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# HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERCULTURAL ISSUES IN PORTUGAL

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### The main educational system

The Portuguese educational system is regulated by the Portuguese Constitution of 1976, being the Framework Law of Education, the Decree Law 46/86 (subsequently amended in respect of certain clauses) the document which defines its main general outline. Education in Portugal, being administered by the State, is currently a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education, for basic and secondary education, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, for higher education. It is free and compulsory from the age of 6 until the age of 18 (lasts for 12 years), and covered by public and private schools, at all levels of education. The Portuguese educational system, organised in levels of education, training and learning, comprises four sequential educational levels: preschool (optional and for children between 3 and 5 years old), basic education (9 years divided in three cycles: 1st cycle – 4 years; 2nd cycle – 2 years; and 3rd cycle – 3 years), secondary education (3 years), and higher education (university and polytechnic).

The Pre-school education is optional and is designed for children between 3 and school starting age.

The Basic Education (9 years – from 6 to 15 years old) aims at ensuring a general education common to all students, providing the acquisition of the basic knowledge that allows the pursuit of studies and is divided in 3 cycles: 1st cycle - lasts for four years and one single teacher is responsible for teaching (other specialists may assist); the 2nd cycle, lasting for two years, is organised by different disciplines and multidisciplinary areas of study taught by different teachers; finally, the third cycle lasts for three years and is structured as a set of disciplines or groups of disciplines, incorporating various subjects of vocational training. A single teacher is responsible for each subject or multidisciplinary educational field, including vocational studies also. At the end of this cycle, a diploma/certificate is conferred.

The Secondary Education (3 years – from 15 to 18 years old) aims at providing diversified training and learning and includes specific studies and various courses intended principally to prepare for higher education or for the labour market. There is a variety of secondary education options available to students, taking the form of scientific-humanities, specialised artistic, professional or vocational training courses. They can comprise courses intended mainly for students who want to continue their studies in higher education and more professional courses intended mainly for those aiming to obtain intermediate vocational training in order to enter the labour market. All options lead to the secondary education diploma.

The Portuguese educational system also offers other legally framed possibilities to complete basic and/or secondary levels, such as Recurrent Education, Distance Learning, Itinerant Learning as well as other specific programmes if duly authorized by the Ministry of Education.

The Higher Education, structured according to the Bologna Principles, is divided into two main educational systems. The University system (public and private), focuses on theoretical education and training, being more research oriented; and the Polytechnic, more profession-oriented, emphasizing practical education and training.

### Current strategies promoting integration at school

In Portugal, Human Rights Education is part of the curriculum of the Portuguese educational system, since it is one of the thematic areas of Citizenship Education (Decree-Law no. 139/2012). This subject “vows to contribute to the development of responsible, autonomous and solidary people that know and exercise their rights and duties through dialogue and respect for others, with a democratic, pluralist, critical thinking and creative spirit, with reference to the values of human rights” ([http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship\\_education\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship_education_guidelines.pdf)).

Regarding the Portuguese educational system, Human Rights Education is one dimension of Citizenship Education, being it justified by its connection to Democratic Citizenship Education, focusing “in the wide spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in all aspects of people’s lives (...)” [http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship\\_education\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship_education_guidelines.pdf).

Citizenship Education, comprises a wide and comprehensive sort of thematic areas, embracing not only Human Rights Education, but also other rather relevant dimensions, namely: Education for Development, Media Literacy, Volunteering, Education for Gender Equality, Financial Education, Environmental Education/Sustainable Development, Education for Security and National Defence, European Dimension of Education, Health and Sex Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Consumer Education, Intercultural Education, among others. Particularly, the goal of intercultural



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education, within the Portuguese educational system is to “promote recognition and appreciation of diversity as an opportunity and source of learning for all, in respect for the multicultural nature of society today. The aim is to develop the ability to communicate and encourage social interaction, which creates identities and a sense of belonging to humankind” ([http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship\\_education\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship_education_guidelines.pdf)).

Citizenship Education, considering its transversal areas, requires, as a school subject, a cross-sectional approach. It, according to its guidelines, can be addressed within the school subject areas or within activities or projects, respecting the context and autonomy of schools (Decree-Law no.139/2012, with the changes introduced by the Decree-Law no.91/2013). In this context, a set of documents, materials and guiding principles were developed, namely the “Citizenship Education Guidelines”. Analysing them, it is concluded that the “curriculum approach of Citizenship Education can take on different shapes, depending on the dynamics adopted by schools in the context of their autonomy, especially through the development of projects and activities of their initiative, working together with families and entities that intervene in this context, under the framework for the relationship between school and community” ([http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship\\_education\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/ECidadania/citizenship_education_guidelines.pdf)).

Bearing in mind these procedures, specific curricular guidelines started being developed by the Ministry of Education with the support from other public sectors and organisations from civil society. For instance, among others in previous years, it was launched, in January 2017, the Education for Development Specific Guidelines – Preschool, Basic and Secondary Education (<http://www.dge.mec.pt/referencial-de-educacao-para-o-desenvolvimento-educacao-pre-escolar-ensino-basico-e-ensino>), produced in partnership with the Ministry of Education and other institutions such as ‘Camões-Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua’, pelo ‘CIDAC – Centro de Intervenção para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral’ e pela ‘Fundação Gonçalo da Silveira’.

In this context, the collaborative work also favours the possibility of many organisations/associations/NGO (IGC/Human Rights Centre is one of them) to work in partnership with schools on more or less durable projects regarding human rights issues. For instance, the project “Escolas Amigas dos Direitos Humanos” (“Human Rights Friendly Schools”) with Amnesty International, the school projects on “Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking” with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), or the “Selo Escola Intercultural” (“Intercultural School Stamp”), with ACIDI-High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural dialogue (aims at distinguishing the schools that stand out in the development of projects that promote the recognition and appreciation of diversity as a learning opportunity).

Currently, Citizenship Education is not a mandatory subject (Decree-Law no. 139/2012), its offer depends on the schools autonomy, project and culture. As referred in the “2016 Portuguese Report Analysis Tool” from the Council of Europe (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/2016-report-analysis>), Citizenship Education “cannot be considered as a widespread practice following a coordinated plan of action”. This subject, not being a compulsory one, depends on the teachers and on the school directors’ willingness and sensitivity to develop these topics within the subject curricula and the learning environment.

Very recently, in 2016, the Portuguese government emphasised its intention of developing the area of Citizenship, Human Rights and Gender Equality as a priority for the country (Order No. 6173/2016), by creating the “Working Group on Citizenship Education”, responsible for designing a Strategy for Citizenship Education and implement, in public schools and in all levels of education, a set of competences and knowledge about citizenship.

It can be affirmed that there is already a relevant path in the formal recognition of the relevance of human rights education in schools, but, lacking a systematic practice, it is necessary to keep working towards its realization and effectiveness.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

### Methodology implemented

Acknowledging the goal of the IHR project in providing secondary school teachers with the skills to deal with multicultural classrooms through the acquisition of intercultural competences based on the understanding of human rights and non-discrimination values, it is firstly necessary to comprehend how these issues are being addressed in schools and ultimately to perceive the willingness to promote



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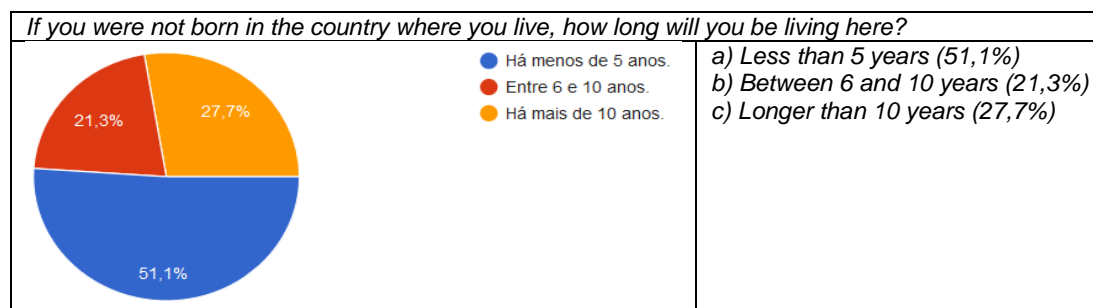
cultural diversity. The cultural exchange among diverse groups and individuals is increasing in the world, being then this reality mirrored in schools with multicultural classes. In pursuance to better understand how schools are dealing with cultural diversity and ultimately seeking to work together with the teachers, in order for them to face the challenges established by multicultural classes, namely human rights and intercultural issues, it was developed, through questionnaires, a sample survey.

Therefore, two different groups were considered: a) lower and upper secondary school teachers and administrative staff; b) students from lower and upper secondary levels of five schools of the region of Coimbra, some in more peripheral areas and others in more central areas. In each school, the classes chosen for this purpose were defined by school directors (including courses intended principally to prepare for higher education and professional courses, preparing for the labour market) according to the target group defined by the project and the school availability. The student's questionnaire collection took place between 15<sup>th</sup> May and the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017 with 500 questionnaires and the teachers' questionnaire took place between 15<sup>th</sup> May and the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017, accounting 153 teachers' questionnaires in paper and online.

