The Diversity Value
How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration
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- Citizenship and Active citizenship

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**References**
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Further documents and reports produced during the project are available at: www.ismu.org/diverse. Both this book and the other texts produced reflect the view only of the Authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Integration of immigrants in receiving societies is an important objective that requires the implementation of different policies as well as tools for their support. International research on factors that affect the quality of immigrant inclusion in societies highlights different elements that have to be considered and in particular social, structural and cultural policies. This chapter, based on the research carried out in Andalusia, examines three scenarios of how the implementation of policies and social and cultural practices impacts on the integration of TCNs in the region. Furthermore, it identifies and proposes some key areas where new policies or tools could be developed in order to promote and encourage their better integration in the region. Moreover, we hope our experience, although based on the case of Andalusia and Spain, could also contribute to the global discussions on the integration of immigrants and how to promote it through public and private policies, strategies and actions in other contexts.

Andalusia is one of the Spanish regions with the greatest number of immigrants, followed by Catalonia and Madrid. The evolution of foreign immigration has been very similar to the overall one in Spain: a very fast increase of immigrant population from the mid-nineties in the XX century and a stabilization and decrease coinciding with the current economic crisis (Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, 2014; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 1996-2013). In 2013 the foreign population registered in Spain was 5,546,238 (542,314 in 1996). Foreigners represent 12.6% of the population (4,943,627 foreigners with residence permits). In 2013 the number of immigrants in Andalusia was 729,725 (8.6% of the population), while in 1996 only
89,641 immigrants were registered in the region (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2013).

Territorial differences exist depending on the immigration rates registered in municipalities and provinces. Diversity by country of origin, and ethnic diversity are also important traits of this region. Most foreigners settle in municipalities along the coast of Andalusia, due to the development of agriculture, an important and dynamic tourist sector and the presence of tertiary activities in the region (Gualda, 2012). Segmentation by nationality is also an important feature of the Andalusian labour market (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2014).

Europe is the main continent of origin of foreigners in Andalusia, especially from the EU, followed by Africa and South America. In Spain there are similarities with Andalusia but there is a greater presence of Americans (mostly South-Americans) and less Africans and Europeans. Today, citizens from some countries are more present in the region, particularly from the United Kingdom, Morocco and Romania. Globally, the number of TCNs in the region has increased from only 39,237 in 1996 to 345,169 in 2013, i.e. an almost ninefold increase compared to 1996 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2014).

With regard to their insertion in the labour market, activity rates are markedly bigger for TCNs, given that most immigrants have come to seek work. Insertion rates are especially high for men (84.43%). Nonetheless, TCNs have the highest unemployment rates reaching almost 40% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2014).

TCNs are in a worse labour situation than Spanish nationals, EU-27 citizens and North-Americans, and are proportionally less integrated in managerial, technical, professional or other skilled positions. The opposite occurs regarding non-skilled workers, 49.8% (non EU-27), in contrast to only 14% of Spanish nationals, or 28.1% of EU-27 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2014). As regards the level of achieved qualifications, there are important differences among foreigners of various nationalities in Andalusia. The highest level of illiteracy is found among Africans and Asians, reaching nearly 10% of their population. However, if we add the number of immigrants who have not even completed primary education, Africans are in a worse position with two-thirds of their population corresponding to this profile (Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, 2013).

LLL is a key issue for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment as it leads to an improvement of SKCs (CEDEFOP, 2008 p. 123). According to the DeSeCo Project (OECD)¹ in 2001, acquired competencies are today key as education is linked to work and employment (Rychen and Salganik, 2006). The term competency is holistic and dynamic and combines skills, knowledge, motivation, values, attitudes and behaviour (Lorente, 2012, p. 105). It is also ascribed to a particular political, social, educative and cultural context. But what happens if particular competencies are observed from other national contexts?

Acquisition of SKC is valuable in itself (Fragoso and Guimarães, 2010), but in the case of immigrants it can have an added value in terms of social inclusion, if these

¹ Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations.
skills are validated. But the task is not easy as different traditions, norms and educational systems interplay. Moreover, there are demographic and labour market reasons that justify the existence of the recognition process and the need to encourage it, both because there are workers that do not have formal accreditation of their professional skills, and immigrants who in turn would have to participate in recognition processes to enhance their inclusion in the labour market. However, recognition is a very complex task for all the actors intervening in the process, as different legal and administrative frameworks in different countries are confronted at national, regional or local level. Normative gaps for the validation of competences are also addressed (Miranda and Martín, 2009; Roquero and Hernando, 2004; Lorente, 2012). At the same time, the ease or difficulty of getting SKC recognized differ depending on the educational level, the type of competencies, and when and where they were acquired.

