

# PERSPECTIVES ON FORMATION OF SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATORS: ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO DE LISBOA vs IUT MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE BORDEAUX

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## Summary

In the present communication the authors intend to start a reflection upon the higher education training of sociocultural animators across two European countries within the Process of Bologna framework: Portugal and France. This work derived from a teacher mobility mission undertaken by a team from Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa to the IUT Michel de Montaigne, Université de Bordeaux.

Firstly, the diverse theoretical and practical perspectives on the activities of sociocultural animators are briefly outlined. Secondly, a comparative study of the professional training in the two higher education institutions is presented, and the observed similarities and differences are discussed.

**Keywords:** training of sociocultural animators, sociocultural community development, comparative study

## Resumo

Neste artigo pretende-se realizar uma reflexão sobre a formação inicial de Animadores Socioculturais em dois países europeus, no âmbito do Processo de Bolonha, Portugal e França. Este trabalho resultou de uma missão de mobilidade Erasmus realizada por docentes da Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa ao IUT Michel de Montaigne, Université de Bordeaux. Apresentamos uma breve contextualização das várias perspectivas de Animação Sociocultural nos dois países e, posteriormente, realizamos uma reflexão sobre a formação inicial de Animadores Socioculturais em ambos os países, identificando, também, as convergências e as divergências entre os modelos de formação seguidos nas instituições comparadas.

**Palavras-chave:** formação de animadores socioculturais; animação sociocultural; estudo comparativo

## **Résumé**

Cette communication a pour objectif d'amorcer une analyse comparative de la formation universitaire des animateurs socioculturels dans deux pays européens, le Portugal et la France, impliqués dans le processus de Bologne. Cette réflexion a émergé suite à la mission d'une équipe d'enseignantes de l'École Supérieure d'Éducation de Lisbonne (Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa) à l'IUT Michel de Montaigne de Bordeaux, dans le cadre d'un échange Erasmus. Dans un premier temps, nous exposons les perspectives théoriques et pratiques du champ de l'animation sociale et socioculturelle au Portugal et en France. Nous menons dans un second temps une étude comparative au niveau des formations universitaires proposées par les deux institutions partenaires et nous discutons de leurs convergences et de leurs divergences.

**Mots-clé :** formation des animateurs socioculturels ; animation sociale et socioculturelle ; étude comparative

## **Introduction**

The Bologna Process, signed in 1999 by 29 European states with a view to establishing common objectives, trends and strategies for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), became a major challenge to the higher education institutions and teachers. For some institutions it brought the opportunity of altering existing curricula, for others it paved the way to start new lines of training.

The Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa (ESELx) proceeds with the preservice and inservice teacher training, along the lines of several prior institutions. In 2006/2007 ESELx began to offer a 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of studies in Sociocultural Animation (SCA), among other new degrees. On the other hand, at the University Institute of Technology Michel de Montaigne of the University of Bordeaux 3 (IUT MdM), with more than four decades of experience in qualifying professionals in the fields of Social and Sociocultural Animation (SSCA), the Bologna Process led to changes made to already well-established curricula.

These two different trajectories also led to different choices in terms of the training offered to students. From differing duration of degree, courses or professional practice, to different courses, themes and strategic axis of training, a number of aspects contribute to a marked difference in the training offered by ESELx and IUT MdM. However, a closer look enables us to identify some common ground and perspectives, and similarities between the two degrees.

In the current study, the sociocultural animator is perceived as the worker – professional or voluntary – that is engaged in sociocultural community development, or, to use the established expressions from the Portuguese and French realities, as the person conducting activities referred to as 'Animação Sociocultural' or 'Animation Sociale et Socioculturelle'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact the expression 'sociocultural community development' is the correct expression in English. We have opted to use the expressions 'sociocultural animation' and 'sociocultural animator', resultant from literal translation, in order to link to an established use of these expressions among theoreticians and professionals of this field.

How do those differences and similarities between the two higher education institutions impact on the practical work of the sociocultural animators? What are the difficulties that arise from implementing the two curricula? What are the advantages perceived by the teachers? What strategies are devised to overcome the difficulties and to improve in future professionals a sense of autonomy and responsibility?

