



SEDEC - from a European project to a teachers training course

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The SEDEC (Science Education for the Development of European Citizenship) Comenius Project brought together scientific and teachers training institutions in Portugal, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Romania and Poland, from 2005 to 2008. Some of the aims of this project were to investigate the relationship between science education, citizenship and European identity and to produce didactic materials and protocols for activities, designed to enhance the participation of pupils and teachers as citizens in the dialogue between science and society. A "Draw-a-scientist" activity, differentiated questionnaires for teachers and students and conceptual maps about Europe, obtained in all the countries involved, were the starting point for other activities such as teachers training courses on Science Education and European Citizenship. The results of these activities showed a weak awareness about the relation between Europe and Science but also an increasing sense of the presence of women in science and the hope, in young people, for a solution for our problems (environment, health). At the same time, most of the students confessed that a scientific career was not an option.

In 2007 and 2009, based on the results of the survey, the Centro de Formação Dr Rui Grácio organized two teachers training courses in order to elaborate teaching materials that could be used in classrooms to raise awareness of the relation European citizenship and Science.

We started discussing the importance of learning about scientific processes, implying discussing and eventually accepting others ideas, in the construction of citizenship. Then we discussed European citizenship as well as some paradigms of our society in science and scientists to make teachers more aware of their responsibilities as European citizens, of the need to make citizenship more explicit in their practice and also of the advantages of sharing ideas in a widened community.

In both courses the teachers built worksheets, PPT presentations, games, that they used in their classes and shared. All materials produced by teachers were (for some time) available, with materials from other European teachers, in an internet site. This gave teachers a sense of sharing and encouraged them to use and adapt other colleague's supports or even to produce new materials and this represented enrichment in teaching practices. Unfortunately this page is no more active.

One of the most successful aspects of this training project was the diversity in subjects taught (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geology or a bit of everything, like for primary school teachers) and in teaching levels (from first year until the twelfth).