



**DIVERSITY AGAINST  
DISCRIMINATION  
TRAINING STRATEGIES  
FOR THE INCLUSION OF  
IMMIGRANTS IN THE  
EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET**

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**FINAL REPORT**

OCTOBER 2015

[di-di.eu](http://di-di.eu)

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DIVERSITY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION: TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR THE INCLUSION  
OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

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**PUBLISHED BY ENDA EUROPE**

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## DI&DI: DIVERSITY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION: INCLUSIVENESS STRATEGIES IN A MULTICULTURAL EU LABOUR MARKET

### **Migration and Unemployment: A European Challenge**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014, according to Eurostat data, 33.5 million people born outside the European Union (EU) were living in an EU member state. 19.6 million of these people were citizens of a non-EU member State, representing 3.9% of the EU-28 population, and 17.9 million were born in a different EU-member State than the one they were currently living in<sup>1</sup>.

European statistics show considerable differences in EU countries between the employment rates of nationals (EU citizens living in their country of origin) and foreign migrants. In 2011, the unemployment rate of non-EU citizens was 11.1 points higher than that of the nationals. This gap continued to increase until 2013 but was reduced to 10.7 in 2014. The unemployment rates were also higher, by 2 points in 2014<sup>2</sup>, for mobile EU-citizens compared to nationals.

With regard to the gender dimension, significant differences are observed in unemployment rates between female and male non-EU migrants on one hand, and between female non-EU migrants and female nationals on the other hand. This gap is very high in almost all the EU member states and indicates that female non-EU migrants are the most exposed to precariousness in the EU labour market.

Youth is another population strongly concerned by unemployment in the European Union. European residents aged 15-29 were the most affected by the unemployment increase between 2007 and 2014. If this is true also for the native-born young population, the increase was significantly higher for non-EU born young population, with an unemployment rate rising to 28% in 2014 from 15.8% in 2008.

### **Employment: A Priority for Building Inclusive Societies**

Experts working on migration policies, like Randall Hansen, point to migrants' access to employment and their incorporation into the economy as the most important challenges for integration<sup>3</sup>. Frank Hoffer, senior researcher at the International Labour Organisation, observes that guaranteeing the dignity, protection and empowerment of migrants in the labour market is an essential condition for fighting against xenophobia<sup>4</sup>.

Many factors explain the higher unemployment rate of foreign migrants compared to the EU-native born citizens in European countries. Discrimination is an important one. Prejudices, based on origin, nationality, appearance and religion, often lead to the unequal treatment of migrant workers or jobseekers in the labour market. Female

1 Main sources for data on Migration in the EU-countries: Eurostat / European Commission, « Migration and migrant population statistics », [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics/fr](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics/fr) (accessed September 30th, 2015)

2 Main sources for data on migration and unemployment : Eurostat / European Commission, « Migrant integration statistics: employment », [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant\\_integration\\_statistics\\_-\\_employment](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics_-_employment)(accessed September 30th, 2015)

3 Randall Hansen, « The centrality of employment in immigrant integration in Europe », Migration Policy Institute – Europe, February 2012.

4 Frank Hoffer, « The real problems of migration and how to solve them », published on the website <http://www.socialeurope.eu/> on 29 april 2014.



and young migrants are particularly affected, since they are also exposed to discrimination based on gender and age.

Anti-discrimination has been an important topic on the European agenda for the last 15 years. The legal framework became strengthened in 1999 with the Treaty of Amsterdam, whose Article 13 was specifically concerned with the fight against discrimination. In 2000, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, in its Article 21.1, identified a list of criteria for illegal discrimination.

That same year, the Council Directive 2000/43/EC of June 29<sup>th</sup> implemented the principle of equal treatment among persons, without distinction of “race” or ethnic origin. The Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 then established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The legal measures against sexist discrimination were also reinforced with the Council and Parliament Directive 2002/73/CE of 23 September 2002. This common legal framework was then transferred to Member States’ legislation. Ambitious programs like EQUAL, developed during 2000-2008, allowed for the funding and implementation of tools, as well as experimentation and new practices on the issue of equal treatment.

However, there are other factors that also need to be taken into account to explain the unemployment rate of foreign migrants in the European Union. For example, the lack of recognition of their competences and qualifications acquired abroad, their lower knowledge of the “implicit rules” of the European labour market, such as those linked to self-presentation strategies, and the lack of insertion into professional networks.

Building on this framework and general context, the Di&Di project, launched in 2013, intended to develop and test new methods for supporting the professional inclusion of migrants through anti-discrimination training and the promotion of diversity.

