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SOMOS – Lisbon Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights

A Study Case

(for the Inclusive Cities Observatory of the United Cities and Local Governments)

Sérgio Xavier

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**UCLG Committee
on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights**

MC2CM STUDY CASES

Title

SOMOS – Lisbon Programme for Democratic Citizenship & Human Rights Education

Teaser

An innovative programme aiming to develop Human Rights culture and democratic citizenship through local training and awareness-raising methods.

Abstract

SOMOS is an innovative local Programme of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights prepared from scratch along one year and launched in Lisbon at 10 December 2015, costing 100.000€ and reaching directly 2000 people per year. It aims to develop a shared culture of Human Rights and Democracy in the city through training and awareness-raising initiatives.

One of the Programme main challenges it's be implemented with sustainable coherence, in close cooperation with NGO's, along with the necessary continuous learning process within the City Council.

SOMOS next steps can be its multiplication in other cities within and beyond the country.

Background and objectives

According to the Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU in 2015, only 42% of Portuguese people have knowledge of their rights; only 18% state that the efforts made to combat discrimination are effective and only 15% think that there's no need to introduce new measures of protection from discrimination¹. Lisbon is the Portuguese city with the highest number of immigrants².

These reasons anchored Lisbon governmental intentions to promote the "effective access to social rights" and the "elimination of the causes of exclusion and discrimination"³, directly addressed by 55

¹ (EUROBAROMETER - Discrimination in the EU in 2015, Portugal Factsheet, 2015, pp. 3-4)

² (Plano Municipal para a Integração de Imigrantes de Lisboa - Volume 2 – Diagnóstico da População Imigrante residente em Lisboa, 2015, p. 9)

³ (Programa de Governo da Cidade de Lisboa 2013-2017, 2013, p. 49)

concrete proposals of action related with education⁴, following Council of Europe guidelines urging for the promotion of local⁵ and national policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education⁶.

SOMOS is a Programme responding to the mentioned issues, in line with the local political strategies, international recommendations and coming from the principle that Human Rights Education is a Human Right⁷. It aims to develop a culture of human rights and democratic citizenship in Lisbon. From within the City Council staff to the wider scope of target groups in the city, it provides training for free, in 23 available themes, involving a broad diversity of partner organisations and institutions. It grants intensive training to multipliers in the city, which contribute for the general goal of directly reaching at least 2000 people per year.

SOMOS also promotes awareness-raising campaigns tackling human rights in general and discrimination in concrete, fostering social reflection and debate.

Implementation

SOMOS Programme implementation was initiated in late 2015 encompassing two dimensions: training and awareness-raising activities. Training regards to the initial strategic learning processes addressing the City Council staff (2015), aiming to increase internal coherence of practices. Training is also addressed to external publics, aiming to develop the multiply effect of SOMOS values. The awareness-raising activities include small workshops – from 3 to 7 hours – provided for free to the groups, organisations and institutions who request them, either if they're private, public, governmental, non-governmental, formal, informal, corporate or educational. These activities are implemented by "Bolsa SOMOS", a pool of multipliers gathering a diversity of educators from civil society, including freelance or NGO-based. Anyone can benefit from SOMOS workshops.

SOMOS disseminates widely the branding "SOMOS os Direitos que Temos" ("We are the rights we have"), fostering the self-responsibility in assuring own's and other's rights. One of the two awareness-raising campaigns is titled after the branding and features people coming out in widely spread posters along the city with short statements. The objective is to deconstruct a variety of stereotypes and prejudices among the population.

The campaign "Os Direitos estão nas nossas Mãos" (Human Rights are on our hands) disseminates through the city a monthly poster tackling different themes. It raises awareness about everyone's role in promoting and protecting each other's rights.

"Escola SOMOS" (SOMOS School) is one of the most visible activities of the Programme. It consists in an intensive week of parallel training courses on human rights and democratic citizenship themes, with joint moments, where the about 70 participants engage together in educational activities.

⁴ (Plano de Acção dos Direitos Sociais 2014-2017, 2014)

⁵ (Have Your Say! - MANUAL on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, 2008, p. 7)

⁶ (Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, 2010, p. 8) (Compass - Manual for human rights education with young people, 2012, p. 484)

⁷ (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, pp. Art.26, 2))

Escolas SOMOS are built together with partner organisations, including migrants NGO's, and happen once or twice per year and gather people coming from the most distinct sectors such as NGO's, academy, public institutions, corporate, schools, volunteers, etc. Besides the training and networking dimension, Escolas SOMOS host activities open to the wide public such as cinema sessions, human rights and democracy organisational practices or living libraries⁸.



Figure 1- The official launching and presentation of SOMOS, at Lisbon City Council, by the Social Rights Deputy Mayor, João Afonso. 10 December 2015. In SOMOS, n.d., Retrieved July 15, 2017, from <http://www.programasomos.pt/single-post/2016/10/18/SOMOS>. Copyright 2017 by Municipality of Lisbon. Reprinted with permission.

