

Local Employment Development and Corporate Social Responsibility in Portugal



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1 Local Employment Development in the national context

Before 1974 the social security system in Portugal was quite incipient. The unemployment subsidy was created only in 1975 and, with the Constitution of 1976, the social security system was expanded to cover the whole of the population, namely as regards unemployment protection. Since long, the Roman Catholic Church, through its parishes, and the holy houses of mercy¹, played an important role in providing assistance to disadvantaged groups of the population, such as children, elderly and the poor. This group of social enterprises was expanded, during the late seventies and the eighties, to other not-for-profit, privately owned organisations, such as co-operatives, foundations, and mutual organizations. Typically these institutions collect some financial support from the central government to part fund their activities and provide services to the population which are charged to users in accordance to their income bracket (including totally free services for the low income families).

Only in the 80's and 90's the social solidarity policies were explicitly combined with job creation policies and the balancing of work life with the family life concerns. Central government measures, such as the Local Employment Initiatives (1986) and the RIME programme² (1995), were the first visible active employment policies in the country³.

The first national framework for local investment in human resources was provided by the Regional Development Plan (PDR) for the period 1989-1993. In this document, central government made an effort to adapt the promotion of employment to the economic and social development conditions of each region. This approach was inspired in the experiences in OECD countries in the eighties and on the European Commission programmes Leader, Poverty and Leda⁴.

But it was the first version of the National Plan for Employment, adopted by the Government Resolution no. 59/98 of May 5 for the period 1998-2002, that became the main instrument for the labour market policy in Portugal. The plan followed the commitment of Portugal to hold to the guidelines laid down in the Extraordinary Summit on Employment of Luxembourg, held in November 1997, transposing the contents of such guidelines, with the adjustments required by the national specificities, and establishing objectives, quantified targets and action deadlines, as well as defining new programmes and measures.

Following the Vienna Summit, held one year after the Luxembourg Summit, the government launched a process of revision of the National Plan for Employment, involving various ministerial departments and the participation of the social partners. A number of revisions were incorporated in the plan and was decided to perform periodic revisions of the document in the future.

Based on this multi-annual plan, the major objectives of the labour market policy were focused in the following⁵:

¹ Charitable organisations related to the roman catholic church. They are run by local brotherhoods not submitted to the church hierarchy.

² Grants for micro-enterprises

³ Guerreiro, M. (2000)

⁴ Guereiro, M. Ibid.

⁵ Moniz, A (2002)

- Promotion of an adequate transition of the youngsters into the active life.
- Promotion of social and professional insertion and fight against long term unemployment and exclusion.
- Improvement of basic and professional qualification of the working population under a lifelong training approach, namely to prevent unemployment.
- Preventive management and follow-up of sectoral restructuring processes.

This first National Plan for Employment was a strategic landmark of the employment policies in Portugal⁶. It was the first time that employment was considered to be one of the pillars of the economic development, thus allowing to combine economic convergence targets with quantified objectives for creating, maintaining and qualifying productive jobs. This was done within a defined regional strategy set out in the Portuguese Regional Development Plan (2000-2006), which included regionalised intervention measures⁷. Another planning document, the National Plan for Inclusion⁸, also included objectives and actions connected to employment, notably through the “individual insertion contracts”, which provided personalised programmes for socially excluded individuals⁹.

Two other editions of the National Plan for Employment (2003-2006 and 2005-2008) were adopted, as well as a number of annual revisions. In these documents, the Portuguese government has been following the guidelines and developments introduced the European Employment Strategy in the last years¹⁰.

Due to the downturn and stagnation of Portuguese economy since the year 2000, much emphasis is being put on job creation objectives to counteract the persistent trend of growing unemployment. Thus, the current version of the National Employment Plan (2005-2008) adopted job creation and retention as a major priority: “To promote job creation and, in the framework of a life cycle work approach, attract and retain as many persons as possible in employment, preventing and fighting unemployment, namely of young people and long term unemployed, through (...) active employment policies, combined with the protection of the unemployed, taking into account specially the most vulnerable groups and bringing public services closer to clients”¹¹.

In the proposed revision of National Plan for Employment¹² there are 26 active employment measures, covering a large number of areas, such as employment for newly graduates and youngsters in general (reduction of social security contributions, grants to employers hiring youngsters, traineeship support, training programmes for youngsters, etc.), for long term unemployed (reduction of social security contributions, tax credit and grants to employers, training programmes, etc.), unemployed benefiting from the unemployment subsidy (occupation/training programmes), elderly workers (reduction of social security contributions, grants to employers, senior volunteers programme), for disabled workers, for promoting gender equality, etc..

