



Thinking Civically Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement Project

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

RELATÓRIO FINAL

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A project of the

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1 INTRODUCTION/ *INTRODUÇÃO*

In 2005, the Portuguese-Canadian National Congress (PCNC) launched Thinking Civically Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement Project a two year initiative designed to increase the civic and political participation and representation of Portuguese-Ontarians, particularly young adults, from Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Kingston, London, and Toronto. The initiative was a three-step project designed to facilitate youth development and engagement in community and mainstream civic life by: (i) recruiting and training “Youth Leaders” in the five Ontario communities; (ii) assisting Youth Leaders and other volunteers to identify local barriers to full civic participation and to develop and implement localized strategies to increase the engagement of Portuguese-Canadian youth; and (iii) planning and executing a Youth Summit for young people to network and share strategies used in their local initiatives, and to develop coordinating mechanisms for the activities and programs implemented in the earlier stages of the project.

This report outlines in detail the deliverables that were effectively carried out throughout the project’s lifetime. Highlighted are the initiatives developed by the Youth Leaders and proceedings of the Youth Summit (see Section 3).

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Branch (Ontario Region). Community projects delivered by non-profit organizations rely heavily on volunteer contributions as well as support from community sponsors. We wish to thank the many volunteers who contributed their time to the project, including Project Steering Committee members, Youth Leaders, Youth Summit speakers and facilitators, and Train-the-Trainer speakers (please refer to Sections 5 and 6).

Section 4 includes pictures of various project events including the Train-the-Trainer session, Youth Summit and Youth Leader initiatives.

Special thanks go to Ana Almeida (Projects Manager), Debbie Pacheco (Project Assistant) and PCNC Executive for their hard work and dedication to the organization and this initiative. Their outstanding contributions to the development and success of this project are greatly valued.

To making a difference together,

Rudy Valentim
Project Coordinator

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/ MENSAGEM DO PRESIDENTE

The **Thinking Civically Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement** Project arose from a previous Congress initiative, entitled *Meeting for Action/Reunir Para Agir*, where a series of regional roundtables were held in Portuguese-Canadian communities across Canada to discuss issues of concern identified by local communities. The 2003 regional roundtable in Toronto focused specifically on the civic and political participation of Luso-Canadians and identified the overall community's disengagement from civic life as a key concern. Despite our community's size and history in Ontario, the Portuguese have traditionally found themselves disenfranchised from the civic and political activities of this province and continue to be under-represented in circles of influence and decision-making. While the sources for this lack of civic and political engagement are complex and multi-fold, the Congress and the volunteers that developed this project consider it an important attempt to improve community involvement in all aspects of Canadian life. The focus on increasing the engagement of Portuguese-Canadian youth, in particular, will lay the foundation for a future community of active and full citizens. After witnessing the development of so many interesting initiatives by project Youth Leaders, there is no doubt that this project will continue to have long-lasting positive effects. We are exploring ways to share the lessons learned with other communities outside of Ontario. It is of extreme importance that youth be encouraged to actively participate in civic life so as to ensure that future generations will be greater participants in Canadian society.

— Emanuel Linhares, National President

O projecto **Pensando Civicamente; Projecto de Liderança Juvenil e Participação Cívica** nasceu de outra iniciativa do Congresso intitulada *Reunir Para Agir*, composta por uma série de reuniões "mesa-redonda" regionais que tiveram lugar em comunidades luso-canadianas espalhadas por todo o Canadá, onde se debateram assuntos de interesse a essas respectivas comunidades. A reunião de 2003 em Toronto identificou a falta de participação política e cívica por parte de luso-canadianos como um dos assuntos mais preocupantes. Apesar do tamanho e do historial da nossa comunidade no Ontario, os portugueses continuam maioritariamente desligados de actividades políticas e cívicas neste país e continuam sem representação em círculos de influência e tomada de decisões. Enquanto as razões desta falta de participação política são complexas e múltiplas, os voluntários do Congresso que desenvolveram este projecto consideram-no uma tentativa importante de melhorar a participação comunitária em todos os aspectos da

