

# DIGITAL INCLUSION AND CITIZENSHIP ON THE INTERNET - A PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF TEACHERS OF A NATIONAL PROGRAM PROJOVEM USING A SOCIAL NETWORK

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## Abstract

Depending on how they are used, virtual social networks can promote discussion, broadening and learning in a variety of topics. In the specific case of the network PROEDI (Teachers in the Digital Age – [www.proedi.ning.com](http://www.proedi.ning.com)), which is a website open to discussion and exchange of experiences among teachers who want to develop their skills in digital literacy, it may contribute significantly to the digital inclusion of teachers in the municipality of São Luís – Maranhão – Brazil, specifically to those who work in the program PROJOVEM. Therefore, the purpose of this communication is to present and discuss some proposals that aim at integrating the educational network PROEDI in the formal/informal context of PROJOVEM program, which has the objective to promote the digital inclusion of its teaching staff so that they can provide their students a rethink about the importance of Communication and Information Technologies and in the Information Society.

**Keywords:** Social Networks, Projovem, Technologies, Inclusion

## Introduction

We believe that education is a key factor for social inclusion because it is by itself a form of inclusion. It is possible to corroborate this perspective with some authors such as Piaget (2002), whose studies indicated the need for collaboration and especially the exchange of ideas and experiences among those involved, considering that the initiative of each one, the respect for the other's ideas, are conditioning factors to the existence of a collective construction of knowledge. Depending on how it is used, it is in this light that social networking can promote discussion, broadening and learning in a variety of topics. In the specific case of the network PROEDI (Teachers in the Digital Age – [www.proedi.ning.com](http://www.proedi.ning.com)), which is a website open for discussion and exchange of experiences among teachers who want to develop their skills in digital literacy, it emphasizes and welcomes the initiative of individual teachers to develop their own educational path, and it can contribute significantly to the digital inclusion of teachers in the state of Maranhão - Brazil<sup>95</sup>, specifically those who work in the program PROJOVEM.

Therefore, the purpose of this communication is to present and discuss some proposals that aim at integrating the educational network PROEDI in the formal/informal context of PROJOVEM program, which has the objective to promote the digital inclusion of its teaching staff so that they can provide their students a rethink about the importance of Communication and Information Technologies in the Information Society, also called "Third Wave" by Toffler (2002) – if we take into account the issues of digital exclusion in which most of the young Brazilians live –, as well as acquire skills in handling some of the tools of the Social Web.

## Urban PROJOVEM

To describe PROJOVEM, we took data from the integrated teaching project as reference – which is an official document constructed by various contributors, organized by Salgado (2008) –, the law that established it and also some information from the Municipal Coordination of the program in São Luís of Maranhão, Brazil.

The Urban Projovem – a mode of the National Program of Youth Inclusion - PROJOVEM –, established by federal law No. 11692 of 10 June 2008, aims at ensuring social inclusion and education of young Brazilians who belong to the range group between 18 to 29 years that, despite being literate, did not finish elementary school (8th grade). For this it is necessary to promote human development and citizenship of youngsters involved through the following actions: i) reintegration of youngsters in

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<sup>95</sup> São Luís, capital of Maranhão, which is located north of the state, precisely on the island Upaon-Acu, in the South Atlantic, between the bays of São Marcos and São José de Ribamar (source: Wikipedia) and has a population of 1.014.837 inhabitants (source: IBGE)

the process of schooling (completion of primary education); ii) the identification of potential opportunities and work training for youngsters in the world of work; iii) the participation of youngsters in collective action of public interest; and iv) digital inclusion as a tool for productive involvement and communication; v) expanding the youngsters access to culture (Salgado, 2008).

