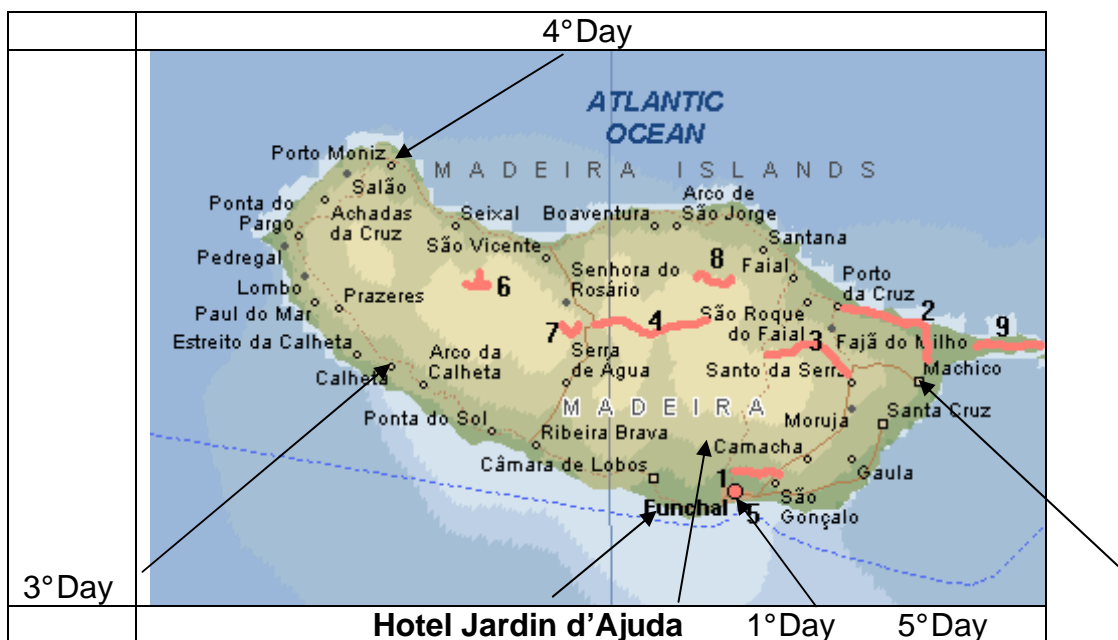


Arion Trip to Madeira
30th May to 3rd June 2006

Delegates:

Director Mario Sarcletti – Austria
Annuschka Seyssens – Belgium (Flanders)
Zdeoka Hanhalterova – Czech Republic
Christian Ladleif – Germany
Balbine Ollivra – France
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Margaret Donaldson – Great Britain
Lamberto Bozzi – Italy
Libero Di Leo – Italy
Jazeps Volans – Latvia
Ingrid Luntz-Sloolan – The Netherlands
Marek Gracz – Poland
Elena Vrabiescu – Romania
Edita Zacharova – Slovakia
Jovi Vidmar – Slovenia
Petra Tiefengrabner - Slovenia

‘Quem se atreve a sonhar arrisca – se a que algum dos seus sonhos se realize !’



MADEIRA –

No day without sunshine, no day without rain.

It's called the flowering island, the island of everlasting spring and the floating gardens of the Atlantic Ocean.

On our travels in Madeira, the island was likened to Swiss cheese because of the number of long tunnels. The roads were winding, narrow and steep. The people were warm, friendly and hospitable. Madeira has a population of around 280,000 inhabitants.

Expectations:

The group anticipated they would be able:

- To exchange information with colleagues about the differences between their education systems;
- To develop a greater understanding of how education systems in Europe compare and contrast;
- To observe at first hand how the education system in Madeira, as an autonomous region of Portugal, is organised;
- To create a vision for the European dimension as a tool to build bridges between cultures.

The programme was based on visits to a range of institutions. This formed the cornerstone for the development of an insight into the Madeiran education system and processes.

