



**T.I.P.S for intercultural dialogue –**

**T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue**

a European project proposed by FOR.COM (Italy)



a Leonardo da Vinci project (Multilateral project) .

in five countries : Italy, Austria, France, Greece, Poland



**Report 5 – Proposal of a training programme  
for cultural mediators**

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**TIPS: T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue**

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## Module 0 - Introduction - Overview on the main content of the training

The training programme has been built keeping in mind the following issues :

- ❖ being focussed on professionals working with migrants with the emblematic professional figure of the intercultural mediator ;
- ❖ keeping in mind the mediation approach : integrating both migrants' and institutions' sides and so remaining as neutral as possible ;
- ❖ insisting on the main specificities of cultural mediation meant to solve conflicts and so proposing a process, some elements of solutions and examples of best practices ;
- ❖ valuing an innovative support of training : the t-learning ;
- ❖ enriching the knowledge on migrants and migration issues and the concrete problems faced on the ground by professionals working with them ;
- ❖ integrating the public approach : cultural mediation may be different when addressing different profiles of migrants (such as women, youngsters, elderly) ;
- ❖ taking into account the different domains in which cultural mediators are mainly asked to work, avoiding the negative approach (justice, police, retention centre...).
- ❖ Enhancing the European perspective : some European countries may be more in advance in this field but are eager to learn from the other countries' experience.

The methodology and pedagogical approach integrates a theoretical approach (based on the literature gathered in the partners' countries) and a pragmatic approach (needs expressed by cultural mediators met during the consultation and/or national meetings).

**Modules 1 & 2** are focussed on the main innovations of the TIPS project: first, the TIPS project is part of the Life long learning programme (**module 1**); secondly, it is proposing a new learning method, t-learning integrating TV, Internet and mobile (**module 2**).

The first module explains the context of the TIPS project, the Lifelong Learning approach (Leonardo da Vinci project), the role of intercultural mediation in the migration issue, the skills, competences and know-how required for being a cultural mediator, the role of formal training courses for intercultural mediation. (**module 1**).

The t-learning approach is mostly based on communication technologies enhancing the oral communication. As 50% of the World population has now access to a mobile, this device is the most appropriate to reach intercultural mediators used to work with migrants where mobility is a key issue. The Internet device will propose a virtual platform whose main issue is to enhance exchanges of best practices between intercultural mediators. The TV learning will present different case studies to help the intercultural mediators solve problems they should be faced to... (**module 2**).

Modules 3 to 5 are dedicated to define, challenge and set the "ideal" profile for a cultural mediator in a European perspective.

**Module 3** is précising the profile of intercultural mediators, on the basis of a consultation realised among intercultural mediators. A questionnaire has been dispatched among them insisting on the skills and competences, the training already followed and the needs for training. Their answers have been a good basis for correcting the proposed training programme meant to answer their demands.

**Module 4** is challenging the different skills and competences to acquire and develop today and those which should be developed in the future. On the basis of a questionnaire built, cultural mediators are asked to express their needs and demands.

**Module 5** is proposing the ideal profile for a European cultural mediator, insisting on the activities already fulfilled and the ones that should be developed ; the skill and competences required and the ones that should be enhanced in a European perspective ; the knowledge to be enriched taking into account the context in which they are working (school, hospital...).

**Modules 6 and 7** are proposing some guidelines for intercultural mediators, somehow a methodology to be applied for solving conflicts (**module 6**) and the professional framework agreed upon for intercultural mediation some of the countries (**module 7**).

The conflict is the basis of intercultural mediation. It is necessary to provide the mediators with some methodological developments on the typology, the specificity of the discrimination linked to race or ethnic origin, the ways and means to solve them (**module 6**).

It is useful when working in a brand new profession to clearly precise the general framework and the main principles. Principles have been set in France, Greece and Italy. Moreover, a comparative European study has been made on mediation in 2000 by the Délégation interministérielle à la Ville, with a specific focus on intercultural mediation. (**module 7**).

**Modules 8 and 9** are dedicated to the general background of the migration issue and the role played by intercultural mediation in this perspective as they have been main demands expressed by intercultural mediators interviewed.

The first module will be focussed on the public addressing intercultural mediators: the migrants. There are different reasons for leaving ones country (work, family reunification, studies, political asylum...). European societies must cope with new waves of migrants. Most of them come from Turkey (2.3 million 12% of the total), Morocco (1.7 million, 9%), Albania (0.8 million, 4,3%) and Algeria (0.6 million, 3,2%). They have different religions (most of them are Muslims), and different cultural backgrounds. It is raising the issue of multiculturalism, interculturalism and diversity (**module 8**) and how to cope with them.

A better knowledge of migration policies both on European and national levels is crucial for intercultural mediators to give the right references to migrants and sometimes to institutions themselves that might ignore the European perspective. It is also very useful to present the main actors working in the field of migration and their responsibilities (**module 9**).

**Modules 10 to 14** are very focussed on the everyday life work of the intercultural mediators and the conflicts they have to face: in knowing and defending their rights, in social housing, in education, in employment, in health.

**Module 10** is focussed on the migrants' rights and the idea of citizenship. What is the meaning of being a citizen in a European country? What are the international and European references on citizenship and human rights?

**Modules 11 to 14** are meant to solve problems in several problematic casual situations faced by migrants: in social housing, at school, on the labour market, in a hospital. Each time the conflicts faced by cultural mediators are presented, the main actors playing a role and

proposals of solutions with examples of best practice found mostly in the voluntary sector which has played a pioneer role in working with migrants.

The social housing policy (**module 11**) has a European background but it also depends on the national legislation; migrants are one of the first public concerned as the access to social housing has been a main demand expressed by many illegal or legal migrants in the past years in many European countries.

Education (**module 12**) is a key issue for migrants as this is both for adults and their children the only way to be fully integrated in the host societies; alphabetisation and school mentoring are quite important issues in this context, mostly developed by the voluntary sector.

Employment (**module 13**) is the other way to be truly integrated in society even though the access to the “normal” labour market with fair conditions may be a challenge for many migrants.

Health (**module 14**) is the last main domain to be taken into account as it deals with very intimate problems and may be the place of many taboos and cultural habits which could be seen as obstacles to a good integration.

**Modules 15 to 17** are focussed on three specific publics for whom intercultural mediation should be most useful: youngsters faced to the double cultures (host country/native country), women who have different status (mother, wives, working person...) and seniors with the difficult situation at the age of retirement. Each time, it is important to distinguish in the problem faced what is a common issue for this specific public and what is very linked to their migration background.

**Module 15** is dedicated to youngsters and the different types of conflicts cultural mediators may be faced to such as the generation gap, the problem of acculturation and the main issue of volunteering in this context to value their roots.

**Module 16** is dealing with intercultural mediation among women with a focus on the specific education, alphabetisation, social and professional integration and the issue of equality of chance (equal access to professional opportunities).

**Module 17** is developing intercultural mediation among seniors with the discrimination face by migrants’ seniors in retirement issue, the generation gap with the younger migrants and a new social identity through volunteering. Each time

## Module 1 – The TIPS project – Context, objectives, perspectives

### Content

1. TIPS project in the European context
2. The role of intercultural mediation in the migration issue
3. Qualities, Competences and know-how for the intercultural mediation
4. The role of formal training courses for intercultural mediation

### Main recommendations

1. Making clear to participants that a group learning process is intended which is based on the expertise and experience of participants together with the support of Information and Communication technologies (t-learning)
2. Making clear to participants that the work will be much more productive, if they don't only refer to positive examples and successes but also to negative examples and failures (both personally and professionally)
3. Try to gain a clear insight of participants' expectations and preferences.

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Profile of intercultural mediators
- ◆ Building the extreme profiles of an « ideal » migrant and of a « problematic » migrant
- ◆ Elaborate and discuss “pro” and “con” lists

### Sources

- ❖ For.com, Presentation of the TIPS project, March 2007.
- ❖ Halba (B), Lifelong learning : a key issue for Migration, Migrants and professionals working with them, Conference CERMES, Sofia (Bulgaria), June 2008

## 1. The TIPS project in the European context

Migration has long been a key issue in most European countries faced to huge migratory flows, due to history (former colonial empires in United Kingdom, The Netherlands or France) and geography (close frontiers with emigrating countries such as South Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries).

Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, migration has become a European competence, integrating the “first pillar”. But the politics of migration still remain a controversial issue among many Members States.

On a macro-level, migration is an economical issue that requires a political framework. For the ten past years, the European Union has built a strong basis in this perspective to regulate migratory flows and to speak the same common language towards third country nationals. The macro-level perspective concerns policy-making processes: legislation, institutionalization of migration policy, strategies of inclusion of immigrants, security concerns, human rights issues...

Migration is also to be considered in a micro-level perspective to raise and answer questions about migrants’ everyday life and their integration. In this perspective, a main concern of the European Union has been to exchange experiences and examples of best practices on migration issues, to bring different interests, views and perspectives.

The European policy is in particular meant to enhance Diversity and promote Equal opportunities for all. They have been key issues in the two recent European Years (2007-2008), meant to highlight major issues.

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All<sup>1</sup> has led the way to a bolder strategy to fight against discrimination in the European Union. It has aimed to: make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination – irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation ; promote equal opportunities for all and launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals. Migrants are key targets in this context.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008<sup>2</sup> recognises that Europe’s great cultural diversity represents a unique advantage. It is encouraging all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of Europe’s cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions. The enlargement of the European Union, deregulation of employment laws and globalisation have increased the multicultural character of many countries, adding to the number of languages, religions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds found on the continent. Intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship.

In this context, a Leonardo da Vinci project, was successful in 2007 under the last Life Long Learning (LLL) programme (2007-2013). It is called “T.I.P.S for intercultural dialogue - T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue”. It was initiated by For.com (University Guglielmo Marconi, Rome, Italy) and gathers Austria (Auxilium, Graz), Greece

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) was established by [Decision N° 1983/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council. (18 December 2006) on the statement that Europe is becoming more culturally diverse. ; [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?redirect\\_url=my-startpage-eyid.html](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html)

(Hellenic Open University, Patras), France (Iriv, Paris) and Poland (Tischner European University, Krakow)<sup>3</sup>.

The partnership includes countries with different migration backgrounds: former countries of emigration become immigration countries (Italy, Greece...), traditional immigration countries (Austria, France), and still emigration country (Poland).

## **2. The role of intercultural mediation in the migration issue**

As migration is one of the main issues' policies Member States have to face, a common approach to questions that migration flows arise is necessary in order to assure cohesion, economic and social development.

Each member state and the European Union as a whole has to develop skills and professional competences related to migrants' needs focusing on issues as acceptance, both behavioural, historical and cultural, social integration, diversity management.

Many professional figures have developed around these priorities. The intercultural mediator is a key actor in this perspective to accompany migrants' everyday life as their main duties are to promote integration of foreign citizens:

- ❖ to facilitate communication and mutual understanding between immigrants and hosting countries ;
- ❖ to provide a consultancy professional service to people, families and associations of immigrants ;
- ❖ to orientate immigrants towards main targeted facilities and services.

Intercultural mediators facilitate and enhance the integration of migrants in the host societies. They play a role of go-between between the institutions and the migrants. They are not supposed to be on either side but to facilitate and enhance the solution of problems that may arise between institutions and migrants.

The conflicts may be of different kind.

They can oppose a migrant to a specific institution (such as school, hospital, employment agency...).

They can also be between groups of migrants (same ethnic origin) to a specific institution for a concrete problem such as lodging; for instance the Malians in and around Paris asking for better conditions of housing.

The conflicts may also arise between categories of migrants (such as women, youngsters or seniors) and institutions. The example of old migrant workers who couldn't afford to go back to their native country when they are retired and are forced to stay in shelters that were supposed to be for their working life and not life long is an example of such transversal problem that might require a mediation between migrants of various ethnic origins and institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.forcom.it/tipsproject>

### 3. Qualities, Competences and know-how for the intercultural mediation – the lifelong approach

The European strategy in the field of migration and asylum has focused on two approaches: the security approach. This is a short term strategy focussed on struggle against illegal immigration. The integration approach is a longer term strategy, enhancing all the chances for migrants to benefit by the same and equal chances in the host societies.

The profession of intercultural mediation plays an emblematic role in this context. Its main mission is to solve or propose alternative solutions to conflicts rising between the national institutions and the migrants. The approach is a very practical and basic one: accompanying migrants in their everyday process of integration. It is both a short term and long term.

On one hand, intercultural mediators may be faced to illegal migrants or migrants in a transitory position (waiting for the agreement to stay) or to new legal migrants who deserve to know the national background of the host society. On the other hand, they are working in the long term with migrants to make them become autonomous, independent and free towards institutions to avoid any future conflict through a mutual understanding.

In a macro-level perspective, national states and the European Union have settled legal framework to master migration flows. On a meso-level, institutions, most of the times public authorities but also habilitated associations have to apply these legislations. On a micro-level, individuals are faced to very practical problems in their everyday life. Intercultural mediators are the common channel between all these levels: they must know the national background in the field of migration and asylum ; they are appointed by institutions (public authorities or more often associations) ; they work directly with migrants to answer their demands and needs.

Intercultural mediation gives a human dimension to migration as they are human beings with a specific background. They have often foreign roots, have experienced the process of integration. They have overcome the main difficulties and have transformed their personal experience in a specific skill. The acquisition of competences is a key point of the Lifelong Learning process. In a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, it is stated that

*“{...} key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation {...}”<sup>4</sup>.*

Because they should be acquired by everyone, the recommendation proposes a reference tool for the Member States to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, ass the acquisition of key competences

*“{...} fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such groups include people with low basic*

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendation published in the Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006

*skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or migrants, etc. {...}*” .

The main purpose of the TIPS project is precisely to value and develop specific skills and competences required or to be acquired by cultural mediators in order to facilitate the integration of migrants in their everyday life. Intercultural mediators are precious resources both for minority ethnic communities and for society as a whole.

They are “culturally sensitive and competent services providers” more than just information or linguistic support providers. That is why competences and skills they have to master are so wide and need to be adapted to very specific case to case situations. Intercultural mediators are working in public or private services. One field of work includes first contact services: offices for foreigners, sanitary services, police departments, tribunals, prisons but also association and cooperatives promoting socio-cultural developing integration projects.

Their role is also very important in sanitary structures (hospitals, first assistance bureau) where new emergent branches of medical services are becoming aware of migrants’ specific needs. They usually work in associations or institutions in charge of

#### **4. The role of formal training courses for intercultural mediation**

The Copenhagen process, in the lifelong learning perspective, is meant to value informal and non formal learning. The profession of cultural mediation is typically a new kind of job that has been developed on the basis of this informal and non formal learning, on personal and professional experience.

Training is a key issue in this perspective to develop and acquire relevant skills and competences as intercultural mediation has known a real development in the last ten years albeit the missions and competences required are not so clear. The training programme proposed by the TIPS project is meant to answer three objectives. Its first main function is to identify the specific skills and competences required to work with migrants. The second main function is to share one’s experience with other cultural mediators. The third function is to value and develop other skills and competences, such as the European perspective or the knowledge of other field of intervention of cultural mediation (health, justice, defence of rights...).

Intercultural mediation is also a new profession faced to a problem of recognition. It is most of the time an institutions’ demand (the financers) rather than a migrants’ demand (the beneficiaries). As a consequence, intercultural mediation may have raised some suspicion among migrants who might see mediators as representatives of institutions.

The main purpose of the TIPS project is to realize a vocational training course using t-learning methodology for cultural mediators and any staff working with migrants in order to improve skills and competences needed to work and improve integration of migrants.

The innovation of the TIPS project is both addressing a brand new profession, intercultural mediation and proposing a new learning method, t-learning integrating TV, Internet and mobile . Intercultural mediators are stimulated by their public (the migrants). Their training requires targeted and customized answers to very specific, sometime individual, problems. Continuous and updated training and information support should be assured to these

professionals whenever are needed. Information Communication Technologies could provide these services and support.

Migration has become more and more complex (various geographic and cultural origins of the migrants). The question of social coeducation (“mixité”) is an on-going debate to avoid the ethnic “ghettos”. On the European level, this issue is better known as the diversity principle : making sure that all citizens, whatever their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation could be represented and have access to responsibilities in society (at work, in local life...). The topic of citizenship has known new developments with the last two enlargements of the European Union to Southern and Eastern countries, new frontiers for Europe. The question of naturalisation is no more relevant with new EU members’ migrants as the European citizenship should be protective enough to have access to most of the fundamental rights (work, social rights, human rights...). The main added value of the TIPS project is to integrate this European perspective and not too much focussed on national issues to avoid any stigmatisation.

## **Module 2 – T-learning for the mediators – the ICT issue for intercultural mediation**

### **Content**

1. From Intercultural mediation to interactivity
2. The key role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the TIPS project – the issue of t-learning
3. A virtual learning community – the lifelong learning approach
4. Networking – a key issue of the TIPS project

### **Main recommendations**

1. being aware of the added value of the t-learning for the training course
2. being trained to use the different tools (TV, Internet, Mobile...) offered
3. being able to be an active participants in the training course and network
4. enhancing all the aspects of interactivity

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ working on the virtual platform
- ◆ virtual meetings
- ◆ using the mobile devices, proposing new phrase books (in new languages or new topics)
- ◆ proposing new films for the TV learning (personal testimonies)
- ◆ updating the data base on Internet

### **Source:**

- ❖ For.com, Presentation of the TIPS project, March 2007.
- ❖ Halba (B), Lifelong learning : a key issue for Migration, Migrants and professionals working with them, Conference CERMES, Sofia (Bulgaria), June 2008

### Sources to be added :

- Learning objects
- Virtual platform
- Chart of Learning Object (CLO)

Main questions raised by the T-learning approach:

Question 1: what is the link between the three types of device ? is this a common name t-learning ?

Question 2: what is the specificity of the mobile ? definition of m-learning ?

Question 3: what are the main conditions to have access to m-learning ? having a mobile ? other conditions (a specific subscription to have access to web portal ?)

Question 4: what is the specificity of the TV ? definition of TV-learning ?

Question 5: what are the main conditions to have access to tv-learning ? having a TV ? other conditions ?

Question 6: what is the specificity of the Internet ? definition of e-learning ?

Question 7: what are the main conditions to have access to e-learning ? access to Internet ? other conditions (passwords, specific software ?) ?

Concrete questions raised by the TIPS project linked to ICT (during the project)

Question 1: how to be part of the virtual community?

Question 3: will we have virtual meetings?

Question 4: is this only learning at a distance? Could we have live meeting?

Question 5: Intercultural mediation is a communicative profession, personal one? is there something missing through technologies ?

Question 6: will we have real names for chats or will we have pseudo?

Question 7: is this anonymous or is this personal?

Question 8: is there a place to present

Questions about the follow up of the project

Question 1: shall we have to pay to be permanent members of the virtual meeting? how much?

Question 2: what organisation will be responsible for the web hosting? for the up dating of the data ?

Question 3: what about the access to the virtual learning platform after the end of the project?

## **1. From Intercultural mediation to interactivity**

The training of intercultural mediators is ordinarily handled through specific courses (generally supported by ESF funding) organized by agencies authorized by national or regional authorities, on the basis of specific professional skills and qualification the would-be mediator must possess. Sometimes they are organized by Universities. They can be accessed upon possession of specific qualifications: a good knowledge of the national language, a middle-to-high cultural level and, obviously, being part of a group or nationality represented in the country.

Classical learning methods are used : face to face training, groups of trainees with a trainer giving content, methodological approach ...Cultural mediator could find difficulties in realizing the “communication bridge” with the migrants needed in a specific situation, due to the language of the migrant, to personal behaviour or negative experiences which have made immigrant less self confident.

Intercultural mediators are stimulated by their public (the migrants). Their training requires targeted and customized answers to very specific, sometime individual, problems. Continuous and updated training and information support should be assured to these professionals whenever are needed. Information Communication Technologies could provide these services and support. In particular, t-learning methodology, which balances the use of TV and mobile devices, can allow continuous training and in depth case studies.

Moreover, migration is a moving reality. Cultural mediators must answer as quickly as possible the growing demands of migrants in various fields such as education, legal information, health, justice, specific rights, leisure, employment opportunities... The best way to answer is to share other professionals’ experience, to have an easy access to the legal information and to the most updated data in the field. In the training programme proposed in the TIPS project, cultural mediators will be able to join a virtual educative platform with key elements to be downloaded easily.

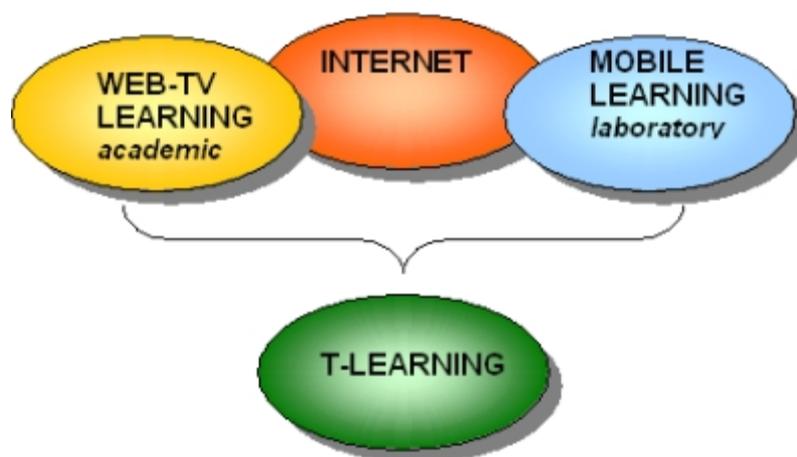
Mobility is the main characteristic of migration. Intercultural mediators must also be very mobile and flexible. The use of mobile phone (m-learning) proposed in the TIPS approach is most appropriate. If Internet is not so accessible, the mobile device is a technology commonly used by anyone.

Intercultural mediation is also based on negotiation, oral communication, television (TV – learning) is better understandable. By watching concrete situations, intercultural mediators can better react to the reality. They will also be able to enrich the different case studies proposed.

Last but not least, migration needs a networking approach as migrants are themselves members of many networks (families, religious or ethnic communities, sometimes professional network). Another issue proposed by the TIPS project is to create a new network between intercultural mediators coming from five different countries (Italy, Greece, France, Austria and Poland)...

## 2. The key role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the TIPS project – the issue of t-learning

The main objective of the T.I.P.S. project is to realize a training course using t-learning methodology for cultural mediators and sanitary staff in order to improve skills and competences needed to work and to act with immigrants.



**TIPS didactic methodology** has been developed according to two goals:

- 1) exploiting benefits of integrated use of distance and digital devices
- 2) maximizing benefits offered by each specific tool (e-learning platform, TV platform, mobile platform).

The course contents will be then accessible through the three tools and for each tool specific didactic features will be structured. Internet will be used to provide, through the TIPS project web site, more general information, materials, news, and will allow the access to the e-learning platform where didactic material can be stored and downloaded.

TV learning will allow the realization of personalized training session according to participants' time availability and needs. Video and audio lessons, with topics organized as hypertextual contents, will be available on TV and e-learning platform created for the project. Training course contents will also be available any time and anywhere on Mobile, e.g mobile phones, PDA, through the mobile platform.

The m-portal will also allow the access to the **TIPS mobile phrasebook**, which contains a repository of most important phrases and expressions translated in more than one foreign language, and to the **TIPS e-book** which will provide information about different culture tradition, religion, practices, etc. The mobile will allow to learn directly on a work environment, so to realize a “learning by doing” approach integrated with a “work based learning” method. Moreover the integrated use of mobile and internet will allow participants to access the web portal forum, blog and chat areas so that continuous cooperation and communication among all participants of the virtual learning community would be constantly implemented and guaranteed.

### 3. a virtual learning community – the lifelong learning approach

In the context of economic globalization and development of an information society, we observe, in all economic areas, a recurring questioning of activities and employment associated to a transformation of competences related to technological evolution, company structure changes and an accelerated renewal of knowledge<sup>5</sup>.

Consequently, lifelong learning becomes an essential method for permanently adapting qualifications, with a view for individuals to engage in learning and build a sustainable career and, in parallel, for companies to find human resources needed within the framework of the evolution of their activities. This issue of continuous adaptation of the relationship between learning and employment generates heterogeneous applications for training and a need for tools, both internal and external to companies, which can satisfy individuals as well as the masses of applicants.

Lifelong learning needs to develop flexible learning tools that can be adapted to each specific request (modularity, capitalizable units, shaping with various types of training and of learners...), but also to develop integrated solutions (competence assessment, skills and learning validation ...), in order to consider all formal, informal and non-formal learning when assessing and following-up training needs.

Use of ICT is an essential contribution to the learning environment as it places the individual in the midst of the training process while at the same time creates real multi-actor learning communities and helps to establish active, innovative and enriched pedagogy.

Employees' competence acquired in vocational and personal contexts is a reference for company productivity evolution. With this in mind, it is important to define qualifications in a broader sense than academic programmes. Faced with this determining stake in terms of economic dynamism and social cohesion, the eLearning Papers invite contributions on the general subject "Training and work" with a view to presenting reflections, innovating solutions and good practices.

The TIPS project assumes that cultural mediators competences and skills are "client driven": it means that most of the skills and competences are developed by cultural mediators through their job experiences. This is why TIPS project aims at emphasising and improving on the **job training and at creating a virtual learning community** where job experiences and suggestions can be shared by all participants. This virtual learning community will consist of teachers and students at distance.