### Students' and teachers involved

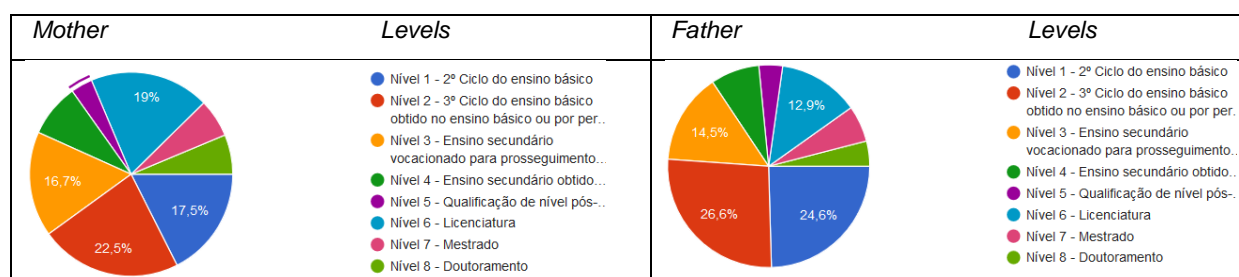
Analysing the students questionnaires, it is important to highlight the gender disparity since 62,7% of the respondents are female and only 37,3% are male. Regarding this sample, 9,04% of the students enrolled in school have a different nationality from the Portuguese one (90,96%), namely Brazilian (2,41%), Angolan (2,01%; plus 0,20 with dual nationality), Cape Verdean (0,8%), São Toméans (0,60%), Swiss (0,4%), Nepalese (0,40%), German (0,20%), Spanish (0,20%), Russian (0,20%), Venezuelan (0,20%), Belgian (0,20%), Luxembourgish (0,20%), East Timorese (0,20%), Bissau Guinean (0,20%) Ukrainian (dual nationality, also portuguese (0,20%) and Romanian (0,20%).

Considering the students born in a country different from Portugal, 51,1% are living in Portugal for less than 5 years and the rest is divided between 6-10 years and longer than 10 years, showing that the selected areas are divided by short and long term migration. The fact that most of these students are coming from portuguese speaking countries is certainly due to the portuguese past and present History and its relations with these countries.



At home, at school and with friends, the most spoken language is Portuguese. Nevertheless, other languages are spoken in these contexts, such as English (the most common after Portuguese) and French (both languages taught at Portuguese schools) and the mother tongue languages of the countries mentioned above, especially at home and with friends.

Regarding the parents' education, the levels with the highest number, in both mother and father, are Level 2 with (22,5%), i.e. the second lower level of the educational system. Nevertheless, 31,4 % of the respondents' mothers are graduated; the fathers have a lower value with 22,7%.

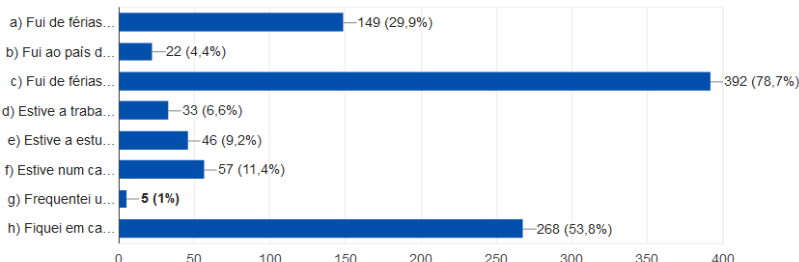




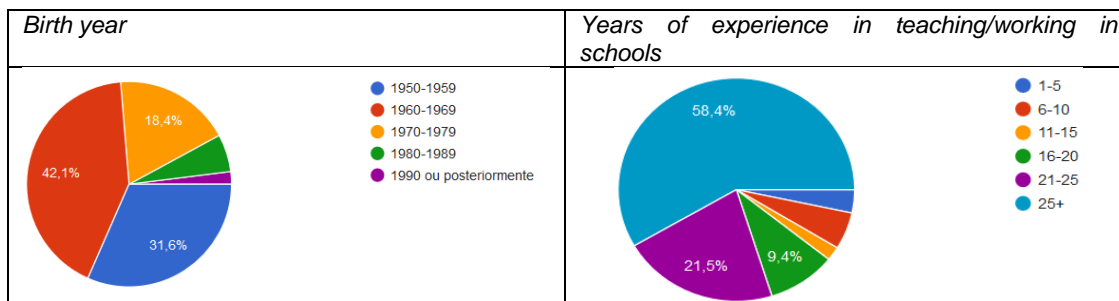
When asked about how the students spent their last summer, most of them had the opportunity to go on holidays with parents (78,7%) and friends (29,9%), but very few (1%) had the possibility to learn a new language and interact with other cultures. Nevertheless, 4,4% of the respondents had the opportunity to go to their parent(s)' country of origin.

Do you ever spend your spare time with people/students whose families come from a country different from your country of residence?

- a) *I went on holiday with my friends*
- b) *I went to my parent(s)' country of origin*
- c) *I went on holiday with my parents/relatives*
- d) *I worked*
- e) *I studied*
- f) *I attended a summer camp*
- g) *I attended a language course abroad*
- h) *I stayed at home*



Analysing the Teachers questionnaires, the gender disparity is something to be considered, with 76,5% of female and 24,5% of male. Regarding the birth year, it is possible to understand that the large majority of the teachers belong to older groups, being younger the less represented. Thus, 58,4% of the participants have more than 25 years of experience. An important data to highlight is that 92,5% affirmed that they have worked in schools located in different cities of the country, significant when addressing cultural diversity.

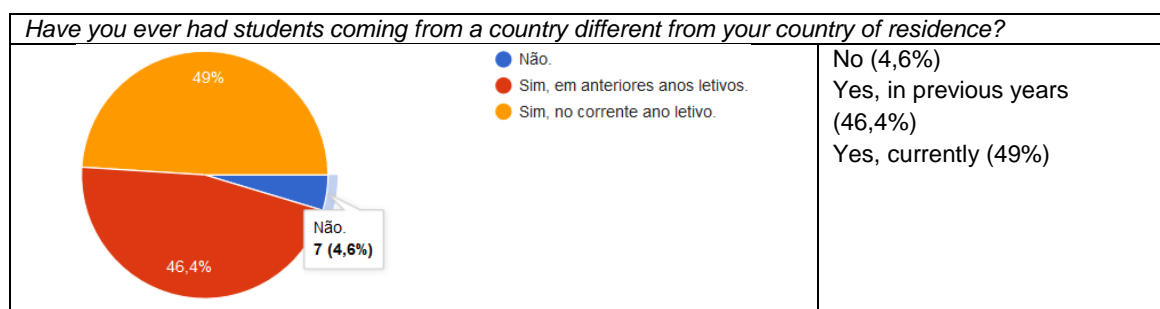


### 3. MAIN FINDINGS

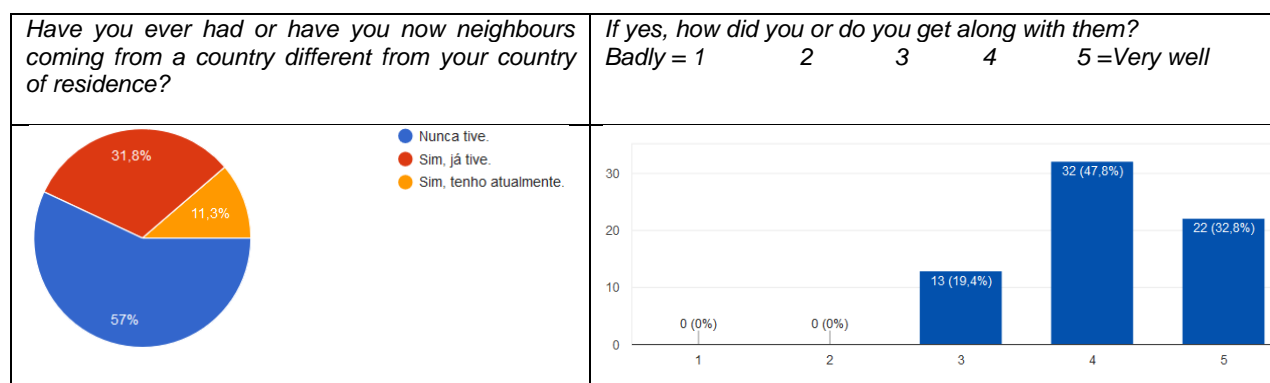
#### 3.1 TEACHERS

##### Multicultural issues at school

Considering the teachers' skills and perception about multicultural issues at school, an important data to present is that, confirming the students results of the questionnaires, only a tiny part (4,6%) of the teachers answered that they never had students coming from a country different from their own. Those countries (different from their own country of residence), in descending order are, namely, from African countries (77,6%), countries from the European Union (46,9%) and centre and south american countries (39,9%).

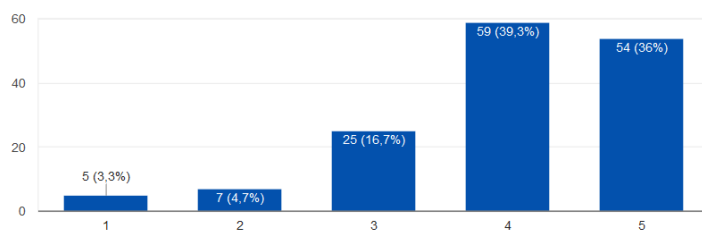


The participants, when asked if besides school, in their spare time, they have contact with people whose families come from a country different, 52% affirms seldom and 12,5% never had contact with families coming from different countries. Out of those who answered positively (35,5%), the main context is, definitely, their circle of friends (75,2%). Although 57% of the participants have never had neighbours coming from a different country, out of those who had contact, none has classified those relations as negative and very negative.



In 2016, 9,2% of the teachers attended a training course on interculturalism and 30,8% on inclusive education, demonstrating already some concern with these themes within the classroom. Additionally, the large majority of the respondents believes that teaching in a multicultural context requires specific skills. Here is an important data, since it is undeniable that given the existence of multicultural classes in the current situation, teachers consider that this context requires specific competences from them.