In the present work teachers from ESELx and IUT MdM address and try to discuss these questions, both from within the perspectives of the two schools and from the knowledge informed by both the actual teaching and the practical tutoring of the future sociocultural animators. Additionally, this study attempts to create bridges between the two training systems and to facilitate the mobility of the students and the animators. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to share with the higher education community a discussion started during a teacher mobility mission of the Portuguese team to the IUT Michel de Montaigne at Bordeaux.

Methodologically, we have opted for a qualitative approach in order to produce an exploratory comparative study of the two training models. A documental analysis of the official information made available to the public by the two institutions and of the directive documents regulating the respective degrees was undertaken<sup>2</sup>. Also, data was gathered from our individual histories and informal narratives supplied in our roles as teachers and tutors of the future sociocultural animators. The comparison emphasises both the training methods and their underlying rationale.

### **1. Sociocultural Animation – underlying concepts**

In Portugal, SCA gains relevance mainly from the 1970s onwards, in particular following the end of the dictatorial regime brought about by the April Revolution<sup>3</sup>. It is in this context that community organizations and popular education emerge, linked to the freedom of speech and of association principles. These movements are rooted in a broad notion of citizenship, cooperation, solidarity and active participation in the lives of groups and communities (Lopes, 2008). From the years immediately following the April Revolution until the 1980s, SCA establishes itself as a publicly acknowledged social movement: an Interministerial Commission on Sociocultural Animation is formed; issues related to the deontology of sociocultural animators, their professional status and training are widely debated; and the first Animation Centres are created. It is during this stage that the work done by the sociocultural animators, even on a voluntary basis, is acknowledged by means of a specially designed training. In the 1980s, following this

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from the published directive documents listed in the References, we have analysed the plans of the three IPIP courses and the proposal of creation of a 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of studies in sociocultural animation (ESELx, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> This, mostly peaceful, revolution begun on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1974, and brought to an end a regime started in 1928.

debate, we witness a stage marked by the requirement of preparing sociocultural animators in accordance with a global, organized and professional perspective of the SCA (Lopes, 2008).

Upon the power shift from central to local structures, in 1986, SCA endures a stage of lack of social recognition by the state and faces new challenges. In this setting, the first higher education level degrees in sociocultural animation are created and a new growth of community organizations (e.g. neighbours committees, countryside associations, local projects) occurs.

During the 1990s, SCA is perceived by the National Education Council as a non-formal educational process. It initially takes the form of a diversity of means of expression and communication (theatre, cinema, street animation, local and communitarian projects, international meetings), reinforcing the roles of the local development and the communities' active participation in their life style improvement.

In France, Social and Sociocultural Animation emerges from the new social urban requirements of the French reality of the 1960s, linked in particular to the building of "large neighbourhoods" (Augustin, 2010) and to immigration. A descendant of Popular Education, SSCA coexists with the construction in the neighbourhoods of the first sociocultural and sports centres (Youth and cultural centres<sup>4</sup>, community centres, etc.), and requires qualified, full-time workers. According to Lebon (2005), "l'apparition des animateurs accompagne la dissolution des liens sociaux traditionnels"<sup>5</sup> and will therefore have youth guidance as its main function. The SCA is established on a professional basis driven by the desire for social regulation, and the 1970s mark the arrival of a new profile of animators within these structures. These are the first graduates from the newly created and specially designed training programmes in Bordeaux. Although there had been professional training experiments in the Popular Education context since 1964, in the frame of DECEP<sup>6</sup>, the civil society actors now joined forces to create a professionalizing training programme within the University of Bordeaux. The reflections and debates held previous to the creation of that first DUT Social Professions - expertise in animation - find their origin in the 1963 Bordeaux national meeting, organised by the Teaching alliance, the secular work federation of Gironde, and the Bordeaux layman students circle, on the topic "Secularism and Marxism". This meeting can be seen as an anticipation of the Bordeaux IUT, as afterwards about a dozen of the participants were invited by Robert Escarpit to become teachers or co-workers at IUT (Augustin, 2010).