As the Spanish Constitution (1978, Art. 149.1.30) establishes, the State has exclusive competence for the accreditation of titles and the recognition of formal qualifications acquired in Third Countries. The Ministry of Education, and its representative bodies in the Autonomous Communities, and in Spanish embassies, is in charge of receiving, assessing and approving applications for the validation of foreign titles (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura and Deporte, 2014). On the other hand, the recognition of SKC of TCNs and their incorporation in the Spanish Vocational Educational Training (VET) systems or in the labour market occur through specific processes for assessing foreign qualifications.

With regard to lower education levels, the legislation provides that if a foreign student under 18 years of age (TCN or not) comes from a foreign educational system and wishes to join to Compulsory Primary Education or Secondary Education (ESO), it is not necessary to perform any formal validation of previous studies, and schools and high schools establish the way prior learning is going to be recognized in order to guarantee the successful inclusion of minors in their centres.

As regards university, unless there is a mutual recognition of titles and qualification agreements that allows direct access to a university, students with titles from sending countries having concluded no agreements with Spain, or whose qualifications do not permit access to university in the country of origin, but are equivalent and comparable to the Spanish title of Bachiller, must pass the university qualification exam Selectividad.

At higher levels, the validation of university studies undertaken abroad is the responsibility of the universities in which applicants wish to continue their studies. With regard to the outcome of the validation of university degrees, between 56% and 68% of them are approved indicating that it is more difficult for immigrants to obtain such accreditations than to access the university. Another problem is the slowness of the procedure even for European residents in Spain (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura and Deporte, 2014):

… For some faculties it’s terrible because they ask for so much documentation, which of course must be translated and verified” (...) “there are lots of obstacles, especially for Africans, really a lot” (...) “(a student) had problems with validation because his own country did not want to lose qualified people, or
they want to earn lot of money through him” (interview with an Employment Counsellor, 2014).

In sum, the procedure for the validation of TCN official degrees requires the completion of formalities, stakeholder engagement, time and economic costs, ranging from the relative simplicity of obtaining a secondary education degree to the difficulty, delays and costs of a university degree.

As regards the validation of professional “competences”, an increasingly important term within the framework of the OECD and the EU (Luengo, Luzón and Torres, 2008; Martin Mulder, Tanja Weigel and Kate Collings, 2008), there exist several difficulties for TCNs. National legislation in Spain regulates the common process for the recognition of competences, in terms of objectives, principles and instruments, through the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training (SNCFP) and other relevant national and regional legislation. Following a series of pilot experiments, Spanish and Andalusian legislation introduced mechanisms for the official recognition and certification of professional competences. TCNs and other immigrants have access to the procedure at the end of which they are awarded Professional Certificates; these certificates are very useful for entering the labour market. One of the most interesting initiatives for the recognition of immigrants’ SKC is that of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications (IACP) whose goal is to achieve SKC accreditation by means of a Professional Certificate (by applying RD 1224/2009).

The greatest difficulty that workers from Third Countries face is that the entire accreditation procedure is based on work experience obtained in Spain. This sometimes leads to a vicious circle, difficult to resolve: to provide foreigners with residence or work permits a contract is required, but to hire immigrants a company also requires documented workers:

... The problem is that many of them are undocumented, they are working but illegally, without permits, they have passports and other documents, but their situation is not regularized (interview with a Director and teacher of Spanish Adults Education Centres for Lifelong Learning, 2014).

The process of certification of non/in-formal competences, together with the will to create equivalences between vocational and educational certificates, is consequently opening doors through which people (and TCNs in our case) can access the Education System, the Vocational Training system and the labour market. This means that non-nationals can see their skills and knowledge recognized and certified through a “regularized” procedure, and not through a specific process for non-nationals, as in the case of the validation of foreign educational certificates. Consequently, this new process of recognizing professional SKC presents innovative opportunities for this target subgroup.