⁶ Though there were other active employment policy measures taken several years before, such as the Local Employment Initiatives, as already mentioned.

⁷ Mendes, T. C. R. (2004)

⁸ The 1st edition of this programme covered the period 2001/2003. There is currently in force the 4th edition for 2005/2007

⁹ Guerreiro, M. Ibid.

¹⁰ MTSS (2007)

¹¹ MTSS (2005)

¹² MTSS (2007) Ibid.

The most important of these measures relevant to job creation are run by IEFP (the National Institute for Employment and Training, an agency of the Ministry for Labour and Social Solidarity) and deployed throughout the country by its nearly one hundred Employment Centres.

The overall annual budget assigned by IEFP to the measures is in the region of Euro 220 mn., and is applied to (a) training/employment programmes, (b) the creation of employment and enterprises, (c) social labour market and (d) regional measures.

(a) In the training/employment area the most important component (28% of the budget¹³) provides grants to trainees (meals, transportation, accommodation, other expenses) for a period from 9 to 12 months, in coordination with the organisation that provides these traineeships (these organisations must comply with some requirements, such as good standing as regards tax and social security obligations). These programmes apply to qualified and highly qualified people, usually youngsters immediately after getting their higher education graduation.

(b) The programme supporting the creation of employment and enterprises is intended to facilitate de access to jobs by groups that are difficult to integrate (youngsters, long-term unemployed and disabled persons) includes 2 major measures:

- The support to job creation measure (16% of the budget) applies to all registered unemployed entitled to receive the unemployment insurance benefit. The unemployed person, individually or in association with other people under the same conditions, starting an enterprise or becoming partner of an existing company that provides him/her with a full time job, receives, as an upfront lump sum, the aggregate value of all future unemployment insurance benefits he/she is entitled to.
- The local employment initiatives (15.3% of the budget) provides financial support to new companies incorporated under certain circumstances: they must create up to 20 full time jobs, to be filled by unemployed or youngsters seeking the 1st job, and operate in the manufacturing and services industries (in general, agriculture is not eligible, but biological agriculture and the processing of agricultural products is), the promoters must be able to provide cash (own equity) to cover at least 5% of initial capital costs, and at least half of the promoters must be unemployed. The measure provides grants equal to 18 times the national minimum wage, per job created (grants may be increased by 20% for each job filled by certain unemployed persons – long term, over 45, youngster seeking 1st job -, or by 25% for each job filled by a disabled person). These “employment” grants are cumulated with “investment” grants of up to 40% of the initial capital costs; the latter must not exceed Euro 150,000.

(c) 2 major sets of measures dominate the social labour market programmes:

- The “insertion” enterprises measure (7% of the budget) provides private solidarity institutions implementing capital investment projects that create jobs for long term unemployees and other disadvantaged unemployed people, with 2 types of financial support: (a) “investment support” consisting of (1) a grant equal to 18 times the national minimum wage per job created and up to 50% of

¹³ Figures for year 2006

the capital costs and of (2) an interest free loan of the same individual amount (per job created) and up to 20% of the capital costs; (b) “functioning” support; (b) “insertion subsidy”, per job created, to part fund training costs (up to 6 months), salaries/wages and social security charges during the “professionalisation period” (from 6 to 24 months). Other minor financial and in-kind support mechanisms may also apply.

- The “occupational programmes” measure (15.6% of the budget) supports private solidarity institutions, municipalities and state services that submit an occupational project, with the maximum duration of one year. The project must create temporary and socially relevant work opportunities for unemployed or economically disadvantaged persons, thus increasing their possibilities of future insertion in the regular work force. The measure provides grants to part fund the employers costs with the temporary jobs.

(d) The regionalised component of IEFP programmes are the Regional Employment Plans. These are one of the measures of the National Employment Plan, addressing specific regions where unemployment rates are higher. Though, due to the small budget available (less than 0.5% or Euro 1 mn.), this measure has no substantial impact on employment.

* * *

It is against this background of government funded nationwide programmes that local actors develop their employment initiatives. Besides individuals and organisations that directly submit applications to the existing governmental programmes, there are many actors, such as charities, local development associations, chambers of commerce, ONGs, that integrate these public support systems into a local based, territorial development strategy, where job creation concerns are usually placed on a prominent position within their priorities.

