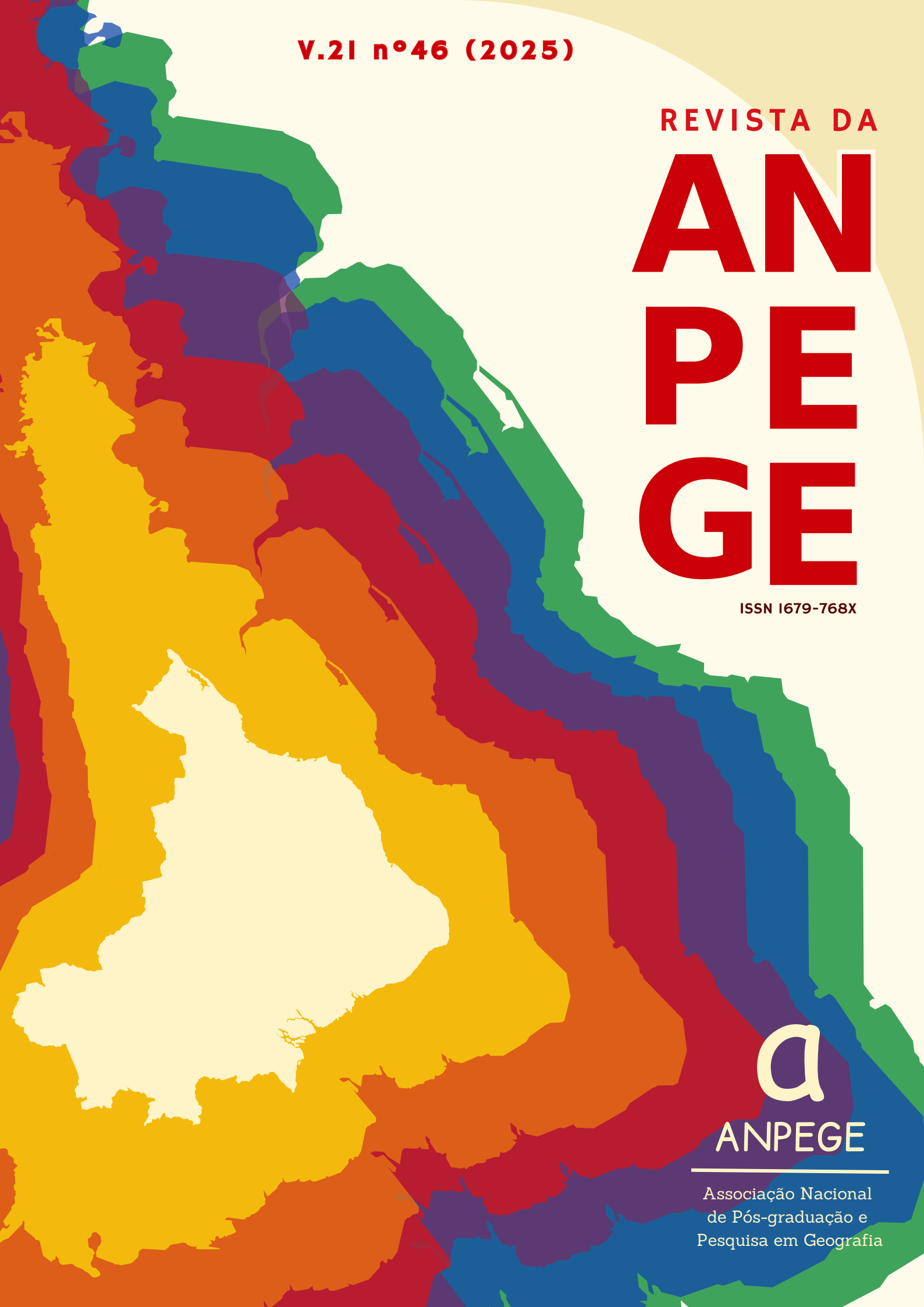
V.21 nº46 (2025)

REVISTA DA ANPEGE

ISSN 1679-768X



ANPEGE

Associação Nacional
de Pós-graduação e
Pesquisa em Geografia

REVISTA DA
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ENTREVISTA

Interview with Professor Sérgio Claudino: teaching, research and outreach in Geography from a Portuguese context.

Entrevista com o Professor Sérgio Claudino: ensino, pesquisa e extensão em Geografia a partir do contexto português

Entrevista al profesor Sérgio Claudino: enseñanza, investigación y divulgación en Geografía desde un contexto portugués.

DOI: 10.5418/ra2025.v21i46.20497

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V.21 n°46 (2025)
e-issn : 1679-768X

RESUMO: Entrevista com o Professor Doutor Sergio Claudino, do Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território da Universidade de Lisboa, recentemente aposentado. Na oportunidade, ressalta o conceito de cidadania territorial, narra sobre sua formação no ensino básico e secundário dentro do cenário português, bem como apresenta sua trajetória, desafios, expectativas e contribuições para o ensino, pesquisa e extensão a partir do ensino de Geografia em Portugal, Brasil e outros contextos de atuação e cooperação internacional.
Palavras-chave: geografia; ensino de geografia; pesquisa; cidadania territorial; formação docente.

ABSTRACT: Interview with Doctor Teatcher Sergio Claudino, from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon, recently retired. He highlights the concept of territorial citizenship, discusses his training in primary and secondary education within the Portuguese context, and presents his trajectory, challenges, expectations, and contributions to teaching, research, and extension through geography education in Portugal, Brazil, and other contexts of international cooperation and action.
Keywords: geography; geography education; research; territorial citizenship; teacher training.

