals a reduced and closed conception of the educational and formative value of geographical education, since it presents: absence of a holistic view of reality, due to the sharp separation between physical / natural and human / social in geography; in adopting a model of curriculum development based on an atomized listing of content and ad hoc objectives; devoid of any kind of conceptual hierarchy adequate to the process of knowledge construction. The process of public discussion and application of the curricular goals was the subject of a strong protest by teachers associations, parents and teachers themselves, because of the difficult feasibility of implementation in the field due to the very high number of goals to be achieved by the students in each year of schooling. The authors argue that not only the entry into force of the curricular goals is an enhancer of the devaluation of the curricular and social status of geography, but also represents an epistemological regression in the way the teaching-learning process is conceived, not being favorable to curricular innovation.

In 2016, half a decade after this process, there is a new discourse on curriculum, which tends to value curricular flexibility again. Once again, competences are now identified as key competences and 10 areas of development: Language and texts, Information and Communication, Thinking and Problem Solving, Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking, Interpersonal Relationship, Well Being and Health, Aesthetic and Artistic Sensitivity, Technical Knowledge and Technologies, and Consciousness and Mastery of the Body. In each of these areas, operational descriptors and practical implications are also identified. As was the case at the beginning of the century with the Curricular Reorganization of Basic Education of 2001, it is specified the understanding of the concept of competence, arguing that they are complex combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes that mobilize "knowledge in action", being very pertinent to solve daily problems. They are cognitive, metacognitive, social, emotional, physical and practical. They do not exclude each other, but are complementary, and do not correspond to a

specific curricular area and it is believed that each curricular area contributes to them, being necessarily involved multiple skills, theoretical and practical.

In a truly participatory process, involving the associations of teachers, universities and other specialists and political experts, "essential learning" (EL) is defined in curricular guidance documents based on the planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning, leading to the development of the skills in the profile of the student leaving compulsory education, with a link to a curriculum for a 21st century citizenship – the "Profile of the Students at the Exit of Mandatory Schooling", in Portuguese "PASEO – Perfil dos Alunos à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória" (DGE, 2017). In a clearly constructive perspective and being unanimously acknowledged that there is a problem of extension of the curricular documents, it was tried to identify, discipline by discipline and year by year, the essential set of contents, capacities and attitudes, with a view to pursuing the following objectives: to consolidate learning in an effective and meaningful way, refocused on what is essential; developing skills that require more time (performing work involving research, analysis, debate and reflection); and to allow effective pedagogical differentiation in the classroom. However, there is no repeal of previous existing documents, nor the consequent adoption of new manuals.

EL are the Common Curriculum Denominator for all students, but do not exhaust what a student should do throughout the school year. It is not the minimums to achieve for a student's approval, they are the common base of reference. They allow the freeing of curricular space so that, in each school, articulated work can be promoted between the EL and the other learning provided in the other curricular documents, with a deepening of themes, diversified interdisciplinary explorations, mobilization of local components of the curriculum, among other domains of curricular autonomy.

4. PROJECT "WE PROPOSE!": BRINGING THE WORLD INTO THE GEOGRAPHY CLASSROOM

The Project "We Propose!" challenges students to identify local problems that are relevant to them, carry out fieldwork on them, and present proposals for community intervention. The development of the Project is not rigid and tries to respect different rhythms of schools, teachers and students. One of the fundamental principles of the "We Propose!" Project is the bet on the development of educational partnerships among various educational actors or with potential educational intervention (Claudino, 2018). The University of Lisbon provides general coordination of the project and talks with all other partners and also assures the training of teachers, from a pedagogical-didactic point of view, as well as in a more specific area of land use planning. Schools are central partners, mobilizing teachers and students and, of course, educational spaces and times

for the development of the project. The municipalities identify with the students the major concerns that mark the planning of their territory, present in the Municipal Master Plans, and provide documentary and statistical information to support the development of school projects. They often give direct support to students and their work groups and are very receptive to proposals made by students, some of which have been implemented effectively and/or have been incorporated into the review of the Municipal Master Plans. Students also have contact with geographic information systems companies that support the mapping of information, providing training to teachers and students in order to use their software. The scholarly significance of this study resides in the demonstration of how students are placed in contact with local associations beyond the institutional and economic fabric of their surroundings and learn to value geographic knowledge and how geography can help in solving land use problems.