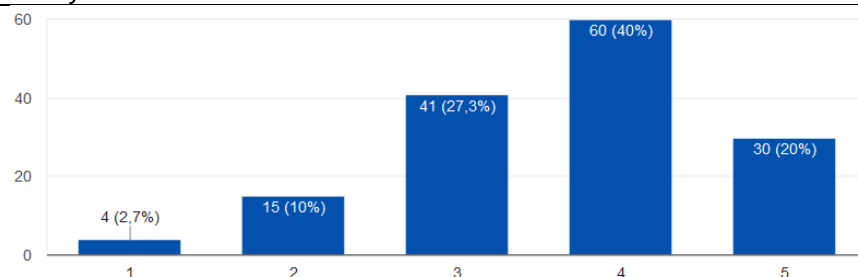
*Do you think that teaching in a multicultural context requires specific skills?*



1) I totally disagree  
2)  
3)  
4)  
5) I totally agree

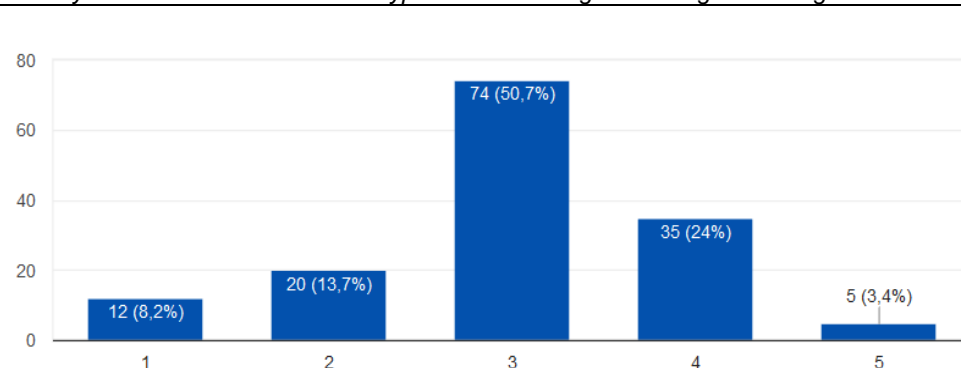
Considering the class context and the existence of different cultural backgrounds within it, the majority of the teachers confirm that they include within their school activities the history of those students, whose families come from different countries. Further, a large number of the participants have already reconsidered stereotypes after teaching or working with foreign students at school, which also reveals the availability of teachers to adapt their methodologies to the group, with 63,9% admitting, often and very often, a different approach as a consequence of having students from different backgrounds and cultures. Nevertheless, despite being a small percentage, 3,4 % never changes their methodologies when having students with different cultures and 3,4% never reappraised their methods themselves after teaching or working with foreign students. However, when considering colleagues coming from a different country from their own, the teachers clearly demonstrated, despite in different ranks, their willingness to it (98,7%).

*Do you usually ask students, whose families come from different countries, for information about their history?*



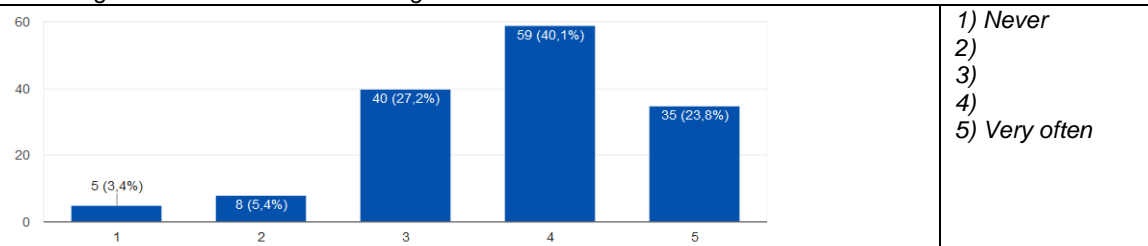
1) Never  
2)  
3)  
4)  
5) Very often

*Have you ever reconsidered stereotypes after teaching or working with foreign students in your school?*



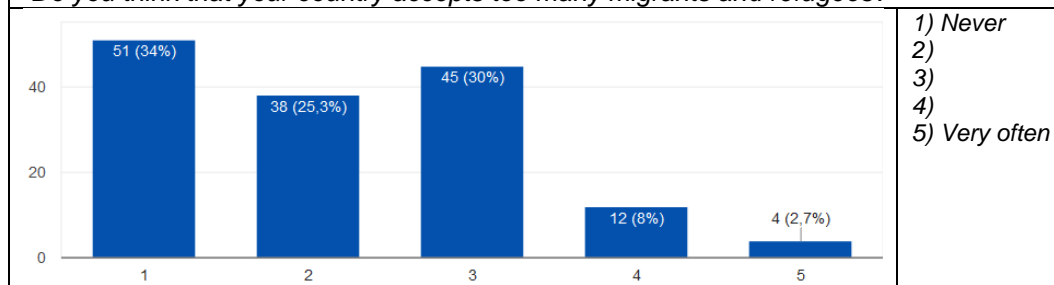
1) Never  
2)  
3)  
4)  
5) Very often

*Have you ever reappraised your methods of teaching/your approach with the students, as a consequence of having students from different backgrounds and cultures?*



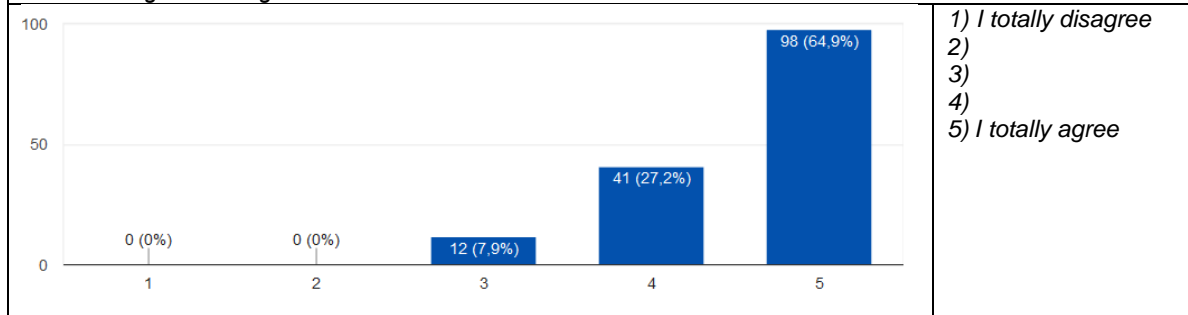
In fact, this position regarding the school context, reflects the teachers' sensitivities towards society, since a large number (78,6%) of participants stated that, often and very often, would like to visit different places and cultures, reflecting their openness to diversity and different cultures. Further, when directly asked if their country accepts too many migrants and refugees, more than half of the respondents disagreed (in different levels).

*Do you think that your country accepts too many migrants and refugees?*



Lastly, it is worth highlighting the position of the teachers regarding the role of school within interculturalism, since no teacher disagreed with the statement *"schools must act as a tool of integration for foreign students/migrants/refugees"*. Although not all teachers, as noted above, demonstrate willingness to adapt their methodologies to multicultural classes, these data underline that a large number of teachers has considered that as an important aspect for the activities within class, underlying the importance of school in receiving foreign students, migrants/refugees.

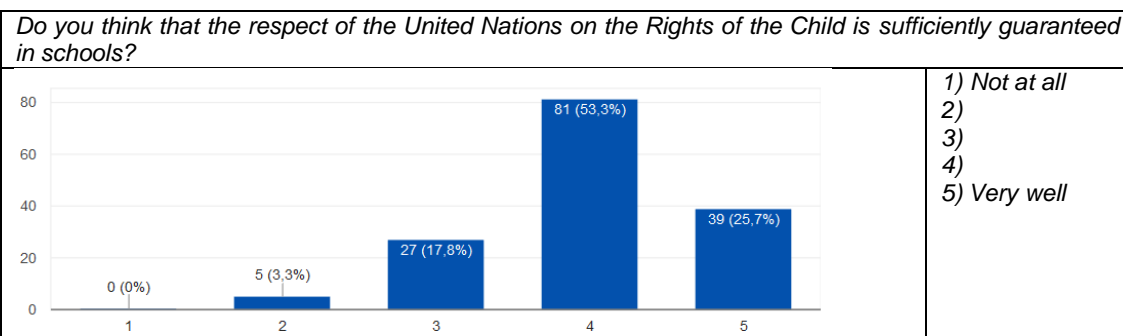
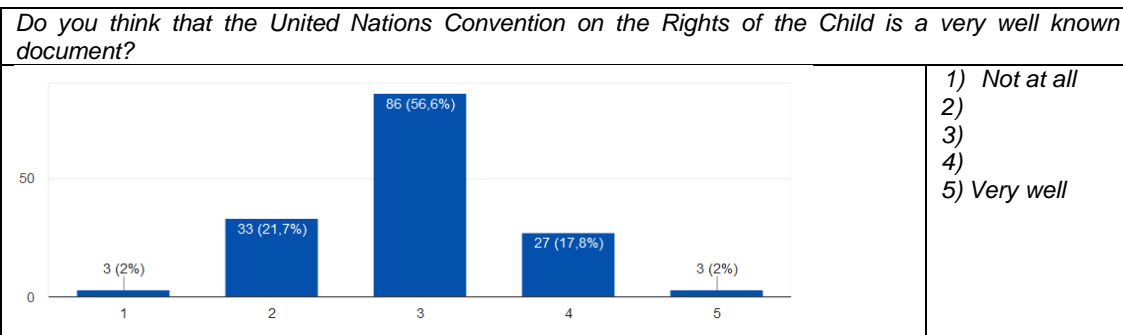
*Do you agree with the statement: "Schools must act as a tool of integration for foreign students/migrants/refugees"?*