RESUMEN: Entrevista con el profesor doctor Sergio Claudino, del Instituto de Geografía y Ordenación del Territorio de la Universidad de Lisboa, recientemente jubilado. Destaca el concepto de ciudadanía territorial, analiza su formación en educación primaria y secundaria en el contexto portugués y presenta su trayectoria, retos, expectativas y contribuciones a la docencia, la investigación y la extensión a través de la enseñanza de la geografía en Portugal, Brasil y otros contextos de cooperación y acción internacional.
Palabras clave: geografía; enseñanza de la geografía; investigación; ciudadanía territorial; formación del profesorado.

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Sérgio Claudino Loureiro Nunes holds a Teaching Degree in Geography from the University of Lisbon (1981), a Master's Degree in Human Geography and Spatial and Local Planning (1992), and a Doctor's Degree in Human Geography, (2002), all obtained from the University of Lisbon. Recently retired from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon (IGOT-UL), his academic career has been marked by outstanding work in the field of Education in Geography. He served as the coordinator of the Master's Degree in Geography Education at the University of Lisbon and the Center of Teacher Training at IGOT-UL. Furthermore, he works as an Integrated Researcher at the Center for Geographical Studies (CEG/IGOT-UL) and is a member of the Board GEOFORO (Foro Iberoamericano de Educación, Geografía y Sociedad,) reinforcing his engagement in international networks of academic cooperation[1].

He is the creator of the "Projeto Nós Propomos! Cidadania e Inovação na Educação Geográfica", an initiative widely developed in Portugal, Spain, Brazil, and other countries, which promotes educational practice aimed at civic education and critical territorial intervention by primary and secondary school students in Portugal, equivalent to elementary and high school in Brazil.

His work includes collaborations with several universities, especially from Brazil and Spain. He has published numerous works in the field of Geography Education, Geographic Education, teacher training, experimental teaching, and school textbooks. He has contributed to the training of new researchers and educators in these areas by serving as an advisor, whether for master's or doctoral degrees. Over his career, he showed commitment to renewing teaching practices in Geography and to valuing the critical and civic education of students. His experience as a professor, researcher, and coordinator of innovative projects offers diverse insights into the paths of contemporary geographic education.

This interview, held on April 29, 2025, at IGOT, at the University of Lisbon, is organized by Gustavo Henrique Cepolini Ferreira, Professor at the Universidade Estadual de Montes Claros, Post-Doctorate Researcher at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa and Secretary at the Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação em Pesquisa em Geografia (ANPEGE,) Sonara da Silva de Souza, pursuing a Doctor Degree in Education at the University of São Paulo, and Éliton Paulo Novais, pursuing a Doctor Degree in Geography at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. With an spirit of dialog and sharing, we begin our interview, inviting him to revisit his academic and institutional trajectory.

INTERVIEWERS: We would like to ask you some questions starting from this milestone, which is your retirement, about your contribution to Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian Geography, among

[1] Curriculum available on https://www.cienciavitae.pt/portal/FE1C-ACE6-3A0B

many others. The initial question is to understand a little about your path. Who is Sérgio Claudino, and why Geography?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Firstly, thank you for the interview, I appreciate it. I am from a rural area, a village, a small town in north Lisbon. This has some meanings. My parents were merchants, so we had contact with everyone in the community. My mother, in particular, had a strong sense of engagement with the community, of a Christian, humanist inspiration. Therefore, I always had an experience in which we were raised with a sense of social commitment, as one of my brothers says. On the other hand, living in a village, my world was not exactly that of a village in the sense of carrying out agricultural tasks; it was a world very much focused on the outside world. Television then appeared. We watched the news, and I think that meant a lot to me. This interest in the world, which still marks me today, and which leads me to follow the news throughout the day, also helps to explain my later interest in Geography. Therefore, Geography emerged early as a subject that interested me. When I went to high school, I remember that a brother of mine, who was one year older, had already commented to my Geography teacher that his younger brother really liked the subject. My interest in Geography was tied to my interest in the world of a young person who did not particularly enjoy carrying out agricultural tasks. My parents practically did not do them. When I had some time in vacation, I watched the news, watched television, read books. So, my interest in Geography comes from there. Later, I applied for the Geography course. There was no Internet that time. I had immense difficulty finding out where the school of Geography was. I took the course. I think that in courses we always learn less than we expect and always learn more than think. I started my studies in 1977/78 and was a good student. I had difficulties in coming and adapting to Lisbon. There is an impersonality to the city that shocked me, even though I already knew it was like that. It was a very rigorous, very demanding course, in which we failed a lot. When I finished the course, I had a feeling of emptiness, like ‘There's so much I don't know.’ Then, I did what everyone else does. I was in my senior year, so I applied for a teaching position and started teaching at a primary and secondary school.

