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**Workshop – The local Policymaking of Interculture between national integration policy, diversity, cohesion and development**

**Intercultural mediation, a “new deal” for local policy making**

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### Bibliography

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## Introduction

On a European scale, the last initiatives taken by the European Union may have given the negative image of a closed and defensive Europe, with a revival of the “besieged fortress syndrome”. The 'European Pact on Immigration and Asylum' adopted in 2008 under the French presidency at the European Council for Justice and Home affairs, starts with a preamble, intended to reassure countries that the Union is not becoming a 'Fortress Europe'. It recalls the fact that Europe receives more immigrants than North America and states that the continent needs immigration for economic and demographic reasons. Nevertheless the five major guidelines are security oriented even though “*in a spirit of solidarity*” : new powers given to Frontex, the agency of European police for external borders ; the European 'Blue Card' initiative, meant to reverse the trend of Europe receiving low-skilled immigrants ; a selective repatriation of illegal immigrants ; opportunities for legal migration for work or studies or promote the return of third country nationals to their places of origin.

On national scales, migration is still an on going debate and a controversial issue. Elective periods in many countries together with the economic crisis have favoured the development of racist and xenophobic speeches pointing out migration as the main reason for the high level of unemployment and the increase of social problems and poverty. This scapegoat strategy may have led to the criminal action of an isolated individual to denounce the multicultural society he was living in.<sup>1</sup> On a local scale, associations and local authorities (towns and cities), have been pioneers in the recognition of intercultural mediation being the first scale to identify and enhance the new professional profile of intercultural mediator since the 1990s..

The multilevel governance of migration and integration policy has produced a lot of confusion with contradictory messages. The Intercultural mediation approach might bring a “new deal” in the sense of changing the perspectives especially if it succeeds to empower migrants and ethnic minorities in giving them tools and methods to value their unique experience and background. In this perspective, the issue of intercultural mediation might bring a challenging issue to make integration be a vivid reality for local policy making. This is the aim of our article.

We will first and foremost insist on the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism. The prefix “inter” implies interaction, exchange, breaking down barriers, reciprocity and objective solidarity. The term “culture” implies recognition of the values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations to which human beings refer in their relations with others. What is the added value of the intercultural mediation approach in this perspective?

We will then focus on the role of Intercultural mediators. They are meant to facilitate and enhance the integration of migrants in the host societies. They are not supposed to be on either side but to find a solution to problems that may arise between institutions and migrants. What is the role of intercultural mediators to build a bridge between national and local institutions and stakeholders?

At last, we will introduce two European projects that have proposed an innovative approach both to professionals and migrants to enhance intercultural mediation: the TIPS (2007-2009) initiated and led by an Italian University and the Migrapass (2010-2012) initiated and led by two French organisations. This last example proposes a new perspective in Intercultural

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<sup>1</sup> the Norwegian activist, Anders Behring Breivik, killed more than 70 people mainly youngsters belonging to a political party promoting diversity in July 2011 in Oslo.

management: making migrants be the main actors of their integration working side by side with “intercultural mediators” and institution. Integration is a two way process as intercultural mediation underlines it. The lifelong learning may propose a challenging alternative for local policymaking of intercultural between national integration policy, diversity, cohesion and development..

## I. **Intercultural Mediation in the European context**

The concept of mediation and its theoretical analysis has emerged since the late nineties in Europe. Although migration has become a European competence, integrating the “first pillar” of European policies, politics of migration remain a controversial issue among many Members States, both on national and local levels. Intercultural mediation proposes a challenging issue to make integration be a vivid reality for local policy making. In times where multiculturalism has strongly been criticised in European countries such as in Germany or United Kingdom<sup>2</sup>, the intercultural approach might bring a more constructive approach.

### **1.1 From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism**

On the one hand, multiculturalism states that society is made of citizens with different social, religious or ethnic backgrounds living together in the same country. It might be considered as a static approach. Communities may have no link between them but sharing the same territory. On the other hand, interculturalism introduces the idea of reciprocity, the will to connect communities. Each of the community, nationals and immigrants, accepts to recognise and respect the other community with its special traditions and customs.

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

*“ the use of the word ‘intercultural’ necessarily implies - if the prefix ‘inter’ is given its full meaning – interaction, exchange, breaking down barriers, reciprocity, and objective solidarity. If the term ‘culture’ is given its full force, it also implies recognition of the values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relations with others and in their world outlook; recognition of their importance, recognition of the way they work and their variety, and recognition of the interactions that take place both between the multiple registers of a single culture and between the different cultures, in time and space”<sup>3</sup>*

Other approaches stress that

*“Intercultural Education is a transnational activity and neither students nor its subject matter could be delimited by familiar borders”<sup>4</sup>*

Drawing from the European experience some approaches pinpoint the underestimation of the intense, existing power relations in the ways in which cultural otherness and culture

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<sup>2</sup> German Chancellor Angela Merkel and English Prime minister David Cameron, Autumn 2010

<sup>3</sup> quoted by Rolandi-Ricci, M. (1996) in “Training Teachers for Intercultural Education: The work of the Council of Europe” in *Beyond One’s Own Backyard: Intercultural Teacher Education in Europe*, edited by Th. Dragonas, A. Frangoudaki, Ch. Inglessi. Nissos, Athens.

<sup>4</sup> Coulby, D. 2006. Intercultural education: theory and practice, in *Intercultural Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3, August 2006.

difference is understood especially from the point of view of a superficial multiculturalism. Established systems of power, knowledge and representation, both ethnocentric and Eurocentric, exercise a driving force in the ways in which cultural difference is recognised, represented and structured in the field of education.

*“Focusing on the superficial manifestations of culture, multiculturalism [in the UK] failed to recognise the continuous hierarchies of power [emphasis in the original] and legitimization existing between these different centres of cultural authority”*<sup>5</sup>

This approach of cultural difference that recognises the historical character of the diverse national traditions and at the same time places particular emphasis on the power relations which reproduce the hierarchy of these traditions in the field of education, invites for a dialogue without prerequisites and without guarantees. Through this dialogue the essentialist perceptions fixing the ‘other’ in an early stage of the European development and in a subaltern position are constantly undermined and called into question.