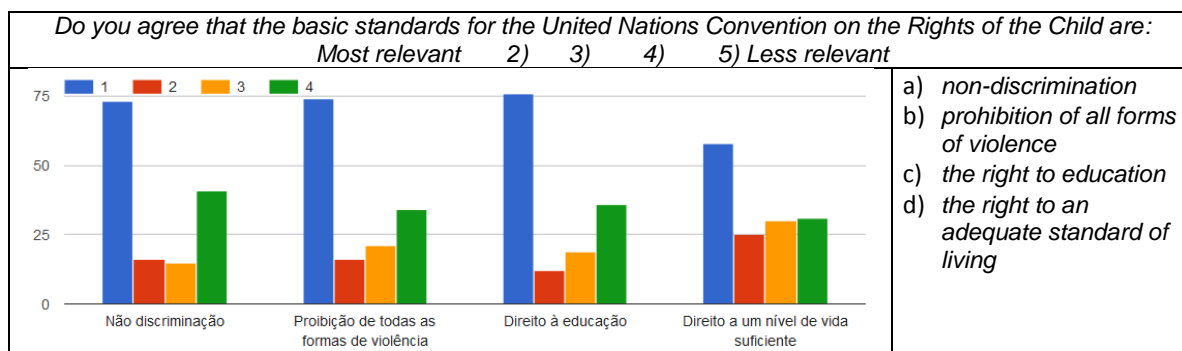


### Implementation of human rights at school

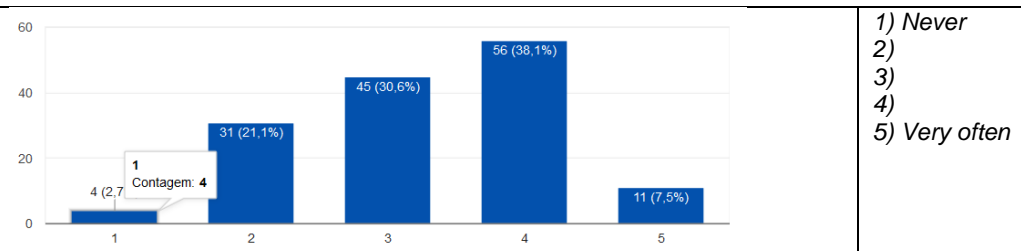
A part of the questionnaire addresses directly the teachers' awareness and knowledge on human rights instruments and in particular the link between human rights and the teaching activities, namely, its goals and methodologies. Regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2% of the teachers believes it is a very well known document and 56,6% a relatively familiar document. Although a large majority of the respondents consider that the rights of the child are sufficiently guaranteed in schools, these data enlightens that these document still needs further promotion.



Taking into consideration its themes, teachers consider as most important the right to education, prohibition of all forms of violence against children and also very close, non-discrimination. Lastly, with a reasonable margin, the right to an adequate standard of living. Considering the issue of violence, the situation where students are most exposed to violence is at home, within the circle of friends and at school. Although teachers affirm, as shown above, that the rights of the child are mostly guaranteed at school, they also consider school as place where students are vulnerable to violence and insults. Thus, it is understandable the need to continue working on the rights of the child and on the UN Convention on the Rights of Child at schools. It is, therefore, important to increase work on human rights education.



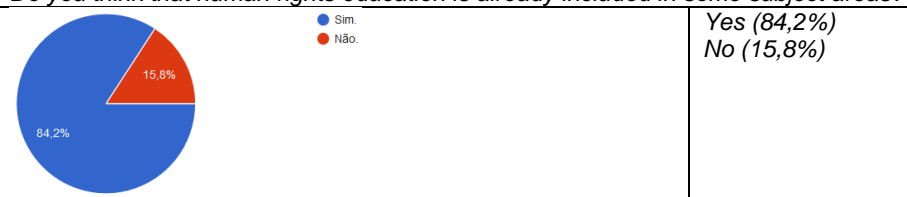
*In which situations do you think it is more likely for children and adolescents to be vulnerable to abuse, violence, threats, insults? a) At school*



- 1) Never
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5) Very often

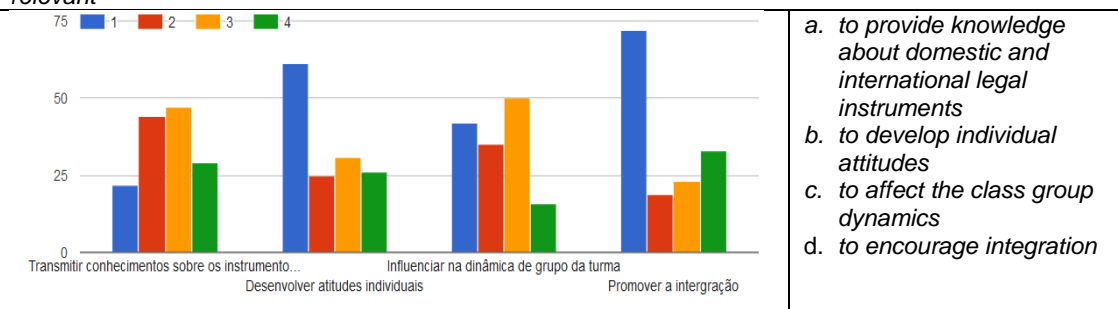
Considering human rights education subject in particular, the large majority of the participants consider that it is already included in the subject areas (84,2%), namely, Law and Social Sciences, History, Portuguese and Languages. In fact, considering the goals of human rights education, this subject it is specially perceived as a way to promote integration and to develop positive individual attitudes towards the others. As seen through the graphics, to provide knowledge about domestic and international legal instruments is not considered the most important goal of human rights education. Instead, participants consider the promotion of integration and the development of individual attitudes as the main goals of human rights education. This indication meets the teachers' perceptions about education, considering it as a mean (with very approximate values) to develop the capabilities of each student, to provide basic knowledge and to develop citizenship skills.

*Do you think that human rights education is already included in some subject areas?*



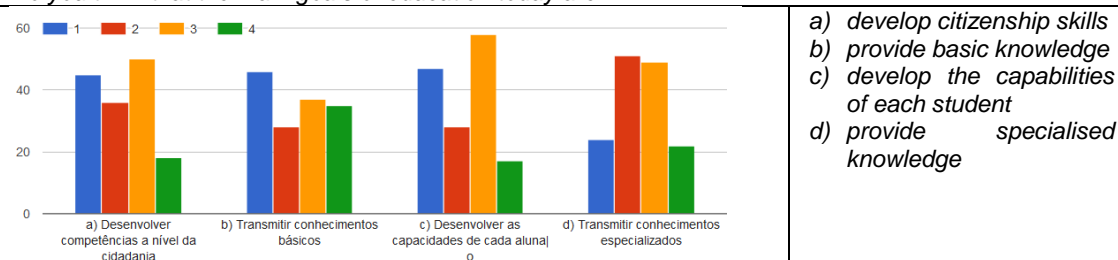
Yes (84,2%)  
No (15,8%)

*Do you think that human rights education main objective: Most relevant 1) 2) 3) 4) 5) Less relevant*



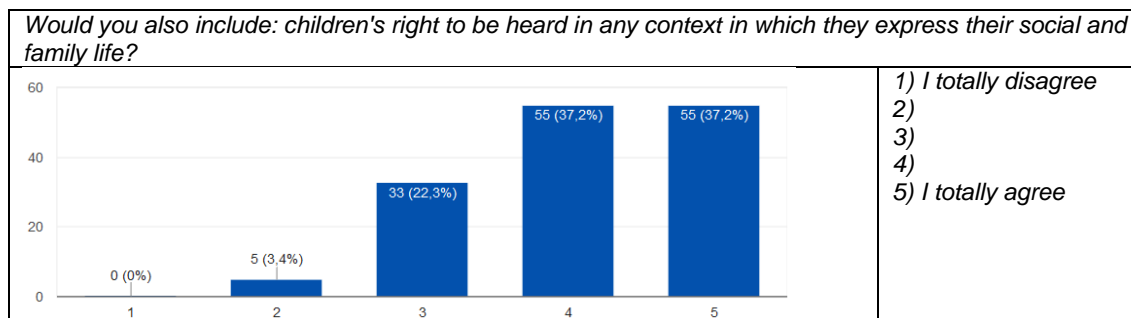
- a. to provide knowledge about domestic and international legal instruments
- b. to develop individual attitudes
- c. to affect the class group dynamics
- d. to encourage integration

*Do you think that the main goals of education today are:*



- a) develop citizenship skills
- b) provide basic knowledge
- c) develop the capabilities of each student
- d) provide specialised knowledge

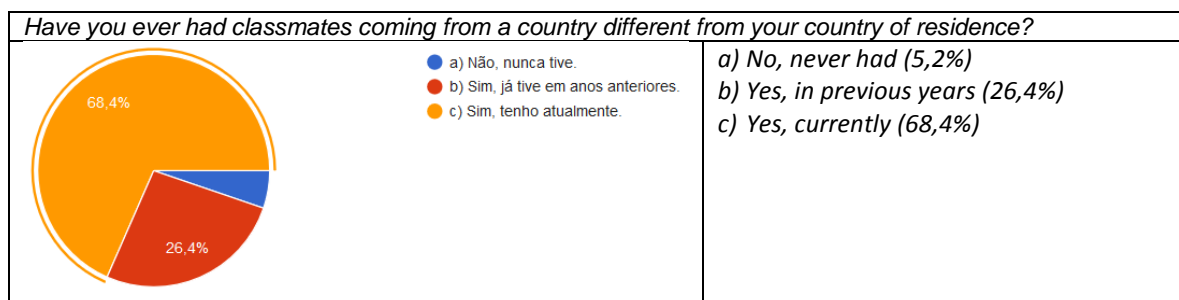
Finally, the vast majority of the respondents agree with the inclusion of the children's right to be heard in any context in which they express their social and family life.