INTERVIEWERS: What is the name of that school, Professor?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Escola Secundária Dona Filipa de Lencastre. It is currently the highest-ranked state school in Lisbon because it is very centrally located. I did what was normal, which was to be a Geography teacher. My choice to study Geography was not entirely at random, since at the age of 12 I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I can explain – in a rural area, teachers wre the most interesting people I knew. I was lucky that I had good teachers. Therefore, I decided I wanted to be a teacher. My background is typical of someone who lives in a rural area. And of those who see school as a benchmark for personal growth. On the other hand, when I went to Geography class, I

already knew there was a shortage of teachers for that subject. It was not until my final year of high school, which was equivalent to my second year of secondary education, that I had a teacher with a degree in Geography.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you remember what was her name?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Teacher Iolanda. She was a teacher in Angola. Decolonization occurred, Angola became independent, the situation changed, and she came to Portugal. She even told us that the Geography exams, right there in '74, after April 25th, focused only on content related to Angola. Here, in mainland Portugal, in the metropolis, in 1974, only the Geography exams had their content changed. No one could ask questions about what would become the former colonies. The only questions could be about mainland Portugal, the Azores, and Madeira. That also demonstrates the strong ideological character of Geography in relation to the coup d'état. We start talking about revolution when we realize it is more profound than a simple change of power – it is a change of regime. My senior year was in 1980/81, and I was already teaching classes.

INTERVIEWERS: Did everything happen at the University of Lisbon?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Yes. Then, I started teaching classes, full time. I had the feeling that through comparisons with the students, I actually knew a few things about Geography. I came to terms with myself. That is because I did not know, but I knew how to study. I had been teaching for two years. Later, I did what a two-year ‘internship’ at a school where, in addition to classroom practice, we had to do research for our training and develop various activities related to the environment. The training model has nothing to do with the current one. Currently, teachers are trained by higher education institutions and universities. Back then, Geography teacher training took place in schools. That also results from the complicated relationship (at the time, I was not aware of it, but today I have some research to support it) between the university and teacher training. At the beginning of the 20th century, universities trained teachers, but it became clear that universities did not training teachers, and there was a phenomenon of transferring this training to schools.

INTERVIEWERS: Regarding your academic trajectory, you continued studies at the university, your master's degree, and your doctorate. Who were your advisors, and what what were the guiding principles and ruptures in this process?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: When I finished college, as I mentioned, I taught for two years at a school and applied for an internship, which I did very early compared to what was usual in Portugal. And I reached the peak of my career because, in practice, it was just a matter of waiting for old age to

set in. There was no evaluation whatsoever, which was that I would become a professional at 25, which was extraordinarily early. I became a permanent teacher when I finished my internship in 1985, with good grades, and it was a very interesting experience. In 1985, I applied and was placed here at a school in the center of Lisbon, the successor to the first lyceum in the Portuguese capital. It is a school with a very strong tradition and history, which made me feel a little uncomfortable. Even though I adapt well, I felt there was a very clear barrier between the older teachers and the younger ones. My colleagues were not permanent teachers as I was. Naturally, I got along with those of my age. That same year, I participated in an initiative with fellow interns from another school. The schools were very dynamic thanks to the teachers who were doing their internships, as they were obligated to do so. I was told by a colleague to apply to a higher education institution, from which he would graduate. Higher education institutions were being created to train teachers for students in the first and second cycles of primary education (basic education, in Portugal). Portugal had joined the European Community in 1986, and it was urgent to train teachers and have qualified teachers like the other EU countries. It was unacceptable that Portugal had such a low level of professionalization among its teachers, and the higher education institutions, not quite the universities, had the function of training teachers. I then went to the Escola Superior de Educação de Setúbal. This is how I entered higher education. I supervised teachers during their internships. I went to schools, attended classes, had work sessions, etc. But I lived in Lisbon, where I had bought a house. Displacing to Setúbal was not that easy. That year, I saw an advertisement – it was not customary to publish them in the newspaper – for a professorship in the Department of Geography of the School of Languages. I applied for it. The School of Languages was not expecting me to apply. But I had some experience and I got in, in 1987. It turns out that the government, precisely because it wanted Portuguese teachers to have professional training, effectively forced universities, which trained geographers and other specialists, to also provide training in education. Therefore, the Department of Geography at the University of Lisbon had received a young assistant who has the distinction of being a teacher, having experience as a permanent teacher, having completed an internship, and having worked in teacher training. The Department was about to start teacher training, and so they immediately told me that I would be working in teacher training. I did not mind because it was a subject that interested me. I am, or was, because I have retired, a founder of the teacher training program at the School of Languages. I started my Master's Degree in Human Geography and Spatial and Local Planning at the School of Languages. The Master's Degree had nothing with teaching. In my dissertation, I tried to address the teaching of Geography, and the coordinator of the Master's Degree program tells me no. The teaching of Geography is not regarded with the same academic dignity as other areas. In a sort of commitment, I addressed the regional impact of higher education. In reality, I worked hard and learned a lot about the

articulation between secondary and higher education, but it was not about teaching Geography. That would be impossible today. Telling someone who is working as a professor at a university that trains geography teachers not to do research in that area... I finished my Master's Degree and then started Doctorate. Initially, they also told me that I would have to pursue a doctorate in Geography, excluding teaching. I must say that what was happening in the School of Languages, in other fields of knowledge, was the same. My colleagues in History, Languages, and Philosophy, who were in teacher training programs, did not pursue their Master's and Doctoral degrees in Education because it was considered less prestigious than other fields. Professor Teresa Barata Salgueiro, who would later become the head of the Department of Geography and the first president of IGOT, spoke with the advisor I had chosen, Professor Carlos Alberto Medeiros, so that I could work on teaching Geography. My thesis was about the didactic transposition of basic scientific information into textbooks and school manuals in Portugal. I investigated how the scientific information available in 19th-century Portugal was later transposed into textbooks. In fact, my thesis addressed the education in Geography. Professor Manuela Malheiro Dias Ferreira was the first person to write a doctoral thesis in Education in Geography at the University of London. In Portugal, I wrote the first thesis concerning Education in Geography, although formally in the field of Human Geography, because there was no teaching specialization at that time. Today, of course, there are already Doctoral programs in Geography and specialization courses in Teaching.