sociedade Canadiana. A concentração de esforços em aumentar a participação cívica de jovens, em particular, proporcionará a base para uma comunidade no futuro repleta de cidadãos que participam activamente na vida social e política deste país. Depois de testemunhar tantas iniciativas interessantes, criadas e orientadas por jovens líderes que participaram neste projecto, não tenho dúvidas que este projecto terá como legado muitos efeitos positivos de longa duração. Estamos actualmente a estudar a possibilidade de partilhar as lições que aprendemos com outras comunidades lusófonas para além do Ontario. É extremamente importante encorajar os nossos jovens a participar mais na vida cívica deste país de modo a estabelecer um padrão de participação para futuros cidadãos de origem lusa no Canadá.

— Emanuel Linhares, Presidente Nacional

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PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ *RESULTADOS DO PROJECTO*

Highlighted below are key **Thinking Civically Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement Project** activities, listed by activity type:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

Project resources described below are available for downloading from the Congress website, www.congresso.ca.

- ☑ A literature review on civic engagement was conducted and an annotated bibliography, listing and summarizing relevant literature on the topic, created. The review includes 62 documents in the following sub-categories: youth/ethno-racial youth and civic participation; immigrant, ethno-racial communities and civic participation, and general information on civic engagement in Canada.
- ☑ A fact sheet on Portuguese-Canadians and civic engagement was created. In particular, the fact sheet presents statistics on Portuguese-Canadian political representation, a discussion on civic engagement and barriers to full participation, and a list of useful resources.
- ☑ A useful websites resource list on civic engagement was created. The list includes 31 websites relating to the theme of civic engagement, organized according to region – Canadian, American, and International.

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER SESSION

- ☑ Youth Leaders from each of the five Ontario communities participated in the 2-day event, which took place at the Days Hotel and Conference Centre in Toronto from October 22-23, 2005. Throughout the two-day training event, youth leaders were exposed to an array of presentations related to community development. Topics covered included conducting a community environmental scan, developing goals and objectives, identifying target audience and allies, developing an outreach strategy, facilitation skills, fundraising, volunteer management, and best practices, amongst others.
- ☑ A number of community activists participated in the event as guest speakers, including: Helder Ramos (Voxnova youth listserv moderator and *Sol Português* community newspaper youth columnist); Monica Nunes and Gary Bertão (involved with Greenpower, a Toronto-based non-profit youth organization that inspires and empowers young people to take leadership locally and globally to achieve socio-economic development through conservation and environmental initiatives); and, Helder Marcos (involved with Project Diploma, a community-based effort to make higher education more prevalent in the Portuguese-Canadian community, and Canada25, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that

brings the voices and ideas of Canadians, aged 20-35, to the nation's public policy discourse and takes action on issues of local and national significance).

- ☑ A Training Manual was created, including background information on the Congress and project, facts about Portuguese-Canadians and civic engagement, and useful tips and tools on the topics of leadership, project development and implementation, volunteer management, meeting facilitation. Sample project ideas were also presented, and a number of useful items included in the appendices. The training manual is available for downloading on the Congress website.

YOUTH LEADER INITIATIVES

Staff recruited the following Youth Leaders from five Ontario communities: Lara Alves (Hamilton), Maria Castelhana (Kingston), Nancy Sousa (Toronto), Katherine Diniz (Toronto), Liliana Araujo (Kitchener), and Michael Gabriel (London). Throughout the life of the project, Youth Leaders developed a number of exciting local initiatives aimed at increasing civic engagement amongst Portuguese-Canadian youth in their local communities. Below is a summary of the numerous initiatives developed by Youth Leaders throughout the project's lifetime.

