



sinergias ed

Conhecer para melhor agir

Promoção da investigação sobre a ação em ED em Portugal

Development Education (DE) Synergies: Learnings and challenges of collaborative processes

La Salette Coelho

11th May 2017

Uma iniciativa:



Co-financiamento:



Apoio



FUNDAÇÃO
CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN



1. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches

A. AN ONGOING EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEBATE

- “**Academic monopolism**” (Tandon, 2016) - Creation, Validation and Dissemination

- **Risks**

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Distant from reality; | - Promotor of: | - Serves an academic purpose, |
| - Fragmented in disciplines; | .cognitive injustice; | BUT DOES NOT |
| - A single perspective | .“massive epistemicide” | influences practices and informs |
| | (Santos, 2007) | public policies |
| | | - NOT transforming society |

- **Alternatives**

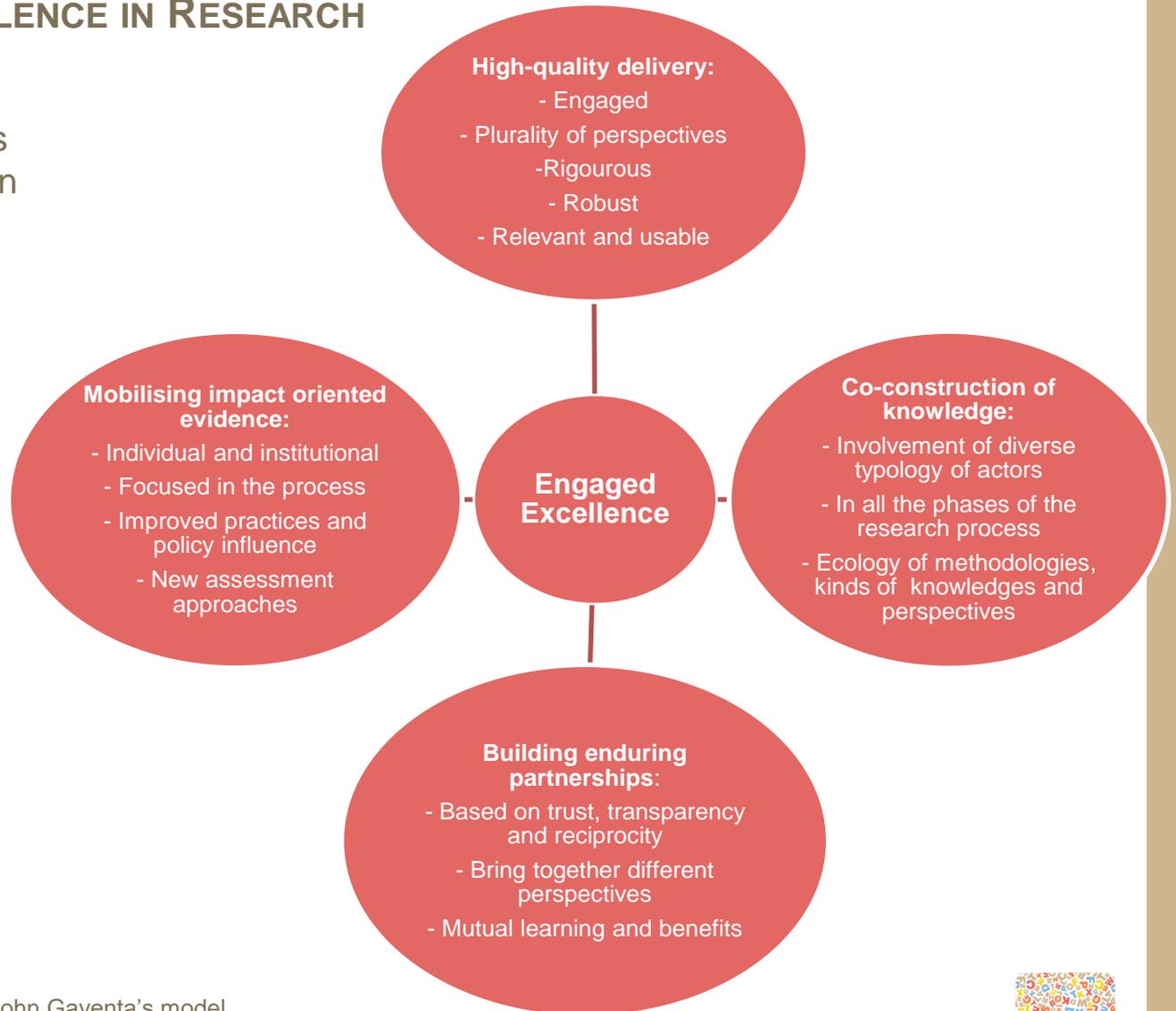
- existence of a “**boundary work**” made by “knowledge brokers or boundary organisations” which can bridge the gap between researchers and practitioners and/or decision makers (Oswald, 2016; Schucksmith, 2016).
- some hybrid person - a “**researtioner**” (Roque Amaro, 2014).
- **co-production of knowledge** - which interfere with conventional research practices and roles of researchers (Schucksmith, 2016)
- importance of building **networks and long-term relationships** of trust between academics, their partners and policy and practice communities.

1. Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches

C. ENGAGED EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

❑ IDS identifies four pillars of engaged excellence in its Strategy 2015-2010 (IDS, 2015):

- i) Delivering high-quality research;
- ii) Co-constructing knowledge;
- iii) Mobilising impact-oriented evidence;
- iv) Building enduring partnerships



Source: Author elaboration based in John Gaventa's model (Oswald, Gaventa and Leach, 2016, p.2)

2. The context of the study

B. PROJECT CONTEXT

Development Education Synergies

Getting to know so as to act better – promoting research on DE action in Portugal

- ❑ Shared perspective between the two organisations: FGS (NGDO) and CEAUP (I&D)

Need for alternative scientific research methodologies:

- horizontal logic of reflection
- joint knowledge production
- practical implications as the driving force behind the transformation and legitimisation of actions in the field.

DE as “a framing paradigm that fosters the re-conceptualization of knowledge and promotes the transformative role of education”
(Tarozzi, Torres, 2016)

DE as a fundamental field and discipline for:

- an integrated vision and action in development field;
- promoting a closer relationship between Universities and NGDOs

2. The context of the study

C. COLLABORATIVE WORK

- 12 HEIs and 12 CSOs were invited  10 HEIs and 11 CSOs joined the project
 - relevance or interest in DE field;
 - diversity of entities
 - territorial decentralisation
 - easy to reach
- 4 meetings within the 2 years of the project (it were forseen 2 in the project description)
- Phases of the work :
 - matching of the partners
 - decision about what would be research topics, methodologies, sources, etc.,
 - data collection and analysis, finalising, in some cases, with the joint writing of a paper.
- Knowledge co-creation:
 - 6 papers were published in the *Sinergias journal*
- Other unexpected synergies
 - creation of a virtual communication,
 - active participation in other activities of the project
 - co-organisation of events among entities,
 - creation of a post-graduation course in a partnership involving entities from the project

2. The context of the study

D. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

☐ Qualitative Research

☐ **Research design** - “case study” - it allows us “the study of the particularity and complexity of a unique case, being able to understand its activity in the extent of important circumstances” (Stake, 2009)

☐ Research Techniques

- **bibliographic analysis**, mainly to build the conceptual framework
- **content analysis**, from **available documents** and **interviews** performed with participants in the partnerships of the project.

I PHASE – Document Analysis - very diverse, elaborated in very different times, through several methodologies and presenting multiple perspectives

- i) Transcription of a panel (recorded in video) devoted to the collaborative work that took place in the international meeting - "Synergies for social change: dialogues about Development", in January 2016 (8 organisations);

II PHASE – Interviews to some of the participants in the collaborative work



3. Testing the framework

❑ Engaged

The identification with a **common cause**, of a **collective meaning** for the study, was really important for the success of the partnership. (CSO1)

❑ Plurality of perspectives

“It was needed more time for dialogue (...) the **conceptual frameworks are different** in both types of organisations, the **language, the timings, the perspective**” (HEI2)

❑ Rigorous and robust

“(...) we are in a **work in progress**, we made just a *working paper*, very exploratory right now but we **intent to go deeper** in the next phase” (HEI1)