Moreover, although the law provides certain opportunities, the recognition of non/in-formal learning in Andalusia is not implemented fully and successfully, despite the fact that some groups could benefit from it. It is hoped that this type of recognition will help to raise the educational level of citizens and increase their con-
Integrating TCNs in Andalusia

Connection with processes of LLL. On the other hand, it will allow skilled workers performing functions without SKC recognition to demonstrate their skills through these more accessible procedures. Immigrants who access the system of continuing education for adults, either because they cannot prove their previous training or because they lack training and want to acquire it, will probably prefer a more employment-oriented process, e.g. linked to vocational training. But the Continuing Education for Adults system (EPA) provides only general education (Secondary School, Baccalaureate).

Another completely different case is the recognition of skills by private companies or NGOs. Companies, as well as NGOs we interviewed, can produce their own system for the “approval” or “accreditation” of acquired professional skills. “Talent recruitment” used to be a strategy of international companies. Actually, in global terms, companies and NGOs were more interested in recruiting workers on the basis of their competences rather than of their titles.

The fieldwork allowed us to infer that the recognition of SKC had direct and very positive impacts on the labour market and social integration for TCNs, as well as many other impacts, more difficult to measure, related to immigrants’ self-esteem and self-image. In particular, the following emerged from the interviews: a) increased employability; b) greater possibility to regularize the legal status of residents in Spain; c) possibility to abandon marginal activities; d) improvement of economic and social position through working in better-paid and socially recognized jobs; e) possibility to receive social benefits (unemployment, pension and social security rights, etc.); f) possibility to progress in education; g) improved self-image and self-esteem.

...there are women who for the first time in their lives have had their professional experience officially recognized while maybe they have spent their whole lives looking after elderly people... (interview with the Director of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications, 2014).

Furthermore, immigrants from Third Countries face the following difficulties in terms of SKC recognition: lack of information, bureaucracy and slow procedures or financial cost. Finally, we observed that the available agencies, procedures and tools for the recognition of TCNs’ SKC differ depending on the educational level to be recognized (university, secondary, primary), or on whether it is a case of approving a title, recognizing, validating, etc. courses and other learning experiences. The recognition of formal education titles follows a different procedure, depending on whether they regard non-university or university education. There is no protocol or specific rules for immigrants from Third Countries.

We can now focus on the information obtained from studying organisations that had implemented some kind of DM practices in the Andalusian Region. By diversity we mean all characteristics that are a source of social differentiation (culture, language, country of origin etc.) (Giovannini, 2004). The impact of diversity on productivity varies significantly depending on how well such diversity is managed. This means that in DM the main role is given to the decisions and actions of organisations in a way which not only benefits the organisations themselves but also traditionally...
underprivileged groups (Giovannini, 2004; Crawford, 2002; Chinchilla and Cruz, 2011; Torre and Borrajo, 2012; Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmussen, 2004; Prieto and Marcos, 2010), in line with actions by the European Commission to promote diversity (Eurofund, 2013a; European Commission, 2014).

In our study we found that DM emerged more or less frequently depending on factors such as the size of the company or its degree of internationalization or the economic sector. Also important were the qualifications of workers, and whether the company had several branches that could give promotion opportunities to non-Europeans in the same company but in a different branch. Companies with a large staff, with an international or European dimension, with several offices around the world and a common working language (English) were inclined to give more importance to DM in different areas and processes of the organisation. At the same time, an important trajectory towards the defence of Human Rights in some NGOs merged well with DM experiences.

After examining different cases throughout this study, we can say that DM can be easily implemented within an organisation, irrespective of its type (private or public; large or small; national or international). The main requirement is to have the will to do it and to give priority to DM in internal organisation. The process is easier when the tools for achieving this goal are already in place (open and competitive selection processes, Welcome days, etc.). DM is encouraged when rules are clear and coherent, and if concrete measures, strategies and practices to achieve it are established and applied by the organisation. Thus, workers can perceive the importance and advantages of this orientation, as a sort of internal socialization of employees.