The multicultural approach takes into account that people have different cultural backgrounds. This is a first step to understand that European societies are not (and have never been) homogeneous. A second step would be to accept that even minorities, whatever they might be (religious, social or ethnic), have rights to be respected and enhanced. This is the intercultural approach. The only condition for minorities is that their rights are not contradictory with the Common Law nor the Common Good. This is the Social Contract defined since the XVIIIth Century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau<sup>6</sup> which has been a constant reference in many European countries in adopting their Constitution, for instance in France.

Whatever the considered approach, multicultural or intercultural, dealing with the notion of “otherness” remains a main problem especially in difficult economic times where the increase of inequalities have generated many conflicts among communities having the feeling that “some human beings would be more equal than others” to quote George Orwell<sup>7</sup>.

In other words, otherness would be organised in a hierarchical society where “nationals” would be better treated. Some anthropological works in Europe have defended this “racist” approach since the XIXth Century as the colonisation process was going on. Some human beings were considered as inferior to others due to their ethnic origins (mostly the colour of their skin). These theories were implemented at the age of the Industrial Revolution where many European countries were annexing countries in Africa, Asia or Latin America to benefit by the natural resources together with a free workforce. The “anthropological” justification for annexing territories and people living in these countries, considering that colonised people would be better “civilised” thanks to the colonisation, seems to have been quite helpful to explain exploitation of some human beings by others. In the short story “Tamango”, French writer Prosper Mérimée<sup>8</sup> shows that reality was much more complex. Without the complicity of native people in Africa, slavery wouldn’t have been so developed. Slaves’ trade was a fruitful activity for many people in North and South whatever the colour of their skin. Nevertheless the terms of the exchanges (North/South) remained most unbalanced, strongly in favour of the North.

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<sup>5</sup> Donald J. & Rattansi A. (1992) ‘Race’ culture and difference, SAGE Publications, London.

<sup>6</sup> Rousseau J-J. *Du contrat social*, first published in Amsterdam in 1762

<sup>7</sup> Orwell G. *Animal farm*, 1945, first American edition

<sup>8</sup> Mérimée P. *Tamango*, short story first published in 1839, Paris.

In our contemporary societies, riots in difficult areas characterised by a high proportion of people with migration backgrounds are mainly explained by economic and social problems<sup>9</sup> : low level of education, high level of unemployment and not by the ethnic origins of the “leaders” of the riots. Moreover, studies implemented in France among children in difficult areas insisted on the fact that children with a migration background would be even more motivated to succeed in the educational system<sup>10</sup>.

The economic crisis Europe has been faced to since 2008 has hugely affected people still more vulnerable and fragile in society. In this context, intercultural mediation might be a challenging issue. As underlined by Michel Wieworka in his foreword of the European study on mediation:

*“it provides a means of turning certain social problems into conflicts and of channelling certain conflicts towards negotiation rather than to a more radical solution”.*

## **1.2 Mediation and Intercultural Mediation**

Mediation has first and foremost a legal meaning. According to the French Dictionary of Law

*« Mediation is a technical process for the solution of problems in order for people in conflicts to find a solution, through a formal or informal negotiation, without a lawsuit, through a person called the mediator”<sup>11</sup>.*

Mediation is

*« an action accomplished by a third person, between people or groups who freely agree to participate and who will have the final decision, with a view either to create new relationships or to prevent/solve a conflict relation between them”.*<sup>12</sup>

We can define mediation as

*“a process of building, repairing social link and managing day to day conflicts, in which a third person, impartial, independent, without any authority but the one freely accepted by partners (institutions and migrants) tries through exchanges between persons and institutions to support either by improving either by establishing relation or solving a conflict”*<sup>13</sup>

As underlined by Clarisse Buono, Nikola Tietze and Alexandra Poli, social sciences have proved there wouldn't exist such a neutral intermediary<sup>14</sup>. As a consequence,

*“any mediation is an operator of translations, reformulations, shifts in meaning, according to its own logical mechanisms”<sup>15</sup>.*

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<sup>9</sup> such as the ones in the United Kingdom, summer 2011 or in France, autumn 2005

<sup>10</sup> Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, Paris, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Guillaume-Hofnung M. *La Médiation*, Collection Que sais-je ?, Edition Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2005, 127 pages.

<sup>12</sup> Six JF *Le temps des médiateurs*, Edition Seuil, Paris, 1990, 288 pages.

<sup>13</sup> Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, Paris, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Wieworka M. and alii, *Mediation : a European comparison*, éditions de la DIV, Saint Denis, 2002

It is “both a particular form of translation and construction of social reality and a field of conflicting interpretations”<sup>16</sup>

Mediation is first dedicated to create a social link, then to solve conflicts. Its four main functions according to Michèle Guillaume-Hofnung are:

*“creating, rehabilitating, repairing and solving social link to help solve a conflict”<sup>17</sup>.*

The French sociologist is proposing a typology distinguishing “mediation of differences”, othernesses being the foundation of any social construct and “mediation of disagreement”, aimed at conflict management. In the first case, mediation is a means of “re-weaving the social fabric” ; in the second case, mediation is a means of settling conflicts.

As far as cultural or intercultural mediation is concerned, it has been defined by the Italian social cooperative Onlus, in the framework of its project HELP<sup>18</sup> as follows :

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

Intercultural mediation appears to be meaningful in times where many questions are raised in local policymaking of Interculture between national integration policy, diversity, cohesion and development.

### **1.3 The need for mediation in the local policy making of Interculture**

According to Michel Wieworka<sup>19</sup>, mediation has gained ground in all European societies in the past twenty years despite differences from one country to another mainly due to the history and the political culture of the countries. It is also explained by the diverse conceptions of cultural difference and its links with social inequalities. It is indeed part of the debates concerning participatory democracy.

When the European study on mediation was published (in the beginning of the 2000s), European building was confronted simultaneously with a “fearsome crisis of its institutions”, problems of social exclusion, the “concomitant upsurge of modern individualism”, and with cultural differences”. European citizens were seeking “new forms of democratic living, and afford increasing significance to law and justice”.