❑ Relevant and usable

“It helped in getting to a **better definition of what DE means in the projects**” (CSO1)

“This collaborative work allowed us to **build a course, with the teachers of the HEI**, devoted to DE issues” (CSO2)

“**The application for the next phase of the project we have studied was completely different** because of the research made together” (CSO1)

High-quality delivery:

- Engaged
- Plurality of perspectives
- Rigorous
- Robust
- Relevant and usable

3. Testing the framework

- ❑ **Diverse typology of actors:**
 - 10 HEIs involved – **University, Research Centres, Polytechnic Institutes**
 - 11 CSOs involved – **NGDOs and Local Associations**

- ❑ **In all the phases of the research project**
“There was some difficulty to the HEI to accept the **collaboration in all phases of the research** – this created some discomfort between the partnership” (HEI2)

When the study was planned in a “**service provider**” **logic**, meaning the University studying the NGDO, for example, the partnership was not consolidated and did not reach the final goals (HEI2)

- ❑ **Ecology of methodologies, kinds of knowledge and perspectives**

“There was an initial difficulty because we both came from different fields (psychology, educational sciences), it was a challenge (...) **we had to create our own “research language”** that it would be different if we were doing the study on our own” (CSO1)

“We had no specific expectations with the study. We wanted to look at that project with DE lenses and that helped to avoid a **relationship based on power asymmetries**” (CSO1)

. The **acknowledgement of differences and complementarities between the entities** helped identifying the role of each institution in the collaborative work. (HEI4)

Co-construction of knowledge:

- Involvement of diverse typology of actors
- In all the phases of the research process
- Ecology of methodologies, kinds of knowledges and perspectives

3. Testing the framework

❑ Individual and institutional

“I am not sure if change has been made, but I am sure that **this project left some seeds in my institution**” (HEI2)

❑ Focus in the process

“The project was much more than the final products, **the papers were just an excuse to develop joint activities.** (...) There were learnings that exceeded our initial purposes, and that was really great”. (HEI2)

❑ Improved practices and policy influence

“Because it become almost a **platform of communication**, it was a really added value - we had opportunities to **work with other organisations that were new to us**” (CSO3)

“We wanted an impact evaluation of our 7 years project and it was really important to work with someone from the Academic world and to **reframe our own expectations and our own knowledge**” (CSO3)

❑ New assessment approaches

“It was important to notice that this project, because had no funds for the research, made us **emancipate of the usual funding and project logics**” (CSO2)

“The **application for the next phase of the project** we have studied was **completely different** because of the research made together” (CSO1)

Mobilising impact oriented evidence:

- Individual and institutional
- Focused in the process
- Improved practices and policy influence
- New assessment approaches

3. Testing the framework

❑ **Based on trust, transparency and reciprocity**

“In this kind of work it is needed a **mutual trust** (...) and a **constant dialogue**. It was very important to meet in presence – Skype calls or emails are not enough”. (HEI2)

“The **previous personal relationships were very important**”. (HEI1 and CSO4)

“The **geographical distance** was a challenge”. (CSO1)

❑ **Bring together different perspectives**

It [the project] **reinforced a culture of collaboration between different institutions learning to reconcile diverse times, concepts, languages, instruments, cultures and objectives**” (HEI4)

❑ **Mutual learning and benefits**

“It’s important to know very clearly the **motivations** of each partner, that helps to shape the partnership and the role of each one” (HEI3)

“We developed **communication skills** – listening, explaining, arguing – **the dialogue** was really important for **mutual understanding** and learning” (CSO2)

Building enduring partnerships:

- Based on trust, transparency and reciprocity
- Bring together different perspectives
- Mutual learning and benefits

Thanks for your attention!

www.sinergiased.org

Aknowledgements:

. DE Synergies project coordination team

Tânia Neves, Jorge Cardoso e Hugo Marques

. Filipe Martins, external evaluator

. Cecília Fonseca, expert on Systematization of Experiences

La Salete Coelho

CEAUP - Centre for African Studies of the University of Porto

E-mail: ceaup.lasaletecoelho@gmail.com