⁸ (Don't judge a book by its cover! - The Living Library Organiser's Guide 2011, 2011)



Figure 2- A joint session of the III SOMOS School, at Camões Secondary School, July 2017. In SOMOS, n.d., Retrieved July 15, 2017, from <http://www.programasomos.pt/single-post/2017/07/11/III-Escola-SOMOS-O-que-%C3%A9-uma-escola-de-ativismo-1>. Copyright 2017 by Municipality of Lisbon. Reprinted with permission.

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

todos os dias promovo o diálogo intercultural
já fui discriminado por ser cigano

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

todos os dias promovo a inclusão de todas as identidades de género
sou uma mulher transexual

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

aprendo continuamente com pessoas diferentes de mim
o racismo é fruto da ignorância

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

todos os dias luto por uma cidade sem discriminação
cresci num bairro social

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

com ou sem abrigo
tal como tu sou uma pessoa

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

SOMOS OS DIREITOS QUE TEMOS

todos os dias luto contra a discriminação
julgaram-me por ser lésbica, mas hoje não me escondo

conto convosco para uma Lisboa sem preconceitos
www.programasomos.pt

Figure 3 - Images of the "SOMOS os Direitos que Temos" campaign. In SOMOS, n.d., Retrieved July 12, 2017, from <http://www.programasomos.pt/a-campanha>. Copyright 2017 by Municipality of Lisbon. Reprinted with permission.

All the educational activities in SOMOS happen under non-formal education principles, allowing the development of attitudes, not leaving aside the knowledge and skills dimensions of competences, as described in Bloom's taxonomy⁹. These principles include voluntary and active participation from the participants' side, learner-centred processes, pedagogic responsibility from the educators' side, cooperative learning, horizontality and transparency in the learning process, non-hierarchical definition of learning paths, flexibility, learners responsibility, inclusive and safe environment, experiential learning¹⁰. Significant efforts are made towards the compliance of SOMOS educational processes with these principles, in particular among the educators.

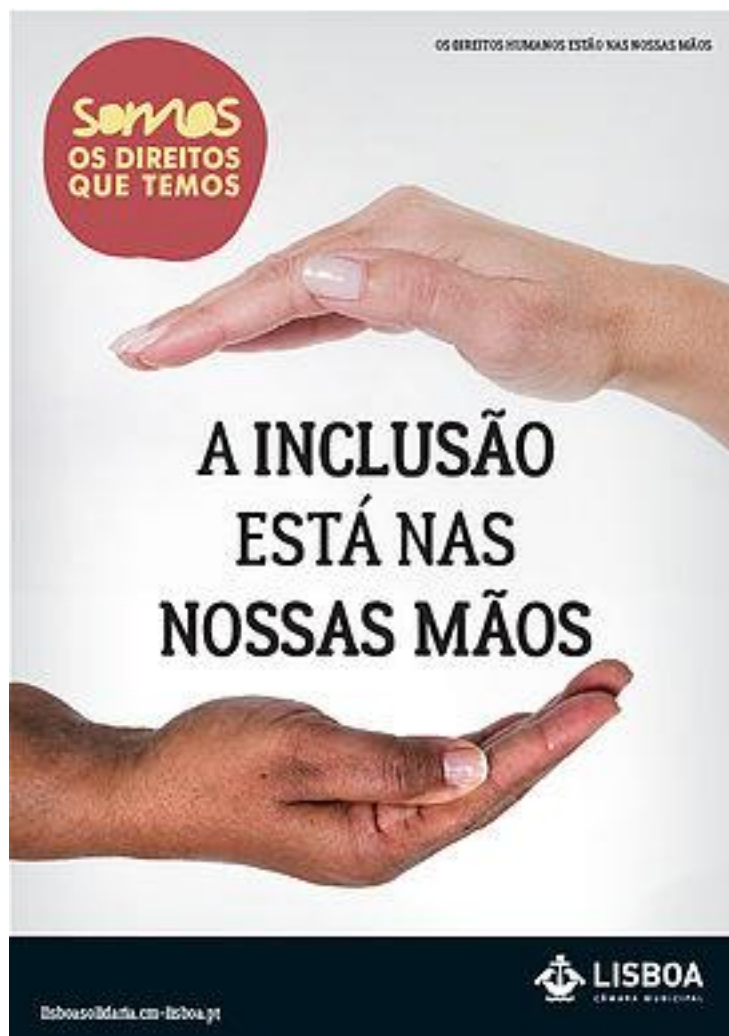


Figure 4 – One of the monthly images of the "Os Direitos estão nas nossas mãos" campaign. In SOMOS, n.d., Retrieved July 12, 2017, from <http://www.programasomos.pt/single-post/2017/02/02/Os-Direitos-Humanos-est%C3%A3o-nas-nossas-m%C3%A3os>. Copyright 2017 by Municipality of Lisbon. Reprinted with permission.

SOMOS themes include: Introduction to Human Rights, Democratic Citizenship and Rights of the Child, Youth and Children Participation, Racism and intercultural dialogue, interreligious dialogue, LGBTi Rights, structural and institutional discrimination, ageism and intergenerational dialogue,

⁹ (Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain, 1956)

¹⁰ (Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development, 1984)

disablism, Human Rights Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship, gender equality, gender identity, Human Rights and media, Bullying, gender violence, Homeless people, drug users, prostitution, remembrance and Human Rights, health.