Ten years after this pioneer study, things are even more complicated in Europe faced to both an internal migration (a consequence of the last two enlargements of 2004 and 2007<sup>20</sup>) and external migration (immigration is the main element in the European Union demographic

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<sup>15</sup> Latour B., *La science en action*, La Découverte, Paris, 1989 quoted by Buono C., Tietze N and Poli A.

<sup>16</sup> Mace E. *La médiation*, Cahiers de la Sécurité intérieure, 1998 quoted by Buono C., Tietze N and Poli A

<sup>17</sup> Guillaume-Hofnung M., *La Médiation*, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Handicap Educazione Lavoro Partecipazione - <http://www.immiweb.org/>

<sup>19</sup> Wieworka M. and alii, *Mediation : a European comparison*, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> 10 new European members entered the EU in 2004 and 2 in 2007, mainly from Central and Eastern Europe

growth<sup>21</sup>), in times of economic crisis. Even though internal migratory flows haven't increased so much among Europe after the last enlargements and though external migratory flows have remained constant, many conflicts have emerged on European, national and local levels meant to limit migration flows both on European and national scales. For migrants who are living legally on the European territory, the local policy making of Interculture is a crucial issue as integration is a day to day experience.

Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, migration has become a European competence, integrating the "first pillar". But politics of migration & integration still remain a national topic. On a local level, integration linked to migration policy is one of the main issues stakeholders have to face. A common approach together with multilateral governance is necessary in order to assure cohesion, economic and social development to migration and integration policy. Local stakeholders, each member state and the European Union as a whole have to develop policies focusing on issues as acceptance, both behavioural, historical and cultural, social integration, diversity management. For the fourteen past years, the European Union has built a strong basis to regulate migratory flows and to speak the same common language towards third country nationals. The macro-level perspective concerns legislation, institutionalization of migration policy, strategies of inclusion of immigrants, security concerns, human rights issues...

At the same time, a main concern of the European Institutions has been to take into account the new trends in migratory flows in Europe and as a consequence the need for a better recognition of citizens considered as more disadvantaged in the European societies. In recent years, European Years, meant to highlight major issues, were dedicated to Diversity and to Equal Opportunities for all.

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities (EYEO) for all has led the way to a bolder strategy to fight against discrimination in the European Union. It has aimed to make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination-irrespective of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. It was also meant to promote equal opportunities for all and launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals. Migrants were key targets in this context.

*"The aim of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All is to raise awareness of the advantages of a just and solidarity-based society. It advocates awareness-raising initiatives to combat discriminatory attitudes and behaviour and to inform people of their legal rights and obligations. It takes an across-the-board approach to non-discrimination that should ensure the correct and uniform application of the Community legislative framework throughout Europe by highlighting its essential principles and gaining the active support of the public for legislation on non-discrimination and equality"*<sup>22</sup>.

Struggling against discriminations faced by some categories of the European population opened the doors to the second step: enhancing Intercultural Dialogue. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was launched in 2008.

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<sup>21</sup> In January 2006, the third country nationals residing in the EU were about 18,5 million i.e 3,8% of the total population

<sup>22</sup> European Commission - [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/other/c10314\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/c10314_en.htm)

*“Europe is becoming more culturally diverse. The enlargement of the European Union, deregulation of employment laws and globalisation have increased the multicultural character of many countries, adding to the number of languages, religions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds found on the continent. As a result, intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship. (...) The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008 recognises that Europe’s great cultural diversity represents a unique advantage. It will encourage all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of our rich cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions.”<sup>23</sup>.*”

The statement concerning the “multicultural character of many countries” is strongly linked to a need for Intercultural dialogue. If diversity is considered as a wealth for European societies, it is also seen both as a challenging and a difficult issue to build European identity and citizenship. This is true for migrants coming from third countries (external to the EU) but also for migrants belonging to the EU (especially the new members entered in 2004 and 2007).

For the ten years to come, new perspectives have to be open, a second step, a more qualitative one, in the migration issue. It should be more human, based on individuals. It should be focused on skills and competences, on personal and professional experience, on non formal and informal learning. It should value human being, human capital. It should also enhance the bottom up strategy rather than the top down one. Cultural mediators have to integrate this crucial point to act as a bridge between Institutions and migrants. Their role and status is a key issue in building the local policy of Intercultural management. The European comparison is fruitful to better understand the difficulties and national specificities in order to propose a relevant local policy in migration and integration.

## II. Role and status of Intercultural mediators

Mediation is an ideal place for theoretical approach and public action to converge as researchers work together with persons of responsibility in the administrative and political field as well as stakeholders in the field <sup>24</sup>. But mediation shouldn’t be considered as “*the latest invention of theorists close to political power and eager to consider solely the weapons of reason the governance of countries or of towns and cities*”. If mediation is establishing itself as a subject of study, it is first and foremost because throughout Europe it corresponds to a set of practices in rapid growth, deployed at grassroots level and not just from above.

This is the bottom up approach enhanced by the Intercultural mediation, most demanded by both by Institutions on European, national and local levels and by stakeholders as stated by the European Commission in its Communication on a Community Immigration Policy in 1997<sup>25</sup>

*“While integration is primarily the role of Member States, governments share this responsibility with civil society notably at the local level where integration measures has been implemented. The key to success is the establishment of micro-level actions based on partnerships between all the many actors who need to be involved : regional*

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<sup>23</sup> European Commission - <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html>

<sup>24</sup> whatever the field of study: economics, sociology or politics

<sup>25</sup> Commission of the European Union, Communication on a Community Immigration Policy, COM (2000) 757 final, Brussels, 22.11..2000

*and local authorities, political leaders (especially those of the larger towns where many migrants settle), providers of education, healthcare, social welfare, the police, the media, the social partners, non-governmental organizations and migrants themselves and their associations.”*

In its last report on *Migration and Integration* published in 2007<sup>26</sup>, giving the new framework for the European policy, the Commission emphasizes the mutual accommodation enhanced by intercultural mediation:

*“Integration of third country nationals is a process of mutual accommodation by both the host societies and the immigrants and an essential factor in realizing the full benefits of immigration. The link between legal migration policies and integration strategies needs to be continually reinforced..”*

Intercultural mediators bridge the gap between the two approaches: reminding of the legal framework of immigration and integration in order for migrants to find their place to live and work in the host societies. The third person at the heart of the mediation is a key element – no mediation would be possible without this third person. A mediator

*“enables individuals and even more so social or cultural groups not to live in isolation, withdrawn, unrecognised by the rest of the population, ignored, despised or rejected in meaninglessness and violence” 27.*

According to Michel Wieworka, as far as intercultural mediation is concerned, thanks to the efforts of mediators, immigrants may find a place in the urban society. Mediators may also provide a statutory and symbolic reintegration which would avoid resentment and hatred especially when racism is at stake.

