



POLICY BRIEFS

The Ministerial Integration Conference on
“Turning Principles into Actions”
Groningen, 9-11 November 2004



Organised by The Netherlands' Ministry of Justice

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In co-operation with the Migration Policy Institute

Under the Auspices of the

The Netherlands' Presidency of the European Union

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Preparing for the Integration Policy Conference

Introduction and Welcome

On behalf of the Dutch Presidency, and as a Minister responsible for integration, I am pleased that you have accepted our invitation to the Integration Policy Conference and look forward to welcoming you to Groningen on 9 November 2004. As a national-level minister who deals with the challenges of immigrant integration on a daily basis, I hope that you will join me in emphasising the importance of a long-term political commitment to the integration of immigrants and minority groups, and of a common vision on integration. A sense of urgency has guided discussions in this area over the last few years; we need to maintain this momentum to promote a stable and coherent future for Europe.

Our ultimate goal is to give *practical relevance* to the vision for integration we share in two areas: introductory programmes and youth with a minority/migrant background. I urge you to focus on practical initiatives to foster integration that will lead to the engagement of all citizens and residents based on shared values and respect.

Practical information

Policy briefs

- Enclosed are a set of policy briefs that include questions and recommendations to serve as a basis for the discussion in Groningen. You will also find the discussion questions listed below. I urge you to consider these in preparing for the conference.

Discussion format

- Introductory programmes (10 November) will be explored in a plenary session, in which only ministers, secretaries of state, and representatives of European organisations will be seated in an inner circle to foster interaction and discussion.
- After an introductory film on youth (11 November), I would like to ask you to join me in closed-door, small-group workshop discussions for ministers and secretaries of state only. For logistical reasons, we have had to divide the group into workshops ahead of time and we hope that you will be pleased with our suggestion. Please see the Annex 1 for your workshop allocation.
- We have asked some Member States to give a short presentation during both the plenary session and in the workshops. In the interest of a fruitful and complete

exchange of ideas in all sessions, we would ask that you focus your comments on the topics raised in these introductions and to keep your comments concise.

Discussion questions

Introductory programmes

The inability of recently arrived immigrants and even some resident minority groups to speak the local language, together with their lack of knowledge about society, can lead to the development of an economic and social underclass. These are challenges that we all take seriously. Introductory programmes are a targeted response designed to promote social orientation and increase access to language classes, and are sometimes coupled with labour market participation. We will start with a discussion about shared citizenship and civic participation. The topic will be briefly introduced by the United Kingdom, laying the basis for discussion on “what works” in promoting participation, mutual respect, and a sense of shared citizenship in our societies.

- Should introductory programmes focus on self-reliance of the migrant, on giving full effect to the migrant’s added value in society (culture, economy), or on promoting the concept of shared citizenship?

We will then turn to integration in practice—at school and in the work place. One useful way of promoting language acquisition, for example, is to combine language learning and work experience, training, child raising support, or education. This section will be introduced by Spain, laying the basis for a discussion of multi-faceted approaches that involve the migrant, the public sector, and the private sector in the integration process.

- How can other parties (e.g. civil society or companies) be motivated to participate in the integration process? Should they just be made aware of the benefits they could draw from their participation, or should the State impose positive incentives or even obligations?

Youth

The position of migrant and minority youth is often substantially different from that of their parents. They speak the language, have taken advantage of the available educational opportunities, and are often successful and upwardly mobile. Due to a number of factors, however—including discrimination, the tensions between two cultural worlds, segregation, and their exposure to poverty and social exclusion—some are over-represented in criminal activities and school drop-out rates, and are becoming increasingly distanced from society in general. If there is any integration problem for which a solution must be found, it is that of youth, Europe’s future. We have grouped these challenges into three thematic groups, one per workshop:

Workshop 1: Strengthening the democratic state and preventing radicalisation

- Some solutions to radicalisation encourage the building of existing community ties within the migrant community (mentorship programmes) while others focus on assimilating migrant youth to society (encouraging participation in mainstream activities such as football). How can Member States actively encourage respect for diversity and constructive dialogue with and about Muslims in Europe?
- Should Member State governments and/or EU institutions play a role in training Imams and unofficial Islamic community leaders? If so, what is the most effective way to establish and maintain lasting and productive contacts within the Muslim community to guide this process?

Workshop 2: Immigrant parents, children and schools: Bridging the gap between home and the host society.

- What structural changes should be made in schools to increase the educational achievement of youth from a minority/migrant background? How can we ensure that these measures address social and cultural differences?
- How can parents be encouraged to participate more actively in the school system with regards to the educational and social expectations of their children?

Workshop 3: Promoting equality of opportunity and combating discrimination.

- What are the most effective initiatives for promoting equality of opportunity for youth from a minority/migrant background in the labour force? Is it better to work on improving their educational achievement, to reduce discriminatory hiring, or increase internship positions?
- Should anti-discrimination measures be targeted at the needs of specific groups (e.g. youth with a migrant/minority background) or is a mainstream anti-discrimination approach desirable?



**Introductory Programmes I:
What makes a “good citizen”?**

Purpose

To discuss which skills are needed to participate in all aspects of society, and who takes the responsibility for acquiring these skills. Learn about how Member States give substance to the notion of shared citizenship and the sense of belonging.

Points for consideration (derived from the accompanying policy brief)

- There is broad consensus in Member States that good management of migration necessitates effective integration of immigrants. The aim of integration policy is full participation in society, not assimilation.
- In the past, integration of newcomers has not always been given due importance. As a result, many former immigrants are still insufficiently integrated and their children, although in a different position, are also disadvantaged. Knowledge of the language and skills required for labour market participation are often the starting points, but integration may also extend to knowledge of institutions, norms and values, etc
- A common understanding about shared responsibility for the community is essential to integration and does not require that immigrants renounce their own culture. Essentially, this emphasises the concept of shared citizenship, which includes a notion of respect for diversity and one of active participation in the political, social, and economic life of the host society.
- At issue will be different conceptions of what shared citizenship means, and how best to encourage full and active participation.
- Many States give incentives for immigrants to attend introductory programmes, some require their participation, while a few even sanction those who fail to fulfil introductory programme requirements. Considering that the immigrant him-/herself is the first (but not sole) beneficiary of integration programmes, it raises the question of who should bear the responsibility for such programmes.

Success factors

- Identification of target groups and adaptation of the introductory programmes to their specific needs. Long-term unemployed, high-skilled refugees, mothers with children or second-generation immigrants all have very differing needs for completing a process of integration. Adaptation of the programmes to meet these diverse needs improves the success of introductory programmes.
- Providing incentives or imposing sanctions stimulates participation in introductory programmes. Whereas some States choose positive incentives (free courses, reimbursement, or earlier access to residence permits or citizenship), others opt for the imposition of sanctions if requirements are not met (fines, cutting social benefits, or withdrawal of residence permit), or a combination of both.
- Make information easily accessible. The provision of information—via books, brochures, or the Internet—greatly aids the integration process.

Discussion question

- Should introductory programmes focus on the self-reliance of the migrant, on maximising the migrant's potential in society (culturally, economically), or on promoting the concept of shared citizenship?



Introductory Programmes II:

Learning in context

Purpose

To share information on how introductory programmes can be most effective and discuss initiatives that successfully increase the participation of migrants and minority groups.

Points for consideration (derived from the accompanying policy brief)

- Integration is a two-way process involving migrants and the host society in all its aspects: individual citizens, private employers, local and central government.
- Learning in context initiatives, also referred to as “dual trajectory programmes,” combine language learning and/or social orientation with work, vocational training, education, child-raising assistance, or other activities.
- Mutual respect and understanding are cornerstones for cooperation in the integration process. Introductory programmes may benefit from the active participation and involvement of members of the host society. Mentoring initiatives bridge the gap between migrants and citizens, while ensuring migrant’s access to information.
- Integration takes place “on the floor” – i.e. at the local level, in the work place, in schools, and in the neighbourhood. Central government has an essential co-ordinating role.

Success factors

- Language teaching is more effective when set in a context (of work, learning, etc.)
- Using the potential of private employers and/or local community organisations enhances the effectiveness of introductory programmes
- Projects to avoid community tensions have proved useful for successful integration

initiatives. Initiatives that prepare residents in a certain area for new arrivals, and that bring together residents and new arrivals, enhance mutual understanding and positive relations.

Discussion questions

- How can other parties (e.g. civil society or companies) be motivated to participate in the integration process? Should they just be made aware of the benefits they could draw from their participation, or should the State impose positive incentives or even obligations?

Policy Brief

Introductory Programmes and Initiatives for New Migrants in Europe

By Sarah Spencer with Anna di Mattia, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society University of Oxford, in co-operation with the Migration Policy Institute



Executive Summary

Migration is a permanent feature of European societies. It can bring significant benefits. But successful integration of migrants can not be taken for granted. For some migrants the integration process is not proving successful: in employment, education, housing, health or community relations.

There is growing consensus on the need to promote integration into the labour market *and* society; to focus on newcomers *and* the second generation; and that integration is a two-way process. It requires the migrant to adapt *and* the host society to address the barriers that can prevent full economic and social participation.

This paper looks at the integration of newcomers. It identifies the differing approaches adopted and good practice which could be shared. It outlines:

- Which new migrants are the target
- What the integration initiatives are designed to achieve
- Which agencies are responsible
- When the initiatives take place
- Whether participation is a matter of choice, incentive or compulsion
- What the programmes and varied initiatives consist of
- What has worked; and what has been less successful

Some programmes focus narrowly on acquisition of language, or access to employment. Dual trajectory programmes are increasing: providing language *and* social orientation, within or outside of a work setting. There is some evidence that language tuition is most effective when set in the context of work or higher education.

Migrants' participation in language classes and social orientation are encouraged by incentives, or required, with sanctions for failure to participate. The relationship between the would-be resident and the host country may be defined as a contract: the migrant commits to learning the language and social engagement in return for the right to residence and to receive support in the integration process.

Where the state takes lead responsibility for introductory programmes, there is a trend towards greater control at the national level, with new agencies to plan and co-ordinate.

The challenges of integration have been felt most keenly at the local level. Regional and local government leadership has created opportunities for innovation but can lead to uneven provision.

Civil society - including employers, trades unions and community organisations - plays an increasing (but still under-utilised) role in introductory programmes: from language and skills training, social orientation and access to services, to initiatives to improve community relations. Programmes are often introduced because of need at the local level rather than as a result of national policy.

Information for migrants is provided in innovative and accessible ways, on access to jobs and services, on the laws, institutions and history of the country, on policing, advice agencies, personal finances, social norms and acceptable behaviour.

In social orientation courses, the goal may be provision of practical information or to influence behaviour. Parts of courses may be delivered by migrants, in a range of languages. Provision of childcare facilitates the participation of women.

Some initiatives focus not only on the migrant but on the host community - addressing their concerns and promoting positive interaction with their new neighbours. Initiatives prepare residents for new arrivals and bring migrants and residents together in situations which promote understanding and cooperation.

Mentoring initiatives are designed to bridge the gap between migrant and citizens as well as to ensure access to information. Helping to overcome ignorance and mutual fears, mentoring contributes to broader community relations' objectives. Some schemes engage work colleagues in mentoring new migrant employees.

Little research to measure outcomes has been conducted. The evidence available suggests successful initiatives may be those which:

- Engage private employers and/or local community organisations
- Reflect the actual needs of migrants
- Benefit from strong coordination between the organiser of programmes and the agencies providing services
- Follow through after initial investment in the migrant, recognising that integration is a long term process
- Do not address only language and employment (necessary but insufficient for integration) but also social orientation and access to services
- Address the concerns of the host community, providing information about new arrivals and fostering good relations with them
- Have resources to provide services such as language tuition, soon after arrival, to all migrants who need it, not only those in particular categories

Some barriers to success have been identified. These relate to the narrow focus of a programme, the exclusion of categories of migrant, the inability to match programmes to actual needs, financial constraints, poor coordination, lack of infrastructure at the local level, motivation to participate, or lack of suitably trained teachers and materials.

Conclusion

There is a growing range of introductory programmes and initiatives across the EU from which migrants and host societies are benefiting. Sufficient evidence on outcomes exists to encourage further investment and innovation.