Figure 1: Professor Sergio Claudino with his thesis – cover restored in 2025 - IGOT.



Source: GHCF, apr. 2025.

INTERVIEWERS: Did you pursue your Doctorate with the same professor of your Master's Course.

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: I pursued my Doctorate with a different advisor. My Doctorate advisor was Professor Carlos Alberto Monteiros, and I appreciate him for that. He was watching, and I think, deep down, he saw that things were being orchestrated. In the initial phase, especially in the initial theoretical discussion, as well as in the empirical research, I had the collaboration of Professor Souto González, who was already a friend of mine. He earned his doctorate in Urban Geography in Spain, and the fact that he held a doctorate gave him academic standing, allowing him to subsequently become an advisor of various theses. At the level of the Iberian Peninsula, he was clearly the face of education in Geography. A retired Portuguese-Brazilian professor, João Rua, who teaches at PUC in Rio de Janeiro, gave me a very valuable piece of advice, from a methodological point of view, on how I should conduct the empirical analysis of the textbooks.

INTERVIEWERS: What was that methodological hint?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: João Rua said that I would have to create summary charts, organized by topic, showing how the various textbooks addressed different subjects, for example,

religious divisions. What appeared in each textbook, therefore, I had to base myself on very clear empirical research. In my doctoral research, my investigation of textbooks was very objective. I had tables with the basic information and then I provided commentary. There is this rigor of empirical investigation.

INTERVIEWERS: Could you explain about the results you found in your doctoral research?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: In Portugal, education in Geography is deeply marked by the construction of the Empire and Colonialism. Being Portugal a colonial metropolis, Geography had a role to play in preparing students from the Empire. That gave rise to very contrasting cycles, which is not common, for example, in Spain or France. We had the longest-running colonial empire in Africa until 1975. Therefore, there is an influence from the political reading of the Empire, in addition to the influence of a more academic reading. Obviously, the dominant paradigms in Geography are also noticeable in school production. There is a mobilization of Geography at key moments for the defense of the Empire, which we do not find elsewhere. Furthermore, in the post-April 25th, after the Revolution of 1974, we are a peripheral country in Europe and, on the other hand, a country turned towards other continents. There is a political cycle, which begins when Portugal joined the European Union, marked by a devaluation of the country's education system and an increased emphasis on Europe. Why? Because Portugal did not have identity issues. We are the oldest country in Europe. We have fixed borders since 1927, which expanded with the Azores and Madeira. We did have any conflict among regions. We wanted the Portuguese to feel European, and, to do so, we devalued Portuguese education and created a year entirely dedicated to Europe. If there is one country where we can see how the discipline of Geography is an ideological one, it is Portugal, due to the moments in which the Empire is valued. Even under the current democratic system, the emphasis placed on European models in Geography has been greater than that of other countries.

INTERVIEWERS: What is your view on how Portuguese textbooks represent and engage in dialogue with the former colonies and territories? How do you view this theme? Last week we analyzed an elementary Geography textbook from 1942. It features a brief history of Portugal, but also has specific sections on all the former colonies or colonies at the time. Colonies still existed in 1942. And some of these sections sound like a reproduction of a genocide, a destruction of memory about these territories, There is progress today with the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries.) How do you evaluate that? Do you have any impressions of these books, of the advances, of the breakthroughs in relation to these countries?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Like I said, I was a student during the Empire. In other words, I was 15 years old when the 25th of April 1974 happened. We had to study the Empire repeatedly. When I was at primary school, I studied Portugal, Angola, all the overseas territories. When we entered what we now call the second cycle, the 5th and 6th grades, we would study each of the territories again. When I entered the third cycle, I would study each of the former colonies again... We need to understand that we are talking about a country at war, sending its youth to Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea. Therefore, in order to send these young men, they and their families had to be convinced that they were fighting for their country. When I was in high school, I did not study Angola, Mozambique, etc., because the 25th of April happened and I entered high school in 1974/75. Therefore, in the course of study for a student who studied Geography, I would study Portugal and its colonies four times. That is it. It was a sympathetic image, highlighting many productions, because it was also important for us to understand that these were territories with wealth. It was part of the national wealth. I had difficulty distinguishing the productions of the various territories, because everything revolved around coffee, cotton, etc. Portugal struggled to cope with the reality of its former colonies in the post-independence period. The Geography programs produced shortly after April 25th, and continuing into the late 1970s, completely ignored the CPLP. Why? Because Portugal has just been at war against these countries. Geography is uncomfortable with those territories. The person who drew attention to this during a training session at a school was precisely Professor Suzanne Daveau[2] – a lady who came from France, with a detached attitude, who said how the Portuguese has a complicated relationship with the subject because they were former colonies, now independent countries, and they do not address it. In the 1990s, we were already talking about a community of countries. We have already gained two decades of distance; we feel comfortable now. I think it is a great asset that we have a group of countries that share the same language. It is a great asset for Brazil to be able to engage in dialogue with Timor-Leste and Mozambique, etc., in their language. In fact, I think it is extraordinary that I arrive in Brazil and can speak my language without any effort, something I cannot even do in Spain anymore, and be able to read the signs. This is, of course, one of the reasons why so many Brazilians come to Portugal. I would like to take this opportunity to say the following. One frustration, or one thing left undone (but I still have to close other drawers), a project I had that was, in a way, postponed by Nós Propomos, is precisely to organize a meeting on the teaching of Geography in Portuguese-speaking countries. We need to get Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea to speak officially. I know that many colleagues go to

