

PROMOTING LOLA PROJECT IN PORTUGAL

To be able to participate in a community of people is a privilege. But to interact with active science workers who are interested in changing the world is a lifetime opportunity.

So, where to start?

As lola ambassadors for Portugal, we start promoting the project, like a stone in the pond, it started to create concentric circles as a chain reaction, spreading over in our country and beyond!

The main idea was to make the LOLA toolkit available for all the interested people in order to apply it, mainly in secondary schools. It's as simple as that, but that was not enough.

In Portugal, the Lola Project started with António Carloto from the Polytechnical Institute of Beja who initially implemented the tool with his students in a class of Educational Multimedia Communication and the precious help of João Fernandes by the translation of its contents from English to Portuguese language.

kl assigned the LOLA process as one of the class activities subjected to assessment, says António Carloto. The students would use the LOLA toolkit and their work would be monitored, looking for possible flaws and ways of improvement. They liked the idea and I think that they did a good work, presenting interesting cases of sustainable initiatives in a broad range of fields. Their main difficulty was deciding when a "case" was eligible or not, but I think this is the interesting issue to be debated in the class with LOLA. This initiative has a lot of merits in a world of semi-blind consumerism and lifestyle uniformization - people should be aware that they can live and work in a different, more sustainable, way."

The Portuguese Ministry of Education supports the LOLA project and published news about it on the webpage of the ERTE/PT a team from the Directorate-General of Innovation and Curricular Development (DGIDC) of the Portuguese Ministry of Education. The ERTE/PT mission is the conception, development and evaluation of initiatives concerned with the computers, networks and Internet use at schools and in the learning process.

At the Setúbal College of Education, Alicia Dourado, who joined the Portuguese LOLA ambassador João Fernandes, decided to create an event to present, not only the concept but also the exhibition. This was an opportunity for the dozens of students present at the event - teachers to be in the next years - to see the Teaching Pack and its advantages as a teaching tool. This initiative is very important to show several ways of, not only preparing classes, but to make a real difference by introducing new inputs into the pedagogical materials with their own students in a collaborative way. This also improved the visibility of the Setúbal College of Education and of LOLA among the local media.

The main difficulty in promoting LOLA in Portugal resides in reaching teachers, to capture their attention and to collect all the experiences they are implementing in their own schools. So this is actually an opportunity to improve the work regarding LOLA in Portugal by designing and implementing a marketing plan, in particular a webmarketing. Making connections between LOLA and other good initiatives like the contest "Cidades Criativas" ["Creative Cities"] by using communication tools from the web 2.0 (like blogs or forums) can be a simple way to promote good experiences. Both promote good practices and creative ideas among young people especially because of the "worth to mouth" and the increasing of their awareness to this kind of actions among internet. The previous experience with the contest is a positive indicator that this could be a possible path to follow with LOLA.

So, there's still a lot to do in order to help changing the world but, step by step, with the help of new contributors to the project, we can contribute to it!