This comprised the following activities:

1. An overview was given of the Madeiran system in general and in particular its development and ongoing debate on election of head masters and outsourcing.
2. A presentation was given by the team responsible for creating, managing and leading their system.
3. Participants, in a meeting with representatives of all the schools of Madeira, gave presentations about their own education system and their roles within it. Participants and their hosts could reflect on similarities and differences in the context of their own system.
4. Various types of schools were visited. Amongst them were Pre-Primary, Primary, lower Secondary, Vocational, Secondary schools and some Special institutions. Opportunities were provided to talk to teachers, students and other personnel within schools.
5. The schools which were visited were all well resourced, also in terms of ICT. Children were seen using the new technologies with confidence and enthusiasm.

Greeting

We met at 20.00 in the café of the Jardins d'Ajuda Suite Hotel to be greeted by Jorge Morgado (Regional Director of Educational Administration), Paulo Tavares (ICT), Joao Estanqueiro (Trip organiser), Angela Borges (Advisor for the Regional Secretary for Education) and Miguel Carvalho (the paparazzi). Everyone introduced themselves and was given a carrier bag which contained information on Madeira, an updated programme, Madeiran wine and cake.

Introduction

Schools produce a project plan to gain additional funding for the school. Each school has a different project. The schools are split into Pre-Primary, Basic, Secondary and Higher education. We visited schools from each of these areas although often the schools catered for more than one age range. The system has Private and Public schools.

Pre Primary Schools

We were collected by a mini bus at 9.00 from the hotel. We first visited the Pre Primary school Joao de Deus. Jorge gave us a clear picture of what the education system was like in Madeira. Basically there are Private and Public systems which are both supported by the State. Private schools have their staff paid by the State whereas the Public system has everything paid by the State.

The Pre Primary school we were in was a Private school based on Joao de Deus charter. This gave a structure for the teachers to follow. The children have 'wrap around care' as often both parents work – 8.30 until 6.00. This is one of the reasons that the funding was provided. There were 1 teacher and 2 support staff per class. The classes were 12 in the younger years up to 3 years and 25 until 5 years. Children are taken in from the age of 3 months. If there are Special Educational Needs (SEN) students they would receive more support. Communication is basic to their education. The school was well resourced. All outside areas had safety tiles. The philosophy is that the school reflects home, it must have a garden. The teaching was very traditional – the teacher dictated what was going to happen. The children were organised and activities were very structured. The school demanded an incredible amount of parental involvement. Contracts were signed on pupil entry. There was a 'no blame' philosophy.

Next we visited Pre Primary O Girassol School which is a public school. This school was less favourably resourced but with a very good ambience. The teachers were more experienced in the profession. Again there was a good teacher/pupil ratio in this case there were 2 teachers and 1 support staff per class. The classrooms appeared to be limited in space, although each group had two spaces in which to work. The students appeared happy and relaxed. The structure was less formal and encouraged play. The educational provision appeared to be more child led.

Basic Schools

The first Basic school we visited was Salesian School which covered the Secondary age and Primary age. The ages were from 5 years -15 years. The school was divided into areas each having their own lunch times. Each class had the same teacher from age 5 for four years. Each class elected a President, Vice President and Secretary once a year at election time. Every 2 weeks they have a class meeting which was led by the President and the secretary took minutes of the meeting on a pro-forma. All the children are able to set the agenda for the class meeting. The minutes of the meetings go to the Principal.

This was a religious school with a church on site. They have contact with Salesian Schools all over Europe. The minister is responsible for the pupil's spiritual and moral welfare. The Principal is also a Priest.

Primary(1st cycle) and Pre-Primary School of Machico (public school)- catered for pre-school and Primary (1st cycle). This school was new and had only opened this year. The facilities were bright, airy and appropriate for the students it catered for. The children were split into areas of the school depending on their age. The school day was split the same as the other schools which covered this age of students. They had an extensive extra curricular programme which has an hour curriculum time as well to ensure all students access the areas (English, Library, Project work, Arts and crafts, dance and theatre, music, PE and handicrafts). The school was very child

centred. There were 50 teachers, 30 teaching assistants for 511 students, and 40 adults in the evening. The school was open from 7.30 am to 10.00 pm. The evening sessions were for adult education. The leadership of the school was strong and dynamic. They promoted the development of thinking and problem solving. There was a big push for citizenship. Religious education was optional. Lunches are paid for by the Government. Each child has an hour for lunch which is free time. The timing of this altered depending on the age of the child. Curriculum and extra-curricular activities finished at 5.00. After this the children can stay until 6.30 pm and have constructed free time.

