

# **A Study on state of the art on intercultural training.**

## **Synthesis Report**

Elaborated by: Folkuniversitetet

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## Introduction

According to Eurostat (2012) there are nearly 4 million people migrating every year in the EU. The Europe 2020 Strategy (2010) and the Stockholm Programme (2010) set out the effective integration of legal migrants. The European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2011) recommends the organisation of introductory programmes for newly arrived migrants easing their insertion in the society and work place, as well as the development of methodologies and tools to equip teachers and trainers with the skills for managing diversity.

Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability of successful communication and cooperation with people of other cultures. A person who is inter-culturally competent captures and understands, in interaction with people from foreign cultures, their specific concepts in perception, thinking, and feeling. Intercultural competence has been listed as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning identified by the EU.

## Situation in the partner countries concerning intercultural training

More than 232 million of people – about 3% of the World population – left its country of origin in 2012 to live in another country. Europe and Asia – with more than 70 million of migrants each – are the continents who host the major number of migrants, the equivalent of 2/3 of the total population. In this report we can find a great variety of actions carried out in favour of integration and intercultural action, enhancing local actions because interculturality is more a local than a global phenomenon. Interculturality is developed and discrimination is restrained in territories where individual people live.

## Austria

Integration is one of the great challenges for **Austria** to guarantee social peace and economic success. Social diversity is a chance for economic development. Integration is a duty and responsibility of each single person. Successful integration is only possible through the involvement of everybody.

Integration requirements are determined by origin, gender, social status, cultural or religious background, as well as generation. For the purposes of a future-orientated integration policy the focus should be on opening perspectives for women as well as children and youth, especially those belonging to the second and third generation of migrants, and their needs shall be respected.

Integration of persons entitled to asylum and tentative beneficiaries of protection is a special challenge due to their need of protection. Also established minorities shall be addressed by integration measures. Measures against racism and discrimination are part of Austrian integration policy.

## **Greece**

In **Greece**, intercultural training is of major importance due to the number of immigrants. In 1996, the Institute of Expatriates' Education and Intercultural Training was founded. In Greece, since 1985 many schools with Intercultural Educational Programs are founded, where training according to the specific educational, social, or cultural needs of students is applied.

The promotion of Intercultural training is mainly achieved by strengthening the teaching of Greek language, the development of students' skills, the psychological support of themselves and their families, as well as the empowerment of teachers and education staff with training programs.

## **Italy**

While EU law slightly improved **Italian** antidiscrimination laws, equality policies remain the weakest in Europe. Italian government is inactive on voting rights and citizenship reform, compared to other new immigration countries.

From a brief analysis of the current integration policies, we can observe a favourable labour market mobility and family reunion, new long-term residence requirements to encourage language learning and integration, a difficult access to nationality, new legal conditions out of step with general societal realities, an anti-discrimination law which slightly improves to meet EU standards, voting rights still absent for non-EU residents, and weak education policies aimed to pupils with migrant background. Italy is becoming an increasingly multicultural and multilingual country, and its progress depend in large part from these new presences. Every year 6.000 foreign students graduate in Italian Universities, demonstration of the fact that immigrants are moving from mere labour force to a stable demographic presence. And what are the effects of these demographic trends on businesses? While the foreign workers may face more difficulties in relating to the company and colleagues (for language and cultural issues), they represent an important resource for the company, for their different experiences, visions and ideas.

## Spain

Along last years, **Spain** has got used to coexist with people coming from many parts of the world. Generally we can say that Spain has been a good host country for the millions of people that have arrive to our lives in the last decade.

Talking about interculturality is talking about hosting and fight against discrimination. It is a development model of social realities, of acknowledgement of diversity and equity as well as a container of attitudes of rejection to that development process.

## Sweden

In **Sweden** there are several ways for migrants to get support in their ambition to increase their civic and social competences.

The very first thing most migrants enter is SFI, Swedish for immigrants, where they not only is to learn Swedish language, but also get information about Swedish labour market, Swedish society, school- and education system, healthcare, trade unions, political system etc.

Other institutions working in this field is the social services office, that not only deal with social welfare but also in supporting individuals in building networks, discussions about education and suitable work etc.

Factors for migrants finding jobs “easy” are depending on, besides of language, from which country they come, what social conclusion they lived in, the more similar to Swedish conditions the easier, education level and the possibilities of validation as close as possible to Swedish conditions.

Another thing to take into account is whether the migrant has an existing network in Sweden, relatives who have jobs etc.

## Resources for intercultural training local and regional level

### Austria

On a local and regional level especially the large players attach importance to intercultural competence and training.

A variety of local, regional, national and international consultants and training institutions offer their programs also in Tyrol. Many of these offers can easily be found on the Internet – but there is almost no information nor documentation available on the use of such programs.

The big companies tend to buy comprehensive intercultural trainings (including e.g. Contrast Culture Trainings, Area Studies, Intercultural Role Plays and Intercultural Simulations).

For most of the numerous SMEs in Tyrol such comprehensive trainings are not affordable, but also not necessary. Their major focus is on the collaboration of different nations, cultures, and religions in a working context – on the workplace.

Most of them concentrate on group-building activities, which show a great variety. Depending on the people involved sportive activities are chosen, like a commonly scheduled hiking or cycling tour, or a more cultural aspect of the excursion is liked.

In order to being able to coach their clients in an optimal way, the Tyrolean part of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) has introduced some intercultural training activities in order to further open the organization for employees and clients with migrant background.

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### Greece

The promotion of Intercultural training is mainly achieved by strengthening the teaching of Greek language, the development of students' skills, the psychological support of themselves and their families, as well as the empowerment of teachers and education staff with training programs.

Recently, the Hellenic Association of Intercultural Education was founded, as the official carrier of the International Association for Intercultural Education in Greece. The aim of the Greek Union Intercultural Education, in collaboration with the International Association for Intercultural Education and other national and international bodies, is the conduction of seminars and conferences, the development of new partnerships/ projects for Intercultural Education and human rights as well as the implementation of Intercultural Education in school practice.

In June 2014, the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on “Organizing and administration of Education, Interculturalism and Greek as a foreign language” was organized by the Free Society and the Centre for Intercultural Education. The Conference aimed to examine issues of administration of Education and the role of Intercultural education in administrative educational policies, as they formed on the new conditions due to economic crisis.