Most of these organisations are incorporated as private not-for-profit associations aiming at adding value to local resources and at fostering local development in all aspects, through economic, social and other initiatives. The majority of these associations are public-private partnerships joining local governments (typically town and/or parish councils) and private organizations, such as entrepreneurial, cultural, recreational, sports, social, producers, volunteers, vocational schools, co-operatives, and other not-for-profit organizations. In some cases membership is extended to individual persons and to SMEs.

Other actors in the field are the local and regional chambers of commerce or industrial associations. These, either directly or through the partnerships mentioned in the previous paragraph, engage in activities aiming at creating (or facilitating the creation of) productive jobs.

The participation of the organisations of social partners, *per se*, in the creation of jobs is very scarce: (a) from the 66 members of the 2 major federations of local development associations that have their membership publicly available, only one have in its membership 3 local trade unions; (b) the representation of employers is much more frequent, though not through their organisations engaged in industrial relations (the so-called vertical or sectoral associations, federations and confederations), but through local or regional chambers of commerce and industry and other local/regional entrepreneurial associations.

Summarising, the Portuguese local employment:

- tends to be a top down, government induced process;
- embedded in a broader strategy covering the promotion of entrepreneurship, the social insertion, the social labour market and the qualification of the population in general;
- basically concentrated on fighting the high employment rates the country is experiencing in the last 5 years;
- applied throughout the country in similar fashion, including the autonomous Atlantic islands;
- catalysing and part funding the intervention of local actors, such as municipalities, charities, local/regional development associations, chambers of commerce and other ONGs, many times in co-operation with the local employment centres run by the central government;
- where the co-ordination is mostly done by the central grant system and, at local level, by diverse partnerships among local actors;
- using the government budget and EU structural funds as the major funding sources;
- lately tending to rely more on social capital initiatives, particularly in the peri-urban and rural areas.

2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Local Employment Development

Portugal ranks 21st (in 108 countries) on the Responsibility Competitiveness Index 2007¹⁴, with only 3 EU15 members lagging behind (Spain, Italy and Greece). Though the 3 components that make up the index are not far from each other (between the 22nd and the 29th positions), the country is doing better on what concerns the social enablers and worst in what concerns the business actions, suggesting that the civil society as a whole is more predisposed to consider social responsibilities than the business community by itself.

Social responsibility actions performed in a informal manner have been practiced in Portugal since long by many companies, notably SMEs. Though only after the Lisbon summit in 2000, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) became more clearly promoted by the government and interested groups.

According to an opinion research conducted in 2000 covering 12 European countries¹⁵, only a small minority of the Portuguese public was aware of the concept of CSR. Though 66% of the participants considered that companies should pay more attention to the subject (European average: 58%) and 70% stated that their buying decisions could be influenced by the social behaviour of the manufacturer, only 28% were prepared to pay more for a social and environmentally responsible product (Europe average: 44%).

During the first half of the decade the CSR matter underwent a significant progress:

- new organizations promoting CSR in Portugal were created: BCSD Portugal (2001)¹⁶, RSE Portugal¹⁷ (2002) and APEE¹⁸ (2002);
- the Economic and Social Council¹⁹ organised a seminar with the participation of the social partners (2002)²⁰ and, subsequently, published an important opinion on the CSR topic (2003)²¹;
- the Stock Markets Commission updated its regulation on the governance of listed companies;

¹⁴ Begley, P., Nascimento, E., MacGillivray, A and Boechat, C (2007)

¹⁵ MORI (2000)

¹⁶ The Portuguese member of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). BCSD Portugal has currently a membership of 105 companies, mostly large and multinational

¹⁷ The Portuguese member of CSR Europe. Currently this association has 14 members.

¹⁸ APEE – Associação Portuguesa de Ética Empresarial (Portuguese Association for Corporate Ethics). Independent organisation with membership of 28 organisations and several individual members.

¹⁹ The Economic and Social Council (CES – Conselho Económico e Social) is a constitutional body for consultation, co-operation and participation, in the field of economic and social policies, created in 1991.

²⁰ CES (2002)

²¹ CES (2003)

- “Nova Delta”, a Portuguese family owned company was awarded the certificate of compliance to the SA8000 standard, becoming the first Portuguese and Iberian firm to be certified by this standard (2002);
- the number of firms publishing annual CSR reports increased substantially;
- the number of conferences, seminars, workshops and similar events on CSR and related matters also expanded considerably;
- new or existing business consultancies started to offer services in the field.

