



ORGANIZATION

Faculty of Sciences and Technologies of the University of Algarve (FCT), Portugal
pledges to

Become an Alliance 8.7 partner

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Name:

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Description:

The objective is to reduce the school drop-out of secondary school children. The Algarve region in the South of Portugal has the highest national dropout rates (21.6%) in the country. The Algarve is a main European touristic destination, with an economy mainly based on tourism and services (80%), with a minor contribution from fisheries and agriculture. Allied to the overwhelming dependency on these economic sectors in the region for future jobs, the overall low educational level, low average salaries (14% lower than the national average) and low family income strongly contribute to the lack of interest of young in proceeding their studies in school. As the Algarve has one of the highest number of students per resident population in the country, this high dropout rate channels 15–17-year-olds to high risk, low quality, and abusive labour conditions, at a time when they should be at school to increase their educational level and acquire important skills to improve their condition in the job market.

Furthermore, the collapse of the hospitality and tourism industry because of the COVID-19 pandemic had an exceedingly serious impact on the regional economy. This resulted in loss of income of numerous families. Further, the reliance on long periods of online learning during confinement pushed these high-risk students away from the school environment. Not only this reinforced the social inequalities amongst students but contributed to aggravate the lack of student interest and reduce the scope of school intervention to try to bring these high-risk groups to study. Thus, despite the efforts of various stakeholders to motivate students to stay in school until they reach 18 and to eradicate child labour in the Algarve region, the current social and economic context will most likely cause set back of a few years in reaching this goal. For this reason, it is essential that all regional stakeholders acknowledge the problem of child labour in the Algarve region and unify efforts to increase awareness and implement effective measures to solve this problem and ameliorate the impact of this devastating pandemic in the Algarve.

To achieve this, the Faculty of Sciences and Technologies of the University of Algarve (FCT) and the João de Deus School Cluster (AEJD) commit to engaging with the region's stakeholders to bring a solution to this problem while contributing to the UN's SDG8.7 pledge to end child labour by 2025. In this 2021 Action Pledge, the FCT, the University of Algarve and its

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scientific research centres will provide expertise in pertinent areas (social sciences, economy, education, tourism) and bring together regional stakeholders from governmental, legal, law enforcement and educational organizations, to debate the problem of child labour in the Algarve. In addition, we intend to i) design a smart dissemination strategy using social media of FCT and stakeholders to promote the #endchildlabor2021 initiative and contribute to the United Nations SDG8.7 goal as an active partner of the Alliance8.7, and ii) to publish popular articles in regional and national media to raise the awareness of the population to this problem. The João de Deus School Cluster will integrate the FCT initiative as a representative of the school community and will implement a targeted action plan in the school cluster to raise the awareness of the academic population (teachers, staff, students, and families). It will carry out activities with students and teachers on this thematic and will promote student debates in cooperation with the FCT and all other stakeholders supporting this pledge. In addition, it will also disseminate all activities and on its webpage and social media.

Implementation plan:

May 2021: Announce the commitment of FCT, AEJD and other stakeholders to the #EndChildLabour2021 initiative and partnership with the Alliance 8.7, in the institutional website pages, social media and in regional/national media.

June 2021: Release a short video in recognition of World Day Against Child (12th June). The video will include information about the objectives of International Year, the partners' specific role and the importance of the pledge for the Algarve. The video will be posted on social media using #EndChildLabour2021.

July 2021: A blog post will be released on the web pages and social media of UALG and AEJD addressing the concept of child labour and the various forms of work (formal and informal) that it comprises.

August 2021: A blog post will be released on the web pages and social media of UALG and AEJD addressing what factors contribute to child labour in the Algarve and which sectors are more prone to integrate these children.

September 2021: Host a public debate on the problem of child labour in the Algarve and the impact of COVID-19, at the UALG. Promote highlights from the debate on social media to raise awareness about #EndChildLabour2021. Provide live streaming links to post on the FCT and AEJD social media sites and web pages for the public. Disseminate in regional and national media.

October 2021: A blog post will be released on the web pages and social media of UALG and AEJD addressing the main ideas and conclusions of the public debate.

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November 2021: Host a student's debate at the AEJD to perceive the ideas and views of 13-18-year-old students on what is child labour, why students are unmotivated and drop out of school, and what do they propose to overcome this problem. The highlights from this debate will be disseminated on FCT and AEJD social media and official web pages.

December 2021: Art exhibit on child labour prepared by the students of AEJD. An online video with all the work developed by the students of AEJD will be posted on the UALG and AEJD social media.

Release a short retrospective video showing the work, the people, and the key takeaway messages from this action pledge and how it contributed to the #EndChildLabour2021 initiative, on the social media pages of UALG and AEJD.

Impact:

By joining the Child Labour Platform, FCT and AEJD will organize and mobilize the region's University, R&D institutions, regional schools, and local government, professional associations, and other relevant regional stakeholders to address the problem of child labour in the Algarve in joint and concerted action. In addition, FCT and AEJD will motivate its staff and students to engage in this cause by increasing their knowledge and awareness, through the development of specific actions, the transfer of knowledge to schools and motivate students to continue their studies. FCT and AEJD will develop effective cooperation with the different regional stakeholders to contribute actively to the education of its population and motivate other school clusters and organizations across the Algarve to join in and become active partners in the #endchild labour2021 initiative and commit to the SDG8.7 goals up to 2025.

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