

# Mãos à Obra

Francisco Banha

## Learnings Report

**Abstract**—My participation in this activity in Campo Grande's Social and Parochial Center (CSPCG) [1] proved to be a great source for gathering new skills and further developing existing ones. It contributed for both my personal growth and as an individual of the modern society. All of the individual jobs were useful because they allowed me to take important and unique lessons that will be extremely important in all aspects of my life.

**Index Terms**—challenge, planning, communicating, teamwork, solidarity.

What is this? Context!!

## 1 INTRODUCTION

THIS report will describe what I learned as a volunteer, helping with the activity that was proposed by ENTREAJUDA [2] - Mãos à Obra, as well as give my overall view on what volunteering is to me and to society.

For this activity it was initially required that we communicated with the coaching team assigned to us, and later that all of us doing the activity coordinated our efforts to complete the activity successfully.

My major objective with this activity was mainly to help those in need in any way I could. Even though the initial description of the activity talked about painting jobs and small reparations on people's houses, in this case it consisted on helping the CSPCG - that in turn provides help for a lot of people from our society - with the removal of the soil from the flower beds in which they had some infiltration problems.

## 2 VOLUNTEERING

For a long time now there exist in society different groups of people. Those that live in conditions in which they cannot deal with the costs of living by themselves, and sometimes live in desperate situations, and those that are

able to live life by themselves without assistance from others but can in turn help others. In my activity I got to deal with both, because it is in institutions such as ENTREAJUDA and CSPCG where those two meet. The ones that need help go to such institutions to get the help they need from the ones that are willing to provide such help.

ENTREAJUDA is an institution that helps social solidarity institutions by providing means and resources in order for them to do meaningful actions that help people fighting the poverty they face in life. It mobilizes good willed people for a structured intervention in the fight against poverty.

CSPCG provides several services on education, health care, social solidarity, culture, and volunteer work mainly to children, young people and elders, as well as their families.

### 2.1 What volunteering means to me

I have always been keen on helping people that don't have an easy life, be it because of monetary issues, or because of health conditions. Whenever I find myself in a situation where I see that someone could really use my help I try to do the best I can to help them. However in modern society there is a lack of motivation to help others. Be it because people don't really care, or because they are unable to approach others in order to help out.

I used to be on the second group of people but as I've been living through my life I've been

- Francisco Banha, nr. 65361,

[Linha Kete in formation]  
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(1.0) Excellent	LEARNINGS						DOCUMENT						
(0.8) Very Good	Context × 2	Skills × 1	Reflect × 4	Summ × .5	Concl × .5	SCORE	Struct × .25	Ortog × .25	Exec × 4	Form × .25	Titles × .5	File × .5	SCORE
(0.6) Good	0.8	0.4	1.0	1.0	0.8		1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0	
(0.4) Fair													
(0.2) Weak													

fighting that aspect of mine. I had never really done any volunteer work but in my daily life I try to help others whenever I can. Only when there is some organized event in which I can participate, do I help out on a larger scale. And that was the case with this activity. Because of the integration of such activities in the course of Portfolio IV at Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) I got to help out a bigger cause.

I will use this experience to further improve myself, because by helping this institution I am not only helping the people of the institution but also those that benefit from its services, and finally myself.

### 3 LESSONS LEARNED

All of the jobs I got to do have taught me something, and will in turn allow me grow as an individual.

#### 3.1 Soil removal from the flower beds

This activity has brought me experience of working in a team, since all of us that were going to do this activity would be grouped according to our availability. I got paired with a colleague and because of that I tried my best to create a positive environment while we were working. I got to develop not only my teamwork skills because of it but I also learned some techniques for working on the fields.

We were not really working on fields but we were still working with soil under the harsh sunlight of the afternoon. I learned how to properly protect myself in such conditions and also helped my colleague with it, which further improved the environment and helped me develop my teamwork skills. We got to use some tools - a shovel and a hoe - that I had never actually held before even though I saw them when I went to my grandparents' house in Alentejo. I got instructed on how to properly handle those tools in order not to ruin my back. I could somehow imagine how it used to be in my grandparents' time and find a new connection between us that had never existed before.

We also had to develop a technique that wouldn't cause us back pain when carrying the

bags from the flower beds to their destination. I once again developed my teamwork skills not only because we had to coordinate to carry the heavier bags, but also because I was suggesting my partner to use the strength of his legs when picking the bag up instead of his back. We created a positive working relation and as time passed we were working ever more in synchrony.

