

Chapter #1

LIVE2WORK PROJECT: INCREASING THE CHANCES FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL VULNERABILITY

Joana Carneiro Pinto & Helena Rebelo Pinto

Faculty of Human Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal

ABSTRACT

The Live2Work Project is an ERASMUS+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnership for cooperation and the exchange of good practices involving four countries (Portugal, France, Denmark and the Czech Republic). Its purpose is to develop an intervention methodology for end-users working with young adults (18-30 years) in situations of professional vulnerability, including migrants and refugees. Throughout this work, we intend to briefly present the six outputs that constitute the project, namely, the conceptual framework, the toolbox, the course guide, the in-service training courses, the online audio-visual learning scenarios, and the Moodle courses and learning platform on website. Particular attention will be given to the challenge of refugees' integration on a global scale, and to the theoretical rationale of the project. In particular, we will explain the contributions from career normative models, career design, construction and management models, career systemic models, and career culturally adequate models to the development of the theoretical rationale that sustains the project.

Keywords: Live2Work project, life projects, professional vulnerability, young adults, migrants and refugees.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE LIVE2WORK PROJECT

The Live2Work (L2W) stems from a partnership involving four countries (Portugal, France, Denmark, and the Czech Republic) and eight different institutions¹, which together developed an innovative project of public utility, and of scientific relevance.

The project's main goal is to develop a work methodology for professionals (end users: mentors, advisors and trainers) dealing with young adults (18-30 years) facing professional vulnerability, including migrants and refugees, actively promoting the development of skills relevant to their ability to build healthy and sustainable life trajectories. Taking into consideration the nature of the target group, this project envisages to endow these different professionals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and strategies to promote and support each targeted individual in starting and developing his/her own life project. Therefore, targets are all those young adults between 18 and 30 years old that currently experience professional vulnerability (unemployment) given the mismatch between their qualifications and/or skills and those demanded by the work market for a specific function. And, the professional users are those who work daily with the target group, such as advisors, mentors and trainers.

The Project's specific objectives are:

(i) To create a proven work methodology that a diversity of professionals (end users) can offer in their organizations to the target group, regardless of their academic/professional background (e.g., psychology, social work, education);

(ii) To offer a set of scientifically supported, fun and attractive instructive activities, using working tools that are either created, adapted or reinvented;

(iii) To offer a set of formative activities that can be flexibly used, either as a default or customized to the person's needs and characteristics, or to the current stage of the participant's life project development;

(iv) Training the end-users in this work methodology through their participation in free and accessible workshops;

(v) To provide a set of affordable instructional activities based on support materials;

(vi) To allow for a free use of all materials/outputs produced by this project, that can be accessed at online platforms (e.g., project's website, Moodle platform).

To achieve such objectives, the project's different partners are jointly working on the production of six distinctive outputs:


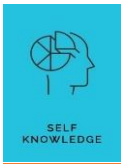
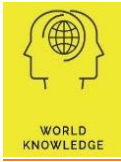

(i) Output 1: Handbook of the project's conceptual framework, concerning the (re)construction of life projects of those in professionally vulnerable situations. The handbook's first section introduces the project's objectives and distinctive characteristics and synthesizes each of its different stages and outputs. Section two focuses on the project's social relevance as it presents the demographic, educational and employability status at these different European countries, and the challenges faced by its migrants and refugees. It also presents a reflection on the importance of taking into consideration the issue of social justice on par with professional knowledge and skills, while intervening in the construction of life projects with this target group. The third section analyses the different theoretical contributions (e.g., from the career normative models, career design, construction and management models, career systemic models, and career culturally adequate models) taken as the theoretical framework for the development of the toolbox. Finally, section four presents the four dimensions - derived from the theoretical foundation - used for developing the instructional activities. Additionally, information is given on the instructional approach, organization, procedures and activity structure of the toolbox.