This course lasts 18 months and to those students that are regularly enrolled and assiduous will be awarded with a payment of 20 installments of R\$100,00 (one hundred reais), which is an allowance to be paid monthly (Law No. 1.,692 of June 10, 2008)

### Curriculum Design

According to Salgado (2008), the curriculum design of Projovem is integrated and interdisciplinary (basic training, professional qualification and citizen participation), with a view to inclusion of their potential audience (see Table 1) and has a workload of 2.000 hours (1.560 in classroom and 440 through networking) to be met over 18 months of classes (78 weeks). To do so it is organized like a network because it works like a cohesive whole, as a result of the intersection of structuring axes with the contents of different curricular component. Thus "each axis interacts with each curricular component, so that even keeping the specific point of view of each field of knowledge, the axes and the content address common issues" (idem, p.71).

CONTENTS STRUCTURING AXES	Humanities topics	Portuguese Language topics	English topics	Mathematics topics	Natural Sciences topics	Professional qualifications topics	Citizen Participation topics
	<b>I- Youth and Culture</b>	Being young today; The culture of the community in which I live (knowledge, doings, beliefs and artistic expression); Suffer prejudice and discrimination; My class has a good quality of life?					
<b>II- Youth and the city</b>	Living in the city My neighborhood, my territory Urban violence invades the day-to-day lives of young people? Education, work and leisure for everyone? Sanitation is important...						
<b>IV – Youth and Communication</b>	Communication: importance for my life and my work Media: integration or exclusion? Sexuality and responsibility Have I access to the media? Environment and communication in a globalized world						
<b>V – Youth and Technology</b>	The production of my body: health and beauty Does technology humanize the city? The difficulty of access to technology is a violence against the citizen... Does technology facilitate my young life? How can technology protect/destroy the environment in which I live?						
<b>VI- Youth and Citizenship</b>	Being a student of Urban Projovem is an experience of citizenship? Can you be happy living in the city? Being a citizen is to be ethical! Being a young citizen on the full exercise of citizenship is... Responsibility for the environment is a young people thing?						

**Table 1: Integrative themes of the training units on the Urban Projovem**

The component of basic education follows preferentially the curriculum governed by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - LDBEN 9394/96. Professional Qualification is now seen on three aspects: i) General Technical Training (overview of the working world); ii) occupational Arcos

– course offerings that the program provides, which are 23 in number and from which the municipality chooses at least four according to their demand for employability; iii) Project of vocational guidance – POP –, and besides offering reflections on the world of work, aims at guiding youngsters in their career (Salgado, 2008).

Finally, we have the Citizen Participation component that is intended to provide the basic concepts of this action. To do so we will also include the Community Plan of Action (PLA), which can be characterized as a planning carried out by young people of social actions to be developed, due to a problem experienced in their communities (Salgado, 2008).

Following this logic, each teacher works as a specialist and has to show that each area of knowledge is important because it helps constructing a citizen's knowledge. In addition, this same teacher plays the role of the supervising teacher, with the primary function of ensuring the integration of the three dimensions presented herein.

If we look closely at table 1 above, we will see that the structural axes, composed of integrative themes, permeate all disciplines, which is to say that they function as cross-cutting themes, because "they are focused by the different fields of knowledge (from the three dimensions of the curriculum), according to the specific points of view" (Salgado, 2008. p.73)

### **Administrative Organization of Projovem**

The Pole is the lowest administrative level of the program. It is composed of 16 *nuclei* ranging from 2.400 to 3.200 students. Each pole is composed of 01 Executive Director, 01 Pedagogical Director and 01 Administrative Technician. In addition to these professionals, there are also the Basic Education Teachers, Professional Qualification Teachers and Citizen Participation Teachers (Salgado, 2008).

In turn, each nucleus is composed of 5 classes of 40 students, and exceptionally classes can have up to 20 students. Therefore, the number of professionals needed in each nucleus follows preferably the national guidelines of the program, i.e.: 05 Basic Education Teachers (one from each area of elementary school); Vocational Teachers, where each one of them will teach 04 classes, and Citizen Participation Teachers, where each one of them will teach 10 classes.