## **2.1 Bridging the gap between institutions and migrants<sup>28</sup>**

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

In France and Italy there is an official recognition of intercultural mediation. The law 40/1998 introduced the figure of the cultural mediator into the Italian legal system for the first time, reflecting an experimental experience that had begun during the 1990s. In France, intercultural mediation is part of the profession of culture and social mediation (a profession that adopted its own Chart in 2004). Even though the profession of cultural or intercultural

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<sup>26</sup> Commission of the European Union, Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration, Brussels, 11.0.2007, COM (2007) 512 final

<sup>27</sup> Wieworka M. and alii, *Mediation : a European comparison*, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Halba B.. (2008) , *Lifelong learning : a key issue for Migration, Migrants and professionals working with them*, Conference on Migration in and from South-eastern Europe, Cermes (New Bulgarian University) and Ethnographic Institute and Museum (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) , Sofia, June

mediation has not been officially recognised with a status in many European countries; the professional profile together with the activity, acting as a mediator between the Institutions (hospitals, school, court of justice...) and the migrants, exist whenever a third person is asked to pay the go-between.

Intercultural mediators have been asked to play a crucial role in the past twenty years. Migration has become more and more complex with various geographic and cultural origins of the migrants together with their various socio-professional profiles. In France, a general framework for social mediation<sup>29</sup> stated the main principles for the professionals working in this field which are relevant for intercultural mediators :

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

### **2.2A special profession developed since the late 1990s<sup>30</sup>**

Intercultural mediation is a new profession faced to a problem of legitimacy as it is most of the time an institution's demand (financers) rather than a migrants' demand (beneficiaries). The question of social and professional recognition has been raised. Some migrants may have seen mediators as representatives of institutions. One element has been decisive for their recognition and acceptance by their public, their special profile. Many cultural mediators have a migration background. They have often experienced the process of integration. They have overcome the main difficulties faced and have transformed their personal experience into a specific skill. Moreover, many of them have also begun working as mediators on a voluntary basis. Associations are the most appropriate framework for this activity. We would like to underline the profession in two countries who have faced similar situations: France and Italy.

In France<sup>31</sup> the emblematic profile of cultural mediator is the "*Femmes-relais*" (Women-relay) created in the late nineties. Many associations of female migrants proposed this new

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<sup>29</sup> Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, octobre 2004

<sup>30</sup> Halba B. (2008) *Training program for cultural mediators* – TIPS Project, Leonardo da Vinci project led by the Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi (USGM), iriv, Paris, July

activity supported on a local basis under the aegis of the so-called Policy of the City (*Politique de la Ville*) launched in 1991 together with the local prevention councils. All the different levels of public authorities are involved: local (city or town), departemental (General Council), regional (regional Council) and national (Ministry in charge of the City affairs). “*Femmes-relais*” then “*Adultes relais*” (Adults-relay) were in charge to create social link and to manage the day to day conflicts mainly in the suburb or in specific area in the city (with a high level of social housing). Many initiatives have been implemented by associations, to promote active citizenship. Other initiatives were developed by institutions in charge of public services such as public transport (such as the RATP in Paris and Ile de France) , social housing firms (the so-called “*bailleurs sociaux*”), whose main goal was to struggle against insecurity (delinquency) and incivility (vandalism) problems.

Many “*Femmes-relais*” or “*Adultes relais*” have begun on a voluntary basis. Thanks to the public support, they could have a status and become paid professionals. Associations were the main employers of the “*adultes-relais*” with nearly 80% of the signed conventions (but financed with public funds). The local public sector is the second employer with 15% of the signed conventions. Social housing, educative institutions, trade unions represented a small proportion of employers with only 5% of the signed conventions. In January 2006, 2 867 “*adultes-relais*” were working on the French territory , mostly in Ile de France with 25% of the total. At the moment, the profession is facing a difficult situation with a huge decrease in public financing.

In Italy<sup>32</sup>, the figure of the cultural mediator also appeared in the late nineties reflecting an experimental experience that had begun during since the beginning of the 1990s as in France. First mediators, both Italian and foreign people, were deployed above all in first reception structures and the immigrant offices of local bodies, thus enabling these emergency accommodation centres and local facilities engaged in front-office work with immigrants to become operative. In the initial stage the linguistic-cultural mediators functioned essentially as interpreters working first in French and English, later on in Arabic, Chinese and Albanian. As time passed the characteristics of the migratory phenomenon changed together with the mediation intervention. No longer juts interpret or translator, cultural mediators have become support action to foster social integration by organising encounters with Italian society and facilitating access to the services network through “comprehensive receptivity”.

### 2.3 Tasks and functions assigned to cultural mediators<sup>33</sup>

The basic functions of intercultural mediation have been summarised as follows in UK<sup>34</sup> :

- Cultural mediation may lead to the **empowerment** of immigrants and refugees in the host country by providing them with the stance and knowledge necessary to exercise their rights and to make choices which are beneficial to them.
- Cultural mediation leads to the **interpretation of cultural values** of immigrants and refugees to parties in the host country and to the interpretation of cultural values of various social groups and segments of the host country to immigrants and refugees.