At the level of the sociocultural animators' relationship with existing institutions, we can

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<sup>4</sup> MJC (Maisons des Jeunes et de la Culture) in French.

<sup>5</sup> The emergence of animators follows the dissolution of traditional social links.

<sup>6</sup> Diplôme d'Etat de Conseiller d'Education Populaire (State Licence of Popular Education Advisor), a training programme regulated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

historically refer the program-law on sporting and socio-educative infrastructures (1961), the signing of the national collective convention on sociocultural animation (1988), and the decree on the reorganization of animation as a profession of the public appointment domain (1997).

## **2. Training of Sociocultural Animators**

### ***2.1 In Portugal***

The training of sociocultural animators was initially based on “living and experiencing approaches”, and subsequently on short term workshops, either in Portugal or abroad (Lopes, 2008). The ministerial division Fundo de Apoio aos Organismos Juvenis (FAOJ) stimulated the training of animators (Lopes, 2008). This division distinguished four types of animators: the sociocultural, the socioeducational, the polyvalent and the specialized. The training model developed by this entity relied on a broad spectrum of social sciences disciplines: from Culture, Psychopedagogy, Organizations Sociology, or History of the Society and the Arts, to the fields of Communication and Expressions (either artistic or cultural). The knowledge from all these fields, linked to the practical work of the sociocultural animators, was a keystone in promoting reflection upon the training intended for SCA.

By the end of the 1980s the training of sociocultural animators was mainly undertaken at secondary school level vocational training<sup>7</sup>. In 1986, the first higher education degree in Cultural Animation was created, under the aegis of a private school: Cooperativa de Ensino Superior Artístico - Árvore I. Three years later the first degree in Sociocultural Animation was created, by another private higher education institution: the Instituto Superior de Ciências Educativas (Lopes, 2008).

It is from the 1990s onward that we can witness a significant burst of training programmes in SCA, both in the public institutions (university or polytechnic) and in the private sector (*idem*). Throughout the decade the expansion is noticeable as much in number as in geographical distribution, covering almost all the regions by means of the Higher Schools of Education. Slight variations in the title<sup>8</sup> attest to the diversity of curricula as well as the diversity of existing perspectives regarding the goals, activities and training trajectories of SCA and related fields.

Currently, within the context of the Bologna Process, there are in Portugal 10 training programmes for sociocultural animation (strictly under this title) offered by seven higher education institutions. All the programmes fall within the category of polytechnic education,

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<sup>7</sup> Though these lines of training continue to exist and be under the regulation of the Ministry of Education, they do not have the same relevance nowadays as they did in the 1980s.

<sup>8</sup> e.g.: Socioeducational Animation, Educational and Sociocultural Animation, Community Education and Cultural Animation

corresponding to a 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of studies with an academic training of 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). All these programmes distribute the credits in an approximately even way over 6 semesters. In all these cases the completion of secondary school is normally the prerequisite<sup>9</sup>; but access to the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle is also open to working people, aged 23 or more, upon approval through a specific exam.

## 2.2 In France

In France, the training trajectories are numerous (Table 1). There is an historical separation between the “Youth and Sport” degrees and the Social Professions University Degree in Technology (DUT) certification in Social and Sociocultural Animation degrees. The latter are university degrees under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Since the 1990s, the higher education level training programmes of the Social Professions DUT have expanded from six in 1991 (Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lille, Paris Rennes, Tours) to fifteen in 2008. Only the training programmes regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research are related to the Bologna Process structure (Licence, Master, PhD) with the attribution of the ECTS according to the principle of 30 ECTS per training semester (Table 1).