## **The Di&Di Project: A European Collaboration**

The Di&Di (Diversity against Discrimination) project was designed in 2013 by six European partners in five European countries. The situation of the European labour market was particularly alarming at that time: between 2008 and 2013 the European Union experienced an exceptional increase in unemployment rates, with non-EU nationals strongly affected.

One of the main particularities of the project was its choice of target audience. The project was focused on female low-qualified migrants and qualified young migrants, both considered to be needing specific support. These two populations are strongly exposed to unemployment, precariousness and discrimination risks. Furthermore, their profiles are more and more represented into current migrations towards Europe.

The six European partners of the project worked in different contexts and professional frameworks: Enda Europe (France) and Centre for Immigration and Integration (Bulgaria) are NGOs, the Istituto per l’Europa Orientale e Balcanica (Italy) is a university institute; Bildungsmarkt ev. (Germany), iriv conseil (France) and ECAP Foundation (Switzerland) are professional learning organisations.

The complementarity of the professional competences and environments of the six partners is a specific strength of the project. A peculiarity in the partnership was the participation of ECAP in Switzerland, a non-EU country, facing the same inclusion problems as EU-members but starting from a less developed and more restrictive legal framework on anti-discrimination and migration. This allowed the partners to reflect together on the impact and opportunities offered by the progress made at the EU level.

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## **Combining Anti-discrimination and the Promotion of Diversity to Support the Inclusion of Migrants in the European Labour Market**

The main aim of the Di&Di project was to develop strategies for the successful integration of low-qualified female migrants and qualified young migrants in the labour market. To reach these objectives, the six partners developed:

- A training programme, directly addressing these two target audiences, focussing on their empowerment through awareness-raising on discrimination risks, better knowledge of their rights, and tools and methods to promote their migration experience as a specific competence in the labour market. A European prototype for the training program was elaborated by the partners in 2014, starting from the innovative approach of the Migrapass project (Autremonde, *iriv et al.*, 2010-2012, <http://migrapass.eu>), focused on the valuation of migrants' competences through the implementation of a specific portfolio. The common training model was then adapted, tested and completed in each national and local context.
- A mentoring programme, addressing employment professionals and those working with migrant populations, aiming at developing their knowledge on anti-discrimination, as well as the specific difficulties and strengths of the target audiences. The mentoring process also intended to collect and share tools, methods, case studies and best practices to strengthen the mentors' capacity to support the target populations' professional inclusion. A European model of the mentoring programme was developed to be adapted, experimented and completed in each country of the project. This common mentoring model transferred the results and innovative approach of Enda Europe's Diversity Plus project (2006-2010, [diversiteplus.enda-europe.org](http://diversiteplus.enda-europe.org)), focused on the roles and practices of companies, trade unions, local authorities and associations on anti-discrimination and diversity promotion.
- Steering committees with experts in the fields of employment, diversity promotion and anti-discrimination, where the partners shared

the lessons learned during the Di&Di process and collected new feedback and advice.

### **From lessons learned to new challenges**

This final publication describes, in its first part, how the project was implemented by the partners in the five European countries, taking into account the national and local specificities, and the main results reached in each context. It proposes then, in its second part, to go beyond these differences in order to extract common results, lessons and perspectives. The ambition of the Di&Di project is indeed to design a European approach of training and mentoring to support the target populations' inclusion in the labour market.

At the end of the project, in 2015, the European situation with regards to migration has changed considerably. Despite the statistical data becoming encouraging, with a decrease of migrants' unemployment rates in 2014, the political and humanitarian context became critical. On the one hand, European countries experience the rise of xenophobic and anti-immigration feelings, strongly represented in the public sphere through the access to political power by extreme-right parties. On the other hand, Europe has to deal with a global refugee crisis provoked by wars and extreme poverty in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Approximately 500 000 migrants, notably refugees fleeing Syria, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia and Afghanistan, have entered the European Union in 2015.

Beyond the critical issues of emergency and welcoming these people, this situation will be a road-test for the European countries' integration capacities. In this context, the lessons learned from the Di&Di project, presented in this publication, aspire to contribute to a necessary common effort for inventing new inclusion models in our societies.

## TRAINING AND MENTORING: THE STRATEGY IN FIVE EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

### 1. Experimentation and findings in Bulgaria

Bulgaria's specific migration context is that of a Balkan post-communist country, currently an EU member state. The understanding of migration experience invariably needs to take into consideration the country's communist past. Typical for the migration processes during communism were the high degree of regulatory control and the maximum restriction imposed on human migration. This applied both to its nationals crossing the borders to move abroad, and to foreign citizens moving into the country.

