

**The Music, Health, Social Inclusion, and Human Rights Lab: A Lisbon Lusíada  
University Project for Human Rights promotion through music**

**Filipa Pais d'Aguiar**

*PhD. (CEJEA)*

**Tânia Gaspar**

*PhD. (CLISSIS) Lisbon Lusíada University*

Right on the foundations of Human Rights one can find the Human Dignity Principle which is both the home and the lighthouse for several of its autonomous, yet intertwined dimensions such as sustainability, digital and biological existence. The Portuguese Republic Constitution first article determines that “Portugal is a sovereign Republic founded on Human dignity [...]” which expresses the enhanced value of Human Dignity in Portuguese constitutional order. But one might ask, why is it important to implement this project, at this exact moment, in the middle of a pandemic? Precisely because the population’s isolation demanded by authorities to address the pandemic’s spread has yet the potential to increase the risk of exclusion of individuals that, prior to the pandemic, were already facing challenges concerning inclusion and Human Dignity protection. Furthermore, the Portuguese Republic Constitution’s twelfth and thirteenth articles also establishes the Universality and Equality principles that, combined, provide non-discrimination basis determining that no one can be privileged or discriminated or excluded from any right or duty owing to gender, origin, provenance, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, political or ideological belief, *etc.*

The observance and respect for these principles’ dimensions and, *in fine*, for Human Dignity, gained particular focus on the question’s selection for the 2021 census questionnaire. In fact, The High Commission for Migrations 2021 Census working group on ethnic-racial questions, (created by the Despacho n. ° 7363/2018) worked on recommendations towards the possibility of including questions, in the census questionnaire, that could help to perceive the Portuguese population ethnic-racial configuration. Nonetheless, the Portuguese National Statistics Institute excluded ethnic-racial questions from the 2021 census questionnaire

considering that: firstly, the population census questionnaire cannot be used as a population classification instrument; secondly, the issue's high complexity, namely, self-classification-based answers; thirdly, the lack of enough information (for instance, in Europe only Ireland and the UK ask this kind of questions). So, to prevent the risk of discrimination towards minority groups, *v.g.* Roma communities, and of menacing both Human Dignity and the respect for fundamental rights but still recognizing information relevance, it was decided that, during the 2021 second semester, Portuguese population will be addressed a pilot survey on this issue (DN. Lusa, 2019).

Not long before, the Human Rights Council resolution 26/4, 14 July 2014 had already recognized that “[...] Roma have faced, for more than five centuries, widespread and enduring discrimination, rejection, social exclusion and marginalization all over the world and in all areas of life.” (UN. General Assembly, 2014), (UN. OHCHR, 2015c); showing concern that “[...] Roma continues to be socially and economically marginalised, which undermines the respect of their human rights, propagate prejudice and impedes their full participation in society and the effective exercise of civic responsibilities.” (UN. General Assembly, 2014), (UN. OHCHR, 2015c). The 26/4 Resolution also recognized that “[...] Anti-Gypsyism constitutes a major obstacle to the successful social inclusion of Roma and the full respect of their human rights.” (UN. General Assembly, 2014), (UN. OHCHR, 2015c). And, by the Council of Europe definition, anti-gypsyism is “[...] «a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanization and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and the most blatant kind of discrimination»”. (UN. General Assembly, 2014), (UN. OHCHR, 2015c).

The 26/4 UNHR Council resolution operative paragraph n. ° 3 invited the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues: first, to produce a global study on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide; second, to present concrete recommendations; third, to submit the global study to the 29<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council session (15 June 2015) (UN. General Assembly, 2014), (UN. OHCHR, 2015a). The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation of Roma Worldwide Report aims to: firstly, provide an overview of “[...] the human rights situation of Roma worldwide, applying a minority rights-based approach to the protection and promotion of the rights of Roma, including the protection of their existence; [...]” and a description of the

“[...] trends in State practice, highlighting positive developments as well as challenges.” (UN. OHCHR, 2015c). Secondly, obtain response to questionnaires addressed to States and National Human Rights Institutions. Thirdly, engage in a consultative approach towards “[...] numerous international and regional organisations, non-governmental, grassroots organisations and Roma rights experts [...]” (UN. OHCHR, 2015c). Finally, the report’s methodology was grounded on the four pillars of minority rights: protection of a minority’s existence; protection and promotion of the identity of minority groups; guarantee of the rights to non-discrimination and equality; right to effective participation in public life and decision-making process (UN. OHCHR, 2015c).