Specific objectives of the project are:

- to design and realize a project web portal
- to realize training seminars through t-learning methodology
- to define a mobile vocabulary which contains a repository of most important sentences and verbal expressions in at least 7 languages (most used by immigrants)
- to draw up an e-book for most frequent situations faced by mediators working with immigrants

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.elearningpapers.eu/>

- to allow continuous communication for experiences exchanges among cultural mediators

#### **4. Networking – a key issue for migrants and intercultural mediators**

A key competence developed by migrants is called a “meta competence” which could be expressed as the ability to adapt to a new life, a new country, new people, new social and professional context, and new references.

This competence is also shared by the intercultural mediator who is at the heart of many networks:

- ❖ family network
- ❖ friends network
- ❖ native country network
- ❖ professional network

The TIPS project will propose a new network comprehending:

- ❖ the TIPS experts in the five countries ;
- ❖ the national contacts in the field of intercultural mediation (associations, public authorities, training bodies...)

This network will be:

- ❖ updated during the TIPS project ;
- ❖ enriched by the intercultural mediators networks available through the training courses

The ways to update the network:

- ❖ through the mobile : repertory including all the phone numbers of the trainees ;
- ❖ through Internet : the key reference, last documents to be found, testimonies of intercultural mediators and examples of best practices, together with a e-library with all the main texts with hypertext links
- ❖ through TV : intercultural mediators could also provide some examples of materials they use when working with migrants

## **Module 3 – The profession of intercultural mediator – From theory to practice**

### **Content**

1. Definitions of intercultural mediation
2. Main prerequisite for intercultural mediation – theoretical approach
3. Main profiles
4. Specific competencies and knowledge acquired through intercultural mediation and their valuing through classical training
5. The needs for training expressed by intercultural mediators

### **Main recommendations**

1. knowing the main profile of intercultural mediators
2. Being aware of the possibilities for promoting mediators' skills and competences
3. Identifying the different areas in which the issues of skills and competences development are important for intercultural mediation management
4. Making the link between the development of competences and the needs for training
5. Enhancing recognition of the profession of intercultural mediator

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Reviewing of job advertisements in the field of migration/mediation
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Reflection and Self-reflection
- ◆ Work in small groups
- ◆ Role play

### **Source:**

- ❖ Halba (B), *Lifelong learning : a key issue for Migration, Migrants and professionals working with them*, Conference CERMES, Sofia (Bulgaria), June 2008
- ❖ Halba & Cournede, Report 2 – Cultural mediation in France, Iriv, Paris, April 2008
- ❖ Halba & Cournede, Report 2 – Consultation among cultural mediators in Ile de France, Iriv, Paris, April 2008
- ❖ Dosti , Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Italy, For.com, May 2008

## 1. Definition of intercultural mediation

Mediation between two or more parties in general means the consensual employment of a third party for assistance in order the former to reach an agreement or a shared understanding or to resolve a conflict<sup>6</sup>.

Mediation has a legal meaning. According to the French Dictionary of Law :

*« Mediation is a technical process for the solution of problems in order for people in conflicts to find a solution, through a formal or informal negotiation, without a lawsuit, through a person called the mediator »<sup>7</sup>.*

*“We can define mediation as a process of building, repairing social link and managing day to day conflicts, in which a third person, impartial, independent, without any authority but the one freely accepted by partners (institutions and migrants) tries through exchanges between persons and institutions to support either by improving either by establishing relation or solving a conflict.”<sup>8</sup>*

In a sociological approach, mediation is

*« an action accomplished by a third person, between people or groups who freely agree to participate and who will have the final decision, with a view either to create new relationships or to prevent/solve a conflict relation between them ».<sup>9</sup>*

About mediation in general we read in Keshavjee (2006: 2):

*“According to Lon Fuller (1971: 325), “the central quality of mediation”, lies in “its capacity to reorient the parties towards each other, not by imposing rules on them, but by helping them to achieve a new and shared perception of their relationship, a perception that will redirect their attitudes towards one another”. For this to happen, “the primary quality of the mediator... is not to propose rules to the parties and to secure their acceptance of them, but to induce the mutual trust and understanding that will enable the parties to work out their own rules” (ibid: 326)”.*

This third person at the heart of the mediation is a key element – no mediation would be possible without this third person. Moreover criteria essential for mediation are: impartiality, independence and absence of official power. In the practice, the mediator is rarely an external person (« impartial third person ») as it is often appointed by an institution. This is raising the problem of independence and recognition of the profession of intercultural

Mediation is first dedicated to create a social link, then to solve conflicts. Its four main functions are: “creating, rehabilitating, repairing and solving social link to help solve a conflict”. It exists several aspects for mediation: education, family, justice and institution mediations that may have a direct or indirect link with intercultural mediation.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gla.ac.uk/rg/emulti08.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> GUILLAUME-HOFNUNG Michèle, *La Médiation*, Collection Que sais-je ?, Edition Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2005, 127 pages.

<sup>8</sup> Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, Paris, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> SIX Jean-François *Le temps des médiateurs*, Edition Seuil, Paris, 1990, 288 pages.

Intercultural mediation, in the TIPS project perspective, is defined by the Italian social cooperative Onlus, in the framework of its project HELP<sup>10</sup> as follows :

*« a profession whose main objective is to facilitate the relations between natives and foreign people, in order to promote knowledge and reciprocal understanding , to enhance positive relations between people with different backgrounds”.*

Another definition given in Italy to cultural mediation, born from working practice and commonly accepted is (Dosti, For.com, Roma, May 2008):

*“When difficult situations of comprehension are foreseen in a communications process between people from different cultures, Cultural Mediation allows dispelling any misunderstandings and doubts between the applicant and the others involved, defining for both parties a system of codes, language and cultural values to be adopted to overcome the distances and potential conflicts”.*

The main specificity of intercultural mediation is to be addressed to migrants (main public), and to behave as go-between with the institutions whatever they are : public authorities in charge of migration, school, hospital, police, justice, but also private bodies such as the social owners (housing). The cultural mediators are employed in public administrations and private services where first contact services are offered: offices for foreigners, sanitary services, police departments, tribunals, prisons, associations and cooperatives promoting socio-cultural integration projects, often through alphabetisation (Iriv, Paris, April 2008).

More specifically cultural mediation is a process where the parties are characterised by different cultural values (HOU, Patras, May 2008).

Vargas (1999: 287-288) gives a comprehensive definition of the concept of cultural mediation and some useful associated examples as following:

*“Cultural mediation may be defined as the process through which a person, variously designated as a cultural mediator or multicultural liaison officer, facilitates communication when conflicts or misunderstandings due to cultural and linguistic barriers pose actual or potential obstacles between people of different backgrounds and service providers (Eisenbruch 1988; Fandetti and Goldmeier 1988; Lew 1991; Marsella et al. 1994). For example, a service provider and a client (student-teacher, parent-teacher, doctor-patient, clientmental health worker) may collide. To overcome what may be a mix of cultural and linguistic barriers, both parties may benefit from a mediator who can translate not only literal meanings, but also the subtle cultural undertones, in order to communicate effectively: 'effective communication requires understanding not only one's own culture but other cultures as well' (Marsella 1994: 353). When service providers operate from what is to them a commonly understood set of health concepts that may be unknown and even contradictory to refugees from other cultures, otherwise excellent medical treatment can be undermined. If a teacher relies solely on her or his Western model of teaching, important ethnocultural factors may be overlooked, risking overgeneralization, stereotyping, or missed learning opportunities. Cultural mediation affords a bridge of understanding, particularly*

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<sup>10</sup> Handicap Educazione Lavoro Partecipazione (site Internet : <http://www.immiweb.org/>).

*between host culture professionals and newcomers, through awareness and sensitivity to ethnocultural differences”.*

In countries, where cultural diversity is high and increasing due to migratory and refugee movements from a series of origins, such as in Greece cultural, mediation is an absolutely necessary process mainly because it facilitates intercultural communication and understanding and promotes resolution of cultural conflicts.

## **2. Main prerequisites for intercultural mediation – theoretical approach**

Cultural mediation is very involved in on going debates on struggling against social discriminations and enhancing equity of chances. Its action is of high importance on the field. It is considered as a counter power to answer the lack of action of public authorities in migration matters whose main approach is more a security or legal approach (struggling against illegal migration).

A cultural mediator should possess the following requirements:

1. a good knowledge of one or more foreign languages,
2. middle-to-high cultural level (university degree),
3. work experience in the field and/or personal experience.

The main characteristics required for intercultural mediators are skills and competences in the following fields:

1. communication,
2. empathy,
3. active listening
4. knowledge either in the native country or the host country (culture, laws, traditions...).

Intercultural mediation has become a professional activity which requires the following abilities:

- ❖ comprehension (especially inter personal effective communication) ;
- ❖ relational abilities ;
- ❖ emotional balance ;
- ❖ planning abilities ;
- ❖ being able to face and to solve conflicts ;
- ❖ being able to promote self-esteem ;
- ❖ language literacy ;
- ❖ cultural and historical background.

Cultural mediators should also possess communicative competences, empathy, active listening and a good knowledge of the host country as the native country (culture, laws, traditions, etc.) The field of their skills and competences should be as large as possible to be able to adapt to different backgrounds.

To complete and confirm this general approach on the profession of intercultural mediation, on the basis of the studies made and the testimonies published for the past fifteen years, it was

most useful to make a consultation among the intercultural mediators. It was made in Spring 2008 in France. It concerned:

- ❖ their profile and main activities ;
- ❖ the skills and competences they think should be required for their profession ;
- ❖ the needs for training to develop or acquire these skills and competences.

### **3. Main profiles of cultural mediators**

The Intercultural mediator is mostly a woman (76,2%). This is confirming the profile of “Femmes-relais” for instance in France which is the most emblematic profession of intercultural mediation developed for the past ten years.

The average intercultural mediator has had a previous personal or professional experience as they are mostly over 45 years (57,1% are aged from 45 and 64 years). The profession is very based on experience and knowledge of the migrants’ problematic.

The intercultural mediator has a family (85,7% is married). This point is important as the mediation has often started among one’s own family.

They are highly qualified as 81% have a higher education. This is confirming the general approach of a middle-to-high cultural level (university degree).

They have linguistic skills as most of them speak at least two foreign languages: 52,4%. They have followed mainly a human and social cursus at the University (62%).

Intercultural mediators have mostly a migration background as 47,6% have foreign roots and the same proportion was born in another country.

They have become cultural mediators mostly after a voluntary experience among an association working with migrants and ethnic minorities (38%). They have mainly become intercultural mediators for professional reasons (23,8%). The need for professional skills and professionalisation of the intercultural mediation is strong.

A huge proportion of cultural mediator is working among an association: 95%. Most of them are paid-staff (57%) but the proportion of volunteers is quite important (43%). This is an interesting point: intercultural mediation has been the assessing of skills and competences acquired or developed in the framework of non formal learning (volunteering).

The proportion of long term intercultural mediator (38% working for more than ten years in the field, less than five years 38%). The first intercultural mediation has been developed in the context of the policy of the city (nineties) but has known a development and revival in the past five years with the new framework for migration and migrants.

The main activities fulfilled by the intercultural mediators are the following:

- a. welcome, information among migrants on day to day life in the host country, useful contacts : 16% ;
- b. a specific accompaniment, the linguistic support : 15% ;

- c. counselling and information on rights and duties, struggle against discrimination, equality of chances: 12% ;
- d. go-between with public authorities : 11%.

This is interesting to notice that intercultural mediators are doing this profession without knowing it or calling it with this terminology. This is confirming the need for official recognition of the profession.

#### **4. Specific competencies and knowledge acquired through intercultural mediation and their valuing through classical training**

The skills and competences the most required for being an intercultural mediators are the following according to the consultation:

- 1. knowing how to communicate and to adapt to a multicultural context : 18% ;
- 2. being able to have an active listening and negotiate in a difficult context : 18% ;
- 3. having a good knowledge of the national migration background : 16% ;
- 4. knowing how to manage a group, to solve conflicts : 16% ;
- 5. having a good knowledge of a foreign language, having notions of the native languages of the migrants with whom I work : 14% ;
- 6. being able to learn with adults with different background : 14%.

The communication skills and active listening are the key competences required for the intercultural mediators. This is confirming are former approach , the profession is main focussed on the ability to listen, understand and explain.

Most of the intercultural mediators have followed training, usually through an external agency, to value these skills and competences (47%).

The prevalent contents-topics of the training activities followed are:

- 1. enhancing knowledge in public policies in the field of migration : 33% ;
- 2. learning a specific knowledge of a technical-professional type : 33% ;
- 3. learning of specific relational abilities : 28,6% ;

The migration topic is a moving reality. The legal framework has been changed or reinforced several times for the past ten years both on national and European levels. It is explaining the fact that the knowledge on public policies should be updated quite regularly.

The specific knowledge is very linked to the very recent development of this profession, and mediation in general, which requires a specific raining for it.

The third type of training most often followed is once more very linked to relational abilities, that reinforces the communication and active listening skills focussed above.

The training of intercultural mediators is ordinarily handled through specific courses (generally supported by ESF funding) organized by agencies authorized by national or regional authorities, on the basis of specific professional skills and qualification the candidate mediator must possess. Sometimes they are organized by Universities with a specific diploma.

Classical learning methods are used : face to face training, groups of trainees with a trainer giving content, methodological approach ... Cultural mediator could find difficulties in realizing the “communication bridge” with the migrants needed in a specific situation, due to the language of the migrant, to personal behaviour or negative experiences which have made immigrant less self confident. Intercultural mediators are stimulated by their public (the migrants). Their training requires targeted and customized answers to very specific, sometime individual, problems. Continuous and updated training and information support should be assured to these professionals whenever are needed. This is the key issue of the TIPS project.

## **5. The needs for training expressed by intercultural mediators**

A huge proportion of the interviewed (81%) have identified specific needs for training. The main demands concern:

1. Deepening of knowledge on specific themes-aspects of interest on national policies and European perspective in the field of migration: 42% ;
2. Acquisition of specific disciplinary knowledge (juridical, psychological): 28,6% ;
3. Knowledge of specific operative or methodological intervention instruments (such as alphabetisation): 28,6%.

Immigration and integration is a very controversial issue. It has become a European competence since the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997. European communication has often been confused with national issues and controversial argues. This is the reason why it should be better explained to the public first concerned, the migrants, thanks to the intercultural mediators. The theoretical content of the training is important with key data and overview on the situation of immigration in other European countries together with the European framework with a specific focus on the Integration actions launched by the European Union (INTI, European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals...).

Another main demand expressed is the need for acquiring a specific disciplinary knowledge: juridical for having the legal framework of migration (and the status of the migrants, which is of great importance for a better understanding of their rights and duties) ; psychological (as mediation is in a context of conflict). The legal framework is a key issue in the European perspective as there are many documents of reference totally unknown by the general public.

The third main demand expressed concerns methodology (operative tool). A key issue of the training programme should be to propose tools and methods to work with migrants and institutions with a pragmatic approach and not an ideological point of view.

A high proportion of the interviewed agreed to experiment the pilot vocational course proposed by the TIPS (76%). The potential user of the TIPS project agreed for the following reasons :

1. to share my experience (educative virtual community) : 52% ;
2. to have a European perspective : 47% ;
3. to experiment an innovative technological approach (t-learning) : 38%.

The main reason expressed is to share my experience (52%). This is highlighting the need for recognition of intercultural mediators who are faced individually to problems on the ground and wouldn't have the opportunity to testimony on their practice.

The second main reason is the European perspective: 47%. Most of the intercultural mediators didn't know the existence of the Life learning programme nor the specificity of the Leonardo da Vinci projects . They were quite enthusiastic with the possibility to be partner of such project.

The last issue, the t-learning, was less attractive for them. This is a key point for the TIPS project to insist on the ways and means to make the tools and methods proposed easy to understand and use.

## **Module 4 – The profession of intercultural mediator in perspective – Challenging the issues with cultural mediators**

### **Content**

1. Definitions of intercultural mediation
2. Main requisites – the national perspective
3. From experience to competence
4. the specific
5. The needs for training expressed by intercultural mediators

### **Main recommendations**

1. knowing the main profile of intercultural mediators
2. Being aware of the possibilities for promoting mediators' skills and competences
3. Identifying the different areas in which the issues of skills and competences development are important for intercultural mediation management
4. Making the link between the development of competences and the needs for training
5. Enhancing recognition of the profession of intercultural mediator

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Reviewing of job advertisements in the field of migration/mediation
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Reflection and Self-reflection
- ◆ Work in small groups
- ◆ Role play

### **Source :**

- ❖ Consultation made in France (Ile de France)
- ❖ National meeting and consultation made on this occasion in Italy (Latium)
- ❖ Questionnaire designed by Iriv

## 1. Definition of intercultural mediation

The definition of intercultural mediation is not so easy to give as it comprehends two main notions: intercultural / mediation.

The notion of intercultural means a link between two cultures, a bridge between them. It is different from multicultural for instance that means the existence and cohabitation of many cultures which doesn't imply a link or a bridge or any relation between them.

Intercultural is very linked to the idea of diversity, equality of chances. The European Year 2008 dedicated to intercultural dialogue insists on this idea, one year after the last enlargement. In three years the European Union has known quite a change passing from 15 to 27 countries. Its frontiers have grown on the East part (Central and Easter countries) and South part (Mediterranean and Balkan areas).

You can either take it as a threat: the frontiers are two huge. The reaction is a defensive one, with all the negative behaviour of the "besieged fortress". All the European laws passed for the past ten years in Europe in the field of immigration has given this defensive idea of a closed land faced to the attacks of foreigners, any national from a third country.

You can also take it as an opportunity: European Union will experience diversity in its own frontiers. The integration of new EU members has been a key issue, through the European Social Funds or through the European Funds for Regional Development. The main idea is to enhance social development (same fundamental rights), economic development (access to labour market, creation of jobs). The EU has also developed Integration programmes for third country nationals such as the INTI programme. Intercultural has another sense in this context as the nationals of these countries could have the choice in keeping their nationality or to change it for the host country's nationality. The perspective should be different.

The notion of mediation enhances this idea of making the bridge, acting as a go-between. If a mediation is necessary, it means that a conflict or different points of views have emerged. Mediation has become a real profession in the past years : in families, in firms, in administration.

The TIPS project is mainly focussed on one public : the migrants. In this perspective, mediation has a specific meaning. It is a profession whose main task is to make the link between institutions and migrants in different contexts.

Methodology :

- ❖ giving a definition of mediation, cultural mediation, then intercultural mediation
- ❖ discussing about the different meanings

## 2. Main prerequisite for intercultural mediation – national approach

The profession of intercultural mediator has been developed since the beginning of the nineties in the countries faced with an important proportion of migrants (France, Austria, Italy..).

- ❖ question 1 : which social demand does the intercultural mediation answer ?
- ❖ question 2 : is the proportion of migrants in the population a decisive criterion to develop such a professional activity ?

The main concern was to solve conflicts emerging between migrants population and the institutions (public authorities, social housing...).

- ❖ question 1: who decided to develop the profession of intercultural mediator? Is this an institutions' demand or a migrants' demand ?
- ❖ question 2 : who are the main beneficiary of such a professional activity ?

Different countries have proposed some definition for this new profession, giving also different names and typologies.

- ❖ Question 1 : what is the specificity of intercultural mediation in the field of social work ?
- ❖ Question 2 : what is the difference between intercultural mediation and the other forms of mediation ?

The main idea is to compare the different ways this new profession has been defined and organised in the different countries in order to give a more general perspective and transversal definition.

Methodology :

- ❖ definitions given to intercultural/cultural mediation in the different countries (France/Greece/Italy)
- ❖ a definition through the different domains of activity (Austria)
- ❖ discussing the main differences of approach, the main references
- ❖ what should be the added value of the European perspective compare to the national perspective ?

### 3. From experience to competence

The profile of the intercultural mediator is also very useful to understand the motivations of this new profession.

The intercultural mediator is mainly a woman:

- ❖ question 1 : how do you explain this gender perspective ?
- ❖ question 2 : does the intercultural mediation require female qualities ?

The intercultural mediator has a middle to high level of education.

- ❖ question 1 : is intercultural mediation the result of a professional or personal pathway ?
- ❖ question 2 : is the profession linked to an initial education or continuous training ?

This is a profession mostly born in the non profit sector, mainly in association but we have the example of Italy and the social cooperative. Intercultural mediators are most of the time paid staff in associations:

- ❖ question 1 : why is the profession so non profit oriented ?
- ❖ question 2 : should a voluntary experience in the field of volunteering be a prerequisite to be a good intercultural mediator ?

The migration background seems to be quite strong to be an intercultural mediator:

- ❖ question 1 : is this a compulsory criterion ?
- ❖ question 2 : what should be the main advantage to have experienced a migrant situation ? what could be the main obstacle ?

Methodology :

- ❖ on the basis of the results of the consultation, working in small groups about the ideal or average profile of intercultural mediator
- ❖ an example of emblematic intercultural mediator in France : Femmes-relais, an example of emblematic intercultural mediator in Italy  
an example of emblematic intercultural mediator in Greece  
an example of emblematic intercultural mediator in Poland
- ❖ building the “ideal” profile of a European mediator

#### **4. Specific competencies and knowledge acquired through intercultural mediation and their valuing through classical training**

1. Having a good knowledge of the National Migration background main values and national references (constitutional ones...)

Question 1 : are you informed enough about the migration issues ?

Question 2 : how are you informed ? what are the main ways (Internet, newspapers...)

2. Having legal skills and competences in the field of migration (rights and duties)

Question 1 : do you know the different status of the migrants (workers, family reunification, students) ?

Question 2 : does this have an impact on the way you are working with migrants ?

3. Having a good knowledge of a foreign language, having notions of the native languages of the migrants with whom I work

Question 1 : do you think the linguistic skill is compulsory ?

Question 2 : what should be the main advantage ? the main obstacle ?

4. Knowing how to communicate and to adapt to a multicultural context

Question 1 : what kind of communication do you usually use ?

Question 2 : would you be ready to use new forms of communication ?

5. Knowing the traditions of the main civilisations

Question 1 : Is this a main requirement for being a good intercultural mediator ?

Question 2 : how far could it help ? could it be an obstacle ?

6. Knowing how to use New Technologies of Information and Communication (Internet, Mobile, Television...)

Question 1 : are you familiar with all these technologies ?

Question 2 : what are the main advantages ? the main drawbacks ?

7. Being able to learn with adults from different knowledge and backgrounds

Question 1 : are you familiar with all these technologies ?

Question 2 : what are the main advantages ? the main drawbacks ?

8. Knowing how to manage a group, to solve conflicts,

Question 1 : what are the main characteristics of the groups you are faced to ?

Question 2 : what are the main opportunities ? the main threats ?

9. Being able to have an active listening and negotiate in a difficult context

Question 1 : what do you understand by active listening ?

Question 2 : what difference do you make between negotiation and mediation ?

10. Being able to notice the risky behaviour and propose solutions

Question 1 : what kind of ability does this require ?

Question 2 : what kind of skills and competences would you privilege ?

11. Having cultural or artistic skills (music, song, dance...)

Question 1 : do they have a link with the profession of intercultural mediators ?

Question 2 : could you use them in a new form of work with migrants ?

### **5. The needs for training expressed by intercultural mediators**

Deepening of knowledge on specific themes-aspects of interest on national policies and European perspective in the field of migration

Question 1 : how do you update your knowledge in the field of migration ?

Question 2 : do you privilege the national level ?

Question 3 : what are your main sources of information on the national level ?

Question 4 : are you informed of the European policy in matter of migration ?

Question 5 : what are your main sources of information on the European level ?

Acquisition of specific disciplinary knowledge (juridical, psychological)

Question 1 : what do you understand by interpersonal effective communication ?

Question 2 : how would you define relational abilities ?

Question 3 : what is the meaning of emotional balance ?

Question 4 : do you know the legal framework of migration ?

Question 5 : do you know the dispatching of competences between the European level and the national level ? what is the last directive discussed about on a European level ?

Knowledge of specific operative or methodological intervention instruments

Question 1: are you confident with your planning abilities?

Question 2: are you able to face and solve conflicts? What definition would you give of solving a conflict ?

Question 3: have you been taught to promote self-esteem? Would you say it is part of learning by doing

Question 4: do you have skills in language literacy? Do they belong to the required skills for being an intercultural mediator?

Question 5: are you using your cultural and historical background in your profession? What are the strengths? What are the weaknesses?

The TIPS project is focussed on three main points:

- ❖ Proposing a European perspective
- ❖ Experimenting an innovative technological approach (t-learning)
- ❖ Sharing one's experience (educative virtual community)

Question 1: what is for you the added value of a European training programme?  
Question 2: do you have contacts with other intercultural mediators in your country ?  
Question 3: have you had any European contact with other professionals in your field ?  
Question 4 : have you been member of a virtual community ?  
Question 5 : what are the main opportunities of e-learning compare to a classical training ?  
what are the main threats ?

