

Arion Program
Study Visit for Education Specialists
and Decision Makers

O Sistema Educativo Português

Funchal, Madeira
28 May – 2 June 2006

*‘Madeira teu nome continua
Em teus filhos saudosos
Que além fronteiras
De ti se mostram orgulhosos’
(O. Teixeira)*

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Rhymereport of a visit that went on
Under the Aegis of Arion
*De secunda até sexta-feira
Na Ilha da Madeira*

The teachers who work in *Madeira* have the duty
To teach an extra subject: the subject of beauty
To make their students fully understand
The blessing of living in a blessed land

A land of sunshine, a land of flowers
Refreshed by fresh *chuveiros* or showers

Day 1

At the top of the week’s busy working list
Was a private institution, an infants’ school
Neatly organized according to the rules
Of a renowned smart pedagogist
That *João de Deus* who brought to *Funchal*
A seminal work: “*La Cartilha Maternal*”

*“Bem se podrian prestar honras e culto
A um homem popular de grande vulto”*

At about ten we had a quick snack
After which we all went back

To the coach and in a quarter of an hour
 Reached the “*Girassol*” or sunflower
 The private Kindergarten’s public counterpart
 Where children care is the teachers’ art

The approach to foreign languages is regional
 For little children English is optional
 But then starting from the primary
 It’s curricular and compulsory

The way some joyful song were sung
 In a church under Don Bosco’s watchful eyes
 Made clear the good Salesians keep the young
 On the straight path, away from sins and lies

The school is half way up a hillside
 (With a long playing ground, long and wide)
 An exhibition had been held there, a *Feira
 Do Livro*, one of many in *Madeira*
 Where la língua portuguesa is a source of pride
 And reading is treated with the utmost care

Berardo’s foundation once you’ve seen it
 Strikes you as a true collector’s titbit
 It’s part rambling museum and part theme park
 Rich in many a collection, very rich
 So rich as to surpass the bounds of kitsch:
 Even a goldfish there looks like a shark!

Day 2

At the *Machico* primary school kids may try with no pain
 Curricular activities that stimulate the brain
 As for the dancing and singing that aroused wild cheers
 They stimulated also the eyes and ears
 (the Fado was played *para Lambertinho*)

We were welcomed with warmth and *carinho*
 At the secondary school of *Riberinho*
 As we were very late they had to step up the pace
 Of the presentation in a hall with a fake fireplace

They put on a screen a lot of graphs with statistics
 Adding they had a problem with logistics
 Explaining the predicament they were in
 As the school is about to change its skin

(school renovation here is the Government’s rule:
 Everything gets rebuilt, even the pool)

Day 3

On Wednesday morning (a morning cloudy and cool)
 We were taken to the *Calheta* primary school
 The school is small but offers much more
 Than appears in the curriculum core:
 From guided studied to a paper in the Internet
 And lots of Festivals like that of *San Martinho*
 When all *comem castanhas e bebem vinho*

The *Calheta* secondary has a stunning view
 On the Atlantic ocean calm and blue
 There small classes are taught for top results
 To make the students responsible adults
 (but some of us in the chemistry lab lost their poise
 Watching quick experiments that made a lot of noise)

At the *Calheta* Sugar Mill
 Rum is made in an enormous still
La Poncha is a form of alcoholic art
 It warms the soul and the cockles of your heart
 But be careful when it's 79% proof
 Or it will make you jump up and hit the roof

Acrobats and singers got a standing ovation
 With a performance of unusual skill
 At the *Casa das Mudas* before a presentation
 Of the school systems of every European nation
 Each speaker had to carefully contrive
 To sum up in ten minutes his/her communication
 (But alas a French minute runs like five)

Day 4

At *Louros* we realized that special needs
 Are met in a very practical way
 With a matter of fact caring approach that leads
 To a lifelong change for those who might go astray

But then they think the Centre also should
 Cater for the talented and the good
 With a carefully constructed program that links *Funchal*
 With *Braga* University in mainland Portugal

At *Porto Moniz* where the view is second to none
 We first had lunch: white cubes made of corn and cod well done
 There followed a discussion on the endemic shift
 Of the teachers who won't stay put and run adrift
 Few are the student and the school is small
 Small, well equipped and more window than wall

An inspector who looked rather young
 And spoke concisely in the French tongue
 Neatly outlined the various duties of his office
 In the name of good practices and good service

It was surely with little *alegria*
 That on the afternoon of the *quinta-feira*
 We missed the visit to the *Companhia*
 Of the *excelentes vihnos da Madeira*

As the Arion Program had no Anthem at all
 In spite of its evident suitability
 One was promptly improvised in a Hotel hall
 By a rhymester with no evident quality

Day 5

The day began with a short spell
 At the conservatory, once a hotel,
 where the Arion Anthem got a fitting
 (composed on the spot) musical setting

The Arion Anthem*

1

Fleet of foot, day and night
 Forward marches the Arionite
 And one goal firm in the mind
 The fast progress of mankind

2

Nothing tired, day and night
 On on marches the Arionite
 And one goal firm in the mind
 The fast progress of mankind

3

On on on ... on with Arion
 On on on on with Arion*

(*palavras de un poeta sem qualidade)

The anthem goes:

1

Ta ta ta – ta ta ta

Ta ta ta ta – ta ta ta

Ta ta ta – ta ta ta ta

Ta ta ta ta – ta ta ta

2

(Same as above)

3

Ta ta ta – ta ta ta ta
Ta ta ta ta - ta ta ta

At the Formation Centre they see to the promotion
Of some special courses for the certification
Of young adults in the vocational sphere
(before they get a job they come right here)

The emphasis is on a learning blend
Of synchronized activities for those who intend
To operate in comfort in their homes and share
the potentiality of synchronic software

We were asked to present ourselves nation by nation
Then we were offered a brief presentation
Of the activities and were told what a good asset
Is the use of technology and the Internet

For lunch we went to a place half school and half hotel
com um menu característico e irresistível
That is characteristic and irresistible
Served in a way elegant and impeccable

Last but not least at the end of the visit
At the Da Silva School of Technology
Each of us got a useful training kit
Or *Mala de Aprendizagem* as they call it
Good for the use of grammar and lexicography

The end of the course dinner was picturesque
Or one had better say really “arionesque”
Inside an old *adega* in a banana grove
Only a short distance from a romantic cove
With the waves dancing under the silvery moon
Meanwhile the cooks busied themselves and soon
We were served juicy chunks of grilled meat
And bottles of *vinho tinto* a real treat
And as the moment seemed most opportune
We were handed the course evaluation sheet

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Como se diz em inglês
Tudo correu bem ?