Portugal’s answers to the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation of Roma Worldwide questionnaire also mirrors the Portuguese National Roma Communities Integration Strategy, founded in 2013 and, in 2018, extended until 2022. NRCIS priority was to “[...] create an Observatory of Roma Communities and to draft several studies, including a national study on Roma Communities in Portugal. This study was concluded by the end of 2014 and launched on the 20th January 2015.” (UN. OHCHR, 2015b). In answer to question n. ° 6 (*Has your Government identified the main priority areas for Roma inclusion? If yes, what are the main goals? Please provide relevant details in this respect, as well as an estimate of funds allocated on measures relating to national strategies and policies for Roma inclusion.* (UN. OHCHR, 2015b)), there were identified four strategic areas (education, employment, healthcare, and housing) and one crosscutting pillar with eight dimensions (I – Knowledge of socioeconomic context of Roma communities and follow-up mechanism of National Strategy; II – Discrimination; III – Education for Citizenship; IV – Roma history and culture; V – Gender Equality; VI – Justice and Security; VII – Mediation; VIII – Social Security). And in answer to question n. ° 9 (*Is Roma history and culture part of the national curriculum? Is the International Roma Day celebrated and if yes, how?* (UN. OHCHR, 2015b)), several initiatives were referred such as the Intercultural School Award (existing since 2012, with the High Commission for Migrations (ACM) and the Ministry of Education collaboration to develop projects and promote diversity as an opportunity for learning); the Intercultural School Kit (developed by ACM, consisting of educational materials about intercultural aspects that can be used by all education professionals and is available online); and celebrating International Roma Day (on the 8<sup>th</sup> April) and National Roma Day (24<sup>th</sup> June) (OHCHR, 2015b). Therefore, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation of Roma Worldwide report and questionnaire highlighted the major importance of the education strategic area as a path for inclusion, Human Rights and Human

Dignity protection, particularly relevant on minority protection. Also, the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 highlights the importance of education in children development, for instance in article 29<sup>th</sup> considering that: “[...] education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; [...].” Hence, the awareness arising of youngsters for the vital importance of Human Rights and of the Human Dignity several dimensions’ can be developed through education. On the one hand, this awareness may also promote health, social inclusion, cooperation, and communication skills on populations at risk of social exclusion. On the other hand, music, as a universal language, has the potential of gathering youth in an educational context. Some young people face socio-economic and cultural challenges, which have an influence on their engagement and success in school. Young people from economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds could have difficulty adapting to traditional teaching and learning environments. In order to promote success, positive future expectations, and inclusion in adult and professionally active life, it is necessary to use innovative, motivating methods that promote competence rather than reinforce difficulties and inadaptation. Music, communication, expression, and interaction through music can act as a facilitator to reach these young people and promote their strengths, socioemotional skills, and success.

The Lisbon Lusíada University research project “*The Music, Health, Social Inclusion, and Human Rights Lab*” is a shared project that combines two research centres (CEJEA - Centre for Environmental, Economic and Law Studies, Public Law and Political Theory research group; and CLISSIS - Lusíada Centre for Social Work and Social Intervention Research, Citizenship, psychosocial intervention and quality of life research group) and one faculty (Faculty of Architecture and Arts, Jazz and Modern Music degree). Therefore, this multidisciplinary research group, formed by a team of psychologists, social workers, music and law professors and researchers looks forward to observing and study the real impact of education for Human Rights through musical performance activities on health, social inclusion, well-being, and quality of life improvement. To do so, it will be applied quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods at the beginning and at the end of each of the two moments/phases that comprise the project program (pre post intervention assessment). The first moment/phase