(ii) Output 2: Toolbox - It consists of a total of 21 instructional activities, organized into four distinctive dimensions, according to the principal models and theoretical references that support the theoretical rationale of the developed intervention (e.g., Super, 1990; Gottfredson, 2005; Greenhaus, Callanan's, & Godshalk, 2010; Pinto & Taveira, 2011; Patton, McMahon, & Watson, 2006; Conyne & Cook, 2004; Fouad & Bingham, 1995; Leong & Hartung, 2000). First dimension concerns self-knowledge and it aims to help participants to clarify their self-concept and to develop their self-esteem, through participation in six activities; participants engaged in these activities should be able to answer the following questions: "*Who am I? What traits do I have? How did I become the person I am now? Which path did I take? Who do I want to be? What do I need to change to become who I want to be?*" The second dimension relates to world knowledge. It aims to satisfy the participant's curiosity and help him/her explore educational, training, and professional opportunities, as well as identify social support networks, through participation in five activities; participants engaged in these activities should be able to answer the following questions: "*What are my main interests? What are the opportunities presented to me? What type of obstacles do I anticipate before me? To whom am I connected to (who are the people that make up my social network?) Who supports me?*" The third dimension concerns transitional skills, a set of abilities necessary for changing from one's current situation to the desired situation. There are five activities in this dimension, which will help the participant answer the following questions: "*What are my motivational, resilience and persistence levels? How do I manage my time? Am I tolerant in accepting diversity? Do I have adaptability skills?*" Finally, the fourth and last dimension concerns decision making, and helps the participant outlining

objectives and implementing an action plan that increases his/her chances of successfully achieving his/her goals. It comprises three activities which will help participants answer the following questions: “*What objectives do I need to set to achieve my goals? What is it that I want to accomplish in all aspects of my life? Which steps and stages do I need to go through and which activities do I need to accomplish to achieve my goals? What obstacles do I anticipate I will have to overcome, and what are the resources I will need to achieve my goals?*”

In addition to the aforementioned dimensions/activities, another two extra areas/dimensions are included; one related to the contractual agreement, and which precedes the intervention, and another that allows the participant to review a summary of his/her intervention path. Table 1 presents all dimensions and their respective activities included in the toolbox (Pinto, Azeiteiro, Harrsen & Rebelo-Pinto, 2018).

Table 1.
Toolbox structure: dimensions and related activities.

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>Activities and Tools</u>
 PRE TOOLS		<u>Activity 1A: Individual Contract</u> <u>Activity 1B: Group Contract</u>
 SELF KNOWLEDGE	<u>What characteristics do I have?</u> <u>How did I get to where I am?</u> <u>What was my pathway?</u> <u>Who do I want to be?</u> <u>What do I need to change?</u> <u>What skills do I need to develop?</u>	<u>Activity 2: My Values – Image Cards</u> <u>Activity 3: My Life Values by Self-Assessment</u> <u>Activity 4: Character Strength Cards - Solitaire</u> <u>Activity 5: Strengths by Storytelling</u> <u>Activity 6: VIA Online Assessment</u> <u>Activity 7: Strength Spotting Interview</u>
 WORLD KNOWLEDGE	<u>What opportunities do I have?</u> <u>What obstacles do I anticipate?</u> <u>Which resources do I have to overcome those obstacles?</u> <u>Who is part of my social network?</u> <u>Who supports me?</u>	<u>Activity 8: Self-Assessment for exploration of interest – Steps to identify future career paths</u> <u>Activity 9: Competence Tree</u> <u>Activity 10: Exploration of Occupations</u> <u>Activity 11: Mapping Network Relations (step 1)</u> <u>Activity 12: Identifying Role Models and Support (step 2)</u>
 TRANSITIONAL SKILLS	<u>What is my learning style?</u> <u>How do I communicate?</u> <u>Am I tolerant to differences?</u> <u>What adaptability skills do I have?</u>	<u>Activity 13: Learning Positive Emotions</u> <u>Activity 14: Learning the Power of Thoughts – The Diamond</u> <u>Activity 15: Challenging Thoughts, Core Beliefs and Build Optimism</u> <u>Activity 16: Perceptions</u> <u>Activity 17: Time Management</u>

 <p>DECISION MAKING</p>	<p>What are my closest milestones? What goals am I motivated by? Which are the next best action steps that I need to take? How do I set my goals for the future? How do I anchor my goals for the future?</p>	<p>Activity 18: Goal Setting Activity 19: Goal Setting – Anchoring the goal Activity 20: Anchoring Learnings, Decisions and Goals</p>
 <p>WRAP-UP ACTIVITY</p>		<p>Activity 21A: The Self-knowledge Sum up Activity 21B: The World-knowledge Sum up Activity 21C: My project – The global overview</p>

For each activity a (a) “technical sheet for the facilitator” and (b) an handout for participants were developed: (a) The “technical sheet for the facilitator” identifies the activity, the belonging dimension, the number of participants, duration and objectives to achieve, the necessary preparedness, and step-by-step instructions for its implementation; some observations/suggestions (e.g., for adapting the activity) and useful reference links are also added; (b) The handout for distribution among participants contains all the information regarding the nature of the activity and its implementation. Some of the activities are accompanied by a third printed sheet (c) the “supporting information sheet”, that contains additional information to assist the technician on his/her presentation of the activity to the participants (e.g. the “Value by Image Cards” activity, is accompanied by a “supporting information sheet” that includes the definition of “Life Values”, as well as examples and definitions of specific values). We consider fundamental to ensure that the toolbox’s suggested activities are user friendly, comprehensive and relevant to the end users.