In this framework, the DUT (comprising 120 ECTS) emerges as an exception to the above-mentioned structure. It is considered by employers as a university professional degree corresponding solely to a “bac+2” level<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 1: Pathways of training in SSCA in France**

Ministry of Youth and Sport			Ministry of Higher Education and Research
<b>Non-Professional Degrees</b>	<b>Professional Degrees</b>		
<b>BAFA</b> (Certificate of competency for the animation function)  <b>BAFD</b> (certificate of competency for the position of Director)		Level I (300 ECTS)	<b>Masters Professional</b> (including "Specialty Territory Animation Engineering ")
	<b>DES JEPS</b> (State Higher Diploma in Youth, Popular Education and Sport)	Level II (180 ECTS)	<b>Professional licenses</b> (including "Specialty Social Intervention")
	<b>DE JEPS</b> (State Diploma of Youth, Popular Education and Sport)	Level III	<b>Social Professions DUT</b> option Social and Sociocultural Animation
	<b>BPJEPS</b> (Patent Professional Youth, Popular Education and Sport)	Level IV	
	<b>BAPAAT</b> (Certificate of Professional Competence Technician Assistant Animator)	Level V	

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<sup>9</sup> Completion of secondary school occurs after 12 years of school; it is expected to be reached by the ages 17-18.

<sup>10</sup> In France the “bac” corresponds to the completion of secondary school.

### **3. Two Higher Education Institutions – ESELx and IUT Mdm**

The Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa is part of the public higher education polytechnic network, was formally established by the decree-law nº 513/T of 1979 (D.L.513/T/1979), started functioning in 1985, and currently belongs to the Lisbon Polytechnic Institute. Regardless of its apparent youth, ESELx is the pedagogical heir of two very important institutions in the training of elementary teachers, pre-school educators and specialized teachers<sup>11</sup>. It is only in 2006 that ESELx broadens its training scope to different professionals, through the creation of the degree *Licenciatura em Animação Sociocultural*<sup>12</sup> (LASC) (Port. 714-A/2006), in accordance with the Bologna Process. This is the starting point of a history of training in sociocultural animation.

The IUT *Carrières Sociales* and the *Inforec* (in-service training) formed the IUT B of the University of Bordeaux III. Created in 1967, due to the efforts of Robert Escarpit and Henri Lagrave, simultaneously with the department of Information Professions, the Social Professions department, together with *Inforec* set the foundations for the professionalization of animators by means of short duration higher education (Augustin, 2010). Its pedagogical programme was in fact to be followed by the national pedagogical committee.

Since its creation, the Social Professions department of Bordeaux IUT B remains the leading school in France in terms of numbers of SSCA graduates. At a later date, and thanks to the Bologna Process, the IUT proposes new training programmes with professional degrees and a professional master's degree (SIAT – territory animation engineering specialist).

#### ***3.1 The curricula design***

The ESELx 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of studies in SCA aims to enable professionals to act in social, cultural and educational (e.g. after school activities or LTA) environments. For this reason LASC integrates three training components: specific theoretical and technical component; personal, social and cultural component; and practical professionalizing component (Serra, 2008). In addition, both the existing daytime and post-working (evening) programmes require students' attendance of the courses. The LASC curriculum has undergone some minor adjustments since 2006, but the current plan, as defined in the directive Desp n. 6474/2010, comprises a core of courses, one set of elective courses and one set of advanced courses (Table 2). The student's choices of the elective and advanced courses will produce curriculum specificities as well as allow the

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<sup>11</sup> These institutions were Escola do Magistério Primário de Lisboa (established in 1930) where elementary school teachers and pre-school educators were trained, and Instituto António Aurélio da Costa Ferreira (established in 1929) which trained teachers specialized in teaching disabled children. These, in turn, come in sequence after several institutions devoted to training teachers since 1862.

<sup>12</sup> Before the Bologna Process the *licenciatura* degree corresponded mostly to 4 school years; in some fields it could correspond to 5 or even 6 school years. The same designation is now used to refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of studies.

certification of a field of expertise<sup>13</sup>. Every course relates to at least one of the disciplinary fields: Social and Education Sciences (SES); Arts and Sports (ASp); Languages and literatures (LL); and Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences and Technology (MST). All the courses are one semester in length except for the three Interdisciplinary Professional Intervention Project (IPIP) which are two semesters long each<sup>14</sup>.