[2] Franco-Portuguese geographer, now a centenarian, born on July 13, 1925, left behind a significant contribution and legacy to geographical studies. The second edition of the "Atlas Suzanne Daveau" was launched in 2025. Within the scope of IGOT, the exhibition "Suzanne Daveau 100 anos: Geógrafa e… não só!", curated by Professor José Manuel Simões, was inaugurated on July 2nd and can be visited until September 26, 2025, at the Espaço Arte do IGOT in Lisbon. Available on: https://ceg.igot.ulisboa.pt/noticias/exposicao-no-igot-celebra-os-100-anos-da-geografa-suzanne-daveau

universities, teach courses, others write manuals, but I think there is a space within the Portuguese-speaking world that should engage in dialog. It is a good thing I did not go ahead. I did not commit myself; that dream involved celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence. The 25th of April occurred in 1974, but independence was declared in 1975, except for Guinea-Bissau, which had proclaimed its independence before the 25th of April. This is still a small personal project. My impression of what is said about Angola, Mozambique, and other former colonies is that it is discussed very superficially. I think that is where the colonizer complex comes into play, as I have already mentioned. But I think we need to value the various dimensions that unite us. Brazil needs to value the Latin American community, Mercosur, for sure, but it is also normal that it values the space of the Portuguese-speaking community. The CPLP is a community that should begin to exist from the point of view of dialog in teaching Geography, and I have this frustration. I think IGOT had an obligation to have developed this dimension and failed to do so, partly due to my own fault.

INTERVIEWERS: Could you tell us more about the history of the Master's course of Education in Geography at the IGOT and your work in this academic field?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Following the Bologna Process reform in Portugal, all teacher training would be at the master's level. There has been a profound change in the education system. There is a three-year cycle, roughly equivalent to an undergraduate degree, which is the teaching degree, followed by two years of a master's program. A master's degree is a professional training course in Portugal. We have had colleagues who get a master's degree in one area, then a doctorate in Geography, but then need to find employment in primary and secondary education. They can teach only if they have a master's degree in Education With the Bologna Process, in 2007, the new legal framework for initial teacher training was approved. Within this context, a master's program in History and Geography Teaching is created. The novelty was the integration of these two areas. This meant a devaluation of both History and Geography and, in practice, we have a liberal interpretation of the devaluation of education in Social Sciences. Why are we wasting so much time on subjects that make people think? I am against this. Therefore, students with a teaching degree in History, with three years of History studies, had to complete a minimum of less than one year of training in Geography, and graduates in Geography had to complete a minimum of training in History to become History and Geography teachers. It is evident that this was paving the way for a day when they would say 'We are going to integrate the subjects of History and Geography' and therefore, instead of having a History subject and a Geography subject, they would both be integrated as a result of this movement. In 2011, I launched a national petition against this integration of initial teacher training, arguing that teachers would have poor training. In other words, a History graduate with little training in Geography could

never be a good Geography teacher, and vice versa. It was launched with other colleagues and afterwards we made contact with the socio-professional associations of Geography and History in Portugal. I contacted the Associação de Professores de Geografia[3], Associação de Professores de História[4], Associação Portuguesa de Geógrafos[5], and, later, the Associação Insular de Geografia[6]. These associations collaborated in collecting signatures for a petition that was presented to the Assembly of the Republic. Clearly, we viewed the process as political. This led to parliamentary groups focusing on the matter. The Ministry of Education had begun internally to request opinions on the situation. There was lobbying activity, mainly carried out by the Associação de Professores de História. And indeed, in 2014, through Decree-Law No. 79/2014, of May 14, a reform of initial teacher training was published, creating the Master's Degree in History Teaching and the Master's Degree in Geography Teaching. That is why I say that I am a bit of a 'father' to the Master's program in Geography Teaching. At the IGOT, the former president invited me to coordinate the Master's Degree Program in Geography Teaching.

INTERVIEWERS: In Portugal, how many Master's Degree Programs in Geography Teaching are there?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: There are currently three Master's Degree Program in Geography Teaching. One here at IGOT, at the University of Lisbon, another at the University of Coimbra, and a third at the University of Porto. Courses that are approved by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, which pays particular attention to the training of teachers and those responsible for teacher training.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you believe there is a shortage of applicants for said Master's Degree in Geography Teaching? Or not?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Currently, there are many applicants for the Master's program in Geography Teaching, as well as for other Master's programs in education, because it is common knowledge that those who earn a Master's degree in Geography Teaching are guaranteed employment. In Portugal, when attending a teacher training course, the practice, the tradition, with few exceptions, is that people will become teachers. Here at IGOT, for every three applicants, one person is admitted. Therefore, there is no shortage of applicants. However, I would like to say that the interruption of Master's Degree programs in Geography Teaching at various universities means that research in

[3] See APOGEO: Revista da Associação de Professores de Geografia, whose association was founded on October 19, 1987, available on https://www.aprofgeo.org/wp/
[4] See: https://aph.pt/
[5] See: https://www.apgeo.pt/
[6] See: https://aigmadeira.pt/

Education is a peripheral area of the Academia. And in general, internationally, in Brazil, in France, in Spain, it is also an undervalued area.