Hamilton

- ☑ Lara Alves established a number of exciting initiatives in Hamilton. The Youth Leader, with support from local volunteers developed (a) a community roundtable discussion, (b) "If I Were the Mayor of Hamilton" speech contest, (c) an in-school mentoring program in partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Hamilton & Burlington, (d) a tutoring program in partnership with the Hamilton Public Library, and (e) Luso-Jovens of Hamilton youth group.
- ☑ On November 23, 2005 Lara hosted a community roundtable to try and determine some of the issues faced by Portuguese youth in the Hamilton community. A number of issues came out of the roundtable including: lack of communication between teachers, parents and students; lack of academic achievement; lack of mentors and leaders in the community; and a lack of civic engagement. Ultimately, the roundtable helped inform the initiatives Lara would go on to develop.
- ☑ The 1st Annual Hamilton Speech Contest, "If I were the Mayor of Hamilton", took place on May 19, 2006 at Hamilton's Council Chambers. In total, twenty-four students from grades 1-9 took part in the contest and presented their speeches in either Portuguese or English. Students were asked to speak about how as Mayor they would deal with issues of importance to them. Hamilton Mayor, Larry Di Ianni, was in attendance and local community leaders acted as judges.
- ☑ An in-school mentoring program was developed in partnership with the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board and the Big Brothers and Sisters of Hamilton & Burlington. The vision of this initiative was to develop a peer-

mentoring program for grade eight students so that their transition to high school is successful. The program would match grade eight students (mentees) with grade 11 students (mentors). Once the match was made, the mentor and mentee would meet for one hour a week during school hours at the mentee's school. These weekly meetings would help expose the mentee to a high school environment and provide him/her with a positive role model. Once the grade 8 student entered grade 9, the mentor and mentee would continue to meet once a week during lunch period. This would help the mentee become more comfortable with their new school environment, while receiving guidance from their mentor. Unfortunately, due to a number of issues including the inability of the local high school to support the program and the increased amount of time and energy required to run the program it was decided to put the program on hold for the immediate future. Lara still hopes to have this program up and running in the future, but at the moment she has shifted her focus elsewhere.

- ☑ One of the issues identified at the round table meeting held in November 2005 was the inability of Portuguese parents to help their children with homework and a lack of services providing free academic assistance. As such, Lara decided to develop a free drop-in program for Portuguese youth to get help with homework at a central location - the Hamilton Public Library. The goal of this program is to not only help youth with their homework, but to get parents involved in their children's education by attending and participating in the tutoring sessions. The program began on the 20th of January of 2007 and runs every Saturday from 2:30pm to 4:00pm.
- ☑ Lara, with the help of local volunteers, also established the Luso-Jovens De Hamilton Youth Group in October of 2006. The mission of the group includes: organize fundraisers for local organizations and charities; develop initiatives and programs that not only meet the needs of the Portuguese community, but the Hamilton community in general; organize yearly picnics to thank the community for their support; run intramural sports teams such as beach volleyball, soccer, basketball, etc. for underprivileged youth; organize and hold drama productions; and provide a safe space for youth to congregate, be themselves, and have fun. The Luso-Jovens of Hamilton currently has 11 members.

Kitchener-Waterloo

- ☑ In Kitchener-Waterloo, Youth Leader Liliana Araujo worked on a number of exciting initiatives including: (a) a community roundtable discussion, (b) a tutoring-mentoring program, and (c) a "youth page" in the local Portuguese community newspaper.
- ☑ Liliana organized and hosted a community roundtable on the 5th of February, 2006 at the Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall. The roundtable allowed Liliana to assess community needs and informed her development of local initiatives.
- ☑ A number of issues came out of the community roundtable including the need to assist and support youth in pursuing post-secondary education. As a result,

Liliana decided to organize a tutoring-mentoring program. The program operates in partnership with the local Portuguese Language School, the Kitchener Portuguese Club and Paixão Portuguesa (a local Portuguese youth group). In developing the program Liliana organized a planning committee (comprised of local volunteers) and distributed a questionnaire amongst parents with questions pertaining specifically to program logistics (i.e. time, location, etc.). The goal of the program is to assist young students and to highlight the importance of pursuing an education, as well as to facilitate the transition for high-school students into post-secondary education. The program works by pairing up post-secondary students with high-school and elementary school students – allowing the older students to assist the younger students with their homework and to provide them with positive role models. The program currently runs on Sundays from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Kitchener Portuguese Club.