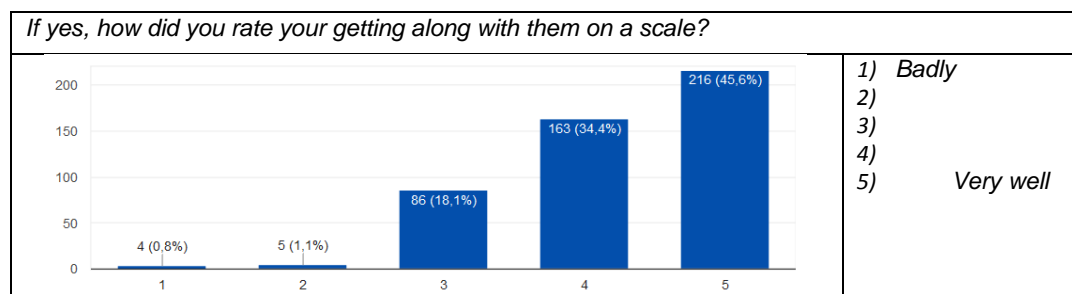
### 3.2 STUDENTS

#### Multicultural issues at school

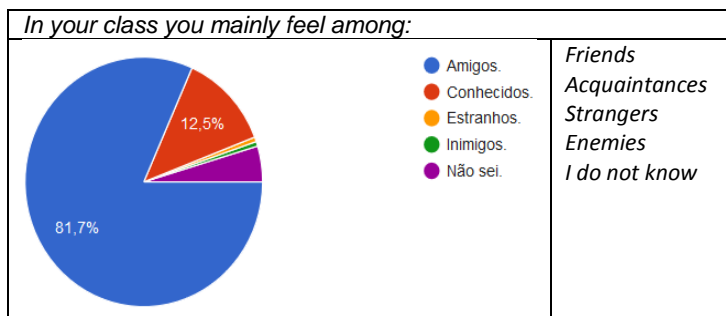
Analysing the students' questionnaires regarding multicultural issues at school, it is possible to highlight that only 5,2% never had contact with classmates coming from a country different from their own, which means that cultural diversity is clearly present at schools. Thus, multiculturalism is definitely present at schools and it is an important issue to be addressed and studied.



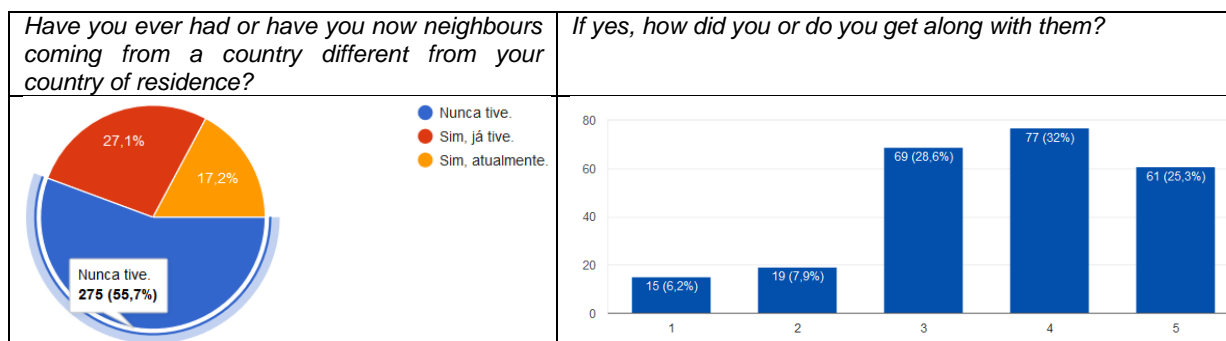
Another important data is the fact that within multicultural classes and schools, only 1,9% of the students indicated that they have had a bad and very bad (answers 2 and 1) experience with foreign classmates. In fact, a large number, 80%, considered that those experiences were positive and very positive (answers 4 and 5). These means that the contact with people with a different culture is not a problem per se, for the major part of this students.



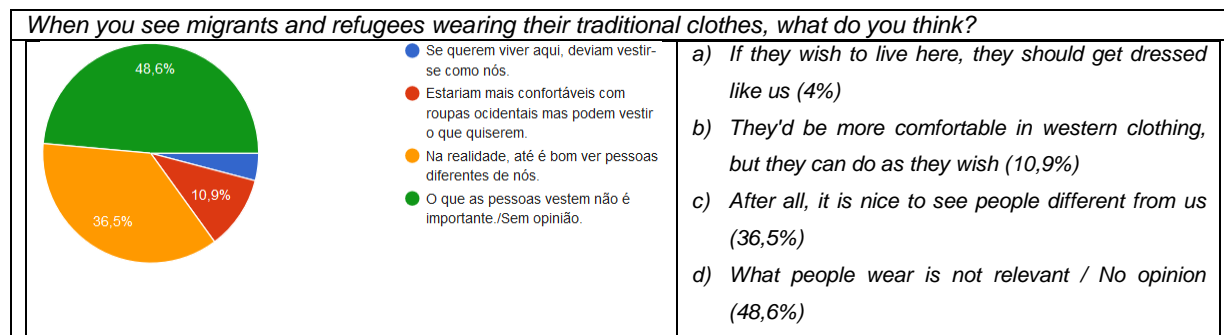
Actually, 81,7% of the students pointed out that within class they mainly feel among friends, 12,5% among acquaintances and only 1,2% indicated that they feel among strangers and enemies. It can be highlighted that in school, at least within each class, the major students' relations are peaceful.

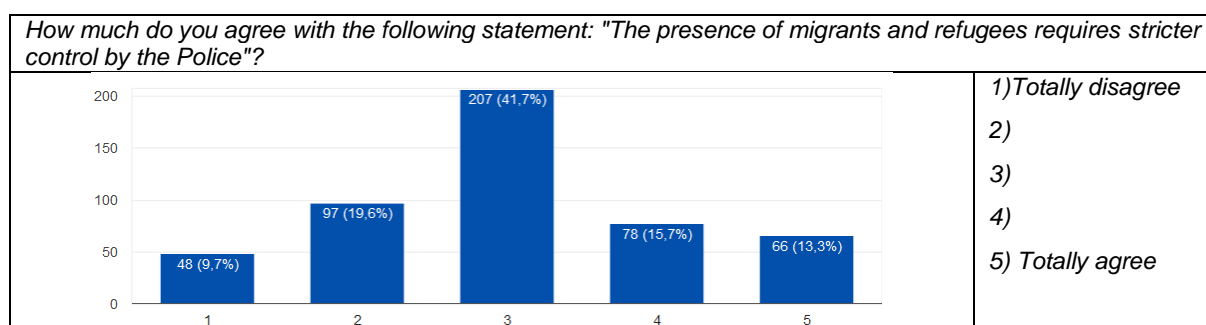
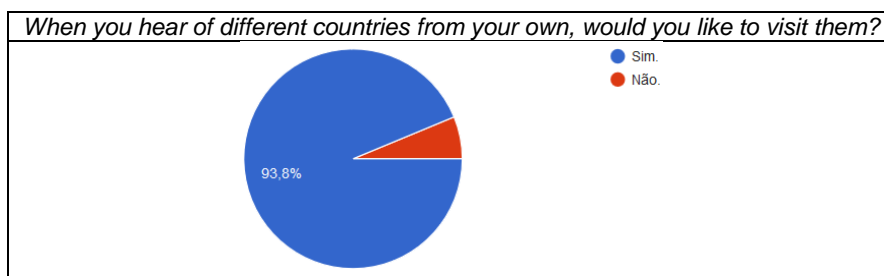


In reality, 41% of the respondents, a significant number, specify that they frequently spend their spare time with people/students whose families come from a country different from their country of residence, especially in their circle of friends and sports associations, revealing willingness to cultural diversity. Only 16,1% of the students revealed that they have never had contact with people coming from a country different from their country of residence. Considering the relations with the neighbourhood, outside the school environment, 55,7% never had contact with neighbours coming from a country different from the one of their residence. Nevertheless, regarding those who had the opportunity, at some time, to have contact with neighbours coming from a different country, 14,1% considered those experiences bad and very bad. Nevertheless, it is an important value which should be addressed and analysed. In fact, the opportunities to have contact with foreigners is lower outside school.

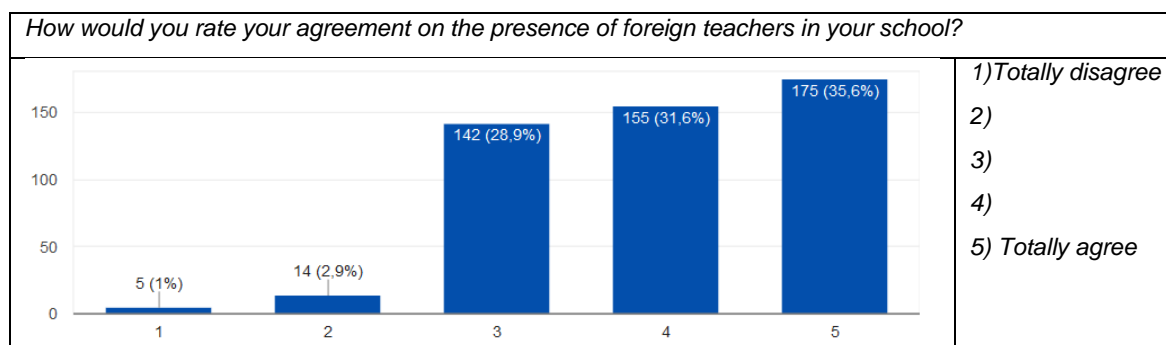


When considering directly and specifically migrants' way of dressing, it is possible to verify that despite the 4% of students who consider that "they should dress like us", a high percentage of the students puts prejudice aside, revealing their openness to cultural diversity affirming that what people wear is not relevant and that it is nice to see people wearing different clothes (appreciating the difference). Even when asked if students would like to visit countries different from their own, a high percentage of respondents, 93,8% affirms yes. Nevertheless, when asked if the presence of migrants and refugees requires stricter control by the Police, a low percentage of respondents disagrees with this statement, maybe due to a raising idea which links migration with insecurity and crime.