## **6. Designing your ideal profile of training programme for cultural mediators**

Working in small groups :

- Think of some kind of “ideal profile” for cultural mediator ;
- Insist on the professional experience and prerequisite
- Detail the main skills and competences required
- Propose the main training to develop

On the basis of the consultation made in France (Ile de France) and the national meeting organised in Italy (Latium) with cultural mediators :

- Compare the profiles of cultural mediators ;
- Identify the main skills and competences considered as key issues upon cultural mediators ;
- The training needs for this brand new profession
- The European perspective : a main issue
- The t-learning approach : the SWOT approach (strength, weaknesses, opportunity, threatens)
- Cultural mediator today / Cultural mediator for tomorrow

## **Module 5 – Defining the profession of cultural mediation - Valuing the profession**

### **Content**

1. Main tasks fulfilled by intercultural mediators
2. Qualities and abilities
3. Specific knowledge
4. Skills, Competences
5. Action plan - prospects

### **Main recommendations**

1. Identifying sectors of activity where the development of qualifications and competences is important for migrants
2. Being aware of the possibilities offered to promote qualifications and competences of intercultural mediators
3. Being able to enhance their own skills
4. Enhancing the issue of life long learning among intercultural mediators

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Reflection and self-reflection
- ◆ Work in small groups
- ◆ Role play

### **Sources**

- ❖ Halba & Cournede, Report 2 – Cultural mediation in France, Iriv, Paris, April 2008
- ❖ HOU, Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Greece, Patras, June 2008
- ❖ Dosti , Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Italy, For.com, May 2008
- ❖ Oliveira , Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Austria, Auxilium, Graz, June 2008

## 1. Main tasks fulfilled by intercultural mediators<sup>11</sup>

### Welcome, information among migrants, support and accompaniment for integration

The first main mission fulfilled by cultural mediators is to inform migrants on the different administrations and public services they must address. Thanks to their personal or family experience, they are aware of the needs and demands of migrants, often shy to address institutional bodies. Mediators make these institutions be more familiar. The main goal is to make the migrants be autonomous in addressing the administration and not doing the job for them.

### Go-between with public authorities

The cultural mediators often know the language of the migrants and, what is more important, the cultural context. They provide institutions with precious information on the cultural context and the understanding of specific behaviours. They place the role of a referee with owners of social lodging (in case of unpaid rents or any act of vandalism), school (problem with children or homework), hospital, police... Any public service migrants may be in contact with.

### Linguistic support

The linguistic barrier is a main obstacle for migrants. In this case, the mediator may play the role of translator. This is a way for institutions to be better understood among migrants. This is usually the case in school, hospitals, courts of justice, any institution where communication may be a key issue. They explain both the meaning and the way these institutions are running, information that might also be of great interest for native citizens...

### Information on rights and duties

Migration is a moving situation. Migrants are changing. Depending on their status (temporary or permanent stay), migrants may be very demanding on their rights: social, professional, civic rights... Even though they are not citizens of the host country, they should benefit of the fundamental rights (fare conditions in work, housing, education...). Intercultural mediators often inform them in matters of equality of chances, struggle against discriminations.

### Counselling and orientation in education and training field

Education and training are main issues for migrants' parents that consider education as the key issue for the integration and future of their children. Mediators must provide migrants with information on the education system ; ways and means to facilitate the educative success of their children (school mentoring).

### Counselling and orientation in employment field

Access to employment and opportunities of work offered are main concerns for migrants as this is the key issue for their integration. Mediators must inform them whom they must address : local employment agencies, local missions for youngsters or any process proposed for this specific public (with difficulties on the labour market).

### Prevention in sanitary and social field

Mediators must inform migrants on the National Health Service ; ways and means to have access or to be taken in charge by the medical system, such as the State medical Help in

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<sup>11</sup> Halba & Courneade, Report 2- Cultural mediation in France, Iriv, Paris, April 2008.

France (Aide médicale d'Etat -Ame) for migrants in an irregular or the Individual Integration Subsidy (Allocation d'insertion now Allocation temporaire d'attente -Ata).

## 2. specific skills and competences developed by Intercultural mediators<sup>12</sup>

The professional cultural mediator has to be characterised by certain abilities and skills. Those skills are related to personal ethical values and moral standards, critical thinking, communicative skills, multiple language skills, patience, trustful character, creativity and flexibility. The main skills and competences asked to cultural mediators are the following:

- a. Having a good knowledge of the National Migration background main values and national references (constitutional ones...)
- b. Having legal skills and competences in the field of migration (migrants' rights and duties, different status, asylum seekers...)
- c. Having a good knowledge of a foreign language, having notions of the native languages of the migrants with whom I work
- d. Knowing how to communicate and to adapt to a multicultural context (by the language or other means...)
- e. Knowing the traditions of the main civilisations (Judeo-Christian, Muslim, Buddhist..) to avoid any cultural clash or taboo
- f. Knowing how to use New Technologies of Information and Communication (Internet, Mobile, Television...) to have a rapid access to information
- g. Being able to learn with adults from different knowledge and backgrounds ;
- h. Knowing how to manage a group, to solve conflicts ;
- i. Being able to have an active listening and negotiate in a difficult context;
- j. Being able to notice the risky behaviour and propose solutions ;
- k. Having cultural or artistic skills (music, song, dance...) to find an original way to communicate.

## 3. Specific knowledge<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, cultural mediators may also develop or acquire specific knowledge in both field of common mediation (whatever the public concerned) and mediation linked to the migration issue (focussed on migrants) :

- a. Cultural entertainment : Mediators may be asked to organise workshops in leisure activities. This is a new pedagogical approach : the « detour strategy ». By organising sewing, music or theatre workshops mediators make the migrants feel more comfortable. It should allow them to open their mind on personal problems they are facing in a less negative way. They share cultural skills or knowledge with others and so the mediator can make them overcome other difficulty. Through the positive image of their culture they would give, they may be more open to understand and share other perspectives.

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<sup>12</sup> Halba & Cournede, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Halba & Cournede, op cit – Dosti, Report 2- Cultural mediation in Italy, For.com, Roma, April 2008.

- b. Family mediation : Mediators may be asked to solve problems among the migrants' families. Most of the time these are generation and culture gaps between the native and host societies. Children with migrants' parents have both cultures. This cultural choc is raising problems. If their parents meet difficult situations, they would attribute them to their foreign origins. As a result, they reject their foreign roots. They are in a negative mood and organise their personal and social exclusion, rejecting both their origins and the host society. Mediators could also play their role of go-between between these two cultures, valuing both of them.
- c. Culture and Leisure exchanges : Mediators may take the initiative to organise cultural visits so that migrants could know and have access to places they wouldn't go alone. This is part of integration. Any place should be available. Mediators may also organise travels with the native countries in the same perspective to value the foreign origins and to improve links between the host and native societies.
- d. Other kind of knowledge : Conflict management practice methodologies /theoretical systematisation ; roots of intercultural conflict in acculturation processes ; sensitive cultural identity areas for the first and second generations, social and interindividual agents of conflict ; interiorised cultural code diversities in relation to the principal social institutions: the family, the state, education ; functional codes of institutions in Italy: the organisation of the western social state.
- e. The acculturation processes of immigrant families and comparison with the host society: the cultural models and behaviour codes of immigrant families ; the intercultural dynamics of immigrant families: roles, relationships, intergenerational and couple conflicts ; the second generation, the identity of youngsters in a multicultural context and acculturation processes ; comparison with the behavioural models and codes of nationals' families ; rights and responsibilities in comparison to the host society: relations with institutions ; comparison between child-rearing and child-care models ; conflict with the operating model of the Italian social state

#### 4. Taking into account the context of work for cultural mediation<sup>14</sup>

The cultural mediator is a professional who operates in contexts with high immigration density. Three levels of competency may be identified:

- **basic competencies**: knowledge and abilities suited to any context
- **specialisation**: competencies in specific areas of intervention
- **supplemental**: competencies additional to those acquired in the individual operative contexts.

Cultural mediation can be delineated as a twofold and mutual process to decode communication applied to three levels:

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<sup>14</sup> Dosti, Report 2- Cultural mediation in Italy, For.com, Roma, April 2008

- a). Practical – directive order level
- b). Linguistic - communicative level
- c). psycho-social level

a) The first order of mediation, demanded more or less explicitly by clients of ethnic minority has a practical - directive function: confused and faced with new social-institutional and political bureaucratic systems, they ask from their co-nationals (or from natives with which they have established a privileged relationship) to be guided in their first contact with services and with institutions of the new country. Immigrates will seek mediation when for example, they have to enrol their children to school, when they have to refer to health service system for their children's vaccination, go through bureaucratic practices, and so on.

b) Mediation carried out in institutions and in public services has a specific linguistic-communicative function that stems out from direct interpersonal relationship between functionaries and their foreign clients pertaining to different cultures: functionaries cover a professional and/or institutional role; while the others, for needs or hardships they encounter, they find themselves in a position of fragility and dependency in confrontation with those providing services to them. Cultural mediation has the objective to create a communicative context in which persons of different cultures can consider as normal what at first seemed strange or bizarre because it belonged to a culture different to one's own.

c) Analyzing the context of ethnic minority service seekers, two interpretations are possible. The first will consider all clients seeking public service, irrespective of their ethnic origins, as seeking mediator services because they find themselves in disadvantaged conditions. According to this interpretation, the difficulties of ethnic minority service seekers are qualitatively different from those experienced by nationals but would only differ in the disadvantage's entity. The second interpretation pones deeper questions and demands more radical solutions than the first one but appears more adapted to finding solutions relative to discrimination problems. It demands analysis of typology and dynamics of the discrimination. If disabled service seekers in wheelchairs have difficulty in physically accessing a public service, the foreigner service seekers can have difficulty in accessing information for them incomprehensible. In the first case ramps are needed, while mediators and translations are required for the second case.

To enable the mediator to work in the principal sectors of social life, the following specialisations have been identified ; they should be acquired in relation to the mediator's own vocational orientations and the needs present in the local context :

- **Education and culture** : when working in schools of all types and levels ; social services ; hospitality communities ; meeting-points and interculture centres;
- **Health** : when working in hospitals ; consultancy centres ; day-clinics ; Ethnopsychiatry ; drug addictions centres ;
- **Security** : when working in police headquarters ; in Prefectures ; in Courthouses ; in Prisons ; in Permanent District Centres (CTP) ;
- **Street**: when working for local authorities or districts.

## **5. taking into account the domains of activities<sup>15</sup>**

A meaningful approach of the skills and competences required for cultural mediators may be found in the training programmes proposed so far to professionals working with migrants.

### **a) Cultural Mediators in health organisations**

Communication between health professionals and migrant and ethnic minority patients is not only complicated by language barriers, but also by cultural misunderstandings. Hospital staff's work is based on implicit cultural assumptions – e.g. with regard to the roles of patients and providers and the way to diagnose and treat illness. These often do not correspond with the expectations of migrant and ethnic minority patients who may have different conceptions of health and illness, values and beliefs, and frequently are unfamiliar with mainstream European health systems. In this way, differences in expectations present an obstacle for the professionals in effectively performing their job.

On the other hand, migrant and ethnic minority patients' needs and expectations may not be understood on the part of health professionals – due to language barriers, but also due to an unawareness of values and beliefs related to the patients' cultural backgrounds. In some instances, explicit expectations of migrant patients, such as the whole family looking after them whilst in the hospital, may not be acceptable for the staff as they cause problems for service routines and the well-being of other patients, and as the context of such expectations (like a religious duty to visit ill family members) are not understood.

The main role of cultural mediation in this context should be :

- Raising the level of information about socio-cultural backgrounds and religion ;
- Enlarging the diversity management skills ;
- Encouraging the level of empathy for foreign people ;
- Thinking of the own cultural practice and traditions as well as enlarging the decision-making and responsibility.

### **b) Cultural Mediators in social organisations**

The main objective is to play an active part in developing multicultural processes. Cultural mediators should work with people in social services, administration, integration, school and education. The main topics concern: immigration, multicultural society, and integration. The aims are:

- To support the interaction and contact of people with different cultural backgrounds;
- To support the cooperation of these different groups;
- To rise their level of awareness;
- To promote the acquisition of language
- To promote vocational training and orientation
- To empower citizens for self-help.

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<sup>15</sup> Oliveira – Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Austria, Graz, June 2008

### **c) International Centre for Cultures and Languages<sup>16</sup>**

The training and further courses in human rights at first focussed on promoting legal knowledge. Consciousness building played only a little part. The exchange of opinions and experiences plays a particularly important role. The subjects are intercultural communication, conflict management, diversity, minorities, migration, human rights and discrimination. The aims are:

- To understand how one communicates and understand one's own culture with particular reference to everyday police work ;
- To engage with other cultures and gain awareness of other forms of communication in an intercultural context and in the contact between the police and the population ;
- To learn about the political, social, historical and economic backgrounds to migration ;
- To impart and discuss the fundamental ideas and lines of development of human rights ;
- To be made conscious of discrimination mechanisms and prejudices ;
- To impart knowledge and facts relating to the situation of migrants ;
- Personal contact with migrants.

### **d) Cultural Mediators in child day care centres and schools**

In the educational sector, the main task of cultural mediators is the facilitating of communication between foreign and "national" pupils as well as teachers. A further challenge in this field is the establishing of a structure which allows the communication between parents and the pupil's teachers. Moreover a mediator provides information for both families and teachers about the different education systems. A further task, which has to be covered by cultural mediators is the assistance concerning the modalities of registration in schools. An essential work is the preparation of informative material in foreign language about the particular school for the pupil and the pupil's parents.

The aims of the training are:

- to convey knowledge concerning migration, legal and social situation
- to learn about the requirements of live in a pluralistic society
- to raise the awareness of different values and social backgrounds of migrants living ;
- to gather knowledge concerning the linguistic variety in educational institutions
- to gain practical experience
- to be aware of integration and diversity management issues
- to increase conflict management competences

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<sup>16</sup> Since 1999 a training course on 'Policing in a multicultural society', reconducted in 2008 for the fourth time together with the Security Academy/Federal Ministry of the Interior in Austria

**e) Cultural Mediators in the legal sector – Police headquarters, Prisons, Tribunals**

The main tasks in this field refer to counselling and assistance regarding getting all kinds of papers from the police. Moreover the cultural mediator has to advise the service staff on the characteristics of the clients' culture. He/She is a key actor for obtaining the essential documents like residence permit or work permit. Further more the cultural mediator gives instructions due to guidelines on bureaucratic procedures.

## Module 6 - Ways and means to solve conflicts – A methodology for intercultural mediation

### Content

1. theory of conflicts
2. Identifying the sources of conflict - Typology of conflicts
3. Specificity of conflicts linked to migration - Obstacles/main obstacles faced
4. Types of solutions to be proposed

### Main recommendations

1. Insist on the demands and expectations of the migrants and institutions which are quite different ;
2. Don't underestimate the integration of new comers: the main obstacle should be the language and expression (analphabetic problem...)

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ **Open Discussion** on the limits and difficulties faced by migrants
- ◆ **Role-play** : a conflict between a migrant and an administration in charge of internal affairs (identity card/residence permit), between a migrant and an hospital (customs in contradiction with the host country), between a migrant and a social housing body (neighbourhood problems)
- ◆ **Collective work** on the image of migrants and migration

### Source :

Halba (Bénédicte), *Gestion du bénévolat et du volontariat*, De Boeck, Bruxelles, 2006.

Halba (Bénédicte), *Involve project – Report for France*, Paris, June 2006.

Halba (Bénédicte), Schumacher (Jürgen), Strümpel (Charlotte), « Encourager et faciliter le travail avec les bénévoles », Iriv (Paris), Isis (Allemagne), European Centre (Autriche), 2000-2001.

Hellriegel, Slocum, Woodman, *Management des organisations*, De Boeck, & Larcier, Bruxelles, 1992 ; 9<sup>ème</sup> édition 2004.

Monroy (Michel) et Fournier (Anne), *Figures du conflit – Une analyse systémique des situations conflictuelles*, PUF, Paris, 1997.

## 1. Conflict Theory

A conflict is not easy to define as it is usually taking various forms and happens in different contexts. We may propose the following definitions<sup>17</sup> :

- “1. Opposition, antagonism, difference, disagreement, discord, dissension, friction, hostility, strife;
2. Battle, clash, combat, contest, encounter, fight, strife, war ;
3. Incompatibility”

The term is used each time « a situation faced by individuals or groups whose main objectives, cognitions or emotions are incompatible and meant to oppose »<sup>18</sup>.

Three types of conflict may appear:

- conflicts of objectives : when the goals and objectives of the different parties are incompatible ;
- cognitive conflicts : when ideas or thoughts of the parties are incompatible ;
- affective conflicts : when feelings or emotions are incompatible.

In organisations, conflicts are not necessarily negative. They may be useful. The emerging and solving of a conflict may allow identifying a problem and often finding a constructive solution. The research of means to solve the conflict may provoke an innovation and a change to make it be acceptable.

The intentional introduction of a conflict in the decision process may be positive as a group may be victim of a phenomenon of “group thought”. The bad effects it may produce may be smoothed in enhancing the birth of a conflict that creates one or more different opinions.

Nevertheless, most of the time, a conflict may have negative consequences and waste energy and resources, in time and money. It may affect the psychological well-being of a group provoking resentment, tensions and anxiety. If the conflict is going on, it may, in term, threaten the existence itself of the group.

In the context of cultural mediation, unsolvable or never ending conflicts, fruitless and more and more aggressive, have created the profession in a crucial time, the beginning of the nineties. Institutions expressed a need for support and complementary work of a third party, aware of the institutions’ demands and understanding the migrants’ demands or problems.

The strategy to solve the conflicts should be:

- firstly to identify them ;
- secondly to integrate the specificity of migration ;
- thirdly to propose an appropriate solution.

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<sup>17</sup> Harper & Collins « Dictionary and Thesaurus », first edition 2003, New York (USA)

<sup>18</sup> Hellriegel, Slocum, Woodman, Management des organisations, De Boeck & Larcier, Bruxelles, 1992.

## 2. Identifying the sources of conflict - Typology of conflicts

On the basis of the classical approach of human resource management, we can identify 4 types of conflicts concerning directly cultural mediation <sup>19</sup>:

1. intrapersonal conflict (within the individual) : the conflict may have various origins, the choice between negative results, positive results, between both negative and positive results ; we are talking about cognitive misunderstanding when individuals admit that their thoughts, behaviours and/or values are contradictory ; this type of conflict is often experienced by migrants ; the cultural mediator may explain some attitude or behaviour taking into account this context ;
2. interpersonal conflict (between individuals) : it implies at least two or more individuals opposed in their preferences in matter of objectives, behaviours and values. There are different ways to face the problem : abstention that means lack of authority and cooperation that leads to frustration for everybody ; oppression that means an authoritarian behaviour without any cooperation spirit equally source of negative feeling (losers versus winners) ; conciliation that means a cooperative behaviour with lack of authority well received but less estimated ; cooperation is a behaviour commonly well accepted as it is integrating a will of trust and collaboration ; the research of a compromise is a half way behaviour between cooperation and authority based on equal exchanges generally well appreciated by the group ; these types of conflict often happen in family or associations ; cultural mediators should play the role of go-between among individuals belonging to the same group ;
3. intra-organisational conflict : it comes from the opposition raised by the way role and tasks are dispatched among the same structure/organisation ; these are the kind of conflicts faced by cultural mediators among specific part of migrants such as the generation gap problem (youngsters/elder migrants) or the gender gap issue (women/men) ;
4. intra-group conflict : it concerns problems faced among members of a group or some of them, which affects the management of the organisation and its results ; reasons are linked to the nature of the tasks dedicated and to the relational and emotional process among the group ; an external person is usually welcome in this context to solve the problem and make things less emotional ; this is the key-role of cultural mediators as institutions often require their services in this context ; cultural mediators have to deal on a personal basis with migrants and representatives of institutions ;
5. inter-group conflict : disagreements and problems between two or more groups ; the two groups adopt aggressive attitudes and develop attitudes of mistrust, rigidity, oppressive behaviour ; this kind of situation may happen in the context of cultural mediation when a group of migrants is faced to a specific problem ; for instance the Malians, in France, asking for social housing or the Roms in Italy being asked to be officially identified to prevent any human traffic or delinquency by the Italian institutions ; cultural mediators are required to work in a collective context (understanding demands expressed by a group of persons) ;

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<sup>19</sup> Hellriegel, Slocum, Woodman, Management des organisations, De Boeck & Larcier, Bruxelles, 1992.

### **3. Précising the specificity of the conflicts linked to migration - Obstacles/main obstacles faced by cultural mediation**

Identifying the type of conflict is not enough. The cultural mediator should also be aware of the main obstacles/barriers experienced by migrants that might be known by cultural mediators in order to solve conflicts whatever their origin or the actors involved :

- a barrier linked to the status of the migrants : the legal or illegal situation of the migrant in the host country has a decisive impact on his/her behaviour and solution of the conflict ; in France, in recent years, many illegal workers, counselled by trade unions chose to go on strike to obtain better working conditions and ask for the regularisation of their situation ; often with the support of their employers they have been successful in their demand ; other illegal migrants chose to join Association for Defence (such as « Droit au Logement », Access to Housing) ;
- a barrier linked to the language : many conflicts may be quite easily solved when migrants could explain with their own words what was going on (for instance in Justice or Police affairs); the communication with institutions is complicated by the problem of language even though speaking the language of the migrants is necessary but not sufficient ;
- a barrier linked to illiteracy: life is very difficult when you couldn't write or read, even though you can speak the national language; many conflicts with institutions are linked to this problem as migrants couldn't read the information and so couldn't answer in due time or react in the appropriate way; it is also a problem in transport when you are travelling for the first time or in any work as many things are written;
- a psychological barrier : migrants are often faced to difficult situation (education, employment, housing...) in the host country ; as a result they often have a bad feeling of themselves and suffer from a lack of self-esteem that makes relations with institutions complicated or in a defensive way ; giving migrants a good image of themselves is an important element ;
- a financial barrier: everyday life is often difficult for migrants, their first source of exclusion is economic; mostly low qualified workers, they don't earn a lot of money; everything is very expensive for them and they usually think they couldn't afford it such as medical support or access to education ; this is a source of conflict as they would refuse any service or support they are entitled to receive ; explaining them that migrants, poor or rich, have the same rights as any national citizen is a key issue ;
- a cultural barrier: migrants don't know the institutions of the host country and the way they are working as this is also difficult for a native person; they are shy to ask for information as they take for granted that any native knows everything; their lack of knowledge and experience in the field is making them be aggressive; recalling the fundamentals and introducing the main tasks and missions of each institution they are faced to is fundamental.
- an education barrier : some attitudes or behaviours are tolerated in certain societies and are not in other ; being aware of societal or religious taboos.

#### 4. Methods and rules to be proposed

A conflict may be fruitful and usable as it might help to avoid any « collective thinking » or to solve a hidden opposition between members of a group or between groups.

It might help under the following conditions:

- both parts agree on the sources of the conflict ;
- both parts are willing to find a solution ;
- both parts recognise the professional and constructive action of the cultural mediators

Two methods might be used in reaching a solution:

1. the method of the dialectic investigation : two opposed points of view or two contradictory ways of action are proposed by cultural mediators ; thanks to this method, a decision might be taken, agreed by both parts on the basis of facts, possibilities and ideas clearly known and identified ;
2. the method of the « devil's advocate » : someone takes a position, sometimes one he or she disagrees with, for the sake of argument. This process can be used to test the quality of the original argument and identify weaknesses in its structure. Thanks to this method, the decision may be taken with a critical perspective.

The following rules shouldn't be forgotten by cultural mediators in any solution proposed or method applied:

- reminding of the general principle : rights and duties of each part in the conflict ; for instance in the social housing context, migrants should have decent conditions of housing ; they have a rent to pay and rules to follow inside ; some institution has adopted Chart in this perspective : rights the owners and of the tenants ;
- adopting a clear framework and clear rules to follow : authority or responsibility for each actor, a clear leadership with the tasks to be fulfilled by each one ;
- proposing a work plan : a precise schedule of the tasks to be fulfilled or solutions to be found and organising them in a planning agreed upon by all parts with clear milestones ;
- anticipating a conflict : when the milestones are reached and all the results are not, to propose alternative solutions, a new dispatching of task on the basis of the intermediary results obtained ;
- taking into account the positive efforts made by the different actors in the conflict : it is highly counter-productive to do as if nothing has been done or everything has been done on equal terms ;
- avoiding personal conflicts : it is sometimes useful to change the personal contact for instance in an institution if there has been a negative background with the migrant(s) concerned ; any solution should be refused for personal reason ;
- working with more than two persons: proposing a group mixing the different profiles of people in conflict (one representative of the institution / one representative of the migrants);
- anticipating a specific process to solve conflict even before they happen such as an internal rule or any informal document forecasting : persons to be contacted in case of conflict, limits of his/her action, a time schedule with action plan, alternative solutions in case of remaining conflict

## **Module 7 - General framework of intercultural mediation – Comparative approaches**

### **Content**

1. Principles defining the intercultural mediation
2. Professional basis
3. Working conditions - Context: Public / private / non-profit ;

### **Main recommendations**

1. to know which practical aspects have to be set in place before mediators
2. to know where to find specific information on these aspects
3. to be able to think of creative solutions with respect to these practical aspects

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Internet research
- ◆ Screening existing material (brochures etc.)
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Interviews and telephone interviews

### **Sources :**

- ❖ Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, Paris, October 2004
- ❖ Halba & Cournède, Report 2 – Cultural mediation in France, Iriv, Paris, April 2008
- ❖ HOU, Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Greece, Patras, June 2008
- ❖ Dosti , Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Italy, For.com, May 2008

## 1. Principles defining the intercultural mediation

Intercultural mediation is a process aiming at enhancing social integration, living together, meeting and gathering people with different backgrounds. Migrants bring with them new customs, new values and traditions to be respected. Intercultural/cultural mediators are revealing, explaining and valuing new ways of thinking and multicultural approaches. They should allow foreign citizens (migrants) to become real actors and to find solutions to solve the difficulties they are facing. The more independent and autonomous they are, the better they can solve their own problems. Autonomy is a key issue for migrants. Intercultural mediation is not a substitute but a support for migrants to reach this autonomy.