Primary (1st cycle) and Pre-Primary school of Estreito de Calheta (public school)

This school was in a rural setting with a school population of 91 basic level and 51 pre-primary. The school was open from 8.30 to 18.30 and until 23.00 in the evenings for Portuguese language classes which were free. Most students at these classes were European. Celebrations such as Carnival and Halloween were a frequent occurrence and there was a Graduation Ceremony for students finishing 4th grade. The school was part of a Comenius project and had links with many European schools in countries such as Turkey and Poland. As in other public schools the Principal was elected by the teaching staff. Soon this will change to include parents as electors as well – an initiative which is being greatly discussed by educationalists. Special needs students were integrated and included. Whilst there, we were invited to watch a cycling proficiency competition, the winner was to go on to a regional then national competition.

Secondary

Secondary School of Machico (Public School)- This school catered for students at 2nd and 3rd level Basic and for secondary level students (middle and secondary school age). There was extensive building work in progress. There were 6,125 families in the local area and the town had a population of 21,147. They had large purpose built facilities – gymnasium, sports hall, and were building a middle school block. They had 144 permanent staff, 87 temporary staff and 55 contract staff, 26 of which had duties elsewhere. The students were here until the end of compulsory education at 15 years. They had National examinations at the end of 12th year ready for university. More students went into jobs and other activities than university. They had extra help in Mathematics, Portuguese, English and French which had proven to be areas in which students underachieved. 89% of the budget was spent on staffing. The cost per student was 4,480 E.

2nd and 3rd Cycle Basic and Secondary School of Calheta (Public School)

This school was also in a rural setting. There were 428 students at Basic level and 480 at Secondary. 90 – 100% of students who had completed 3rd Cycle progressed to Secondary level which is not compulsory. The Principal and Vice Principal were elected by jury and held their positions for four years. The new directive from the national government will change this process to one where teachers, non-teachers, students and parents vote for their new Principal – staff questioned whether this would be a good process as it could lead to selection by popularity and not necessarily by competency and quality of leadership. The school is open from 8.00 in the morning until 23.30. Students attend from 8.00 until 18.30 following both curricula and non-curricula activities. Evening classes were held for adults. They had an extensive alternative and extra curricula programme. The alternative curriculum included mechanics, carpentry, fashion design, barmen and waiters, environment and

rural tourism which all led to a school diploma. The school has links with higher education establishments e.g. the school of Hotel and Tourism, and lecturers come from these institutions to teach in the school. The extra curricula activities were for 1 hour for 2 or 3 times per week. Timetabling for all activities is difficult and so some have to go over into other sessions e.g. morning into afternoon.

The students take examinations at the end of 3rd Cycle and Secondary education and in order to go on to University they have to pass all subjects. This leads to some students having to repeat subjects or years. The repetition of years, which is common practice throughout the education system could lead to demotivation on the part of the pupil.

Teachers of 2nd and 3rd Cycle have 22 teaching hours and 20 hours for Secondary. The Principal is contracted for 35 hours but in reality he is at school for many more hours.

Secondary School of Porto Moniz- (Public school)

The school is situated to the north of Madeira, it is a small school but the only one in the region. It has 150 students in 17 classes. This equates to 5.5 students per teacher. There is a demographic blip at present leading to 20 students less in each year group. The school is newly built and has amazing resources including 2 well equipped IT rooms and computers throughout the school. There was a guest room for parents which included computers in order to access administration details on students/children.

Again it covers 2nd and 3rd cycle and Secondary level education. There are 3 basic schools in the region that send all their students to the school. The school has its own budget for staffing and resources.

