

EVPA CoLab AWARD

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MISSÃO CONTINENTE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

SENSITIZING AND MOBILIZING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY TO THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY EATING, CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION AND AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Submitted by the SONAE MC, Portugal

BACKGROUND

A. Which **type of organisation** are you (tick all that apply)?

- A Capital Provider (Investor): An investor deploying financial capital and other resources for impact **and** minimum financial return
- A Market builder: a network and movement aiming at strengthening the impact economy ecosystem.

A **Capital Provider** and **Market builder**, in the sense of training and involving the educational ecosystem and the company, namely employees. Sonae MC fully finances the program and implements it thanks to partnerships with the Ministry of Education (institutional support in the validation of content from the Directorate-General for Education), with the Ministry of Health (with which we are in the protocol development phase), with the municipal councils, schools and academia, with a Center for Studies and Research in Social Dynamics and Health for impact measuring (CEIDSS -Centro de Estudos e Investigação em Dinâmicas Sociais e Saúde), with the University Hospital Center of São João (CHUSJ - Centro Hospitalar Universitário de São João), with the Institute of Biomedical Sciences Abel Salazar of the University of Porto (Instituto de Ciências Biomédicas Abel Salazar da Universidade do Porto) and with the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF - Federação Portuguesa de Futebol).

B. Please briefly summarise your **mission**

SONAE MC is a leading retail company in Portugal that is part of a group (SONAE) that adopted a sustainability strategy nearly 30 years ago. SONAE MC considers that it is part of its role to act in its upstream ecosystem (sustainable products, producer involvement, nutritional labelling, plastics reduction and recycled plastic incorporation, etc.) and downstream, participating in the education of young consumers and customers.

Missão Continente School Programme is an educational Programme designed to help students, parents and teachers to develop a better and healthier relationship with food,

conscious consumption and an active lifestyle. During the school year, the programme engages schools to participate through a website, and provides educational activities, challenges with associated prizes, playful-pedagogical materials, field visits and virtual sessions (with the involvement of Continente's employees and partners) and support for teachers to work on the pillars of healthy eating, conscious consumption and lifestyle active. All materials and initiatives are available on the program's website. It also engages stores throughout the country, with schools visits.

C. Which of the **use cases** does your practice(s) apply to? Please tick all that apply!

- Social innovation in public services / with public authorities

As mentioned before, Escola Missão Continente, is designed and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, with the Ministry of Health (with which we are in the protocol development phase), the municipal councils, schools and academia, with CEIDSS (Centro de Estudos e Investigação em Dinâmicas Sociais e Saúde), and with another partners (mentioned before) The approach to nutrition, sustainable consumption and an active lifestyle is transmitted, not based on an expository methodology but encouraging action, creating missions and challenges for schools, engaging the children and their families, as well as the community. Schools classes carry out projects involving their communities, such as creating recycling actions in the field/local community; make known local producers and products and encourage local production and recipes that mitigate food waste with these products; some schools with food produced in their garden held small fairs in which they invited families to participate, and the profits were then donated to a cause/institution local.

D. Which **system practice field(s)** does your practice apply to? Please select the most relevant (max three).

- Collaboration

It's a project co-built with stakeholders namely the Ministry of Education and Academia. Implemented by partners and with governance of different stakeholders.

E. Please give us a brief background 1) what motivated you to act and who initiated the practice(s), inside or outside your organisation, and (if applicable) 2) describe the event that triggered your engagement.

According to COSI Portugal 2019, the prevalence of childhood obesity increased with age, with 15.3% of eight-year-old children obese, including 5.4% with severe obesity, a value that is 10.8% in children aged six years (2.7% severe obesity). Disadvantaged children are in greater risk. At the same time, the concern with sustainable consumption increases in Portugal, but citizens complain about the lack of information and difficulties in taking decisions. Schools embrace both themes but lack human and pedagogical resources.

So Sonae MC and Missão Continente, now 18 years old, was in a good position to raise society awareness for the adoption of healthy eating and an active lifestyles, through conscious consumption, valuing national production and fostering environmental sustainability also intrinsically related with Continente's business. Escola Missão Continente goal is to contribute to a change in this context, by giving informations, raising awareness and giving the tools that children, school teachers and parents need to make healthier and more sustainable choices.

THE PRACTICE(S)

F. Briefly **analyse the situation before you introduced the practice**. What contributed to maintaining the status quo and producing (undesirable) results, e.g. resources (or lack of

resources), rules (informal and formal), roles (relevant actors from the public, private and social sector, their legitimacy or effectiveness) and/or the kind and quality of relationships (informal and formal cooperation, power dynamics, information flows).¹

This project allowed a connection between children, the employees and stores, that in classroom or during stores visits can raise children awareness of the importance to change eating habits, consumption habits, lifestyle habits, catalyzing the engagement of their teachers and families. Because children are a driving factor of behaviour change, in an effort to work with younger generations towards a sustainable future.