*In France (Halba, Cournède, iriv, 2008)*

On the basis of a general framework for social mediation<sup>20</sup> stating the main principles for the professionals working in this field are the following:

- ❖ Neutrality and impartiality : the main goal is to respect both parties (institutions and migrants);
- ❖ Negotiation and dialogue: intercultural mediation is not an authority relation even though the respect of the national law and common rules of collective life are important ;
- ❖ Free will and participation of inhabitants: at any time, any party may leave the mediation ; free agreement is the main principle ; mediators should explain also the limits of his/her action and asking regularly if his/her action are accepted and agreed upon ;
- ❖ Good will of institutions: enhancing citizenship and underlining the poor running of institutions, social and cultural mediation encourages the modernisation of institutions, to enhance a better proximity with inhabitants and a better public service answering people's needs ;
- ❖ Protection and defence of rights: mediation shouldn't replace services provided and rights defended by institutions. It is improving social relations without avoiding anyone to defend his/her rights ;
- ❖ Respect of fundamental human rights: all the rights proclaimed in the European convention for human rights and any reference text such as the Fundamental Social rights ; mediation should respect public liberties and rules protecting private life.

Intercultural mediation has known a real development in the past twenty years. Migration has become more and more complex (various geographic and cultural origins of the migrants). The question of social coeducation ("mixité") is a key issue. Intercultural mediation remains an institutions' demand rather than a migrants' demand. This is raising the question of recognition. Mediation may have raised some suspicion among migrants who might see mediators as representatives of institutions. Intercultural mediators have a decisive action in the field of prevention "public safety" and defence of rights. They can better answer the new needs and social demands expressed by migrants.

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<sup>20</sup> Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, octobre 2004

*In Greece (HOU, Patras, 2008) :*

The basic functions of cultural mediation, especially as regards to immigrants and refugees may be summarised as follows<sup>21</sup> :

- Cultural mediation may lead to the **empowerment** of immigrants and refugees in the host country by providing them with the stance and knowledge necessary to exercise their rights and to make choices which are beneficial to them.
- Cultural mediation leads to the **interpretation of cultural values** of immigrants and refugees to parties in the host country and to the interpretation of cultural values of various social groups and segments of the host country to immigrants and refugees.
- Cultural mediation leads to the **resolution of social conflicts** which are caused by cultural differences and cultural misunderstandings.
- Cultural mediation can serve as a mean of successful relationship between immigrants/refugees and **public agencies and bodies**. Furthermore it can serve as a mean of **linguistic facilitation** of the relations between immigrants and natives, where linguistic facilitation does not mean just translation but emphasis on the different cultural meanings of terms and expressions within different contexts.
- Cultural mediation may be very helpful in critical domains of social life of immigrants and refugees in the host countries such as **employment, legal rights, education, training, health services, family affairs, entertainment and leisure**.

*In Italy (Dosti, For.com, 2008)*

The main principles to be followed by cultural mediators in Italy should be the following :

- **Neutrality and impartiality** is at the core. Neutrality implies that the mediator has no vested interests in the content of the problem and in the outcome of the mediation. The only concern is to improve the ways of communication and of understanding between the two parties. Being curious of patterns and of how the different views of the same situation is connected are ways to ensure neutrality.
- **Impartiality**. Impartiality indicates that the mediator is not favouring any of the parties. He ensures that both parties are heard and as much as possible get their needs met but lets the parties define their own solutions
- **Position of power**. Neutrality and impartiality stress the crucial point of position of power. If the mediator is in a position of power in relation to one of the parties in the conflict the possibility of a neutral and impartial process is impaired. If social workers or others with power over one or both of the parties wish to assist in solving culturally related conflicts a more viable way seems to be to enhance their intercultural competences and using these in doing their ordinary tasks.
- **Being a third party**. The mediator has the role of assisting both sides in uncovering the needs and in finding solutions that both sides will benefit from.
- **Negotiation and dialogue**: this is not an authority relation even though the respect of the rule is important (national law) and common rules of collective life ;
- **Free will and participation of inhabitants**: at any time, any party may leave the mediation ; being involved and agreeing is the main principle ; mediators should explain also the limits of his/her action and asking regularly if his/her action are accepted and agreed upon ;
- **Good will of institutions**: enhancing citizenship and underlining the poor running of

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.gla.ac.uk/rg/emulti08.pdf>

institutions, social and cultural mediation encourages the modernisation of institutions, to a better proximity with inhabitants and users of the public service and their application to new needs of the population. Cultural and social mediation enables a better exercise of the relations between institutions and publics ;

- ***Protection and defence of rights***: mediation shouldn't replace services provided and rights defended by institutions.

- ***Respect of fundamental human rights***: social mediation should respect all the rights proclaimed in the European convention for human rights and the precedents linked to it; referring both to the principles and to their practical application; mediation should respect public liberties and rules protecting private life.

- ***Nationality***. In Italy the mediator belongs to the same minority peer group and can therefore act as a spokesman for the immigrant and set an example for the immigrant in how to deal with various difficult situations.

## 2. Professional environment

The profession of cultural mediator is a brand new one. This is why it is useful to remind of the background and genesis of its professional genesis to better understand the environment in which cultural mediators are meant to work.

### *In France - the emblematic profession of intercultural mediator*

After the migration waves of the seventies, very linked to the family reunification, more and more young adults (children of former migrants' workers) involved in associations and political parties to defend equal rights and access to education, employment, social promotion. Many associations of migrants' women have also been created and the first "femmes-relais" have appeared. Supported by the so-called "Policy for the City" and local prevention councils, initiated in the early 90s, they were dedicated to create social links and manage the day to day conflicts mostly in inner cities. Many initiatives have been developed by associations, to promote active citizenship. Other initiatives were developed by institutions in charge of public area such as public transport societies, social housing firms, whose main goal was to struggle against insecurity (delinquency) and incivility (vandalism) problems.

The French government then decided to create the so-called « **adultes-relais** ». This is the beginning of their official recognition. In 1997, in the framework of the local security contracts and under the specific status of the « jobs for youngsters » (« emplois-jeunes ») financed by the government, local agents for prevention (« agents locaux de médiation ») have been recruited. In 2000, they were 7 000 agents in inner cities to solve the day to day conflicts. These jobs were answering a social demand for proximity.

A programme « adultes-relais » allowed the recognition of the profession of cultural and social mediator. Created by the Committee for Ministers of the 14th of December 1999, this programme financed specific actions in the field of social and cultural mediation for people living in the areas selected under the Policy for the City criteria (unemployment rate, poverty rate, proportion of migrants' population...). The specific Committee for Ministers dedicated to Cities reinforced in March 2006 this programme in allowing the access to this profession through Valuing Prior Learning (**VPL**) to make it be recognised with a diploma. This programme was meant to value and enhance the role of adults and to renew a social link in the areas of the "Policy for the City" to facilitate the relations between the inhabitants of difficult area with the institutions. In the longer term, it should open its perspectives (security,

delinquency and violence approaches) to work on exclusion and improvement of “a better life altogether”.

The “femmes-relais » already present and active in the field have benefited by this new programme to obtain a better status. The cultural mediators in general have benefited by this programme. Thanks to their skills, experiences and know-how, they play a key-role. They bring a useful help to migrants populations, first in enhancing access to public service, then in bringing means to answer the mutual misunderstanding (problems of values and norms, cultural references). The programme aims at recruiting people with migrant’s roots because of their skills in communication and their personal network. This is raising a problem of stigmatisation and/or a form of positive discrimination: why should we choose a cultural mediator on the basis of his/her personal background? Moreover, the mission is often focussed on a negative diagnostic: insecurity, delinquency, urban problems...

Associations are the main employers of the « adultes-relais », with nearly 80 % of the signed conventions. The local public sector is the second employer (15 % of the signed conventions). The owners of social lodging, educative institutions, trade unions for transports... are very low employers (less than 5 % of the conventions). In January 2006, 2 867 “adultes-relais” were working on the French territory; mostly in Ile de France with 25 %

The public subsidy is calculated on the basis of the minimum wage (SMIC), full-time, including social and employers taxes. 83 millions of Euros have been dedicated to this programme in 2006. In 2008, the financing is integrated in the Urban Contracts for Social Cohesion, together with the “Success for Education programme” or “City-Life-Holidays” programme. That is the reason why specific credits have been dedicated to this programme by the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equality of Chances (ANCSEC).

Nevertheless, the profession of cultural mediator has first and foremost started on a voluntary basis. In France, the Chart for Social Mediation<sup>22</sup> clearly specifies that « volunteers have often taken innovative initiatives, participating actively to the creation of social link and active citizenship in difficult areas ». It is also mentioned in the text “volunteer citizen mediators”.

### ***In Greece: Roles, mission and skills***

The cooperation titled ‘Koinoniki Anfiktionia’ (within community initiative EQUAL and the Institute of Consumers)<sup>23</sup> introduced a program of promotion of various professions of ‘social economy’ aimed at the enhancement of the employment chances of less favoured social groups in Greece. Among this profession there is the profession of cultural mediation as well. This is one of the few initiatives which illustrate in a thorough way the prospects, the role and the function of the profession of cultural mediation in Greece. This initiative describes the following features as regards the cultural mediation profession and its prospects in Greece:

**Definition of the profession.** Cultural mediator develops cooperation with public agencies and with service providers in order to facilitate cooperation between those agencies and

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<sup>22</sup> Charte de référence de la médiation sociale, ibidem

<sup>23</sup> <http://newinka.gr/uploads/files/MONOGRAFIES.pdf>

people who are socially excluded or are at risk of social exclusion such as immigrants, refugees, return migrants, Roma etc.

**Character of cultural mediator's work.** The mediator's work may include the following:

- Support of employment and other consultants when communicating with less favoured groups ;
- Cooperation with local agencies, authorities and broader communities in favour of target groups ;
- Provision of services to the target groups in order for those groups to integrate in the new cultural environment ;
- Support and promotion of networking actions ;
- Active participation in the design of campaigns and intercultural festivities and other sensitising events aiming to the general public, to employers and to political bodies.

*In Italy (Dosti, For.com, may 2008)*

A Cultural Linguistic Mediator is a professional representative with the task to facilitating communication and understanding, both on linguistic and cultural level, between service seekers of ethnic minorities and functionaries in agencies or public service offices, self presenting in an equidistant and neutral way between the interested parts.

A mediator is called to carry out the activity of facilitation with impartiality and must guarantee confidentiality on the contents of a conversation. A mediator collaborates to the definition of strategies of information diffusion considering its impact upon specific cultural areas.

Law 40/1998 introduced the figure of the cultural mediator into our legal system for the first time, reflecting an experimental experience that had begun during the 1990s. Recognition of the cultural mediation profession necessarily implies an institutionalisation which, even with the adoption of flexibility criteria, will require adequate preparation.

To ensure that the role of this figure is not over-simply made equivalent to a “jack of all trades operator” without establishing the capabilities required for its performance will require various precise specifications of the tasks to perform, the sectors in which to act, the types of employment open to it, its professional characteristics, the training standards to be met, evaluation of the experience of those who have already been operating in this sector for some time, together with verification of the effectiveness of the connection channels both with the group and country of origin and with Italian society itself.

In Italy there is no univocally defined path to follow in order to become a cultural mediator. The first training courses for “linguistic-cultural mediators” appeared at the time of the “immigration emergency”, that is to say the arrival of large numbers of African nationals, particularly from North Africa and the Maghreb. These first mediators – both Italian and foreign – were deployed above all in first-reception structures and in the immigrants offices of local bodies, thus enabling these emergency accomodation centres and local facilities engaged in front-office work with immigrants to become operative. In the initial stage, the linguistic-cultural mediators functioned essentially as interpreters working in French and English; later on, linguistic-cultural interpreters who spoke Arabic, Chinese and Albanian were also introduced. As time passed the characteristics of the migratory phenomenon changed and

many immigrants, taking advantage of the possibilities provided by new legislation (amnesties and Law No. 40), were able to achieve family reunification. Once the emergency phase was over the nature of mediation intervention also changed, along with the mediators' role. No longer just interpreting, but *support action* to foster social integration by organising encounters with Italian society and facilitating access to the services network through "comprehensive receptivity". A form of receptivity that is able to comprehend the new socio-cultural demand carried by immigrants in all sectors of society. The first training courses were addressed to both Italian and foreign trainees, but it was not yet clear if mediators should be immigrants or not, what function they should perform, what types of capabilities they should have and in what specific services they should operate

### **3. Working conditions - Status : paid-staff, volunteers, independent workers, professional context**

#### ***In France (Halba, Cournède, iriv, May 2008)***

Mediation is playing a major role in associations meant to bring the means and support for developing links among social groups that wouldn't meet. They also promote the idea of common identity. They also play this role of go-between between the population and the institutions.

Association is both an employer for mediators (most of them are working for associations) ; and the place to acquire the experience, skills and competences to become a professional mediators ; first on a voluntary basis, then being paid-staff. This may be the case for foreigners who couldn't afford to work. During the delay they are unable to work, they may acquire or develop new skills and competences. The profession of cultural mediator is based on a very practical experience of day to day life. A volunteering may be a first professional experience as it is considered as an informal and non formal learning.

Association is a privileged link between institutions and migrants. The social centres, local houses, local associations, in priority areas (Policy for the City areas) work mainly with migrants and ethnic minorities. They propose school mentoring workshops for children, alphabetisation workshops for parents, legal counselling, culture workshops (sewing, painting, music, dance..).

Often, the pathway for a social mediator is the following: first, he has been the "beneficiary" of the service provided by the association, then he becomes a "provider" of the service to other migrants. He/she may start his/her own carrier as a volunteer then he/she is hired by the association. "Adultes-relais" are examples of such activity of cultural mediator who have been first practices on a voluntary basis. This was part of the policy of integration: creating activity to be better integrated integration through work.

#### **In Greece (HOU, May 2008)**

The most common working environment is the office where the cultural mediator meets with individuals. In many cases the cultural mediator works in the environment of various public bodies or has to visit regularly. In terms of hours, those they are differentiated according to task and peculiarities of target groups.

Cultural mediators in Greece may be employed in the following domains or sectors:

- Public and private sector and local authorities
- In the Agency for Special Social Groups of the Organisation for the Employment of Labour Power of Greece (OAED).
- In the International Organisation of Migration in Athens, Greece
- In the Greek Council for Refugees
- In the Centre for the Support of Return Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees
- In the Centres of Provision of Accompanying Supportive Services
- In the Centres of Information and Support of Socially Vulnerable Groups (immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, return migrants and roma)
- In the Greek Red Cross
- In the Centres of Professional Training
- In Non Governmental Organisations
- In private agencies which are participating in the designing, implementation and monitoring of programs aiming at enhancing intercultural understanding

Generally it is estimated that the prospects of employment in this sector in Greece are favourable, mainly for two reasons:

- The first reason is related to the relatively low level of the development of the profession so far.
- The second reason is related to the increased needs for cultural mediation services in a country with a high degree of cultural diversity.

***In Italy (Dosti, For.com, May 2008)***

It is necessary to distinguish the figure of the cultural mediator/mediatrix of immigrant origin from other potential professional figures in the cultural mediation field. Accordingly, the proposed professional profile presented below focusses on the specific figure of immigrant mediators/mediatrices. As wording too serves to conceptualise and represent its object it would be advisable, when defining the professional profile of the immigrant cultural mediator/mediatrix, to make sure that its name contains a precise reference to competency in the language and culture of origin.

With regard to the professional profile of intercultural mediators: it has become clear that a distinction must be made between the roles of Italian mediators and migrant mediators: the foreign or native speaker linguistic-cultural mediator is indispensable, as is the Italian mediator: they can and do have different functions. Of course a native-speaker mediator who has attained a very high level of ability can also take on other tasks, and the same is true of an Italian who can handle various levels of intercultural mediation. But in direct relations with immigrants, that is to say with people who have a different language and culture, members of minority groups, it is not possible to manage without the services of persons who, taking language as their starting point, are able to decypher the cultural codes of the person in question, as this is the only way to avoid misunderstandings, erroneous interpretations and increased conflictuality.

An Italian can only grasp such things after having followed a very particular life-course. So linguistic-cultural decoding is an aspect that cannot be entrusted to an Italian; whereas an Italian can, in all the other aspects involved, take on intercultural mediation tasks such as planning, promotion, reorganisation of facilities and services, training, service for other

colleagues and institutions, intervention activities to promote harmonious relations, etc. These aspects bring us to the question of whether it makes sense to foresee an intercultural mediator profile specific to Italians or whether every faculty in the social area should instead equip itself to promote training areas and paths on intercultural and intercultural mediation. Another aspect that has become apparent regarding the training of immigrant mediators is that of the low priority given to mastery of Italian. It would be necessary to work for integration between universities and professional training, through the credits system, so as to enable them to acquire a very high level of linguistic competency, by facilitating the training path followed by immigrant mediators.

There is an extreme fragmentation of **profiles in the mediation area**. It seems that for each area, for each sector of intervention several profiles have developed. And what relationship is there between market supply and demand? This is an issue that has not been tackled, but it is a serious matter; euphemistically speaking, the answer could be that “their proportions are totally out of proportion.”

Civil servants are following a public mission of childhood protection for instance. Cultural mediators don't have to follow the same professional framework ; they usually integrate the parents' demands and points of views that may be different from the national perspective or national law, cultural traditions and customs (for instance polygamy...).

For this reason, social assistants may have considered cultural mediators as competitors and sometimes opponents in their professional practice. Competitors because they work in the same field but with different status: social assistants (working for State) have a decision power (financial support, placement...), cultural mediators don't have any status nor this sanction power that gives them a positive image towards migrants. Social assistants may also consider cultural mediators as opponents when they defend another point of view, they wouldn't share (for instance defending the parents' points of view with different cultural references and standards). The best legitimacy for cultural mediators is their job on the field, the way they solve problems as they don't have any official recognition in the status nor a specific diploma for this brand-new profession.

## Module 8 – Intercultural mediation and diversity - From multiculturalism to interculturalism

### Content

1. Multiculturalism/Interculturalism
2. Diversity – main aspects
3. Linguistic diversity
4. Equality of Chances - The specificity of discrimination linked to ethnic origin

### Main recommendations

1. To explore the complex issues underlying the discussion about migration
2. To become aware of contradictory reasons to promote integration of migrants
3. To understand the boundaries of intercultural mediation
4. to get a general impression of the issues raised of intercultural mediation

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Debates and Discussions
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Work in small groups with a grid of tasks and grid of competences

### Sources

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- ❖ SALTO-Youth, A guide to European Diversity, <http://www.salto-youth.net/>, Resource Center, 2004.
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## 1. multiculturalism, interculturalism<sup>24</sup>

Key concepts linked to interculturality in education are :

- ❖ interaction,
- ❖ exchange
- ❖ breaking down barriers
- ❖ reciprocity
- ❖ solidarity
- ❖ institutional recognition of other cultures and other styles of life.

A report from the Council of Europe, trying to define intercultural education, writes :

*“ the use of the world ‘intercultural’ necessarily implies - if the prefix ‘inter’ is given its full meaning – interaction, exchange, breaking down barriers, reciprocity, and objective solidarity. If the term ‘culture’ is given its full force, it also implies recognition of the values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relations with others and in their world outlook; recognition of their importance, recognition of the way they work and their variety, and recognition of the interactions that take place both between the multiple registers of a single culture and between the different cultures, in time and space ”<sup>25</sup>*

Other approaches stress that “Intercultural Education is a transnational activity and neither students nor its subject matter could be delimited by familiar borders”<sup>26</sup> (Coulby 2006:254)

Drawing from the European experience some approaches pin point the underestimation of the intense, existing power relations in the ways in which cultural alterity and culture difference is understood especially from the point of view of a superficial multiculturalism. Established systems of power, knowledge and representation, both ethnocentric and Eurocentric, exercise a driving force in the ways in which cultural difference is recognised, represented and structured in the field of education.

*“focusing on the superficial manifestations of culture, multiculturalism [in the UK] failed to recognise the continuous hierarchies of power [emphasis in the original] and legitimization existing between these different centres of cultural authority”<sup>27</sup>*

This approach of cultural difference that recognises the historical character of the diverse national traditions and at the same time places particular emphasis on the power relations which reproduce the hierarchy of these traditions in the field of education, invites for a dialogue without prerequisites and without guarantees. Through this dialogue the essentialist perceptions fixing the

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<sup>24</sup> Tsimouris G, (2008), *Intercultural education in contemporary Greece: The teachers point of view*, University of Pantheon (Athens), Conference on Migrations in and from South-Eastern Europe, Sofia, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted by Rolandi-Ricci, M. (1996). “Training Teachers for Intercultural Education: The work of the Council of Europe” in *Beyond One’s Own Backyard: Intercultural Teacher Education in Europe*, edited by Th. Dragonas, A. Frangoudaki, Ch. Inglessi. Nissos, Athens.

<sup>26</sup> **Coulby, D.** 2006. Intercultural education: theory and practice, in *Intercultural Education, Vol. 17, No. 3, August 2006, pp. 245-257.*

<sup>27</sup> Donald J. & Rattansi A. (1992) ‘Race’ culture and difference, SAGE Publications, London.

‘other’ in an early stage of the European development and in a subaltern position are constantly undermined and called into question.

## 2. diversity

One of the founding principles of the European Union is respect for its diversity. The upheavals of European history show the importance of protecting national minorities and allowing different religious, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities to flourish. The peace and stability enjoyed by the EU over the last half century is largely due to this pluralism. In May 2004, the EU experienced its biggest ever enlargement, bringing the total number of Member States to 25. And the Union is likely to expand further in the future. Protecting and celebrating the diversity of cultures under the umbrella of the Union is a key to ensuring a prosperous future<sup>28</sup>.

The Preamble of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union states :

*“the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union [...]. The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the member States”.*

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008<sup>29</sup> recognises that Europe’s great cultural diversity represents a unique advantage. It is encouraging all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of Europe’s cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions. The enlargement of the European Union, deregulation of employment laws and globalisation have increased the multicultural character of many countries, adding to the number of languages, religions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds found on the continent. Intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship.

### **Making the business case for diversity<sup>30</sup>**

Our differences are our strength. Europe has a rich society because its people come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. To benefit from the full wealth of skills, talents and ideas in Europe, it is vital that everyone is included. Diversity can bring huge benefits in the workplace. Companies are increasingly recognising that diversity is not just a moral argument or a question of meeting legal obligations. In a 2005 Commission report, 83% of companies with a diversity policy in place said that it had brought real business benefits. A diverse workforce is one with different perspectives and different ideas. Public authorities and private companies serve and address people with a wide range of backgrounds. By reflecting this in

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<sup>28</sup> SALTO-Youth, A guide to European Diversity, <http://www.salto-youth.net/>, Resource Center, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) was established by [Decision N° 1983/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council. (18 December 2006) on the statement that Europe is becoming more culturally diverse. ;

[http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect\\_url=my-startpage-eyid.html](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html)

<sup>30</sup> The business case for Diversity – Good practices in the workplace - Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, September 2005, Focus Consultancy and Conference Board.

their own workforce, they are better equipped to understand their needs. Diversity makes business sense. A survey of organisations from across Europe revealed how diversity can offer real benefits whatever the size or type of business. They include: improving links with the minority community and enhancing its image; helping in the development of new products, services and marketing strategies; attracting, recruiting and retaining people from a wide talent base; improving knowledge of how to operate in different cultures; building social cohesion.

### 3. Language diversity<sup>31</sup>

There are estimated to be about 150 regional and minority languages in the European Union – although the exact number varies depending on how you define a language. These languages may be specific to a region such as Catalan, Basque, Breton, Welsh, Sardinian, or they may be languages spoken by a minority in one state but which are official languages in another EU country, such as Hungarian in Slovakia, German in southern Denmark. “Many tongues, one family”.

The language we speak helps define who we are. The European Union respects this right to identity of its 450 million citizens. While committed to integration between its member states, the EU also actively promotes the freedom of its peoples to speak and write their own language. The two aims are complementary, embodying the EU’s motto of United in diversity.

In addition, the Union actively encourages its citizens to learn other European languages, both for reasons of professional and personal mobility within its single market, and as a force for cross-cultural contacts and mutual understanding. In an ever-growing and more diverse EU, it is important that its citizens can communicate with each other. The Union also promotes the use of regional or minority languages which are not official EU languages, but which are spoken by up to 50 million people in the member countries, and as such form part of our cultural heritage.

The EU as an organisation operates in 23 official languages since the last enlargement of 2007. Each country decides, when joining the European Union, which of its national languages it wishes to be used as an official EU language or languages.

Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is enshrined in the **European Charter of Fundamental Rights** adopted by EU leaders in 2000. It covers not only the 20 official languages of the Union but also the many regional and minority languages spoken by segments of its population.

There are said to be about 150 of these, spoken by up to 50 million people, but the exact number depends on how you define a language (as opposed to a dialect, for example).

- Languages specific to a region which may be wholly or partially in one or more member states. This would cover languages like Basque, Breton, Catalan, Frisian, Sardinian, Welsh and so on.

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<sup>31</sup> European Commission, *Many tongues, one family - Languages in the European Union*, Directorate-General for Press and Communication, Brussels, July 2004

- Languages spoken by a minority in one state but which are official languages in another EU country. This definition covers, for example, German in southern Denmark, French in the Vallée d’Aoste in northern Italy, Hungarian in Slovakia, etc.
- Non-territorial languages such as those of Roma or Jewish communities (Romany and Yiddish), or Armenian.

The notion of regional and minority languages does not include dialects of any of the official languages, or any of the languages spoken by immigrant communities in the European Union

#### *Non-indigenous languages*

A wide variety of languages from other parts of the world are spoken by immigrant communities in EU countries.

Turkish is spoken as a first language by an estimated 2% of the population in Belgium and the western part of Germany and by 1% in the Netherlands. Other widely-used migrant languages include Maghreb Arabic (mainly in France and Belgium), Urdu, Bengali and Hindi spoken by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent in the United Kingdom, while Balkan languages are spoken in many parts of the EU by migrants and refugees who have left the region as a result of the recent wars and unrest there.

In general, these ‘non-indigenous’ languages are not given formal status or recognition in EU countries and they are not covered by EU language-teaching programmes. However, many national and local authorities provide classes to help immigrants learn the language of their adopted country and thus integrate into the workforce, the local community and national life in general. Being residents in an EU country, they also benefit from European Union social and regional development programmes.

Many immigrant communities in the EU have been in place for several generations now and their members are bilingual, at ease both in the local language and in that of their community.

Each year, the Council of Europe, with the support of the European Union, organises a European Day of Languages on 26 September. The slogan chosen for 2004 was Pack an extra language in your luggage. Launched in 2001, the number of events taking place on this day has risen steadily each time.

The idea behind the European Day of Languages is to raise public awareness of the importance of language learning in an increasingly interdependent Europe. The event recognises that linguistic diversity is one of Europe’s strengths and that language learning can spread tolerance and mutual understanding.

#### **4. key issue of intercultural mediation – promoting equality of chances**

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All<sup>32</sup> has led the way to a bolder strategy to fight against discrimination in the European Union. It has aimed to: make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination – irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual

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<sup>32</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm)

orientation ; promote equal opportunities for all and launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals. Migrants are key targets in this context.

The question of social coeducation (“mixité”) is a key issue. The action of intercultural mediation has been decisive in the field of prevention “public safety” and defence of rights. It has insisted on new needs and new social practices.

It is remaining an institutions’ demand rather than an individuals’ demand. This is raising the question of recognition. Mediation may have raised some suspicion among migrants who may see mediators as representatives of institutions.

Mediators play the role of go-between between two worlds, allowing another perspective, other references on migration issues but also on public policies to help and support migrants. Their position of third person impartial and pathway between two worlds are the main characteristics of their job. They facilitate communication between two worlds and two different visions and so allow a better understanding.

Most of the time with foreign roots, cultural mediators have experienced the situation of being migrants and are better aware to communicate with migrants families. As they have succeeded their integration process, they are also legitimate and heard.

With migrants arrive new customs, new values and traditions that must be respected. The cultural mediator is playing a role to reveal, explain and value these new approaches. Cultural mediation is a process aiming at enhancing social integration, living together, meeting and gathering people with different backgrounds. It is allowing citizens to be real actors and to find solutions to solve the difficulties they are facing. The more independent and autonomous they are to solve their own problems, the better the cultural mediation is. Autonomy is a key issue for migrants.

Mediators are very careful about relational codes used in societies and must adapt their behaviour to these codes. Moreover, they are faced with acculturation process whose main characteristic is to find the “easy way” in each culture and so avoid any obligation or duty. This “run away” attitude is quite common. The ability to speak different languages may be a key point but also a false proximity with people. Speaking the language doesn’t mean understanding or being on their side. It could also be an obstacle to a professional approach. The native language spoken by the migrants must be a tool but not the main vector of communication to respect a neutral approach.

The cultural mediator shouldn’t be associated to any identified community to be free to act and work with people from various backgrounds. Cultural mediators are frequently faced with family conflicts, involving generation gap problems that might be increased with the mixing of other cultural values.

## **Module 9 - Intercultural mediation and Policy in the field of immigration and Integration, main actors of migration**

### **Content**

1. From immigration to integration
2. a European perspective : public policies in the field of immigration and Integration :
3. a European perspective : from immigration to integration
4. a comparative perspective : public policies in the field of immigration and Integration – reports of Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland
5. a comparative perspective : main actors in the field of national, regional and local services - reports of Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland
6. the main legal references in the field of Migration in Europe

### **Main recommendations**

1. the notions of immigration and integration are different but closely linked, they have to be clearly précised
2. Intercultural mediation is to be understood in the context of the public policy in the field of integration and immigration
3. both European and national levels are important
4. The decision making process in matter of immigration is a key point as all the relations between migrants and institutions depend on it

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Discussions on the knowledge on migration
- ◆ Concrete examples to be found through Internet
- ◆ national reports proposed by the TIPS partners
- ◆ Last press release (both national and European press)
- ◆ Personal examples of intercultural mediators

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## 1. Immigration versus integration

A definition for migration proposed in the *Oxford Concise dictionary of Politics* is the following:

*“the permanent movement of individuals or groups from one place to another. Migration is of course a basic fact of human history”*.<sup>33</sup>

A definition for integration proposed by the High Council for Integration (France) is the following :

*“integration consists in encouraging active participation to society among all women and men meant to live altogether in our country, accepting without inner restriction that specificities such as culture might remain, but focussing on similarities and common points in equity of rights and duties, to ensure social cohesion”*<sup>34</sup>.

A main concern of the European Union has been to exchange experience on migration politics and practices, to bring different interests, views and perspectives. Migration is to be considered in two levels :

- ❖ a macro-level perspective closely linked to policy-making processes : legislation, institutionalization of migration policy, strategies of inclusion of immigrants, security concerns, human rights issues) ;
- ❖ a micro-level perspective to raise and answer questions about migrants’ everyday life.

“A thriving Europe needs active citizens, living together in integrated societies”<sup>35</sup>. Immigrants are more and more numerous in Europe. Integration has become a key issue for most of our European countries. “Two processes are critical to improving immigrants’ outcomes: the elimination of inequalities, and the acquisition of competences. These challenges are at the heart of integration policies in Europe”<sup>36</sup>.

Immigration and integration may be opposed in the ways they are presented :

- ❖ short term strategy : security approach, struggle against illegal migrants, human traffic, restrictive legislation towards nationals from third country ;
- ❖ long term strategy : integration approach, inclusion and social cohesion, facilitating every day life and long stay in the host countries.

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<sup>33</sup> Lain McLean , *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996’

<sup>34</sup> High Council for Integration, “Integration, the French way” , Paris, 1993

<sup>35</sup> Niessen (Jan), Schibel (Yongmi ), MPG, *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*, European Commission, Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security, Second edition, May 2007

## 2. From a national to a European competence - European perspective - Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997 <sup>37</sup>

With the coming into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, Community competence was firmly established in the areas of immigration and asylum. From being a matter for inter-governmental co-ordination under the “third pillar” arrangements, responsibility for developing policy was moved to the “first pillar” with a programme of action adopted by the Council in order to establish progressively an area of freedom, security and justice (Articles 61-63).

In October 1999, the elements of a common EU asylum and immigration policy were agreed by the European Council in the Tampere Conclusions which, together with the Action Plan approved by the Council in Vienna in 1998, formed the basis of a work programme for the Commission and the Member States.

The European Council stressed the need for rapid decisions on « *the conditions for admission and residence of third country nationals based on a shared assessment of the economic and demographic developments within the Union as well as the situation in the countries of origin* » but didn't give any indication on the implementation of such a policy.

There are strongly divergent views in the Member States on the admission and integration of third country nationals. It concerns not only the conditions for the admission and residence of third country nationals for employment and other reasons, but also standards and procedures for the issue of long-term visas and residence permits, the definition of a set of uniform rights for third country nationals and the criteria and conditions under which third country nationals might be allowed to settle and work in any Member State together with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The underlying principle of an EU immigration policy has been that persons admitted should enjoy broadly the same rights and responsibilities as EU nationals but that these may be incremental and related to the length of stay provided for in their entry conditions. The measures under article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam to counteract racism and xenophobia have been vigorously pursued and action to integrate migrants into our societies has been seen as the essential corollary of the admission policy. At the same time the fight against illegal immigration has been intensified with priority to combating trafficking and smuggling. Finally the policy has been developed and implemented in partnership with countries of origin and transit.

The importance of the fair treatment of third country nationals means to ensure that migrants benefit from comparable living and working conditions to those of nationals. Failure to provide the resources necessary to ensure the successful integration of such migrants and their families will in the longer term exacerbate social problems which may lead to exclusion and related problems such as delinquency and criminality.

While many legally resident migrants have integrated successfully and make an important contribution to the economic and social development of their host countries, social exclusion affects migrants disproportionately and they are often the victims of racism and xenophobia.

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<sup>37</sup> Commission of the European Communities, **Communication on a Community Immigration Policy**, COM(2000) 757 final, Brussels, 22.11.2000

A legal framework has been proposed by the Commission to fight discrimination and xenophobia. However, it is also essential to create a welcoming society and to recognise that integration is a two-way process involving adaptation on the part of both the immigrant and of the host society.

The European Union is a pluralistic society enriched by a variety of cultural and social traditions, which will in the future become even more diverse. It means a respect for cultural and social differences (Diversity principle) but also for the fundamental shared principles and values such as respect for human rights and human dignity, appreciation of the value of pluralism and the recognition that membership of society is based on a series of rights but brings with it a number of responsibilities for all of its members be they nationals or migrants (Active Citizenship principle).

The Charter of Fundamental Rights should provide a reference for the development of the concept of civic citizenship in a particular Member State (comprising a common set of core rights and obligations) for third country nationals. Successful integration policies need to start as soon as possible after admission and rely heavily on partnership between the migrants and the host society. In order to promote integration, settlement packages has been developed for all new migrants tailored to their individual needs (including language training, information on political and social structures, accessing services etc with special attention to the needs of migrant women and children). It is recognised, however, that integration is a long-term process and special attention needs to be paid to second generation migrants.

While integration is primarily the role of Member States, governments share this responsibility with civil society notably at the local level where integration measures has been implemented. The key to success is the establishment of micro-level actions based on partnerships between all the many actors who need to be involved: regional and local authorities, political leaders (especially those of the larger towns where many migrants settle), providers of education, healthcare, social welfare, the police, the media, the social partners, non-governmental organisations and migrants themselves and their associations.

### **3. From immigration to integration - European perspective (2007-2013)**<sup>38</sup>

The third Annual report on Migration and Integration published in September 2007, gives the new framework for the European policy in the field of Migration and Integration

In January 2006, the third-country nationals residing in the EU were about 18.5 million, i.e. 3.8% of the total population of almost 493 million. Immigration is still the main element in the European Union demographic growth and positive net migration is recorded in most Member States. Net migration, ranging between 0.5 and 1 million per year for most of the 1990s, has increased to levels ranging between 1.5 and 2 million since 2002.

The typology of entry differs widely between Member States. While family reunification is important in some countries, like Austria, France or Sweden, other Member States, like Ireland, Spain, Portugal and UK, had a high percentage of work-related immigration.

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<sup>38</sup> Commission of the European Union, **Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration**, Brussels, 11.9.2007, COM(2007) 512 final.

Important regularisations took place in Spain while France, Germany and The Netherlands opted for limited regularisations for specific groups of immigrants. In Spain and Italy, the process of regulation has come to an end in the past two years.

The most numerous groups of third-country nationals in the EU come from Turkey (2.3 million), Morocco (1.7 million), Albania (0.8 million) and Algeria (0.6 million). However, the number of foreign-born citizens in some Member States, like France, Sweden, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, is higher than the number of third-country nationals as many immigrants acquired the citizenship of the host country.

Integration of third-country nationals is a process of mutual accommodation by both the host societies and the immigrants and an essential factor in realising the full benefits of immigration. The link between legal migration policies and integration strategies needs to be continually reinforced. Consolidating the legal framework on the conditions for entry and stay of third-country nationals is essential for the development of a coherent EU approach to integration. Legislative instruments are already in place concerning family reunification, long-term residents and qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as persons in need of international protection. They recognise rights such as, depending on the legislative instrument, access to employment and to education/training and equality of treatment.

EU legislation on anti-discrimination supports this legal framework. In the Policy Plan on Legal Migration, Commission has announced proposals for a general framework directive defining the basic rights of immigrant workers in the EU and for a directive on the conditions of entry and residence of highly skilled immigrants. Beneficiaries of international protection also require tailored integration measures owing to their particular situation.

Different instruments have been proposed so far by the European Union to support Member States' integration policies ; some of them are specific others are more transversal.

Since 2003, the Commission has been co-financing trans-national integration projects that promote cooperation between Member States, regional/local authorities and other stakeholders under the INTI Programme. In this framework, a European project called *Involve* has been initiated by the European Centre for Volunteering (ECV, Brussels) in 7 countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom. It was meant to stress the positive impact of involvement of their country nationals in volunteering as a means of better integration<sup>39</sup>.

In the framework programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-2013, the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals aims to create a new form of solidarity to promote Member States' efforts in enabling immigrants to fulfil conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration. The European Refugee Fund, under the same programme, supports tailored integration measures for people falling within its scope including refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection whose stay in the EU is of a lasting and stable nature.

At last but not least, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Community initiative EQUAL **have** offered a pool of innovative good practices to prevent and fight labour market

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<sup>39</sup> European Volunteer Centre, « Involve », Final report, Brussels, 2006 ; <http://www.involve-europe.eu>

discrimination of immigrants. Increasing immigrants' participation in employment and thereby strengthening their social integration is a specific priority of the new ESF (2007-2013). Moreover, the new PROGRESS programme (2007-2013), will also support the implementation of the anti-discrimination and gender equality principles.

Under the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006), the European Commission had also financed transnational exchange actions including migrants. The Mem-Vol project<sup>40</sup> initiated by Inbas Sozialforschung (Germany) in 2003 gathered 6 countries : Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom. It was a first approach to study whether volunteering might be a means of integration - societal, cultural and on the labour market - and of empowerment and development of the civil society. Therefore promoting and facilitating volunteering and self-help of migrants and ethnic minorities should be an important objective to combat social exclusion and poverty.

Regional policy instruments also address issues of migration and integration, especially in urban areas. The URBAN II Community initiative had a strong focus on social inclusion in disadvantaged urban areas, the URBACT II programme (2007-2013) for the exchange of experience on urban development issues takes into account specific diversity.

#### **4. Main references of legal reference in the field of Migration in a European perspective**

Since 1997, where Migration as become a main European competence, any documents have been published by the European Commission on this topic. Here is the list of the main references :

1. European Commission, COM(2000) 757 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on a Community Immigration Policy, Brussels, 22.11.2000
2. European Commission, COM(2001)387 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an open Method of Coordination for the Community Immigration Policy, Brussels, 11.7.2001
3. European Commission, COM (2003) 336 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on immigration, integration and employment, Brussels, 3.6.2003
4. European Commission, COM(2005) 389 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union, Brussels, 1.9.2005
5. European Commission , COM(2005) 390 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Migration and Development: Some concrete orientations, Brussels, 1.9.2005

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<sup>40</sup> [www.mem-volunteering.net](http://www.mem-volunteering.net).

6. European Commission, COM(2005) 669 final, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION, Policy Plan on Legal Migration, {SEC(2005)1680}, Brussels, 21.12.2005

7. European Commission, COM(2007) 512 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, **Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration**, Brussels, 11.9.2007

8. Migration Policy Group (MPG), Handbook for Policy makers and practitioners, European Commission, Brussels, November 2004

9. Migration Policy Group (MPG), Handbook for Policy makers and practitioners, European Commission, Second Edition, Brussels, May 2007

### **5. A national perspective : public policies in the field of immigration and Integration (Case of Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland)**

On the basis of the 5 national reports, the intercultural mediators will work on the definition given to different notions:

- ❖ definition of migrants/immigrants/foreigners in each country
- ❖ finding a transversal definition : a European perspective

On the basis of the national reports, the IM will work on the tradition of migration in the different countries :

- ❖ typology of countries : immigration tradition ? emigration tradition ?
- ❖ new models : from emigration to immigration ? are they thinking of other examples in Europe ?

On the basis of the national reports, the legal framework in each country:

- ❖ what are the last laws passed in each country concerning migration ? are they recent ? are they numerous ? what are their reactions ?
- ❖ what are the main characteristics of this legal framework ? the key issues they could see ?
- ❖ is there a change in the last laws passed ? if yes, are they linked to a change in the government (new political majority) ?

There are different patterns of migrants:

- ❖ forced migration : war or starvation (refugees)
- ❖ ethic migration : religious or political reasons (asylum seekers)
- ❖ illegal migration : trafficking (economic slaves or prostitutes)
- ❖ economic migration : circular labour
- ❖ life cycles migration : moving at retirement to a warmer climate, getting married, having children

on the basis of the national reports : what are the more numerous migrants

The different profiles of “legal” migrants:

- ❖ workers (labour market) ;
- ❖ families (family reunification) ;
- ❖ students (studies abroad) ;
- ❖ refugees (asylum).

Question : On the basis of their experience: is the intercultural mediation different as far as the status of the migrant is concerned ?

## **6. Main actors: national, regional and local services**

On the basis of the national reports sent

⇒ main structures (status, role, address and key persons) : 1 page for each structure, minimum of 5 organisations

question 1 : what are the main ministries or central public bodies relevant for migration in your country :

⇒ for instance in France : Direction for Population and Migrations (DPM) ; Commission for housing of immigrant populations (CILPI) ; Committee for Integration (CII) ; Committee for Control of Immigration (CICI)

question 2 : have you heard of any consultative bodies in the field of immigration and integration

⇒ for instance in France : National Council for Integration of immigrant populations (Conseil National pour l’Intégration des Populations Immigrées-CNIPI) ; Commission for refugees’ appeal (CRR) ; High Council for Intégration (HCI) ; Statistical Observatory for Immigration and Integration (OSII) ; High Council for Population and Family (HCPF) ; High Authority for Struggle against discriminations and Equality (HALDE)

question 3 : do you think of any other Public bodies

⇒ for instance in France : National city for the story of immigration (CNHI) ; Office for the International Migrations (OMI) ; Action Funds for Support to Integration and Struggle against Discriminations (FASILD)

questions 4 : what are the main associations relevant in the field of migration and integration in your country ?

⇒ for instance in France : Social Service to Immigrants (SSAE) ; Association Social Service Family Migrants (ASSFAM) ; Association France Land of Asylum (FTDA)

## Module 10- Intercultural mediation and defence of rights

### Content

1. Integration and the citizenship principle
2. Citizenship and membership in the European perspective
3. The key issue of Human rights (International convention, European convention, Chart of fundamental rights...)
4. The key issue of civic and civil rights – examples of European projects in the field of social inclusion

### Main recommendations

1. reminding of the main notion of citizenship ; being aware of their status is necessary for migrants
2. A key issue is to remind them of the main references in the field of human rights (both international and European levels)
3. a focus could be made on civic and civil rights
4. Speaking the language of migrants is sometimes useful but might also be a trap (as it could create a false proximity) ; speaking a common language understood by both sides is the best way to solve conflicts

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Working out « pro » and « con » profiles as a background for individual decisions
- ◆ Presentation and discussion of case examples, possibly based on a role-play
- ◆ Collecting practical know-how of participants, discuss different approaches and design general guidelines

### Sources :

- ❖ Breidbach (Stephan), *Plurilingualism, Democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English*, , University of Bremen, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2001
- ❖ The Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols
- ❖ The "European Convention on Human Rights"
- ❖ The Chart of Fundamental rights
- ❖ Mem-Vol project, initiated by Inbas Sozialforschung (2003) , in 6 countries.
- ❖ Involve project, initiated by CEV (2005-2006), in 7 countries.

## **1. Integrating migrants in the social system of the host country — Citizenship principle**

The definition of citizenship given by the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics (OCDP) is the following :

“the status of being a citizen, usually determined by law. In the republican tradition, qualifications for citizenship are associated with particular rights and duties of citizens, and a commitment to equality between citizens is compatible with considerable exclusivity in the qualifying conditions. (.../...) In general qualifications for citizenship reflect a conception of the purposes of the political community and a view about which persons are able to contribute to, or enjoy the benefits of, the common good or the freedom of the city.”

On the basis of the OCDP, what is the difference between citizenship and membership ? Since individuals participate in a common life, they have rights and duties as a consequence. We would have moral obligations to another because of that shared existence, whether what is shared be characterized as economic activity, culture or political obligation. There may be an uncertain connection between the ideas of membership of a community and citizenship of a polity. Membership of a community may be asserted as a qualification for citizenship. The common good would be the main value. The main debate lies on the legal status versus the empirical conditions.

Membership/Citizenship/Inclusion<sup>41</sup> : The initial definition of citizenship as full and equal membership in a liberal democratic polity suggests alternative principles for allocation of nationality. Full membership does not only mean a range of rights but also a comprehensive inclusion of people. But how can we determine who is included ? When the determination follows descent or cultural belonging, migrants will inevitably generate mixed cases. An alternative would be an allocation of right and legal status.

A right to citizenship should then be inclusive and optional in the same way as the rights of citizenship. The elements of this would be a protection of statelessness resulting from denaturalization, the individual right to the citizenship of the birth country or resident country. And finally, a free choice for taking over the new citizenship. Membership cannot, as a democratic principle, be a dictation of majority. It is more an “admitting” to political decisions by virtue of their permanent resident in the territory.

Furthermore, the rights and the wishes of emigrants have to be respected and this implies a free option to adopt the citizenship of one’s state of resident. In some countries, migrants’ reason not to naturalize is the fear to lose their rights in their countries of origin or react to ethnic discrimination. On the other hand, privileged migrants, such as EU citizens, see naturalization as a very slight improve of their position. An answer to this could be an equalization in all basic liberties and social rights as local vote and access to high public offices. Immigrants would then no longer naturalize in order to escape legal discrimination to which they are exposed as aliens. In this view migration is not “a stone in the way” but a test case for the voluntary character of membership in liberal polity. The basic norm for liberal democracy is equal respect, not equal treatment. And this can, therefore, be done only by differentiating both, formal membership and rights.

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<sup>41</sup> BAUBÖCK, Rainer “Recombinant Citizenship”, Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna, 1999.

## 2. Citizenship in the European context : European Union versus Council of Europe<sup>42</sup>

Citizenship is not a recent concept it has nevertheless recently gained renewed interest in areas such as political philosophy, 'New' political programmes, the imminent crisis of the institution of the nation-state and its particular version of the welfare state, and, finally, the discourse of European integration.

The term 'citizenship' calls to the fore a multitude of contexts and possible meanings. Peoples of Europe possess a great variety of understandings. It may be sufficiently deeply rooted within Europe's intellectual and political history to make it a likely candidate to function as a 'political heuristic' with its apparently strong link with the discourse of liberalism. It hence places much emphasis on the individual as an active agent in society and thus on the processual aspect of societal life. 'Citizenship' thus functions as a 'gravitational centre' around which new modes of social integration for the people in Europe may develop

This may help to explain why, for example, both the European Union in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht and the Council of Europe in the "Education for Democratic Citizenship Project" launched in 1997 adopt the term of citizenship to mark a new phase for the political agenda of European integration<sup>43</sup>. At first glance, the European Union and the Council of Europe draw on different concepts of citizenship.

- in the European Union context, 'European Citizenship' takes as a starting point citizenship as a legal institution which needs gradual substantiation ;
- in the Council of Europe context, the concept of citizenship – on the basis of the principle of participatory democracy – is considered as an educational matter which refers to the development of individual capacities, competences and attitudes by the people in Europe ; it is though based on a much broader understanding of the field of political and social inclusion which extends beyond the legal and the legislative.

These two concepts of 'citizenship' are, however, not mutually exclusive. Legal entitlements are necessarily hollow if people are only insufficiently able to claim and exercise their rights or remain excluded from social and cultural capital needed to access social and cultural provisions entailed in these rights.

There is common ground in at least two important aspects:

- firstly that a relevant concept of citizenship addresses active individuals who participate in the shaping process of the polity,
- and secondly in the assumption that 'Europe' should become more integrated, which means that it is seen as a viable setting for a polity to be shaped.

In this perspective, migrants even without the nationality of the host country are to be considered as real citizen and not as "second class citizens".

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<sup>42</sup> Breidbach (Stephan), *Plurilingualism, Democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English*, University of Bremen, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2001

<sup>43</sup> in neither of the founding documents of the Council of Europe or the European Economic Community (before it became the European Union), is the term 'citizenship' explicitly mentioned.