One other aspect that I feel that I greatly improved was on planning and decision making. Usually during our work for the university's courses we are often told what to do and how to do it. This activity has provided me with an experience that none other had previously provided me which was making decisions on the work to be done and dealing with the consequences that came from them. We were told what needed to be done and even though we had to ask for permission to use something, we were the ones deciding what to do and how to do it. This was probably the most important aspect that I got from the whole experience.

One not so relevant lesson I learned was how to better get around in Lisbon. I'm from outside of Lisbon and the fact that I had to drive to various locations throughout Lisbon has further improved my knowledge of the city.

Overall I feel like I improved myself physically - since all this work also required strength - but also psychologically due to the teamwork developed between me and my colleague, and our combined efforts to improve our working techniques.

#### 3.2 Communication with the coaching team and ENTREAJUDA

Initially there was a lot of communication between the coaching team and ENTREAJUDA. They were the ones that would communicate on our behalf with ENTREAJUDA in order to aggregate all of our opinions into one single e-mail so as to facilitate the organization of the activity. The coaching team would talk to us via e-mail to get our inputs on the matters at hand and also to let us know what was the state of the process. They were a big help because they dealt perfectly with various situations such as the person in charge going on

vacations and later leaving the institution, and also arranging for us to start the activity as soon as possible. They also replied promptly to my questions and were overall very helpful. I believe this also allowed me to learn better how to participate and respect the communication chain when it is between two distinct groups. The coaching team was our contact to speak with ENTREAJUDA and without them things wouldn't have gone so smoothly. I also believe that our collaboration with the coaching team was essential since without it their job would also have been much more difficult.

During the course of the days I spent at CSPCG I also had to deal with the people that worked there. Because they were people with different ages and backgrounds, I had to adjust my dialogue in order to properly have a conversation with each one. This ability helped me not only on this activity but also on my life. Each person is different and have different interests and education and so we must adjust accordingly.

In order for people to properly communicate with each person they encounter they have to be flexible and adjust the way they talk in each individual situation. This experience has provided me further experience and firsthand knowledge on some of the realities that exist in modern society. I shall use the information I got from this experience throughout my life.

## 4 CONCLUSION

After completing the work I agreed to do I got to know some more about the inside works of a charity institution as well as how to deal with flower beds and, the most important, with people. I also developed some skill that everyone should have, which are the abilities to make decisions and to deal with their consequences.

I was glad I could help out even if a little this big chain of people helping people. It was also a good escape from the daily engineering life. In the future I will definitely consider helping out some more. In fact I already did help out more than what was required. I could not have left the CSPCG with an incomplete job, so I and my colleague decided to help them out using our own time so that the job could be completed.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the people from ENTREAJUDA and CSPCG for having accepted my participation in this activity and all the people involved with them for every bit of help they gave me during the activity. I would like to thank the other volunteers for helping with the task, and a special thanks to Bruno Rodrigues, who was my partner during the course of this activity and helped me greatly and I feel we got to be friends in the end. I would also like to thank the coaching team that helped us during the initial conversations with the entities, and for being available when I had any questions. Finally I would like to thank the course's professor Eng. Rui Santos Cruz for being available to help with any problems that might arise and for allowing us to do so many diversified activities that teach us lessons that we don't usually learn on any other course at IST.



## REFERENCES

- [1] "Centro Social Paroquial do Campo Grande," [http://www.igrejacampogrande.pt/cg/?page\\_id=98](http://www.igrejacampogrande.pt/cg/?page_id=98).
- [2] "ENTREAJUDA," <http://www.entrajuda.pt/>.



**Francisco Banha** Student nr. 65361 of the Master's Degree of Computer Science at IST.

## APPENDIX DECLARATION

	<p><b>CENTRO SOCIAL PAROQUIAL DO CAMPO GRANDE</b></p>	

### DECLARAÇÃO

O Centro Social Paroquial do Campo Grande declara para os devidos efeitos que

Francisco Marques Canelas F. Banha, CC 13754851, fez  
voluntariado neste Centro no Projeto 'Mãos à obra', tendo realizado tarefas de requalificação de  
espaços, totalizando 31 horas.

A obra realizada permitiu requalificar espaços e foi de enorme utilidade para esta instituição.

Lisboa, 3 de Junho de 2015

Pela Direcção  
  
 Maria Helena Presas