In IPIP students are expected to develop their professional practical skills, in each year of the cycle of studies (IPIP I, IPIP II, IPIP III). These courses include seminars (intensive in certain weeks), mentoring (provided by a number of teachers from the SES and ASp areas) and work-in-context (increasingly longer through the years). The three IPIP are strongly interconnected.

**Table 2: LASC-ESELx Curriculum introduced in 2010/2011 (Desp. n 6474/2010, Apr 12<sup>th</sup>)**

	Core courses	Disciplinary fields	ECTS
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	Introduction to Sociocultural Animation	SES	3
	Contemporary Social Issues Seminar	SES	5
	Knowledge, Information and Communication	MST	5
	Human Development and Life Cycles	SES	5
	Oral and Written Expression Techniques	LL	5
	Interdisciplinary Professional Intervention Project (IPIP I)	SES	13
	Elective courses (to a total of)	-----	24
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	Inclusion and Social Politics	SES	4
	Organizations Psychosociology and Group Dynamics	SES	4
	Historical, Artistic and Cultural Heritage	ASp	4
	Natural Heritage, Environment and Health	MST	4
	Advanced course	-----	5
	Advanced course	SES	5
	Communitarian Intervention Models	SES	5
	Interdisciplinary Professional Intervention Project (IPIP II)	SES	14
Elective courses (to a total of)	-----	15	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b>	Professional Ethics and Deontology	SES	3
	Diversity and Cultures	SES	6
	Risk Behaviour and Groups	SES	6
	Seminar on Culture, Art and Science	SES	5
	Advanced course	-----	5
	Advanced course	-----	5
	Interdisciplinary Professional Intervention Project (IPIP III)	SES	30

Advanced courses	
Conflict Mediation and Management (a) , (c)	Social Politics for Seniors (b) , (c)

<sup>13</sup> The field of expertise (Animation; Intercultural mediation; or Senior citizens intervention programme) is acknowledged if the student completes 4 field-specific advanced courses and effects his professional practice insertion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years in the same field-specific context.

<sup>14</sup> For the one-semester courses each ECTS corresponds to 25 h of student's work, of which 36 % is devoted to work in contact with teacher (either in classes or in tutorial orientation).

Multicultural Settings and Citizenship (a) , (c)	Education of Adults (b) , (c)
Multicultural Mediation in Educational Settings (a) , (c)	Local Development and Partnerships (c)
Family Mediation (a) , (c)	Educational Resources Management and Animation (c)
Gerontology (b) , (c)	Special Needs (a) , (b) , (c)
Geriatrics (b) , (c)	

Notes: Each and all of the advanced courses have a one-semester duration, and correspond to 5 ECTS.  
Field of expertise: Intercultural mediation (a); Senior citizens intervention programme (b); Animation (c).

Elective courses			
Courses	Disciplinary fields	Courses	Disciplinary fields
Vocal and Body Expression	ASp	Leisure and Sport Activities Animation	ASp
Spaces Animation	ASp	Adapted Sport	ASp
Theatre and Interdisciplinary Settings	ASp	Literature of Portuguese Expression	LL
Theatre Practice	ASp	Animation through Science	MST
Workshop on Handicraft Techniques	ASp	French I	LL
Workshop on Plastic Expression	ASp	French II	LL
Museology	ASp	Early French	LL
Workshop on Multimedia Techniques	ASp	Specific Contexts French	LL
Workshop on Musical Animation	ASp	English I	LL
Musical Expression	ASp	English II	LL
Guitar	ASp	Professional English	LL
Music and Motion	ASp	Mathematics Methods and Models	MST
Physical Activity and Health	ASp	Applied Statistics and Project Management	MST
Sport Management and Organization	ASp	Games, Animation and Mathematics	MST

Note: Each and all of the elective courses have a one-semester duration, and correspond to 3 ECTS

