



YOUTH VOICES

PATIENT SAFETY AND HEALTH QUALITY

Youth Voices from Portugal



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About us	04
Patient Safety	06
Think About It	08
Youth Voices	11
Statements	29
Get in touch	30



HEALTH LITERACY

PATIENT SAFETY

QUALITY OF HEALTH

PATIENT CHOICES

PUBLIC POLICIES

HEALTH IN EVERY POLICY

YOUNG PEOPLE VOICES

HUMAN VALUES

ETHICAL TECHNOLOGY

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

COSTS CONTROLLED

DIGITAL SKILLS

ABOUT US

The Portuguese Society for Health Literacy (SPLS) is a national and international benchmark in health literacy, pursuing scientific, educational, technical, organizational, ethical, and human goals. Its work covers individual, organizational, community, and public health literacy, simultaneously strengthening individuals, professionals, and health systems in different contexts.

Through action research, training for better levels of health literacy, the promotion of community interventions, the creation of strategic partnerships, and the promotion of innovative training programs, the SPLS contributes to more informed, resilient, participatory, and equitable societies, consolidating health literacy as an essential pillar of citizenship and well-being.





The Portuguese Society for Health Literacy (SPLS) brings together young leaders from different areas of health to promote their voice in the world.



With this Booklet we want to discuss health, health literacy patient safety, quality of health, patient choices, public policies, health in every policy, young people voices, human values, ethical technology healthy environment, costs controlled and digital skills.



PATIENT SAFETY



To raise patient safety standards, we need to look beyond technical aspects. Our approach focuses on health literacy as a risk management tool.



By empowering patients to understand their diagnosis and their role in rehabilitation, we minimise adverse events and optimise continuity of care.



PATIENT SAFETY



**Patient safety is the
unseen cornerstone of
quality. Without literacy,
clinical effectiveness is
lost in misunderstanding.**



**Quality is not measured
by what the doctor
does, but by what the
patient is able to
sustain safely.**



THINK ABOUT IT...

Youth voices - Coordination

@splspportugal

2nd edition

“Quality in health and patient safety are not only technical responsibilities of health institutions; they are collective commitments that require informed, engaged, and empowered citizens. Safe care depends on clear communication, understandable information, shared decision-making, and systems that allow people to participate actively in their own care. Health literacy is therefore a fundamental pillar of quality and safety. To build sustainable and people-centred health systems, youth voices must be structurally integrated in health assemblies, community initiatives, and public policy processes. Young people bring essential perspectives on communication, prevention, mental health, digital information, and trust in institutions. **Their participation should not be symbolic, but meaningful, continuous, and influential.** When youth are involved in community discussions, local decision-making, and national health strategies, policies become more relevant, services become more responsive, and patient safety improves. Listening to young citizens strengthens accountability, innovation, and social trust. A culture of quality in health requires dialogue, participation, and co-creation. Integrating youth voices in assemblies, communities, and public policies is essential to build safer, more equitable, and more human-centred health systems”.



Prof. Cristina Vaz de Almeida
President of Portuguese Health
Literacy Society

THINK ABOUT IT...

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splsportugal

"I believe that keep on using digital tools to improve patient safety is crucial... national digital health strategies, clinical decision-support systems, and safe health informatics frameworks are essential. There's also a huge opportunity to train health professionals and patients to use digital tools to improve health outcomes."

Prof. João Breda

Head of the WHO Office on Quality of Care and Patient Safety in Athens



SPLS

SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE



THINK ABOUT IT...

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splsportugal

“Patient safety is a key priority for health policies... the National Plan aims to consolidate and promote safety in the provision of health care. Core principles include safety culture, incident reporting, communication, and implementation of safety practices.”

Prof. Valter Fonseca

Director of the Department of Quality in Health at the Directorate-General of Health



YOUTH VOICES

YOUTH VOICES FROM PORTUGAL

march 2026

Sociedade Portuguesa de Literacia em Saúde

1. **Mariana Fonseca**
2. **Leonor Correia**
3. **Ana Justo**
4. **Rita Ribeiro**
5. **Joel Sadio**
6. **Beatriz Ruivo**
7. **Benedita Nápoles**
8. **Coralie Alves**
9. **André Marques**
10. **Afonso Garcia**
11. **Francisco Ferraz**
12. **Ana Beatriz Gato**
13. **Maria Fontão**
14. **Maria Leal**
15. **Inês Lemos**
16. **Gonçalo Furtado Tedéu**