Besides this, seminars are organized by the Free University of citizens (EL.P.PO) in collaboration with the Centre for Intercultural Education, with the following topic: Tutoring and Teaching Greek in native speakers, students and adults.

## Italy

Tuscany is among the regions that offered the best conditions of immigrants in the employment field, after Emilia Romagna and Liguria. In fact, the Tuscany Region has traditionally been committed to promote the inclusion of foreign citizens in the area, paying attention to inclusion and social care, professional training and education.

In the field of intercultural communication, in line with the principles of pluralism, the Region of Tuscany facilitate dialogue between parties in respect of the linguistic and cultural differences, in the logic of promoting effective interaction processes that represent a fundamental prerequisite for the construction of a plural and cohesive community, based on the contribution of people of different language and origin and compliance with the constitutional principle of equality.

The Regional Law 29/2009 provides in this regard that the region will promote the development of intercultural communication (Article 6, paragraph 27) which is designed as a tool to ensure the resident foreign population access to local services, in combination, to enhance the knowledge of the languages and cultures of countries of origin.

With particular reference to the first aspect, the acquisition of language skills and civic education promote an active and conscious use of local services.

In this way, the Region of Tuscany connected several funds interventions, linking the activities of the public sector to the private, and putting together the Fondo Interprofessionale (Inter-professional Fund) with the resources of the European Social Fund. The initiative was the first step forward strategic effort to promote the unification of training tools for all workers.

According to the IRPET research “Immigrazione e Lavoro in Toscana – Regione Toscana, Rapporto 2011”, the vocational training aimed to immigrants is one regional priority, particularly since 2000. Foreigners, compared to Italians, enjoy more funded course and /or recognized by the Region of Tuscany, an aspect that can be interpreted as a result of choosing training paths to enable the



recognition of formal qualifications. It could confirm successful public policies promoted by the Region in the field of vocational training for immigrants. On the contrary, nearly one third of Italians attended courses organized by companies or organizations in which they work, while only 13% of foreigners are able to attend it.

The picture that emerges in relation to the Tuscan context, is that the training activities for immigrant seems generally not to be integrated with the work activities. It can therefore be assumed that there is a national labour market that still invests little in immigrant workers qualification with respect to Italians.

From a point of view of specific local and regional policies and practices in the field of training on the workplace, we can identify different training paths generally offered which now represent established practices within the training system.

- Training on workplace safety;
- Training on Italian language and culture;
- Training on employment and local services;
- Training on specific professional competences.

## Spain

Work environment is related with educational environment in many ways. On one hand, access to work settings is important to follow previously good educational itinerary. On the other hand, most of immigrants that live among us, have come looking for a future for them and for their children and therefore it is essential, from the point of view of interculturality, to make all possible efforts to achieve that children and their families can adapt and integrate themselves in the best way as quick as possible.

To achieve these objectives Cantabrian Education Regional Ministry developed the Interculturality Plan. It was designed in 2006 and it was really a pioneer at national level, because the Plan included the immediate immersion of pupils instead of what was usually done, excluding those pupils and assisting them as an own group separated from the rest of the group. Successes achieved by the Interculturality Plan have made most Spanish Regions to follow this model.

The Intercultural Dynamization Centre has the objective of support actions carried out in educational institutions. The aim is to take in foreign students and ethnic minorities and their families and also respond to their education needs. In the same way they advise in the planning and development of

intercultural proposals to be carried out in institutions and which are implemented in the field of educational programming in different plans, programs and projects that guide educational action.

## **Sweden**

Sweden's 'mainstreaming' approach works to improve equal opportunities in practice. All residents are legally entitled to be free from discrimination, live with their family and secure in their residence and citizenship. Within Sweden's social model, each individual is also legally entitled to support that addresses their specific needs (e.g. labour market introduction, orientation programs, Swedish language and mother tongue courses).

## Resources for intercultural training – national level

### Austria

A variety of local, regional, national and international consultants and training institutions offer their programs also in Tyrol. Many of these offers can easily be found on the Internet – but there is almost no information nor documentation available on the use of such programs. Such information is only available informally.

For most of the numerous SMEs in Tyrol such comprehensive trainings are not affordable, but also not necessary. Their major focus is on the collaboration of different nations, cultures, and religions in a working context – on the workplace.

In this working context it is important to set the light on the chances provided by the diversity of their employees. Most of them concentrate on group-building activities, which show a great variety. Depending on the people involved sportive activities are chosen, like a commonly scheduled hiking or cycling tour, or a more cultural aspect of the excursion is liked.

In any case it should be avoided to use lists set up in a “To do – not to do”-style. Although such lists are very easy to use in self-learning or group contexts – they usually tend to foster stereotypes. So even in situations with smaller groups, budget Case Studies and Role Plays can be the means to raise the employees’ awareness of the benefits of diversity, but also of the potential traps.

In order to being able to coach their clients in an optimal way, the Tyrolean part of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) has introduced some intercultural training activities in order to further open the organization for employees and clients with migrant background.

An initiative of several partner institutions reviewed the educational context. They conducted a study on the attractiveness and accessibility of educational institutions for people with migrant background.

Intercultural qualifications or trainings have found a permanent place in company training programs of larger companies. After the euphoric start with beginning of the discussion and implementation in the 1990s in German-speaking countries now especially arises the question of further development

of the methods. Increasing globalisation creates the need to adapt the methods to different cultural circles and to break the mould.

Furthermore, cross-cultural training methods often also provide potential for application in other contexts, such as the development of social skills. Although, there is still little evidence for this.

In order to foster diversity and to profit from it, institutions and enterprises need a structured institutional diversity management. A survey conducted with enterprises involved in the Integrationsnetzwerk (a network for integration) showed that concepts for diversity management are implemented in a variety of ways. All of the interviewed enterprises implement one or another diversity activity mentioned in literature, like diversity trainings, mixed teams and the communication of diversity activities.

As the focus is on communication within the organisation, language courses are offered. Nevertheless it is obvious that language competences are not the only key to a deeper understanding. Therefore, the facilitation of intercultural comprehension e.g. by organising intercultural seminars, is demanded.