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<sup>31</sup> Madelin B. (2002), *Les médiations sociales et culturelles en Ile de France*, ateliers de la médiation Ile de France, Saint-Denis, June

<sup>32</sup> Dosti S. (2008) *Cultural mediation in Italy*, TIPS project, USGM, Roma, June

<sup>33</sup> Halba B. (2008) *Training programme for cultural mediators* – TIPS Project, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> University of Glasgow- School of education - <http://www.gla.ac.uk/rg/emulti08.pdf>

- Cultural mediation leads to the **resolution of social conflicts** which are caused by cultural differences and cultural misunderstandings.
- Cultural mediation can serve as a means of successful relationship between immigrants/refugees and **public agencies and bodies**. Furthermore it can serve as a means of **linguistic facilitation** of the relations between immigrants and natives, where linguistic facilitation does not mean just translation but emphasis on the different cultural meanings of terms and expressions within different contexts.
- Cultural mediation may be very helpful in critical domains of social life of immigrants and refugees in the host countries such as **employment, legal rights, education, training, health services, family affairs, entertainment and leisure**.

On the basis of the study made among cultural mediators in France and Italy<sup>35</sup>, the main tasks intercultural mediators have been assigned to are the following:

1. Welcome, information among migrants, support and accompaniment for integration: the first main mission fulfilled by cultural mediators is to inform migrants on the different administrations and public services to be addressed. Mediators make these institutions be more familiar to migrants. The main goal is to make them be autonomous in addressing the administration and not doing the job for them.
2. Go-between with public authorities : cultural mediators often know the language of the migrants and, what is more important, the cultural codes. They provide institutions with precious information on the cultural context to better understand specific behaviours. They play the role of a referee with owners of social housing (in case of unpaid rents or any act of vandalism), school (problem with children or homework), hospital, police....
3. Linguistic support: language is a main obstacle for migrants. In this case, the mediator may play the role of a translator. This is a way for institutions to be better understood among migrants. This is usually the case in administration of internal affairs, courts of justice, or any institution where communication may be a key issue. They explain both the meaning and the way these institutions are running, information that might also be of great interest for native citizens...
4. Information on rights and duties: migration is a temporary situation. Depending on their status (temporary or permanent stay), migrants may be very demanding on their rights: social, professional, civic rights... Even though they are not citizens of the host country, they should benefit by the fundamental rights (fare conditions in work, access to housing and education...). Intercultural mediators often inform them in matters of equality of chances and struggle against discriminations.
5. Counselling and orientation in education and training field : education and training are main issues for migrants' parents that consider education as key issues for the integration and future of their children. Mediators must provide migrants with information on the education system; ways and means to facilitate the educative success of their children (school mentoring).
6. Counselling and orientation in employment field: access to employment and opportunities of work offered are main concerns for migrants as the best way for their integration. Mediators must inform them on whom they must address : local employment agencies, local missions for youngsters or any process proposed for this specific public (with difficulties on the labour market).

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<sup>35</sup> TIPS project, Paris and Rome, 2008

7. Prevention in sanitary and social field: mediators inform migrants on the National Health Service ; ways and means to have access or to be taken in charge by the medical system, such as the State medical Help in France <sup>36</sup>for migrants in an irregular or the Individual Integration Subsidy<sup>37</sup>.

Intercultural mediators should also better answer demands expressed by migrants with special needs: youngsters faced to a double culture (host country/native country), women who have different status (workers, mothers, wives, ...) and seniors with the difficult situation at the age of retirement..

With youngsters, different types of conflicts may be faced by cultural mediators such as the generation gap (conflicts with the parents and family patterns) and the problem of acculturation. Usually acculturation refers to a process when someone is leaving his/her culture behind. Then appears the process of cultururation when she/he acquires the new culture. Acculturative stress refers to the psychological, somatic, and social difficulties that may accompany acculturation processes<sup>38</sup>. A "psychic conflict" may arise from conflicting cultural norms. Valuing their roots working may be a way to solve the problem.

As far as female migrants are concerned, issues such as the status in the family , education or alphabetisation, social and professional integration and the respect of equality of chance (equal access to professional opportunities) are main concerns for Cultural mediators.

With elderly migrants, a main issue has emerged in the past ten years: the discrimination faced by migrants at the age of retirement. Migrant workers were supposed to go back to their native countries but they couldn't for financial reasons (they would lose all their social benefits) or for personal reasons (no more link with their family). They have to build a new social identity.

### III. **Intercultural mediation in the lifelong learning perspective – a new deal for local policy making of Interculturel**

According to Lon Fuller, "*the central quality of mediation*" lies in

*"its capacity to reorient the parties towards each other, not by imposing rules on them, but by helping them to achieve a new and shared perception of their relationship, a perception that will redirect their attitudes towards another". For this to happen, "the primary quality of a mediator is not to propose rules to the parties and to secure their acceptance of them, but to induce the mutual trust and understanding that will enable the parties to work out their own rules" 39.*

In this spirit, mediation would fail if either party had the feeling that the solution proposed might be unfair and would favor the other party. It might even happen that both parties would have this negative feeling. Intercultural mediators are often faced to ethical dilemmas since helping one side more than another would compromise their impartiality. The case of a "settlement oriented" is quite commonly seen in the process of problem-solving when the two

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<sup>36</sup> Aide médicale d'Etat –Ame

<sup>37</sup> Allocation d'insertion now Allocation temporaire d'attente –Ata

<sup>38</sup> Redfield R., Linton R., Herskovits M.J. (1936) Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 38, No. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Fuller and WR Perdue (1936), 'The Reliance Interest in Contract Damages' Yale Law Journal

parties are not equal in power. This is seldom the case when an individual is faced to an institution.

In order for intercultural mediators to fully play their role in the multilevel governance of migration and integration policy, they must be given a special role and place in the local policy making. Their professional expertise and competence are the best way for them to be recognized and accepted both by public authorities and migrants who wouldn't question their action. They should also be given appropriate tools to work and implement their action both towards public authorities and migrants. The lifelong learning (LLL) programme launched by the European Union since the Lisbon European Council of 2000 has been a relevant framework to achieve this goal. We will emphasize two European projects implemented under the aegis of this programme: the TIPS (2007-2009) and the Migrapass (2010-2012).