There are clear benefits in the diversity of providers, and the variety in approaches adopted, rather than sole reliance on state driven, uniform delivery. Organisations in civil society, including employers, can be a significant additional resource if supported by a public policy framework that provides guidance, coordination and, in some cases, funding.

Language skills are a necessary but insufficient condition for integration. Language tuition needs to be supported by broader measures to foster social integration, access to essential services, and positive community relations.

The situation in each Member State differs. Not all programmes will be suitable for transfer to other states but there are many positive initiatives from which others could

learn. There is no central source of information, and limited evaluation from which to judge 'what works'. Future cooperation at the EU level should address this limitation while fostering the innovation and sharing of good practice which is beginning to emerge. Independent evaluation of the outcomes of initiatives, using common criteria of assessment, would be invaluable for states when considering future policy development and resource allocation.

Introductory Programmes and Initiatives for New Migrants in Europe

Introduction

Greater consensus has recently emerged among EU Member States on the importance of initiatives to promote the integration of migrants into the labour market and society. Migration is recognised as a permanent feature of European societies which can bring significant economic and cultural benefits. It is nevertheless evident that the successful integration of migrants can not be taken for granted.

While many migrants do achieve economic and social integration without public policy intervention, there is evidence that in some communities the integration process, for newcomers and subsequent generations, is not proving successful: in employment (disproportional unemployment and non-utilisation of skills and qualifications); education (language skills; underachievement of migrant children); housing (excessive segregation; homelessness); health (which research shows declines *after* arrival); and community relations (tensions, victimisation, disorder).

This evidence has necessarily prompted reconsideration of integration strategies and greater acceptance of the need for a comprehensive approach:

- promoting integration into the labour market *and* society
- focusing on the second generation *and* newcomers; and
- recognising integration as a two-way process that requires the migrant to adapt *and* the host society to address the barriers that can prevent economic and social participation.

Some Member States have seen value in separate, formal programmes for new migrants (eg Netherlands, Finland); in others the priority has been building integration measures into mainstream services (eg Italy, Spain). State programmes can be complemented by initiatives at the local level run by community organisations or private employers, sometimes in partnership with the state.

This paper

This paper looks at recent experience in relation to the integration of newcomers. In many Member States, measures to integrate migrants are in the earliest stages. In others, existing measures are undergoing reform. In part this reflects the history of post-war migration. States in North West Europe have the longest experience of in-migration and

hence of integration initiatives. In other parts of Europe experience is more recent. Necessarily, therefore, many of the examples in this paper are drawn from states which have the longest experience in this field.

Our aim is to identify the different approaches that are being adopted and 'good practice' which may be transferable. As most initiatives have not been in existence long enough for outcomes to be measured, nor independent evaluation to have been conducted, the identification of good practice can only be tentative at this stage. But the framework of options highlighted here may in itself be of assistance to states in their consideration of the approach most suited to their individual circumstances.

From our review of current initiatives for newcomers, we outline in this paper:

- Which new migrants are the target
- What the integration initiatives are designed to achieve
- Which agencies are responsible
- When the initiatives take place
- Whether participation is a matter of choice, incentive or compulsion
- What the programmes and varied initiatives consist of
- What has worked; and what has been less successful

Discussion

Which new migrants?

For those Member States which have initiatives for new migrants (and particularly those with formal programmes), the core target group is third-country nationals who have, or will acquire, residence status. Some programmes target only the head of household, others include family members. This may include the spouse of nationals (eg France). Some state programmes exclusively target refugees; most exclude the highly skilled. Asylum seekers may be included if they have valued skills (eg Denmark). Where participation is compulsory, the target group includes the unemployed who are drawing benefits. This may, as in the proposed new German and Dutch schemes, include migrants who have not recently arrived. In some states, (eg Latvia and Estonia) long term residents remain the primary focus. Target groups may include women who, while not drawing benefits, are not in employment. Many voluntary sector projects also exclusively target refugees rather than, for instance, those arriving as family members or on migrant worker programmes.

There is an increasing focus on specific groups such as women (eg France), mothers with small children (eg Denmark), youth and the elderly. The particular needs of the illiterate have begun to be addressed.

Programmes regularly exclude newcomers from other EU states, even though in some cases they can face difficulties in achieving labour market and social integration. Migrants who enter on the basis of shared ethnic origin are, however, increasingly recognised as needing support (eg Germany, Finland).

State- run Integration Programme: Sweden

A comprehensive, non-obligatory integration programme to prepare migrants for employment and life in Sweden. In consultation with the migrant the municipality, funded by the government, is obliged to draw up a plan based on the needs of the individual. Education and job experience are taken into account. The programmes include education and training, tuition in Swedish and English, an introduction to Swedish society, vocational guidance with workplace training, and a review of leisure-time activities run by local associations. On average, the programme lasts two years. There is an expectation that programmes begin soon after arrival so that migrants can take up a job or further education, and acquire an independent means of subsistence as soon as possible. There are introductory programmes for children, which can involve preparatory schooling prior to insertion into the mainstream education system. Asylum seekers may, while awaiting a decision on their status, participate in some of the organised activity¹.

State – run Integration Programme: Austria

The law requires newcomers (third country nationals who entered after 1 January 1998 for permanent residence) to enter an introductory programme. It focuses on language tuition, with an element of civic instruction, in a certified language school. The language course consists of 100, 45-minute lessons with no final exam. The state pays 50% of the cost (up to a maximum of Euro 183) if the course is completed within the first year of receiving a residence permit. If completed within two years, a 25% contribution is made. However, if the migrant has not completed the course within four years, the residence permit may not be renewed and the migrant expelled. As an initial sanction, the government may stop unemployment benefit for up to eight weeks².

¹ Further information can be obtained by visiting: www.integrationsverket.se.

² Further information can be obtained by visiting : www.integrationsvereinbarung.at.

What is the goal?

While there is increasing recognition that integration, to be successful, must be achieved across a number of dimensions, some programmes still focus narrowly on acquisition of language and/or access to employment. The goal can simply be self-reliance (without state benefits) through acquisition of a job; or, in the longer term, that the migrant achieve employment commensurate with skills and qualifications. Migrants in those job-focussed programmes may have access separately to information and guidance about the host society ('social orientation'), have guidance on accessing education and health services and suitable accommodation. Dual trajectory programmes are, however, increasing: providing language *and* social orientation, within or outside of a work setting.

Where social orientation is provided, the goal may be practical (how to access services) and/or behavioural: an understanding of the norms, values and history of the host society, to promote employability and good relations in the community. In some initiatives the premise is that the migrant is willing to adapt if support is provided; in others, it is an insistence that minimum standards of behaviour are required. Some social orientation programmes focus not only on the migrant but on the host community - addressing their concerns and promoting positive interaction with their new neighbours (eg Finland, UK).

In broad terms, the goal can be to redefine the relationship between the would-be resident and the host country as a contract: the migrant commits to learning the language and social engagement in return for the right to stay and to receive support in the integration process (eg Austria, Denmark). In that context, states vary in the emphasis they place on providing *opportunities* for migrants to participate, with a commensurate responsibility on the state to open doors to that participation; and the emphasis on *compulsion*, reflecting a focus on the migrants' responsibility to learn and contribute.

Some states define the level of integration to be achieved, others emphasise the need for the individual to establish their own long term goals, beyond the immediate goal of self reliance (eg Sweden). Several include within their objectives the protection of the rights of migrants regardless of ethnic group or cultural background, and the promotion of equality of opportunity (eg Sweden). Some refer to respect for different cultures while seeking to promote a common sense of identity and respect for democratic values (eg Estonia, Ireland). Some are keen to encourage civic participation, and may have a representative of foreigners on locally elected bodies (eg Rome, Italy).

Some state programmes lead to specific outputs: a certificate of participation (eg Belgium³) or of language achievement (eg Denmark). A level of achievement, whether of language alone or more broadly of social engagement, may be a condition of residence or access to citizenship status (eg Denmark, and as proposed in France and the Netherlands).

Who is responsible?

Within the State

There is no uniformity on where primary responsibility lies for introductory programmes and initiatives. Where the state plays a significant role, as in some countries in North West Europe, there is a trend towards greater control at the national level, with new national agencies to plan and co-ordinate (eg Germany, France). There is also, however, responsibility for implementation at the local level (eg Denmark; Sweden). Municipal co-operation can be required by statute and/or encouraged by financial incentives.

The challenges of integration have been felt at the local level. Regional and local government have thus often been proactive in initiating measures (eg Portugal, Italy) as have city authorities (eg Frankfurt am Main). In some cases their models are then adopted elsewhere. This approach creates opportunities for innovation but means provision is uneven and coordination more difficult.

Within government, departmental responsibility can reflect the focus of past programmes (eg Ministry of Labour) and may or may not be well coordinated across other relevant departments (eg health and education). In part, the creation of new national agencies to oversee integration strategies is designed to ensure joined-up thinking and implementation. Adopting an alternative approach, the Netherlands has recently brought all migration matters, including integration, under the Ministry of Justice.

Private sector

Some private sector employers are playing an increasing role in providing language and skills training (eg Sweden, UK), often with social orientation. They may assist in finding or providing accommodation (and in Italy can be required to do so). There are examples of companies which set pay and conditions for low skilled workers above the minimum, in part to reduce turnover costs (eg Rentokil, UK). Business may enter into a

³ References to Belgium in this paper are to measures implemented in the Flemish part of the country.

formal agreement with the state to contribute (eg Sweden). Trades unions contribute to language tuition and health and safety training (eg the Catalonia Farmers Union, Spain; the construction workers union in the UK).

Civil society

Other organisations in civil society play a significant role in all aspects of introductory programmes: from language and skills training, social orientation and access to services, to initiatives to improve community relations. Faith groups, including Christian churches and Muslim associations, and refugee community groups, as well as mainstream voluntary organisations feature prominently in a number of states. Government at national or EU level may contribute funding. Such initiatives are often introduced because of need at the local level rather than as a result of public policy. Some states (eg Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, UK) are increasingly emphasising the importance of these non-state actors.

Who pays?

The cost of national programmes may be covered by the state (eg Poland, Latvia), may have a financial contribution from regional or municipal government, or include a contribution from migrants themselves. Employers may be expected to pay part of the cost (eg Austria). Governments may provide grants to voluntary organisations to provide services (eg Spain, Ireland). Levels of funding to course providers can be affected by results: better results attracting higher funding as an incentive.

When do introduction initiatives take place?

Some Member States now require a level of language acquisition before entry is granted. Ethnic Germans take a language test in their country of origin, as do ethnic Finns in Russia. The Netherlands intends to require a language test prior to entry clearance. Formal state introductory programmes, post entry, may commence within a set period of weeks after arrival, or timing may revolve around the application for and renewal of residence permits. Programmes may be set for completion within two to three years or be more open ended.

Is participation a matter of choice, incentive or compulsion?

This question arises only in relation to state introductory programmes. Some states have not had such programmes in the past and are introducing them on a voluntary basis.

Elsewhere, participation in language classes and, in some cases, social orientation, is encouraged by incentives, or required.

Incentives include earlier access to a residence permit (eg Denmark, where the migrant must also show steady employment and a 'meaningful connection with Danish society'); earlier access to citizenship (eg Germany, after seven years instead of eight); financial assistance for language courses (eg Poland, for refugees) or free classes (eg Belgium). It can include repayment to the migrant of part of the cost of the course, once completed (eg Austria). Migrants may have access to additional social benefits if a language course is followed (eg Hungary and Finland).

Sanctions for failure to participate in or complete courses include refusal to grant or extend residence permits, and hence the right to remain in the country (eg Austria), reduction or withdrawal of welfare benefits (eg Denmark), and fines (eg Belgium). The requirement may include demonstrable efforts to find work (eg Denmark) or to undergo a medical examination (eg France). Categories of people regularly exempted from the requirement to participate include the elderly and the sick. Those penalised for failing to participate do not, it appears, always have recourse to appeal.

Programmes and initiatives: structure and content

Government led programmes can be full time over a period of weeks or part time over a longer period, with rolling admission or set starting dates. They may be offered in all parts of the country or in areas with significant migrant populations. The programme may begin with a personal assessment of the language and employment needs of each migrant (eg Belgium, Denmark), as well as their wider need for housing and services. This is followed by a tailored course designed to ensure that the individual becomes self-reliant (eg Denmark: a migrant with no Danish or employment could receive up to 30 hours per week tuition and support). Elsewhere, programmes are not individually tailored. Where comprehensive programmes do not exist, states may provide an initial day of introduction to services and personal advice on how to access language and vocational training (eg France's reception 'platforms', a gateway to services and one-to-one advice).