(iii) Output 3: Course guide - a general set of instructions (including a *PowerPoint* course) to assist the training of professionals on how to use all products associated with the project. A first draft was prepared so that all project members could run pilot courses in their own countries as a first test to the developed materials. A final comprehensive course guide version (Workshop facilitator’s guide) was later compiled to assist other professionals running Live2Work workshops with their peers and colleagues, further spreading the tools, methods and ideas for successfully working with the development of new life projects. This course guide is organized around the following structure: (a) migrants/ refugees and the tools, which includes the importance of social norms and the need for creating cultural awareness, (b) methodologies for running a Live2Work workshop, which includes the learning goals, the need to provide support and the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1987), and the sense of ownership and understanding, (c) adult leaning theories, including Andragogy – making experience relevant; Experiential learning - Experience, Reflection, Conceptualisation, Experimentation; and Transformational Learning: The Importance of AHA! Moments, (d) a workshop case to help learning from success, which comprises working with a case with notes for the facilitator, and (e) workshop modules, organized around a three-day workshop schedule. It was the consortium intention to ensure that these are hands-on and practical workshops that build on the knowledge and experience of end users. The workshop is therefore structured and designed in a way to teach professional end users how to use the tools with a learner centred focus.

(iv) Output 4: Piloting courses/ in-service training courses, aimed at testing the following materials: L2W conceptual framework, toolbox, and course guide (including workshop content and structure). The consortium organised several Live2Work Workshops that took place in Portugal, Czech Republic and Denmark. These workshops served the purpose of presenting the first three outputs, with the scope of receiving immediate reactions and recommendations from professionals actively working in the fields of unemployment, vulnerability, and refugee integration. Test persons have included professionals within Live2Work partner organisations, or professionals from professional networks of the consortium. One of the L2W trainers that ran the workshop annotated the immediate feedback received during the workshops, and after the workshop the participants were invited to fill in a survey. Based on these information sources, each partner compiled a national workshop report, to share the feedback and findings with the whole L2W consortium. This feedback was taken into consideration during the production of the final version of the tools and materials.

(v) Output 5: Online audio-visual learning scenarios. Up to now 4 videos have been produced within the project's context. One of these is intended for international promotional activities of the project (tutorial of the Toolbox). The remaining three are videos concerning the presentation of either a toolbox dimension or a toolbox specific activity. The first video is a comprehensive tutorial for the implementation of the "Character Strength Cards" (Solitaire)" activity within the context of self-knowledge. The second which is about world-knowledge, shows the importance of having a network of inter-personal relationships. The third video pertains to transition skills and stresses the relationship between thought, feeling and action, and the importance of changing the first two to achieve a more positive focus and a more positive action result. In addition to English audio, the videos will have subtitles in four languages (PT, EN, DN, CZ). Currently all videos are being reviewed for approval by all partners, while a fifth video related to the toolbox's fourth dimension (decision making) is in preparation.

(vi) Output 6: Moodle courses and learning platform on website, with a set of interactive materials for online learning, that are easy and intuitive to use. The project already has a promotion website that can be visited at the address www.live2work.eu. Moodle courses open to the entire community will soon be created, making the project materials available and ready-to-use.

The project started on September 2016 and will finish on February 2019.