### **3.1 Lifelong learning : a challenging framework for intercultural mediation**

The Copenhagen process, in the lifelong learning perspective, is meant to value informal and non formal learning. The profession of cultural mediation is typically a new kind of employment that has been developed on the basis of this informal and non formal learning, on personal and professional experience. Intercultural mediation gives a human dimension to migration as cultural mediators are professionals with a unique background. Having experienced the process of integration, they have developed unique skills and competences.

The acquisition of competences is a key point of the Lifelong Learning process enhanced by the European Parliament and of the Council, stating in a common recommendation that

*“{...} key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation {...}”<sup>40</sup>.*

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

*“{...} fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or migrants, etc. {...}”*

The LLL programme is addressing both professionals (cultural mediators) and their public (migrants). One of the main conditions for projects to be successful is to prove its impact on the target groups but also their ability to involve the stakeholders (on all levels). A fair and efficient governance of migration and integration policy implies a multilevel approach: if the general framework is given both on European and national scales, local stakeholders have to

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<sup>40</sup> European Parliament and European Council - *Recommendation published in the Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006*

implement it. This is why intercultural mediation approach is so challenging as far as it brings with it the notion of negotiation and equal treatment of concerned parties.

We would like to introduce two projects supported under the programme Leonardo da Vinci, with a focus on professional integration. The first one is a training course proposed to cultural mediators: TIPS for intercultural dialogue – T-learning to improve professional skills for intercultural dialogue. The second one is a portfolio and companion for migrants to value the special skills and competences developed thanks to their migration experience. The first project is addressing directly the main actors of Intercultural mediation, the mediators themselves. The second project is focused on their public, migrants. Integration is a two way process.

### **3.2 Training cultural mediators : a first step– the TIPS project<sup>41</sup>**

As Intercultural mediators play a key role of bridge between the institutions and the migrants, a relevant training, meant to make them develop and acquire relevant skills and competences, should be a main issue in the migration and integration policy both on national and local levels. Their experience is still a good basis, the skills and competences they have acquired have to be identified and valued.

#### **3.2.1 Philosophy of the training course**

The training course proposed by the TIPS project, “*Practising and Enhancing Cultural Mediation in a Pluralistic Europe*”, is meant to prepare cultural mediators for tomorrow’s challenges in the migration and integration fields in Europe. Based on the needs expressed by the cultural mediators and the existing programmes proposed in the cultural mediation field, the TIPS project<sup>42</sup> has proposed a new approach with a training course integrating the following issues :

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

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<sup>41</sup> Halba B. (2009), TIPS for intercultural dialogue- T-learning to improve professional skills for intercultural dialogue - Comparative research report, iriv, Paris, October

<sup>42</sup> TIPS Project (2007-2009) - Leonardo da Vinci project led by the Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi (USGM) in Italy (Forcom and Gruppo Pragma), Austria (Auxilium), France (iriv), Greece (HOU) and Poland (Tischner University).

- ❖ enhancing the European perspective : some European countries may be pioneer in this field and eager to transmit their experience to other countries' experience.

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

Cultural mediator could find difficulties in realizing the “communication bridge” with the migrants, due to the barrier of the language, to personal behaviour or negative experiences which have made migrant less self confident. The classical approach (face to face) might be inappropriate to answer the migrants' needs. The t-learning proposed by the TIPS is one example of e-learning approach.

Intercultural mediators must be mobile and flexible as mobility is the main characteristic of migration. Their training requires targeted and customized answers to very specific, sometime individual, problems. Continuous and updated training and information support should be assured to these professionals whenever they are needed thanks to the support of Information Communication Technologies allowing continuous training and in depth case studies.

Migration is a moving reality. Cultural mediators must answer as quickly as possible the growing demands of migrants in various fields such as education, legal information, health, justice, specific rights, leisure, employment opportunities... The best way to answer is to share other professionals' experience for having the most updated data in the field. A virtual educative platform is proposed to cultural mediators.

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

### **3.2.2 Sustainability of the TIPS course – Follow up**

The TIPS project was an experimental project and its initiative to propose a common training course in Europe for cultural mediators has to be greeted. Nevertheless, during the experimentation in the different countries (Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland) some limits and reservations were made.

The linguistic issue has been underestimated. Despite a phrase book proposed in different migrants' language, the modules in English proposed to the cultural mediators have been a main barrier for many of them to follow the course. Even though they are working in a multicultural context, they are using the language of the host country and English is not necessarily a common language. Moreover, many cultural mediators are social workers trained in this specific field and English may not be a main topic, at least in the educational education proposed in France.

A second main barrier is the use of the different ICT supports. If the cellular phone was a good idea as this is a common device used both by migrants and cultural mediators, the functionalities required to have an access to the m-learning platforms are only available through expensive smart phones. This is the same for the learning objects available on the

TV-learning platforms. They are also demanding the use of an expensive modem. Cultural mediators and even training organisations working with them couldn't afford such expensive equipments.

Taking into account these barriers faced for the sustainability of the TIPS project, some of the partners of the consortium have decided to adapt the training course proposed and to develop a national training also available at a distance through e-learning. This is the example of *iriv* for France<sup>43</sup>. The French training course is proposing 16 modules through a written support (a book) and learning objects available through Internet.

**Modules 1 to 3** give the general background of the training course. **The first module** presents the European Year for the Intercultural Dialogue and the TIPS project together with the added value of the French proposal taking into account national requirements and specificities. **Module 2** is proposing a list of definitions required to better understand cultural mediation in France such as: migration, emigration and immigration; stranger, foreigner and refugee; integration /assimilation and integration. **Module 3** is explaining the different issues of multiculturalism, interculturalism and diversity. In the French context, diversity and struggle against discrimination has been the main mission given to the public institution the "HALDE (High Authority for Struggle against Discrimination and Equality of Chances).