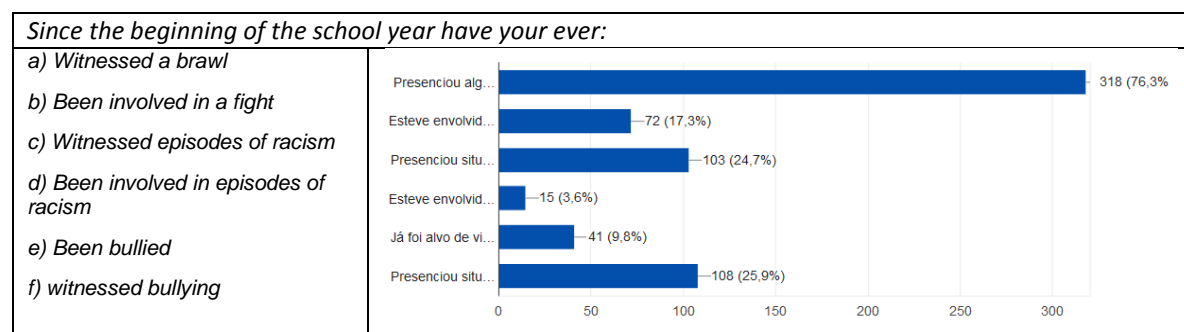
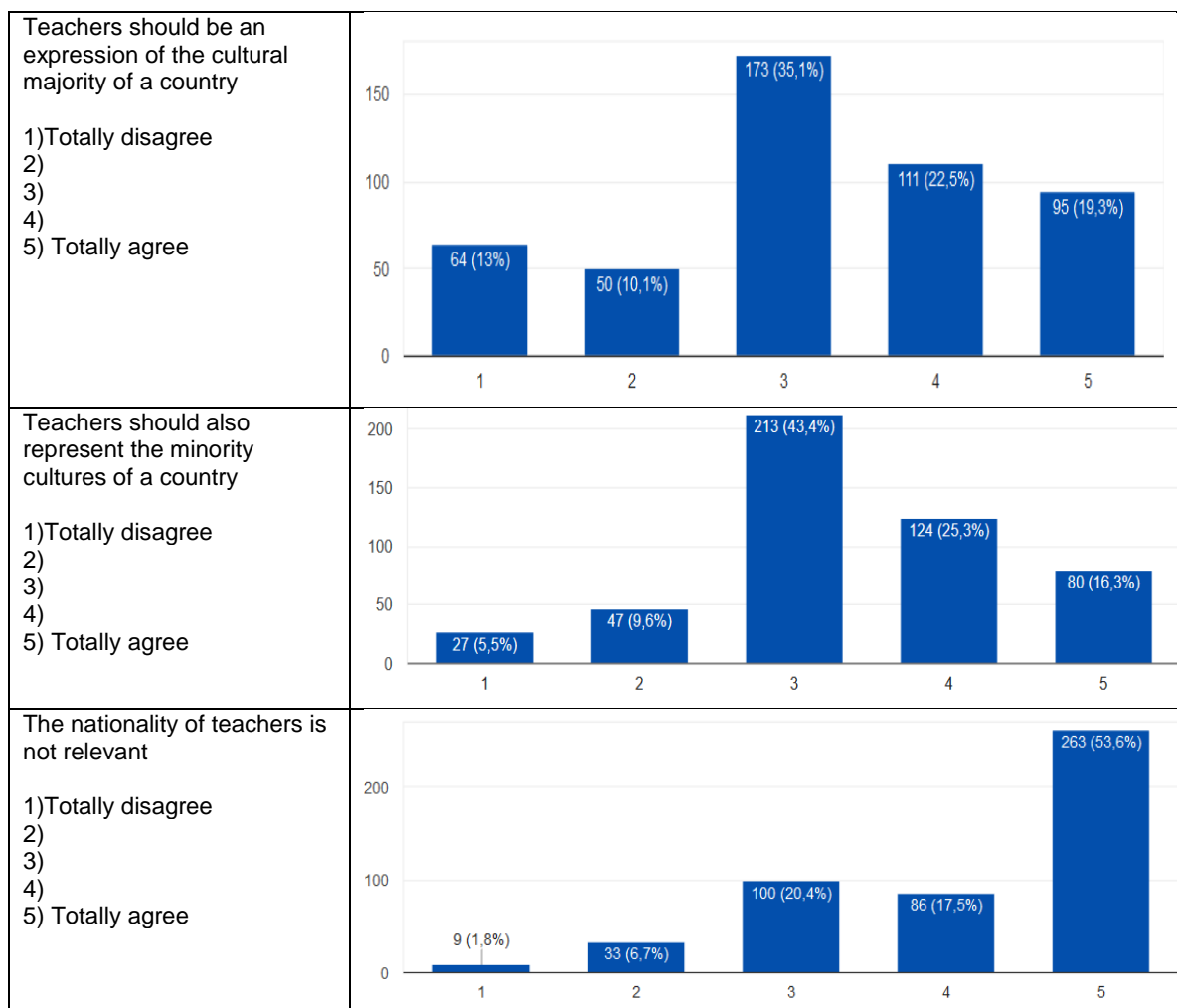
Considering the school space, and in particular the presence of foreign teachers in school, the nationalities of the teachers for 53,6% of the students were not considered relevant and a high percentage indicates, in fact, that the teachers should also represent the minority cultures of a country. In fact, when asked particularly about the presence of foreign teachers in their schools, more than half of the students agree with their presence. Nevertheless, a high percentage of the students points out that foreign teachers should be an expression of the cultural majority of a country.



### Implementation of human rights at school

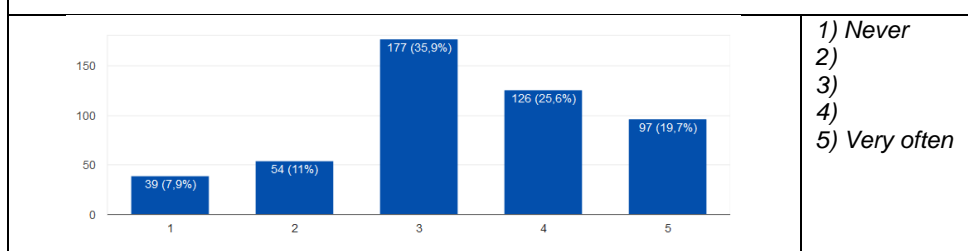
Regarding the students' awareness and knowledge on human rights issues and the implementation of human rights at school, themes as racism, rights, interculturality, bullying, violence were addressed. Although, in the previous questions, schools were, in most cases, considered a place promoting cultural diversity, 24,7% of the students have already witnessed episodes of racism and, in fact, 3,6% were particularly involved in episodes of racism. Regarding issues as bullying, 35,7% of the respondents affirm that they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying. Another important data to underline is the high number of students who have witnessed a brawl with 76,3%, becoming clear the need to raise awareness about these issues.



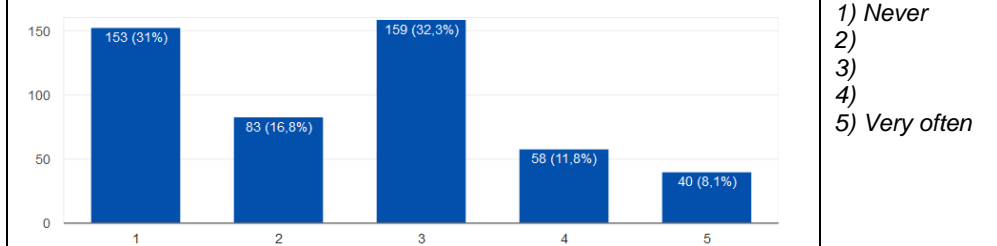


Regarding the previous data, school, reflecting society, is also a place of conflict. Despite this difficulty and challenge, the major part considers that they have talked about discrimination and racism within the school environment just for some extent. For instance, regarding intercultural education, 31% of the participants have never participated in intercultural education projects. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the previous numbers/graphics, it is important to improve projects and activities within class and school addressing those issues with a more systematic and planned practice.

*In the previous school year how often have you talked of discrimination and racism?*



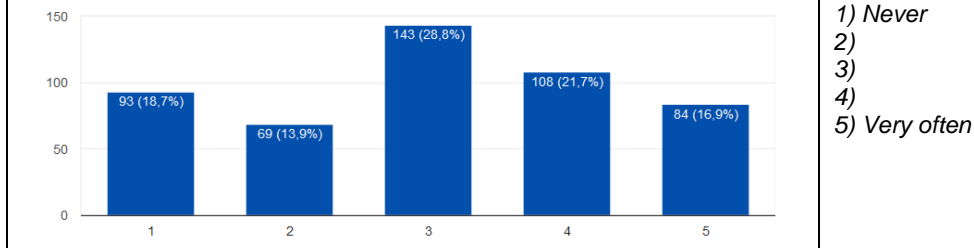
*In the previous school year how often have you participated in intercultural education projects?*



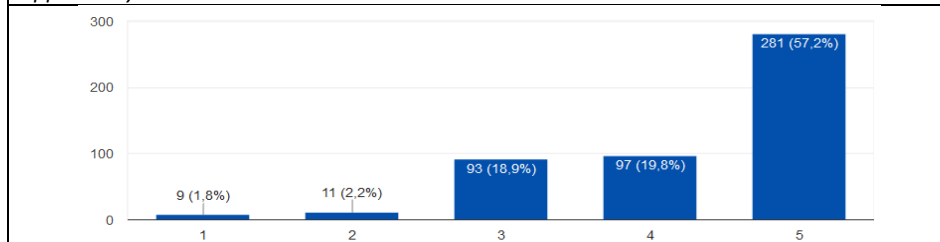
When considering field trips, visits and group work, the major part has very often participated in these type of activities, evidencing interest in having contact with other realities and people.