2. EXPLORING OUTPUT 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. The challenge of refugees' integration on a global scale

In the last few years people all over the Globe have experienced hard times, mostly due to 15 still unresolved conflicts. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) these conflicts were responsible for the displacement of approximately 66 million people, causing people to either seek refuge elsewhere inside their country (internally displaced) or in more extreme cases to abandon their country (externally displaced). Contrary to the European general belief, most people if forced to leave their homes would rather stay in their country of origin or seek support in the neighbouring countries and would only look for help in Europe as a last resort. Notably, people have been fleeing from conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Nigeria, either by land or by sea, and a large majority perish while attempting to achieve a more secure, less violent, less abusive life, and one with less poverty (BBC, 2016; Eurostat, 2017; UNHCR, 2013). In 2015

Europe hosted approximately 1.3 million refugees, mainly in Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Italy and France. However, there is a growing perception that migrants and refugees have not been welcomed in the best possible way. On arrival migrants bring with them a collection of necessities that need to be addressed such as physical (e.g. nourishment, shelter, protection) social (e.g., participation in educational, formative, professional, social, recreational, and citizenship activities) and psychological (e.g., stress, mourning, trauma, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation) (Berger, 2013; Hovey & Magaña, 2003; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). This growing awareness to assist these vulnerable people and to provide them the means to a full social integration is counteracted by a strong degree of mistrust in their ability to achieve it, and concerns that their presence among us could actually increase the risk of terrorism, violence and criminality in our societies (Yakushko, Watson & Thompson, 2008). This adds up to the social costs associated with providing shelter, education, and training, and to the fear migrants will reduce the number of job opportunities for national citizens which is already low. In truth, the discriminatory treatment towards migrants is a barrier to their full integration and adaptation, and only contributes to perpetuate the cycles of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, regardless of their permanent, or temporary settlement, as they wait for the conditions in their country of origin to change, allowing them to return in safety.

An inclusive fair and equalitarian society is constructed having in mind the satisfaction of its citizen's needs, whether physical or psychological, and creates the necessary opportunities for full realization of their citizen's potential. Such society should implement an array of diverse actions that will empower the individual, and allow equal access opportunities, resources and values, regardless of his/her gender, race, ethnicity or religious belief (e.g., Hartung & Blustein, 2002; Helms, 2003; Herr, 2001; Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001; Irving & Malik, 2004). In what specifically concerns the needs of self-realization, the refugees' developmental potential through information, guidance and career counseling activities is crucial given the likelihood that self-realization will play a significant contribution to his/her integration in a new culture (Yakushko, 2006); the enrolment in these activities will provide the refugee with the acquisition and training of new skills, necessary to face the ever changing realities of the world market, which, in the end, may be to his/her benefit should the refugee decides to return to his/her country of origin.

The theoretical information, the empirical data of scientific studies, and the field experience of the institutions have shown that the difficulties of the migrants are not exclusively of an individual nature. On the contrary, there has been a great influence of their past experiences in the country of origin, their family and employment structures, cultural norms and standards, as well as their religious values, and in the way they experience the migration situation. Such awareness requires that the study of this theme be contextualized and comprehensive, not only in relation to its protagonists (target group), but also in relation to their surroundings (contextual systems).

Next, we will present the theoretical support for the project's goals of successfully integrating people that find themselves in a professional vulnerable situation, which includes migrants and refugees.

2.2. The rationale of the L2W: Contributions from career models

The construction of life projects which is the basis of the L2W project, output 1, in what concerns the conceptual handbook, is founded on four distinct career theoretical perspectives which help to clarify and delineate interventions considering all the personal and contextual dimensions previously mentioned:

(i) The normative models (e.g. Super, 1953, 1990; Gottfredson, 1996, 2005): which consider career development as an individual continuous process, that unfolds over the life stages, over which the individual plays several different roles that differ in prominence, thus providing a broader vision of career, both longitudinal and latitudinal.

(ii) The design, construction and management of career models (e.g., Greenhaus et al., 2010; Pinto & Taveira, 2011): which put the emphasis on the cyclic, recursive and systematic nature of the process of decision-making and problem solving, containing stages such as self-exploration, environmental exploration, the development of objectives, definition and implementation of an action plan, and feedback and evaluation, mostly relying on the assumption of personal responsibility;

(iii) The systemic models (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 1997; Patton et al., 2006; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Conyne & Cook, 2004): which recognize the individuality of each client. These models are culturally inclusive and place the individual “in context” within a set of systems (individual, social and contextual) that relate among them in an open, circular and recursive manner, that have highly permeable boundaries, and are susceptible to chance; and,

(iv) The culturally sensitive models (e.g., Fouad & Bingham, 1995; Leong & Hartung, 2000): which delineate the process of career counselling in a number of stages during which the role played by the client’s culture (and that of the psychologist) is constantly emphasized, focusing on the education of minorities as a route to end the poverty and discrimination cycle.