- ☑ Liliana also contributed to a quarterly “youth page” section in Alem-Fronteiras, a local Portuguese community newspaper. This allowed her to provide the community with updates on her initiatives and to recruit volunteers.

London

- ☑ In London, Michael Gabriel worked on organizing an Adopt-a-Student Day, which was held at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) on January 19, 2007. The day was organized in partnership with the University of Western Ontario, Pope John Paul II High School, Juventugal (a local Portuguese youth group), and Portuguese Connexion (UWO Portuguese Student Association). The purpose of the event was to promote and make Portuguese-Canadian youth aware of the opportunities and advantages of a post-secondary education. By “shadowing” fellow Portuguese-Canadian students enrolled at UWO, a “typical university school environment” was demonstrated while the importance of education and its benefits reinforced. Guest speaker, Dr. Fabiola Ribeiro spoke to the students about the importance of a post-secondary education and highlighted her experiences. In the end, fourteen university students participated in showing eighteen high school students around campus and providing them with information on university life. It is Michael’s hope that this becomes an annual event and planning for next year’s event has already begun.

Kingston

- ☑ In Kingston, Maria Castelhana hosted a Creative Essay contest for both elementary and secondary students in partnership with the local Portuguese language school. Students were asked to reflect on what they want to be when they grow up and discuss the reasons behind their chosen fields/careers. To encourage some advance planning for post-secondary efforts, the contest’s high school participants were asked to provide details on the years of education required and which schools offer the programs they are interested in. The contest was advertised through local elementary and high school teachers and

the Atlantis community radio show on CFRC FM. In total, six submissions were received for the contest. Of the six, three were chosen to read their essays live on the Atlantis radio show on April 23, 2006. Shoppers Drug Mart sponsored the contest and provided the winners with \$25 gift cards.

Toronto

- ☑ With the assistance of Congress co-op student Nancy Portela, Nancy Sousa organized a school trip to an all-candidates debate at Davenport-Perth Community Centre in Toronto's Ward 17 on November 1st, 2006. Senior grade students from St. Mary's High School were invited to attend the debate with the goal of exposing youth to the importance of municipal politics and how it affects them on a daily basis – from the buses they take to school, the programs that are offered at local community centres, etc. Moreover, the trip was meant to prepare older students who were of age (or close to legal age) to vote. In total, six students participated in the field trip.
- ☑ Participating students were also given an information sheet explaining municipal politics and reminding them of the upcoming municipal elections. The one-page resource was used to familiarize students with municipal politics before the all-candidates debate field trip. Ultimately, this resource will be used in preparation for future all-candidates debate field trips and will be distributed to students and civics class teachers at local high schools.
- ☑ In conjunction with the field trip, Nancy also connected with Primed (a Toronto-based organization that creates multi-media resources to support and enable local civic engagement and access to municipal politics) and created a short video of the all-candidates debate and the experience of organizing the trip. The video includes a discussion of the challenges in organizing the field trip and provides suggestions to individuals and community groups who may want to organize similar trips. This video was subsequently screened at the Youth Summit and was well received.
- ☑ Katherine Diniz explored a number of interesting initiatives throughout the life of the project, including the development of a questionnaire for leaders of all the political parties on issues of importance to the Portuguese-Canadian community. This questionnaire would ultimately result in a summary report outlining party positions, which would then be made available to the community at large. Katherine also looked into setting up a support network for Portuguese-Canadian students attending York University. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Katherine was unable to continue to pursue these initiatives. Katherine intends to recruit new volunteers and to revisit these ideas in the near future.