### 3. main references in Human rights

According to Soysal (1996)<sup>44</sup>, “In the new [post-national] model, the membership of individuals is not solely based on the criteria of nationality; their membership and rights are legitimated by the global ideologies of human rights. Thus, universal personhood replaces nationhood; and universal human rights replace national rights. The justification for the state’s obligation to foreign populations goes beyond the nation state itself. The rights and claims of individuals are legitimated by ideologies grounded in a transnational community, through international codes, conventions and ws on human rights, independent of their citizenship in a nation state. Hence, the individual transcends the citizen.”

There are different rights : legal, political, social, cultural... The migrants should be aware of the main following reference :

1. the 1951 Geneva convention and the 1967 New Work protocol
2. the 1950 European Convention for Human rights
3. the 2000 Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols are part of international humanitarian law – a whole system of legal safeguards that cover the way wars may be fought and the protection of individuals. They specifically protect people who do not take part in the fighting (civilians, medics, chaplains, aid workers) and those who can no longer fight (wounded, sick and shipwrecked troops, prisoners of war). The Conventions and their Protocols call for measures to be taken to prevent (or put an end to) what are known as "grave breaches"; those responsible for breaches must be punished. The Geneva Conventions have been acceded to by 194 States and enjoy universal acceptance<sup>45</sup>.

The "European Convention on Human Rights" sets forth a number of fundamental rights and freedoms (right to life, prohibition of torture, prohibition of slavery and forced labour, right to liberty and security, right to a fair trial, no punishment without law, right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, right to marry, right to an effective remedy, prohibition of discrimination). More rights are granted by additional protocols to the Convention (and its Protocols 1, 4, 6, 7, 12 and 13. Parties undertake to secure these rights and freedoms to everyone within their jurisdiction. The Convention also establishes an international enforcement machinery : the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It deals with individual and inter-State petitions<sup>46</sup>.

The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights sets out in a single text, for the first time in the European Union's history, the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the EU. These rights are divided into six sections: Dignity ; Freedoms ; Equality ; Solidarity ; Citizens' rights ; Justice. They are based, in particular, on the fundamental rights and freedoms recognised by the European Convention on Human Rights, the constitutional traditions of the EU Member States, the Council of

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<sup>44</sup> quoted by Stephan Breidbach, *Plurilingualism, Democratic citizenship in Europe and the role of English*, op cit.

<sup>45</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, Switzerland, <http://www.icrc.org/>

<sup>46</sup> European Council, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Summaries/Html/005.htm>

Europe's Social Charter, the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers and other international conventions to which the European Union or its Member States are parties. The issue of the Charter's legal status - i.e. whether to make it legally binding by incorporating it into the TEU - was raised by the Cologne European Council, which originally launched the Charter initiative. The Convention drew up the draft Charter with a view to its possible incorporation, and the European Parliament voted in favour of incorporation. The Nice European Council (see Annex I to the Presidency conclusions) decided to consider the question of the Charter's legal status during the general debate on the future of the European Union, which was initiated on 1 January 2001<sup>47</sup>.

Migrants should find in this three main texts, the basis to be aware of their rights, in order to consider themselves as full citizen, whatever their status, conditions of life or work conditions.

This is most important for cultural mediators to know these legal basis on both International and European levels as they will give migrants self-confidence in defending their rights. Moreover it should also give them the critical approach to act as active citizens and not just as "passive" citizens. The legal basis are important in the everyday life of any citizen.

An example of best practice - the Citizenship Foundation

In 1984 solicitor Andrew Phillips (now Lord Phillips of Sudbury) persuaded the Law Society to fund an experimental project in association with the National Curriculum Council. This was the Law in Education Project.

This landmark project developed teaching materials to introduce students to their legal rights and responsibilities and the role of law in our democratic society. Although being a citizen necessarily involves knowing one's legal rights in everyday situations and something of the legal principles underpinning them, it has not been common practice to teach law in schools as part of a basic social education.

Besides developing knowledge and understanding of the law, the materials expected students to engage critically with the content and purpose of the legislation, encouraging critical thinking and democratic discussion. Concepts such as rights, duties, responsibilities, justice, law, power, and authority were introduced.

Based on the achievement of the Law in Education Project, the Citizenship Foundation was established in 1989, and began by broadening its emphasis on law-related education into mock trial and youth parliament competitions. New projects were begun, looking at primary citizenship, moral education, political literacy and work with alienated groups such as young offenders.

The Foundation lobbied with others for the inclusion of Citizenship on the National Curriculum, convinced of its fundamental importance in underpinning all areas of public life. It recognised that 'citizenship education' is sufficiently different from 'social education', and must include every aspect of public life, such as law, politics, morality, philosophy and economics.

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<sup>47</sup> European Parliament, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm)

Today, the Citizenship Foundation's work is recognised both nationally and internationally.

#### **4. The key issue of civic and civil rights – examples of European projects in the field of involvement, social inclusion and citizenship**

It is one thing to know your rights; it is another thing to use them in practice. Cultural mediators could also play a major role towards migrants in order to have a constructive and positive state of mind. They could enhance among them the idea of active citizenship.

Two European projects may be mentioned in this perspective :

- Involve <sup>48</sup> : migrants' involvement in voluntary and civic activities as a means of integration (2004-2006) ; a European project initiated by the European Center for Volunteering (Brussels) under the INTI programme in 7 countries ;
- MEM-VOL <sup>49</sup> : Migrants and Ethnic Minority Volunteering (2003); a European exchange study initiated by Inbas Sozialforschung (Germany) on volunteering as a means of social, cultural and professional integration and of empowerment and development of the civil society, under the Transnational programme for Social Cohesion in 6 countries.

The Mem-Vol aims at enhancing volunteering as a means of integration - societal, cultural and on the labour market - and as a means of empowerment and development of the civil society. Little is known about volunteering of migrants and ethnic minorities, although kinship and neighbourhood networks and ethnic communities are in the focus of research. Volunteering -in favour of the own community or for different groups - might be a means of integration into society in a double sense: e.g. by labour market counselling to facilitate employment or by educational training for children of foreign origin and by developing new skills and qualifications through volunteering. Migrants and ethnic minorities suffer in all member states of the European Union from high unemployment. Therefore promoting and facilitating volunteering and self-help of migrants and ethnic minorities should be an important objective to combat social exclusion and poverty.

The main topic of the Involve project is migrants' involvement in voluntary and civic activities as a means for better integration. The project is also addressing the lack of knowledge about migrant volunteering including third country nationals' concepts of, and attitude towards, volunteering and national policies & actions that facilitate these activities. It has nurtured a trans-European network; allowed for increased dialogue between stakeholders; promoted identification, exchange and dissemination of knowledge and best practice; and has made recommendations for policy changes. The main topics addressed are : the role of migrant "self" organisations ; the barriers that prevent migrants from volunteering ; the role of national and EU policies & programmes to support migrant volunteer involvement ; the role of the media ; the role of local host communities

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<sup>48</sup> CEV (leader, Belgium) ; FSCV (Spain), CIVIQ (Netherlands), Menedek (Hungary), Iriv (France), University of Vienna (Austria), Volunteering England and IRV (England) ; [www.involve-europe.eu](http://www.involve-europe.eu)

<sup>49</sup> Inbas Sozialforschung (leader, Germany), Volunteer Denmark (Denmark), European Centre (Austria), Iriv (France), IRV (England), Community Partnerships (Netherlands) ; [www.mem-volunteering.net](http://www.mem-volunteering.net)

partnership models between stakeholders ; the attitude of migrants towards volunteering and barriers perceived by themselves.

These two projects have been quite challenging in enhancing an issue important in the field of migration : changing the perspective, making the migrants subjects and no more objects of action or policy towards them.

Thanks to the Involve project, examples of best practices have been selected to focus on the migrants involvement in mainstream organisations.

The GeMIDE project – Gesellschaftliches Engagement von Migrantinnen, Migranten und Deutschen (civic activities of migrants and Germans)<sup>50</sup> promoted by the Bund Turkish European Employers' Association is meant to promote integration, participation in civil society, promoting and fostering self-help of migrants and ethnic Germans. The slogan of the gEMIDE project is “integration does not start with politics but in everyday life”. Through their involvement in civic activities migrants are empowered to participate in society. Main elements are: no paternalistic approach, volunteers are colleagues, not clients ; communication at eye level ; involvement of families. It is a low threshold project. All participants are considered as equal. Migrants are encouraged to bring in their knowledge and to share experiences. They are placed in projects and initiatives where they come into contact with the German population to promote intercultural learning and to overcome barriers in everyday life. Migrants volunteers are networking with local civil services and other initiatives, participating in the nationwide network on civic activities (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement BBE), practically oriented language courses, cultural activities.

In France, Local committees for citizens, meant to integrate foreigners (mainly non-European national)s, were created after the so-called “Loi Vaillant” passed in 2002, aimed at promoting local democracy and citizenship. The main idea was to encourage the involvement in the city life of non-European foreigners living in districts of big cities (over 80 000 inhabitants) . Members are elected for 3 years and must participate in regular meetings, and work on specific matters relating to day to day life in their district. Commissions are often created, mostly dedicated to Education, Health, Culture and Leisure, Access to rights and Women. In addition, some concrete projects were launched: mediation between parents and teachers, annual day for foreign residents' citizenship; citizen campaign for the right to vote in municipal election. Non European residents have the opportunity to be associated more closely with local life in their city. Their awareness and understanding of different public services is improved. Their voice is heard in a specific context, through regular meetings with representatives of the municipality and representatives of associations.

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<sup>50</sup> Involve project – Germany case studies- Susanne Huth and Duygu Yücel (INBAS-Sozialforschung), 2006

## Module 11 - Intercultural mediation and social housing

### Content

1. Social housing – in Europe – a key issue
2. Main actors and actions lead
3. Types of conflicts and problems - Intercultural mediation in a social housing
4. Examples of best practices

### Main recommendations

1. Being aware of the different types of co-operation between migrants and institutions
2. Thinking of the existing relations between migrants and intercultural mediators
3. Gaining knowledge on tools and methods to deal with arising problems

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Role play
- ◆ Interviews

### Sources :

- ❖ Ghekiere (Laurent), The development of social housing in the European Union, Collection Europe, Dexia with Cecodhas, Union sociale pour l'habitat, Paris, 2007.
- ❖ Involve project , initiated by CEV (Belgium) in 7 countries (2005-2006)

## 1. Social Housing – a key issue in Europe- Policy in the field of social lodging<sup>51</sup>

In its various forms in the European Union social housing is presently accommodating about 22 million households and its development at the crossroads of general interest defined by the Member States and the general interest of the European Community is again on the political agenda. Housing supply is a common priority of many European governments from London to Rome, from Madrid to Paris, no matter their political colour and regardless of the achieved economic and social development in the new Member States, as well as in the old ones.

In the European capitals, in governmental programs, local policies, in electoral campaigns, and even at the very heart of the European institutions, namely the Council and the European Parliament, the issue of the development of social housing is openly addressed. The European Union, and notably the Council composed of the 27 Heads of State and Government, in its Council on “Employment, social policy, health and consumers”, has made the issue of homelessness and exclusion a priority in the context of the strategy of social inclusion and social protection of the European Union. Under the British presidency a resolution was adopted for social housing to become eligible for the 2007-2013 cohesion policy, in the regional policy of the EU. Moreover, on May 10th, 2007, the European Parliament adopted a report on housing policy and regional policy requesting the European Commission to deepen the issue of the Community-wide housing crisis and its impact and to commit itself to adopt a “*European Declaration on Housing*”.

The exclusion of disadvantaged persons from access to decent housing is, more than ever, a burning issue in the European Union illustrated by the decisions of the Council regarding the European strategy for social inclusion. Nevertheless, the process of marginalisation is also reaching other vulnerable social groups like young people in general, poor employees, *key workers*, young families, elderly people, single-parent families, families with many children. Migrants and their families are first concerned by social housing.

The flexibility of the labour market and, as a consequence, the weakness and discontinuity of income for an increasing number of families, do little to enable them in coping with the requirements of real estate markets given their available spending capacities. Financed with historically low interest rates over recent years and by a solvent demand, yet now increasing and with longer credit periods, the housing markets do not seem to respond to the signals of moderation emitted by the European Central Bank and the other central banks.

Precisely this global – economic and social – character of the postulation of housing accessibility brings the issue onto the political agenda. Given the development of the social demand to cope with, and the structural character of, the explicative factors of market failure, the question arises again in the Member States as to how the perimeter of intervention of social housing can be defined.

As an element of solidarity and redistribution of income, the service of general interest “housing” can’t stay in an unchangeable perimeter nor based on the conflict between general interest and European Community interest. The actual quality of the fulfilment of missions of

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<sup>51</sup> Ghekiere (Laurent), *The development of social housing in the European Union*, Collection Europe, Dexia with Cecodhas, Union sociale pour l’habitat, Paris, 2007.

general interest by the commissioned bodies will depend on its capacity to adapt to its environment and to the type of needs to be fulfilled in terms of housing.

## 2. Actors of social housing <sup>52</sup> –

The history of social housing in Europe is a long one as it has started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The missions entrusted to it over the centuries have changed and it still exists a big diversity of the national situations and the solid local and cultural roots in the systems of social protection and redistribution of the revenues of the Member States.

After its appearance in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the industrial revolution, social housing developed in the majority of the European countries, often launched by private philanthropic or hygienist initiatives to improve the insalubrious housing conditions for the labour force.

The public authorities rapidly took over those private initiatives and gave them a legal framework obviously derived from the cultural and social traditions of the various Member States, which generally remains the basis of public intervention in housing today.

Thus, depending on the level of intervention on the market and the extent of the missions assigned to the social housing sector, one can distinguish between three concepts of social housing in Europe:

- **a residual concept** striving to cope with a clearly outlined social demand that is restricted to the most disadvantaged persons who are generally excluded from a housing market characterized by a strong predominance of homeowner occupation and a non regulated private rental market;
- **a generalist concept**, also targeting a social demand but to a larger extent and open to all families with limited resources. Due to the large extent of public intervention, this concept actually has an impact on the global housing supply, namely in terms of quantity and price;
- **a universal concept** intended to guarantee the housing supply for the entire population with both a complementary offer to what the market provides and the regulation of the entire housing market.

The sharing of housing competencies between the various national public authorities also varies from one Member State to the other. But one is observing a thorough movement towards decentralisation of housing policies from the central authorities to the regional and local ones with respect to the definition of social housing, its organisation, its regulation and its funding methods.

The management modalities of social housing are also very different, ranging from direct management by council housing to the provisioning of the service by private enterprises – or even private persons – not specifically dedicated to social housing, but acting within the framework of a set of social obligations, often temporary, which confer the “social character” to the dwelling. However, the most current type of management is still the specialised enterprise dedicated to social housing and entrusted by a public authority, no matter whether it is under public control or not.

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<sup>52</sup> Ghekiere (Laurent), *The development of social housing in the European Union*, Collection Europe, Dexia with Cecodhas, Union sociale pour l’habitat, Paris, 2007.

### **3. Problems and conflicts - Intercultural mediation in social housing**

It is important for cultural mediators to be aware of the national and European policy in the field of social housing to have points of comparison and to be able to bring other views and solutions proposed.

The two main contacts in this field are local authorities which would be legally entitled to dedicate a percentage of the dwelling stocks on their territory to social housing:

- a little more than 20% in Austria ;
- almost 20% in France (not respected in all the cities) ;
- 12 % in Poland ;
- 5% in Italy ;
- inexistent in Greece.

Several conflicts have happened to denounce the poor level of social housing in the city centre or the management of real estate leading to inflation and exclusion of poor income people:

- with local authorities : migrants or foreign people in illegal situation asking for access to social housing ; many actions in this field have been done in France in the past Years with occupation of churches or wild camping in the streets ;
- with private enterprise : illegal occupation of empty dwelling in the centre of the cities, for instance in Paris

In this context, cultural mediators may play the role of negotiators towards migrants to convince them to stop the movement because their action is not legal and because conditions of health and hygiene are not respected after a while (most of the time the “wild camping” is with the children).

Other more casual conflicts may happen due to the bad conditions of living or the phenomenon of ghetto dealing to concentration of many problems:

- delinquency problems : in big social housing such as the modern towers built in the seventies or eighties, drug problems or racket problems with youngsters or the problem of the “collective rapes” in the cellar of such towers ;
- public health problem : insalubrious housing conditions leading to health problem such as the Lead poisoning (due to the presence of lead in the material used in old construction that poisons the water) or the asbestos problem to be denounced and action asked to solve the situation ;

In the first case, cultural mediators should play the role of negotiator with the family of the youngsters involved and the local authority and/or the police. They could also play a major role towards the victims of such felonies.

In the second case, cultural mediators play a major role to express the different sources of problems faced by the family in their housing. It is also due to the fact that the first tenant was a single person or a couple with a child and with the years the number of the people has increased, sometimes to ten people in a flat made for three people. The problem of cohabitation may be a major problem in families.

#### 4. examples of best practices

In the field of voluntary sector, we can find some initiatives meant to defend access to social housing such as the French “Droit au Logement – DAL”. It has organised in the past years all the actions highly spoken about thanks to the media.

Many associations located in difficult areas, in the suburb, have also developed in the past years meant to enhance participation of migrants to the local life. They are no more targets of public policy but main actors. These local associations were created in the very heart of the inner cities in order to enhance this participation to local life, for instance organising once a year a big event, making all the inhabitants participate by preparing food or organising a dance or a music band...

The main idea is to struggle against the hopeless feeling many migrants may have developed when living in social housing where the “natives” may have gone away and only remain the migrants. The development of such kind of “ghettos” is making things even more difficult as they would reinforce the false idea that migrants have been given up by the host society, reinforcing an idea of exclusion. The main idea by enhancing social participation of migrants is meant to change the perspective.

An example of such action of social inclusion is given by Spain<sup>53</sup>, the association “Nkabom Ye Ghana Union” a migrant association willing to promote Ghanaian solidarity, well being and integration in the host society, by participating in community development and social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

The activities are carried out to help maintain group identity, facilitate familiarity with the surrounding environment and life in the community. In general, they are leisure activities with a marked social component, seeking integration through contact and relations with the host community and familiarity with the geography of neighbourhood and surrounding areas.

Events organised include: inauguration of associations inviting all the people in the area to participate ; celebration of Ghana Independence day, presenting cultural aspects such as dress, cuisine, art and history ; participation in and celebration of local festivals, organisation of trips to different areas.

A partnership with a local neighbourhood association emerged. The participation in civic activities with other groups and the intercultural exchange ensured that the organisation is perceived as part of the local community. It has developed the idea of living in the community and being socially integrated with the immediate human and physical space. It is improving the reflection of a commitment to the social community and personal interest in participating in common development.

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<sup>53</sup> Cristina Garcia and Cristina Gomez (Fundar)- Involve project – Case studies for Spain, 2006

## Module 12 - Intercultural mediation and education

### Content

1. the issue of education for migrants – learning for children ; learning for adults
2. Types of conflicts that might happen ; role of the IM - Main actors in education ; the example of school mentoring and alphabetisation

### Main recommendations

1. Being aware of the different types of co-operation between migrants and institutions
2. Thinking of the existing relations between migrants and intercultural mediators
3. Gaining knowledge on tools and methods to deal with arising problems

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Role play
- ◆ Interviews

### Sources

- ❖ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning ,30.12.2006 EN Official Journal of the European Union L 394/13
- ❖ Malarme (Jean-Pierre), Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, Communauté française, Belgium, Cedefop Platform, March 2005
- ❖ Halba (B), School mentoring in Paris, Training course for volunteers, 2005.
- ❖ Oliveira (S), Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Austria, Graz, June 2008

## **1. the issue of education for migrants**

Education is a key issue for migrants. It is the main way to be integrated in the host society and to improve one's skills and competences. It is also the main way for their children to build their personal and professional future.

In the cultural mediation perspective, education integrates two main issues:

- valuing education and experience for adults,
- improving education for children.

### **1.1 learning for adults migrants**

This first issue is focussed on the skills and competences to be acquired by migrants to be fully integrated in the host society. The European Commission has defined key competences<sup>54</sup>.

Competences are defined here as “ a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment”.

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

- 1) Communication in the mother tongue;
- 2) Communication in foreign languages;
- 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- 4) Digital competence;
- 5) Learning to learn;
- 6) Social and civic competences;
- 7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and
- 8) Cultural awareness and expression.

The key competences are all considered equally important, because each of them can contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society. Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another. Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT) is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities.

There are a number of themes that are applied throughout the Reference Framework:

- critical thinking,
- creativity,
- initiative,
- problem solving,
- risk assessment,
- decision taking,
- and constructive management of feelings play a role in all eight key competences.

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<sup>54</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning ,30.12.2006 EN Official Journal of the European Union L 394/13

The first main competence for migrants is of course the linguistic skill, to be able to speak the national language but there is also another type of competence which would deserve a great effort, different from the others, specific to the migrants population. It is called “Meta-competences”, defined as "high-order abilities which have to do with being able to learn, adapt, anticipate and create, rather than with being able to demonstrate that one has the ability to do", can be seen as the result of the process "learning to learn". One can qualify the result of this process by the French expression "savoir-savoir"<sup>55</sup>.

Meta-competence belongs to a more complete approach of competence whose typology proposed by KSC expressed in the dynamic scheme :

	<i>Occupational</i>	<i>Personal</i>
<i>Conceptual</i>	Cognitive competence (knowledge) <b>"Savoir"</b>	Meta-competence (facilitating learning) <b>"Savoir-savoir"</b>
<i>Operational</i>	Functional competence (skills) <b>"Savoir-faire"</b>	Behavioural competence (attitudes and behaviours) <b>"Savoir-être"</b>

Meta-competence is concerned with how to apply skills and knowledge in various task situations and how to acquire missing competences. Key competences (or over-arching competences) are context-independent, applicable and effective across different institutional settings, occupations and tasks. These characteristics of key competences are linked to meta-competences: how to apply and transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes in different contexts.

The concept of meta-competence is summed up by the expression "facilitating learning". This expression must be understood in a wide sense: facilitating learning in the context of lifelong and life-wide learning, including all the ways to learn and to acquire competences, throughout life. It is possible to acquire meta-competences informally, through experience.

In the abilities required to be a cultural mediator, “being able to promote self-esteem” is one of the first ones, aside “comprehension”, “relational abilities”, “emotional balance”, “planning abilities”, “being able to face and to solve conflicts”, “language literacy”, “cultural and historical background”.

Being able to identify and value migrants’ skills and competences is the ability that fits perfectly with the requirement of “being able to promote self esteem” as the first wealth of migrants is their experience, their skills and competences and this specific meta-competence.

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<sup>55</sup> Malarme (Jean-Pierre), Conseil de l’Education et de la Formation, Communauté française, Belgium, Cedefop Platform, March 2005

## 1.2 learning for children<sup>56</sup>

Education is the only way for children to be integrated in the host society chosen by their parents to grow up. But migrants often feel lost with the educational system. If their children are faced to difficulties they wouldn't know how to deal with it.

It is seldom to find pupils or students fully reluctant to school or studies. They may be stressed because too much pressure is put on their shoulders but they are not truly against education or learning.

False ideas and “clichés” are quite easy to be created in the education field. It is so easy to set the average profile of the child who should be determined to fail at school :

- migrants' child ,
- raised by a single parent,
- living in difficult areas or suburbs.

A study made in France between 1995 and 2002 by the Ministry for Education gives a less caricatured picture of the situation of migrants' children at school :

- public studied : 16 700 pupils entered in their sixth year of education (aged of 11 years) in 1995 ; their situation five years after (2002) ;
- first statement : migrants' children have less chance to fail before the end of the compulsory educational system than the other children because their ambitions are higher and education is the main way to succeed ;
- second statement : with the same social and family situation, migrants' children are more numerous to reach the general baccalaureat ;
- the main handicap remains the socio-professional situation of their parents :  $\frac{3}{4}$  of migrants' children have parents with low qualifications (workers, employees or unemployed) versus  $\frac{1}{3}$  for children whose both parents are “nationals” ;
- a main asset : family ambitions are high towards school ; even though parents are not very active with their studies, they are expecting a lot from the educational system ; they have come in the host country for a better life, even though they haven't succeeded, their expectations are high for their children, they could realise the dream they have had for themselves ; school remains the most appropriate institution in this context as a tool for social promotion ;
- the drawback of these high expectations is when migrants' children don't succeed in their studies, they express more than the other children a feeling of injustice towards the educational system that can be expressed with violence or resentment, with regards with the ambitions they have had ;
- a great asset : the will for a social mobility is their main motivation in their studies and their professional project which is more expressed than the other children.

When dealing with youngsters in the field of education, cultural mediators should be aware of these elements as education is a very sensitive issue for migrants and their children.

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<sup>56</sup> Halba (B), School mentoring in Paris, Training course for volunteers, 2005.

## **2. types of conflicts that might happen and the role of intercultural mediation – the example of school mentoring and alphabetisation**

Institutions have proposed many ways for migrants to have access and improve their education:

- continuous education for adults : with specific courses to learn the language of the host country ; a number of hours is proposed to the new comers as the authorisation to stay is linked to the ability to speak the national language ; for the migrants who have been in the country for a long time, if they are paid-staff workers they could also be proposed a continuous training to improve their skills and competences ;
- specific education for children : specialised classes for migrants' children are proposed for new comers ; migrants may live in specific areas which are devoted financial support for specific accompaniment (for instance, the so-called "Policy of the city" in France).