INTERVIEWERS: Throughout your career, you have been building the concept of spatial citizenship. Could you explore it? Could you talk about its relevance for Geography Teaching?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: The concept of spatial citizenship emerges in the context of the Projeto Nós Propomos!, which is explicitly a citizenship project. I felt the need to say that we were a citizenship project, but a citizenship applied to Geography. Since I understand Geography to be the science that studies societies within territories, and since the concept of territory seems particularly rich to me because territory is simultaneously a space of power, a space of domination, but also a space of transformation, of construction by a society, of identity, 'spatial citizenship' seemed appropriate. We talk a lot about territorial identity and how one of the components of each person is their territorial identity. If a person is not comfortable in their environment, if they do not identify with the territory they inhabit, they will also not feel happy in that territory. I needed to create something, in the sense of applying citizenship to Geography, and that is how this concept came about. *What is spatial citizenship?* From my point of view, it is the serious commitment that each of us has and should have in building our community, the commitment to participating in solving basic problems, especially at different scales. In other words, **spatial citizenship** basically means that each of us should consciously participate in improving the living conditions of our community[7]. Clearly, there is an emphasis on the local scale, especially since Nós Propomos! has a very local focus, but naturally it cannot forget the other scales that frame it. This commitment to spatial citizenship, which I believe should exist at the individual level, can also be a commitment of institutions. A school should also have a commitment to spatial citizenship within its community. Therefore, in the first definition I spoke of this commitment, the commitment that a young person should have, or that people should have, in solving space-based problems. Why do I say it is space-based? Because if I say that there is a problem of a more psychological nature, which is also a problem, but perhaps outside the scope of Geography. Geography is space-based. In summary, I would say that **spatial citizenship is the commitment that people and institutions should have in solving space-based community problems.**

INTERVIEWERS: The next question is about the Nós Propomos! How did the project emerge? And, in the context of IGOT, which was also mentioned, because in a way IGOT, besides having institutional backing, it welcomes, I do not know about funding, but if you could assess a bit of this expansion beyond Portugal, because it is milestone of the program.

[7] See: Claudino (2014) e Andreis, Copetti e Claudino (2023).

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: The Projeto Nós Propomos! emerged because I work with schools, with the curriculum, or rather, I used to work with the curriculum in teacher training. In 2001, the requirement to conduct case studies was introduced into high school curricula. What have I been verifying over the years? The problem was that this case study, which was essentially planned to be local in scale, was not being implemented in schools. I, in 2003, was part of an advisory board for exams in Portugal and suggested that students be evaluated in relation to case studies. Why? I had a feeling that if it did not come up in the exams, it would not be implemented. From my point of view, the university has an obligation that goes beyond the training of teachers, which is also to revitalize the teaching of Geography, just as in other areas the university has an obligation to contribute to the revitalization of other activities. In 2011/12, we started the Projeto Nós Propomos! with two main pillars: to focus teaching on active themes and to contribute to the participation of the population, a logic of governance; therefore, to get the youth and the population to discuss their territory. This clearly has to do with the IGOT. We left the School of Languages. We were the Department of Geography, and we became an autonomous school of Geography, the so-called Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning. Therefore, the goal is to revitalize the teaching of Geography and bring it into the public sphere. The project grew with the work. My life, on a personal level, has changed radically. And even the research on Education in Geography, which I enjoy doing so much, I stopped doing or, more accurately, it changed. The project became internationalized, in reality, in Brazil. It was implemented by a colleague who was a visiting Doctorate student, Sandra Mendonça, who said to me "I could implement this in Brazil." She was here in 2011. Then, João Bazolli, colleague from the Federal University of Tocantins, said "I work a lot in public participation, and I would like to bring that." Sandra implemented the project, for the first time, in Brazil, in 2014. João Bazolli takes it and gives it great importance later in Tocantins. I am creating a project that is as simple as possible. Students look at their community, identify problems, gather information about them, and then propose solutions to those problems. For example, if we have a plot of land in the middle of the city that is abandoned and used as a garbage dump, what can we do? What could this land be used for? They look and say "We can make playground here." They make this proposition. It is sort of that.

INTERVIEWERS: In how many countries is the Projeto present today?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Today it is in Portugal, it is in Spain and, this year, it was implemented in Timor-Leste. It is in Mozambique, but it had already been implemented in Laos. Brazil is the great homeland of Nós Propomos! The project is in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, but with less dynamism or more intermittent operation. I think there's a gamble to take – to revitalize the Projeto in these countries. It is, for all intents and purposes, the largest international experimental

geography teaching project.

INTERVIEWERS: Internationally, is Brazil the country with the longest duration?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Longest duration and longest dimension. I will be going to a EUROGEO conference, the European Geographical Association, in North Macedonia, and I will certainly find what I have found at other international conferences – there is no international project like Nós Propomos! We have, brought the students into the streets, put them to work, etc. In some places and in some universities, when they tell me "We are doing the Nós Propomos," from my point of view, I have some self-censorship, because it seems to me little more than a study visit to see the local problems. But at least if the Project helped bring the students out into the streets, to look at the problems, to look at them critically. That is already a lot.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you have any estimate of the number of cities and schools participating in the Projeto in Portugal?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: We have had around 60 schools in recent years. In the first year, we had around 400 students, and in recent years, approximately 3,000 students enrolled. Then, participating directly here in the final seminar, because we also have students online, we have around 1,500 of them. There is always a break. In any case, we have had around 300 or more projects completed per year, which is a lot. One qualitative change the Projeto Nós Propomos! is that: it originated in high school, precisely because of the case study, but it has since expanded to elementary school. Since 2013/14, we have had the project in elementary school, with younger children, and, meanwhile, with middle school, therefore, some students between 11 and 15 years old.