**Modules 4 and 5** define the actors of the cultural mediation: the migrants and the public stakeholders responsible for the migration policy. **Module 4** presents the public of the cultural mediators: the migrants. It gives an average profile explaining the reason for their migration. It also compares with other European countries. **Module 5** explains the policy of migration and integration in France, replacing it in the European context. The tradition and history of migration are key issues to better understand the national policy proposed. A better knowledge of migration policies both on European and national levels is crucial for intercultural mediators to give the right references to migrants and sometimes to institutions themselves that might ignore the European perspective. It is also very useful to present the main actors working in the field of migration and their responsibilities.

**Modules 6 to 8** present the profession of cultural mediator. **Module 6** reminds of the professional framework agreed on for intercultural mediation in some of the countries together with the main principles set and where a status exists. **Module 7** gives an "average" profile of a cultural mediator, defining their profile, their missions and tasks, the skills and competences required to be a professional. **Module 8** explains the core of the profession: solving conflicts. Some theoretical background is reminded together with the main obstacles and barriers faced by migrants.

**Modules 9 to 13** is focused on cultural mediation in different usual situations. **Module 9** is dedicated to the migrants' rights and the idea of citizenship. What is the meaning of being a citizen in a European country? What are the international and European references on citizenship and human rights? **Module 10** is dedicated to Social Housing policy as migrants are one of the first public concerned by the access to social housing. **Module 11** is focused on Education as a key issue for migrants as this is for both adults and youngsters the only way to be fully integrated in the host societies; alphabetisation and school mentoring are quite important issues in this context, mostly developed by the voluntary sector. **Module 12** is dedicated to Employment as the other way to be truly integrated in society even though the

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<sup>43</sup> Iriv, *Médiateur- un métier des compétences* -iriv, Paris, 2009 - [www.mediateur-interculturel.net](http://www.mediateur-interculturel.net) supported by l'ACSE and Uniformation

access to the “normal” labour market with fair conditions may be a challenge for many migrants. **Module 13** concerns Health which is a sensitive domain to be taken into account as it deals with very intimate problems and may be the place for many taboos and cultural habits which could be seen as obstacles to a good integration.

**Modules 14 to 15** are focussed on “publics with special needs”. **Module 14** is dedicated to youngsters and the different types of conflicts cultural mediators may be faced to such as the generation gap, the problem of acculturation and the main issue of volunteering in this context to value their roots. **Module 15** is dealing with intercultural mediation among women with a focus on the specific education, alphabetisation, social and professional integration and the issue of equality of chance (equal access to professional opportunities). **Module 16** is developing intercultural mediation among seniors with the discrimination faced by migrants’ seniors in retirement issue, the generation gap with the younger migrants and a new social identity through volunteering.

On the basis of the TIPS project and its national development in France, a new European project was proposed, the Migrapass. .

### **3.3 Valuing a migration experience – the Migrapass project 44**

A second step in enhancing Intercultural mediation is to propose appropriate tools & methods to migrants themselves to enhance their integration considering that they are the main actors of the integration process. A European team is currently working on improving the recognition of migrant workers' skills and competences in the framework of a new Leonardo da Vinci project. Led and coordinated by two French organisations, Autremonde and iriv, it will run between October 2010 and September 2012 and involves five European countries : Austria (Oikodrom), Bulgaria (Cermes), France , UK (Roehampton University) and Spain (University of Burgos).

#### **3.3.1 Aim and objectives of the Migrapass**

The Migrapass project intends to develop a tool and methodology - a portfolio together with a companion - to support migrants to express their experience, identify their skills and competences, and to define the possible areas of employment, in the light of knowledge and skills developed through their individual experience: professional (including training,), social (volunteer work), personal, etc.

This tool and method – a portfolio & companion – is meant to make migrants be capable of synthesizing and valuing their experience (personal, social, professional...) in order to value them on the labour market. The portfolio should allow migrants to write their own profile, through a self-analysis of the knowledge and skills, useful to give them value and put into a single tool and method (the e-portfolio) the various experiences of the migrants, including informal and non formal experiences.

The main aim of the Migrapass project is to propose an appropriate tool and method to value the unique experience of migrants and also identify the needs expressed by migrants to make their skills and competences be recognized and adapted to the national labour market. It is

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<sup>44</sup> The website of the project is [www.migrapass.net](http://www.migrapass.net) ; a blog is proposing an interactive approach for users to provide with their feedback : <http://migrapass.blogspot.com/>

meant to change the image of migrants and so make a difference in their professional integration.

The Migrapass project was proposed taking into consideration three main barriers or obstacles migrants had to cope with on the national labour markets. A first issue to be considered is how skills and competences of migrants acquired in their native countries might be recognised on the national labour market of the host societies. The average profile of the migrant is a low qualified one. Nevertheless, some of the migrants have had a diploma in their country that wouldn't be recognised in the host society. Some opportunities might be offered to them in the field of non formal and informal learning, the Copenhagen process. Even though their national diploma or qualification is not valid, the experience and competences attached to them should make them be qualified for some employments.

Another issue is to struggle against any discrimination faced on the labour market by migrants. One of the main obstacles is the lack of knowledge of the "hidden" labour market, based on personal or social network. In this context, the mentoring proposed by the Migrapass, might play a key role in opening doors, in introducing them to potential employers, in identifying professional opportunities. The main purpose is to propose them a professional accompaniment – a companion- provided by people (professionals or volunteers considered as mentors) that should take into account their special experience.

A last issue tackled by the Migrapass is to promote diversity on the labour market. Migrants have developed, thanks to their migration experience, unique skills and competences. They shouldn't be considered as handicaps or barriers but should be recognised as specific ones. The Human Resource approach calls them "meta-competence" which means competence linked directly to the mobility. The positive image of their migration background should be decisive in their professional career.

### **3.3.2 A portfolio for migrants**

Based on a previous European project aiming at valuing a voluntary experience on the labour market<sup>45</sup>, the Migrapass is proposing a portfolio and a companion. The portfolio process follows a three step process. The first step identifies relevant experiences acquired by migrants (professional and social experience together with the migration experience). The second step proposes a detailed description of the migrant's experience replacing it in its context (environment, available resources, and constraints for its achievement...). A third step is dedicated to the migrants' competences which emerge from the description of the experience. The more the experience has been described, the better the competence can be identified and made transferable.