In the Social Professions DUT - option SSCA the students attend in each semester a defined number of modules clustered in three teaching units: TU1 “Institutional environment”; TU2: “Society, population and public”; and TU3: “Methods, techniques and languages”. The semester contents are filled out with a professional field presentation forum, a one-week period of practice insertion (semester 1), a pre-work in context period (semester 3) and two work-in-context periods (semesters 2 and 4) that take place in the partner institutions (Table 3). The total work of all the modules corresponds to 60 ECTS per year. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the students are distributed between certain teachers according to their choice among the four variants: - Local and Intercultural Development (DLI); - Territorial Animation through Leisure Activities (ATL); - Education, Training and Animation (EFA); - Arts, Culture and Mediation (ACM). Additionally, there is a further specific variant organized across the 2 years in the specialist field of Development and Humanitarian Action Management (GDAH). This variant is exclusive of the IUT MdM, in Bordeaux. The students acquire a professional licence at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year concerns only a few students from DUT, and allows the completion of a 180 ECTS professional licence in agreement with Bologna Process structure (Table 4). This year comprises

60 ECTS corresponding to 600 h plus practice insertion. Each student must complete four of the six optional extensions offered.

**Table 3: IUT MmM – Social Professions DUT, option SSCA Curriculum**

	Teaching Unit	Core courses	Hours
1 <sup>st</sup> year semester 1	TU1	Territorial political institutions	20
		Economic and social issues	22
		Public policy	18
		Legal environment	24
		The actors of civil society, professional forum	26
	TU2	Diagnosis of territories	24
		Development of the person	22
		Analysis of society	28
		Population and public entertainment, popular education and specific issues	22
		Educational actors and practices*	18
	Analysis of pre-professional practices*	20	
	TU3	Written and oral expressions	20
		Practices of creativity and of cultural, artistic and physical expression *	50
		Foreign languages and cultures	20
		Office systems	20
		Introduction to research methodology in social sciences	16
		Project methodology	20
Approach to accounting and financial issues	24		
1 <sup>st</sup> year semester 2	TU1	Economic and social issues	20
		Territorial policy	20
		Legal environment	20
	TU2	Diagnosis of territories	18
		Ethnology*	20
		The individual and the group	20
		Analysis of society	20
		Arts and culture*	16
	Analysis of pre-professional internship contexts	44	
	TU3	Written and oral expressions	20
		Practices of creativity and of cultural, artistic and physical expression *	50
		Foreign languages and cultures	20
		Research methodology in social sciences	14
		Project methodology	23
Management		18	
Professional pole	Practice insertion	6 weeks	
2 <sup>nd</sup> year semester 3	TU1	Social policies. Sectorial public policies	20
		Cultural policies*	20
		The economy	20
		Theories of animation. The mainstream of the SSCA*	26
		Specialized law**	26
	TU2	Anthropology*	18
		Analysis of practices: social animation, movies and multicultural issues	20

		Analysis of professional practices**	20	
		Public and specific issues: aging populations, foreign, itinerant**	20	
	<b>TU3</b>	Written and oral expressions	20	
		Practices of creativity and of cultural, artistic and physical expression *	50	
		Foreign languages and cultures	20	
		Project Methodology	22	
		Management	36	
		Techniques of negotiation and mediation	20	
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year semester 4</b>	<b>TU1</b>	Territorial political institutions	20
			Territorial policies	20
			Literature, ethics and history of ideas*	20
			International migration**	30
		<b>TU2</b>	Minorities and cultures	20
			Local development. Alternative initiatives**	30
Analysis of professional practices**			30	
<b>TU3</b>		Written and oral expressions	20	
		Entertainment, social and civic participation*	30	
		Foreign languages and cultures	20	
		Methods and practices of intervention in social and socio-cultural animation**	50	
<b>Professional pole</b>		Practice insertion	7 weeks	
		Dissertation	---	

**Table 4: IUT MdM - Professional Licence Curriculum: Coordination of social projects and cultural development in urban areas**