Financing and resources

SOMOS yearly direct costs are nearly 100.000€, exclusively funded by the Lisbon City Council, being the allocation of 57% to the thematic workshops, 30% to the Escolas SOMOS and the remaining 13% to the campaigns and communication materials. Indirect costs include, municipality trainers and staff. The access to every SOMOS activity is free. The thematic workshops are co-managed with a partner NGO and implemented by a Pool of Multipliers (“Bolsa SOMOS”) with a diversity of profiles. The partner NGO also co-manages the information channels of the Programme.

Results and impacts

SOMOS produces monthly monitoring reports and is foreseen to be widely evaluated yearly. The Programme shows capacity to implement and coadunate a wide plan on social rights in the city of Lisbon; it directly operationalizes strategic actions related to human rights education, but it also excels in supporting parallel processes, namely consultative processes. SOMOS pool of multipliers has been often called to facilitate participatory moments in structural projects such as “Fórum da Cidadania” (Citizenship Forum)¹¹. This indicates that the city have now a new reliable resource, a pool of facilitators, ready to work professionally.

The “SOMOS os Direitos que Temos” campaign is an example of connection with parallel rights policies such as the Municipal Plan for Refugees Hosting, the City Plan for Homeless People, the Gender Equality agenda, the LGBTI rights agenda, the Interculturality and Migrants agenda, the Independent Life agenda, etc. By displaying awareness-raising messages of victims of discrimination, all the parallel rights policies end up benefited.

The 68 SOMOS awareness-raising workshops implemented so far, demonstrate the interest from the different actors in the city for the 23 themes proposed by the Programme. A majority of the requests relate to anti-discrimination and prevention of violence (such as Bullying), contributing to a more inclusive environment in each specific context. The transversal inclusive approach of SOMOS in training and consultative processes, foster social cohesion and contribute to qualify local practices. The fact that SOMOS pool of multipliers is composed by a large number of people connected with a diversity of organisations creates a standard of everyone-learns-from-everyone, making the pool community of practices sustainable. SOMOS is currently in a continuous partnership with 32 organizations.

The two initial training courses addressing Lisbon City Council trainers resulted in reliable multipliers that are nowadays implementing human rights training courses. The 3 SOMOS Schools (encompassing 13 training courses) promoted so far, paved the way for the participants of the

¹¹ (Fórum da Cidadania, 2017)

previous editions to act on the later ones as trainers. In total, SOMOS reached directly 1589 people so far.

Barriers and challenges

SOMOS most significant challenge was to design it, given the fact that there was not a similar reference at local level from where to get inspiration from. It took about one year to design the programme, in articulation with different stakeholders from within and external to the City Council. SOMOS is under constant evaluation and improvement.

SOMOS pedagogical approach is not mainstreamed in public policies and its main results are intangible learning outcomes. These facts make it challenging to make the programme understandable and communicable. Nevertheless, efficient – tangible – communication was essential in order for it to be regarded as a political priority.

Another challenge relates to the gathering of the different human resources and services to make SOMOS work. Intertwining different practices and departmental needs is an ongoing process requiring regular coordination efforts. It is important to identify what can be done and what cannot be done by the City Council services, in order to identify partners for the co-management of the Programme.

The sustainability of the Programme depends of the will of political cycles but also of the coherence of its implementation and leadership. A human rights education programme can't afford to fail on its conceptual and advocacy coherence. This can be challenging in a large institution such as the Lisbon City Council. It's important to assure that the demanding tasks find the hands of people with the *know-how* to handle them, while fostering constant learning opportunities for City Council staff, without compromising the quality of the activities. The biggest challenge for the future of a Programme such as SOMOS may be saving it from quality degradation, in particular regarding its non-formal education approach.

Lessons learned and potential adaption of this policy

There are significant lessons learned with SOMOS. It shows that it's possible for a City Council to provide coherent human rights education and education for democracy. With a budget as small as 100.000€ (0.01% of the total budget for the City Council), SOMOS creates direct impact in about 2000 people per year and develops a shared culture of human rights and democratic citizenship in the city.

SOMOS also shows the importance of pursuing an intersectorial approach. Cooperation with NGO's, Academy, schools or Corporate is essential for the cohesion and horizontality of the programme. Co-management is a solution for complicated tasks and bottom-up processes for designing initiatives is an important feature.

SOMOS, with its pool of multipliers, not only proves as a resource that people in the city can easily reach, it also proves to be a resource to the City Council, namely in the field of internal training and facilitation of participatory initiatives.

A number of municipalities have shown interest in multiplying SOMOS. A careful understanding of the context and the City Council specificities is needed in order to transfer the Programme. Appropriate human resources are crucial for the design, coordination and implementation of a transferred SOMOS.

Moreover than its multiplication in another cities within and beyond the country, SOMOS can have an important role in contributing to the monitoring of the implementation of the *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* in Portugal.

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