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

"Patient safety is built on the movement between clinical evidence and citizen empowerment: as a physiotherapist, I promote function; as a leader in health literacy, I ensure that patients have the voice and knowledge to be the **guardians of their own health journey.**"

Mariana Fonseca

Vice-president of Portuguese Health Literacy Society, Physiotherapist, Promotion Health & Physical Activity



Youth voices

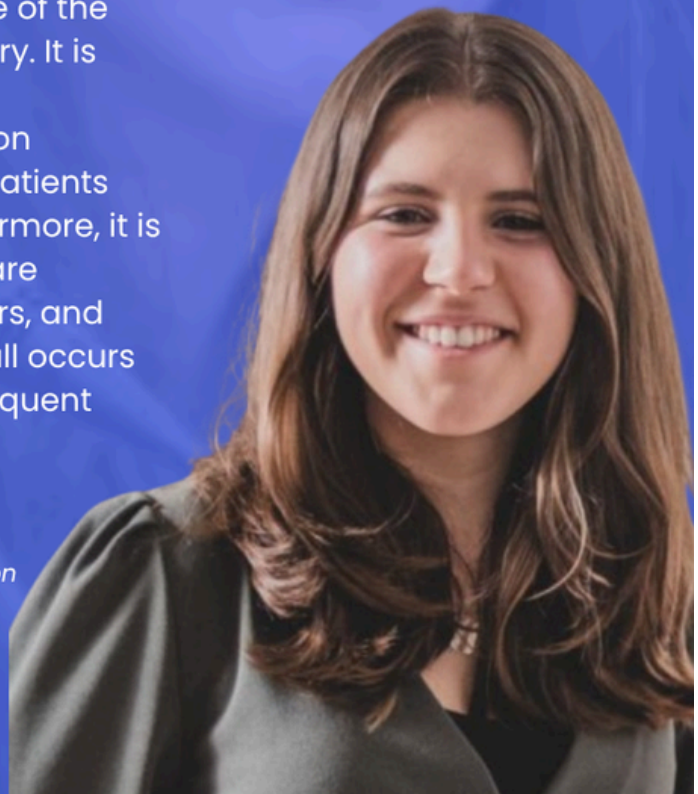
2nd edition

@splspportugal

"The quality of healthcare depends on proper monitoring and the implementation of structured policies based on concrete data, audits, notification systems, and the establishment of clinical practice guidelines known by all. **Regarding patient safety, as a Physiotherapist, I must reiterate that physiotherapy plays a leading role in safety concerning falls.** We know that falls are historically recognized as one of the traditional risks in care delivery. It is necessary to consider safe environments, exercise caution regarding gait, and identify patients predisposed to falling. Furthermore, it is essential to prepare healthcare professionals, family members, and caregivers to react when a fall occurs and to understand the subsequent steps to be taken."

Leonor Correia

*President of the Portuguese Association
of Young Physiotherapists*



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

"Patient safety is not a future goal, it is a present responsibility. Truly safe care cannot exist without valued professionals, teams that communicate with empathy, and patients engaged as active partners in decision-making. Promoting patient safety requires learning from errors to improve systems, preventing risks associated with **workforce overload**, and ensuring genuinely personalised, person-centred care. Healthcare quality is built every day through courage and collective commitment."

Ana Justo

Psychologist



SPLS | SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

“Patient safety and healthcare quality are fundamentally rooted in the sustainability of the medical workforce and the excellence of postgraduate education. In my practice I see daily how health literacy serves as the bridge between clinical evidence and patient empowerment. **A supported medical workforce is the only way to guarantee this person-centered approach.** We need health systems that prioritize Health Literacy as a clinical tool, using AI and Digitalization not to replace the human touch, but to enhance it. By advocating for better workforce planning and sustainable education, we are, in fact, advocating for the patient’s right to a safer, more equitable, and highly informed healthcare experience.”

Rita Ribeiro

Pulmonology Resident



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

“Patient safety and health quality cannot be seen as isolated clinical topics. They are systemic challenges that require innovation, better governance and long-term vision. Preventable harm in healthcare represents not only a human cost, but also a significant economic and social burden. By integrating innovation methodologies, digital tools and evidence-based design into health systems, we can transform safety challenges into opportunities for value creation. **Safety means resilient systems.** It means aligning incentives with outcomes. It means designing care pathways that are efficient, sustainable and patient-centred. Investing in quality is investing in trust, sustainability and the future competitiveness of European health systems.”

