



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

## Candidate's presentation form for EAEA PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS ELECTIONS 2021

Please introduce yourself with this form and make your motivation known to the members of EAEA who will elect the new executive board in June 2021

**To be returned to EAEA until 22 May 2021**

to Gina Ebner [gina.ebner@eaea.org](mailto:gina.ebner@eaea.org) AND

Sari Pohjola [sari.pohjola@kvs.fi](mailto:sari.pohjola@kvs.fi)

<b>NAME</b>	Dina Isabel Mendes Soeiro
<b>TITLE</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	Coimbra Higher Education School - Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra CHES/PIC (ESEC/IPC)
<b>NOMINATED BY</b>	APCEP – Associação Portuguesa para a Cultura e Educação Permanente
<b>RUNNING FOR</b>	<input type="radio"/> President <input checked="" type="radio"/> Board member

Please attach your ID picture to the e-mail.





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1. Please describe your current position.

I am a Professor at Coimbra Higher Education School - Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Portugal, where I lecture Adult Education and Educational Gerontology using an on-Service Learning approach. Students, teacher and communities learn together. The impact of on-Service Learning in the involved students is very significant in the development of vocational skills and in learning for life, while at the same time, in a reciprocal relationship, it benefits individuals and communities. My work contributes to foster reciprocity between higher education and communities. I also do applied research on non-formal adult education.

As a Board member of APCEP – Associação Portuguesa para a Cultura e Educação Permanente (APCEP), the umbrella association in Portugal, I take an active role in promoting lifelong learning for all, adult education and adult literacy on the political agenda.

I learn a great deal and feel very happy coordinating “Letras prá Vida / Letters for Life” (EAEA Grundtvig Award 2017), an Adult Literacy Community-Based Project that sets up workshops to promote literacy, family literacy, critical digital literacy, empowerment and social inclusion. The project also fosters social participation through the conscious and critical use of ICT, by learning how to use smartphones, computers, Internet and social media. ‘Literacy with the heart’ is the motto because affections are at the center of all andragogic dynamics. Music is a powerful tool in this Project, to promote ‘literacy with the heart’, particularly with older learners affected by cognitive impairment. Letters For Life organizes an annual meeting of Adult Education for Life to promote adult education for all and to disseminate good practices in adult education in Portugal, by bringing together experts, students and participants, in a participatory dialogue. The project participates in the APCEP Literacy Circle, develops a community of practice and provides training in adult literacy and non-formal adult education. The impact of the Covid crisis in our activities was devastating. Only working together, cooperating with different services allows us to keep on going.

To learn more about it, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/letraspravida>

<https://eaea.org/our-work/capacity-building/eaea-grundtvig-award/eaea-grundtvig-award-publications/>

<https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/letters-life-portugal>

“Literacy for Democracy” (Active Citizens Fund - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway – EEA Grants, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação Bissaya Barreto) is a project promoted by APCEP. Here I belong to the professional team, which intends to “educate for citizenship and democratic literacy in order to develop the self-efficacy of communities.”



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The Project “National Plan for Adult Literacy” led by the Portuguese Government, with the support of the European Commission and in partnership with EAEA for technical support, is an urgent and necessary response to the needs of Portuguese adults with very low levels of literacy. The Plan was developed in a participatory methodology in which I was involved. I was a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Group and also a facilitator of a Development Group focusing on “methodologies for working on Literacy with seniors”. I expect to contribute to its implementation soon.

As a EAEA Board member since 2019, it has been a privilege for me to share my experience and join my voice to raise the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. I’ve participated and engaged as much as I could in the EAEA initiatives to contribute, but also to learn how to advocate better with preparation and confidence. I hope I can continue to give a constructive contribution for EAEA.

2. How would you like to contribute to the work of EAEA, based on your experience in your organisation?

As a teacher, a researcher and a practitioner who works on non-formal education with communities, organizations and also political actors at local and national levels, my contribution to the work of EAEA is bound to increase cooperation, collaboration and learning among practices, research, training and policies.

Europe is facing very demanding challenges, so we need capacity-building, critical thinking, as well as innovation, not just to adapt but also to transform in this digital, uncertain and complex world.

Given my expertise in Educational Gerontology, I am deeply concerned with the participation of older people. Therefore, I want to continue to contribute in providing high quality and equal learning opportunities for the elderly, enhancing intergenerational learning and promoting awareness of the importance of learning at an advanced age and, as a consequence, demonstrating that, at this stage of life, educational offers are not an expense but an investment.

I want to continue to contribute to EAEA with my commitment, my experience, my will to learn and share and with my passion for Adult Learning and Education (ALE).

3. What are your motivations as a candidate?

Europe and the EAEA have a huge impact in the development of adult education in Portugal, as the Project “National Plan for Adult Literacy” (NPAL) shows, so Portugal needs to be represented in the EAEA Executive Board to continue this work and contribute to implement the NPAL.



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We need to fight for a steady and solid public investment in Adult Education in Europe and in Portugal, strengthen and broaden adult education policies, beyond narrower qualification goals: Adult Education for Life, not just for economy!

I stand for adult education integrated in a lifelong learning strategy that considers and equally values formal, non-formal and informal learning.

I intend to empower adult education practices by promoting training and opportunities for sharing experiences.

And I wish to learn more from all the voices that EAEA gives expression and from its experience, to make new critical friends and to expand my current community of practice.

There is attention on ageing, because older people are now a large and a growing sector of the European population, but there is still an invisible cloak concerning adult education for older learners.

The challenges that we had before the crisis persist and become more difficult because of the crisis. Those who could benefit from ALE the most, the most vulnerable were left behind. The digital solutions we developed were not enough to reach them. To bridge the digital divide, we have to work on digital inclusion of people with low basic skills.

ALE has a huge potential for resilience in this pandemic crisis!

The elderly are not just victims of this pandemic, they are agents of the recovery! In these trouble waters, we need to take everyone on board!

EAEA - as a Europe-wide network – is committed to promote an inclusive exit strategy from this crisis and I want to contribute to that effort.

To sum up my motivation is: to advocate the right to learning and education for all, as a public good, no matter their age, background and/or personal circumstances. I want to guarantee more means to open up opportunities of participation especially for those who have lost hope in education. My dream: create a "Learning Europe" where no one is left behind and learning is a valued path for active citizenship, happiness and well-being!

#### 4. Which other information would you like to share with the EAEA members?

I've learned so many new things during these pandemic times: of course, the deepest Zoom secrets, how to make home bread, but the most important lessons were understanding how fragile our "normal" lives are, how to balance uncertainty and hope, how to be resilient and innovative together to overcome the huge challenges that we face.

This year we celebrate the Paulo Freire's centenary and for me the "Pedagogy of Hope" is more meaningful than ever.

I believe in advocacy for Adult Education with a heart, with an enthusiastic passion for ALE for All that is contagious, that is capable of engaging and commits politicians and society.