According to the 2002 Observatory of SMEs²², contributions in cash is the preferred fashion (80%) Portuguese SMEs support social, cultural and sporting activities. Contributions in kind are much less frequent and tend to be picked out from the range of products they manufacture or the services they provide.

These contributions tend to be occasional, made outside of any established strategy and directed to activities not directly related to the business the donors are in. These prefer to contribute to a specific objective or project rather than to an institution *per se*.

Volunteer work supported by companies tend to be associated with co-operation with the 3rd world, social and humanitarian assistance, education, training and environmental protection²³. In 2001, the international year of volunteers, an important project, “Hand-in-hand”, was launched by a group of large and medium sized Portuguese companies and some multinationals. Under this project, volunteers from the participating companies, during their working hours, provide social assistance services to private not-for-profit NGO, particularly concerning support to disadvantaged groups of the population.

There are a number of awards and distinctions in Portugal recognising CSR achievements or exceptional services. Some examples:

- “Exame”, the most circulated monthly business magazine published in 2003 a “Guide of Socially Responsible Companies”, including a “top ten” listing and the description of relevant social projects of CSR;
- CITE, the central government Commission for the Equality in the Work, organises an annual prize (“Equality is Quality”) aiming at recognising best practices in favour of equal job opportunities for men and woman and of balancing work and family life; since its inception in 2000, this prize was awarded to 30 organisations;
- IDICT, the work inspection services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, instated in 2003 an annual prize recognising good practices in improving work conditions and preventing work accidents;
- AIP, the Lisbon based Portuguese Industrial Association/Chamber of Commerce, awarded a CSR distinction at the 1st Forum of Corporate Social Responsibility in 2005;

²² ENSR (2002)

²³ FML (2001)

- at regional level, there is a prize aiming at promoting the social responsibility of SMEs in the Evora district²⁴, named “Enterprise-citizen Award”, a joint initiative of a town council, an agricultural co-operative and the employment centre of the area.

In Portugal to have private companies engaged in local employment initiatives is a rare think. As mentioned before, companies prefer to direct their CSR programmes to provide support to social (inclusion, disabled, etc.), cultural, and sporting activities.

The few cases of LED initiatives supported by companies, are either indirect (e.g.: local employment projects supported by local/regional industrial associations and chambers of commerce which are voluntary associations of companies, mostly SMEs) or involve other organisations (local government, charities, other ONGs) which tend to be dominant in the project setting. They also participate in job creation, but on an individual basis, and usually induced by government incentives, by providing traineeship opportunities to young people and job opportunities to disadvantaged groups of the workforce (disabled, long term unemployed, elderly, etc.) in their own businesses.

Probably, the main reason for this lack of interest is that companies that have financial conditions enabling them to consider CSR activities, believe that they are more effective in providing job opportunities to the society by investing in their own businesses²⁵ than to embark in more “distant” activities which they do not master and have sustainability prospects that may be worse than the jobs they create directly.

As the collective participation of Portuguese private firms in LED activities is so small, there are no monitoring activities of that participation, neither any assessment of its impact in the society, which should be, obviously, very low.

²⁴ Districts (*distritos*) are administrative divisions without self elected government. Though in the process of being phased out because of the decentralization process, they serve as a base for a series of administrative divisions like the electoral circles and some decentralised services of the central administration. There are 18 districts in mainland Portugal.

²⁵ In a sample of owners and managers of SMEs in a survey conducted in 2003 (Ser MPE Responsável 2003), most of the firms considered that they were in good relationships with the local community and stated that they considered that the most important factor contributing to the image the firm had in that community was their capacity for creating jobs.