In the last school year, 437 schools, 40,619 students and 2,756 teachers participated in the Escola Missão Continente program. In the evaluation carried out by the teachers participating in the program, most respondents consider that the activities are very well organized and well oriented, diverse and easy to solve for the students, which leads to great involvement and enthusiasm on their part. And they also identify the availability of resources (exploration sheets, virtual visit to the store, recipes, among others) as support and an added value in exploring the themes addressed in the project, complementing what is provided for in the curriculum, and making up for the lack of human and pedagogical resources in schools, namely for the theme of conscious consumption.

G. Please describe the **actual results** you sought to achieve with your practice, **the parameters you sought to influence most**; roles, relationships, rules, and resources and how?

The main goal of the project is to help children, parents and teachers to develop a better and healthier relationship with food, conscious consumption and an active lifestyle. But also engaging Continente's employees with their communities.

H. Please describe the **intended results** you sought to achieve with your practice and **the parameters you sought to influence most** – if considerably different from the actual results described above.

In Portugal, one in three children suffers from obesity. In this chapter, the country has evolved, for the better in the last decade. But the pandemic may have, in part, reversed this process. In this context, Mission Continente School will evaluate, from this school year and for four years, the impact of healthy eating in students of 44 schools of the 1st cycle. The study consists of collecting data through anthropometric assessment of the children, assessing their weight and height and collecting data through questionnaires applied to the family. For four years, several topics will be addressed in the classroom, namely the consumption of vegetables, pulses or soup.

The initiative, which is articulated with the Ministry of Education and with the Ministry of Health, still intends to rescue the Mediterranean diet. We want to translate, in a program, the priorities at the level of Children's health. But only works through partnerships and of this mutual accompaniment of the Ministry of Education by validating the contents.

I. Please specifically explain the **role other actors and collaboration played** in this practice (if not the main practice itself) and insert a figure that illustrates the main stakeholders and partnerships that play a role in the practice you are presenting here.

The engagement of the Ministry of Education and of the Ministry of Health is very important in recognizing this action as opening schools to their community, having a larger network of

¹ See more details on using the 5R framework (Results, Ressources, Rules, Roles, Relationships) for systems analysis for example here Ashoka [Online Guide on System Change, part 3](#) based on USAIDs Programm Cycle.



players informing and exchanging information between different generations. This partnership enables a greater openness of schools to the program.

There is also an important partnership with an academic organization (CEIDSS) that will perform a Scientific Impact Measurement Study, which aims to assess the success of social intervention. For this, the initiative will accompany children and young people from 44 classes, from 44 schools, until 2025 and understand how the promotion of normal habits changes, concretely, the lives of these adult adults. The study will follow students from the first to the fourth year of schooling.

YOUR INSIGHTS

J. What went well and why? What were the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them? What would you do differently today and why?

Students and teachers, since the creation of the project, have globally evaluated the program as Good and Very Good, both in terms of the pedagogical resources made available, such as the healthy commitments poster, the healthy eating game that is held after the collaborator/ambassador session, or at the level of challenges that help children consolidate learning and mobilize the educational community for action.

Due to the pandemic, the program had to undergo a major restructuring, having transferred everything that existed in face-to-face format to online. The redefinition of methodologies allowed for the creation of new tools and working methods that ended up impacting a greater number of children and schools, which in face-to-face mode did not allow.

K. Which three pieces of advice would you give to your peers?

In a country like Portugal, cooperation between the private and public sectors to offer schools innovative pedagogical contents, that follow the current concerns, is not controversial. There is a consensus on the division of roles and responsibility of each actor. The role of each partner is different and their collaboration in the co-construction of the project enriches it creating added value for the school community, to better meet the needs of schools, teachers and students. In view of public budget constraints the approach has taken advantage of existing resources and the financing capacity of the private sector. It is an interesting way, in a budget containment context in the education area, to take advantage of existing resources and the financing capacity of the private sector.

It's important that the impact assessment is made by a player totally independent of the private and public promoters.

This kind of project is impactful if it is long term. For example, the impact assessment will last for three years, following the same students.

L. Any other information you would like to share

There is more information in the website, with videos, contents for students, teachers and families.

<https://missao.continente.pt/escola-missao-continente/atividades-e-conteudos-pedagogicos/todas/>

FURTHER RESOURCES

<https://missao.continente.pt/escola-missao-continente/sobre-a-escola/>

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