The analysis of our cases points to the advantages provided by such factors as gains in productivity as well as commitment to and identification with the organisation. Nevertheless, some contradictions are also found when observing particular experiences. For instance, some organisations may encourage diversity linked to the country of origin and promote integration but, at the same time, fail to respect equal opportunities as regards gender. This leads to the creation of low-skilled labour niches, for example in the agricultural sector or the hotel industry where some positions are traditionally offered to women, in the context of local markets segmented by gender. In some cases it was also observed that workers from certain countries are offered contracts more easily due to international agreements and special requirements for Circular Migration (Gualda, 2012).

Proper management of cultural diversity must overcome stereotypes, racism or discriminatory practices, respect and fulfill human rights, and promote equal treatment and equal opportunities. To do this, it is first of all necessary to be aware of the existing internal sources of diversity in organisations and to respect them. Secondly, to recognize the added value DM entails and, finally, to design a strategic plan for DM, which allows a full and proper integration of immigrants at the workplace. The development of this type of specific and systematic programs for DM inside the organisation is still pending in most organisations in Andalusia.

We studied different organisations operating in Andalusia, both in the private and the public sector. During the fieldwork, we had some difficulty in selecting organisations in Andalusia that would be good case studies and representative of good DM
practices for their TCN staff. This difficulty reflects one of the main results of our research: DM is at a very early stage in the Andalusian Region and in Spain, despite their long history of attending and providing services to immigrants.

Very few organisations in the region develop systematic DM practices with TCNs as target groups. We did not find public administrations or institutions in the region which have implemented explicit DM practices. We did not find many small and medium-sized businesses applying DM principles. We found DM especially in big organisations, with offices in different countries or offices at national level and/or selling products and offering services at international level.

DM exists in different areas of organisations such as human resource policies (or in the framework of CSR), communication practices, workers integration processes, work environment or training. This happens in other organisations in Spain (Torres and Borracho, 2012; Prieto and Marcos, 2010; Fernández and Camelo, 2013). Moreover, some firms manage diversity at different stages/phases, e.g., from the entry of workers in the company until their integration, while others only apply these techniques at particular moments. Global principles and values adopted by organisations such as, for instance, equality in terms of opportunities, and equal treatment while dealing with diversity, are defended, promoted and developed in different ways in the studied cases. Practices such as competitive selection processes, Welcome Days, intercultural parties, promotion through productivity, language courses, retreats, training courses etc. were common in order to manage diversity.

In any case, as we have reported (Gualda et al., 2014), there is clear evidence that several organisations in Andalusia apply DM and obtain benefits from it. Andalusian organisations use different approaches with regard to DM. One of them is to promote DM without having specific policies for doing so, i.e. by applying broad principles regarding equal treatment, respect and no discrimination, which address in part the problem of diversity. This happens in different types of organisations, including those in the public sector. Other organisations outline specific DM philosophies, policies and practices.

Some organisations focus only on cultural differences connected to the diversity of the national origin of their staff, while others focus on diversity in a broader sense (so called “superdiversity”), taking into account not only the ethnicity or the country of origin. In addition, important differences emerged regarding certain approaches: a) an approach based on “talent” which is very lucrative for the organisation and b) an approach based on “diverse people” who have to be treated without discrimination for ethical reasons and who benefit the entire community as a consequence of learning to live together in harmony.

Talent has no Age Restrictions. Talent has no Borders. There are Extraordinary People in the whole World… We offer a chance to play in the First League (interview with an Abengoa Company Manager, 2014).

In our experience, big organisations or organisations oriented towards international markets or operating on an international level develop some DM practices, sometimes linked to laws on equal opportunity and CSR issues, and other times as a result of a real need or interest of the employer. Other times DM is somehow a logical result
of working with clients who put forward quality requirements related to personnel resources management. Sometimes it is difficult to understand if DM emerges as a result of legal requirements or due to a real need; however, once it is in place and employers perceive its benefits, the reaction is very positive. When observing how DM develops in local branches of bigger organisations, it is evident that it can be implemented in organisations of any size. In any case, organisations are not particularly lenient, since a common aspect that emerged is that benefits appear when workers are productive (good researchers, good salespeople, etc.). If workers were not productive they were not promoted, if workers did not do their job competently, their contracts were not renewed.