The school is personable, everyone knows everyone. There is no competition, less options for students to choose and the teachers timetables are difficult and are needed to teach outside their specialism. The Principal commented on the instability of staff, 24 staff in total of which only 10 were permanent and none were native to Madeira. The Principal was giving additional wages as an incentive for staff to stay. He had difficulty to present a project for the school. There is little parental participation in the education of their children. The Principal had good liaison with local firms in order to introduce vocational options for students.

At the school there was a presentation from the Inspector for Education in Madeira regarding the inspection system.

Secondary School of De Silva (Public school)

This school started at 3rd level basic but next year was going to include 2nd level basic. The focus of the school was Information Technology as it had the centre for Information Technology on site. The centre provided ICT support at all different levels for teachers, non-teachers, students and the community throughout Madeira. They had a number of different projects including a suitcase for students who were leaving Portugal so they could continue with their studies.

Special Education

Louros School – Funchal

This was a small Special School for students who had social problems and who do not fit into the 'normal' education system – a 'second chance school'. There were 25 students, with more girls than boys, aged 11-16 years with two students aged 19 and 21 from another Special School, with 4 teachers. The school operated from 8.30 until 16.30. The Principal chose the staff because of their suitability for working with these students. They had curriculum activities in the morning and extra-curricular activities in the afternoon. It is a practical teaching situation and the teachers start with the knowledge that the children actually have. The key teaching focus is cooking and food. They begin with daily objects, e.g. a box of milk they have used in a cooking lesson, and then they use this to cover other subjects e.g. Mathematics – learning the weight, Portuguese - to write out the ingredients and method, Science – how milk is produced. Importance is given to raising self esteem and having a well structured environment, this was reflected in their written work which was well organised and beautifully presented. We viewed personal booklets which showed how they arrived at the school, what other students thought of them and objectives for the future. It had a positive ethos to the school and the students were proud with the work they were doing. Some students have 1-1 teaching when necessary. There was such a student who had arrived at the school unable to read and could only concentrate for short periods of time. A personalised programme was in place for him. We viewed cookery and handicraft workshops as well as academic structured lessons. Most students progress to professional schools or back into mainstream.

There was very little parental participation and some students lived in sheltered housing.

Special Needs Centre of Rehabilitation and Education

We were presented with details of how SEN provision occurs in Madeira. The main aim is for Inclusion and to give support for families. This includes helping families to secure homes. They try to guide students into professional courses. Students are supported at transitional stages in their education. There are technical services for all disabilities. There is also support for adults. There are 11 structures for the 11 municipalities, so there is decentralisation. These try to meet whenever possible. The common message is to co-operate with everyone to ensure the children have the support they require. There are specialist teachers for all the areas including Gifted and Talented children. They work with the University of Portugal to stretch the able students to higher levels.

There are special games for the SEN students which also includes students without special needs.

Staff who work with SEN students are supported with training and resources. The focus recently has been on new technologies, 99 computers have been distributed to schools.

There are 4 programmes operating in Funchal:

1. Early intervention
2. Autistic support (on-site unit at a school)
3. Integration at Primary level
4. Integration at Higher level

A total of 777 students were integrated into Public schools and 200-300 were in Special education. There were 185 teachers for these students in mainstream schools.

Teaching of the students was mainly team teaching. Each child's need is assessed and support attached accordingly.

Special School for Severe Physical and Mental disabilities

This was a small city school with 32 teachers employed over the two sessions, morning and afternoon. They also had therapists employed to work with the students. The afternoon sessions were extra-curricular and included swimming and horse riding. The students were mainly physically disabled. The most severe cases did not go off-site and participate in activities but had activities provided on-site.

There was a visually impaired resource centre on the site. From here resources are provided to the whole island. Five people were employed on a full time basis.