3 Selected Cases of LED Initiatives Based on CSR Activities

1. Name of the initiative	Oeiras – PRO: Projecto de Responsabilidade Social das Organizações Oeiras – PRO: Organisations' Social Responsibility Project
2. Country/region/city etc.	The Oeiras county is a municipality in western Lisbon Metropolitan Area. It is in conurbation with Lisbon and has about 170,000 inhabitants.
3. Starting date of the initiative	2004/2005
4. Embeddedness of the initiative	The initiative is handled as a component of the social policy of the Town Council.
5. Initiator of the initiative	Town Council of Oeiras, which is also the co-ordinator of the project, approved under EQUAL initiative action 2 (PT-2004-183) in 29-09-2005
6. Main actors involved in the initiative	ISQ (a private not-for-profit association, founded in 1965, which provides technical services, develops research and development activities and delivers vocational training). FMP (Marquis of Pombal Foundation), a private entity of public utility active in the Municipality of Oeiras and providing social services (support children, youth and elderly citizens and family integration in the community) as well as promoting culture, education, contemporary arts, scientific research and sports. It is basically funded by contributions from private companies of the municipality. LPDM.CRS is a private charity, founded in the 50s, which is now organised as a Social Resources Centre, providing services for disadvantage persons of all ages, namely persons with disabilities, elder people, children and youngsters at risk, among other groups.
7. Funding of the initiative	Funding comes mainly from the EU (EQUAL). The Town Council, ISQ, FMP and LPDM.CRS also contribute either in cash or in kind
8. Objective(s) of the initiative	The main objective of the Oeiras PRO - Organizations Social Responsibility Project, is to give an answer to the needs felt, namely in the field of the promotion and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the area of employment and training, as well as the employability of groups in risk of social exclusion.
9. Target group(s)	Owners, managers and workers of private and co-operative enterprises Owners, managers and workers of not-for-profit organisations; Local authorities People at risk of social exclusion
10. Activities carried out and mechanisms applied	1. Creation of a Centre for Organizational Responsibility and Innovation (CORI) 2. Creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility Local Observatory 3. Creation of a Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility Knowledge Platform and Communication Plan 4. Creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility Manual a Corporate Social Responsibility Kit 5. Setting up of consulting panels' with the Project beneficiaries 6. Creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility Communication Manual

11. CSR aspect	<p>CSR is involved in 2 ways: (1) one of the partners of the project, the Foundation, is funded by contributions coming out from CSR budgets of private firms headquartered or with operations in the Oeiras municipality; (2) besides the 4 partners of the project, there are industry collaborators entitled “target organisations” (large and medium sized firms, including multinationals, such as Nestle and Merck Sharp & Dohme, and social enterprises, including charities and roman catholic parishes); one feature of the project consists in engaging the first type of targets(the firms) in providing free services to the second group of targets (the social enterprises); these free services usually are carried out through volunteer work of employees of the first group of targets in helping to solve problems or develop new systems (.e.g.: one firm of the first group, the Lisbon underground, send a team from its purchasing department to develop and install a inventory management system of a charity active in providing food items to poor people of the municipality)</p>
12. Effects for the inhabitants/ employees/labour market	<p>Though the project started by developing awareness actions and tools for CSR work, some of the actions already carried out helped to maintain current employment in the social sector of the area, by making more effective their activities. After concluding the Equal project in November 2008, the Oeiras – Pro initiative will proceed, emphasising the entrepreneurship aspects of its activities. The planned expansion of an incubator for art related businesses owned by one of the members (the Foundation) will need new tenants: So, helping the the creation of new small firms, offers an opportunity to enlarge the activities of Oeiras - Pro to the entrepreneurship area.</p>
13. Effects for private business	<p>Though there is no formal evaluation yet, the general feeling is that the project already contributed to the awareness and intensification of CSR investments in the area and helped private industry seeking for opportunities to deploy CSR programmes, by providing appropriate targets and meaningful projects.</p>

1. Name of the initiative	Rede de Gabinetes de Apoio ao Empreendedor Entrepreneur Office Network
2. Country/region/city etc.	NUTS II Centre Region (Região Centro)
3. Starting date of the initiative	2007
4. Embeddedness of the initiative	This network emerged with the "purpose of supporting all of those who intend to develop entrepreneurial initiatives" and is owned by 7 incubators located in the Centre region.
5. Initiator of the initiative	CENTIMFE, the technology centre for the Mouldmaking, Special Tooling and Plastic Industries, with a membership of more than 200 organisations, mostly manufacturing industries of the precision engineering field industrial, government institutes (IAPMEI, the small business institute, INETI, the state industrial research lab) and sectoral enterprise associations, such as CEFAMOL (National Association of the Moulds Industry) and APIP (National Association of the Plastics Industry).
6. Main actors involved in the initiative	Seven incubators of the centre region banded together to promote entrepreneurship and job creation particularly in technology areas. The incubators are owned by local town councils, chambers of commerce, universities, vertical sectoral associations and private firms). The network comprises 8 offices located in the participating incubators and providing a range of support services to new entrepreneurs to help them starting new businesses (information, counseling, networking, access to finance, forum, etc.)
7. Funding of the initiative	This initiative is financed by the incubator owners
8. Objective(s) of the initiative	To support entrepreneurship and technology employment
9. Target group(s)	Individuals seeking self employment of starting a new business, particularly in technology areas
10. Activities carried out and mechanisms applied	Promotion and support to entrepreneurship covering, basically, tailored information, general counselling and signposting, networking, access to finance and office/plant facilities
11. CSR aspect	CSR is indirectly involved as a substantial part of the originators of the initiative and sources of funding are either private companies (without any direct interest in the initiative) or not-for-profit associations owned by private companies. The vast majority of these companies are SMEs.
12. Effects for the inhabitants/ employees/labour market	It is just beginning (act of incorporation signed in October 24 2007) to ascertain impact on job creation, which is a direct consequence of new company creation.
13. Effects for private business	Fundamentally, this initiative aims at creating new businesses in technology areas in the NUTS 2 Centre region, thus creating qualified jobs and increasing regional added value.