At the time of the last census from 2011, 8,444 or 23% of all foreign nationals with permanent residence in Bulgaria were EU citizens. Among them the largest is the number of UK citizens – 2,605 (30.9%), followed by citizens of Greece – 1,253 (14.8%), Germany – 848 (10%), Poland – 819 (9.7%), and Italy – 456 (5.4%).

After signing the Geneva Convention in 1993, Bulgaria joined the family of countries granting asylum, thus assuming its international responsibilities in this respect. According to the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) for the past 22 years around 52,000 people have applied for asylum in the country. Among them the highest number of applications came from citizens of Syria, followed by those of Afghanistan, Iraq and Armenia. In fact, during this period of time the average number of submitted applications rarely exceeded 2000 per year. This state of affairs saw dramatic changes with the escalation of the conflict in Syria in 2013. Bulgaria, which since 2007 is an external border of the EU, faced an unprecedented situation to deal with. In 2013, the number of applications reached 7000 and during the next years continual to grow. Till the end of September 2015 the applicant for asylum are 12738. More than half of them came from Syria, followed by citizens of Afghanistan (SAR statistics, 2015).

As a result of the unprecedented peak in asylum seekers in Bulgaria, those arriving in the country are confronted by institutional collapse, political and media ostracism and growing social tension. In a very short time, the reception facilities are filled way over capacity, the procedure for examination of the applications is hampered by difficulties during the proceedings and available expertise proves to be extremely limited. All this is happening against a background of a public debate, which is dominated by extreme populist discourse. It should be pointed out that over the years, the attention of the media has been focused much more on the refugees and asylum seekers rather than on the economic migrants. This has not changed with the increase in the urgency and the scale of the problem, but asylum seekers are often referred to as offenders who have “entered the country illegally”. This improper and negative image is much more frequently projected to the general public, thus promoting a negative attitude towards the foreigners on the whole.



*The training*

The experimentation of the training in Bulgaria was organised between February and March 2015. Overall, more than 30 participants took part in the sessions, and the women slightly



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outnumbered the young migrants. As a framework the training sessions followed the programme developed by Iriv and validated by the members of the Consortium. The 10 modules were merged into a holistic content, adapted to the needs and expectations of the participants. Based on their previous training experience and working with similar groups, the trainers opted for an individual approach, most relevant for the variety of participants' individual experiences, ranging from young people speaking several languages fluently to women with very poor knowledge of the national language.

The training methodology was dominated by interactive methods. The first introductory session had three tasks to accomplish: participants got to know each other to create an atmosphere of trust and a friendly attitude, a sense of the group dynamic and to form expectations of the activity. Building on this introduction, the trainers presented the modules through the personal stories of the migrant women. When they related their educational and professional background, the trainers introduced ideas from the modules to guide their individual needs and to design possible scenarios for future labour market integration. This approach facilitated the comprehension of concepts that for some of the women sounded distant and abstract and ultimately made the theoretical part of the material more accessible. The second session began with a mind mapping and sharing exercise, while sitting in a large circle. Whilst discussing their concerns and considerations, the participants came up with the idea of creating a Facebook group for young qualified migrants in Bulgaria, i.e. a virtual but also easily accessible space where they could exchange ideas for career guidance and professional integration. The name of the group – “Sofia gathering us” – emerged from the interaction (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/386570801549499>). The third session that combined the two target groups of less qualified women and highly qualified youth was a promising beginning to what could become a valuable and productive practice, if properly organized.



### *The mentoring*

Organising the experimentation of the mentoring was quite a challenging task, since the target audience consists of professionals who value their time to an extreme and traditionally do not have a very high opinion of such endeavours. Therefore CII's team started by developing a recruitment strategy that relied on finding the cross-section of the target group's and the project's interests. That happened to be the value of diversity. For the project the value of diversity is the core message that stands against discrimination. For the target group the value of diversity has a business meaning in that it brings new and missing knowledge and skills. To get to them CII used professional networks and institutional connections. Personal contacts proved very important and productive. The participants in the sessions represented the following categories: PR experts, entrepreneurs, journalists, HR specialists, human rights activists, SMEs owners, NGO activists. A central issue put to discussion was how to approach difference in terms of culture, language, opportunities, etc. The Bulgarian public does not have much experience with the accommodation of difference and that was probably why CII's method of attracting participants with the promise of showing them the value of a migrant worker was more or less a success. The CII team's research practice has pointed out that Bulgarian employers avoid migrant workers not because they have negative expectations of their performance but because they have none. The problem is that they do not know



what to expect, and that is why they prefer not to hire them and, hence, create a situation of unintentional discrimination.