includes forming the *MusicLab* at a public school where young students from one of the Lisbon parishes will weekly meet professional musicians, learn from jam sessions, organise fortnightly small concerts and start introducing discussion groups related to Health, Social Inclusion, and Human Rights developed by psychologists and law professors. This first pilot phase will take place in 2021, during which a model of a health promotion and social integration program through music will be planned and tested. As a result of this pilot phase, an intervention model will be implemented in the second moment/phase and applied to a broader group of both students, geographic areas, and themes such as Human Rights, Human Dignity, integration (within the rights of minorities and migrant communities) and health in a biopsychosocial perspective. The program project is currently on its first moment/phase.

## References

CASA-NOVA, Maria José (2013) - Direitos Humanos: da sua possibilidade teórica à sua (im)possibilidade prática numa era de naturalização das desigualdades. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*. Portugal: Universidade do Minho. ISSN. 26:2 (2013) 139-157.

DN. Lusa (2019) – Censos 2021 não pergunta a etnia dos cidadãos. INE prefere fazer um inquérito. *Diário de Notícias*. [Online]. Lisboa : DN. Available at WWW: <URL: <https://www.dn.pt/pais/censos-2021-nao-vai-incluir-pergunta-sobre-origem-etnico-racial-dos-cidadaos--11019723.html>>.

PORTUGAL. ACM, Alto Comissariado para as Migrações (2018a) - *Grupo de Trabalho Censos 2021*

– *Questões “Étnico-Raciais” (2021)* [Online]. Lisboa: ACM. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: <URL: <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/grupo-de-trabalho-censos-2021-questoes-etnico-raciais->>.

PORTUGAL. ACM, Alto Comissariado para as Migrações (2018b) - *Estratégia Nacional para a Integração das Comunidades Ciganas (ENICC)* [Online]. Lisboa: ACM. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: URL: <https://www.acm.gov.pt/pt/-/estrategia-nacional-para-as-comunidades-ciganas-enicc-concig>>.

PORTUGAL. AR. Constituição da República Portuguesa. *Diário da República, Série I*. 86 (1976-04-10). Alterado pelo/a Lei Constitucional n.º 1/2005.

PORTUGAL. Despacho n.º 7363/2018. *Diário da República, II série*. 149 (2018-08-03).

PORTUGAL. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 25/2013. *Diário da República, I série*. 75(2013-04-17) 2211-2239. [Online]. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: <URL:

[https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/RCM\\_ENNIC.pdf/8384c0f4-7c96-4979-90ba-73e5f565fd0b](https://www.acm.gov.pt/documents/10181/52642/RCM_ENNIC.pdf/8384c0f4-7c96-4979-90ba-73e5f565fd0b)>.

PORTUGAL. Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 154/2018. *Diário da República, 1 série*. 230(2018-11-29) 5450-5463. [Online]. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: <URL: <https://dre.pt/application/conteudo/117142874>>.

UN. General Assembly (1989) - *Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 4*. UN: NY. [consult. 13 Jul. 2021]. Available at : <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>>.

UN. OHCHR (2015a) - *Advancing Roma Inclusion* [Online]. UN: NY. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: <URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/minorities/pages/unitednationsregionalwgonroma.aspx>>.

UN. OHCHR (2015b) - *Contributions received in response to the questionnaire by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues - Member States – Portugal* [Online]. UN: NY. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/ContributionsProtectionRoma.aspx>>.

UN. General Assembly (2015) - *Comprehensive study of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism, A/HRC/29/24, 11 May 2015*. UN: NY. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/GlobalStudyonRomaworldwide.aspx>>.

UN. General Assembly (2014) - *Protection of Roma, A/HRC/RES/26/4, 14 July 2014*. UN: NY. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at [https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/26/4](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/26/4)

UN. OHCHR (2015c) - *Global Study on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide*. [Online]. UN: NY. [Consult. 26 Jan. 2021]. Available at WWW: <URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/GlobalStudyonRomaworldwide.aspx>>.