The survey also revealed that enterprises lack information regarding respective offers on the local market.

Based on the evaluation of the analysis and subsequent comparison with the theoretical foundations of intercultural training, data collection has revealed that there are currently 15 to 30 provider of intercultural trainings on the Austrian market, however, we can assume that the competition is much greater. The majority of providers graded the quality of the current intercultural training offers in Austria as being not enough, specializing in sensitizing trainings. It is likely that the offer will rise strongly and a few high-quality providers will enter the market in the long run. For the future it is planned to set general guidelines for quality standards in the context of cross-cultural trainings.

As the benefits of diversity are seen primarily in companies that take into account the cultural background of their employees (both in terms of potential disadvantages as well as their profit-making potential) and where integration is desired, an orientation towards fairness and an integration perspective is recommended. This requires a more radical strategy on diversity management that includes both corporate objectives, targeted support and process changes as well as addressing national origin and immigration background.

### Why intercultural management?

"Especially in Austria, where many well-known companies headquarters are located, the need for intercultural training is particularly large. For these companies, which consist of international teams and which are faced with just such markets, partners and customers, the intercultural competence decides if a business is successful or not. Often it's forgotten by the companies that behind 'business' there are still people. You can only be successful on an international level if you learn how to deal properly with the culturally different behaviour patterns", (Gerhard Hain, adviser and company management of 'ti communication Intercultural management & consulting' in Regensburg and Vienna)

Integration policy considerations have to be done at the moment of immigration. Selected immigration due to criteria of labour markets needs is of special interest of Austria. The granting of Austrian citizenship is the final point of a comprehensive integration process. Measures of integration policy and their operative implementation have to be ensued by structures of the state, the countries and the municipalities. To be successful, the integration process must be measured systematically, evaluated by indicators of integration and be guided professionally. Therefore an Expert Council and an Advisory Board on Integration (created initially by the ministry of the Interior and now established in the Foreign Ministry – the Ministry for Europe, Integration and International Affairs) involving all responsible persons regularly develop strategies and analyse the integration process by indicators in order to present possibilities of improvement in the annual integration report. European as well as national funding shall be focused on needs of target groups.

The creation of guidelines for integration and the nomination of commissioners of integration in the countries of Austria and in the municipalities are desired. Social partners, representatives of groups of interests, NGO's are invited to participate as active partners to the implementation of integration measures.

## Greece

Since Greece is a country with a large number of immigrants, many EU funded projects and literature exists for multiculturalism.

The educational material of the "Kallipateira" constitutes of material supporting the work of teachers of Physical Education ( K.F.A. ) and students, with the purpose to effectively plan actions and themes it deals with. The program focuses exclusively on the contribution and impact of physical education

on the assumption of equality in society, the promotion of respect for human rights, tolerance, diversity and respect of other cultures. Aimed at expanding the role, limits and objectives of physical education classes, it contributes to the educational affairs and problems of modern societies through the game, creating a new angle of approach of motor activities. The topics developed educational materials addressing issues on a) human rights, b) multiculturalism, c) racism and xenophobia, d) gender equality in education and society and e) social inequalities and social exclusion.

Many guides with training materials for repatriated and foreign students have been produced in order to help them with the different cultures.

In the Digital Library of the website of the Ministry of Education, we could find lots of suggestions from seminars as far as the multiculturalism is concerned.

In 2007, a workshop was held in Thessaloniki concerning teaching and learning in multicultural schools where teaching approaches and educational material for the intergration of immigrants students.

Teaching material has also been produced by the programs of Intercultural Education. For instance, the University of Athens produced a supporting paper on language teaching for students aged 11-15 years who learn Greek as a second language. (<http://repository.edulll.gr/884>, <http://repository.edulll.gr/249>)

## Italy

In this regard, we should note the good practice of **La Toscana Impianti (LTI) in Rosignano Solvay (LI)**, which operates in the engineering sector, focusing on design, build, install, maintain industrial plants in various fields. For the company, working in safety has become a priority objective, so over the years has proved to be a positive example in the field of workplace safety, by making investments and initiatives on the topic, especially with specific training paths, for all workers.

The innovative methodology of the training programs was the “on the job training”: in this way workers were able to learn the technical skills of the job and also to understand what the risks are, learning to manage them. The training is done by an experienced worker, able to teach, using the *mentoring or peer-to-peer* approaches. Before entering to the workplace, however, the new worker is asked to make a specific training conducted by the responsible of safety, through the use of lectures, audio-visual tools and other technical supports<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more initiatives on the theme of training courses on safety on workplace, visit *Prato Migranti* website [http://www.pratomigranti.it/archivio4\\_guide-utili\\_4\\_11\\_0\\_1.html](http://www.pratomigranti.it/archivio4_guide-utili_4_11_0_1.html)  
[http://www.pratomigranti.it/index.php?id\\_oggetto=4&id\\_cat=4](http://www.pratomigranti.it/index.php?id_oggetto=4&id_cat=4)

## Spain

Once highlighted some of the most interesting actions at local and regional level, it is important to refer to the Spanish educational system. We can distinguish several systems of education and training in Spain. On one side, we find the academic or formal education, provided in public and private schools financed by public funds. The first cycle, compulsory education, is studied from 6-16 years of age. Once it has been achieved, students have the option to continue further their education and training. They can enrol in vocational training or university studies.

Access to compulsory education is both a universal right and an obligation. Children under 16 are integrated into the educational system. The allocation to the appropriate level depends on age, educational level and language skills (in the case of foreigners).

To gain access to Higher Education, prior levels must be achieved. Those migrant students with lower education level or lower language proficiency find it more difficult to continue in education and reach higher educational levels.

Another type of training is the training focused on acquiring knowledge, skills and employment performance abilities. Legal migrant status to access this type of subsidized training is necessary.

Additionally, different NGOs also provide training to users based on their needs. Migrants who have no access to formal training can acquire the necessary skills to enter the labour market. However, this training is often limited to the official accreditation of the gained qualification.

