

## SENAC AND CINTERFOR: AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP

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In 2018, Senac National Department, in the constant road to modernization of its professional education policies, established an important partnership with the Inter-American Center for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (Cinterfor), a body of the International Labor Organization (ILO), based in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Cinterfor/ILO is responsible for coordinating a network of public and private entities and institutions, composed of more than 65 organizations in 27 countries in Latin America, Caribbean, Spain and Africa. During more than its 50 years of activities, it has been devoting itself to the consolidation of labor competences and knowledge dissemination in the labor education field.

The publication of the *Senac Journal of Education and Work* special edition is the initial result from this partnership, which also anticipates an extensive research on skills development practices to the 21st Century, identified by Senac as “Formative Marks”.

In the following interview, Fernando Vargas and Anna Beatriz Waehneltdt talk about two instances when the institutions were together in 2017: Senac Regional Directors Annual Meeting in Campos do Jordão, São Paulo; and the Seminar Vocational Training Methodologies Based on Projects, Challenges and Opportunities, promoted by Cinterfor/ILO in Montevideo, having the latter even motivated the production of this special BTS edition.

**FV– During Senac’s Regional Directors meeting, in the beginning of 2017, Cinterfor introduced ten guidelines to the marketing and consolidation of labor and life skills education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>1</sup>. What has Senac developed towards it?**

**ABW–** We understand - and endorse - that the ten guidelines aim at the building of solid life skills and labor training systems and we have been working extensively towards this direction. In 2018, we began communicating with Regional Departments about the emphasis in technical high school education offers, designed to contribute to the improvement of such basic schooling stage, historically recognized in Brazil by its low learning indexes and high rates of desertion and evasion. Senac’s higher education is also leaning towards expansion, offering both on-site and online classes. The Sectorial Forums by Segment, a market listening strategy that we have adopted since 2013, alongside our surveys on: Perceived Quality, Egresses, Current and Future Demand, and research investigation on teaching practices, such as those of the Integrative Project, carried out in 2017, are further examples of actions that directly connect with Cinterfor/ILO guidelines.

Notably in regards to the responsibility of vocational education systems in the ninth guideline - “promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion” – Gratuity Senac Program (PSG) stands out as the driving force behind its social function, by imposing a charge of 66.6% from the mandatory fee to subsidize vocational education access to the low-income population. The continuous search for efficacy and effective impact of the PSG in the reduction of Brazilian social inequalities is a central goal we have been pursuing. The demand to promote the agreement with productive development policies and technological changes guide these actions and, above all, they are a way to promote lifelong learning and coordination between formal education and vocational training, essential guidelines from Cinterfor to Latin America.

**FV–** At the seminar in Montevideo, in November 2017, we discussed, with the representatives of several vocational education institutions in Latin America, the perspective of Project Based Learning (PBL) as a strategy for skills development within the labor training scope. From your point-of-view, what is the demand for vocational education institutions to take up the proposal of active teaching and learning methodologies, and, particularly, the PBL, as an institutional policy for vocational training?

**ABW–** The new paradigms of the industry 4.0, the intense dynamics of disappearing or generating occupations, the increasing risk of social inequality in Latin America and the market demand for socio-emotional competent professionals, in addition to the techniques integral to the career profile, are factors that have urged the vocational education institutions to review their course of study. In our discussions during the seminar, we have observed how the Latin American institutions, Senac itself among them, are committed to incorporate to their own educational practices strategies that will allow a vocational training education to be aligned with the market and with enough socio-emotional development capabilities and vocational skills. We believe that both these aspects possess relevant social impact force, since they are directly associated with the employability of our students, to their entry into the professional world as well as to their stability and professional growth.

In this regard, the active learning methodologies, especially the PBL, have been proving, as Cinterfor itself has pointed out, to be a promising path to streamline courses of study and update teaching and learning practices within vocational educational institutions. It is assumed that, in seeking solutions to challenges and problematical situations that are associated with the reality of the occupation in which the student is being trained for, the methodology for projects provides collaborative and participative construction experiences, which allows the student to take responsibilities in joint efforts, promoting their improving role and coordinating socio-emotional skills and abilities. As a result, learning is achieved through the experience provided during the project development; an individual learns by problematizing, researching, testing hypotheses, making decisions and working as a team to accomplish the objectives. The experience with projects in the educational field, even if it is not an innovation in itself, is a pedagogical alternative required to vocational education institutions, above all, by their ability to focus on the dialogic relationship and collective learning throughout the course, justifying, then, their required inclusion in the formal curriculum construction of vocational education courses. Senac is one of the institutions that carry out this prerogative and has been investing significantly in the consolidation and improvement of practices founded on projects-based learning.