Consequently, PWP is an opportunity for students to develop the great purposes and geographical skills of EL and PASEO, namely: Promote the appetite for knowing / thinking about the geographical space and the permanent availability for the critical reconstruction of knowledge itself; Develop geographic curiosity as a promoter of education for citizenship and solving everyday problems; Develop a sense of belonging and attitudes of territorial solidarity, in a perspective of social, economic and environmental sustainability; Identify problematic situations related to geographic space and participate, through the search and presentation of grounded solutions, in the resolution of spatial problems;

With this caveat, we identify, then, the different phases that follow the development of the Project We Propose! (PWP) in Portugal (Claudino, 2019), assuming the differences that, of course, we will find in other countries in which it has spread.

First, there's the meeting with the teachers and the school communities that volunteered to work with the project. This meeting is aimed at integrating the teachers and schools that participate for the first time in the PWP, discussing its objectives and general principles of operation. On the other hand, there is a brief review of the Project in the previous year, the rules to be reformulated, translated in the Project Regulation, as well as the calendar of activities for the new school year are discussed. With the expansion of the Project to schools throughout the country, this debate has been increasingly developed using information technologies - but with the loss of an always important personal contact.

An important stage is the one of signing of protocols with local authorities. In the matrix of the Project, is the establishment of partnerships with several actors, as mentioned before. By concretizing this collaboration among actors, collaboration protocols are signed, in a more or less informal environment, either in the municipality or in the school itself. These agreements have a generic discourse on cooperation between

the entities involved, but they have a great symbolic relevance, due to the commitment to which those responsible for the institutions are bound.

Thus, not only does the student recognize the need to establish territorial partnerships and / or the appearance of new territorial agents, he will also develop a case study, reporting concrete examples of actions that allow the resolution of environmental and sustainability problems - in the community, close to the student, revealing the capacity for argumentation and critical thinking. It will also develop the importance of listening or incarnating the role of representing a certain interest group, knowing how to argue and discuss with other representatives of other groups, highlighting the territorial interests of each one of them, as well as theirs and identifying and discussing the benefits and costs inherent to each one. In conclusion, these skills will result - in the spirit of EL and PASEO - so that the student recognizes that the same territory can be the target of several types of intervention that concern different and, very often, contradictory objectives.

The third stage is the identification of local problems by students. This identification is done through dialogue in the classroom. On the other hand, the teachers conduct itineraries with the students in the school area, so that they look more closely at local problems. Another way of raising awareness of local problems, not least, is to respond to an inquiry, built up from pre-surveys answered by pupils from various participating schools. This survey has multiple objectives: i) to lead the student to identify their main living spaces; ii) reflect on their participation in associations and other community entities; iii) identify their representations about the responsibility of the various actors in solving local problems and, of course, their own responsibilities; iv) to identify, also, the local problems that the own identifies; and v), finally, its expectations on the PWP. There is clearly here a whole discussion proposal, brought to the class group, about the citizen contribution and the local problems to be developed in the schools (Claudino, 2017).

In the students' responses, shopping centers or cafes appear as privileged spaces; drug use, lack of safety or pollution are among the most focused problems; and the mayors are the actors most responsible for solving local problems. As the Project progresses, more often students affirm their individual responsibility for solving them - which will result from the increasing awareness that the Project has promoted among participating students and teachers over the years. In the expectations regarding the project, the answers tend to value the accomplishment of study visits.

Among the problems most commonly identified by the students are the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings in the inner city, generally suggesting the reception of social or hotel services; the occupation of abandoned land / urban voids in the inner city, often as a leisure and sports space; the creation of tourist itineraries, valuing the heritage of urban

centers; the construction of virtual museums on the local architectural and environmental heritage or the improvement of communication routes and public transport. Depending on the characteristics of the students' areas of residence, they tend to value different aspects. Thus, for example, in suburban areas, transport and communications problems are usually valued, just as in tourism areas, the issues of urban quality of life and the valuation of the local environmental and heritage take on great importance. In 2019/20, perhaps following a "Greta Thunberg effect", environmental problems have assumed greater relevance: sustainable mobility, alternative energies, recycling, among others, appear with renewed importance (Claudino, 2020).

Although they are different activities, the formation of groups and the definition of their theme end up happening more or less simultaneously. Typically, they happen by the 2nd month of the Project. Each group has, in general, 4 students, but sometimes this number is higher. As mentioned, a constructivist orientation of learning is adopted, in the sense that students select problems that are significant to them. Thus, students have the freedom to select project themes - from the recovery and reuse of a dilapidated building in the city center to the reformulation of a public transport route, through the construction of a small playground on abandoned land, by the implementation of measures to help combat the local aging of the population or the creation of a youth arts school, just to give examples of some of the projects that have been developed over the years. Often students begin by defining very broad problems. The indications given at the level of the Project are, however, to identify concrete problems in order to avoid the presentation of generic proposals for intervention.