INTERVIEWERS: After your retirement, what are your expectations with the Projeto Nós Propomos! and its challenges?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: With my retirement, there is a new colleague, Professor Ana Louro, who is the new coordinator of the Projeto Nós Propomos!. And, let's say, my challenge is also a little bit about making a smooth transition. IGOT invited me to continue being part of the coordination committee for the Projeto Nós Propomos!. This year I still went to several schools whenever I was contacted, but obviously, it is always a concern. Often, the projects are developed by foundations that have funds, which they offer to people, or to teachers, a weekend at a hotel, and which they provide funds for schools. Actually, we cannot offer that. We do not have money to offer. I am a little worried, but the idea is to try and continue with the Projeto Nós Propomos!.

INTERVIEWERS: Is there a prospect of expansion into new countries or consolidation within existing ones?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: I think that contact with the international network is very important, and therefore I have maintained this contact. Also, to avoid discontinuities, Professor Raimundo Lenilde, from UFPI, the ambassor of the Projeto in Brazil, will organize the 4º Congresso Internacional Nós Propomos!, in 2026. From my point of view, the ideal would be to expand to other countries as well, and in a way, where do I feel frustrated? I am still supervising theses, etc., inherited from my time in active service. In other words, I have not yet had the time I would like to schedule meetings with colleagues to try and boost the Projeto in other locations, particularly in Brazil. I believe that a project is always a personal construction, built on shared experiences and close relationships. In other words, the retired Professor Sérgio Claudino still feels somewhat unretired and has not experienced that full sense of availability. In any case, I am going to Brazil next year and I think I will be there for about two months.

INTERVIEWERS: How do you assess the role and contribution of the Associação Portuguesa de Geógrafos? How has it been contributing to the continuing education of teachers? What is the relationship like?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: I was previously a member of the governing bodies of the Portuguese Association of Geographers (APG). Therefore, there is also an emotional connection. I think that APG has an important role in asserting Portuguese Geography in civil society, and also in dialogue with the government about the field. I have a positive assessment and I think that socio-professional associations are indeed very important as entities of pressure and institutional affirmation in Portuguese society, and as a means of uniting geographers from various universities. It is no coincidence that the board of the Portuguese Association of Geographers usually includes geographers from various universities. In the same year, 1987, in which the Portuguese Association of Geographers was founded, the Association of Geography Teachers was also founded. The initial plan was to establish a single association. In practice, the Association of Geographers has as members university professors and planning technicians, while the Association of Geography Teachers has as its members primary and secondary school teachers. The Association of Geography Teachers is also a relevant association for the affirmation of Geography in education. From my point of view, what is the interpretation of the fact that there is a Portuguese association of geographers and an association of Geography teachers? In Portugal, primary and secondary school teachers have a higher socio-professional status than they do in Brazil. This also stems from a distinctly geographical circumstance. In Portugal, all Geography teachers in the public education system are employees of the

Ministry of Education. And because of that, they have a great sense of unity, and greater power to make demands. Primary and secondary school teachers, in general, have a much greater capacity for making demands in Portugal, compared to Brazil. In Brazil, teachers are fragmented into municipal employees, state employees, and federal employees. And this division fragments the capacity to make demands. In Portugal, it is clear that teachers have helped to overthrow governments, to remove the absolute majority from governments. That being said, the existence of a strong association of Geography teachers reveals the tradition of a class, of an association distinct from the Portuguese Association of Geographers. It also reveals, obviously, something else. The divorce between higher education and primary and secondary education, that is, primary and secondary school teachers said 'no' to being in the same association as higher education teachers, certainly fearing being absorbed and losing specific power if they were together.

INTERVIEWERS: We attended an event at the University of Évora[8] on February 25th of this year, in Évora. There were 40 to 50 undergraduate students present, and one of the speakers asked "Which of you would like to pursue as Geography teachers?" And, to the surprise of the assembly, three raised their hands. I mean, everyone else present wanted to pursue scientific research. So, in your view, in your trajectory, how do you approach this crisis, this lack of teachers? What path forward would be possible given the current political climate in Portugal?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: The University of Évora does not train teachers. Suddenly, I realize that the majority of students (I am surprised by that number, to be honest) think "I would like to be a Geography researcher." As we have discussed before, geography teacher training courses are receiving a very high number of applications, probably due to pragmatism. When they finish their geography degrees, they do not realize they can work in research and instead understand that they have a guaranteed job as teachers. Therefore, for now, there is no crisis. Master's programs in Education are receiving far more applicants than available places, meaning that becoming a teacher is not an appealing activity for a 19-year-old. This means there is a negative image of what it means to be a teacher and what they have experienced. But, in any case, there is a crisis. Not so long ago, they were students in Geography classes in elementary and high school, and now they do not want to be. And this means that the image of what it is to be a Geography teacher, even for those who went to study Geography, is not so positive. This means that the teaching of Geography needs to change. This is the reading I have.