Taking into consideration, in particular, the racism problematic, although not surfing directly on racist or anti-racist sites (77,8% have never surfed racist sites; 60,9% have never surfed antiracist sites), a large percentage has already read racist posts on social networks, 16,9% very often. Racism is, thus, also present at social networks. Nevertheless, when directly inquired about cultural and linguistic diversity, more than half of the students consider it an opportunity.

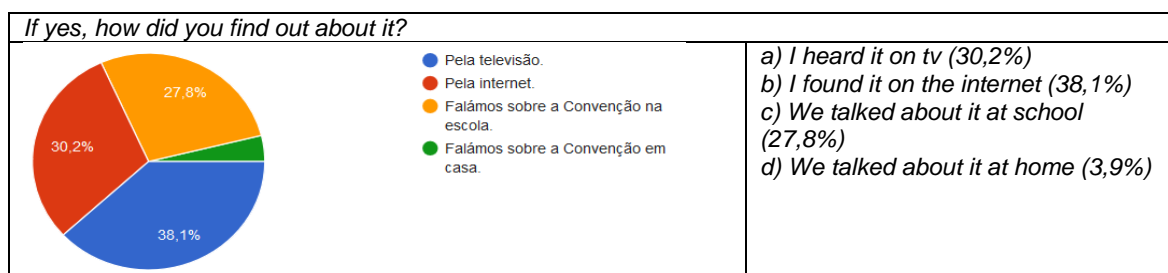
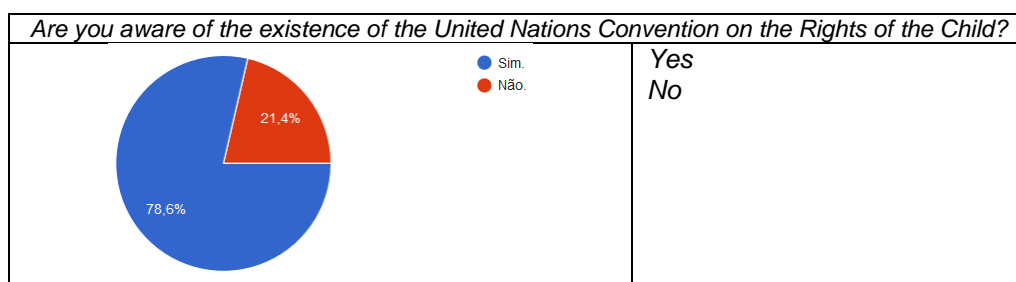
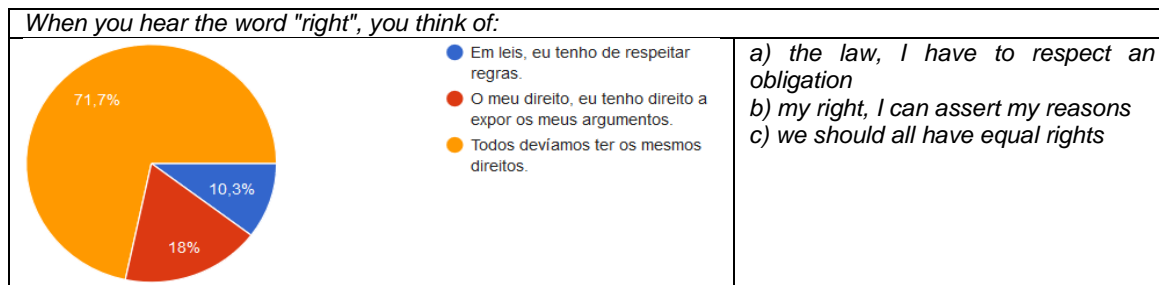
*In the previous school year how often have you read racist posts on social networks?*



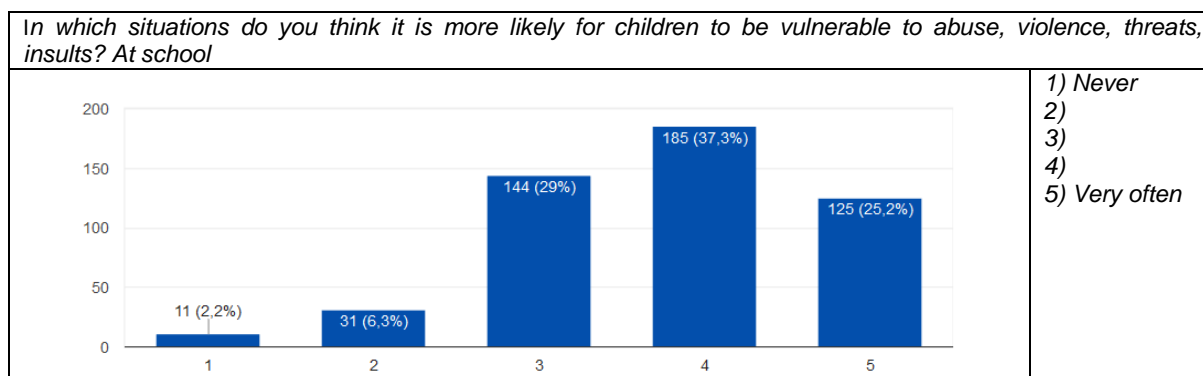
*Do you think that cultural and linguistic diversity are: 1) a threat 2) 3) 4) 5) an opportunity*



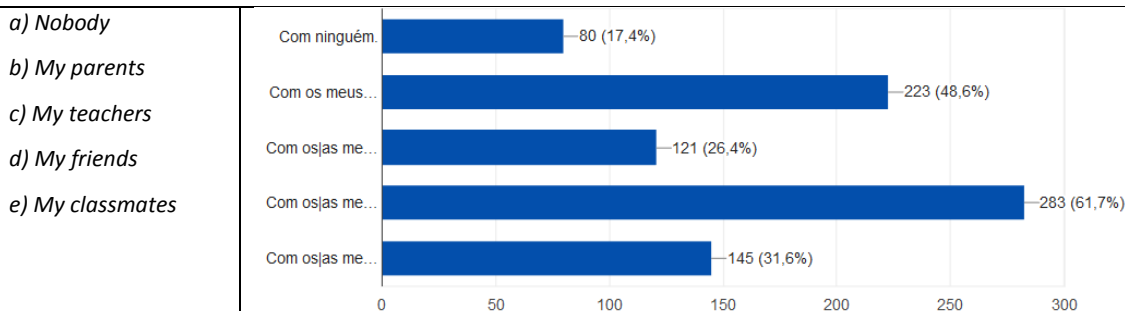
When considering the word “right”, 71,7% highlights their egalitarian approach to the theme, stating that all should have equal rights. A positive aspect is that 78,6 % of the participants know of the existence of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, only 27,8% have talked about it at school and 3,9% at home, being television and internet the most important vehicles of knowledge regarding this issue.



When the students were asked about their perceptions about the situations in which it is more likely for children to be vulnerable to violence, threats and insults, a relevant part considers school and sport associations the environments where children are most subjected to violence. Another important fact to highlight is that a considerable number of participants also point out that within their circle of friends they are also often exposed to violence, threats and insults. When witnessing these kind of situations, students contact primarily their friends (61,7%) and parents (48,6%), being teachers, i.e., school, the group they least trust regarding these themes. This is clearly an important finding, bearing in mind that students have designated school as one of the most violent places for children. It is, thus, an important issue to be addressed by all school community.

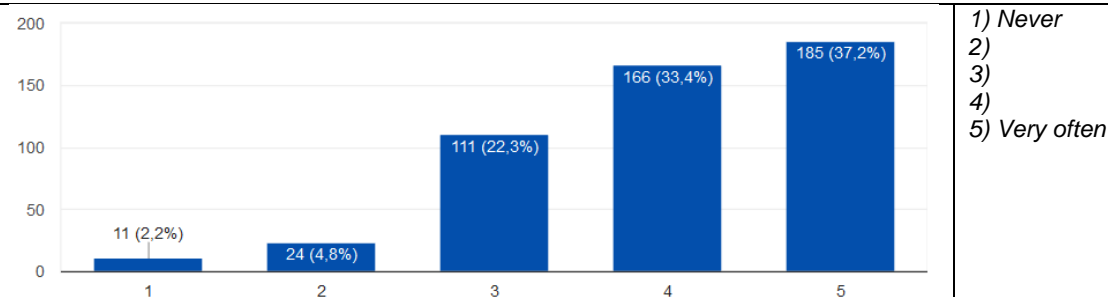


*If you witnessed episodes of abuse, violence, threats, insults at school, who did you talk to about it?*

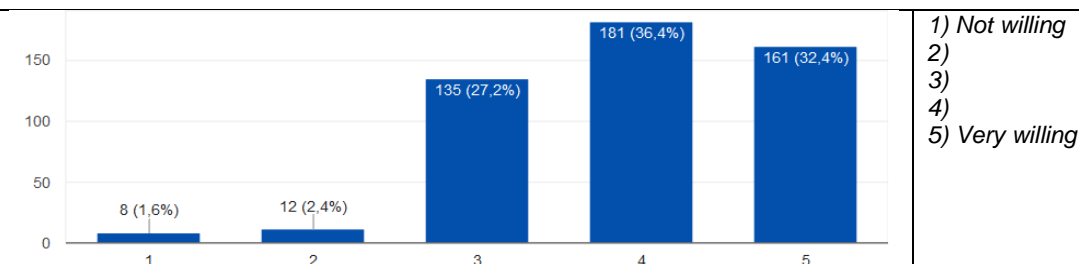


However, it is important to underline that, at school, students mostly feel free to express themselves as they wish, feeling respected for who they are. The school is, thus, a place where students feel confident and considered, so it is an important place to address the issues related above, creating a safer environment, emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity and promoting human rights. Despite the use of a more formal language used between adults (teachers, administrative staff, etc.) and students, within school, the participants have clearly defined themselves as willing to listen to what the others say, an important condition to work these issues with the students.