Programmes may have a narrow focus, notably on language, or include a combination of language, vocational training, advice and assistance in securing employment, and social orientation. If language tuition is not needed, the social orientation element may still be compulsory. Tuition may take place outside of the work place or be combined with the individual's employment. The content of programmes may be proscribed, or allow flexibility in the choice of courses attended (eg Finland).

The content of programmes and initiatives can be grouped as follows:

1. Information provision

Information is provided to migrants in increasingly innovative and accessible forms, although the majority of migrants in the EU still have no access to it. Welcome packs are provided by some states and by voluntary organisations (eg Ireland) providing invaluable information on access to jobs and services, on the laws, institutions and history of the country, on policing, advice agencies, personal finances, social norms and acceptable behaviour. Some cities provide information relevant to that area. The information may be provided in book form, in one or more language, or on video or audiotape.

Citizen in Denmark: A Manual for New Members of Society

The Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs published a book, *Citizen in Denmark*, in 2003. It provides information on topics ranging from introduction to Danish society and description of the migrant's first days in Denmark to language courses offered. *Citizen in Denmark* is also available as an audiotape, providing a good example of information dissemination accessible even to those with little education. The manual can also be downloaded from the Ministry's web page. It is published in eight languages: Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Danish, English, Farsi, Somali, Turkish and Urdu. The focus of the Danish manual is broader than that produced in some other states, including an overview of Danish society⁴.

Handbook on Immigrants' Rights and Entitlements: Ireland

The Immigrant Council of Ireland, an NGO, published the *Handbook on Immigrants' Rights and Entitlements in Ireland* in 2003. It outlines the application process for entry and differing rights of migrants now resident in Ireland. It provides up-to-date, practical information on all aspects of law, policy and practice. Key topics include residency, entry visas, work and business permits, student visas, family reunification, citizenship, social welfare, health care, education, accommodation, and employment. The handbook can also be downloaded from the organisation's web page⁵.

Information technology has facilitated access for those for whom books are not the most appropriate medium. Two examples are among our highlighted projects.

⁴ Further information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.inm.dk/medborger/medborger/index.htm>.

⁵ Further information can be obtained by visiting : <http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/handbook.htm>.

Migrant community organisations are often the first source of advice to newcomers. Their capacity to provide accurate information and to encourage constructive engagement can be enhanced by state funding (eg Spain, UK). Service providers also need information on migrants and effective integration strategies. The Danish government, for example, publishes a manual for local politicians on good practice and has a database of examples for officials to use on a dedicated website⁶.

Info Bank: Finland

The web pages of Info Bank contain important information for migrants on the functioning of society and opportunities in Finland. The menu of this internet service is divided into essential questions relating to immigration and living in Finland covering language courses, culture and leisure, crises, work, education, health, social services, permits, accommodation and associations. The links provide further information on services provided by public and voluntary bodies. This well organised information service was initiated by the International Cultural Centre, Caisa, in cooperation with the Helsinki City Library. It is funded by the City of Helsinki and the European Social Fund. The pages of Info Bank have been translated into English, Swedish, Somali, Russian, Estonian, French, Serb Croat, Turkish and Farsi thus proving information even for the most recent migrants with no knowledge of Finnish or Swedish⁷.

Virtual Integration Office: The Netherlands/Germany

The Virtual Integration Office, a multimedia information product, was established in 2002. It serves as an intermediary between migrants and public authorities by simplifying transactions between them. Touch screens have been installed in public places and the programme can also be delivered via Internet and CD ROM. Information is constantly updated and includes immigration matters and finding employment. Arabic, Turkish and English language versions exist. The information is presented to suit people who have low literacy by using pictograms and an audio guide. In the Netherlands, the Virtual Integration office, which is adapted in each city to specific local needs, costs from € 15.000 pa. In Amsterdam alone, up to 2500 people use the city's fifteen information points each month. The project has also been implemented in Eindhoven, Den Haag and Deventer, and extended to Germany demonstrating that one idea can work in several countries⁸.

6 www.erfaringsdatabasen.dk

7 Further information can be obtained by visiting: http://www.caisa.hel.fi/page.asp?_item_id=303&_lang_id=EN.

8 Further information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.inburgeringsloket.nl/startprojectviwebitem16725lande.html>

2. Language tuition

Language classes are provided by the state, private employers, trades unions and voluntary organisations, within and independently of the work place. There is some evidence that language tuition is most effective when set in the context of work or higher education; or perhaps simply when set in the context that the new migrant most needs. That could, for a mother of young children, be language for shopping and access to the school system.

State provision of language tuition varies in hours provided and the level of language ability expected. Austria provides 100, 45-minute lessons; Belgium up to 180 hours. Germany plans to provide considerably longer courses, up to 300 hours basic with an additional 300 hours, plus 30 hours of social orientation. The state may require tuition to be undertaken at certified language schools (eg Austria). Courses may be geared towards the level of education the individual has had (eg Denmark) or only the level of language achieved (eg Finland).

In-house Integration Project: The Netherlands

In 2001 this multi-cultural personnel management programme (IIP), was set up to provide language training at the workplace, to inform immigrant employees about the norms and values of that workplace, and to promote employment practices appropriate for a diverse workforce. It has been implemented in firms in several regions, in collaboration with the government, several municipalities and Regional Training Centre's. So far, 300 migrants have benefited from the programme. The IIP includes an employment contract for the migrant, on-the-job language and communication training, vocational training, a training module for employees who act as mentors to migrants, and guidance to managers on managing a diverse workforce⁹.

Language in a work setting: United Kingdom

Fusion Personnel, an agricultural gangmaster operating in the Evesham area of England, supplies casual labour to horticultural businesses. Many of the firm's employees are recent migrants and have basic literacy, numeracy and language needs. To improve their basic skills and effectiveness at work, Fusion Personnel has developed a training scheme. It provides time off during working hours to attend language training with a tutor from a local Further Education college, paid for by the firm. Fusion Personnel benefits from a more motivated

⁹ Further information can be obtained by visiting: http://www.youngtpg.com/BeYoung/BeYoung_13_WT.pdf

(page 5) Contact person: Joop van Schijndel, <moa@hetnet.nl or joopvanschijndel@hetnet.nl

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workforce and actively campaigns against other gangmasters who employ irregular migrants or pay less than the statutory minimum wage¹⁰.

Where language tuition is provided independently by the voluntary sector, it may nevertheless be by organisations with close associations with employers, with the overt intention of securing employment for the migrants on completion of the course (eg Working Links, United Kingdom).

Language in a work setting: Latvia

Under its National Programme for Language Training, Latvia has since 1997 provided free language tuition for workers in key occupations such as railway workers, the police, medical staff, fire fighters and teachers. The aim is to help them secure or maintain employment as well as to increase participation in wider society. The focus here is not new arrivals but long term residents who do not speak Latvian. In cooperation with education experts in universities, teaching materials have been specially designed, and teachers trained, to make tuition appropriate for these workers. These partners, including employers, meet regularly to discuss ways in which the programme could be strengthened¹¹.

Language and orientation courses: Germany

Introduction courses have been organised by the Office for Multicultural Affairs in Frankfurt am Main since 2001 to support a smoother transition into daily life by providing basic information for new migrants with a long-term intention to stay. The particularity of the programme lies in the conception of the first part of the course (amounting to about 40 hours) which is offered in eight languages by instructors that are often migrants themselves, and provide a practical orientation to the city. Migrants are taken on a field trip to the city centre using public transport and see where various public authorities are located. They also get a broad overview of the legal system and social order. Orientation courses, which are held in native languages, provide important information about Frankfurt, its institutions and public facilities. Subsequently, 600 hours of language tuition are offered by certified language instructors. The City of Frankfurt and the Ministry of Social Affairs Hessen funded the pilot project in 2002. Migrants contribute €0.50 per hour¹².

¹⁰ Further information can be obtained by visiting: www.fusionpersonnel.co.uk.

¹¹ <http://ivavp.lv/home.php> email: ivavp@ivavp.lv

¹² Further information can be obtained by visiting: http://www.stadt-frankfurt.de/amka/english/projects/usuk_projects_frame_e1.htm. Contacts: Cornelia Hiel, Tel. 0711/231-3446, cornelia.hiel@im.bwl.de Regina Thalheimer, Tel. 0711/231-3448, regina.thalheimer@im.bwl.de. Also, you may refer to the following document: Richard Wolf und Friedrich Heckmann: In Deutschland zu Hause- Politik, Gesellschaft und Alltagswissen fuer Zuwanderer und Einbuengerungswillige. Evaluationsbericht zum Modellprojekt Integrationskurse an das Bayrische Staatsministerium fuer Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Familie und Frauen und das Bildungszentrum Nuernberg, europaeisches forum fuer migrationsstudien (efms), 2003.

3. Vocational training

Vocational training is a regular part of individual integration plans (eg Finland) as well as the opportunity to complete professional skills for which training has been begun elsewhere (eg Sweden, for refugees). It may include on the job workplace training. Finland also encourages voluntary work, where language is insufficient for employment, as a pathway to work, including involvement in the management of migrant associations. Denmark's programme for asylum seekers enables them to combine language tuition with work in their asylum centre or an internship in a local firm. In the UK, non governmental organisations also run vocational courses for refugees, while Further Education colleges run courses for refugee health professionals to upgrade their language skills and orientate them towards the UK health system.

Language for work: United Kingdom

Working Links was established in 2000 to help the long-term unemployed into sustainable jobs across the UK. Its 'Language2work' courses are designed to teach English relevant to the work situation and to provide help in finding a job. A six-week, intense, 'work-first' English course is designed to enable people to gain sufficient confidence to start work. It includes career counselling, job search skills, and assistance in brokering a relationship with a potential employer. Initial funding came from government but is now provided by a range of public agencies. Local employers are drawn into an arrangement with the programme, including providing interview training. In return they get advice on migrants' differing entitlement to work. The Trades Union Congress provides advice to participants on rights at work; and participants receive practical advice such as how to open a bank account. After the migrant finds a job, Working Links stays in touch for three months 'to check that everything is running smoothly'. Sixty new people start Language2Work every six weeks and since November 2000 over 40% of participants have found work. 60% were still in employment after 13 weeks¹³.

4. Social orientation

The goal of social orientation courses may be to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behavior; or more broadly to encourage social engagement and participation in the community. Courses can include practical skills (eg experiencing use of public transport to identify location of key agencies in the city, as in Frankfurt; or engagement in their child's school activities, as in Finland). It regularly includes practical information (eg access to jobs, vocational training, the structure of the labour market, health and

¹³ Further information may be obtained by visiting: <http://workinglinks.co.uk>.

education sectors), and can review local leisure-time activities (eg Sweden). It may cover the history and culture of the country, its legal, administrative and political systems; as well as more subjective subjects: lifestyles, social norms and expected behaviour at work, and the importance of human rights and equal opportunities. Courses may be delivered by migrants, in a range of languages. Some provide childcare to facilitate participation of women.

Integration workshops for women with children: Denmark

The Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs organises integration programmes for Danish language and social orientation. The intention is to provide an opportunity to participate in a local community activity and, in the long term, to move on to working life. It should strengthen personal development, social involvement and integration. The project has two components: an integration seminar consisting of four modules including classes in Danish society and legislation, career and educational counselling, excursions and study trips, exercise, bike training and computer literacy lasting six weeks. An information course and tutoring for both children and mothers is also offered. The second component consists of open workshops with employers to provide job guidance. A successful textile workshop has been set up with 100 users. The City of Copenhagen provides funding. In 2002, 15 out of 53 participants embarked on further programmes at the language centre, eight found employment and one started her own business. Moreover, the project was found to act as a bridge between women and the local community, thereby facilitating integration into Danish Society¹⁴.