Specialized human resources and specific strategies are required in order to tackle parents, students and teachers suffering stress and tension caused by new learning difficulties, excessive diversity of educational levels, problems related to sociability and integration, etc.. Problems vary depending on the country of origin of the students, parents socioeconomic status, the proportion of such students in each centre, etc.. External support received by the school is also a decisive factor, especially the support delivered from migrant organizations and integration specialized institutions.

Among the numerous activities carried out in our country in favour of multiculturalism, we highlight the incredible work of the “Incorporate” Programme. Despite being a relatively new project, it is developing a real and close work with the underprivileged. Work is being used as a social inclusion key tool.

Designed to ensure that the often existing barriers between companies and social organizations were diminishing. The project balance: over 27,000 companies have signed 70,000 employment contracts with users. A remarkable proportion of these results are a direct consequence of training. Training

that has been jointly delivered with the Solidarity Economy Observatory (SEO). SEO contribution to “Incorporate” La Caixa project design and professionalization of social inclusion technicians to the required standards is noteworthy.

The project, despite the high unemployment figures, registers a steady increase in positive results year after year. Most importantly, it is surely making it possible to cross the fine line that separates social exclusion from social inclusion. A job means more than just income for our users groups. "

“Incorporate” project is carried out at national level, but is locally where it really unfolds its potential. It offers local businesses an employment integration schedule that facilitates transition into the labour market for people at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded. It identifies qualified individuals to fill job vacancies, and provide occupational assistance. Occupational technicians support new employee work performance and company staff adaptation on the job site.

Lavapies National School Instruments Bank, Madrid. The Lavapies National Orchestra started, in August 2010, as a project for young people of any nationality, preferably immigrants. It seeks out to promote tolerance and peace through art.

Stories compilation told by residents of the Shelter and Refugees Centre (SRC) Alcobendas, remembering the stories told by their elders. The SRCs are temporary foster and primary care public facilities to asylum seekers, displaced persons and refugees in Spain. They depend on the Institute for Migration and Social Services (IMSERSO).

## **Sweden**

On a national level most initiatives comes from the authorities, like the Public Employment Service, Migration Board and the Swedish National Agency for Education among others. But those services are conducted by a large number of organisations like municipalities, adult education providers all over Sweden and below follows a couple of examples on good practice.

### **Introduction Guides (Etableringslotsar)**

Newly arrived migrants are able to receive help from an introduction guide. This guide could be an organization or a company working for the Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). The guide's job is to help the migrant during their training activities. The guide may, for example, give the migrant practical help when he/she are looking for a job or give advice on social issues or on what type of training or profession is best for the migrant.

The migrant choose the guide to help them and they plan the activities together. The Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) will give the migrants information on the guides they can choose from.



### **Knowledge of Swedish society – civic orientation**

Civic orientation is an activity that should be included in your introduction plan. Civic orientation is the municipality's responsibility and consist of at least 60 hours of education, where you will get a basic understanding of Swedish society. The education will be provided in your native language as much as possible, or in another language you understand.

### **Step-in job**

If the migrant have been granted a residence permit during the past 36 months, he/she can get a step-in job ("instegsjobb"). Step-in-jobs cannot be granted to citizens from EU/EES or Switzerland. To get a step-in job, the migrant is required to take a course in Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) at the same time. And this must be administrated by the Public Employment Service first.

Note, however, that the Employment Protection Act (LAS) does not apply to persons who are receiving a special employment subsidy in the form of an introductory job.

## **Resources for intercultural training – international level**

*According to the **Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006** on key competences for lifelong learning, intercultural competence is one European priority to achieved in the every learning context, from childhood to old age, as part of the general social and civic competences, which support individuals to participate in social and working life, in an effective and constructive way. "Intercultural competence" means understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate, which equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation.*

### **Austria**

In **Austria** more and more projects and business processes are now settled in international contexts. Beside the special situation of expatriates (in this context professionals or skilled workers sent abroad by their organisation for a specific period of time or to implement a certain job) most organisations face the fact that employees of e.g. different culture, language, nationality, religion need to cooperate in teams.

In the case of a foreign assignment, expatriates might take different roles as an interface between the headquarters and the depending units abroad<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Dowling et.al. (2008), p. 92 – 95

- Agent of direct control:  
they can be used as merely controllers, in order to ensure compliance by the hosting unit
- Agent of socializing:  
uses the corporate culture as an informal control mechanism, transferring and implementing values and beliefs
- Network builder:  
they develop social capital, prepare and facilitate interpersonal linkage, which can be used for informal information and communication
- Transfer of competence and knowledge:  
often misunderstood as assisting in the transfer of skills to local co-workers
- Boundary spanner:  
they collect information in the new context, and spread information about the home organisation
- Language node:  
especially after returning to their home country expatriates tend to turn into experts for their host country's language

But no matter what role for the expatriate, or working in the headquarters, the real challenges that result are, for example, the leading of teams with employees from different countries of origin or the consideration of different cultural circumstances. Intercultural trainings provide managers and employees with the necessary cross-cultural skills and have proved to be crucial for the success of international collaborations.

It is necessary to learn to deal with differences in mentality, without looking at our personal mentality as the only right one. Dr. Karin Schreiner (Intercultural Know-how - Training & Consulting): "Intercultural trainings for teams can find a remedy, because you work to create a common basis for manners, without giving individuals a feeling that they are disadvantaged. Different understanding of time, function and modes of communication should be addressed and appreciation learned. One has to agree on a common basis."<sup>3</sup>

Especially in a mixed cultural team you have to face challenges that may arise in intercultural collaborations as a theme. Not integration, but cooperation is the motto. In addition to the technical-factual level and the issues of cooperation an additional level - the cultural – has to be included.

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<sup>3</sup> Training – Das Magazin für Weiterbildung und HR-Management

"Mag. Gerhard P. Krejci (Consulting for Teams and Leaders) describes an intercultural team exercise: "All participants from different cultures should introduce themselves in the first 15 minutes and tell something about themselves and their country of origin. For example, you can thereby also respond to stereotypes and ask: 'What is a particular stereotype that's being said about my culture and that doesn't apply on me.' Or you ask how many languages someone speaks and for whom the working language is the mother tongue. Behind barriers there is often a language problem. Everyone should dare to talk, exchange ideas and make a contribution. Thus, you can simple and almost playfully bring difficult issues in the common work process."<sup>4</sup>

For European and for international companies cross-cultural competencies apply as essential for the success of international cooperation. This goes personally, by telephone and over the internet and therefore requires special sensitivity on all sides. No matter whether trainee or manager – intercultural training should convey this sensibility and knowledge.