	Teaching Unit	Core courses	Hours	ECTS
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year semester 1</b>	<b>General competences, urban territories, society and development</b>	Diagnosis of territories	30	3
		The city and the urban areas: geography, development	30	3
		Participation and citizenship: Political sciences	20	3
		Social communication	20	3
		Methods of intervention in social and socio-cultural animation	30	3
		Office systems	20	3
	<b>Optional extensions</b>	Arts and culture	30	3
		Integration, social economy	30	3
		Cultural projects	30	3
		Migration, multiculturalism and solidarity	30	3
		Leisure and free time, cultural time?	30	3
	Local development and territorial identity construction in urban areas	30	3	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year semester 2</b>	<b>Professional competences</b>	Methodology of the professional intervention project. Direction of research paper	60	4
		Research methodology	30	3
		Analysis of practices	30	3
		Completion of funding applications	20	3
		Professional forum	40	2
	<b>Employability</b>	Practice insertion / Professional report	14 weeks	10
		Professional report		
		Tutored projects	150	5

### *3.2 Two training methodologies*

The training methodology implemented at ESELx for the LASC is based on Project Work in an “integrated, theoretical and practical, professionalizing and interdisciplinary” (Campos et al, 2010) training perspective. In each of the three years the first semester is devoted mainly to theoretical and practical training under the scope of the courses. The final week of the semester is the first intensive seminar period of the respective IPIP, and aims to prepare students for the work-in-context time. In contrast, during the first two years, 6,5 weeks<sup>15</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester are devoted to IPIP, with the remaining weeks devoted to theoretical and practical training. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year the second semester is entirely occupied by IPIP III. In the IPIPs the training sequence includes the intensive seminar period, the work-in-context period, the tutorial seminars (at two points during the semester) and the final seminars in which students share with their peers and teachers the work-in-context experiences and, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, present their project results.

The duration, the goals and the complexity of the students’ expected tasks increase throughout the three IPIPs. Among the concepts and perspectives that make up the three IPIPs, some emphasis is placed on the SCA contexts of work: Childhood, Youth, Education of Adults, Senior Citizens and the peripheral issues of sociocultural systems (e.g. conflict, delinquency, social exclusion), and on the potential activities of SCA (training, diffusion, artistic and mediation).

During the IPIP II and III each student is counselled by two teachers: one of the IPIP coordinators and a tutor-teacher<sup>16</sup>. In the IPIP III, the counselling teachers shall observe each student in action at least twice during the work-in-context period. In the final report of each year students are expected to show a critical approach to the SCA role in the training context, and to evaluate the justification and the completion of the intervention implemented by them.

The training methodology at IUT MdM is based on a rotational structure in which the students spend time at the work-in-context partner institution and time at the IUT. During this period students have modules of defined blocks of theoretical and practical training. During the work-in-context period students are counselled by a professional of the partner institution. Each student also has a tutor-teacher, who discusses with him the intervention plan, visits the institution and may observe the student in action. At the end of the school year students have to present their final work before a jury comprised of both the tutoring professional and teacher among other experts. The rotational training structure also enables various institutions to

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<sup>15</sup> The IPIP weeks are distributed in blocks during the semester in order to allow some continuity of permanence in the partner institution, as well as the attendance of IPIP seminars or other classes, and the existence of time for the student’s autonomous work.

<sup>16</sup> The student can and should seek for help from the remaining tutor-teachers of other disciplinary fields if needed.

propose that their employees undergo the training programme. The training periods are gradually more complex and demanding both in the work-in-context and in the report situations.

#### 4. Divergences and convergences

From the comparison of the plans and curricula of both programmes, and from the meetings between the authors, a number of divergences and convergences were found and the most relevant are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5: Comparison of sociocultural animators training between ESELx and IUT MdM**