In a fifth stage, the coordination team develops a session with students in schools. One or more members of the coordination team travels to each participating school. In this session: i) the objectives of the Project are recalled, ii) the phases in which it takes place, iii) the network of schools in the country, and iv), also the foreign universities that participate. The discuss centers in the students and teachers about the projects they are developing. In some cases, students make mini-presentations of projects that are already starting. The presence of the member of the coordination team can help to clarify some doubts and also serves to be aware of the doubts and problems that may arise. But the most important part of this session is personal contact, always very important, with students, teachers and the school itself.

A sixth stage includes working sessions on the Municipal Master Plan. Whenever possible, technicians from municipalities meet with students and teachers and share the main concerns of the Municipal Master Plan, which help to frame the problems students are researching. This is also a way of bringing students closer to local power, which has been a very important asset of this contact. When the projects are already started, in some city councils the technicians met with each of the working groups - in a very rich

experience, surely for the students, but also for the technicians, who thus also, by this way, get to know the sensitivity of young people to local problems.

The core of the PWP lies in the fieldwork and this is the next stage. Students go out in the field, photograph the spaces and urban problems they want to work on and listen to the people in the community, in small surveys or interviews. When students identify a problem, they often construct / propose solutions for it. Their opinions are valued, but they are intended to listen to the public about these problems and their own proposals, emphasizing that the gathering of these views will give more value and credibility to their proposals. Thus, the students carry out photographs, population surveys and interviews with retail operators, mayors or other local actors. The fact that the students approach the population in order to gather their opinion on a problem is also a way of sensitizing the population to the problem.

The elaboration of the proposals by the students, the eighth stage, are presented in two ways: a multimedia resource and a small descriptive memory. The PWP is increasingly invited to take part in scientific meetings, local assemblies in the municipality with elected members from the local government, the events of the schools themselves, such as the end of school year exhibitions. Thus, it has been increasingly requested to prepare posters with the students' proposals.

In February, 5 months after the project begins, there´s a Intermediate self-assessment (ninth stage) when they are already at an advanced stage of the implementation of their group project, the students respond to an online questionnaire, on the website of PWP where they identify the tasks they have already done and those that they have to accomplish, and point out the difficulties they are experiencing. This exercise is worth, above all, as a self-assessment activity, in which the group makes its own assessment of the project's development. Coordination responds to each of these self-assessments, generally praising the work already done and giving, in some cases, suggestions on how to overcome problems identified by students (such as unsuccessful contacts with local authorities) and tasks to be carried out in the future (usually related with the auscultation of the population).

For the dissemination of student proposals all groups participate in the National Seminar, which is held at the University of Lisbon, where they present their proposals in the morning, for which they have 10 minutes, in a room with colleagues from other schools. In the afternoon, the plenary session is held, where academics and administrators take interventions and distribute awards and prizes to the students. The dissemination of proposals extends through schools to youth assemblies and, above all, municipalities, with dissemination in the local media.

In the final Project Evaluation, at the end of the school year, an evaluation survey is launched for students and teachers, with an anonymous response. Pupils complain about their lack of time, in a year in which they have school exams. Sometimes they complain about the lack of collaboration of their local authorities or the people they are addressing and ask for their opinion and refuse to answer. Teachers often complain about the need for greater dissemination of the Project, in an effort they considered must be shared. But the overall balance is unequivocally positive or very positive.

As a preparatory and secondary school teacher, the founder of PWP requested and received support for school activities from outside the school world, as students also expand their networks by meeting and getting to know technicians and professionals working in geographical and spatial planning in the municipalities and other political or civil society institutions. Later, as deputy, he was surprised that in the organs of locality to which he belonged, there were no requests for support for school activities. Perhaps this was the main reason why the PWP always presented the objective of mobilizing the municipalities for the realization of the Project.