Women Mediators of the 20th District of Paris: France

The Women Mediators of the 20th District of Paris (Femmes-Relais) were formed in 1996 and had by 2002 nine salaried employees and ten volunteers serving about 600 persons per year. The goal is to advance the integration of women into society, in particular to enhance their understanding of how French society works. They advise and assist migrants on various issues such as schooling, health, housing, and employment, changing the women's perception of these institutions. Immigrant women from the 20th district are the main target group with more than half originating in North Africa and the Near East. The project is financed from various public institutions including the Municipal Council of Paris and the Ministry of Justice¹⁵.

14 Further information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.inm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=97&n=1&h=31&t=1&d=1801&s=5>

15 Further information can be obtained from Femme Relais du 20eme, 74, Rue des Lamaniers 75020, Paris (0144 62 93 92). Also, a brochure has been published:

Sharing Integration Experiences: Innovative Community Practices on Two Continents, Aristide R. Zolberg and Alison Joy Clarkin (eds.) International Centre for Migration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship, New School University, New York City, 2003 Chapter: Women Mediators of the 20th District of Paris by Sophie Maurer.

Mentoring

Mentoring initiatives, designed to bridge the gap between migrants and citizens as well as to ensure migrants' access to information, are featured as part of social orientation in many Member States. They help to overcome the social isolation some migrants experience. The evidence suggests this is an approach with considerable potential but remains under-utilised. Helping to overcome ignorance and mutual fears, mentoring also contributes to broader community relations objectives. Some integration schemes engage work colleagues in mentoring new migrant employees (eg National Programme for Language Training in Latvia).

Connecting People: Austria

Connecting People, a mentoring project for young asylum seekers was initiated in Vienna in 2000 by UNICEF Austria and organised by Asylkoordination Oesterreich. Mentors attend a three-month training session before they are matched with a refugee whom they assist in practical matters such as finding a job, attending school and learning German, as well as providing emotional support. The project aims to offer young refugees orientation and safety and is considered an important step in integrating them into society. The mentors meet regularly with the project coordinator. This project has recently also been implemented in Graz¹⁶.

Time Together Refugee Mentoring Scheme: United Kingdom

Time Bank, a charity, runs a mentoring scheme for adult refugees in London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Peterborough to connect them with British citizens. Mentors are given an initial eight-hour training session. The scheme is structured with a learning contract drawn up by the mentor and mentee to formalise their commitment to each other. Both are asked to set aside at least 5 hours a month for a year. In a useful handbook suggestions are given for possible activities but it is the responsibility of the mentee and mentor to decide what they want to do, and to gain, from the relationship. On evaluation it was found that refugee participants had more job interviews. A number of organisations have expressed an interest in working in partnership to extend this scheme nation wide. The European Refugee Fund contributes to the cost. Lloyds TSB foundation paid for the independent programme evaluation¹⁷.

¹⁶ Further information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.asylLat/connectingpeople/>

A book has been published (in German): Connecting People-Jugendliche Flüchtlinge und ihre PatInnen erzählen Gebunden, 136 Seiten, ISBN 3-85476-060-4, Euro 9,90, sfr 17,80, Hg. von UNICEF und asylkoordination österreich

¹⁷ Further information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.timebank.org.uk/mentor/>

Community relations

Projects to avoid community tensions are not always part of introductory programmes. In some areas, however, local municipalities and voluntary organisations have initiatives to prepare residents for new arrivals, and to bring migrants and residents together in situations which promote understanding and positive relations. Governments may provide grants, as Ireland does for 'welcome' meetings, day trips, sports and inter-cultural activities. Migrant and faith groups have been found in research to be successful in forging relationships with the wider community, providing newcomers with the confidence to build 'bridging capital' with strangers. In the UK, public bodies have recently been given a statutory duty to promote good relations between local residents and ethnic minorities, including new arrivals.

Preparing residents for new arrivals: United Kingdom

In Southside, Glasgow, public meetings were held to inform local residents about the services that asylum seekers would receive and the circumstances which had given rise to their forced migration, in order to reduce the likelihood of community tensions. As a result, local people formed a welcoming committee to present the asylum seekers with clothing and other essentials. This initiative was so successful that it was also implemented in West Dunbarton and Edinburgh¹⁸. In Leicester, the value of careful and extended preparation for the arrival of new migrants and refugees has also been demonstrated. A multi-agency group, including the local council, refugee organisations and the police engaged in 12 months of preparatory work before housing asylum seekers on the predominantly white Northfields estate. This involved meetings, setting up a forum for the exchange of information, attempts to counter myths about asylum seekers and refugees and close consultation with the local tenants and residents association¹⁹.

Conflict prevention and resolution: United Kingdom

The Safe Communities Initiative (SCI) was launched by the Commission for Racial Equality, a statutory body, in 2003 to support local organisations in preventing and resolving community conflicts relating to migrants and ethnic minorities. A steering committee, chaired by a retired chief commissioner of police, includes voluntary organisations (eg Muslim Council of Britain, Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Citizens Advice) and government departments

¹⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/social/asis.pdf> p37

¹⁹ <http://www.cih.org/publications/pub352.htm>

responsible for social cohesion, dispersal of asylum seekers, and neighbourhood renewal. As well as producing guidance on strategies to avoid community tensions, SCI brings together local agencies to facilitate collaboration. Following disorder arising from community resentment of asylum seekers in Wrexham in 2003 it organised an agency de-brief to ensure lessons were learnt. In Spring 2004 it held two Youth Cohesion Conferences at Arsenal and Aston Villa football grounds to learn from young people about sources of conflict in their lives and share ideas on good practice solutions. SCI is working with Muslim groups and Imams to calm tensions arising from the arrests of individuals suspected of terrorist offences²⁰.

5. Holistic approach

Some agencies endeavour to provide a full range of services to meet the needs of migrants, in cooperation with public agencies, as well as to improve relations in the wider community.

Holistic service: Ireland

SPIRASI, a catholic voluntary organisation founded in 1999, has a holistic approach to integration, providing a range of services. Its Centre for the Education and Integration of Migrants provides language tuition for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. IT training modules are also provided on site to clients free of charge. The number of students attending English language programmes in 2002 was 434 (daytime classes) and 175 (evening classes). Spirasi is also part of a Centre for Health Information and Promotion, in association with public agencies. It delivers health information in several languages at Dublin reception locations to newly arrived asylum seekers to help them comprehend how the Irish health system works and how to access services. During 2003, 1,452 newly arrived asylum seekers participated in health information sessions organised by the four salaried immigrant staff. Spirasi also has services for victims of torture, with 730 people from over 40 countries helped since 2001. It visits schools to promote understanding of migrants, contributes to the training of public service providers, and provides up to date advice via its website²¹.

What has worked? What has been less successful?

The examples highlighted here are among those which stand out as initiatives which are delivering benefits for both migrants and the host society. As yet, little research to measure outcomes has been conducted. It is indeed difficult to assess the impact of programmes when the goal is not only language acquisition but broader, long term

²⁰ www.cre.gov.uk

²¹ Further information can be obtained by visiting: www.spirasi.ie.

employment and social objectives. The evidence available suggests successful initiatives may be those which:

- Engage private employers and/or local community organisations, whose potential contribution is under-utilised
- Reflect the actual needs and background of migrants (based on personal assessments, consultation with migrant representatives or research)
- Benefit from strong coordination between the organiser of programmes and the agencies providing services
- Follow through after initial investment in the migrant, recognising that integration is a long term process
- Do not address only language and employment (necessary but insufficient for integration) but also social orientation and access to services
- Address the concerns of the host community, providing information about new arrivals and fostering good relations with them
- Have resources to provide services such as language tuition, soon after arrival, to all migrants who need it, not only those in particular categories

Where these programmes and projects have been evaluated, some barriers to success have been identified. In relation to language tuition, migrants can wait too long for access to classes; or classes can be ineffective because catering for people who not only have differing levels of language ability but very differing levels of education. Access to work-focused language training can be limited. The distance to the education provider can be too great for migrants to participate. Migrants may lack motivation to learn a language used only in one country if they do not expect to be able to remain in the long term.

Programmes may meet the needs only of the head of the family. Local agencies can find it difficult to identify who is entitled or required to participate. High level strategies are not always backed up by guidance to staff nor the teaching materials needed. Plans for individual migrants can be insufficiently specific so that provision does not meet actual needs. Attendance can fall below numbers expected. It is not clear whether sanctions are being applied and thus whether they have an impact on participation and attainment.

A lack of public infrastructure, or of an active voluntary sector, can mean that there is no framework in some states in which an integration strategy for newcomers can be placed. Elsewhere, poor co-ordination between agencies, each responding to separate pressures, is hindering provision of joined up services as well as the monitoring of outcomes. Programmes and projects are regularly under-funded or heavily reliant on insecure project funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In a short space of time, the seeds of a huge variety of integration programmes and projects have been sown, across the EU. While many still have no access to these initiatives, others are benefiting, as are their host communities. Sufficient evaluation has not yet been conducted to identify which initiatives are most successful there is enough evidence to encourage further investment and innovation. Language is a necessary but insufficient condition for integration and must be supported by broader measures to foster social integration, access to services, and positive community relations.

The situation in each Member State differs as do the priorities for policy intervention. Not all programmes or projects will be suitable for transfer to other states but there are many initiatives from which others could learn. There are clear benefits in the diversity of providers and in the variety in approaches adopted, rather than sole reliance on state driven, uniform delivery. Community organisations, and private sector employers, can be a significant additional resource if supported by a public policy framework that provides guidance, coordination and, in some cases, funding.

It was difficult to find the case examples for this paper. There is no central source of information, and limited evaluation from which to judge 'what works'. Future cooperation at the EU level should address this limitation while fostering the innovation and sharing of good practice which is beginning to emerge. Independent evaluation of the outcomes of initiatives, using common criteria of assessment, would be invaluable for future policy development and resource allocation.

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**Minority Youth 1:
Strengthening the democratic state and preventing radicalisation**

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion is to share information regarding the growth of, and appropriate responses to, radical movements among (in particular) Muslim youth. The discussion should concentrate on appropriate responses to these concerns, especially ones that concentrate on prevention and promotion of dialogue within the Muslim community and between different groups.

Points for consideration (derived from the accompanying policy brief)

- Radicalisation, both of Muslim youth communities and the larger immigrant youth movement, is defined as an intense degree of alienation from the host society which, at the extreme, could lead to violent acts prompted by political and religious-ideological motives.
- Immigrant and minority youth face a substantial educational, social, and cultural gap that is undermining social cohesion, damaging the economic well-being of individuals and nations, and potentially enabling the growth of radicalisation.
- There are two broad causes of radicalisation: 1) Internal causes related to host country conditions. These include economic hardship and social alienation, which can result from both a disadvantaged economic and social position, from discrimination, and from self-imposed social exclusion. Perceived and real cultural and religious differences can strengthen all of these tendencies, and lax enforcement against propagators of radical discourse opens the space for religious extremists to make contact with young, often frustrated and excluded youth. 2) External agents and events, including growing conflicts in Muslim countries.
- This discussion will focus primarily on the equally important responsibilities of the state, the receiving society, and the Muslim community itself. What can Member States do to ensure that Muslim communities are guaranteed equality of opportunity and a voice in the democratic system, are given an outlet for complaints about discrimination, and command respect for diversity among the receiving population? Simultaneously, how can members of the Muslim community take responsibility for becoming full and equal members of society, increase internal dialogue, censure radical influences, and reduce reliance on radical outside influences?

Success factors

- Anti-Racist and Community Dialogue Efforts Targeted at Minority Youth. There is already a greater European community dedicated to preventing racism and xenophobia, but incorporating youth-specific programmes into anti-racism events can encourage discourse and activism and help youth think critically about their own actions.
- Development of the Mentorship Network. Mentoring programmes draw on existing knowledge in immigrant communities and develop role models for young immigrants, role models that replace radicalised leadership alternatives.
- Vigorous Leadership against Racist Acts. Hate crimes and racist attacks can spark a radical response in immigrant communities. Thus, it is important for leadership in the non-violent counterculture to be decisive in action and to defuse the radical tension after such incidents.
- Engage Youth with Radicalisation Alternatives. These alternatives engage the passion and energy of youth and direct them away from radicalisation by encouraging mainstream activities, such as football and music concerts. These programmes also provide some measure of connection between native and immigrant youth on common grounds.