Focusing now on the third main topic, participation of immigrants in receiving societies is a key issue, as commonly addressed in European Policies or principles, such as the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union (The Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Government of the Member States, 2004) or through the European Handbooks for Immigrants integration in Society (Niessen and Huddleston, 2010). Andalusian policies have also been addressing the issue of participation through Integral Programmes for Immigration where “participation” has been a stable “Governing Principle” in the First, Second and now Third Integral Programme for Immigration, together with other principles such as “Interculturality”, “Equality”, “Integrality”, “Normalization”, etc. (Consejería de Gobernación, 2002 and 2007; Consejería de Justicia e Interior, 2014).

Though this part of the research focused on describing the characteristics of different types of NGOs and volunteer organisations in Andalusia, and especially on how TCNs participate in the third sector as another way of achieving integration in the host society, most of the experts and associations we contacted, as well as legislation and programmes for integration, underline that there are no specific rules and orientations for TCNs; existing rules apply to foreigners in general and aim to promote the participation of immigrants in society also through training and participation in NGOs.

Traditionally in Andalusia, after the entry of immigrants in Spain around the mid-eighties, we initially found two types of NGOs caring and attending immigrants. First of all those providing a general service, i.e. organisations that provide care to all types of people (immigrants and natives) with different needs. This is the case, for instance, of the very well-known, Cruz Roja, Caritas or Human Rights Association. It is also the case of other NGOs that emerged in local or regional contexts, mainly composed of Spanish people, but with the aim of helping and providing services to immigrants. These were “pro-immigrant” NGOs. In later years, alongside the general service and pro-immigrant NGOs, a new type of organisation emerged, created by and composed of immigrants (‘ethnic associations’), as the majority of components were non-nationals. Today, with the settlement of immigrants in the Andalusian region, all three types co-exist and what we normally find is that some borders between NGOs are blurred as very well established immigrants begin to occupy also positions of leadership in some non-ethnic organisations. Today the landscape in Andalusia of NGOs
that give care to immigrants or are constituted by them is very heterogeneous. Therefore, it is important to address the difficulties existing in Spain, to differentiate clearly between ethnic or non-ethnic associations, because of the incorporation of immigrants in all types of NGOs and finally because immigrants are assuming leadership positions also in non-ethnic organisations. Although this distinction does not really correspond to the Spanish context and to the situation of Andalusia, it makes the comparison among countries in the DIVERSE Project easier, since volunteer organisations have been divided into “non-ethnic” and “ethnic”. We refer to “non-ethnic” NGOs when they are of a general nature (such as Cruz Roja, Fundación CEPAIM) or pro-immigrant (as Andalucía ACOGE). As a result of the crisis and of the more stable presence of immigrants living in the region, some NGOs that previously only dealt with immigrants have now undertaken projects which also take the host society into consideration (for instance, projects in neighborhoods). Therefore, the boundaries between ethnic and non-ethnic NGOs in Andalusia are sometimes blurred.

One of the key aspects that differentiates “ethnic” and “non-ethnic” NGOs is how participation is managed and whether it is possible. In “non-ethnic” entities, participation, channels of participation and the relative procedures, are normally addressed more easily and effectively because there are more native Spaniards involved (as leaders or as members, partners or volunteers) and this enables them to better understand the mechanisms linked to the creation and functioning of NGOs, as well as the mechanisms for legal participation.

Sometimes it is not easy to find volunteers. A volunteer candidate does not necessarily fit in all types of NGOs, and this is one of the first things that organisations try to ensure through the selection process. In this way, they usually follow legal protocols for recruiting volunteers and try to match the functions to be performed with the personal preferences of each volunteer. The legislative framework is also considered (Consejería de Gobernación y Justicia, 2010; Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, 2011). In addition, instruments such as a “volunteer contract” and basic and continuing training for volunteers function also as a place for meeting and exchanging ideas between people of different associations.

Overall, TCNs participation in NGOs enhances understanding between nationalities, facilitates actions in favour of other immigrants from the same cultural backgrounds and helps to understand their lives, experiences and reasons for migration. At the same time, TCNs bring a different viewpoint to some aspects that go unnoticed by the locals. They are often more sensitive to problems because they have a firsthand knowledge of them.