Chris Fuchs (kick off Management Consulting) states that "The differences within Europe cannot be ignored and therefore the same applies as with all other intercultural seminars: to understand the own culture and background, to understand the others cultures and their backgrounds and to compare the work culture of both cultures and work on that what to do, to communicate with others that they understand and accept the importance and urgency. Important in training is to work on the Why and the Solution and what behaviour is right or wrong."<sup>5</sup>

The time frame for a cross-cultural training should be 1 to 2 days, the experts say. Two days offer an opportunity to go more into depth and to explain questions of practical everyday life as well as cultural differences in values and questions about the professional challenges (leadership, dealing with employees, hierarchy and time understanding, conflict behaviour or negotiation strategies, methods of communication).

A seminar, a training can align the antennas and establish a basic awareness, to build on. Michelle Gross (spidi.communicating): "Intercultural competence is an ongoing learning process. 'Be quick to observe but slow to judge' gets it to the point: watching myself always critical; to find out where the own prejudices come from and how I deal with it; be attentive; to be tolerant and not too quick with

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<sup>4</sup> Training – Das Magazin für Weiterbildung und HR-Management

<sup>5</sup> Training – Das Magazin für Weiterbildung und HR-Management

prejudices; soak experiences and let them rest for a while – deal again from a different perspective with it. When it comes to the development of cultural competence in a training, it would be advantageous to go from general to specific."<sup>6</sup>

Gerhard Krejci said: "It's beautiful that you can see your own culture in contact with other cultures. You should in principle deal with the fact that there are potential cultural differences (no matter at what level – we have that already within Austria from state to state) and how to respond to it or deal with it. Helpful questions would be for example: What are the criteria I observe a social situation, how can I recognize differences, in what are these justified and how do I rate this?"<sup>7</sup>

In these trainings the participants practice what different perceptions can mean. They reflect how they personally perceive esteem, which understanding of respect they have and in which situations they feel acceptance. The most important key to understand other cultures is to know how you self are culturally knitted.

## **Greece**

In Europe, intercultural education can be divided into formal and informal. Formal is mainly provided by European projects like Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. Informal is the educational policy related to the delivery of education and training that does not lead to an academic degree.

Intercultural education is one of the major problems of the educational life globally. In the USA, 'multicultural' education became a topical issue in the early 1970s, when the first scientific articles and contributions were published, and is still the most widely used term. In Europe, most countries with relatively high immigration flows (such as France, Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands) show a similar line of development with respect to intercultural education, which started in the early 1980s.

## **Italy**

Recommendation No. R (84) 18 on the training of teachers in education for intercultural understanding, notably in a context of migration make the intercultural dimension and the understanding between different communities a feature of initial and in-service teacher training, and

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<sup>6</sup> Training – Das Magazin für Weiterbildung und HR-Management

<sup>7</sup> Training – Das Magazin für Weiterbildung und HR-Management

in particular, teachers training should take into account migrant communities cultural expressions, the prevention of ethnocentric attitudes and stereotyping, strategies for approaching, understanding and consideration to other cultures, awareness of social exchanges existing between the country of origin and the host country not only in the cultural field but also in their historical dimension, consciousness of the economic, social, political and historical causes and effects of migration. Moreover, according to the Recommendation, State Members should encourage the development and use of appropriate materials to support the intercultural approach in the training of teachers, encourage the holding of national and international seminars and courses on the intercultural approach.

The main European Programs and Funds which provide financial support to develop intercultural training courses are the **Lifelong Learning Programme**, the new **Erasmus Plus**, and more specifically connected to the labor market, the new EU **Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**, which integrates and extends the coverage of three existing programmes (**Progress - Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, EURES - European Employment Services, and the European Progress Microfinance Facility**) and supports employment, social policy and labour mobility across the EU. Therefore, the **European Social Fund (ESF)** supports projects designed to help people improve their professional skills and careers.

The European project **The InnoSupport Project (2003 – 2005)** is based on a practical guide to support innovation in small and middle enterprises (EU Programme Leonardo da Vinci- [www.innosupport.net](http://www.innosupport.net)) The Aim of the InnoSupport project is to transfer learning materials in the context of the project's partners countries - Italy, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany and Portugal - in order to reinforce the competences of middle management professional profiles in SMEs and allow them to acquire and strengthen innovation management techniques. Among these competences for the innovation, there is the intercultural competences, which, are both a challenge and an opportunity for companies. According to the Project, intercultural competences are seen as the ability to behave and to act properly in a certain situation<sup>8</sup>. In this sense, success depends to a large degree of attitude, empathy, motivation, and values.

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<sup>8</sup> According the project definition, intercultural competence is “*First of all it means to act in an adequate way in situations when dealing with representatives with different cultural background – employees, business partners, clients. This competence is based on an attitude, to accept that people are different. It means to be open to the idea that my way of thinking and acting is not the only possible way. And that different thinking and actions can lead to the same or even better results. It means to respect other ways of thinking and acting. Intercultural competence requires a personal attitude that my way of thinking and acting is not better or worse than that of my foreign colleague, business partner or client - it is simply DIFFERENT. It’s the idea that I will be able to deal with those differences as a challenge and an opportunity where we both can learn and take profit*”

The project uses self-assessment test/checklist aimed to employers or managers, to focus the issues, and then propose possible idea to organize training course according to the need of the enterprise, and international good practice. There are good references and some resources as a guide to plan a training course in the own enterprise.

Different methodologies were used by the **EU project “ICT - Intercultural Training for Social Integration”(2003-2005)**, which created a learning environment through web tools aimed to train future trainers in intercultural competences.

The project was made by 14 different educational institutions representing six European countries, and its aim was the development of a training model including manual and training guidelines for specialists working in the area of social integration. It provided trainers need’s analysis in country partners, “best practice” examples relative to the theme of “intercultural competence” for the respective countries, and then, from the conclusions it was drawn a competence profile that specifies the particular competences the workers should possess. The competences were preserved in the form of training modules<sup>9</sup>, containing topics such as language, culture, social competence, relevant laws and legal stipulations. Therefore, the modules includes guidelines for the teaching method and lesson plan, intended as a support for the trainer.

