COALESCE
Co-creating the EU Competence Centre for Science Communication

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Case study - Portugal

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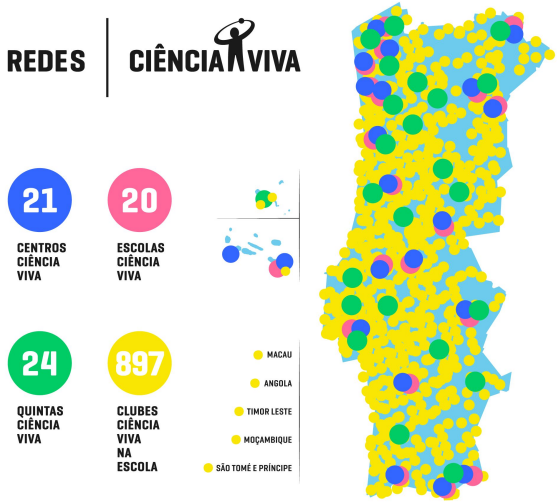
CASE-STUDY

Policy/strategy/tool/program
Ciência Viva

Ciência Viva (National Agency for Scientific and Technological Culture), in operation since 1996

Nationwide organization with a network of 21 Science Centers spread across the territory, fueling a social movement in favor of science and scientific culture involving thousands of researchers and citizens, students and teachers, young people and adults.



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CASE-STUDY

COALESCE

Strategy and implementation

Over more than two decades of existence, it has implemented a successful strategy of training key players in science education, actively involving the public in science, and promoting dialogue between science and society, and is internationally recognized in its areas of intervention.

Its implementation has been achieved through the establishment of several science centers across the country (national network of science centers), with strong roots in various locations: a convent in Estremoz, a church in Tavira, a factory in Aveiro, and even a prison in Vila do Conde, among others. Also through a network of science schools, a network of science clubs in schools, and more recently a network of science farms.

The idea is to bring science and technology closer to students, teachers, and families through different settings.

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CASE-STUDY

Main stakeholder(s) involved

Students
Teachers
Families
Researchers
R&D Research Units
Companies
Schools
Local actors

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CASE-STUDY

Drivers & barriers

Participation in the activities has been raising in Portugal
The interest of schools, families, teachers and students in science related activies has been raising in the recente years

Financial barriers (from the Agency but also from the families); curriculum barriers (and difficulty in integrated different practices in class)

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Outcomes and impact

Several international projects in education, in diverse areas of science
European networks
Cooperation in citizen science projects (Rede CC.pt)
Cooperation in science communication projects (SciComPt)

Since 2008, Ciência Viva has a credited Learning Centre, that in 2023 had around 15000 teachers participants.
Each activity developed in the Ciência Viva has a lot of participants, considering students, teachers, etc.

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Resources & sustainability

Ciência Viva has 113 workers in 2025
Financial resources come from FCT, from PRR, or, in particular cases, from projects

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Policy relevance/ Transferability

Portugal has, historically, a lower participation/interest in science, that has been raising recently. Activities developed by Ciência Viva allow this to happen in a country where the interest is growing, grounded in our students and teachers.

The initiatives, combining education and science, try to reach the most ruraland interior areas, far from large cities, providing an opportunity for integration in places where there are fewer science offerings.

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CASE-STUDY

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Reflections & future directions / Take away messages

As an example of success in this combination of science, technology, and education, it is important that the activities increase, both in terms of the number of people reached and in areas of science, but also in terms of people working directly with and in the agency.

Involve more stakeholders (engaging the students can improve the involvement of the families)

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CASE-STUDY

Policy/strategy/tool/program
SciComPt

Portuguese Network of Science and Technology Communication

Began in 2013, informally, with a group of science communicators interested in creating a network of contacts in Portugal, similar to other countries.

Association that brings together science communicators, science journalists, scientists and researchers

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Strategy and implementation

Functioning as a network, SciComPt aims to map and highlight the work of science communicators in Portugal, promoting partnerships, knowledge sharing, and new opportunities that enable symbiotic growth among all its actors.

SciComPt also aim to help shape the identity of science communicators in Portugal—while maintaining the uniqueness of each individual—in order to foster the prosperity of the community, the professional field, and science itself.

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CASE-STUDY

Main stakeholder(s) involved

Science communicators
Science journalists
Researchers
Scientists
Students
Universities and Centres
Companies

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CASE-STUDY

Drivers & barriers

The population of science communicators and interested parties, whether scientists or others, has been growing, with a significant number of new members and participants at the annual congress over the last years. The different boards have also made an effort to revitalize the association throughout the year, with training courses, seminars, webinars, etc.

As an association of science communication professionals and scientists, the work carried out is entirely voluntary and availability tends to vary greatly. At peak times, such as the organization of the annual congress, the members of the governing bodies spend a lot of their personal time on the association. This leaves little time for other initiatives, such as dissemination, contact with members, etc. which compromise changes of applying to projects or offer training.

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CASE-STUDY

Outcomes and impact

1 Anual congress with several workshops and connecting the community, always at a different site, involving different actors
Several webinars during the year
Starting training sessions on several aspects of science communication
Starting a prize for science communication projects operating in Portugal

~130 Members
Anual congress with ~200 people (started with around 80 in 2013), with ~170 submissions in 2025
~50 people in each webinar, and a lot of demand for the training (design, video, etc.)

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CASE-STUDY

Resources & sustainability

SciComPt does not have salaries to pay, but lives of the quotas from the Members that help to pay the entire congress.
FCT is regularly involved, since Ciência Viva contributes anually to the congress in the form of scholarships.

The sustainability of the association is achieved through the Members, but could be increased with the connection with other stakeholders that could help benefit this group, namely a professionalization of the association. Moreover, with every congress being held at a different location, the association has sponsors that allow to decrease the costs.

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Policy relevance/ Transferability

Science communication has been viewed in Portugal (although recently) as a way of transmitting information, namely scientific and technological. Because of that, only recently Portugal has a PhD on science communication in a public University. However, science communication has seen an increase in highlight and importance to society since Covid.

Connecting professionals of this area in an association, capable of building knowledge and train more people is important. It is also important to have a recognition of this association, by allowing it to become more independent of their Members quotas and to be able to offer more to the society.

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Reflections & future directions / Take away messages

SciComPt is an important association in Portugal, the only one acting in science communication, involving the professionals.

To be able to reach more scientists and journalists, SciComPt may need to be a creditated institution, to be able to offer more tailored training to scicommers and others, and to be able to establish itself as an authority in this area.

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Thank you!

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