ESELx	IUT MdM
<b>Divergences</b>	
<b>Professional certification</b>	
Upon completion of a 1st cycle of studies and 180 ECTS	Upon completion of a DUT and 120 ECTS. (Possible progression to professional licence)
<b>Implementation of Bologna Process</b>	
25 h of total work* per ECTS; each course is independent of other courses	13,5 h of total work * per ECTS; each semester forms an unbreakable block
Non-existence of nationwide regulations regarding the higher education training in SCA; autonomy of the institutions in defining training plans	Existence of a national regulation (PNP – programme pédagogique national), but, nevertheless, institutions have great autonomy in the definition of courses contents
	Professional licence (180 ECTS) can now be obtained at IUTs
<b>Curriculum design</b>	
Existence of a core curriculum (131 ECTS) together with a number of courses that students can select to build their own academic profile (49 ECTS)	Existence of a core curriculum attained by all students in each training variant; options available in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester and in a foreign language choice
<b>Non-existent courses</b>	
Courses specifically on finance, accounting and economics	Courses specifically on physical and natural sciences, health and environmental issues, and their relationship with animation
<b>Number of students starting the training and pre-requisites</b>	
60 at most (half in daytime, half on evening timetables); completion of secondary school or aged 23 or more, upon approval through a specific exam	150 ; completion of secondary school or employed in SCA, undergoes an evaluation ( <i>curriculum vitae</i> , competences, intentions and profile) and selection; 20 start professional licence
<b>Work-in-context training tutoring</b>	
During the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> years students are observed in intervention situations by their tutor-teacher	Tutor-teacher discuss the intervention plan with students; visits the institution; in general, do not observe students' interventions
<b>Teaching context</b>	
Teachers usually teach a diversity of courses on the different licence and master programmes at ESELx; circa 56 teachers linked to LASC plus the partner institution tutors	Teachers work almost solely in the DUT – option SCA; they may teach the licence or masters in that same field; 35 teachers linked to DUT-SSCA plus 150 professionals

<b>Convergences</b>
<b>Foreign language training</b>
Students must complete 6 ECTS in one foreign language during their training (English or French at ESELx; English or Spanish at IUT MdM)
<b>Similar courses</b>
A number of similar topics are found (e.g.: theories and practices of SCA; social contemporary issues and policies; arts and culture; human development; research and project methodology)
<b>Professional insertion and training</b>
Period of work-in-context every year; with increasing duration and complexity. Project elaboration and presentation in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year. Yearly training reports

\*Total work includes work in classes, in tutorial orientation, or autonomous work.

We think it is worthwhile emphasizing some points: in the LASC - ESELx students have a more flexible curriculum and can design their own training trajectory, becoming co-responsible for the education attained; they benefit from a greater proximity to the teachers<sup>17</sup>; but they face a heavier programme in terms of working hours. On the contrary, the DUT option SSCA - IUT MdM students face serious competition to enter the IUT, and, therefore, have to be more professionally focused from an early stage; they benefit from a very well-established and historically grounded training; and they follow a less time-consuming programme, which may impact positively on promoting an attitude of reflection on sociocultural animation contexts, interventions and future trends. More effective reflections may help in building autonomy.

In terms of the Bologna Process – aiming to enable the systems of higher education across Europe to be more comparable, compatible and coherent – the comparison made in the present communication clearly shows that very diverse training programmes exist simultaneously; and the professional certification can correspond to different programmes in terms of contents, duration in years, number of ECTS or number of student work hours.

In both countries SCA derived from a number of political and social events that promoted a different way of looking at people within their neighbourhoods and communities, and their capability of being involved in improving their own lives. On the other hand, the higher education training of sociocultural animators, as well as the vocational training at secondary level, places a strong emphasis on the work-in-context practice. Although these two deep-rooted similarities add to the list identified on Table 5, one may wonder whether the differences also listed will not prevail in promoting the development of a disjointed set of competences among the sociocultural animators trained by the two programmes.

Therefore, we think the current study puts forward the existence of similarities and differences between training programmes, and raises the hypothesis of expecting possible different

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<sup>17</sup> Derived from the much smaller student/teacher ratio and from the teachers' counseling during the IPIPs.

outcomes on the practical work of the professionals formed. Research into current practitioners, into their competences, their strategies of intervention and the effectiveness of their projects is yet to be conducted. However, in our opinion, this research will take on fresh importance and urgency as a consequence of the preliminary study presented in the current communication.

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