An interesting research was realized by The European Intercultural Workplace Project (2004-2007) which kept together partners in 10 European countries (Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Great Britain) to investigate challenges posed by an increasingly intercultural work environment. The project, funded by EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme II, intended to highlight key issues for managers, employees and customers from host and immigrant cultures in public, private and education sectors. Firstly a survey was conducted to analyse the situation in each partner country, then it was realized an empirical case studies in those economic sectors most in need of attention in the individual partner countries and providing a comparative analysis between sectors on a national and trans-national level across partner countries. Finally, the project produced a set of human resource development training modules reflecting best practice and local needs, with the aim of informing and educating the workplace target groups and policy

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*from it. It never means communicate and act from a position of superiority such as: I know best and I'll show you how to proceed. It also means to know about socially based standards, habits, communication styles in other countries or cultures – like dress codes and nutrition habits, distance and proximity, greeting rituals, etc.”*

<sup>9</sup> file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/09\_03\_11\_ICT\_HAndbuch\_FV\_en.pdf

makers<sup>10</sup>. The EUROPE AT WORK: Diversity in the European Workplace Training Manual is available in 9 languages and is designed for a wide range of users: personnel officers, human resources development managers, and management training consultants, Trades Unions representatives, other employee representative bodies, and individuals in general. The EUROPE AT WORK: Diversity in the European Workplace DVD consists of an introduction and 13 scenarios which present samples of intercultural conflicts in the form of mini-dramas.

During the 2008, the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue, many initiatives dealt the themes of intercultural competence and immigration, even in the field of business. One example of that, is represented by two European workshops, coordinated by Impronta Etica, "Mainstreaming Diversity" and "Recruitment and Ethical Management of Foreign Workers", focused on two key aspects of the vast diversity in the world of business. During the workshops it was also represented two examples of responsible management: L'Oréal France, which presented the great opportunities represented by the integration of diversity management within and across companies focusing primarily on the management of processes such as recruitment, training, reconciliation of family life and work, internal and external communication, evaluation, internal mobility and Key Performance Indicators; and Obiettivo Lavoro, which showed how you can recruit and manage foreign workers in a responsible manner, ensuring compliance and the full integration of immigrant workers, determining the benefits of economic, social and ethical issues for society<sup>11</sup>.

The TIPS Project "T- learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue" (2008), was part of the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue initiatives, and involved four European countries: Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland, coordinated by the Italian Consortium FOR.COM and funded by the Life Long Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci.

The TIPS project has developed a training course for people interested in working in the field of cultural mediation, in order to acquire useful skills and ability to work and interact with migrants and immigrants. European partners were selected on territorial criteria, which reflect the reality of migration flows and different practices of integration in Europe. In order to develop a training program meeting the needs of professionals in the cultural mediation, TIPS project carried out a

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<sup>10</sup> The project produced three sector-specific booklets on education, healthcare and SMEs [http://immi.se/eiw/texts/EIW\\_Sector\\_Specific\\_Booklet\\_on\\_SME.pdf](http://immi.se/eiw/texts/EIW_Sector_Specific_Booklet_on_SME.pdf). Therefore, it produced a manual and a DVD with the title *EUROPE AT WORK: Diversity in the European Workplace* <http://immi.se/eiw/training.html>.

<sup>11</sup> These were part of the 21 workshop that were made during the 2007/8 to translate commitments of the European Alliance into concrete practices. "The European Alliance for Corporate Social Responsibility" was promoted in 2006 by the European Commission together with CSR Europe, Business in Europe and UEAPME (European Association of Craft and Small and Medium Enterprises).

comparative research between mediators and professionals working in the field of cultural mediation.

- The city of Vienna has been able to increase the number of apprentices from immigrant through the use of flyers and advertising in multilingual websites. All learners receive information on diversity and follow a module on intercultural education.
- The Development Partnership to live and work together in the city of Linz (Austria) has realized a successfully information campaign which attracted the interest of employers, especially from SMEs, and of local policy makers, with regard of the analysis of the benefits of a cross-border labor market and the development of an intercultural training for union representatives and workers with immigrant backgrounds.
- The Pangea Development Partnership is a project implemented in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha, which has included migrant associations, NGOs, local and regional public authorities with the aim to reach immigrant people of this rural area, putting them in relation with the integrated and specialized training services and consulting services, as well as programs for ongoing support in the workplace. Awareness-raising measures are associated with the research of the “intercultural barometer”, conducted on issues such as socio-economic and cultural contribution of the migrant population in a certain municipality.
- The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) provides its members with a research report and an action plan on collective contracts with respect to issues of interest to migrant workers and ethnic minorities, to be used as tools for integration policies and practices in the workplace<sup>12</sup>.

## Spain

Students curriculum development through international exchange is relatively new, if we talk on a massive scale. Its importance for the advancement of multiculturalism will be analyzed in greater depth in other reports, but it is interesting to highlight here some issues:

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.etuc.org/issue/migration>



- Currently, more than half of all exchange students come from the South and study in the North. Almost a third of these exchange students is composed by North-North students, which is mainly due to study opportunities in Europe, as the European Union Erasmus programme.
- Figures for South-South students are considerably lower (only 18%), although the South-South migrants represent 35% of the world stock of migrants.
- Most exchange students study in educational institutions in the North. During the 2009/2010 academic year (the latest year we have data at international level), four out of five exchange students were living in the North, according to the World Bank
- Study opportunities in the North may actually be more attractive due to the best quality, prestige and reputation of educational institutions, and greater availability of part-time work. However, there are also prestigious regional study centres in the South -for example, more than half of exchange students of the countries belonging to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) decide to study in the region, particularly in South Africa.

## Sweden

The multilateral Grundtvig project 'Step in! Building inclusive societies through active citizenship'. In this project universities, research institutes, public authorities, NGOs, and adult education providers from Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Scotland (GB), Slovenia, and Sweden combined their competences in the field of civic education, integration, and migration.