1. Name of the initiative	Oeiras Solidária Oeiras Solidarity
2. Country/region/city etc.	The Oeiras county is a municipality in western Lisbon Metropolitan Area. It is in conurbation with Lisbon and has about 170,000 inhabitants.
3. Starting date of the initiative	2003
4. Embeddedness of the initiative	The initiative is handled as a component of the social policy of the Town Council.
5. Initiator of the initiative	The Oeiras Town Council
6. Main actors involved in the initiative	<p>The Oeiras Town Council proposes regularly a number of social projects deemed to have enough merit to be supported (the Town Council defines its role as “municipal public service of information, analysis and evaluation rendered to the private companies, bearing in mind the strategic priorities for the social development of the county, thus contributing to the participation of the private companies in the life of the community). It also provides a monitoring and an annual evaluation of the supported projects.</p> <p>The members of Qeiras Solidária (the private companies) select the projects they are willing to support. Typically each member supports a specific project , but some projects may be supported by more than one member.</p>
7. Funding of the initiative	Though the Town Council may provide some supplementary support, typically in kind (e.g.: making available transportation means or the use of municipal facilities), the major providers of support (cash or in kind) are the private members. There are currently 53 members, mostly large Portuguese firms and multinationals (Astrazeneca, BP, Bristol-Myers Squibb, CadburyAdams, Cisco Systems, Ericsson, General Electric, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson’s Wax , Kellogg’s, Merck Sharp & Dome, Microsoft, Miele, Nestlé, Pfizer, Sanofi-Aventis, McDonald’s, Tetra Pak)
8. Objective(s) of the initiative	The Oeiras Town Council defines the mission of this service as follows: “The co-operation with the enterprises, based on their declared willingness to participate in supporting social programmes, thus sharing their business cycle risks with disadvantaged citizens, aiming at contributing to the sustainable social and economic development of the area (...) and defines as having highest priority the following types of intervention: corporate volunteering, supported employment (new jobs, traineeships, on the job training), scholarships, merit awards, social insertion, recreational activities, training and community development.
9. Target group(s)	Disadvantaged groups of the county population, in general
10. Activities carried out and mechanisms applied	This programme operates as a social responsibility investment club. Under the chairmanship of Oeiras Town Council several local and multinational companies, as members, decide which relevant social projects with impact on local community (previously selected by the Town Council) should be sponsored and what kind of contribution should be given (financial, in kind, volunteer work, etc.).
11. CSR aspect	This programme is based on the mediation of the Town Council between private companies willing to provide support under a CSR approach and beneficiaries in need of support. In this way, the programme focus the support in the most socially relevant projects (according to Town Council criteria) and offers an wider range of support possibilities from which private companies can select the ones that best fit their own criteria. This project is unique in Portugal.

<p>12. Effects for the inhabitants/ employees/labour market</p>	<p>Though most of the initiatives are directed to general social projects (support to socially excluded, elderly, children, teenagers at risk of exclusion, handicapped and other social disadvantage groups), the programme provided support that helped to maintain jobs in the county, particularly in the social sector, and helped to create new jobs..</p>
<p>13. Effects for private business</p>	<p>Due to its ability in promoting CSR practices among private businesses, the programme has been considered the best practice in 2006 national context of Responsible Entrepreneurship Award by the Portuguese Small Business Institute</p>

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