The theoretical rationale of the Live2Work project departs from the analysis of the above models and encompasses the following detailed assumptions:

(i) The personal system: encompasses all socio-demographic (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, level of education) and psychologic characteristics (e.g., personality traits, interests, values, strengths, skills, attitudes) that define an individual and can influence a person’s life trajectory; it is important to educate the person about the relevance of increasing his/her the awareness of these traits since they can be very helpful for the understanding of his/her past self, and present self as well, and who he/she wants to be in the future; and how these traits can work for his/her benefit by assisting in the pursue of new life projects, in a world full of contradictions;

(ii) The contextual system: encompasses all of the person’s life contexts, from the closest ones, family, peers, neighbors school and/or work, to those more distant ones, social support, financial and legal institutions; it is important to help the person to explore, understand and use the educational, formative and professional information and to identify the positive (negative) influence the diverse contexts exerted on his/her life, and how they can contribute to attain future projects;

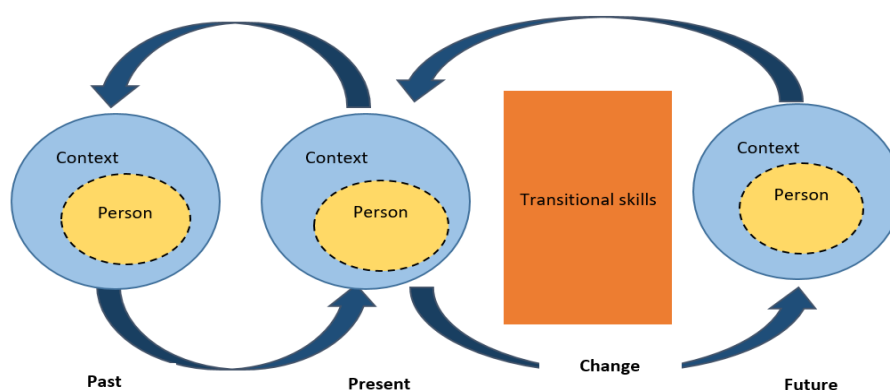
(iii) The temporal system: contains the past, present and future dimensions and their interactions with the personal and contextual systems over time; it helps the person to “relive” his/her life’s trajectory over time, by creating an awareness of who he/she was, and what he/she became based on past decisions (i.e. how his/her past influenced who he/she currently is); and what future he/she intends to create from where he/she stands; this idea of continuity in a life’s path is important since all life decisions are interlocked;

(iv) Complexity, chance, unpredictability and instability of life contexts: This matches the everchanging aspects of life and context concepts; these changes have been described in the literature as unstable, unpredictable and dynamic and therefore hard to control; people are advised to accept these changes as influential in their lives and deal with the circumstances the best possible way they can; the idea that life’s objectives can also change over time and therefore people have to constantly make informed and conscious decisions is also derived from this assumption;

(v) Personal agency: this assumption is about awakening people for their need to regain control over their lives even when chance plays a significant role; a person must be the prime agent of his/her life transformation, and thus one should be encouraged and supported to assume his/her own responsibility in this matter; in doing so the person will cease to be a passive agent waiting for the opportunity to come, and even in the face of unpredictable circumstances he/she will be able to create new opportunities and steer a path, acting swiftly and efficiently (e.g. developing new skills) towards his/her defined life's goals.

Figure 1 graphically illustrates the above 5 assumptions supporting the theoretical rationale of Live2Work project.

Figure 1.
Theoretical rationale of Live2Work project.



These five assumptions were considered during the structuration of the toolbox according to the dimensions and related activities already presented at table 1. Accordingly, the “self-knowledge” dimension corresponds to the personal system of the individual and aims to support the participants in collecting, analysing, interpreting and using personal information. The “world knowledge” dimension corresponds to the contextual system, and aims to allow the participants to collect, analyse, interpret, and use information related to the educational, training and professional world, and their main objectives in life/career. The “transitional skills” dimension corresponds to the changes people want to make in order to transform their present into their desired future. And, finally, the “decision-making” dimension involves the temporal system, more specifically, starting by looking at the past and the present, the design and construction of a desired future.

3. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF L2W PROJECT

Recently the outputs 1 to 4 were tested in pilot studies conducted by professionals that represent the intended end users - those who will be using these materials, i.e. those that will be working with professionally vulnerable young adults (the target group). These pilot studies, developed between September and November of 2017 in Portugal, Denmark and Czech Republic, were conducted to test receptivity to the project and its materials' and their suitability to the intended end users and target group.