The project's overall aim is the promotion of the civil and political participation of migrants, ethnic and religious minorities in European receiving countries. Migrants and people of migrant origin constitute an important proportion - approximately 8.8 % - of societies in Europe; and the phenomenon is on the rise. However, the civic engagement and political participation of migrants and people of a migrant background is very low. This low level of involvement in the political process inevitably results in low representation at different levels of power. The political exclusion of migrants negatively affects social cohesion and social justice, and this exclusion compromises the democratic quality of representation and participation in receiving societies.

## ComInTrain

The aim of the project is to form an international partnership in order to improve language teachers' competencies in intercultural training within language education in VET in order to enhance employability of VET students and prepare them to work in a multicultural environment. This project will address the need for a greater understanding of specific linguistic, social and intercultural needs in VET language education related to employment.

## **Civet**

This Intercultural Training Model was developed by the partnership of CIVET – Counselling Immigrants in Vocational Education and Training. The partners are: Etelä-Kymenlaakson ammattiopisto (Finland), Newham College of Further Education (UK), Utbildning och arbete, Arbete och välfärdsförvaltningen i Kristianstads kommun (Sweden), Berlin-Brandenburgische Auslandsgesellschaft (BBAG) e.V. (Germany), Greta du Velay (France) and Achaia Adult Education Institute (Greece).

Across Europe, non-native speakers face problems in vocational education and training. This project offers training and support to vocational teachers/trainers and workplace instructors to develop intercultural skills for working with migrant students and trainees.

The Intercultural Training Model is presented in three parts: the training framework, the guidebook and additional national support material. We strongly recommend that the materials will be used within the training framework to maximise learning through discussion and group interaction.

The project is aimed at vocational trainers and teachers who work with migrants. The Intercultural Training Model is presented in three parts: the training framework, the guidebook and additional national support material.

## Conclusions and remarks

European societies are increasingly confronted with questions regarding social and political affiliations and the possibilities for the participation in civil life of all its citizens - including traditionally excluded groups like migrants and ethnic and religious minorities, and other socially deprived persons.

Adult education can play a key role in this regard: the promotion of migrants' key competences for active citizenship, lifelong learning and participation in civil societies is an important aspect of improving their chances of getting involved in the labour market and civil society.

But it is important to not only focus on migrants and minorities: key representatives of the majority society have to be addressed and enabled to overcome structural blocks to integration within the host countries' core institutions.

### Austria

Though, in Europe we praise the diversity of cultures, we still struggle to cope successfully with the differences in communication and attitude in a working environment with employees from different cultural backgrounds. In order to ease these struggles there have been developed intercultural communication trainings since the second half of the 20th century.

Nowadays there are so many intercultural trainings on the market that vary in quality and effectiveness. Therefore the employers need to consider some criteria when they choose the training for their managers or employees. Such trainings should deliver an understanding of the own culture and background, the migrant's culture and background. Furthermore they should provide a comparison of the working habits and manners in both cultures and give solutions on how to cope with possible misunderstandings. The attitude we should adopt while working with different cultures is to "be quick to observe, but slow to judge" in order to combat stereotypes.

Knapp-Potthoff postulates five intercultural competences that intercultural trainings should focus on: affective aims (tolerance and capability for empathy), culture specific knowledge, intercultural communication awareness, conversation strategies to cope with the intercultural situation and learning strategies for enriching the knowledge about cultures.<sup>13</sup> Byram differentiates between five

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<sup>13</sup> Knapp-Potthoff (1997)

savoir faire: the knowledge about oneself and about the social and individual interactions, the attitudes to qualify oneself and appreciate others, comprehension skills and the skills to make use of cultural knowledge, as well as skills to acquire knowledge and interaction skills in an unfamiliar environment. The five savoir faire are completed by the educational field, the critical assessment of the own culture as well as other cultures:<sup>14</sup>

## **Greece**

As we can conclude, intercultural training is very important due to the number of migrants in our country. They are in a foreign country, with different people and a quite unknown language. Many schools with intercultural programs have been founded in order to help migrants – students to be acquainted with Greek language and culture. Apart from their educational needs, intercultural training also helps them to be familiar with the different cultural and social needs. In this way, they will be able to adapt to local communities and afterwards to their working environment. We should also mention that many European projects have been focused on education to multiculturalism and tools and methodologies are on a demand recently.

## **Italy**

The training for foreign population is a field of analysis very difficult to classify: apart from the limited statistical data, there are few specific researches which analyse the complexity of the phenomenon, especially when we talk about intercultural competence, which still belong almost exclusively to the school world.

Language learning and vocational training for immigrants are quite widespread in the country, while those training programs more specifically related to the development of intercultural competences with the aim of integration of immigrant workers, represent at the moment just a sporadic practice. Policies and practices for intercultural dialogue exclusively aimed to foreign workers, and training courses are organized outside of the working environment, generally at employment centres, which shows on the other hand a good public training and service system for immigrants, and a good public system which provide funding and grant in order to support private and public initiatives in the field of training.

Training courses in intercultural competences as part of staff management plan or company strategy are very limited: in fact, Italian business world is characterized by reduced structuring initiatives in

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<sup>14</sup> Byram, Michael (1997)

Diversity Management, in terms of planning and evaluation of interventions in the field of staff management.

Intercultural training courses are generally provided for the internationalization of the company and are addressed to managers, in order to develop better relation with foreign markets and clients.

From a point of view of good practices, we can state that at local and regional level there is a good system of training aimed to immigrant people, but specific practices in intercultural training on the workplace are limited or may not be documented, while there is a high consideration of public institutions of training needs, information services, employment centres, cultural mediation services, civic education, and so on, for immigrant citizens and their children.

At national level, there are more experiences in the Central and Northern regions such as Piedmont, Veneto, Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna, especially concentrated around the 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Piedmont and Emilia Romagna has develop and well documented training courses, materials, and methods, which represent fundamental resources to take into account for the organization of a training course on intercultural competence.

At the European level there are many practices and methodologies developed and appropriately documented, which can be great points of reference for the construction of international networks and for the establishment of relations with countries that express similar needs.

From this reflection, is possible to make some considerations to take into account in order to promote policies and practices for intercultural training on the workplace.

