

The Blue Economy Generation:
A Manifesto from Portugal's Youth to its Leaders

Young people in Portugal are concerned about our future. We're excited Portugal aspires to become a leader in the Blue Economy, and we want to be its Champions: The Blue Economy Generation.

We are the **Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors**, a small, but mighty group of university students who answered a **Call to Action** from the leaders of business, education and government at the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Global Blue Job Shadow Day™: **to build a Blue Economy workforce by empowering Portugal's youth.**

Portugal has what it takes to **lead the Blue Economy** – we have the sea, the science and the spirit. We have the largest maritime territories in Europe – and our position unites us with America, Africa and Europe. Our ancestors sailed to the edge of the known world, and beyond. **We want to stand at that frontier again.**

The momentum is real: Portugal's Blue Economy has grown significantly since 2020 - blue start-ups are worth 34 times more now, rising from €47 million to €1.6 billion – in just 6 years!

We believe that Portugal's youth can build on this momentum.

We just need to know:

Where are the jobs? How can we learn about them?

Where can we be trained for them?

During our research, we have found a workforce pipeline that is broken at every stage: while we excel in Ocean Literacy; most students are unaware of available blue career pathways; vocational and technical jobs are being overlooked; and too often graduates arrive at jobs full of theory and empty of practical experience. As a result, our best people are leaving in search of better opportunities.

Each Ambassador championed one pathway: from **Blue Finance, Blue Tourism, Aquaculture, to Blue BioTech, Blue Shipping, Ocean Tech, Clean Water Management, and Renewable Energy.** We dived deep into our research. We conducted surveys and interviewed leaders. We mapped local job projections, education requirements and salaries to help educators guide students toward well-paid blue economy careers. We prepared comprehensive reports of our findings and we designed a roadmap for how business, education, and government can work together to bridge the gaps and build a strong workforce pipeline. We are proud to present this plan today to **Portugal's Secretary of State for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Salvador Malheiro at the Institute's Cronkite Ocean Awards.**

A Strategy Without A Workforce Is A Plan On Paper.

We propose a **Blue Economy Workforce Commission** to be championed by the Secretary Malheiro in order to engage Portugal's business, education, and government leaders to work together to build this workforce.

We imagine a Portugal in 2050

.... where every young person, from the Algarve to the Azores to the interior, learns at an early age that the sea is not only the beach. That it offers young people a career, a passion, prosperity, and most of all the knowledge that our very survival depends upon it.

- **We want to build a Portugal** whether you choose a vocational certificate or a university degree, the ocean will offer you a future that you can build right here.
- **We want Blue Economy companies** to work hand in hand with our schools.
- **We want to connect Ocean Literacy with Blue Economy jobs.**
- **We want the media** to track our leader's progress and
- **Educate society** by spotlighting our blue pioneers in the daily news.

Only this way can Portugal rediscover the potential of our sea - as our ancestors once did.

Our shared commitment:

Invest in our Youth.

Invest in Portugal. Invest in our Future.

**If we invest today, we will see returns by 2050,
in skilled people, thriving companies and a country that leads.**

We call on our leaders to open this Blue Economy to **all** our youth and show us where the opportunities are. Working together, we know that we can turn our potential into opportunities, and vision into real careers – so we can become the Blue Economy Generation - and realize our shared goal of being leaders in Blue Economy.

As Walter Cronkite said, “We ask each one of you to take the first step, that is the important step, and the others will follow.”

The Blue Economy Youth Ambassadors, Portugal, October 29, 2026

Blue Economy Generation



www.BlueEconomyGeneration.org/Portugal