The legislative framework for TCNs who are volunteers in Andalusian NGOs, is the same as for native or other foreigners. On the other hand, the current legal context, and especially the Integral Programs of Immigration that have been developed in Andalusia (Consejería de Gobernación, 2002 and 2007; Consejería de Justicia e Interior, 2014), reflect a political scenario committed to interculturalism and DM. What is more, these plans aim at developing actions to promote policies for the active partici-

\[\text{2 Distinction adopted in the DIVERSE project for the fieldwork.}\]
pation and full citizenship of immigrants in general, including those of Third Countries, and differentiate between EU and non-EU citizens in terms of political participation (voting), taking account of the limited possibilities available to TCNs.

According to the law, a volunteer is someone who works for an entity without pay (interview with the General-Secretary, Andalusia Acoge, 2014).

In most cases, ethnic associations have been founded by the immigrants themselves. Associations of TCNs are mainly based on common interests, be they religious, cultural or pertaining to legal rights, and respond to certain identified needs of the immigrants such as the search for employment, language difficulties, bureaucracy (documentation), etc. Associations formed by TCNs, mainly try to promote social integration and to meet migrants’ specific needs. Because of these characteristics, such NGOs tend to be less stable in the region compared to large non-ethnic institutions. Among the most prominent services offered by TCN associations are networking and coordination with other organisations (hospitals, associations, municipalities, platforms of immigrants, immigration forums etc.). They are also involved in workshops, coexistence projects and cooperation activities, and they sometimes participate in the provincial immigration Forums of the Regional Government.

Integration into societies that receive immigrants can be especially influenced by the way immigrants maintain connections with their countries of origin. While difficulties in maintaining daily contacts with home encouraged immigrants to integrate into destination communities, researchers have found that it is now possible for immigrants to simultaneously live in both origin and destination countries. Although some elements seem to be very decisive in some contexts (poverty, hunger, conflicts etc.), the existence and perseverance of the immigration phenomenon is due to many factors such as the existence of personal and social networks that put new immigrants in touch with ethnic communities already established in destination countries; these networks can play a dual role both as groups that attract immigrants and as support networks for new immigrants and other residents (as suggested by works such as Massey, 1999; Espinosa and Massey, 1987; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). In this way, these communities can be important for immigrants’ integration into destination countries, while also promoting the implementation of transnational projects in countries of origin. Such projects exist in the Andalusian region, but they are few in number and depend heavily on public funding.

To conclude, and from an economic point of view, we observe that the economic crisis has had an impact on NGOs in the last years as a result of reduced funding. Ethnic NGOs were especially fragile, due to their small size and the lack of fundraisers. Furthermore, workers mobility for labour reasons (emigration) could lead to closing some ethnic NGOs or stopping mobility as it is a vicious circle that increases fragility. Institutional participation in Integration Forums to promote measures for the integration of immigrants at local and regional level is also affected, weakening the contribution of ethnic associations to the improvement of the immigrants’ situation.

Well, before the crisis we had up to 12 volunteers working with us, and the last time this year we had 5, and right now all of our programs have finished and we are
waiting for the arrival of subsidies. We have done everything to raise money, but it
doesn’t work,… we can no longer continue to..., so until we get subsidies we cannot
continue hiring (interview with the President, Asociación Mujeres entre Mundos,
women, Sevilla, 2014).

At the same time, some NGOs, with the help of immigrants and society, intensify
their practices and ties of solidarity in order to survive in times of crisis.

In the case of settlements, there has been a very interesting movement of internal
solidarity. This solidarity that emerges in situations of extreme poverty means shar-
ing food, the strategy of the pot, the appearance of spontaneous street markets, etc.
Spontaneous solidarity mechanisms that can ease extreme poverty appear while
people from different nationalities are collaborating in the settlements and in some
neighborhoods (interview with a Professor at the University of Almería, 2014).

Let us now present some concluding remarks. The integration of TCNs is possible
through the development of targeted strategies and tools. This chapter has shown how
integration into the hosting societies can be facilitated by means of validating previ-
ously acquired learning, by promoting DM practices and by encouraging migrants
participation in NGOs.

Although we are already on the route to integration, due to the economic crisis
some mechanisms that were already in place in the Andalusian region have been
stopped as a result of the lack of funds. On the other hand, coherent and continuous
work in different spheres is necessary in order to achieve real integration. In the com-
ing years, some steps in the three areas considered in the DIVERSE project are recom-
manded.