Discussion questions

- Some solutions to radicalisation encourage the building of existing community ties within the migrant community (mentorship programmes) while others focus on assimilating migrant youth to society (encouraging participation in mainstream activities such as football). How can Member States actively encourage respect for diversity and constructive dialogue with and about Muslims in Europe?
- Should Member State governments and/or EU institutions play a role in training Imams and unofficial Islamic community leaders? If so, what is the most effective way to establish and maintain lasting and productive contacts within the Muslim community to guide this process?

Policy Brief

Radicalisation & European Ethnic Minority Youth

By Shireen Hunter

Introduction

When the question of radicalisation of ethnic minorities in Europe is raised, the main concern is typically with Muslim immigrant communities. While the radicalisation of other immigrant groups is also of concern, and should be addressed, Muslims make up the largest at-risk population. Muslims are also the religious minority group in which radicalisation has reached its most dangerous form, involvement in terrorism. This most extreme form of radicalisation has been relatively recent; dating primarily to the mid-1990s, when groups of young Muslims in France were involved in terrorist attacks. The European connection to those involved in the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the Madrid train bombings on March 11, 2004, however, indicate that extremist ideologies, including active involvement in terrorist actions, have permeated segments of Muslim populations in Europe.

In the context of this paper, radicalisation is defined as an intense degree of alienation from the host society that breeds an atmosphere for—and, at the extreme, can lead to—violent acts prompted by political and religious-ideological motives. Less intense levels of alienation, resulting in more generally anti-social and disruptive behaviour—including involvement in criminal activities of varying severity, as well as excessive communalist tendencies—must also be counted as consequences of the processes discussed here. Clearly, people exhibiting these behaviours are at greater risk of susceptibility to radicalisation.

Although violent acts by Muslim immigrants in Europe and their offspring are of relatively recent origin, the radicalisation of segments of Europe's Muslim population has been a gradual process, with many less extreme manifestations. Many factors, some of which will be elaborated below, have contributed to this development, most notably the lack of attention paid by host governments to the economic and social needs of Muslim communities, especially youth. To this factor must be added the Muslims' frequent encounters with widespread prejudice and rejection by indigenous populations.

It is generally agreed that only between 1 and 2 percent of Muslims in those EU countries with large Muslim populations, such as France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, are potential “latent radicals.” Yet, the small size of the radicalized Muslim population is no reason to disregard it. Efforts to attenuate and prevent radicalisation in the future, then, should focus on the large number of socially and culturally alienated and economically marginalized and underprivileged youth. These youth, lacking prospects for an economically and socially sound future, are more easily attracted to narrow and reductionist interpretations of Islam, such as those of Hezb-ul Tahrir.

The ethnic composition of Muslim communities in the EU in many ways helps determine the level of current and potential future radicalisation. For example, Muslims of Turkish origin are far less prone to violent radicalisation than are those who come from North Africa and other parts of the Arab world and, to some extent, from South Asia. Among the Turks, even the radicals are more concerned with Turkey’s internal development and the revival and nurturing of Islam there rather than with causing trouble in Europe. This may be in part because Turks are less affected than many other Muslims by the Arab-Israeli conflict or others such as those in Algeria, Kashmir, or Iraq. Arab and South Asian-origin communities in Europe also appear to be more in tune with the considerable radicalisation of Islam in their countries of origin—a development that is then propagated through channels such as preachers, audiocassettes, and videocassettes.

Discussion

The Causes of Radicalisation

Broadly speaking, the causes of the radicalisation of Muslim youth can be divided into two categories: 1) those causes related to their conditions within the host countries; and 2) the impact of external events and the activities of agents coming from the countries of origin. This paper will concentrate primarily on the internal factors.

Internal Causes

Before enumerating the factors within the host community that contribute to the radicalisation of segments of the EU’s Muslim populations, it is important to note that no direct causality can be established between these factors and the degree of susceptibility to radical influences. For example, it is impossible to establish scientifically direct causality between poverty and economic hardship, on the one hand,

and the level of receptivity to radical views on the other. Indeed, anecdotal evidence shows that relatively well-off Muslims or those with good prospects for economic advancement have become attracted to radical ideas, including those that actively preach violence. The case of some of those involved in the terrorist attacks of September 11, notably Muhamed Atta, illustrates this point.

Nor can direct causality be established between the level of education and receptivity to radical ideas. For example, Hezb-ul Tahrir (HuT) has made inroads among Muslim university students, notably in the United Kingdom. Although HuT denounces violent actions, it adheres to a reductionist, anti-integration version of Islam and pursues the utopian goal of re-establishing the Khalifat. This kind of ideology enhances the tendency to isolation among Muslim communities and hampers integration. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to show that the following economic, social, and cultural factors do play significant roles in the radicalisation of some Muslims, or at least to increasing their vulnerability and susceptibility to such ideas.

Economic Hardship

All the EU countries with large-scale Muslim populations have significant pockets of an economic underclass. These populations live in ghetto-like conditions, trapped in the vicious circle of poverty, crime, and imprisonment. At their extreme, some of these Muslim ghettos, notably in France, have become 'no-go' zones where even the police are reluctant to enter.

Many young Muslims who live in these ghettos become involved in crimes of varying degrees of gravity and end up in prison. While in prison, many of these youth become targets of radical proselytisation or recruitment by the more violent radicals and are encouraged to engage in terrorist acts. The relationship between imprisonment and radicalisation became abundantly clear in France during the 1990s, while the Algerian civil war was raging. Extremist sympathizers of the Algerian FIS managed to recruit young French Algerians to their cause in prisons.

Even those economically-disadvantaged Muslim youth who do not end up in prison are often easily swayed by radical proselytizers, who try to transform their sense of frustration and anger into religious zealotry. This could potentially make them agents of violent actions. Even those disadvantaged Muslim youth who do not subscribe to extremist and violent ideologies in fact tend to stress the importance of a more assertive posture. Thus, many second and third generation Muslims who logically should be more integrated and accommodating to the host society are less so than their parents because they reject the passivity of their parents.

Social Alienation

In addition to economic hardships, Muslim populations in Europe—even those who want to integrate within host societies by becoming productive and law-abiding citizens without abandoning all of their religions and cultural values—face a good deal of suspicion, racial and religious prejudice, and isolation. Of course, anti-immigrant sentiment in those EU countries with large immigrant communities existed before the large increases in the number of Muslims and the emergence of radical groups. For example, the term "Paki-bashing" has been used in the United Kingdom since the 1960s. Similar sentiments existed in France in regard to North African immigrants. At that time, the main cause of this rejection and animosity was the fact of ethnic and racial difference, rather than religious practices.

Today, a considerable number of integrated Muslims complain that the host countries and peoples are not willing to accept them because, in some respects, they are different. For example, as referred to in the British press, one widespread complaint in areas with large Muslim communities is that, because of the Islamic ban on alcohol, Muslims do not frequent pubs and this hampers the development of friendships between them and the indigenous population. Some Muslims also complain that their chances of advancement are sharply curtailed because of their abstention from the use of alcohol, since this prevents the kind of informal ties that often promote advancement in the workplace.

For some Muslims, social isolation is self-imposed. Many have strong communitarian tendencies and want to live in an environment that, as much as possible, replicates their countries of origin. This tendency is reinforced by recent advances in communications, which enable them to remain in constant contact with the mass media of their countries of origin. Indeed, large segments of the Muslim populations in EU countries are more interested in the domestic politics of their countries of origin than in the politics of their countries of residence and citizenship, even though the politics of host countries affect their interest more directly. This communitarian tendency within the Muslim communities makes their economic, educational and other advancement within host societies and their eventual integration more difficult.

Again, it is impossible to establish direct causality between communalism and receptivity to radicalisation. Nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence to show that the more isolated some Muslims feel the more they are likely to be tempted by extremist ideas.

In short, both forms of social isolation and alienation create an environment that extremists of all types use to recruit the disenchanting.

Cultural and Religious Factors

There are considerable differences within EU's Muslim communities in terms of cultural values and level of religious observance. However, a significant number adheres to certain cultural norms, in particular norms related to the role and status of women that are at odds with the values of the host societies but also those of moderate and progressive Muslims.

Similarly, some Muslims in Europe adhere to narrow, reductionist, and static interpretations of Islam. Again, while it is nearly impossible to establish a direct link between these cultural and religious traits and vulnerability to radicalisation, those Muslims who fall into this category tend to be more receptive to the radical discourse of preachers who promote confrontational attitudes toward the host society and even sanction violence.

The need for members of the Muslim community to take responsibility for fighting radical and reductionist forms of Islam—and promote integration—should not be ignored. However, the role of the government in this sphere should be largely cooperative, in recognizing and supporting existing leaders and efforts that articulate moderate visions of Islam and build links to the broader host society.

Laxity of Host Governments toward Propagators of Radical Discourse

Muslim radicals have clearly abused the advantages that the open and democratic character of EU Member States has afforded them. Until 9/11, EU security and intelligence organisations kept groups suspected of radical tendencies under watch. But there was no systematic effort to prevent Imams with radical tendencies from preaching in the mosques. A notorious example was the case of a mosque in Finsbury Park, London, whose Imam was later accused of having terrorist connections. Even before the 9/11 attacks, a number of Muslim leaders in the United Kingdom had asked the British authorities to close down the mosque. The mosque was eventually raided and its radical Imam, Hamza Al Masri, was taken into custody.

Low Level of Religious and Other Qualifications of Imams

A significant number of Muslim preachers active within the EU's Muslim communities have little religious training and qualifications. Except for those appointed by the governments of the countries of origin, many come from small towns and villages. The

level of their religious education is modest at best. Moreover, local custom influences their religious beliefs. For example, their attitudes toward the status of women in society are archaic. They also seldom have adequate knowledge, if any, of the languages of the host countries. Even when they are not considered radical per se, they preach a conservative version of Islam which tends to strengthen communal tendencies and make the progress of integration more difficult.

External Factors

During the last two decades, two sets of external factors have contributed mightily to the radicalisation of segments of the EU countries' Muslim population.

Conflict and Civil Wars in Muslim Countries

Some of these conflicts have attracted a small number of Muslim youth, who are exposed to radical ideas and who are eventually recruited and integrated into the radicals' system and networks. The two-decade long Afghan wars – the Soviet-Afghan War and the Afghan Civil War- have played particularly negative roles. The Algerian civil war has had a negative impact in terms of the radicalisation of some of France's Muslim youth of Algerian origin. Even conflicts such as those in Bosnia and Chechnya have been used by the radicals to create an impression in the minds of Muslim youth that the entire Muslim world is under siege and that the only means of surviving this onslaught is to adopt radical means that include advocacy of violent action.

South-Asian youths in Europe, especially Pakistanis, have been affected by the Afghan war and the ongoing Indo-Pakistani Conflict over Kashmir. Meanwhile, the long, drawn-out Israeli-Palestinian conflict also provides radical elements with a tool to influence the Muslim youth. On the positive side, Muslim communities in the United Kingdom and France have rallied to show their support of British and French hostages held by insurgents in Iraq. This explicit rejection of extremist action by moderate Muslims is exactly the sort of progress within Muslim communities that governments should encourage and reward.

Activities of Salafi/Wahhabi Preachers

For nearly two decades, Arab and South Asian preachers, especially from Pakistan, have been promoting an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam among the Muslim communities of the European Union. During the 1980s, while the Iranian revolution still had vitality, Wahhabi/Salafi Islam, sponsored by Saudi-Arabia, was widely viewed as an antidote to Iranian-style extremism. Therefore, not enough attention was given to the activities of Wahhabi/Salafi preachers. Although most of them did not sanction

violence, the kind of reductionist Islam they propagated created greater receptivity to radical and potentially violent tendencies. At the very least, it encouraged communalist and anti-integrationist tendencies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Counteracting Radicalism and Encouraging Integration

The following policies and approaches can help counteract radical propaganda and advance the integration of Muslim populations in Europe. Some of these policies and approaches relate to more efficient security policies, able to weed out radical elements, notably preachers, without alienating the majority of the Muslim community. More efficient security policies would also help prevent the infiltration of radical elements into the host countries.