Joel Sadio

*PhD Candidate | Exec. Director, Portuguese
Healthcare & Environmental Council | EU
Climate Pact Ambassador | WSA Ambassador*



Youth voices

@splsportugal

2nd edition

"Quality of health care and patient safety are fundamental priorities in modern health systems. Within the pharmacy sector, these principles are closely linked to the safe management and appropriate use of medicines. Pharmacists play a central key role in ensuring accurate dispensing, monitoring therapies, and preventing medication-related errors. In recent years, the paradigms of pharmacy practice have evolved toward a more patient-centered approach, emphasizing clinical pharmacy services and collaboration with other healthcare professionals. **The integration of digital technologies and evidence-based practices further supports safer and more effective medication management.** Continuous professional development and strong regulatory frameworks also contribute to maintaining high standards of pharmaceutical care. Through these practices, pharmacy plays a vital role in promoting better health outcomes and strengthening patient safety."

Beatriz Ruivo

Executive President, LisbonPH



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splsportugal

“Patient safety and healthcare quality are fundamental principles in healthcare, including the field of nutrition. Nutrition plays a crucial role in disease prevention and in promoting optimal health outcomes through safe, evidence-based practice. **Continuous improvement in nutritional care ensures appropriate interventions and reduces risks to patients.**

When healthcare teams work together, patient-centered care becomes more consistent and reliable. Integrating patient safety principles strengthens health systems and enhances the overall quality of care, ensuring better long-term outcomes for individuals and communities.”

Benedita Nápoles

*President of the National Association
of Nutrition Students*



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splsportugal

"The family physician plays a central role in patient safety and healthcare quality within Primary Health Care, particularly in rural settings. The high prevalence of older adults with multimorbidity requires integrated care tailored to the family context and level of Health Literacy. Coordination across levels of care and strong community partnerships enable a holistic, person-centred approach. During consultations, the Family Physician serves as a trusted source of **reliable information**, supporting informed decision-making and improving patients' health literacy. Primary Health Care should be fully integrated into health policies, as it is essential to delivering safer, more equitable, and high-quality care, supported by a more informed and empowered population with stronger Health Literacy."

Coralie Alves

Specialist in Family Medicine (Family Health Unit Vale do Lima, rural practice, ULSAM)



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

“In daily practice, quality and patient safety are often treated as parallel priorities. In reality, they are inseparable from the way we create value in healthcare. From a management perspective, the real challenge is not only to deliver more care, but to ensure that what we deliver consistently improves outcomes, reduces avoidable harm and makes responsible use of finite resources. **Value is not defined by activity, nor by compliance with processes, but by the tangible difference that care makes in people’s lives.** This requires organisations that are able to measure outcomes, learn from variation and engage clinicians in a shared responsibility for results. Safe and high-quality care is not an aspiration at the end of the pathway, it is the condition that allows health systems to remain credible, sustainable and truly centred on those they serve.”