This mobilization has several objectives. The first way is to hold a session in which councilors or municipal technicians discuss with the students the Municipal Master Plan, identifying the major concerns and the broad guidelines for the development of the municipality. Of course, this is also a way of putting young people in dialogue with the municipality. Then, there is the direct support on what and how to read technical reports and other municipal documents: to provide the plan of a square, to indicate the projects of the municipality for a concrete problem ... Naturally, this work along the Project with the students has, admittedly, another objective: to mobilize / interest the municipalities to the work developed by the students, that is, to raise awareness of their proposals. Finally, it is intended that local authorities implement, whenever possible, the students' proposals. In the formalization of relations between the University /IGOT and schools protocols have been signed, which are extended to local authorities whenever possible. The protocols are generic documents, in which these entities reaffirm their purpose of reciprocal cooperation, without concrete obligations being established, from the outset by the local authorities. Also because of the voluntarist character of the cooperation of the municipality with the School, within the scope of the Project, this relation is different from institution to institution. In general, it can be said that their collaboration exceeded what was initially expected. In some cases, it was even municipal technicians challenging their schools to participate in the PWP, for the contribution they could make. At the opposite end, we have municipalities that did not give any feedback. However, in 2019 the International Network of Municipalities Nós Propomos! was created, based on the collaboration between the Cascais City Council (a suburban municipality in the Lisbon´s Great Metropolitan Area) and IGOT-ULisboa, which represents a milestone in

the dynamization of the participation of municipalities in this project with an international dimension.

As repeated throughout the Project, it values the participation of each student, each group of students, each school, in an effort to contribute to more sustainable communities. However, stimulating the quality of student participation, since its foundation, competitions for the best projects at national level have been held. In 2017/18, this national competition was interrupted, as the dispute between students / schools is not an objective, but was resumed in 2019/20, due to requests from students and teachers. Alongside a national competition for student projects, since 2014/15 thematic contests have been held for photography (the first to be implemented), video, text, drawing and advertising spot (this one since 2018/19). With them, it is intended to value resources that students build (who go out on the street, photograph, make videos, write about their experiences) and encourage the participation of students with different skills. These contests have an increasingly central place in the Project and, through them, younger people bring very clear messages about the problems they identify (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Is this our future? (Nacional Photography Contest 2019/20)

In 2020, with the suspension of presential classes due to the COVID-19, the finalization of the PWP was discussed, having canceled the National Seminar (with 2200 participants). However, the Project was continued and more than 300 local intervention projects were completed for students from 43 schools from the 62 initially participating. Participation in the Project was affected by the pandemic, but it was extraordinary in the circumstances in which it occurred and demonstrates a remarkable resilience of the PWP.

With regard to the hundreds of proposals made by the students in each year (about 2000, since 2011/12), few are implemented. However, they have a greater practical impact on what is apparently social recognized. In fact, when they come to the streets to raise questions about a particular problem, young people put this problem to the discussion in the community and then draws the attention of local politicians, with the force of the emergence of partisan youth. Gradually, the problems identified by the young people themselves are resolved, even if the local authorities do not assume that they do so more or less directly, as a consequence of the proposals of the young people themselves.

The experience of implementing the Project in Portugal demonstrates the direct but perhaps above all indirect influence of the PWP decision-makers on the territory. But it also shows how important it is to have a close relationship between the school and the university, often mediated by the university, so that students' proposals are actually implemented and that they can improve their territorial citizenship, when City Hall or Local experts provide meaningful content on real world applications of the young students proposals. This partnership with local spatial planning agents develop in students the ability to collect, treat and interpret geographic information and mobilize it, from reliable and safe sources, in building answers to the studied problems.

The Success of the PWP led him, from the outset, to expand in Portugal, being present throughout the country. However, the more interior and peripheral areas have less adherence to the Project, meaning that schools in more rural areas tend to be less dynamic. But in the meantime, it jumped boundaries. In Spain, the Project has spread since 2016/17 and it was promoted by the University of Castilla-La Mancha and the University of Valencia (Figure 2).

Before, the Project had already expanded to Brazil (2014), where it is spread all over the country. In 2016/17, it started to operate in Mozambique and is in the start-up phase in Colombia, Peru and Mexico. It has thus become more international in an Ibero-American perspective. This internationalization will be due, in part, to the methodological flexibility of the Project, which defines some fundamental phases of execution but essentially gives great autonomy to schools. But it means, indisputably, that there is a great potential for dialogue between the school and the community through geographic education (Claudino, 2018).

