The mass schooling process in Portugal: a unique pathway

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Introduction

• This paper analyzes the implementation process and democratization of mass schooling in Portugal, highlighting its uniqueness in the European context and featuring the current situation in this area.

• Portugal can be considered one of the European countries where the process of development of mass schooling was slower and tardier. At the middle of the 20th century, about half of the population were not still alphabetised, situation without parallel in the European context.

° The transition to democracy (1974) was followed by a rapid growth of the educational system
Methodology

• Documental analysis of legislative guidelines relative to compulsory schooling

• Portuguese statistics in Education

• Results of Portuguese students in Pisa
Results

Graphic 1. Population without any level of schooling by gender (men -H, women -M)

Source: 50 years of statistics in education, Ministry of education and Institute of statistics, 2009
Results


Source: Educação Números, ME, p. 24
Results (trends)

• The data shows that the universalization of basic education took place in Portugal at the end of the 20th century, but currently there is a growing convergence with reference standards set for European space (pre-school, literacy levels and early school leaving of young people).
# Results

**Table 1. Pisa Results (Portugal)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resultados para Portugal</th>
<th>PISA 2006</th>
<th>PISA 2009</th>
<th>PISA 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Graphic 3 – Students that failed at least once in basic schooling

Fonte: PISA 2003 e 2009
Implications for policy/Practice

• The political support to development of educational system must continue due to the late process of implementation of mass schooling

• In the last years, due to the financial crisis, the positive trends in education become less noticeable. Political attention to this fact need to be given

• A great effort is still needed to fight school failure
Conclusion

• The mass schooling process in Portugal was marked by a very specific rhythm and modalities of implementation.

• The universalization of basic schooling is positively related with the quality of student learning (Pisa results).

• Evidence shows a recent convergence with European patterns (level of pre schooling, literacy level, early school dropout etc....)
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