As regards the validation of SKC, the complexity of bureaucratic-administrative
procedures should give way to very simple structures for providing information and
advice to people interested in the recognition of competences; we suggest establishing
“one-stop” offices or personalized monitoring of each of the records. For the accredi-
tation of professional experience, it would be desirable to find ways that would allow
us to demonstrate foreigners’ entire working experience and not only that acquired in
Spain. Another challenge is to break the vicious circle between obtaining a stay or
work permit and receiving a contract of employment.

In the case of immigrants who access the system of Continuing Education for
Adults, as they cannot prove their previous training or because they lack training and
desire to obtain it, a plausible solution would be to develop a vocational training sys-
tem adapted to their work schedules and oriented towards their area of work, or even
to enlarge the responsibilities of the Continuing Education for Adults in this direction.

Despite the existence of various problems, we discovered some interesting efforts,
aimed at facilitating the inclusion of immigrants in the educational system and the la-
bour market, which have been carried out in the few last years by public administra-
tions at a regional and national level and which give hope for the future. Nevertheless,
some of the difficulties and actionable levers found in the report also imply great
challenges to come.

In addition, we propose to make the recognition of SKC of TCNs easier as this
would not only result in the social enhancement of TCNs, but would also increase the
hosting capacity of the Andalusian and Spanish society as a whole. However, these goals cannot be achieved alone: coordinated actions and information inside the country, but also within Europe, are necessary in order to promote better ways for recognizing SKC in Europe.

In the area of DM, we suggest disseminating information to public and private organisations as to what DM is, how to manage an organisation following DM principles, and what benefits can be obtained from it, given that most organisations in the region are unaware of this practice. It is also important to develop specific DM practices in public organisations (administrations), and promote it in private ones, with the help of relevant regulations and training, following the pattern that led to the recent introduction of Equality Plans in Spain. It is also important to give specific orientations and support to small and medium size companies so that they can introduce DM practices and develop counseling activities, tools and strategies for implementing DM plans in different types of organisations.

With regard to the participation in NGOs, we consider it is important to promote participation also in other social areas different from the ones where immigrants typically tend to congregate (ethnic NGOs). For instance, there are a lot of immigrants enrolled in schools and high schools, but the presence of their parents in “Parents Associations” is anecdotal. It is important to discuss how to guarantee the participation of immigrants also in these other spheres of society.

In order to reduce the vulnerability of ethnic NGOs, it is important to train immigrants so that they can acquire leadership and other skills useful for managing NGOs, such as learning how to raise funds or to justify expenditures, etc. These tools would ensure the continuing existence and participation in ethnic NGOs and provide autonomy and empowerment which are key elements for their survival in times of crisis.

Finally, it is useful, according to us, to promote the political and social participation of TCNs who are excluded due to legal reasons (because they are undocumented). On the other hand, it is important to promote collaboration among NGOs in order to further TCN participation in society and enable them to share and take advantage of local resources. The valorization and use of transnational activities as a way of promoting co-development and helping Third Countries is significant. However, it should go hand in hand with respect for the immigrants desire to help their families or home countries while integration in the destination society is taking place.


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The Diversity Value
How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration

The European approach to immigration is traditionally characterized by a sort of “schizophrenia”,
generated by the attempt to keep together two contradictory philosophies: the “economicist” philosophy
on which the system of entry (and stay) is regulated and the philosophy of solidarity and equal
opportunities. To overcome this paradox, three major changes are necessary, which constitute the
challenges addressed by the Diverse – Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for
Society and Economy – project, conducted in 10 European countries and whose results are presented
in the volume: shifting from the perception of migrants as contingently instrumental resources to the
conception of their human capital as a structural resource for the economic and social development of
European societies; promoting a wider awareness, among different types of organizations (profit,
non-profit and public), of the importance and potentialities of Diversity Management strategies;
improving the social participation and the civic and voluntary engagement of Third Country Nationals
in view of the construction of an inclusive European society and in order to change the common
perception of immigrants as people needing to be helped and assisted.

Finally, it is only through the active involvement of different stakeholders and the implementation of
different types of actions that it will be possible to achieve the ambition of “reinventing” the European
approach to immigration, to overcome the European historical paradox and benefit from the “Diversity
Value”.

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