**FV– In addition to these contextual factors, what took Senac to turn the pedagogical experience of the Integrating Projects into a mandatory Curriculum Unit in the courses it offers? What kind of advantages has this brought about? What are the challenges of this strategy?**

**ABW–** In 2013, Senac introduced its Pedagogical Model, an important nationwide line of action. The main motivation for the Model implementation was the demand to offer Learning, Professional Qualification and Intermediate Level Technical Qualification courses, with the same pedagogical quality and operational perspective throughout the country. The model innovated as it consolidates guidelines to the educational practice and points to the common horizon we pursue regarding vocational education quality.

To this respect, the experience with projects, based on the studies of specialists from the Regional Departments who worked on the formulation of the Model original principles, was appointed as a power force to the necessary consolidation of competencies and the development of Senac's Formative Marks, which differentiate the professional we graduate. Through the Pedagogical Model, the methodology of learning by projects was therefore incorporated into the curricular construction of those courses, entitled Curricular Unit of Differentiated Nature Integrative Project (UCPI).

Since then, we have been following the implementation of this experience nationwide and, at this point, it is worth noting that presently the Senac Pedagogical Model has reached more than 70% of the courses offered in 92 vocational education titles, which are carried out cooperatively. This means that more than 280.000 students of these courses participate in Integrative Projects all over the country. If we consider the pedagogical potential of the projects in coordinating skills and the synergy of teachers and students working on experiences that, as we have seen, extrapolate Senac's own environments, the great advantage of this strategy has been, in fact, to increase the quality of our professional training. However, given the diversity of our country, the originality of this experience and the multitude of projects, taking into account the different features of each offer type, our biggest challenges are, on one hand, ensuring that the more than the 25.000 teachers in our institutions have enough training in respect to the positive development of Integrative Projects and, on the other hand, collecting evidence confirming the effective impact of this experience, in order to, in the institutional management field, correct routes, expand and disseminate what is working. Some of these challenges collected in the research we conducted in 2017, with the more than 2000 Senac Integrated Project faculty teachers, were introduced in this special Journal edition. The availability of the *Collection of Technical Documents of the Pedagogical Model*<sup>2</sup> and, more recently, the launching of the Transparency and Unit Program courses are major investments that the National Department has been making towards the permanent training of teachers and technical teams.

**FV– Senac has carried out a research with the teachers of Integrative Projects in 2017 and now, in 2018, in partnership with Cinterfor/ILO, is in the final phase of an even bigger research on teaching practices for the development of Formative Marks and Skills for the 21st Century. What is the relationship between these two actions?**

**ABW–** The Integrative Projects research results, discussed during the Seminar in Montevideo - and introduced in this BTS edition - have made possible to understand several stage aspects of the Projects: Integrated Planning, Problematization, Execution, Evaluation and Synthesis. The teaching practices for the Development of Formative Marks<sup>3</sup>, although they had been approached in this research, were expected for a new investigation round in 2018, in the series of activities for qualitative studying of the Pedagogical Model implementation. In addressing these issues, we perceive the empathy with the topic of social-emotional skills in vocational education, the so-called 4C's - Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking -, and an important study topic of Cinterfor/ILO.

Later, in discussions following the Seminar, the Cinterfor/ILO stressed the pressing need for understanding how vocational education systems have faced skill development issues for the 21st century, especially in a time of great changes in the workforce world. This was the basis for establishing a productive exchange of knowledge and skills among institutions, seeking to understand how teachers implement pedagogical practices aimed at developing Formative Marks.

Throughout the months of July, August and September of this year, we conducted three web conferences of joint planning and Matrix building of Formative Marks/Skills for the 21st Century, which was the foundation for the survey tools. Currently, we completed the data collection phase, with more than 3,000 participating teachers, and we expect that the results, to be released in the first half of 2019, will bring important benefits so that, together, Senac and other Latin American vocational education institutions will further enhance our educational efforts. This challenge is what moves us.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the Guidelines, check out *O futuro da formação profissional na América Latina e no Caribe: diagnósticos e diretrizes para seu fortalecimento*. Montevideo: Cinterfor/ILO, 2017. Available from [https://www.oitcinterfor.org/sites/default/files/simplificacionista/futuro\\_FP\\_portugues\\_web.pdf](https://www.oitcinterfor.org/sites/default/files/simplificacionista/futuro_FP_portugues_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available from [www.extranet.senac.br/modelopedagogicosenac/index.html](http://www.extranet.senac.br/modelopedagogicosenac/index.html)

<sup>3</sup> To obtain more information about Senac Formative Marks, search *Concepções e princípios*, v. 1 from the Coleção de Documentos Técnicos do Modelo Pedagógico Senac. Rio de Janeiro: Senac National Department, 2015. Available from [http://www.extranet.senac.br/modelopedagogicosenac/arquivos/DT\\_1\\_Concepcoes%20e%20Principios.pdf](http://www.extranet.senac.br/modelopedagogicosenac/arquivos/DT_1_Concepcoes%20e%20Principios.pdf) Viewed in 10/29/2018.