André Marques

Nurse, Advanced training in Hospital Administration and Health Governance



Youth voices

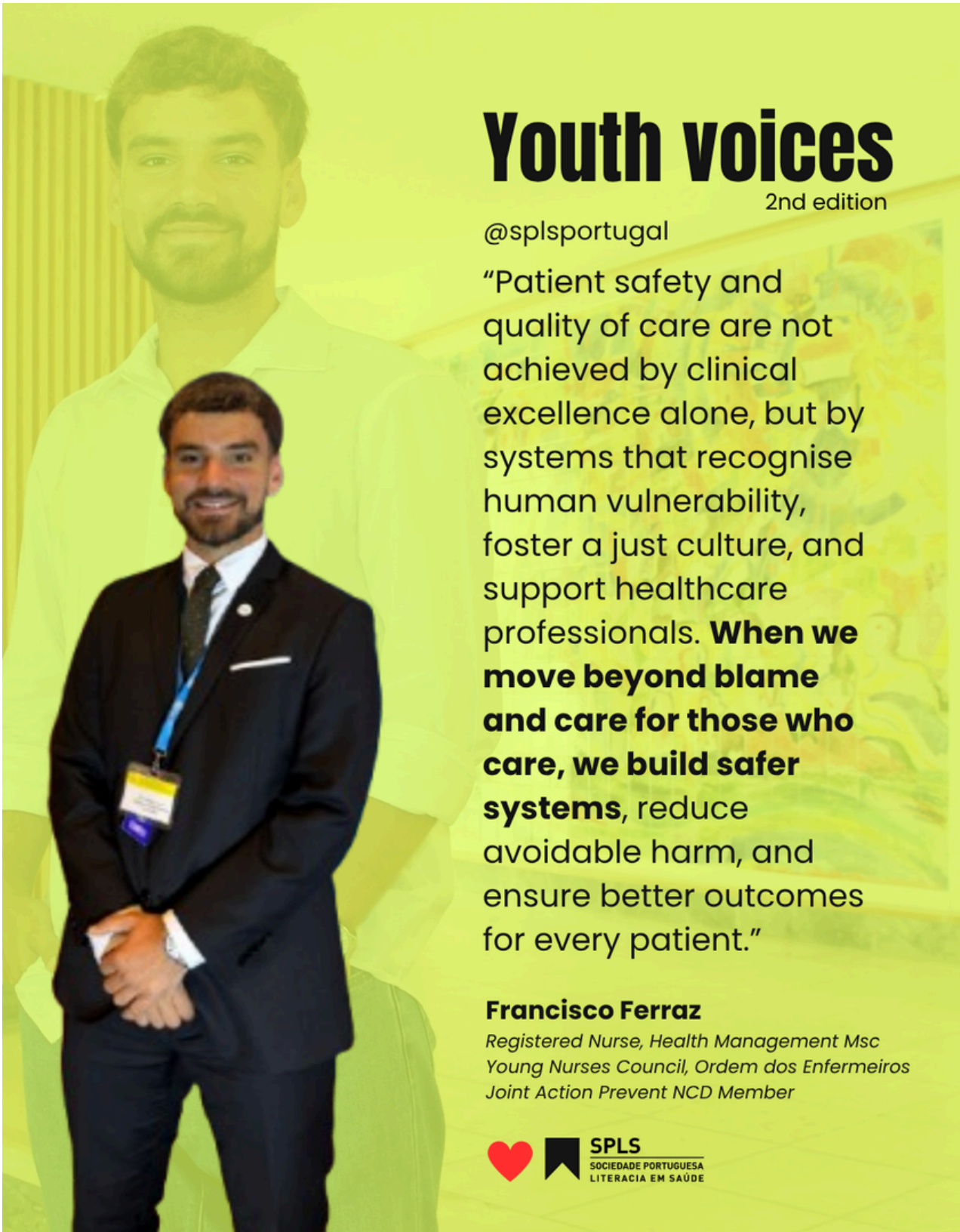
2nd edition

@splspportugal

"Patient safety and quality in healthcare are not confined to the moment care is delivered. They depend on how the system is structured, coordinated, and oriented toward the real needs of the population. **A truly person-centered model values proximity, invests in prevention, and promotes responses tailored to each individual context.** At the same time, the careful and strategic management of available resources is essential to ensure sustainability and minimize avoidable risks."

Afonso Garcia

President - Portuguese Pharmaceutical Students' Association (APEF, Portugal) 2026



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

“Patient safety and quality of care are not achieved by clinical excellence alone, but by systems that recognise human vulnerability, foster a just culture, and support healthcare professionals. **When we move beyond blame and care for those who care, we build safer systems**, reduce avoidable harm, and ensure better outcomes for every patient.”

Francisco Ferraz

*Registered Nurse, Health Management Msc
Young Nurses Council, Ordem dos Enfermeiros
Joint Action Prevent NCD Member*



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

“Mental health has been a current topic when discussing the youngest generations, especially university students. It is our role to ensure their voices are heard and to provide them with long-term measures and **solutions** to promote their well-being as a whole. Health Literacy plays an important part in this process, as it ensures that young people can identify signs of unwellness and openly speak about them, contributing to a more informed and determined generation that unites itself by prevention and direct intervention, other than using simple, short-term remediative approaches, and looks at university as a good and fulfilling experience.”

