

ICONET

Activity Report Portugal



Consultadoria, Formação e
Investigação, PT

ICONET PROJECT

Activity Report-April 2009

1. Objectives of the developed activities

The activities developed in the frame of ICONET project have in mind the Portuguese target group, i.e., the Immigrants. Essentially, the activities were directed to adapt the validation tool of the ICOVET approach. In the Portuguese case, the tool got the designation of Competence Self-Diagnosis Instrument.

The Competence Self-Diagnosis Instrument has been applied to immigrants in order to help them to recognize and identify their non formal competences. That recognition will allow them to have a self-knowledge of what they are able to do and develop in the host country, which in this is Portugal.

2. Preparation of the activities

The activities started to be prepared last year when an agreement was established with two local organizations/institutions in order to develop and apply the above mentioned instrument. One of the organizations, the New Opportunities Centre of the Fundação Alentejo-EPRAL, is responsible for the recognition, validation and certification of competences of adults. The other, the Local Support Centre to the Integration of Immigrants (Centro Local de Apoio à Integração de Imigrantes - CLAI), is giving support to immigrants who are coming to the Alentejo Region. In order to set up the agreements and starting the activities in the frame of the ICONET Project several meetings took place with those two organisations. Previously, in the first meeting, the Academus introduced the project and ask to the organizations their collaboration in the activities.

Later on, the organizations were contacted in order to participate through applying the instrument to immigrants aiming to help them to recognise their non-formal competences and make them visible. The instrument model is an adapted version to the Portuguese target group of the validation tool of previous ICOVET project. Instrument

adaptation had in account the immigrants' reality concerning the conditions in the host country as well as in the origin country. Adaptation of the tool also took in consideration the knowledge and experience of people who have been working in immigration matters and have a direct contact with them.

Afterwards, a training module was developed to be applied to future interviewers: trainers and technicians that work with immigrants and disadvantaged groups. The training module has been developed given that the instrument has proper features which need to be explored and understood by those who will apply the instrument to the immigrants.

The training for the interviewers took place in March and was delivered in a workshop to a small group of people: technicians, trainers, sociologists.

3.Starting the Interviews

In beginning of April, another meeting took place with the CLAI technician in order to start the immigrants' interview process. The topics discussed in the meeting were basically how it will be procedures for the application of interviews, which were the immigrants that would be available to cooperate in this process, which will be the most collaborative immigrants since they are a target with certain reluctance in participating in certain activities that may comprise them in the host country.

It was settled that the interviews will take in the CLAI, and eventually in places that immigrants feel comfortable (such as their work placement, in the church that they attend...). This was a suggestion of the Technician that contacts in daily basis with them.

4. Preliminaries results of the interviews

At the present moment were applied six interviews, of which five were applied to Brazilian immigrants and one to an immigrant of the Republic of Moldova. It was easier to apply the interviews to the Brazilian immigrants since the mother language basis is Portuguese. Although, there are difficulties of the immigrants in comprehending some questions, because of different interpretations/meanings that Portuguese and Brazilians give to the words, sentences and concepts.

The interviewed immigrants seemed to be inserted partly in the Portuguese society, because they are working (maybe not in the job that they wish for). The immigrants showed interest in participating in the interview and they cooperated in an active way. Some referred that until that moment did not realise the non-formal competences that they possess and the interview allowed them to realise what they are able to achieve or able to do.

The immigrants point out that sometimes they do not have knowledge where they should address when they have to deal with some kind of problems or which are the organizations and institutions that could support them. For example, in relation to the formal competences acquired in their origin country, the immigrants need to recognize them in the Portuguese system. This is a process that requires time and also knowledge of the necessary documents to carry out the recognition of competences. Being an immigrant it is not easy to move on the system, they encounter many obstacles, language, different procedures, and different perceptions among others.

This instrument could be a form of creating trust relationships with the institutions, because during the interview the immigrants reveal situations they live or lived, and the interviewer could try to find a way to help, to solve or minimize problems or even forward the immigrants to other organizations that could give a more suitable response.

5. Previewed activities

- To continue the application of the interviews to the immigrants in order to help them to identify and recognize their non-formal competences (if possible to apply the instrument to an immigrants of different Nationalities (for example to African immigrants);
- To analyse qualitatively the interviews that it will allow to obtain a more detailed informations and/or to withdraw some conclusions;
- To make one or two case studies with immigrants, for example to deep more the interview and even have a personal testimony of the immigrant;
- To keep the bridging between Academus and the local institutions involved;
- Participating in an Immigrant Event that will happen in the end of May.