The migrant's route may be considered as a holistic experience. Thanks to the Migrapass portfolio, migrants are asked to identify and describe their professional experience both in their country of origin and the host country. The social experience has to be explained: it includes any kind of active citizenship activities (being a volunteer in an association, being elected member of a local authority, being a member of the council of a village...). A migration experience gathers both internal and external migrations. The last type of experience is the personal and family experience (and the responsibilities within the family).

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<sup>45</sup> Vaeb project- Assessing a Voluntary experience- initiated and directed by iriv in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom, 2003-2006 – [www.eEuropeassociations.net](http://www.eEuropeassociations.net)

The core of the portfolio process is to express the experience in terms of competence. Twelve main competences have been proposed for migrants: competence linked to the ability of making things, to managing and organising oneself, to developing a migration project, to working in a team, to communicating, to developing networks, to collecting and efficiently using information, to overcoming a difficult situation, to living and working in a different cultural environment, to transferring one's professional experience, to joining a new community, to defending rights.

Thanks to a collaborative methodology, migrants are asked to identify the competences relevant for their employment research and to evaluate the level of achievement corresponding to each of the competence: assisted competence (level 1), collaborative competence (level 2), autonomous competence (level 3), expert competence (level 4), and creative competence (level 5).

Many examples are provided in the Migrapass portfolio in order for migrants to understand what is asked to them and how they could also improve the list of competences or type of experience. This is a dynamic and open process based on a collaborative methodology.

### **3.3.3 The added value of the Migrapass**

Validating informal and non formal learning is of increasing importance across Europe as validation is seen as an important element of national policies on education, training and employment, as stated by the Cedefop experts<sup>46</sup>. This is the reason why these experts have dedicated a report to analyze the methods and instruments used to identify, assess and attribute recognition to learning that takes place outside formal education and training institution. The outcomes of these learning processes are diverse and multidimensional.

The experts have noted an extensive use of portfolio approaches. They have also insisted on the fact that the selection process included in portfolio building “promotes self assessment and focuses learners’ attention on quality criteria”. A good portfolio for validation, according to the assessors, is characterized by being easy to assess because it is focused on specific matched learning outcomes. The most important risks underlined in the process are when applicants prepare the portfolio alone or with little mediation from one tutor.

This is the reason why the Migrapass is proposing a mentoring process. The profile of the mentor is widely understood: they can be trainers or professionals working in the professional orientation but they should also be migrants themselves having already experienced the Migrapass portfolio.

Learning by doing and by transmitting one's own experience to other migrants is the basic philosophy of the project. This is part of the empowerment spirit: making migrants be the main actors of their integration. The competence approach is a key issue in a successful professional integration in the long term. Because of the lack of national experience or because of the linguistic issue, migrants could be, in the short term oriented on very basic tasks and low qualified employments. In the mid-term or long-term, the Migrapass approach should allow them to improve their professional career and to make a positive choice: either to stay in their present position or to change it in valuing other competences.

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<sup>46</sup> Cedefop, *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*, Thessaloniki, December 2009

The Europass which is commonly used in Europe proposing a European Curriculum together with other documents to assess a level of language, providing diploma or professional qualifications, could be enriched by a specific tool and method, focused on “users with special needs” : migrants. This might also be the European added value of the Migrapass to the European building. This should make a link between the Education & Training policy and the Migration & Integration policy.

### **Conclusion – Intercultural mediation in migration and integration policy– a combination with a future**

In the past years, European Union and many European countries have given the negative image of closed countries mainly concerned in defending their frontiers and in protecting first and foremost their nationals. The migration and integration policy is closely linked to the needs expressed on the labour market. Many European countries have reduced the number of authorised migrant workers. In France, the number of economic activities open to migration has been limited. In Spain, after opening the doors to migrant workers, the country faced to a huge economic recession decided to close its labour market. In times of economic difficulties, this is a challenge to share the fruits of the growth but so easy to find a scapegoat.

Intercultural mediation is a way to understand both sides, institutions at all levels and migrants. Empathy is a main quality required in intercultural mediation which may be defined as the capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings (such as sadness or happiness) that are being experienced by another human being. According to the Larousse Dictionary, empathy relies on similar and harmonious feelings. This is a psychological phenomenon allowing to be able to “be at the place” of someone else. This capacity should also be the main criterion for a meaningful policy making of intercultural.

Intercultural mediation is not the “cure for all” as underlined by Michel Wieworka in the first European study made on mediation but

*“it prevents the worst, the drifting of individuals and groups, isolation and solitude, confinement inside logical patterns of destructive and also self-destructive violence ; it can take on the appearance of a more realistic social link, an efficient and more open means of public intervention, or even ensure the simple and efficient handling of conflicts that might otherwise turn sour, degenerate or needlessly and ineffectual , and it is difficult to see what it contribute”<sup>47</sup>.*

In times were people in the South of the Mediterranean (from Tunisia to Syria) are struggling to build a future for their fellow citizens, many perspectives may be open. Autocratic political systems that were recently abolished in Tunisia, Lybia or Egypt led to the migration of their populations without any future to be proposed especially to the younger generation<sup>48</sup>. At the same time some of them were pretending to be “the last bastion” to stop migration coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. The challenge for the times to come is to propose a “new deal” in the conception of the governance of migration and integration policy. Letting people chose their own way to develop and find their place in the international debate.

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<sup>47</sup> Wieworka M. and alii, *Mediation : a European comparison*, op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> Halba B. « Avoir vingt ans dans vingt ans en Méditerranée », Atlas, Injep, Marly le Roi, 2000.

On the very local scale, starting with a fair and equal local policy towards migrants and ethnic minorities might be a first step. Intercultural mediation brings a promising approach to the migration and integration policy. The name and concept have been studied and discussed for the past twenty years. Its implementation in making migrants be the main actors of the process is the “New deal” to be proposed to stakeholders in the migration and integration field. The Migrapass aims to bring a main contribution in this spirit.

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