In this context, the following problems may occur:

- illiteracy and innumeracy of many migrants may lead to problems at work as they couldn't progress in their work and so adapt to the moving professional reality ; access to continuous training is often quite difficult and so many migrants feel frustrated ; they don't know how to manage with it because of a lack of knowledge and self-confidence ;
- school failure may happen with the children as the conditions at home are not ideal to make their home studies or study ; children become violent or lost and lose confidence in themselves.

The conflicts may happen with the following stakeholders:

- employers : migrants are asked to improve their skills and competences and don't know how to do it ;
- everyday life (shopping, contacts with administration) : illiteracy and innumeracy are main barriers and obstacles to have a social life ;
- school : parents don't understand the failure of their children nor the reproaches made by the teachers.

Solutions to be proposed by cultural mediators:

- alphabetisation : cultural mediators may help in the beginning the migrants to translate words and information but this is a short term solution ; moreover, the linguistic skill shouldn't be the main skill to develop by cultural mediators ; they should inform the migrants of the many solutions proposed by associations in the field of alphabetisation ; for migrants who are more qualified, they could also inform them of proposals made by local authorities or universities in the field of "Education for all" ;
- school mentoring : aside from the specialised classes for new comers, the educational system has proposed some solution of class with less numerous pupils ; the cultural mediators should also inform the parents of the many proposals made by associations in the field of school mentoring (with both professionals and volunteers) ; the official educational systems are more and more open to this alternative solution.

### 3. examples of best practices<sup>57</sup>

Those are quite challenging situations for parents, professionals in the field of education and children. For a better handling of such difficult situations intercultural and non-discriminatory competences are required.

Due to the necessity of this qualifications and competences the Karl-Franzens University of Graz offers a special training for teachers, professionals in the field of education and members of NGO's working with children and teenagers, who have a foreign nationality or migration background.

The training is arranged in cooperation with the "Interkulturelles Zentrum" (Intercultural Centre) in Vienna and supported by the province of Styria.

The aims of the training are:

- to convey knowledge concerning migration in Austria, legal and social situation
- to learn about the requirements of live in a pluralistic society
- to raise the awareness of different values and social backgrounds of migrants living in Austria and in special in Styria
- to gather knowledge concerning the linguistic variety in educational institutions
- to gain practical experience
- to be aware of integration and diversity management issues
- to increase conflict management competences

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<sup>57</sup> Oliveira – Report 2 – Cultural mediation in Austria, Graz, June 2008

## Module 13 - Intercultural mediation and employment

### Content

1. The issue of employment for migrants - Economic migration
2. Types of conflicts that might happen
3. Solutions to be proposed – Intercultural mediation in an agency for employment

### Main recommendations

1. Being aware of the different types of co-operation between migrants and institutions
2. Thinking of the existing relations between migrants and intercultural mediators
3. Gaining knowledge on tools and methods to deal with arising problems

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Role play
- ◆ Interviews

### Sources

- ❖ Fourrastie (J) , Les Trente Glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975, Paris, Fayard, 1979.
- ❖ Iriv & alii, « AVE project » ([www.eEuropeassociations.net](http://www.eEuropeassociations.net)) , Leonardo da Vinci project, 2003-2006.
- ❖ Involve project, examples of case studies, INTI, 2006.

## 1. The issue of employment for migrants - Economic migration

The first reason and motivation for migrants to leave their country is the economic issue. Their country wouldn't offer them a situation for several reasons:

- a. Less developed economy with poor natural resources ;
- b. War or any natural disaster leading to starvation ;
- c. Political unsafety (corruption problems) ;
- d. Religious or ethnic discrimination...

The destination of their migration is directly linked to the country that would offer them the best economic possibilities.

Till the seventies, European countries have been very interested in welcoming foreign workers as the labour force was not sufficient to build the economy with the economic growth of the years after the Second World War the so-called "Trente glorieuses" (Thirty glorious years) according to the expression of the French economist Jean Fourrastie<sup>58</sup>.

Since the seventies, with the economic crisis, the oil crisis of 1973 and 1979, European countries have changed their perspective. They have closed their frontiers and so the first reason for migration has become family reunification and no more economic reason (workers). The principle of allowing the workers' family to join them in the host country has been quite commonly accepted.

European countries have also tried in the past years to privilege a higher qualified migration. In this perspective, students' migration may have been somehow more developed. Traditional or historical links with foreign countries but mainly geographical position are the main source for this kind of migration : Algeria, Marocco or Tunisia or Senegal, Mali or Ivory Coast for France ; India for United Kingdom ; ex-Yugoslavia for Austria ; Albania for Greece ; Indonesia for the Netherlands ; Romania for Italy...

Faced to a "Fortress Europe" with strong regulation in matter of numbers of migrants to be accepted, illegal migration has developed since the past thirty years. It can be a way to enter the European country, find a job and then be able to ask for a naturalisation. In this case, the offer fits the demand on the market.

In other cases, it has been more problematic as dishonest people have abused the trust of many people in less developed countries to organise their illegal entrance in Europe. Each month, we receive the information of such sad stories of illegal men and women found dead in a boat coming from Africa or in a car or van coming from Asia. In this case, the offer doesn't fit at all with the demand as these activities enrich dishonest people and not the migrants nor the host countries. Struggle against human traffic has been a key issue in the European policy towards immigration and integration.

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Fourrastie (J) , Les Trente Glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975, Paris, Fayard, 1979, 300 p. (Rééd Hachette Pluriel n° 8363).

## 2. Types of conflicts that might happen

The main problems that might happen in the employment field by cultural mediators are the following:

- inappropriate skills and competences of the foreign workers when a change occurs in the economic situation ; the low qualified workers are the first concerned by the departures in firms faced to economic crisis ;
- difficult working conditions and inability to express one's problem because of lack of information ;
- information on the labour market when unemployed ;
- black market with no rights at all, including no access to ;
- illegal activities (sales on the markets or in the street but also prostitution with young women coming from Albania, other countries of Eastern Europe or from Africa).

The main conflicts that might happen:

- with the labour administration : civil servants are asking for official worker ; in case of accident or any disease occurring to workers they must be declared otherwise they don't have any right ; sometimes even with legal workers they are not aware of their rights or duties ;
- with trade unions : same problem as with the labour administration, they refuse most of the time to consider illegal workers as they have no legal status ; moreover even with legal workers, many national workers may see foreign workers as a threaten for their job as they have the reputation to accept more easily hard conditions ;
- with employers : illegal workers go on strike for better working conditions and so ask their naturalisation on the basis of their concrete work ; with legal workers, they are less likely to join a trade union for the reasons already mentioned but also because they are afraid to have a "rebel" image;
- with employment agency : proposals of training or jobs are not easy to understand by migrants ; sometimes the diploma they have had in their country are not recognised ;

Solutions that might be proposed:

- with labour administration : the cultural mediator may play the role of go-between to help the migrants better understand the different process to follow for instance in case of accident or as far as their retirement scheme is concerned ;
- with trade unions : cultural mediator may contact the trade union on behalf of the migrants to ask them what to do towards the migrants' employers ; in spring 2008 in France, trade unions helped illegal workers to obtain their naturalisation after a strike in many restaurants;
- with employers : cultural mediators may ask for information on the labour contract or on the rights of the migrants for following any training, to improve their skills and competences ; alphabetisation course may be proposed in this context ;
- with employment agency : it is often difficult for nationals to find their way in the different proposals made and process ; cultural mediators should be most useful to explain the migrants how it is working and asking for specific job workshop proposed to foreign workers ; cultural mediators could also help foreign workers with a professional experience in their own countries to assess their skills and competences and maybe have an exam to be allowed to work as professional.

### 3. Examples of best practice – Intercultural mediation and employment

Once more the voluntary sector could give some examples of best practice for cultural mediators to work fruitfully with institutions and migrants on the labour market.

A first issue to be considered is how skills and competences acquired elsewhere (in another country) might be recognised on the national labour market of the host societies. We have seen that the average profile of the migrant is a low qualified one. Nevertheless, some of the migrants, men but also women, have had a diploma in their country that wouldn't be accepted in the host society. Some opportunity may be offered to them in the field of non formal and informal learning, the Copenhagen process.

A European project has been awarded, in this perspective, in 2006 in Helsinki. It was called "Assessing voluntary experience in a professional perspective"<sup>59</sup> and gathered 14 partners in 7 countries. It has proposed a portfolio and guide for training for volunteers willing to identify, value and assess the skills and competences acquired or developed through a voluntary experience.

For highly qualified migrants whom diploma are not recognised on the national labour market, a voluntary experience should be a first step to have a professional experience and propose concrete results to be produced towards potential employers. This has been a key issue for associations and an argue for them to attract a new profile of volunteers. This is specially true with the last two enlargements of the European Union (2004 and 2007) where many migrants from Poland or Romania have arrived with diploma form the University in other European countries such as France or Romania to study or stay with the perspective to work as soon as they would have the authorisation to do so.

Another issue is to struggle against any discrimination on the labour market for migrants. One of the main obstacles is the lack of knowledge of the "hidden" labour market, based on personal or social network.

In this context, some associations dedicated to support unemployed people (such as the "mission locale" for youngsters or "Base pédagogique" for adults) have organised with the support of local authorities a process of mentoring. They have selected paid-staff in firms of various fields of activities to play the role of mentor for unemployed people to open doors, to introduce potential employers, to identify professional opportunities. It is working very well with migrants as these mentors give them self confidence and the chance they wouldn't be given on the classical labour market.

Another way to promote diversity on the labour market is also to set examples of people with migration background who have succeeded in the host society. The medias have played a key role in this perspective, for instance when they report the success stories of self-made women or men. An example has been given in the department of the Yvelynes (Ile de France), in a city with high proportion of migrants, where a man with Moroccan origins created his own firm of taxis and created a lot of jobs.

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<sup>59</sup> Iriv & alii, « AVE project » ([www.eEuropeassociations.net](http://www.eEuropeassociations.net)), Leonardo da Vinci project,

An example is given in England. The project was called “VolEmploy Mentoring Scheme for refugees”, promoted by the Volunteer Center Westminster (VCW)<sup>60</sup> a mainstream volunteer organisation.

The aim of the Volemploy project is to improve integration and employability of adult refugees in the City of Westminster. It sets out to ensure that refugees experiencing isolation, depression and suffering the impact of negative media representation can use their skills positively to volunteer within their local community and receive effective support and training during their volunteering. As this can improve their English language skills, and employability prospects, counter depression and isolation by social contact and a sense of doing a worthwhile activity, providing a positive picture of refugees in the wider community.

Another example is found in Austria. The project is entitled “MigrantInnenakademie(Competence courses for migrants) promoted by the Vienna Integration Conference Networking Office.”<sup>61</sup>

The aim of the project is to reduce the gap between the resources and professionalism of organisational management between immigrant organisations and organisations of the host society. The project consists in providing seminar courses to concrete subject areas. The migrants acquire competences and knowledge in project management, funding resources, challenges on the labour market, legal requirements and regulations for organisational law.

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<sup>60</sup> Ruth Wilson(Tandem), Involve project – Case studies for United Kingdom, 2006

<sup>61</sup> Patricia Gap and Christoph Reinprecht (University of Vienna)- Involve project – Case studies for Austria, 2006

## Module 14 - Intercultural mediation and health

### Content

1. Being cared – Intercultural mediation in the hospital
2. Types of conflicts that might happen
3. Examples of best practices

### Main recommendations

1. Being aware of the different types of co-operation between migrants and institutions
2. Thinking of the existing relations between migrants and intercultural mediators
3. Gaining knowledge on tools and methods to deal with arising problems

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Role play
- ◆ Interviews

### Sources

- ❖ Report 2 on Cultural mediation
- ❖ CEV & alii, Involve project – INTI programme - 2006

## 1. the main issue of health for migrants

In the field of health, cultural mediators should first and foremost distinguish what is linked to the social and economic situation of migrants from what is linked to their migration background.

Health is a main issue for cultural medication as migrants as many people facing social and economic difficulties are not aware of the services offered and are so very reluctant to go to the hospital or to see any doctor.

Intercultural mediation should be a key issue in this context:

- a. To inform on the national health system ;
- b. To precise the financing of the health service ;
- c. To avoid any misunderstanding or obstacle to the well-being of the person with a disease ;
- d. To inform on specific diseases ;
- e. To prevent from any careless behaviour.

Access to health is not so easy for people who don't know the national context. Cultural mediators may go, in the beginning, with the migrants to explain them the different services and actors, also the support provided for free for helpless people. Filing a form for the social security, asking for reimbursement are not easy task to do for people who don't know how to read or write. Once more alphabetisation plays a key role.

The migration background may complicate the situation for religious or cultural taboos or practice:

- Women wouldn't accept to be seen by male doctors ;
- Abortion or any contraception practice is forbidden ;
- Medicine is not a usual practice ;
- Some local practice may play against the well being of the patient (voodoo practice or traditional medicine) ;
- The lack of information about the past of the patient ;
- Sexual life of youngsters is denied so they are not informed of any prevention against sexual disease such as AIDS (using a condom) ;
- They are asking traditional "doctors" to give them some medicine that could create by themselves a disease.

The main conflicts faced by cultural mediators are the following :

- With doctors or nurses : the patient refuses to be seen or to follow the required treatment ; he/she comes once and never comes back ;
- With the hospital staff : the patient doesn't know that he/she can be treated free of charge or can't fill the form to ask for it ;
- With the social services: the parents refuse to send their children see a psychologist; they don't want to give any personal data.

## 2. Intercultural mediation and health

Health is a very sensitive topic as it deals with the most intimate part of the migrants' life. There are many secrets or taboos to overcome. Cultural mediators should play a major role towards three specific publics in the field of prevention of conflicts (education to health) :

- women ;
- youngsters;
- elderly.

As regards with women, the main issue is to give them the basis of health education or prevention:

- towards their children : washing the hands before eating, taking a shower or a bath regularly, washing their teeth, being aware of the good habits in cleaning the house and clothes ; preparing a various food even though the economical issue is quite important in this context ;
- towards themselves : convincing them to take care of their health ; not hesitating to see a doctor or going to the hospital once a year for a general check up ; avoiding traditional care ;
- towards their husband : convincing them of being careful if they go with other women ; warning them of risky behaviour such as drugs or alcohols ; women are often the first person to inform the social services of such behaviours.

As regards with youngsters, the first issue is to talk with them about topics that would be taboo in their family such as:

- sexual education : to take a condom in the first relationships ; to ask for a test on AIDS after a while ; to inform the young women of the possibilities of contraception and the ways to avoid abortion ;
- homosexuality : this is a main source of depression and suicide among many youngsters ; to be part of a sexual minority when already belonging to an ethnic minority is like an "aggravating circumstance" ; cultural mediators don't have to know just to have an understanding speaking about sexual minorities ;
- drugs or alcohols : drug or alcohol is often the easy way to escape from a difficult reality ; insisting on the negative impact (jail or hospital) may be a form of prevention especially when other youngsters are involved.

With elderly, cultural mediators should play a major role in identifying strong disease such as:

- Alzheimer : it is developing in all the categories of the population as it s ageing ; the main problem faced is how far the family can take this disease in charge and/or which structure would be suitable ;
- Handicap : it is a transversal problem met by all ages of migrants, in the case of the elderly it is important as it concerns both physical and mental diseases.

### 3. Examples of best practices

The voluntary sector may be a way for cultural mediators to find examples of best practices to solve or prevent any conflict in the field of health.

There are specific diseases faced by migrants depending on the country they come from. The movement of the French Doctors (“Médecins sans frontières”, “Médecins du Monde”...) have developed some specialised consultancies towards migrants to struggle against malaria, or any tropical disease. They are also proposing free consultancies for any the poor people, including migrants. Some old diseases that were thought to be eradicated such as Tuberculosis have also come back in poor district among homeless and migrants population.

There are also very specified actions towards specific publics such as the Rom Community.

- In France : Cesam, in France (since 1985), meant to propose actions of prevention to health for female gipsies in the field of AIDS or Drugs addiction ; AFEV (since 1991) dedicated to Volunteers among youngsters also realised some actions in the field of health towards the Rom community
- In Italy, the Red Cross, in 2008, decided to register the Rom community for this purpose : preventing from risky behaviour and health issue.

Even though migration is not by itself a reason for bad health, it may increase the risk of health problems since migrants face considerable mental and psychological strains. Moreover, prevention plays often a minor role in their native country. As a result, it might be of great importance to introduce migrants to health care services and to promote self-help in this field. In this perspective, health institutions have launched actions meant to prevent conflicts or diseases in the health field thanks to the training of migrant volunteers.

In Germany : the Hand in Hand project (MIT Migranten FÜR Migranten - MiMi); the intercultural health care project in Germany – located in Francfort on Main, promoted by the City in cooperation with Ethno-Medizinischen Zentrums<sup>62</sup>. The Mimi health care project was set up on behalf of the federation of a company health insurance funds in Germany. It is for intercultural health care and prevention. Immigrants who are well integrated are trained as health care mediators. They are in charge of informing their migrant communities in cooperation with representatives of the health care system in both German and mother language. This project gathered 30 women and men from 12 countries (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Morocco, Somalia, Russia, Togo, Turkey and Ukraine) speaking 20 different languages. The content of the training proposed by these migrants volunteers deals with the German health care system, nutrition, mental health, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, children’s health care, long term care for older people, tooth and mouth hygiene. After the training, the intercultural volunteer health mediators offer multi-language health campaigns in terms of conferences, events and counselling in associations, organisations and city quarters.

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<sup>62</sup> Involve project – Germany case studies- Susanne Huth and Duygu Yücel (INBAS-Sozialforschung), 2006.

## Module 15 - Intercultural mediation among young migrants – preventing conflicts among youngsters

### Content

1. types of conflicts specific to youngsters - prevention of any risky behaviour
2. conflicts to face inside the group : acculturation and generation gaps
3. Valuing young migrants' roots – Example of the « Peupliers à palabres »
4. Civic involvement in local life – Youth volunteering

### Main recommendations

1. finding specific ways to address youngsters
2. taking into account the specific expectation of youngsters (the country where they live / their parents' country)
3. working with youngsters to prevent risky behaviours – identifying and proposing solutions to parents/teachers/social workers ;
4. developing specific projects for youngsters : the design of which refers to their common life situation ; insisting on the specificity of a volunteering, what the youngsters bring to the host society, what they are receiving ; their main value (having two cultures) ;
5. opening perspectives

### Methodology proposed

- ◆ discussing biographic plans of participants and experiences with parents and other youngsters related to migration
- ◆ Conducting interviews with young migrants to learn about their perspectives and motivations
- ◆ Gathering and analysing documents about young migrants' initiatives to draw a picture of youth migrant

### Sources

- ❖ Report 1 France, Halba (B) and Cournede (V), Paris, 2008
- ❖ Report 2 on Cultural mediations in France and Italy
- ❖ Lukka (Priya), « Youth volunteering in England » in *Volunteering : an opportunity for youngsters in Europe*, Youth for Europe project , Iriv & ali, Paris, 2000.
- ❖ CEV & alii, Involve project, INTI programme, 2006.

## **1. Types of conflicts specific to youngsters – identifying and preventing risky behaviour**

Cultural mediators may be faced to specific difficulties raised by youngsters from migration. They must at once ask themselves the following questions :

- Is this a general problem raised to any youngster ?
- Is the conflict specific to their migration background ?

This first point is meant to identify the classical problems faced by youngsters:

- Problems at school : they may be of different kind, the results obtained and the type of studies followed ; the social background is important as the pupils/students belonging to less privileged families are more concerned by the results obtained as education is a key issue to build their future life and enhance their chances to succeed better than their parents ;
- Problems with youngsters of the same age : if delinquency is a main issue among youngsters, they are also the first victims of violent behaviour (at home, in their neighbourhood or at school) ;
- Problems of dependency : drugs, alcohol but also any leisure activity such as speed with motorcycle or car jacket, video games and games of challenge on Internet ; any behaviour that would cut them from their family and prevent their socialisation process.

A cultural mediator should be asked to solve conflicts in the following contexts :

- At school : their parents ask them to play the role of mediator with teachers ;this first background is better developed in module 10 ;
- With the police or the justice : for any problem of delinquency ; they could explain the parents the system of the justice, their duties towards their children and the process in which their children will be involved (a soft solution would be an educative center for young delinquents, a “hard solution” would be jails) ; in any case, the key role played by cultural mediator is to focus on the different solutions to be proposed in insisting on the specific accompaniment dedicated to youngsters (they are not treated as adults);the main contacts of the cultural mediators are in this case social workers, policemen or judges ;
- With social services or health system : for any problem of addictive behaviour ; cultural mediators in this context has also to identify the source of the problem and try to find with the parents the appropriate solution ; the consumption of illegal substance (drugs or alcohol) is often a symptom of a deeper intimate problem ; suicide is a high risk for addictive youngsters.

The main issue for cultural mediator when faced to this “classical” youngsters problems as they are not meant to be expert in youngsters behaviour is to find the appropriate person and professional to solve the problem with both agreement of the institutions (school, court of justice, hospital...) :

- A social worker specialised in the field of prevention of delinquency : these professionals are used to working with youngsters ;

- A psychologist is the most appropriate person in many cases on the condition to be well accepted by the youngster ;
- A doctor may be necessary in case of addictive behaviour to receive medicines to treat the physic and mental disease.

## **2. Conflicts specific to youngsters with migration background: acculturation and generation gap**

Apart from the risky behaviour mentioned in the first point, youngsters with foreign origins or foreigners themselves may be faced to specific problems linked to their migrant background.

To begin with, the very specific situations of “Young foreigners isolated” must be taken apart. Their flux has been decreasing (1200 in 2004). They concern mainly Romanian children victims of networks and soldiers children from Africa. Their situation requires specialists of the field, mainly policemen and social workers. This is a situation of exception.

Most of the times, cultural mediators working with youngsters are asked to work in “Community house” or “Youth house”, associations..... This is part of the so-called socio cultural action. These organisations are aiming at enhancing leisure and culture for all. It is comprehending social and leisure activities (school mentoring workshop, socialisation workshop)<sup>63</sup>.

Faced to conflicts among children, the main goal is to struggle against the process of acculturation<sup>64</sup>.

« changes in genuine cultural models when groups of individuals from different backgrounds are meeting in a direct and continuous way. This definition implies that each culture constitutes a system of its own whose various elements are changing and reorganising through these contacts ».

Many youngsters may feel lost as their origins and situation of foreigners is perceived as being the main reason for their difficult situation. Rather than accepting the situation of “second class citizen”, they would privilege their roots in opposition to the host country. The generation gap is important in this context as the youngsters are complaining towards their parents to be passive and to have accepted the situation. They have an idea of revenge.

This is typically the case of “bands” or “gangs” of youngsters sharing all the same origins, fighting against each other. This is an old story in the United States of America for instance since the sixties with the film “West Side story” with the opposition of the Portoricans and the “Americans”. There are several examples in recent years in England (Indians against “white” Englishmen) or in the Netherlands (Asiatic youngsters against “local” people). We have had some examples in France in the past years with the riots in the Suburb in 2005 opposing youngsters with migrants’ origin (most of them from Africa) to the police.

Cultural mediators may be key person in this context of negative communication in the framework of associations. They try to build a bridge between youngsters and institutions to give a positive image of both sides. Here are two main examples of such mediation:

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<sup>63</sup> Report 1 France, Halba (B) and Cournede (V), Paris, 2008.

<sup>64</sup> *Dictionnaire de sociologie*, Larousse, 1999.

- giving the floor to youngsters, valuing their roots ;
- enhancing involvement of youngsters.

### 3. Volunteering : a key issue for young migrants - the English example<sup>65</sup>

In England, Youth volunteering has been a key issue for Tony Blair's government (1997-2007) as a way to enhance their integration and the socialisation process. Many studies have been made in this context to identify the main obstacles faced especially by youngsters with foreign background. The UK Government is currently keen to promote volunteering as a key activity to foster social cohesion and an active civil society. Engaging young people in their communities is of particular interest to government. In an effort to encourage more participation from young people the government is seeking to complement current projects and existing volunteering infrastructure with a number of targeted programmes. This, in turn, fits within a wider aim to make communities more 'active'.

Volunteering by young people can be encouraged or inhibited by a range of factors, such as how volunteering is marketed and organised, how young people view it in relation to their own lives, and their individual circumstances and commitments. Niyazi (1996) argues that there are five identifiable groups, which are traditionally under-represented in formal volunteering. Along with older people, unemployed people, disabled people and black and ethnic minorities, young people are disadvantaged in their access to volunteering. These sections of society are also more likely to be recipients of volunteering than volunteers themselves. The reason that young people are arguably disenfranchised from more formal volunteering networks is because young people feel disempowered and alienated from mainstream society. Indeed the Carnegie Young People Project (1998), which recently interviewed more than 2,000 young people in the UK, found that young people often feel powerless in determining their own lives in an adult dominated world.

Niyazi has explored some of the issues facing organisations that want to involve younger volunteers. She argues that there are five main hurdles that prevent many young people from becoming involved as volunteers:

1. Young people are often unaware of the considerable benefits volunteering can bring them;
2. Volunteering is seen as 'boring' by nearly half of all 18 - 24 year olds ;
3. Volunteering has a reputation for being poorly organised amongst 88% of young people ;
4. Young people often view volunteering as something that is only for white, middle-class, middle-aged women with time on their hands ;
5. Volunteering is viewed as expensive and time consuming for a third of volunteers between 18 - 24 and there is an issue about expenses.