With regard to the more long-term goal of integrating Muslim communities and transforming them culturally to be more in line with the values of European host societies, the following considerations and measures can be helpful:

First, integration should not be equated with the form of assimilation that demands or expects the abandonment of all vestiges of Islamic religious values. If this were attempted, it would increase Muslims' sense of alienation, aid in strengthening communalistic tendencies, and thus defeat the goal of integration. Instead, integration should be approached more gradually. Emphasis should be on the legal, economic, political, and social integration of Muslims within host societies. At the same time, Muslim leaders and communities should be engaged in a cooperative fashion to take more responsibility for promoting integration and fighting radicalisation.

Second, strategies should be developed to address the problems of the Muslim underclass and the phenomenon of ghettoisation. This is a long-term objective, but it is a vitally important part of any strategy to counter radicalisation trends. Equally important is combating racial and religious bias against Muslim communities and preventing discrimination on the basis of racial and religious differences.

Third, it is important to establish seminaries and other learning institutions for the training of Imams and other community leaders in the host countries, rather than relying on persons who have no affinity or acquaintance with the culture of host countries. The fact that the position of imam is rarely paid an adequate salary may also need to be addressed as well before such schools can become useful. However, this

should be done in consultation and cooperation with representatives of Muslim communities, in order to dispel possible concerns that the government is trying to interfere in Muslim religious life. Experience with the few institutes to train Islamic scholars that already exist in Europe shows that producing imams in a way that simultaneously appeals to European Muslims, host country governments (who must also be mindful of concerns about the separation of religion and state), and source country governments (who are often financially involved in such efforts) is difficult. However, by proceeding in a supportive way, the host governments are likely to create allies among the younger generation of Muslims, many of whom find that Imams coming from abroad are unable to provide them with adequate answers to questions that they face as Muslims living in secular societies, including how to maintain their faith while becoming active members of these societies.

Fourth, efforts should be directed towards organizing and developing projects that would benefit both the Muslim and native populations and help them engage in cooperative ventures. These activities could be seen as stepping-stones to easing the Muslim people's sense of isolation and the indigenous people's fear and suspicion of the Muslims.

Promising Practices for Preventing Radicalisation Among Youth

Efforts that increase the opportunities immigrant and ethnic minority youth have to engage with the broader society are a promising way of reducing radicalisation. This involves efforts aimed at the immigrant youth themselves and those aimed at other groups or the local community in general—or both at the same time. Promising practices include:

- Mentoring programs: Discussed more extensively in another briefing paper, mentoring programs can combat racism and radicalisation. One mentoring program in the United Kingdom, run by Peacemaker, pairs at-risk youth with mentors from a different ethnic background.
- Anti-racism efforts: Efforts to reduce racism and encourage dialogue about and with ethnic minorities can be specifically oriented to prevent radicalisation or target youth. For example, the 2004 European Week Against Racism included efforts to improve understanding between immigrant youth and police in Denmark and a Jewish-Turkish cultural exchange event in Belgium.
- Vigorous leadership against hate incidents: Specific incidents, such as attacks on immigrants or mosques, provide fuel for radical elements. Decisive leadership in

response to such actions can defuse this particular time bomb.

- Alternatives to Radicalisation: Radicals twist the natural energy and passion of youth. Alternative outlets for this energy that involve them in mainstream society can reduce the potential for radicalisation. The United Kingdom's Commission for Racial Equality provides one set of examples of such initiatives: its Safer Communities Initiative anti-gang project draws on popular music and concerts, and its "Kick Racism out of Football" has featured efforts aimed at teenagers. Efforts to get immigrant youth involved in sports have also had considerable success in communities across Europe.

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Minority Youth II:

Immigrant parents, children, and mentors: Bridging the gap between home and school

Purpose

To explore the ways in which the educational setting can be used to increase academic performance and to mediate social and cultural differences between migrant/minority communities and the host society. This discussion will focus on increasing the involvement of parents in both the social and educational development of their children.

Points for consideration (derived from the accompanying policy brief)

- Education has both an academic and a socialising function in preparing youth for life in society; different starting points, varying levels of support at home, and cultural, educational, and social biases can contribute to the establishment of chronic disadvantages among migrant and minority communities.
- Education is possibly the most powerful engine for social change. An important body of evidence suggests that immigrant children can be positively affected both by initiatives in schools that help bridge the education gap between them and the children of native residents, and by ones outside of the classroom, such as parenting and mentorship programmes.
- Measures to reduce the gap between migrant and minority youth and their host-society counterparts must pay attention to both the cultural and educational aspects of school materials and of social interaction in the school place.
- At an academic level, thought could be given to measures that allow for additional support for children from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Fighting discrimination in school admissions is also essential in this respect.
- Teachers as mediators and facilitators can play an important role in bridging the gap between the differing educational and cultural expectations of many migrant parents and of the host society. Helping parents understand the school system and the related socio-cultural expectations can help bridge this gap. Efforts to this end start with information provision, and, in the earliest stages, language provision for the parents themselves.
- At later stages, especially by the time students have reached secondary education, the role of parents can be limited or even contentious. At this age, mentors can play an important role in mediating (educationally, socially, and emotionally) between school,

parent and child. The mentor also provides a good role model for young students.

Success factors

- Investing in the Development of the Mentorship Network. Mentoring programmes draw on existing knowledge in immigrant communities and develop role models for young immigrants, but they often face a lack of administrative and structural support (for example, many programmes are duplicated in schools or regions, and have a difficult time recruiting mentors).
- Helping Students Overcome Educational and Social Disadvantage. Students not only need direct intervention in schoolwork, but could also benefit from the active involvement of parents, mentors, and other role models in their academic and career development. Sample programmes include
 - Educating Parents and Children Together, especially in the schools of the children
 - School Advice Centres for Immigrants, to help parents address school-related questions in their own languages
 - Access to School Contact Persons and Assistance, preferably ones with migrant background rather than having teachers double as translators.
- Creating an Improved Educational Setting for Immigrants. Immigrant youth perform best when they gain an early start in education, have second chances to perform well in difficult school years or classes, and gain opportunities for vocational education and dual tracking where appropriate. However, there are often social and cultural stigmas attached to these programmes.

Discussion questions

- What structural changes should be made in schools to increase the educational achievement of youth from a minority/migrant background? How can we ensure that these measures address social and cultural differences?
- How can parents be encouraged to participate more actively in the school system with regard to the educational and social expectations of their children?

Policy Brief

Immigrant Parents, Children, and Education: Bridging the Gap Between Home and Host Society

By Maurice Crul

Introduction

Involving immigrant parents in the education of their children is a proven means of raising academic performance. Success in school is closely linked to success in the labour markets, which is the only means of breaking the cycle of dependency and alienation that pervades many European immigrant communities. For this reason alone, integration policies that create greater educational opportunities for immigrant children²², and that enable parental involvement, should be very high on the political agenda.

But bridging the gap between home and school is critical for another reason: As a means of mediating the cultural disputes that are sharply dividing many European societies, polarizing the political discourse and possibly sowing the ground for radicalisation. Today, there is a prevailing sense that the traditions and practices of some immigrants—especially those from the more communitarian Muslim world—come into conflict with European mores and expectations. The question of girls wearing veils in schools, for instance, has troubled many countries. .

The educational system can and should be the most powerful engine of integration in every EU country. And it has become even more vital given the decline of other traditional integration venues—the military, via the universal draft; churches; labour unions. At the same time that these integration engines have lost their relevance, technology has emerged that allows immigrants to stay immersed in the culture of their homeland, making integration harder.

Policies that enhance the prospects of immigrant children in the school-place are essential to integration. But the nexus between home and school should also be targeted by policymakers who believe integration is a priority. The school-place can be

²²The terms “immigrant children” and “children of immigrants” are used in this brief to indicate both children born abroad as well as the offspring of first- and second-generation immigrants. Furthermore, immigrant children are defined as those whose roots are outside the EU-25, since the education gap is not as serious for intra-EU immigrants.

transformed into a model of civil interaction, where immigrants and their children meet their counterparts; together, they can not only improve educational prospects, but also come to an understanding of each other's traditions and have the opportunity to synthesize them.

This policy brief identifies ways in which policymakers throughout the European Union can improve the educational prospects of immigrant children, while also making progress in tempering the culture clashes that have divided their societies in recent years. Parents and mentors can play a critical role in addressing this challenge.

Discussion

Overview: Immigrant Children and Parents in the Educational System

The children of immigrants are now a prominent force in many European school districts; in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, they are in the majority; in Brussels, they constitute over 40 percent of the school-age population; in London, meanwhile, English is a second language for a third of schoolchildren. Unfortunately, the performance of these children generally lags in all school-success indicators: They drop out at higher rates, repeat grades more frequently, and are concentrated in the least-challenging educational tracks. Their under-performance can lead to truancy and asocial behaviour.

This education gap—the performance of immigrant children versus that of children with native-born parents—is of growing concern to local, national, and European authorities. The divide between immigrant and native children is particularly acute when it comes to the “new second generation” —children of the guest-workers who arrived in Europe in the Sixties and Seventies—and fears have spread that they are forming a new European underclass. While such concerns are often exaggerated for political purposes, there can be no doubt that the education gap is undermining social cohesion, damaging the economic well-being of both individuals and nations.

The primary policy locus for remedying the education gap is, of course, in schools. Recent research reveals that European countries have much to learn from each other's educational practices. For instance, it is clear that immigrant children do better when drawn into the educational system at a young age (as early as two in France and Belgium, versus five or six elsewhere); face-to-face time with teachers is also critical and varies broadly (from 1019 hours in the Netherlands, to just 661 in Germany). Another vital difference is the point at which their schools compel students to select a course of study. When selection takes place earlier, immigrant children are at a disadvantage, since they

have more “catching up” to do. Finally, immigrant children in countries that offer alternative apprenticeship tracks (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark) are less likely to be unemployed.

However, there is a growing body of evidence in Europe that the educational performance of immigrant children can also be affected by initiatives that are not restricted to the classroom. The role of parents and mentors in helping to bridge the gap between home and school is receiving increasing attention.

The goal of policy should be to encourage initiatives that decrease the social and cultural differences between schools and homes. This can take place by creating incentives to bring parents into more frequent contact with schools; by enabling schools to reach out directly to parents via intermediaries or information centres; and by educating parents, children, and educators about each other’s cultures.

One of the moments at which parents can play a critical role in their children’s school career is when they are asked to select an educational track, which typically occurs at the end of primary school. However, since most immigrant parents did not attend school in their country of settlement, their knowledge of the school system is limited. Also, it is difficult for many parents even to judge the abilities of their own child. As a result, most parents simply assent to the advice schools give them. It is at moments of decision such as these that schools should play a proactive role in communicating with immigrant parents in order to make education a more collaborative process in which they feel truly invested.

Expanding communication channels with parents also is increasingly important in light of the need to mediate differences in how culture is expressed and practiced in school and at home. The question of displaying religious symbols in schools—which has led to acute controversy in several countries—is a case in point. In the absence of a dialogue between schools and parents, decisions restricting the display of religious symbols can be seen as biased, thereby exacerbating divisions between immigrant communities and others. The same holds in reverse: Engaging parents more fully can help schools and teachers mitigate cultural practices at home that infringe on the freedoms of children.

The supporting role parents play changes dramatically when their children enter secondary education. Schools at the secondary level tend to be much bigger than primary schools, and students there have many more teachers. Parents tend to visit less frequently and to know fewer of their children’s teachers. At the same time, the subjects taught at the secondary level tend to be ones that immigrant parents never learned themselves; as such, they are unable to help their children with homework and to alert teachers if their kids have difficulties in certain subjects. The fact that children entering

puberty communicate less and less with their parents exacerbates potential problems. In many European countries, these challenges have been successfully overcome, at least in part, by the implementation of mentoring programs.

Promising Practices Across Europe

The practices highlighted below can enable children of immigrants to move ahead more effectively in their educational careers. Some relate to school policy, others equip parents to help their children, and some make use of the potential within immigrant communities.

Educating Parents & Children Together

A common practice nowadays in many countries (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands) is to provide native-language classes for first-generation mothers in their children's schools. This promotes the use of the host-country language within immigrant households; it also has a positive effect on children, who see their mothers making an effort to move ahead. In the long run, learning the local language and understanding the school environment enables mothers to better supervise and support their children.