INTERVIEWERS: On the other end, there is a direct connection to remuneration, salaries...

[8] 20th anniversary Geography course at the University of Évora, available on https://www.uevora.pt/ue-media/noticias?item=42714

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: It has to do with compensation, with salaries, for sure. Please note, if they go into other professions, such as technicians and senior technicians, they will not earn much more than they do as primary and secondary school teachers. A primary and secondary school teacher currently ends their career earning around 2,000 euros. In fact, there is bot such a big difference between salaries in primary and secondary education and in higher education. I myself contacted former students to apply to university, and they told me they did not want to go to higher education because they felt they would lose their independence and that it was not financially rewarding either.

INTERVIEWERS: How would you rate graduate studies in Geography in Brazil? What about your work as an associate professor at the Universidade Estadual do Vale do Acaraú (UVA)?

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: I am perhaps biased, especially since, as I am invited by various universities to teach graduate courses, I have a very positive and favorable view of graduate programs, which aim to be open and even bring collaboration from other professors into their courses. In Portugal, the figure of the professional, who works full-time, is more prevalent. In Brazil, I notice that many of the students come rushing from their jobs, they have taught countless classes, but they are there, sometimes at the end of the day, closing their eyes, sleepy. Therefore, I have a picture of graduate students who are struggling, in this sense of the effort they are making. I am often impressed when I am at meetings and things in Brazil extend into the late afternoon. There are sessions in the evening. I sometimes think there will not be ant audience, nobody will show up, and then the auditoriums fill up with people who have been working all day. So, I want to say that I have an image of people who make a great sacrifice to attend graduate school and who come looking tired, but they come nonetheless. This is not a criticism, this is a compliment. In Brazil, I learned to give meaning to the word written on Martin Waldseemuller's 1507 map, “New World.” In other words, someone who is under construction and is making a great effort. Furthermore, it is very kind of UVA to invite me to be an associate professor. I am always a little afraid that I will not be able to meet expectations. Let's just say there is a very large activity book, but it is obviously a very kind invitation and I could never say no to Professor Glauciana Teles. Let me complete the picture of the people from various places. In Portugal, there are more students who are only pursuing a Master's degree, although many also work. In Brazil, it is common to find people who work all day and then go to school.

INTERVIEWERS: Finally, we would like you to send a final message to the Geography teachers who construct the many geographies in Brazil.

SÉRGIO CLAUDINO: Firstly, I would like to give to my Brazilian colleagues is a personal message of gratitude, given that Brazil, and Brazilian colleagues have had a very open relationship

with Portuguese Geography and with me in particular, notably through the Projeto Nós Propomos!. I must emphasize that I am very pleased with the support that the Projeto, which originated in Portugal, has received in Brazil. As you can imagine, even if I do not say it, I often get emotional when I arrive in Brazil and see people wearing Nós Propomos! t-shirts. I have had some emotional moments. Secondly, I would like to take an example I gave, of how we reversed the devaluation of Geography education, through the creation of the Master's degree in Education in History and Geography, through political struggle and public action. I think that our colleagues in Brazil also need to acknowledge, they need to bear in mind that defending their discipline and defending the kind of geography education that we want, that is useful, also takes place in the political arena, and we have a good example here, which is the Portuguese example. Lastly we, geographers, and we, teaching professionals, have a strong habit of complaining that our discipline is not properly recognized. Well, the process has to be the other way around. We are the ones who need to have a dynamic and useful discipline for the citizens. And if we have it, and when we have it, the discipline is recognized. We need to make Geography a more engaging subject, and I think the Projeto Nós Propomos! is one way to do that, but it's not the only one. I was saying I would be speaking three messages, but here go fourth and a fifth. It is unacceptable that Brazil has no representation on the Geographical Education Commission of the International Geographical Union[9]. This is not the first time I have said this, but Brazil is a major power in teaching Geography. In few countries does Geography have the weight it has in Brazil, across all levels of education. Brazil is a country of remarkable size. Portugal has had representatives on the IGU's Committee on Geographic Education, but Brazil has never had one. This is not possible. Commissions must also reflect the relevance of the countries, and therefore there is a challenge of internationalization and presence in internationalization that involves a presence of Brazil. This is not just due to one side; I also think Brazil is partly to blame. I remember of the first International Charter of Geographic Education, which included the names of two Brazilian colleagues who were to disseminate and debate the Charter in Brazil. When I arrive in Brazil, I talk about the Charter and nobody knows about it. Brazil must claim its place on the IGU Commission on Geographic Education. This is what I want to make clear here. Lastly, and this is somewhat relevant to what we have been talking about, I think there's a space, there is a community of Portuguese-speaking countries, and I think it is important for us to build that community. Moreover, the Museum of the Portuguese Language is located in São Paulo, and therefore, Geography also has a responsibility to contribute to the construction of the CPLP within the context of Geography education. Lastly, thank you very much for the interview. I appreciate that. Thank you very much!

[9] In this context, we recommend reading the International Charter for Geographical Education of 1992, available on: https://www.igu-cge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/15.-Portuguese.pdf

Figures 2 and 3: Prof. Sérgio Claudino holding activities at secondary schools in Portugal





Source: EPN, 2024.

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Data de submissão: 24 de setembro de 2025

Aceito para publicação: 15 de dezembro de 2025

Data de publicação: 31 de dezembro de 2025