Evidence from TSA also explored some of the factors affecting young peoples' views about getting involved in voluntary and campaigning activities. 'Not being paid' and the 'image of volunteering' or actually 'feeling embarrassed by it', were the three most frequently named issues discouraging involvement in volunteering. Other practical concerns that people expressed as reasons for not getting involved ranged from: Not knowing how to go about ; Anxieties about doing something on your own ; Transport and locality issues ; Not enough

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<sup>65</sup> Lukka (Priya), « Youth volunteering in England » in *Volunteering : an opportunity for youngsters in Europe*, Youth for Europe project , Irv & ali, Paris, 2000.

time –too busy with other commitments ; Not being paid- or feeling that you don't get anything back from it ; Fears about getting involved in violence or being arrested during campaigning activities.

Some pupils cited living in small towns as a barrier, feeling that it was difficult to find anywhere to do volunteering. Linked to this, access to transport and the costs of transport were mentioned as factors that may hinder involvement. In particular, the research showed that pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds, found the cost of transport prohibitive. The research also found that the level of activity/involvement was closely associated with having a family member or friend involved in volunteering or campaigning. There was also a significant association between undertaking a variety of voluntary activities and having a religious commitment.

- An example : Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets is a borough in London which is geographically small, but very diverse area. It is ranked as the most deprived borough in the Country with a rapidly growing population, ethnically and culturally varied (at almost 40%), the fastest growing youth population in Europe (with nearly 40% of the population under 25 years old, and 29% under the age of 18), many inter-racial problems (cases of racial harassment), but also a lack of integration between young people from different communities. Although most young people are in employment, education or training of some sort, it has been the case that many end up in the lowest paid jobs.

Young people are involved in volunteering in the following ways: The Prince's Trust Volunteers- teams of volunteers who work on 12-week programmes ; Millennium Volunteers: 150 volunteers are currently registered as Millennium Volunteers and are working towards accreditation status; The Youth Service: works with local young people to establish a borough wide Youth Parliament, with the aim of empowering young people through involving them in local decision-making ; Tower Hamlets Youth Counselling and Advice Services- young person's steering group who have a regular input into the running of the services ; The Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnerships- a scheme that allows young people take part in placements with local companies in the area, through which they receive mentoring support.

#### **4. Enhancing youth volunteering – a new field of work for cultural mediators**

The main goal of the socio cultural action is to value the social group, to integrate all the individuals, to mix the cultures. It is using all the means proposed by public services to make these groups be in contact with the general public to enable anyone to understand the cultural reality of his/her environment. The exchange is on an equal basis.

Mediation must allow people to express their own culture. However, it is not a neutral process as it is answering choices and objectives (solving a conflict). The cultural mediation is included in a public service mission provided habilitated by state services (associations, community houses, social centres...). In this perspective, cultural mediators should be aware of the main issue of volunteering among young migrants. The main benefits of volunteering for cultural mediation among young migrants:

- Making the youngsters feel and act as “first class citizens”.
- Preventing conflicts as youngsters will be main actors and no more “critical publics” ;

- Giving the floor to youngsters to value their action and changing the perspective towards them;
- Valuing their roots without any violent nor critical attitude

An example of good practice is given in Austria in the voluntary sector.<sup>66</sup> The project is called Zeit!Raum – association for socio-cultural work promoted by the City of Vienna (department of the municipality for work with children and adolescents outside school”.

The Zeit!Raum (15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> district of Vienna) offered a wide spread program of social-educational and leisure-time activities for children and adolescents from the age of 3 to 23. Activities are free and focused on the different cultural backgrounds of the public. School help, “cross-cultural” cooking, dance workshop are proposed. A special focus on Muslim girls and women is made because they often face difficulties in their culture. “Secret garden” is targeted at these immigrants giving them a space to meet and to engage in social and cultural activities”. The immigrants participate in the planning of the activities and identify with the work. Most of them remain in contact for a long time to the project. They then serve as “role model” for other immigrants. Peer education is clearly another feature : immigrants work with immigrants.

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<sup>66</sup> Patricia Gap and Christoph Reinprecht (University of Vienna)- Involve project – Case studies for Austria, 2006

## **Module 16 - Intercultural mediation among female migrants – preventing conflicts among women**

### **Content**

5. Types of conflicts specific to women – equality of chances
6. Conflicts specific to female migrants – inside the group, with institutions
7. Valuing the role of female migrants in the integration process
8. Civic involvement in local life – female volunteering

### **Main recommendations**

1. Finding specific ways to address women to motivate them and to give them self-confidence
2. Taking theoretical skills and life experience of women into account and making use of them – Changing the perspective
3. Enhancing the education of female towards customs or habits which would be against their individual rights and freedom
4. Developing specific projects referring to their common life situation ; insisting on their specific role in the family and giving a positive image ;
5. avoiding the gender gap with ideological argues (feminism/male chauvinism) ; focussing on the pragmatic approach (financial approach, family support)

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Open discussion on education of women, women at work, schooling of girls (UNESCO data)...
- ◆ Presentation of women pathway: mothers, paid staff, executive managers, local councils...
- ◆ Conducting interviews with female migrants to better understand the problems they have to cope with
- ◆ Gathering and analysing documents on initiatives launched by women with migration background

### **Sources**

- ❖ Iriv & alii, AVE project, Leonardo da Vinci programme, 2003-2006
- ❖ CEV & alii, Involve project, INTI programme, 2006

## 1. types of conflicts specific to women – equality of chances

As for the youngsters or the elder migrants, cultural mediators should remind of the following question when dealing with a female public :

- Is this a general problem raised to any woman ?
- Is the conflict specific to their migration background ?

This first point is meant to identify the classical problems faced by women:

- Problems with their children: women are mothers and are the first involved in the education of the children which integrate different aspects , first needs to provide (eating, drinking, a place to live), second needs (decent living conditions, good health, a school), third needs (self-esteem, self-confidence...) ; when they are single parents, it is sometimes very difficult to face these problems altogether ;
- Problems with their husbands or the male authority in the family : women are most of the time the first victims of problems of violence among the family ; it is mainly a problem of total economic and social dependency on their husbands or any man in the household (father, brother);
- Problems on the labour market: even women with an educational background may face difficulties to find a job in relation with their skills and competences because they are not aware of them and lack of self-confidence.

A cultural mediator should be asked to solve conflicts in the following contexts :

- In the family : with single women, cultural mediators may be asked to explain the difficulties faced by the children linked to the living conditions (a place to sleep, a place to make their home duties) or rules of health to prevent any disease ; with husbands, brothers or fathers, this is more a problem of violence (physical or psychological) very sensitive and intimate that would require the consultation of experts but the cultural mediator could remind of the rights of any woman irrespective of the social, cultural or religious background ;
- At school : mothers are often the first informed of the problems faced by their children ; cultural mediators may be asked to explain the difficulties faced by their children and the way to solve it either with the teacher or with association proposing a school support ; this education issue is more developed in module 10 ;
- With social services or health system : for any problem of living conditions (for instance unhealthy housing, lead poisoning problem) ; cultural mediators in this context has also to identify the source of the problem and try to find with the parents the appropriate solution.

The main issue for cultural mediator when faced to this “classical” female problems as they are not meant to be expert in this field is to find the appropriate person and professional to solve the problem:

- A social worker to propose the women any specific device ; single parents should be proposed a specific support for their children ;
- A psychologist is the most appropriate person in many cases on the condition to be well accepted by the family (in case of violence) ;

- A counsellor for employment, to make a statement of their skills and competences and propose them appropriate job or training.

## **2. types of conflicts specific to female migrants and specific solutions proposed by cultural mediators**

Each of the main problems commonly faced by women facing a difficult situation may have a specific development among female migrants.

Concerning the first issue linked to the education of their children, the problems faced at school may be a way for cultural mediators to propose mothers a course in an alphabetisation workshop. Illiteracy and innumeracy are the first obstacles for female women to understand what's going on with the education of their children. It is creating a gap as they find themselves illegitimate to play any role. This is the cultural mediator's role to help them change their perspectives. Alphabetisation should help the women in both their family and social life. Women's education is often the key for their children's education. First step is to solve their children's problem; second step is to propose a solution for them. This is a classical way for cultural mediators to convince women to follow alphabetisation course: presenting it as a way to help their children.

Concerning the second issue, violence faced by women inside their family, this is generally the reason why they go and see a cultural mediator to be informed of their rights. Some habits, traditions or religions, at least their interpretation by some individuals, may be very oppressive against women as they are considered as "second class citizen" with no rights and total economic and social dependency on their husbands or any man in the household (father, brother). In recent past, we have heard of many examples of the so-called "honour crime" when a male authority in the family (father or brother) decides to kill his daughter/sister because she would be accused of having dishonoured the family. In the Turkish community, in Germany for instance, this has been a key issue. The main council given by cultural mediators is to remind of any woman's rights.

Sometimes violence in the family may come from women themselves. The problematic issue of excision proves it. This mutilating operation, falsely presented as a cultural habit, is generally the initiative of one woman in the family. Studies made by women on this problem have shown that this was a "business" developed by women presenting excision as a cultural habit to be a "good woman", a better argue to find a husband for the young women, and didn't refer at all to any cultural background.

Another example proving the negative role played both by male and female migrants against young women is the one of the forced marriage. Even young women having followed studies and willing to stay and being integrated in the host country may be sent back to their country, in the occasion of holidays, to be married with men (young or old) they don't even know. We have several examples in France in the past years of such behaviour, with countries from North Africa (Algeria or Morocco) but also with Africa.

A very specific problem is also raised with widows when their husbands have several women. It is forbidden in European societies but sometimes tolerated.

As far as this violence issue is concerned, cultural mediators don't have to give their personal opinion on any habit but remind of the rights of any woman, young or old, in the European society to make them feel free to behave as they want to.

Concerning the issue of the professional integration of women, this is also problematic as it might change the balance in the family as the man should be the one to provide economic support. Faced to a difficult situation, the perspectives may change and the women become the one in charge of supporting the family. The main issue for cultural mediators is to make husbands accept the situation as this may be the reason for a violent behaviour.

### **3. Discussing about the role of female migrants**

The main difficulty raised by cultural mediators when they are faced to the specific public of women is not to be intrusive in the private life of migrants and to remain as neutral as possible, forgetting their personal convictions. They shouldn't behave as activist of the feminist cause as it would be most counter-productive.

The first strategy would consist of reminding some general rules of equal treatment between men and women. In this context, the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All<sup>67</sup> has led the way to a bolder strategy to fight against discrimination in the European Union. It has aimed to: make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination – irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation ; promote equal opportunities for all and launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals. It was not focussed just on women but female migrants may be key targets in this perspective.

Another strategy would be to put forward examples taken into fiction based on the personal story of the authors.

The personal story and professional work of the German film director, Fatih Akin, a man, born in Germany in 1973, in Hamburg, with Turkish origins, is quite relevant in this perspective. Fatih Akin made a very instructive film "Head-On" (*Gegen die Wand*), awarded in 2004 at the Berlin Festival, on this very sensitive problem of the status of the woman in the Turkish community. This is a story about a man with Turkish origins in Germany, in his forties, who has lost his wife and is most depressed (he is a drug and alcohol addict). He meets a young girl from the Turkish community who proposes him to marry her as she wants to escape from her oppressive family. He accepts and they can live their own life. This is not so easy as they finally behave as a real couple and by jealousy the man kills another man in a bar who has been insulting towards his wife. He goes to jail. She goes to Turkey to avoid the dishonour for her family. After some years he goes also back to Turkey but she has made her own life and has children. This should be a good basis for discussion as this is quite a violent film with extreme situations. It is very contemporary as the man is a DJ. The rock and roll atmosphere doesn't prevent from conservative attitudes. The end could also be seen as quite controversial as the young Turkish woman seems to find happiness going back to her roots and playing the role of a mother and wife.

In the same spirit, a film made by a French director, with Algerian roots, Nora Hamidi, a woman, made a film "Dolls and angels" (*Des poupées et des anges*) in 2008, based on her

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<sup>67</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm)

novel. This is the story of three young sisters living in the suburb of Paris and their conflict with their violent father. One of the sisters decides to improve in combative sport, against the will of his father, to protect herself; the other sister prefers becoming a fashion model to be watched by her father who has ignored her since she has become a woman.

The comparison between both films is interesting as they are both talking about the status of young women in families with migration issues where the role of the father is quite important and whose violence may lead to extreme behaviour of his daughters. In both case, the young girls who try to escape, in both case through “easy life”, are the first victims of the traps of the supposed modern society. The conclusion may be controversial.

#### **4. Volunteering as a way to value women’s role in the integration process**

The main benefits of volunteering for cultural mediation among female migrants are the following :

- Making the women feel and act as “first class citizens”.
- Preventing and/or solving conflicts among the families ;
- Playing a social role and changing the perspective towards the status of woman;
- Valuing their role without any violent nor critical attitude
- Being a way to improve skills and competences

Once more, enhancing volunteering may play a major role in the strategy proposed to cultural mediators. As their profile underlines it, they are mostly women and a big proportion has begun the profession of cultural mediation as volunteers. They could be quite convincing towards female migrants.

Being a volunteer in an association is a way to play an active role in a social network different from family and friends. The first contact of female migrants with association is as public : when their children are benefiting by school mentoring, when they are following alphabetisation course... Most of the time, these activities are part of other services provided by associations, such as social centres. Social workers have been more and more convinced of the necessity to involve migrants as actors in the association and not just as beneficiary. This is the key issue of the association as just provider of service (restrictive approach) versus the association as creating social link (open approach). This is also to some extent the opposition between Workfare and Welfare : in the first case you are active, in the second case you are “passive”. This involvement could take various forms :

- preparing the cooking of one’s country and explaining how to make the recipe ;
- sewing with the know-how and material from one’s native country and then selling the product of one’s work ;
- selling the product of one’s country and informing on the sustainable trade principles ;
- organising a dance or music with the specific know how....

A voluntary work may also be the way to use the skills and competences you can’t apply in a professional context as you are not allowed to do it : either because you are not allowed at all to have a professional activity (transitory period) ; either because your professional diploma is not recognised in the host country.

A voluntary experience should also be used in a professional perspective as a first experience: assessing a voluntary experience has been a main issue in the non formal and informal learning perspective. A voluntary work allows to fulfil tasks, to develop or acquire specific skills and competences, to obtain results that could be produced in a future job. This has been a key issue for publics such as youngsters without any professional experience or adults who have had to stop their professional activity (for personal reasons such as raising children). In their curriculum vitae they can integrate this voluntary experience as a real professional experience on the condition to justify it<sup>68</sup>.

An example of best practice is once more given in the voluntary sector.

The Iftar project<sup>69</sup> has been promoted by the Forum for Muslim Women in Austria. The main participants are Muslim Women and opinion makers from various social fields. Women who have an important role in particular social circles, should exchange experience and compare their respective environment. Close cooperation of Muslim women from diverse countries and ethnic backgrounds may ensure cross-cultural learning. Existing knowledge of the European Christian culture is a main condition for establishing bridges between cultures and religions. Gathering on the occasion of a dinner prepared altogether is a soft way to exchange views on important topics.

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<sup>68</sup> see the former Leonardo da Vinci project, “Assessing a voluntary experience in a professional perspective ([www.eEuropeassociations.net](http://www.eEuropeassociations.net))

<sup>69</sup> Patricia Gap and Christoph Reinprecht (University of Vienna)- Involve project – Case studies for Austria, 2006

## **Module 17 - Intercultural mediation among old migrants – preventing conflicts among the Elderly**

### **Content**

1. classical problems raised by the Elderly - The issue of transition from professional life to retirement
2. specific types of conflicts faced by elder migrants– The relations with the native country – Being a stranger in his/her own country , Misunderstanding towards the new generation of migrants -
3. Volunteering as a new field of activity for senior migrants - From interculturality to intergenerational, elder migrants' heritage

### **Main recommendations**

1. Finding specific ways to address seniors, motivate them and facilitate their involvement
2. Taking into account older migrants' professional skills and experience to transfer them to the new generation
3. Avoiding direct generation gaps with reciprocal reproaches about integration and its supposed failure

### **Methodology proposed**

- ◆ Facilitating exchanges between participants, with the families and other senior migrants
- ◆ Conducting interviews with older migrants to learn about their expectations and perspectives
- ◆ Gathering and analysing documents about senior migrants' initiatives

### **Sources**

- ❖ Reports 2 on Cultural meditation
- ❖ ISIS & alii, Enhancing and encouraging work with volunteers, Leonardo da Vinci project, 2000-2001
- ❖ Han University & alii, VPL2 – Managing European diversity, Leonardo da Vinci project, 2005-2007

## **1. Classical problems raised by the Elderly - The issue of transition from professional life to retirement**

As for the young migrants, cultural mediators faced to a conflict involving mainly old migrants must remind of the following question:

- Is the conflict a general issue for the elderly?
- is the conflict linked with migration issue?

The ageing of Europe's population is a crucial challenge for the 21st Century<sup>70</sup>. In the years to come, a quarter of the European population will be older people and retirees. Seniors are not a homogeneous group of the population: you don't cope with the same problems whether you are over 50 years, over 60 years, over 70 years or over 80 years.

For the two first groups of age (50-70 years), the main problem is the economic and social issue. Early retirement schemes and high unemployment rates among older staff members lead to a situation where many people leave the employment sector in their early fifties: either they get retired early or – as woman returners or older unemployed people – they give up the idea of returning into paid employment, as they realize the chances for this are very little.

Social protection systems in many European countries are still based on the so-called inter-generational-treaty: there is no capital stock to pay for the pensions of retired people built up from their contributions, but the contributions of the younger generations are used to pay for the seniors. Due to changes in the age structure of the population and the rise in life expectation less young people have to pay for more old ones. So more and more frequently the problems of the social security systems are addresses in terms of an “age burden” of society.

For the older groups of age (70-90 years) the main issue is the health problem and the dependency on social structures. Your retired life depends on your personal background (social , professional...). It is also very linked to the cultural and geographical area you belong to: city or countryside, role of the family, existing social services... When living in the countryside, social services are less developed and so you are dependent on your family or neighbours.

The main questions that might occur to cultural mediators could be the following:

- economic problems : is the pension high enough to live in good conditions when the migrants retire ? do the migrants benefit by an official pension ? have they had an “official” work with a retirement scheme ?
- does the elder migrant have a family which could support him/her ? is he/she part of a social network for instance association of workers or sportsmen ?

The main conflicts could happen in the following situations :

- Social housing : staying alone or going to a retired home ? access to this structure?
- Hospital : paying for a medial treatment ; health costs are the most important when you are getting older

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<sup>70</sup> ISIS & alii, Enhancing and encouraging work with volunteers, Leonardo da Vinci project, 2000-2001.

## 2. specific types of conflicts faced by elder migrants–

Cultural mediators are coped with three main kinds of problems:

- internal conflicts ;
- interpersonal conflicts, between groups of migrants ;
- institutional conflicts.

In the case of old migrants, most of them were low qualified workers and so their pension is quite low, so their situation is very linked to this economical issue. Moreover going back to their country would deprive them of their pension. A huge problem has been raised with retired foreign workers who couldn't afford to come back to their native country. They haven't prepared their return because they have lost any relation with their family or relatives.

The first issue for cultural mediators in this context is another form of acculturation as the old migrants are forced to stay in a country which is not their home, chose it for economical purpose (to find a work to live). Moreover many of them are alone as they couldn't afford to have a family in the host country.

Close to 100% of all seniors want to live independent as long as possible and not go to a senior's residence. Social policy strongly supports this preference because independent living in most cases is cheaper than living in a senior's residence and the state has to pay for many disabled seniors because their income is not high enough to pay for the care they need.

When they are ageing, older migrants have to go to specialised institutions but most of the time such structures don't exist as shelters for working migrants have been built when they were active but they were not meant to stay and remain. As the migrants wouldn't have any other place to go, the problem is the building of specialised retired house for older migrants. This is one more aspect of social housing policy (more developed in module 9).

The second issue is the relations with other migrants and especially the new generation of migrants: other ages, other countries, sometimes other religions. The community of migrants itself is quite heterogeneous. Different profiles and motivations have appeared such as for instance two main kinds of categories of migrants: older migrants have arrived with the first wage, mostly were of Arabic origins (France or Italy) or Turkish origin (Germany, Austria), from countries with historical links with the host country; it is no more the case in recent migrations. New countries

The third issue is the conflict with institutions which may be seen as the results of the two former types of conflicts. They may appear in different contexts:

- with institutions responsible for retirement scheme : cultural mediators should be aware of the different kinds of pensions older migrants may benefit with ;
- with social housing : the right for older migrants to stay in their home even though it was mostly linked to their working life ;
- with social services : elder migrants in situation of high poverty, alone, without any family, cultural mediators should inform them of the Old age benefits ;
- with health institutions : the discovery and treatment of specific diseases is quite difficult when you can't have any information on the family context.

### **3. Volunteering as a new field of activity for senior migrants**

Volunteering as a key issue for seniors - Nevertheless seniors usually have in common free time and life experience. These are the two main conditions for becoming a volunteer : time and skills to share with others. Free time means time freely chosen. Senior volunteering is also influenced by many factors: whether government policies/programmes exist, different practices and trends in family support, employment policies, education, learning and leisure opportunities, cultural issues, the status itself of older people in society...

Volunteering a key issue for the European Commission - The important role of older volunteers in society is acknowledged in Declaration 38 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1992): "The Community will encourage the European dimension of voluntary organisations with particular emphasis on the exchange of information and experience as well as on the participation of the young and the elderly in voluntary work". Moreover the Commission's communication of 1999 "Towards a Europe for All Ages - promoting prosperity and International Solidarity", promotes the concept of "adding life to years" through active involvement in the local community and society at large after retirement. The ageing of Europe's population is a priority subject for Community - wide cross- sectoral multidisciplinary research, in particular in economic and social fields with the aim to promote the quality of life, autonomy and social integration of older people.

Volunteering of the Seniors in perspective - In most European countries, we observe the phenomenon that where we would expect retiring people to take a greater share in volunteer work, which might provide them with new activities, new perspectives and new social networks to replace the networks of paid labour, this is not true. Older people retire but don't spend more time in volunteering. They replace their professional activities by more passive forms of involvement (media consumption, leisure activities...). A European research should focus on the transition period around retirement and involve labour market partners, traditional social partners and seniors organisations. Ageing should be seen as a wealth and not as a weight for the younger generations. Demographic change in volunteering, as in the European societies in general, is not seen as a challenge but as a threat.

To prevent intergenerational conflicts and to improve the social climate between old and young it seems to be a good idea to show that the older generation still can make a considerable contribution to public welfare. Any strategy is welcome in this spirit, for instance involving in social activities such as volunteering.

Time is an important factor in all social services working directly with clients: time to deal with the individual case, time for a personal communication beyond care and service provision. As time of paid staff is rare and expensive, older volunteers could be asked to join in here.

Older volunteers could provide professional expertise from their former paid employment for voluntary initiatives and associations. What could help the initiatives, but is far too expensive to buy on the market, could be provided by competent senior volunteers.

Remaining active and be part of a close network of friends and acquaintances is a important prerequisite for independent living: active people remain longer in good health and socially well integrated people dispose of informal resources to get support and help. As volunteers are active and socially integrated, their resources for independent living are better.

#### 4. the main issue of Volunteering as a new field of activity for senior migrants - From intercultural to intergenerational heritage

The main benefits of volunteering for cultural mediation among elder migrants should be:

- Making the elderly feel and act as “normal citizens” and no more as a “public charge”;
- Preventing conflicts with other migrants ;
- Enriching other migrants’ experience ;
- changing the perspective towards them and their experience ;
- Valuing their roots.

Many of the older migrants have usually arrived and settled in the host countries for economical reasons as workers in building industry, car factories, agriculture... For those who couldn’t afford to build a family, they have sometimes forgotten to build a social life as most of them were low qualified workers. They did their work, turned back in the shelter for working migrants dedicated to them. When arrived at the age of retirement, the idea of turning back to their country vanished for economical reasons.

Other older migrants could afford to make their families come and settle with them. Their children went to school and started their life in the host country. They want to stay and don’t want to come back in their parents’ country.

The idea of building a social network with migrants with the same migration experience emerged in recent years. Associations are a place to exchange such experiences. The main issue could be to value one’s country and then to value the personal history of each of the migrants with the idea to testimony towards the younger generation and/or the other groups of migrants.

The main idea behind such initiative is to focus on the heritage to transmit to other generations but also to other groups of migrants to avoid any mistake, to learn from experience.

**Examples of such workshop** - Each migrant presents himself/herself:

- date of arrival, reason for settling in the country,
- family background (children, wife/husband...)
- country of origin, historical relations with the countries
- kinds of links with the native country (regular/occasional, family, no links...)
- future : in the host country, in the country of origin ;
- reasons for staying in the host country / reasons for turning back
- professional experience
- personal experience of migration

As a result, the older migrants could explain their experience under the SWOT process<sup>71</sup>:

Strengths	Opportunities
Weaknesses	Threats

<sup>71</sup> Han University & alii, VPL2 – Managing European diversity, Leonardo da Vinci project, 2005-2007