A variety of pedagogic courses for immigrant parents have also been developed. Some aim at teaching early-learning skills for young children, others at the pedagogy of teenagers in puberty. The effect of pedagogic courses for parents has not been extensively studied; the short-term effects so far seem small. Perhaps the most important impact of such programs is that they allow immigrant parents to meet each other and discuss the challenges they mutually face.

The latest research about such projects in a variety of countries clearly demonstrates that the participation rate of parents is highest if activities are organized in cooperation with the schools of their children, and preferably take place at these schools. A valuable side-effect of such an approach is that it also facilitates contact between teachers and parents.

School Advice Centres for Immigrants

Immigrant parents often have little knowledge of school systems and therefore struggle with pedagogic questions in raising their children. School advice centres in Austria, founded in the early Nineties, have helped immigrant parents address school-related questions in their own language. The staff at these centres hold academic degrees in relevant disciplines (linguistics, psychology, social work and the like) and know a wide array of languages (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Turkish, Kurdish, Albanian, Macedonian, and Slovenian). Rather than placing centres in every school, which would not be cost-effective, Austrian authorities established 11 regional centres, covering each of the nine federal states (plus one each in Vienna and Salzburg).

School Contact Persons & School Assistants

In many countries, schools encounter difficulties in communicating with immigrant parents. Language is one barrier, though certainly not the only one. Until recently, language teachers fulfilled the role of translators and were often asked to bridge the gap between parents and teachers. In some countries, this is still a common practice. Language teachers, however, are neither trained nor paid for this role.

The role of intermediary is gradually being taken over by school contact persons and school assistants who themselves have a migrant background. They are not trained as teachers but specifically as intermediaries, a job that requires fewer skills and therefore makes it easier to recruit candidates. Intermediaries play an especially important role in regard to newly arrived immigrants, who often have the most difficulties in supporting their children.

In most countries, school contact persons and school assistants can play a vital role during the current transition period, when there are still very few teachers with an immigrant background.

Mentor Projects for Immigrant Children

Student mentoring draws on the existing resources within immigrant communities rather than promoting wholesale intervention from the outside. In the past decade, the number of immigrant children pursuing university-level studies has grown significantly. These students are among the best and brightest of their respective communities, of which they will form the future elite. A growing number of them work as volunteers in student mentor projects or homework classes in countries like the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Belgium.

The idea of mentoring was first developed in traditional countries of immigration (America, Israel, Canada); in Israel, some 40,000 children are guided by student mentors. In Europe, the practice is still new, though very promising and growing rapidly. In the Netherlands during the past five years alone, roughly 25 mentor projects were established, some local and others national. One such national mentoring program, developed by the professional school advisory bureau Sardes (www.sardes.nl) together with the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES), has produced training and project manuals that can be used by other mentoring initiatives.

The *Moroccan Coaching Project* in The Hague is one of the more successful programs. Moroccan university students coach a Moroccan pupil in secondary school on a one-to-one basis, with the emphasis being on at-risk pupils. Over the course of five years, 118 pupils were mentored for one year on a weekly basis; only five (4 percent) dropped out

of school. This result is even more extraordinary given the pupils involved: Many were truants known for verbally and physically abusing their peers and teachers, while many had severe learning problems.²³

Self-empowerment is the keyword in mentoring. Mentors meet their charges once or twice a week, and together they develop a work program. The mentors assist the pupils both on a practical level with schoolwork, as well as on an emotional level. As successful role models, they provide pupils with the emotional and educational support that can help them succeed at school. Mentors are keenly aware of what pupils need, and they know how things work in an immigrant family. (Interestingly, the majority of mentors in the Netherlands are girls, leading some to call mentoring a “girls project.” Not only does mentoring attract more girls, but relationships among participants are more intense among girls.)

Often, schools choose to set up such a project because they hope mentors will play a mediating role in reaching out to parents. Mentors talk with parents about their children’s progress in schools and sometimes offer academic advice. Mentors encourage parents to keep in close contact with schools and, with the help of the mentor; parents are more able to do so.

Beyond their role in improving the educational prospects of their charges, mentors can also serve as cultural mediators. They help parents under the social and cultural environment in which their children are immersed, and from which parents can be distanced or even alienated. This cross-cultural, cross-generational dialogue that mentors can catalyse helps quell the fears of parents that the culture of their children is being subverted by host-country mores, and it creates an environment in which a positive synthesis of cultures can take root.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is tempting to use the examples above to create a single, ideal educational setting for the children of immigrants. However, this would not do justice to the very different historical settings that have shaped each country’s educational system. This brief’s ambition is a more modest: To highlight a number of policies and initiatives that research shows can help improve the educational and life chances of immigrant children.

23 A thorough description of this program, as well as many other promising integration initiatives from throughout Europe, can be found in *Managing Integration: The European Union’s Responsibilities Towards Immigrants*, Rita Süßmuth, Werner Weidenfeld (eds.), published on CD-ROM by the Bertelsmann Foundation (2004).

1. Invest in the Development of Local and National Student Mentoring Programs

Student-mentoring projects show promising results, from improving school performance to addressing social and emotional problems. Such programs should be developed on a much larger scale and should be further professionalised. To facilitate this, promising practices from throughout the EU should be explored, analysed, and disseminated. The research agenda should also include determining what the most appropriate moment of intervention by student mentors is, and how best to embed student mentors within school systems.²⁴

2. Facilitate Contact Between Schools, Teachers & Parents

Communication between immigrant parents and schools is often problematic. Immigrant parents are in need of information—in their own language—on selection and specialisation within the educational system, as well as on how to navigate broader pedagogical and socio-cultural issues. Policies to facilitate such communication should focus on:

- School contact persons and school assistants (preferably with an immigrant background) in primary and secondary schools.
- School advice centres
- Mentoring programs in which mentors interact with parents
- Language and pedagogic courses for parents, preferably held in their children's schools
- Involving parents in the civic education of their children

3. Implement Policies That Enhance the Educational Prospects of Immigrant Children

Offer an Early Start in the Educational System to Promote Language Acquisition: While lowering the compulsory schooling age would be a major (and possibly difficult) policy shift, effective alternatives to this have been developed in many countries. For instance, some have established pre-school facilities focusing on native-language acquisition. Such programs are only effective if the methods used are compatible with those employed in primary school; ideally, pre-school should be part of primary school.

Create Second Chances to Help Students Overcome Cultural Disadvantages: Children of immigrants usually start school at a linguistic and cultural disadvantage. It takes some time to make up this disadvantage, and so children in

²⁴ One positive step toward identifying and sharing transferable good practices on mentoring has been the creation of the MENTORINT consortium, which analyses mentoring programs throughout the EU and helps build a European mentoring organisation.

systems with early selection fare worse than they otherwise could. There are a number of alternative to later selection that do not impose fundamental structural change on school systems. The key phrase in all alternatives is “second chance;” here are several examples:

- *Repeating the Final Year of Primary School.* Motivated children who are not yet ready to be promoted can be offered an extra year of primary school to make it possible for them pass the entrance exam to a more prestigious track. The results of such an approach have so far proved promising.
- *Intermediary Classes in Secondary Education.* Delay the promotion/selection decision in secondary school. In so-called intermediary classes, children remain together for one or two extra years after primary school without going through a selection process. Research shows that many children of immigrants were able to continue at a more prestigious level after one or two intermediary years.
- *Contiguous Learning Routes & Apprenticeships.* Research on successful children of immigrants shows that many of them took a long road to success. They started low and only step-by-step gained access to higher education. This has also been the traditional path of social mobility for working-class native children. The way the vocational column is organised is essential in this respect; it should be easy to continue moving up through the vocational column, rising step by step from lower to middle to higher vocational education. Apprenticeships can also help smooth the transition into the labour market. An apprenticeship system is potentially a strong weapon against youth unemployment and high drop-out rates.

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**Minority Youth III:
Combating discrimination**

Purpose

To promote a holistic approach to anti-discrimination policy. To further embed the EU directives into all areas of policy and link efforts targeted at the newly arrived and resident minority/migrant populations. The focus will be on proven, successful measures to promote equality of opportunity. Discriminatory practices, whether based on structural bias or individual prejudice, must be eliminated.

Points for consideration (derived from the accompanying policy brief)

- There is already a wide discourse in Europe which condemns racism and xenophobia, anchored in legislation in Article 13 and in two recent European directives.
- However, there is still evidence of discrimination in education (a lack of social mobility and educational achievement for immigrant youth compared to native students) and labour market transition (a higher level of youth unemployment and a lack of training, potentially caused both by poor education trajectories and by labour market discrimination).
- Member States have developed different policy answers to discrimination, with some focusing on broad anti-discrimination measures and others separating introductory programmes for migrants from discrimination policy for the general population. Member States also differ with reference to the target group for anti-discrimination measures.
- For the newly arrived, this may involve dealing with special needs like language training. For the second- and third-generation descendents of migrants, social mobility will depend on fighting discrimination (especially in the workplace) and on promoting an understanding of diversity that utilises and respects the mixed cultural background of these youth.

Promising practices

- National Action Plans. Discrimination begins with prejudice in the host country. Thus, every nation should develop some form of an action plan to supplement the work of the EU Commission, performing more extensive documentation of discriminatory actions, involving young immigrants in their development, and developing monitoring mechanisms to ensure that provisions are enforced
- Active Recruitment of Ethnic Minorities. While affirmative action is not widely practiced in the EU, programmes to attract immigrants to the job market not only benefit many young immigrants, but also reduce the skills under-utilisation that is detrimental to the European labour market. Similar programmes can also be used to increase immigrant enrolment in prestigious schools such as Sciences-Po in France.
- Efforts should be strengthened to make information about employment and educational opportunities easily accessible to minority and migrant youth by increasing distribution to their neighbourhoods and schools.
- School-based Action. Mentoring programmes, as well as delayed advancement and vocational schooling, can help immigrant children achieve at rates closer to those of their native counterparts
- Addressing Specific Incidents of Discrimination. Discriminatory practices and racist activities can promote radical reactions unless the minority youth leadership decisively responds in a non-violent way. Community plans to prevent specific practices, such as discriminatory admissions to discotheques, can be effective when they are properly supported and administered.

Discussion questions

- What are the most effective initiatives for promoting equality of opportunity for youth from a minority/migrant background in the labour force? Is it better to work on improving their educational achievement, reducing discriminatory hiring, or increasing internship positions?
- Should anti-discrimination measures be targeted at the needs of specific groups (e.g. youth with a migrant/minority background) or is a mainstream anti-discrimination approach desirable?

Policy Brief

Youth of Immigrant Origin & Discrimination in Europe

By Patrick Simon

Introduction

The forms of discrimination that affect young people of immigrant origin²⁵ in Europe are not unavoidable. However, they cannot be fought only with the policy instruments developed in years past to integrate migrants; they demand new approaches and an innovative strategy.

This is a crucial turning point for European societies, which must necessarily learn to become multicultural. There is still time to intervene to prevent the formation of ethnic and racial divisions that undermine social cohesion, and to reverse the development of ethnic and religious identities that are reactionary and hostile to mainstream society. However, the success of such interventions mainly depends on the capacity to significantly reduce discrimination by acting determinedly, comprehensively, and systematically on structures rather than agents. Well-conceived policies may reverse the trend and enable diversity to be respected in the culture of democratic societies.

European countries have only recently come to regard themselves as “immigration countries.” The integration of the large waves of immigrants who arrived during the Fifties through the Seventies has now become a central issue in how European societies are organized on social, economic, political, and cultural levels. The permanent settling-in of these immigrants has also created a new dynamic, because their European-born and raised children have now become adults. The emergence of this “second generation” is a demographic reality, one that raises new political questions regarding social integration and citizenship.

Equality, regardless of ethnic and racial origin, is being put to the test in all multicultural societies. Since the Second World War, most of Europe has had to adjust to increased ethnic and racial diversity. Because of the discrimination to which they are subjected, the descendants of immigrants, especially those from former European colonies, have exposed systems of inequality that Europe believed it had eradicated.

²⁵ This term—as well as the simpler term « immigrant youth »—is meant to capture all immigrant youth, including the second and third generation descendants of post-World War II immigrants to Europe.