- The active parts in the integration process should be identified in the stakeholders responsible for general issues in the labour market in the areas of vocational training, career guidance, work mediation and employment. These topics include trade unions, associations of employers, institutions dealing with vocational training centres and career guidance to the world of work in the media at the national level, which determine the environment in which we can encourage employers to train their employees in new skills and intercultural skills;
- There is a need of training in intercultural competences for teachers and trainers in order to be prepared on pursuing training programs on the workplace, and of learning materials which should take into account specific methodologies and teaching approach.

- Adapting education systems to diversity is challenging for Europe, especially for new immigration countries like Italy. Its education system has as many strengths as weaknesses. Beside civil society projects, the Italian education and training system is not actively supporting new opportunities on intercultural education or/and training.
- The importance of training within a comprehensive system of career-orientation, vocational training, starting from the countries of origin, provides an effective programming and a more qualified employment of immigrants. The establishment of mechanisms that work in favour of the equilibrium between domestic demand and supply of foreign labour would promote the activation of training paths that meet the needs of the local labour market and prepare the reception of migrants who aspire to enter Italy for work purposes.
- Best practices highlight fundamental work phases to take into account while providing intercultural training: the selection, the entry and the training, the permanence and the growth.
- Every kind of initiative on this topic, should include a need's analysis study, in order to make a context analysis considering priorities, problems, solutions, goals and results, monitoring the achievement of results, and evaluation.
- The main general objectives of an intercultural training course should:
  - respond to the needs of the workplace integration, socialization, personal and professional communication, mutual understanding, achievement and satisfaction;
  - promote an effective and efficient communication on the workplace;
  - stimulate the sharing of new ideas and innovation;
  - increase involvement, a sense of ownership and responsibility;
  - improve the environment and the working environment;
  - reduce conflicts, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.
- Intercultural competence is based on an attitude, on the idea that dealing with diversity is a challenge and an opportunity, so that a greater codification of practices could create the conditions for a circulation of knowledge and best practices among Italian businesses, which will benefit internally with a more productive workforce, and externally with the ability to deal with foreign markets and clients.

- In order to spread contents, methodologies and materials, it's fundamental to document and report good practices in the field of intercultural training on the workplace, and share outcomes with public and private stakeholders.

## Spain

- In 2006 the General Assembly of the United Nations held its first High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. That event is now seen as a turning point in international migration dialogue. Participants remarked that "international migration could be a positive force for development, in both, countries of origin and destination countries, as long as it was supported by the right policies" (World Bank, 2013). In this sense it is important to emphasize the significant effort that Spain has made to take in and proportionate coverage to massive numbers of migrants who came to our country in a relatively short period of time. Their integration has been a significant challenge but appropriate policies have been implemented mainly in the educational sector, to achieve this objective.
- Migration is not a purely personal matter as it directly affects the economic development of countries, leading to a chain that begins in people, pass through families and communities and finally comes to countries. Globalization results in a considerable increase in human mobility with social, economic and even environmental implications for all those involved. Transform all that potential into a converting force of our reality should be a challenge for any host society.
- There is no doubt that the arrival of these people, at first, is a shock and repercussions are at diverse levels: social, economic, work, health and education. The host society, which benefits in many ways, must adapt their structures to meet the short and medium term needs of the immigrant population. People who migrate come looking to improve their living conditions and offering an opportunity to learn and appreciate the contributions of other cultures; an opportunity, ultimately, to develop values of respect and understanding of diversity.
- The multiculturalism is an anti-discrimination form and, therefore, it is important to consider the need to establish enabling conditions of intercultural practice. Even though we have made significant progress in recent years, we are still far from perceiving multiculturalism as a common reality among us.

- We must consider the difference as a relation and not as an opposition. A relation in which "minority" groups can claim their culture value. Multiculturalism does not mean to strip them of their own culture to impose our own, but lay the groundwork for a common ground approach, moving away as far as possible from impartiality to come closer to solidarity.
- It seems that over the last few years, definitions so far raised about multiculturalism are being rethought, which emphasized the different, to adopt a point of view that puts more focus on what unites us. Unfortunately, terms like inequality, violence and poverty ... are present in the speech of most people living among us who came seeking a better life. This speech is not uniform but common features are present in it. Networking support is very important to them, and people and institutions of the host places can collaborate for the establishment of these networks and achieve common goals. Recognition of the right to be different is important, but much more important is what unites us, the possibilities of working together and sharing common elements.

## Sweden

By tradition, integration into Swedish society is mainly focused on labour market issues and educational system connected. We still see this today even when the labour market is harder to reach due to recession in the economy, technical development and higher demands on the labour force regarding skills and educational background. Focus is, however, shifting towards a more holistic view on integration, not just focusing on vocational skills, but also on civic, social and cultural knowledge and skills, still with the aim of the self-supporting citizen!

The "right" information is delivered to the individual at the "right" time. The individual goes through the process of integration into the labour market step-by-step.

Instead of overwhelming the individual with lots of information at once, the counsellor/mentor provides information in small portions with relevant goals for each step on his/her way to the labour market. This approach allows avoiding "big" goals which can de-motivate the individual as they feel that whole process is too complicated and even impossible to go through.

From the point of view of the progressive approach advice has to be directed at enabling individuals to be or become self-managing. This implies that career guidance and other services have to be



viewed as a process in which people learn how to manage their own careers based on their needs and capabilities. Thus the role of the mentor/counsellor is to prepare, guide and support in such a way that the individual can find his/her own way independently. As a result of this, the individual learns to plan on running into obstructions and finding solutions for them on their own. The mentor teaches the individual to manage his/her talents and to get a grip on his/her future. During the process the picture gradually becomes clearer with regards to the individual's position, goals in the labour market as well as the requirements. In other words the process approach takes care of this fine-tuning by putting the individual in the centre.

At the beginning of the guidance process it is important to create trust among migrants so as to ensure commitment. By commitment we mean that one agrees with the choices that are made and the changes that are introduced. Good practices in some countries have shown success in involving bilingual mentors/advisors for the first stages of integration process. Migrants who have successfully integrated themselves can coach others as they know how to motivate and support migrants from the same culture.

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