Part of a wider research project, funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, which analyses practices, voices and pathways of inclusive education, this presentation discusses the factors behind the construction of inclusive educational practices, and the factors that interrupt the failure-dropout cycle and favour the educational remobilization of young people. Additionally, and considering a set of socio-educational practices developed in the framework of two nation-wide intervention programmes, this presentation will look into the innovative dimension and the local dimension of such practices.

This paper is based on a multi-case study intended to contribute significantly to the analysis of the intervention on school failure and dropout, by mapping the points of view of the institutional actors engaged in a panel of inclusive educational practices, developed in eleven different empirical contexts.

This paper will address two main research questions: 1) what novel approaches are identifiable in these inclusive practices, in terms of resource management, partners, audiences, formats of participation, strategies for measuring success and dissemination networks; and 2) what is the local community’s role in developing, implementing and assessing these inclusive practices.

Since the 1980s, Portugal has been the stage of a series of policies, programmes and practices which have been developed with the purpose of overcoming school failure and dropout, which have, in turn, been studied and evaluated. These assessments have highlighted a contextual and diverse appropriation and reconstruction of said policies; the teachers' perspectives about students; and the multiple rationales underlying their conception and implementation (Canário, Alves & Rolo, 2001). Recently, an external evaluation highlighted how one of the above mentioned programmes contributed to reducing dropout and grade retention in participating schools, even though subsequent data raises some uncertainty regarding the latter aspect (Figueiredo et al, 2013). Based on partially coincident data, another researcher argued in favour of the positive effects of
said programme in reducing dropout rates, detecting a more modest effect on student's academic outcomes, assessed through their results on national exams (Dias, 2013). One other study raises equally relevant questions about the scope of the results of such educational policies (Neves, Ferraz & Nata, 2016).

However, in an international and European perspective, the factors influencing school failure and dropout are well known as processes beginning, in some cases, even before school entry, resulting from the interaction between individual, institutional, contextual, family-related and school-related causes and processes. School alienation is frequently used as a generic concept that, in a way, leaves out much of the complexity of these processes (Ferguson et al, 2005; Dale, 2010; Costa et al, 2013). There is research about the policies, programmes and practices aimed at these socio-educational problems (Frondji et al, 2009; Ross, 2009; Dale, 2010; Rochex, 2011; Raffo, Dyson & Keer, 2014) and there is knowledge about successful practices in preventing and/or overcoming school failure and dropout (UB/CREA & UM/UEA, 2006; Ross, 2009; Edwards & Downes, 2013; Barros & Barrientos-Rastrojo, 2014).

Nonetheless, fairly little is known about: a) how the local dimension influences the processes, factors, rationales and (institutional, local, community) partnerships, and contributes to the construction of successful inclusive practices; b) which socio-educational relationships are most and less challenged by these practices aimed to overcome school failure and dropout (Moulaert et al, 2013).

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