

Common challenges and goals in the Portuguese and OIJ spaces –
building a joint action plan.

Intervention of the Executive Director
of the North-South Centre
of the Council of Europe

Dependencies and interdependencies in the spaces of the
Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and OIJ:
strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

- Dear representatives of Governments, local authorities, international organisations, youth institutions and civil society; Ladies and gentlemen; Young people.
- I appreciate the invitation, but I do not know if I will be the most suitable person to address this topic, because in good truth I represent another reality, the North-South Centre; In fact, it only makes sense that I should be here if I accentuate the word South, as we will see.
- Nevertheless, I will try to deal with this challenge which has been proposed to me, concentrating my speech on what I believe to be the strategic elements which the CPLP and Ibero-American Youth Forum must stress and which can in some way contribute to the reflection of the ambitious objective of building a Common action Plan, which I will consider here as foundational.

Dependencies, which I also see as weaknesses:

- Unequal force of civil society intervention, notably young people and their representative institutions in the countries of

the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries or Ibero-American spaces, usually related to the stage of advancement for respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which promote or block participation and citizenship, local and globaly, respectively;

- Different degree of relationship between youth institutions with the public authorities established, due to the existence of a strong or weak democratic framework; In the second case the dependence is greater and consequently the level of freedom is lower;
- Discrepancy in the development of the different societies that integrate these spaces and which determine for the worst the level of access to rights and obligations, the acceptance of different behaviours and limit civic participation and citizenship;
- Current concerns of young people and institutions representing them in terms of education, employment, social security, their capacity as actors and their participation as co-decision makers;
- The current detachment of young people from different subjects, particularly political, economic and social issues, moving away from a traditional and less participatory model of democracy, looking for alternatives, such as digital, to express, an aspect that must be closely followed to avoid racism, xenophobia or ultranationalists that can lead to acts of barbarism or endangering democracy itself.

Interdependencies, which I also see as strengths:

- What is common to the CPLP and Ibero-American spaces?
Brazil, Spain and Portugal, countries with youth structures with great responsibilities and perhaps the biggest engines of the construction of the Joint Action Plan;
- But without ever being able to forget the enriching and creative diversity, which should not be mitigated, from each member country of the the CPLP and Ibero-American areas, also through their youth structures;
- Interdependence brings responsibilities, such as sharing common values and principles, dialogue and commitment, active solidarity and the creation of partnerships;
- United in a shared interdependence in a globalised world makes us stronger, more heard and more active in the citizenship in our spaces and globally; I believe that this is also what our young people and their institutions are aiming for; And if they succeed, they are succeeding and making us successful;
- The strength of the digital cannot be ignored in the construction of the interdependence and the passage of the necessary messages, deconstructing stereotypes, defending the rights and obligations of young people and their institutions

and sharing information and knowledge of local and global participatory.

Opportunities:

- The world seems to want to return to a time of conquest of areas of influence, where now intervene new actors, but it still remains polarized. and the spaces of the CPLP and Latin American people cannot be ignored in this polarization;
- With the exception of Spain and Portugal, demographics are a very important geopolitical factor in the spaces we speak of; Today we are many but with the number of young people of the great South spaces tomorrow we will be millions more; This reality cannot be ignored by governments or by the institutions of young people in the spaces we speak of here;
- This opportunity should be accompanied by strong global education programs for responsible participatory citizenship and development, and the young people and their institutions should take a big part in this process;
- They naturally have to find their areas of action, avoiding redundancies and wastes of scarce resources, such as money, and above all being able to become more independent from the point of view of funding sources, which will give them more freedom of thought, action and realisation.

Proposals:

- Start to identify what is common and what is close to being common as a foundational point; Avoid the stoppage by the difference and there are many that I will not identify here, for sensibility reasons;
- To be a kind of enhanced cooperation with those who are more advanced to pull and help those who are far behind, showing the necessary solidarity;
- To take advantage of the soft power instruments of the CPLP and Ibero-American spaces, which could, for example, be listed in the common action plan, using young people and youth institutions that represent them in order to produce reliable measures between Policy-makers and decision-makers and civil society, leading the first to consider the prospect and to accept the participation of the latter;
- Separating the wheat from the chaff, avoiding the dispersion between the essential and the attachment, focusing the future joint action on the implementation of the United Nations agenda 2030 and its sustainable development objectives, which is generally accepted, as well as in the universally recognized values;
- For example, in the construction of peace and security; In the de-radicalisation of societies, in the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance, in sustainable economic development; Climate change; In promoting global citizenship and linking it to local expressions, building inclusive societies.

The role of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe with regard to youth:

- Created in 1989 from a European movement that advocated a dialogue between the north, the rich, and the south, in

development, was based in Lisbon because they considered Portugal the apex of a strategic triangle that encompasses Europe, Africa and Latin America;

- The misguidance in some of our activities, the pretext for those who want Europe to return to walls and to the very worrying policies from the point of view of solidarity and interdependence, has limited the activity of the North-South Centre to an immediate south-its Mediterranean vicinity
- But we seek to return to our traditional area of action, by means of a mechanism which is the network of universities on youth and Global citizenship;
- Although still limited in its geographical competences – Africa above all and also Latin America, where we have already organised universities in Cape Verde and Kenya, as well as in Uruguay –we have managed to maintain our presence in the Mediterranean;
- Today we facilitate and coordinate with our partners the Mediterranean University, held in Tunisia, and the University for Youth and Development, organised in Spain;
- There we promote the cooperation of young people and their organisations through non-formal education, networking and exchange of good practice;
- There we address the issues that interest young people and their institutions through a bottom-up approach and the presence of a variety of national, regional and international stakeholders,;
- There we improve the capacity of its institutions to intervene in the spaces where they are and in matters of a global nature, identifying new challenges;
- There we frame young people and their institutions in a structured dialogue where representatives of Governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities (Quadrilogue) also participate;
- There we also address intercultural dialogue and democratic citizenship, essential dimensions for an education for global development;



- There we also promote democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance;
- Finally, there we are empowering young people.

Spaces of the CPLP and OIJ: invite us, we will be there; We will do the same for you. Because together we'll be bigger and heard.

Thank you very much