*At school I feel received and respected for who I am:*



*How would you rate your willingness to listen to what the others say?*



## 4. CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICE

### Methodologies

The “I Have Rights Project” aims at providing lower and upper secondary school teachers with the skills to deal with multicultural classrooms through the acquisition of intercultural competences based on the understanding of human rights and non-discrimination values. Bearing this in mind, the first phase of the project was to understand and analyse how intercultural issues, integration, non-discrimination values and human rights were being addressed at school. Thus, with the relevant and substantial participation of the schools connected to this project, as well as an independent teacher,



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who have been developing activities related to the issues listed above, in the last years, we were able to identify 10 case studies. The case studies, here presented, have different characteristics, some were organised and carried out, within a specific classroom; others, as a suggestion of teachers and/or school directors or of the Ministry of Education, were thought and planned as a school activity, presenting a more comprehensive and general perspective, trying to achieve and sensitize the entire educational community.

As a general school activity, we have identified, for instance, the project “Erasmus Back to School” in which the “Erasmusland” association returns to school with former students of the school, who are attending University, and with foreign university students in Erasmus programme. This activity aims at putting in contact young Portuguese students with foreign students, becoming visible the cultural similarities and differences among them. The activities organised under this project allowed direct contact with Erasmus students, favouring mutual integration in activities, lowering barriers and promoting openness up to diversity. It was also identified the case study “Exchange Programme ‘Santa Clara Sister Cities’”, established in 1972, with Santa Clara, a city in California, USA. This exchange programme, taking place every two years, aims at exposing the students to different cultures in order to respect differences, to promote openness to diverse contexts and to respect other cultures, extending it to students and their families, as well as to teachers. These case studies are examples of school projects which aim at developing intercultural competences and non-discrimination values, by putting their students in contact directly with different cultures and values.

The “Letter Marathon” (Amnesty’s global letter-writing campaign - Write for Rights) is a school activity, following the NGO International Amnesty motto, “a letter can change someone’s life”, inviting students, teachers and non-teaching staff to participate in the Marathon by signing letters. This case study exemplifies the relevance of working directly and in partnership with an NGO particularly focused on human rights issues, being this a way to call attention to persons and communities at risk.

The “ECastro inclusive” is a school project, with multiple activities, developed with lower secondary classes planned for the reception of foreign students. It aims at promoting integration and the values of ethics and social responsibility, the democratic spirit of community involvement, multiculturalism, inclusiveness and solidarity. This case study expresses how a school can develop and organise a project, with a set of activities aimed at the reception of foreign students.

The “Young Volunteer Programme” is dedicated to secondary school students across the country and aims at raising awareness and promoting the culture of Volunteering within young people as an expression of active citizenship. The students act as ambassadors and agents of change, implementing the actions proposed to them within the scope of the project and disseminating the values of Volunteering, not only among colleagues, but also among students from other levels (basic and lower secondary level), families and the local community. This case study is an example of how it is possible to develop a peer education project dedicated to relevant themes such as volunteering, the need to respect each other and the development of living together skills, with impact in the students who promoted the project, in the students who constituted the target audience, in the parents (who participated in the activities and in the public collection) and in the teachers.

The project “Social Networks: Homophobia and Bullying”, operates within the framework of the national project “Justice for all” and aims at promoting democratic values, by emphasizing the Education for Justice and Law (especially Human Rights, minority rights and non-discrimination) as a fundamental tool in a State respectful of the Rule of Law. This case study identifies how it is possible to put in practice a national guideline promoting themes as law and human rights and valuing the role of young people in democratic societies, along with the role of the courts as organs of sovereignty.

The “Grandfather Heinrich’s Notebook” activity was part of the celebration of the International Human Rights Day - 10 December. During a month, a team of teachers of Geography, History and Portuguese with the students of lower secondary school (about 180 Portuguese students and 8 foreign students) read and interpreted the book “O Caderno do Avô Heinrich”, which culminated in the meeting with its writer. The reading and discussion of this work on the Holocaust enabled students to realise that the human capacity to create and appreciate beauty is important to promote peace among peoples. The understanding of problems already experienced allowed young people to extrapolate experiences to current situations (the past can prevent the future), leading to the widening of their capacities for mutual aid and solidarity. The case study “Human Rights Workshop” aims at promoting and protecting human rights, by debating, for instance, issues such as gender equality and respect for human dignity, themes usually very well received by students. It is an activity that has been taking place for about 16 years, in the classroom context, bringing together, in recent years, two classes and



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two teachers. These case studies exemplify the importance of transdisciplinarity and the fundamental relevance of teachers' teamwork when referring to issues of human rights, interculturalism and non-discrimination.

The case study "Multiculturalism in the English Class", represents how issues, such as human rights, non-discrimination, multiculturalism and particularly the refugees' crisis can be addressed within a discipline curricula. In this specific case, the theme of multiculturalism was raised as part of the national syllabus for English in year 11 (Upper Secondary School). The contents were addressed through the development of materials and activities, such as documentaries, songs, writing, reading, facts and figures, debates and roleplays. Addressing these issues in the English class was considered very rewarding for both teachers and students, because not only does it enriched the class but it also gave teachers and students the possibility to confront different points of view. It was an opportunity of promoting human rights issues whose impact transcends the classroom, for instance, the materials were shared among all teachers.

The "Walls of Europe" case study, identified as a best practice, is a project that aims at promoting human rights issues in schools in a more comprehensive perspective, having as the target group all the school community. As part of the celebration of the International Human Rights Day - 10 December 2016, a team of teachers of Arts, Philosophy and Portuguese worked in an interdisciplinary way to develop the project "Walls of Europe", in order to sensitize students and to make them think about this theme. This project, organised in several activities, aims at reflecting on one of the major issues of our time, the walls of Europe. Many migrant issues were raised, leading to several important discussions, focusing mainly in the urgency of inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe. Discrimination and social exclusion were also raised, namely, homeless and refugees issues. Briefly, the project included several activities, such as: the visualization of the film "Ladri di Biciclette" by Vittorio di Sica and the play "Tell the Truth to Power", by the Bonifrates company; a contest of phrases and texts about the refugee crisis; and it was also organised an exhibition through the students' artistic practice (the two last activities became visible for all school community). The goal was to alert the educational community to the challenges that Europe, and the world in general, were dealing with. The NGO "Amnistia Internacional" was also involved in the process, monitoring and contributing with their acquired know-how. According to the teachers involved, the results were positive, as the students have gained awareness on the importance of actively participating in issues that involve human rights, particularly in the defence of the most vulnerable. Students have then acquired the notion of the relevance and urgency of a more participatory and consequently more inclusive society. Besides, this project also led students to contact with children and young people from other parts of the world. This best practice is also an example of the teachers' teamwork and the importance of transdisciplinarity when dealing with issues related to human rights.

Beyond their relevant ability to be replicated, these case studies, using different, pedagogical methodologies and techniques, express examples of activities that, on one hand, can be developed by a single teacher within a specific classroom and taking into consideration the curriculum of the discipline; and, on the other hand, examples of how a school can promote a set of activities/projects, regarding human rights and its current themes, embracing the all school community.

### Lesson learnt

Since it is not possible to analyse and study all the projects and activities that are carried out in Portuguese schools, regarding the themes addressed by the I Have Rights project, the sample here presented, already brings an understanding about how human rights issues are being addressed in schools and for sure many more case studies and good practices exist in Portugal.

Human rights are present in Portuguese schools, either because they are identified as specific themes of the curricula or because teachers and school directors are particularly sensitive to it. Human Rights are not present in a full systematic and organised way, but schools, at least from the examples brought here, more or less directly, are sensitive to issues related to human rights, developing projects and activities in this area.

The projects here identified have shown the schools' openness to teamwork with various NGOs and among teachers, and with the students' parents, who, in general, supported the activities developed.

In conclusion, although more intensive, organised and systematic work is still needed, i.e., greater effectiveness, schools are increasingly becoming more sensitive to the theme and are willing to develop projects and activities regarding human rights, both from top-down and bottom up perspectives.



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## 5. CONCLUSION

Regarding human rights and intercultural issues, and taking into consideration the results of the questionnaires, it is important to underline that these themes increasingly need to be addressed within schools. From a top-down perspective, human rights and intercultural issues are considered in the Portuguese educational system, namely, through the subject of Citizenship Education, which, however, is not mandatory and not exactly the same as human rights education. Nevertheless, these subjects also need to be addressed through a bottom-up perspective, with the support of school directors, teachers and the school community as a whole.

It is central to develop an intercultural approach within schools, as schools are becoming increasingly multicultural, according to the students' questionnaires results. Bearing in mind that Citizenship Education is not a mandatory subject in Portugal, it is vital to sensitize teachers and school directors to human rights and interculturalism issues within classes and at schools, in order to better respond to situations of discrimination and racism, among others. The case studies here presented are examples of how schools and teachers can work these themes within school, and more particularly within class.

Conferring the data gathered from the results of the teachers' questionnaires, despite teachers consider that human rights issues are present at schools, through the knowledge of human rights instruments, namely the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is not enough to a full promotion of human rights at schools, since the major part of the participants highlights school and home as places where children are vulnerable to violence. Thus, it is fundamental to keep working on human rights subjects, specially noting and taking advantage of the fact that the majority of teachers are willing to adapt their methodologies to multicultural classes, through, for instance, specialized training.

Human rights and multiculturalism are issues that lead us to deeper thoughts concerning ourselves and our relation with the other. Thus, it is not only the theoretical knowledge that matters, even when we specifically reflect on topics such as interculturalism and human rights, but it is also important to turn that theoretical knowledge into daily life attitudes, through human rights education. In conclusion, to achieve a more effectiveness of human rights education, namely at schools, it is necessary to develop a more systematic and organized practice, with the crucial support and willingness of schools' directors and teachers, i.e., the school community.



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