Ana Beatriz Gato

President of ANEP



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splsportugal

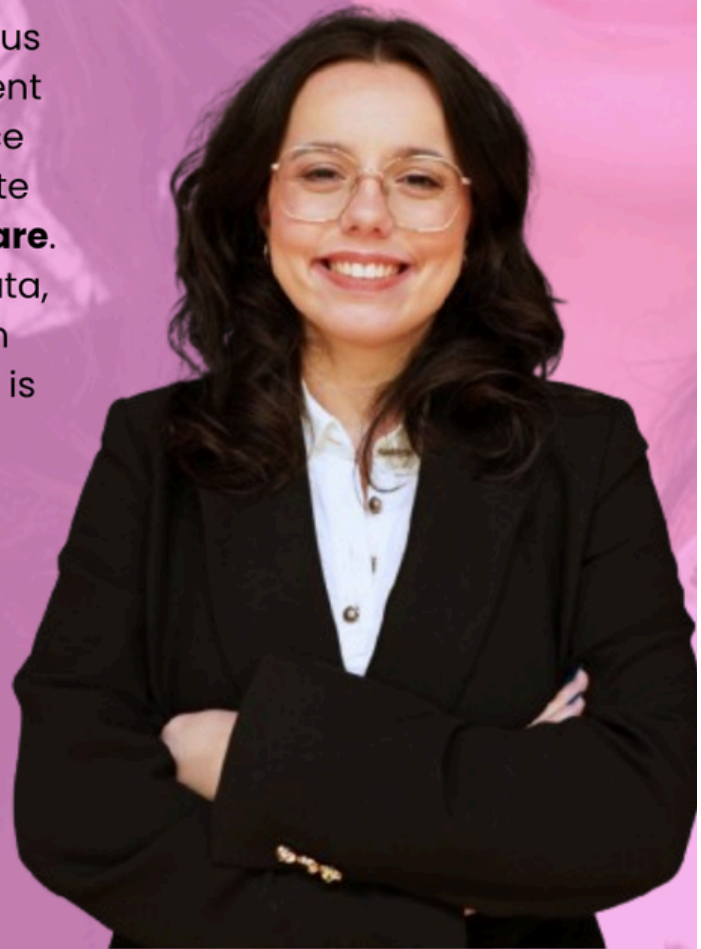
“Patient safety and quality of health are not only shaped at the bedside, but in how public policies are designed, implemented, and evaluated. When health policies are grounded in robust evidence, continuous monitoring, and transparent accountability, they reduce systemic risks and promote equitable, **high-quality care**. Building policy through data, outcomes, and population needs ensures that safety is not left to chance, but embedded into the structures that govern healthcare itself.”

Maria Fontão

President - ANEM 2026



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE



Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

"Patient safety and quality of care start the moment we truly see the person in front of us, not as a diagnosis, but as a human being with dignity, fears, and expectations. When empathy, informed consent and ethical responsibility guide every clinical decision, harm is prevented before it occurs. A healthcare system that listens, respects **vulnerability**, and places human rights at its core does more than treat disease: it builds trust, protects lives, and restores humanity to care."

Maria Leal

Director of Human Rights and Medical Ethics of the Portuguese Medical Students' International Committee

Youth voices

2nd edition

@splspportugal

"We are currently navigating critical and challenging socio-political and environmental matters that weigh heavily on the mental well-being of every generation in different countries. As the younger generations grow, spreading knowledge and securing active mental health resources is no longer optional, it is urgent. As future psychology professionals and especially as human beings, we must continue our youth-led mission to break the stigma, ensuring that those vulnerable to all the social instability are also heard and seen. As a society, we have a duty to do better. **Together.**"

Inês Lemos

Vice President of ANEP



SPLS
SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE



Youth voices

@splsportugal

2nd edition

“The quality of a healthcare system is reflected in its capacity to protect the vulnerable through inclusive and compassionate public policies. **Safety is the ultimate act of respect, achieved through governance that keeps individuals' fears and expectations in mind.** True innovation in healthcare is the courage to listen, the transparency to learn, and the dedication to protect every person as a unique human being.”

Gonçalo Furtado Tedéu

*Medical Student | Supervisory Board of the
National Association of Medical Students*



SPLS | SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE

STATEMENT A

The voice of young people is becoming increasingly influential in European decisions and strategies. Listening to their proposals should be critical to the creation of public policies and pathways at the World Health Organization (WHO).



STATEMENT B

Aware of the value of these young people, the Portuguese Society for Health Literacy gives them a VOICE, supporting them in sharing their achievements and challenges so that others can learn from their experiences.



STATEMENT C

We want to continue supporting students and early-career professionals who seek to develop their leadership skills and drive positive change in healthcare.



GET IN TOUCH



splsportugal@gmail.com



www.splsportugal.com



Alto do Lagoal , n° 11 Caxias
Oeiras



SPLS | SOCIEDADE PORTUGUESA
LITERACIA EM SAÚDE