YOUTH SUMMIT

- ☑ The Youth Summit took place on January 26-28, 2007 at the Days Hotel & Conference Centre in downtown Toronto. The Summit brought together Youth Leaders, Congress representatives and other interested individuals and

organizations to share knowledge, network and develop coordinating mechanisms for the civic engagement projects developed in earlier stages of the project.

- ☑ There were sixty participants in attendance from Toronto, Hamilton, London and Kitchener-Waterloo; including reps of the Portuguese-Canadian National Congress, University of Toronto Portuguese Student Association, York University Portuguese Student Association, On Your Mark Tutoring Program, Luso-Jovens of Hamilton, Juventugal, University of Western Ontario Portuguese Student Association, University of Wilfrid Laurier Portuguese Student Association, Paixão Portuguesa, St. Mary's High School Portuguese Student Association, Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals, the Hamilton Portuguese language school, and so on.
- ☑ The program featured: (1) Keynote presentations on the importance of youth engagement and project sustainability; (2) Presentations by Youth Leaders on initiatives developed in the earlier stages of the project; (3) Workshops on leadership, time management, community mobilization, and team building; (4) Small group discussions on ways to coordinate efforts across the province, share learnings with other groups, and develop coordinating mechanisms for the civic engagement projects developed in earlier stages of the project; (5) Plenary to develop an action plan.
- ☑ Here are some highlights from the action plan developed by the participants:
 - First, to be effective, initiatives developed must directly address identified barriers to civic participation such as age, language, education, class, and so on.
 - Second, to sustain initiatives, support from a variety of stakeholders is imperative (these include media, local businesses, clubs & associations, social-service agencies, and educational institutions). Partnerships with a variety of stakeholders must be established to ensure the availability of a steady pool of volunteers, funding and promotion.
 - Third, the Congress can play a pivotal role in ensuring that initiatives are developed and sustained by providing contacts and resources that would otherwise not be available. Furthermore, www.força.ca can (and should) play an important role in coordinating youth efforts across the province.
- ☑ Visit the Congress website for even more information on the Youth Summit including pictures, Youth Leader presentations, and a summary report.

4 A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS/ FOTOGRAFIAS CONTAM A HISTÓRIA

Train-the Trainer Session / Sessão "Treinar quem vai treinar"



Youth Leader Initiatives / Projectos dos Líderes Jovens



Youth Summit / Cimeira Jovem



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VOLUNTEERS/ VOLUNTÁRIOS

Volunteers make an extraordinary difference to the work of non-profit organizations. This applies too to the **Thinking Civically Youth Leadership and Civic Engagement** Project volunteers who have been amazingly dedicated and supportive. The Congress gratefully acknowledges all of their hard work and efforts. Their interest, energy and support were greatly appreciated! *Agradecemos a dedicação de todos os voluntários envolvidos com o projecto. Muito obrigado!*

Project Steering Committee

Jason Ferreira, *Chair* (Toronto, ON)

Monica Nunes (Toronto, ON)

Susana Miranda (Toronto, ON)

Paulo Garcia (Toronto, ON)

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Nadia Matos (Kitchener, ON)

Sandra Cardoso (London, ON)

Derek Chaves (Cambridge, ON)

6 FUNDERS & SPONSORS/ FINANCIADORES E PATROCINADORES

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Oferecemos os nossos sinceros agradecimentos aos seguintes patrocinadores do projecto:

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Dell Chemist Ltd. (Hamilton)
Blu Martini (Hamilton)
Vasco da Gama Portuguese Association (Hamilton)
Acclamation's Bar and Grill (Hamilton)
Alves Meat & Grocery (Hamilton)
Atlantic Fish Market (Hamilton)
Cabral's Gifts (Hamilton)
Duarte Supermarket (Hamilton)
International Fish Market (Hamilton)
J. Rumor Supermarket (Hamilton)
Jose Cabral Printing (Hamilton)
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Portuguese Bakery (Hamilton)
Alem Fronteiras Newspaper (Kitchener)
Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall (Kitchener)
Kitchener Portuguese Club Inc. (Kitchener)
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