The integration policies developed by Member States during the Nineties sought to lower the barriers preventing immigrants from participating fully in host societies. They emphasized literacy programmes and professional training; improving access to civic and social rights; and, in a few cases, relaxing the conditions for obtaining citizenship. These integration programmes were primarily aimed at adult migrants who needed to adapt to their new society; they were not suited to the integration of the “second generation,” many of whom have obtained citizenship and are no longer culturally distinct from native populations.

The challenge for EU Member States has therefore clearly expanded from narrowly conceived questions of “immigrant integration,” to the broader issue of managing their racially and ethnically diverse populations. This “policy of diversity” consists of recognising and increasing the standing of minority groups and, in particular, combating discrimination by ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone, irrespective of ethnic and racial origin, sex, religion, sexual preference, age, handicap, etc.

Fighting discrimination is one of the European Commission’s main priorities, as defined in Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty and the two directives adopted in 2000. One directive obliges Member States to adopt policies that ensure the equal treatment of all residents, irrespective of race or ethnicity.²⁶ The second directive dictates equal treatment with regard to employment and work.²⁷ The directives, which have now been incorporated into Member State legislation, formally introduced the notion of “indirect discrimination” into European law.²⁸ Although implementation of anti-discrimination law and policy varies considerably across Member States, the directives provide a strong foundation for the beginnings of a veritable European strategy to combat discrimination and promote effective equality.

²⁶ Directive no. 2000/43/EC

²⁷ Directive no. 2000/78/EC

²⁸ It is important to note that these directives do not prevent countries from using race or ethnic origin as criteria in creating policies designed to monitor or rectify inequalities or meet special needs.

Discussion

Youth and Discrimination

It is difficult to estimate the number of immigrant youth in Europe. The definitions and categories change from country to country according to nationality laws and the organisation of statistical systems. Of the 18.8 million foreigners residing in EU-15 countries, 15-to-24-year-olds number just over 2.4 million. However, this figure represents only part of the immigrant youth population, especially in those countries with previously established immigrant populations where the second and third generations constitute significant demographic groups. In France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, the second generation is as large or even twice the size of the population of immigrants.

The children of the immigrants who arrived in the Sixties and Seventies are now entering the labour market in massive numbers. They are experiencing difficulties that differ from those encountered by their parents. While their parents had few qualifications, which explained their vulnerability in the “new economy,” their children are better educated (though they still experience high dropout rates). However, their educational achievements have not produced the social mobility that might have been expected. The unemployment rate of immigrant youth reveals that differences in professional opportunities are correlated with ethnic and racial origins.

Of course, discrimination does not only affect the young, though they often resent it more deeply. In 2002, the European Commission’s Eurobarometer revealed that a greater number of young people report experiences of discrimination or have witnessed such events. The results show that youth have greater exposure to discriminatory situations, but also have sharper reactions to them than did their parents because they have higher expectations and no longer tolerate being treated as inferiors within a society they consider their own. Discrimination for this second generation results from the combination of two factors: The first is that while their average level of education is significantly higher than that of their parents, it remains lower than that of the *native population*. Many minority youth leave the education system without any qualifications or with professional qualifications that fail to provide access to stable and well-paid jobs.

The second factor is paradoxical: Discrimination becomes more prevalent when young people of immigrant origin have been successful at school and are well-qualified for the labour market. They then seek to obtain more competitive professional positions, but employers perceive their origin as a “negative signal” during the hiring process. The

vulnerability of immigrant youth is especially marked during the transition from school to the labour market. Improving this transition should be a priority for policy formation.

The European Experience in Combating Discrimination

Techniques to combat discrimination are separate from integration policies, both from a conceptual perspective and in terms of action. Conceptually, the aim for policies combating discrimination is to reform societies that were organised without taking diversity into account, as this results in the unequal treatment of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Thus, even more so than with integration policy, the broader host society is deeply implicated in the causes of discrimination and must take responsibility for changing the status quo.

In terms of the differences between integration policies versus action against discrimination, the law plays a more crucial role in the latter. Perhaps most importantly, the law and the extent to which it is enforced and supported establish a society's expectations for proper conduct. However, to be effective, legal action must be complemented by policies aimed at promoting equal opportunities, especially regarding access to education and the labour market.

The second difference between integration policies and actions combating discrimination relates to the intended audiences. Ethnic and racial discrimination does not only affect foreigners, immigrants, or even the "second generation." It also affects citizens who merely stand out by the colour of their skin, their name, accent, or other aspects of their appearance. Therefore, it is not possible to end discrimination by simply focusing on young people of immigrant origin, be it through literacy programmes, naturalisation, and the procurement of additional political or social rights or, more generally, the improvement of education programmes. It is only by acting on the systems of unequal treatment themselves that discrimination will be effectively fought, by modifying the procedures that result in differential access based on ethnic or racial origin criteria and by favouring minority representation with the help of quantitative access, objectives.

The European directives on equal treatment provide a new branch of policies that permit discrimination to be fought more effectively. However, they ultimately will be successful only if backed by vigorous implementation and action by Member States. Legal action has been considerably strengthened and should produce a progressive change in practices.

The creation of independent authorities, such as the Commission for Racial Equality in the United Kingdom, to combat discrimination can send a clear signal that discrimination will not be tolerated, helping ensure that interventions are more effective. However, an essential range of instruments and policies is still missing in most European countries. Member States have not yet set up a coordinated strategy that associates legal action, a statistical monitoring of the situation of ethnic and racial minorities in education, and more progressive action to ensure effective equality in housing, access to services and, especially, employment.

The “good practices” reported in Europe consist mainly of providing vulnerable people, including immigrant youth, with assistance at school or when entering the labour market. However, most measures are aimed at professional integration for young people with few qualifications or recently arrived migrants, failing to address the needs of many high-achieving minority youth. There are also efforts to improve the education of young people of immigrant origin; such programmes strengthen their opportunities for social mobility, but they do not address many more entrenched mechanisms of discrimination. Unequal treatment continues to affect young people of immigrant origin *despite* higher qualifications and greater investments.

More targeted actions aimed at helping young people of immigrant origin overcome discrimination might have the following elements, drawn from current anti-discrimination programs in Europe. The characteristics listed below target employment-related discrimination, but most of them could be easily generalised.

- The target of action, young people from ethnic minorities, is clearly indicated, and the programmes focus directly on achieving results with this target group.
- Existing human capital characteristics are maximized through job-search training, taking into account ways to overcome the prejudices of employers. In today’s context, such efforts could include education on rights under anti-discrimination law.
- Opportunities are clearly communicated to minority youth; for example, advertising is distributed in areas where ethnic minorities live or frequent)
- Actions are carried out to ease the transition to work and help youth in overcoming workplace prejudices by providing support programmes to young people from ethnic minorities (such as mentoring or mediation). Another possible mode of action would be to extend apprenticeship opportunities to a broader spectrum of occupations, so that both youth and employers can gain experience working with each other.
- The monitoring of recruitment practices, access to training, salary levels and promotions is used to promote equal treatment. Such monitoring of ethnic statistics has only been carried out by the United Kingdom (within the

framework of the Race Relations Act) and the Netherlands (SAMEN Law between 1998 and 2003). Such statistics are, however, much more common in relation to sex.

- In some cases, more rapid entry of ethnic minorities is promoted via preferential access, also known as “positive discrimination” or “affirmative action”. Such practices are extremely rare, as “positive discrimination” is not an intervention strategy compatible with the philosophical foundations of positive action as perceived by most European countries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The European Union has established the foundations for combating discrimination with two directives passed in 2000; however, many missing elements of anti-discrimination policy must be addressed. Below are a few strategies for putting these missing elements in place.

National Action Plans. Discrimination begins with prejudice in the host country and has many causes and forms. A comprehensive national action plan in each Member State would help ensure that anti-discrimination is a priority and that work against discrimination is advanced on all fronts. These action plans, which could be coordinated with EU-level plans and directives, could best meet the needs of immigrant origin youth by incorporating the following elements:

- *Public leadership and education to promote recognition that discrimination is a society-wide problem and not an issue of immigration.* It is important that European societies dissociate the question of immigrant integration from ethnic and racial discrimination, and recognise that prejudices that are the basis of discrimination are not simply transitory reactions that will disappear over time if integration occurs. This process begins with education about discrimination law and proper conduct, but it should not stop there. European societies are now multicultural and must learn to represent themselves through their ethnic and racial diversity. Political decision-makers must take the lead in recognising the diversity of their societies. Actions must be defined on a European level and in each Member State to start a process to transform representations and practices. Education on cultural diversity and the importance of equal treatment in schools and among the young are important natural starting points for such efforts.

- *A better understanding of how discrimination occurs in the lives of youth.* This requires research to provide an overview of the extent and characteristics of the discrimination that affects immigrant youth. However, it mostly implies the need for action plans to be developed in conjunction with, and with input from, young people of immigrant origin, taking into account the issues of greatest concern to minority youth. This is necessary not only in order to create better policy, but also in order to prevent a collective exclusion of discriminated groups and the shaping of a version of their identity that is reactionary and hostile to mainstream society. European countries might rely on networks and forums as well as on European and national NGOs representing young people to reach out to these populations.
- *Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that provide necessary data analysing discrimination and the development of policies for equal treatment.* This monitoring mechanism should record information regarding both the main dimensions of discrimination and the actions of key players such as business and schools that contribute to discriminatory practices.
- *Active policies to promote equal treatment, developed with the cooperation of employers and other key players in society.* Without such policies, equality remains a formal concept that is not effectively translated into social structures. Equal treatment policies can also build on existing efforts to smooth the transition between secondary school and work or tertiary education that give youth, employers, and universities the opportunity to learn more about each other and break down misconceptions.

Active Recruitment and Selection Policies for Ethnic Minorities. While affirmative action is not widely practiced in the EU, programs to attract and select immigrants for the job market would not only benefit many young immigrants, but also reduce the skills underutilization that plagues the European labour market. The SPAG (*Stimulerings Projecten voor Allochtone Groepen*) project, which was originally targeted at Antillean and Aruban youth, actively recruits specific categories of unemployed persons that are not reached by regular employment agencies. The programme, which expanded to cover Turkish and Moroccan youth in 2001, offers intensive support, training, and mentorship.

There is also an important role for programmes that help immigrants gain admission to selective schools and universities. For example, l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences-Po) in France offers youth from Educational Priority Zones (ZEP) a special entrance exam, as well as funding and coaching, in order to allow them to increase their chances

of admission to Science-Po. The programme provides ZEP students with financial support, training, and tutoring throughout their schooling.

On a philosophical note, such active recruitment and selection programmes need not be based on controversial mechanisms such as quotas assigned to particular races or ethnic groups. More “nuanced” visions of assessing merit would look beyond grades and test scores to recognize that succeeding in a school where low achievement is the norm or when one’s parents are of low income bespeaks greater personal ability than grades or test scores alone can indicate. Thus, they would focus on helping youth from specific neighbourhoods, secondary schools, or income levels (as Sciences-Po does).

School-based Action. In addition to programs that specifically select and support immigrant youth, comprehensive education programs for youth on the periphery can also be effective. The Vasama Project in Finland targets youth from 17-25 years of age who are not attending school; it developed an education system for young immigrants in Vantaa in order to enable them to participate in, and contribute to, Finnish society. The program, which is full-time and free to participants, contains a long-term work practise two or three days a week, an orientation to working life, a computer-skills course, and civics education. However, programs must also address the need to integrate high-achieving students who face cultural and social discrimination. Mentoring programs, as well as programs such as delayed advancement and vocational schooling, can help immigrant children achieve at rates that are closer to those of their native counterparts, and can also help those at high achievement to breach the social and cultural gap that places them at a disadvantage.

Addressing Specific Incidents of Discrimination through Coalition-building.

Community plans to prevent specific discriminatory practices can be effective when they are properly supported and administered. In many cases, identifying a discriminatory practice, achieving consensus that such practice is unacceptable, and laying out a clear vision for non-discriminatory behaviour can lead to significant progress. The RADAR project, in Rotterdam, is a cooperative effort between government agencies and key stakeholders to prevent racist or discriminatory behaviour in admitting clients to discotheques. Each disco owner creates a door-admission plan based on objective criteria, and a discriminations complaint panel evaluates any complaints against the formal policy. Negative responses by the panel can lead to punitive measures, like the temporary withdrawal of a disco’s business permit. Since the program began, complaints of discriminatory admissions to discotheques have significantly dropped.

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