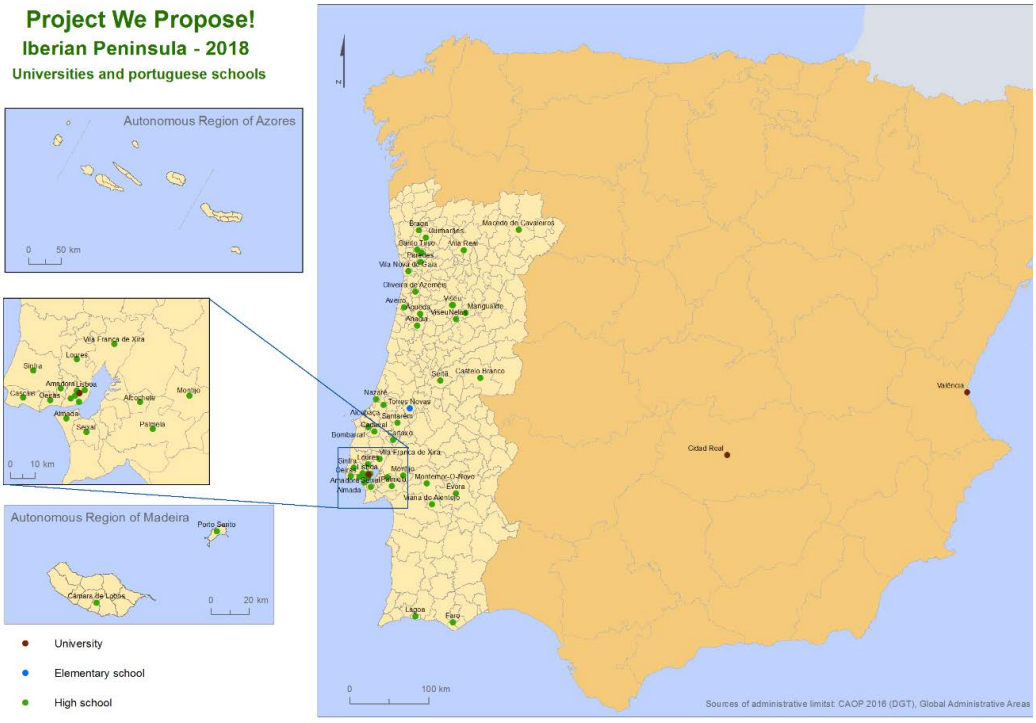

FIGURE 2. Associated Portuguese schools and universities to the Project We Propose!

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By tradition, geographical education uses the conceptual and instrumental dimensions of knowledge to provide students with opportunities to develop geographic competences, and to that extent, geography plays a formative role in development and training for citizenship. Geography in primary, basic and secondary education unequivocally dominates the didactic transposition of basic knowledge related not only to the relative and absolute location, territorial dimension, population and resources of the countries and continents of the World, with the location and distribution of geographical facts, but mainly focused on the identification and resolution of social and territorial problems, in the awareness that they are part of the essential competences of active and intervening citizens in the contemporary world.

Studying Geography is understanding the processes that engender human life in space and time. It is to have an idea of the ideological and political position that is assumed, thinking the relations that are established with the others, with the knowledge,

with the objects. Concerning the study of the city and city life, especially, it is a question of understanding the ideals implicit in the way of its social and spatial organization and of learning about the possible ways of intervening and transforming it. This is what territorial citizenship is all about.

This fact is fundamental to educate citizens, to form, from the concrete reality of urban life, within the scope of permanent values in society, aiming to foster a creative spirit and interested in solving the territorial problems at multiple scales, typical of what is intended to increase when we refer to the School Geography as an instigator of a geographic (multiscalar) reasoning, which can start from the organization of life in the student community. This can only be achieved through the adoption not only of a project methodology, but also, and above all, of a "critical pedagogy of the problem" that gives voice to the students, involving them in processes of reflection and discovery, which are significant, in principle, more success guarantee in the recognition of true learning and the need for transformative intervention in the surroundings at multiple scales. The PWP has proved to be a fundamental instrument in the dynamization of this constructivist and sociocritical spirit in Portuguese schools through the mobilization of case studies.

Students are faced with open problems in their community, which are of interest and motivation, to try to solve. Leading students to develop the ability to solve problems autonomously is a great skill that is developed through PWP and that also meet the great EL and PASEO. Students ask and analyze questions to investigate, distinguishing what is known from the that you want to discover. Define and implement appropriate strategies to investigate and answer the initial questions. They critically analyze the conclusions they reach, reformulating, if necessary, the strategies adopted. Students generalize the conclusions of a research, creating models and products for represent hypothetical or real-life situations. They test the consistency of the models, analyzing different references and conditions.