The municipality of São Luís of Maranhão, Brazil made available a total of 5.250 vacant posts. Thus, there are 2 poles, making a total of 30 classes, since each nucleus ranges from 150 to 200 students.

Thus we have a teaching staff of 216 teachers, of which 32 are Portuguese language teachers, 32 are Mathematics teachers, 32 are Natural Sciences teachers, 32 are English teachers, 16 are Citizen Participation teachers and 40 are Professional Qualification Teachers (source: Municipal Coordination of the Urban Projovem in São Luís of Maranhão).

### **PROEDI social network on the Projovem teacher training**

PROEDI Social Network was designed with the software NING and aims to be a space for discussion, aiming at the development of skills of digital literacy, with the basic premise of sharing experiences and knowledge among its members.

To achieve these objectives, we use some communication tools such as: Scraps; Post; Tools; Share; Events; Forums; Tutorials; Online library. Among these tools, "the Forum serves as one of the most important tools for us to discuss issues relating to teacher training in ICT" (Lisbôa & Coutinho, 2011, p.1230).

In the specific case of our work, which aims at rethinking the digital inclusion of the teaching staff and its possible application in the context of the classroom, we will focus our attention on just some integrative themes that make up IV and V, as shown below (see Table 2), because we believe they maintain a direct relationship with the use of ICT in the classroom.

Training Units	Integrative themes
<b>IV – Youth and Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication: importance for my life and my work</li> <li>- Media: integration or exclusion?</li> <li>- Sexuality and responsibility</li> <li>- Have I access to the media?</li> <li>- Environment and communication in a globalized world</li> </ul>
<b>V – Youth and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The production of my body: health and beauty</li> <li>-Does technology humanize the city?</li> <li>-The difficulty of access to technology is a violence against the citizen...</li> <li>-Does technology facilitate my young life?</li> <li>-How can technology protect/destroy the environment in which I live?</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Integrative themes to be used in training**

Based on this assumption, we will adopt the following proposals:

Creation of discussion forums in order to reflect on these issues so that we can define together teaching strategies to be implemented in the classroom;

Provide materials in the digital library that address topics such as digital inclusion, informal learning and collaborative learning;

Create awareness among teachers with practical examples about the importance of working on the digital inclusion of students with not only the handling of Web 2.0 tools, but also through the methodology of projects, advocating the significant use Internet in a responsible and prudent way;

Encourage teachers to familiarize students with social networking and its future use for teaching purposes;

Providing videos that are directly related to the subject being studied and from there propose activities to the students;

Provide a list of Web 2.0 tools that can be used in a classroom context;

Provide tutorials on how to use these tools in different learning contexts;

Through discussion forums follow the impacts of these practices observed on improving students' education by adopting these practices.

Although each training unit may last only three months, we believe that network training should take place concurrently with the classroom training provided by trainers from the program itself. We say this because we believe that there will be enough time for teachers to become familiar with the environment. In addition, they can share information and experience with the trainers and the pedagogical coordinators in the training actions and in the weekly planning.

### **Final considerations**

We are aware that training must be lifelong in order to be effective. However, we believe that participating in PROEDI network discussion forums can help teachers to broaden their horizons, since they can exchange ideas with a very large universe of people, including teachers working in the same program, but from other areas of the country who undoubtedly adopt different strategies that can be adapted to the local reality, considering that the problems experienced by youngsters, with regard to the topics covered, do not differ much between regions.

It will also be important to give teachers the opportunity to participate in training as this may sensitize them about the need to rethink pedagogical practices provided to many of these youngsters, who closely experience social exclusion, and opportunities to have access to digital technologies and, most importantly, to not make them feel mere recipients of information, but producers or co-producers of knowledge.

We are sure that this alone will not suffice to ensure digital inclusion of teachers and therefore students, but we believe it is a start to think about actions at the macro level, in order to ensure communication in this world permeated by technology, where knowing how to use ICT as cognitive tools is a *sine qua non* condition for inclusion in the information society.

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