Currently all outputs (Handbook of the project's conceptual frame, the toolbox, the course guide and the workshops) are being revised by the project's team in response to feedback obtained from the aforementioned pilot studies, to guarantee that all outputs are internationally adequate and at the same time take into consideration whatever national specifications might be considered necessary to add.

In the future, outputs 5 and 6 (i.e. the videos and the e-learning platform), will also be subjected to further assessment. As mentioned before, a promotional video and three tutorial videos are already available, but still under internal scrutiny and revision. Work on the e-learning platform is already being developed. Afterwards, it will be disseminated through the community, thereby guaranteeing that the entire project and all its materials will be made publicly available.

A major international event is scheduled for January 2019, marking the project's conclusion and presenting both the project and its outputs. The event, hosted by Catholic University of Portugal, at its Lisbon campus, will consist of a final summit (and a few workshops) that will be directed to the educators (psychologists, social workers, professors, mentors, and trainers), students, political decision-makers, social support institutions and non-governmental organizations that work with vulnerable people (e.g., refugee centers). The major goals of the conference are: (i) Awareness about the processes of the construction of life projects with populations in situations of vulnerability, (ii) Presentation and dissemination of innovative methodologies and tools, (iii) Presentation of the process development and results of the project, and (iv) Dissemination of the project's outputs. Some of the conference topics include: vulnerability (personal, social, professional); life projects (educational and employment projects); migration and refugees; multiculturalism and interculturality, inclusion; equity, social justice and social change; and, staff training on life/career (education/employment) interventions. The workshops will be focused on the training of some of the project activities such as: 1. "My values: Image cards", 2. "Identifying Future Career Paths", 3. "Tree of Competences", 4. "Diamond: Positive Focus", 5. "My Goals: SMARTE Model". The project will officially be completed on February 2019.

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KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

The definition of the following terms was taken from the conceptual manual (output 1, pp. 51-54):

Life project: A process of problem-solving and decision making that requires exploration skills, focused on self-knowledge and knowledge of the environment, the definition of objectives, and the definition and implementation of a plan of action, always with a proactive attitude and autonomy.

Migration: an exit movement out of the city and/or country of origin, and consequent entry into a new host city and/or country.

Professional vulnerability: gap between academic qualifications and / or technical skills and labour market requirements.

Refugee: person in situation of forced migration; those who are forced to leave their city / country of origin because of persecution, conflict, war, or violence.

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AUTHORS' INFORMATION

Full name: Joana Carneiro Pinto

Institutional affiliation: Faculty of Human Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal

Institutional address: Rua Palma de Cima, 1649-023 Lisbon, Portugal

Email address: joanacarneirpinto@ucp.pt

Short biographical sketch: Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Human Sciences at UCP – Catholic University of Portugal. She graduated and received her PhD in Psychology, with a specialization in Vocational Psychology, at the University of Minho, with the thesis "Career self-management: study of a psychological intervention model with research grant holders", a topic that represents the transition between vocational psychology and social/organizational psychology. She teaches courses related, among others, to the development of academic and professional skills, research methodologies, psychometrics, psychological assessment, psychology of learning, and educational psychology. She has working experience in assessment and interventions with children, adolescents, young adults, and adults. She is a researcher on studies related to well-being and life projects, the assessment of needs and effectiveness of psychological interventions in institutional settings, and scientific research methodologies.

Full name: Helena Rebelo Pinto

Institutional affiliation: Faculty of Human Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal

Institutional address: Rua Palma de Cima, 1649-023 Lisbon, Portugal

Email address: rebelopinto@sapo.pt

Short biographical sketch: Guest Full Professor at the Faculty of Human Sciences at UCP – Catholic University of Portugal, where she coordinates the Institute for Family Sciences. She also coordinates of the Master's Degree program in Family Sciences and the Master's Degree Program in Psychology in Business and Economics. She holds both Honors and PhD degrees in Psychology from the University of Lisbon, where she later became a Full Professor at the Faculty of Psychology. At the University of Lisbon, she held many positions including Director of the Career Guidance Institute and President of the Scientific Commission for Access and Qualifications' Accreditation. Her main scientific interests and research activities focus on the domains of Health, Education and Family and she has been intensely involved in sleep research and sleep education, particularly with children and adolescents within the contexts of basic and secondary schools on programs involving parents and teachers.

¹ Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML), Catholic University of Portugal (UCP), Padre António Vieira Institute (IPAV), Artevio, Coneqt, Mind Your Organization (MYO), Pelican, and Alb Conseil.