The PWP experience shows that students not only demonstrate the ability to identify problematic situations related to the nearby geographic space and to participate, through the search and presentation of grounded solutions, in solving spatial problems in their community; how they also learn to investigate environmental and social problems, anchored on geographically relevant issues (what, where, how, why and for what); to collect, treat and interpret geographic information and mobilize it in the construction of answers to the studied problems. Finally, they demonstrate the application of geographic knowledge, spatial thinking and methodologies of studying the territory, in a creative way, in teamwork, to argue, communicate and intervene in real problems, at different scales, starting from the community.

According to the constructivist perspective, and the evidence of ten years of application of PWP in hundreds of schools, the construction of meaning, whether from a

text, a given document, a dialogue, or any other type of direct experience; always implies an active process of internal formulation of hypotheses and testing in order to contrast them. If the proposed solution is rejected and the situation considered to be meaningless, it intends to proceed with new hypotheses. Given that knowledge is never dealt with in an isolated way, but rather by forming systems that are coherent with each other, learning does not suppose a simple modification of an isolated concept, but rather a restructuring of the previous conceptual schema by a different one. Learning should focus on solving real problems; the traditional teaching of concepts may not be productive, since the student may retain protoconcepts or prejudices, giving rise to an incomplete knowledge. In the latter case, students are particularly concerned with memorizing definitions of concepts, even if they often do not perceive their meaning.

Thus, concepts must be learned in a continuous process of re-design, re-elaboration and deepening of the known, being subject to a permanent reconstruction, in a spirit of discovery and investigation. A geography that problematizes the real implies knowing how to think space and putting key questions so as not only to know it, but also to discuss it, to think it, to understand it, precondition for enlightened citizen intervention. This is the main goal of PWP.

But we also have seen how the PWP challenges the traditional methodologies of the classical transmissive school and calls for the development of a more critical, constructivist, geographical education, where students can identify local problems that are relevant to them, carry out fieldwork on them, and present proposals for community intervention so they can solve or mitigate them. The PWP responds to the challenge advanced by the new curricular reform in Portugal of the "Essential Learning". Leveraged by a fruitful relationship between the school and the City Council, PWP provides scholastic work that develops critical spatial thinking skills and values of territorial citizenship. It fulfills the exercise of active citizenship, democratic participation, in intercultural contexts of sharing and collaboration and confrontation of ideas on current issues. Encourages students to develop research, evaluation, reflection, critical and autonomous information mobilization skills in order to solve problems and strengthen their self-esteem and well-being. Adopts different forms of school work organization specially collaborative ones, namely through the establishment of educational teams that make it possible to make the teaching work profitable and center it in the students. Invests in the dynamization of the project work and in the development of communication and expression experiences in oral, written, visual and multimodal modalities, valuing the role of students as authors, providing them with meaningful learning situations. Reinforces the learning evaluation dynamics by focusing on the diversity of instruments that allow a greater knowledge of the effectiveness of the work performed and a follow-up to the first sign of difficulty in the students' learning (Claudino, 2014b, 2015, 2017, 2018).

PWP philosophy demonstrates that in periods of uncertainty about the future, where a myriad of new opportunities for human development are envisioned, it is necessary to develop in students the skills that allow them to question established knowledge, to integrate emerging knowledge, to communicate efficiently and to solve complex territorial problems. Driven by these challenges and corresponding to this need, after a wide national debate involving teachers, academics, families, social partners and students, the PASEO is created, which establishes the matrix of principles, values and areas of curriculum development.

An inclusive school, which promotes better learning for all students and the operationalization of the profile of competences that it is intended to develop for the exercise of active and informed citizenship throughout life, means that schools are given autonomy for a curricular development appropriate to specific contexts and the needs of their students. PWP shows that the achievement of meaningful learning and the development of more complex competences presuppose time for consolidation and integrated knowledge management, valuing disciplinary knowledge, as well as interdisciplinary work, diversification of evaluation procedures and instruments, promotion of research capacities, relationship, analysis, mastery of exposition techniques and argumentation, the ability to work cooperatively and with autonomy.

Given that there are schools that have succeeded in counteracting the main predictors of failure, adopting solutions appropriate to the contexts and the specific needs of their students, it is fundamental that the curriculum be considered as an instrument that schools can manage and develop locally so that all students reach the competences foreseen in the in the already mentioned PASEO. For this, it is considered fundamental that the main decisions at curricular and pedagogical level be taken by schools and teachers. And geographical education has something to say about this.

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