Higher

Conservatorio -The School of Arts Funchal (Public Vocational School)

The school was in a delightful converted old building which housed 900 students from the age of 5 years. There are 70 teachers of which 50% are Portuguese and the other 50% are from other countries. There are 60 non-teaching staff with 20 in administration. The Arts centre co-ordinates provision in 9 other small schools in the Municipalities throughout the island. The aim is to give the opportunity of an Arts education to all. The programme covered 3 areas of the Arts: music, theatre and dance. There was a vast range of instrumental teaching, including voice, offered to the students. There was a considerable amount of 1-1 teaching. There was a progression line from children learning at 5 years through to a professional diploma leading to university entrance. The full range of academic subjects were covered on site or at neighbouring secondary schools.

Professional Training Centre – Funchal (Public)

This was an excellent vocational centre which offered a wide range of professional courses. This met the needs of young adults and adult returners to education. There was a good success rate with 100% of those completing courses obtaining employment. There were 240 students with permanent and guest teachers. There were a number of training/apprenticeship programmes which included work experience and vocational qualifications. Applicants come from all over the island and there is great competition for some courses - students had to pass a basic test and interview before being accepted. Accommodation was provided free of charge for those requiring it. Some of the teachers from here taught at the Secondary School of Calheta we had visited previously. They gave the opportunity for students who had not succeeded in the mainstream system to continue their education through a different avenue and to gain qualifications at a comparable level to those leaving grade 9 elsewhere.

New innovations included the Skills, Accreditation and Validation Certification Centre which offers accreditation for prior learning for people over 18 years of age. Also they were starting a Blended learning project in September 2006 for 12 students which included e-learning.

Hotel and Tourism School of Madeira (Public)

This was a splendid complex set in beautiful grounds which had a training centre attached to a hotel. There were 400 students with 50 teachers, full and part time. They were taught and were able to practice all aspects of running a hotel from bar work to

management. The hotel is open to the public but at present was not a commercial enterprise. Students prepared and delivered a wonderful 4 course meal with traditional Portuguese menu and wines.

Excursions and other activities

Berardo Foundation – Berardo was from Madeira and made his money in South Africa. He then created the foundation for educational purposes. There were beautiful gardens, one of the things Madeira is famous for. There was a museum with a permanent exhibition of minerals and stones, and African sculptures. The foundation gives scholarships to those who wish to study on the Mainland or in other countries. The garden and museum are used by students to study. Classes of students often come and study in the galleries. In the garden are many special trees and plants. If vegetation is lost elsewhere in the world e.g. fire, they will help by sending plants and seeds to regenerate the landscape.

Calheta Sugar Mill

We visited the above mill, the last productive one in Madeira where they sell products like honey and rum which they make from the sugar cane. We were invited to taste a typical Madeiran drink, Aguardente (rum) which can be mixed with fruit juice to make a punch – this was strong, intoxicating and delicious.

Casa das Mudas

On Wednesday we had a wonderful gymnastic and dance performance by students from the Secondary school of Calheta. After which, individuals from the European group made presentations on their education systems to an auditorium of Principals, teachers, administrators and the Minister of Education. These presentations were expected to last a maximum of 10 minutes each, but some over ran. The finale was a musical performance by a traditional folk group comprised of some students from the local secondary school and community members.

Summary

All schools are comprehensive schools. A separation of the students is only used when extremely necessary. Therefore they put a considerable effort into supporting the students. The students who go into special schools have a student / teacher ratio of 3:1

The Public and Private Schools work closely together.

The Schools are open from 8.30a.m. until 11.00 pm to cater for the needs of the whole community.

The extra-curricular activities were given a high profile with resources, staffing and time allocation.

The expectations on teachers is realistic, teaching 20-22 hours and having a suitable amount of time to prepare. They have a Work – Life balance.

The visit was most worthwhile and there was unanimous agreement that this is a valuable method for developing pan-European collaboration.

The Arion Anthem (Written by Lamberto and music provided by the Arts School of Madeira)

**Fleet of foot, day and night
Forward marches the Arionite
And a goal firm in the mind
The fast progress of mankind.
Nothing tired, day and night
On, on marches the Arionite
And one goal firm in the mind
The fast progress of mankind.
On, on, on, on with Arion
On, on, on, on, on with Arion.**



‘Gostamos muito de estar aqui’