As a result of the mentoring sessions, which were of a very discursive character because information was exchanged in both directions, CII managed to outline the main characteristics and problems of the national labour market situation with regards to immigrants from both perspectives: the immigrants' and the employers'. In Bulgaria the experimentation of mentoring was organised in 3 sessions in between April and June 2015. The applied methodology followed the main guidelines, but was adapted to, both, the national context and the specific needs of the participants. The main idea was to make the information and material understandable and useful for the mentors by integrating their objectives, expectations and professional contexts, as well as the limits of their intervention capacities. The first training session introduced the developed knowledge and know-how in a conversation-and-game format. The participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe their expectations not only with regard to the event, but also to the issue of diversity on the Bulgarian labour market. In the discussion that followed, they were invited to share their thoughts and reflections on the questions/doubts/insecurities they experience. The second session was based on a Q&A exercise. The major question of employers (mostly SME owners), job intermediaries, and institutional (labour bureau) representatives was about the marketable assets of migrants, or what would make them value-added employees. The general agreement seemed to focus on the knowledge of different (rare) languages and notion of different cultures. An important part of the participants in the group were attracted to the event because of this particular asset, which possibly explains their fields of activity: Translation Company, tour operator, language school, designer bureau, sociological agency. The variety of languages, cultures and experiences of migrants (often shown as a major obstacle) was in fact outlined as the key asset for their integration in the labour market. The third session provided the participants with examples of various national contexts of discrimination and diversity issues. Through

the subtle interventions of the trainers in the discussion, knowledge was transferred on the legal framework of discrimination and explanations were given about the various forms and practical expressions of this phenomenon in a work environment.

## 2. Experimentation and findings in France

In France, the experimentation with the training and mentoring programmes was developed in a context where, on the one hand, there was a legal framework focussed on protection with regards to fighting discriminations, and, on the other hand, where the particularities of migration experiences were not taken into account in the main public and private programmes promoting diversity. Indeed, these issues are usually dealt with in relation to territorial policies fighting against exclusion. The territories for priority intervention are mainly determined on the basis of social criteria. Nonetheless, recent studies showed a direct correlation between being an immigrant and the high exposure to unemployment risks. These studies also demonstrated that amongst immigrants, young people who were students in their country of origin and women who were professionally active before migrating were most at risk of discrimination, unemployment and the downgrading of their social class. Hence, this context lent itself particularly well to a trial of the Di&Di approach.



*The training*

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On the basis of the theoretical training designed by iriv conseil in 2014, focusing on 10 main topics, a training programme was offered in 5 sessions combining the 10 topics. The first session was dedicated to the general context and objectives of the Di&Di insisting on the lifelong learning perspective (modules 1 & 2). The second session developed the legal framework, both the European and national levels of the non-discrimination approach (modules 3 & 4) in order for the learners to identify a situation of discrimination on the basis of legal / official documents. The third session explained the barriers that could be encountered (internal/external) (modules 5 & 6) – in order for the learners to identify the main obstacles they could face in the labour market and how to overcome them. The main barriers were the language (a required linguistic level such as B1), having their professional experience and qualification recognised (only nationals of the European Union have an official recognition of their national diploma and qualifications), and the access to finance for those willing to create their own activity (the documents and information to be provided may be like an exam to be passed). The fourth session explained the tools & strategies already existing to overcome some main barriers- such as the Migrapass portfolio (being able to describe a professional experience in terms of competences and build a professional future) or the Allinhe Guide (one option could be to follow a training/education path to have gain a national diploma/qualification...) in order for the learners to have a concrete example of pedagogical approaches to be followed. The fifth session was a pedagogical conclusion of all the other sessions which built an action plan on the basis of a SWOT analysis: being aware of their weaknesses and the dangers of the labour market, the learners are asked to focus on their strengths and professional opportunities. They were asked to take into account different deadlines: short term (3 months), mid-term (6 months), long-term (one year and more). A collective approach was privileged all along the five sessions with a roundtable opening each session for the learners to be able to present themselves and their professional profiles in a group and to discuss their professional opportunities. The experimentation of the training

took place in two local environments. In Paris, it was held at the Maison des Associations of the XI<sup>th</sup> district in April 2015. The association « Atouts cours », which offers linguistic courses for migrants, sent half of the participants. The partners first met the person responsible for the course at the Embassy of Croatia during a seminar organised in January 2015 to present the project. The club El Taller of the Cité des Métiers sent the other half together with a few “external participants” (1 or 2). In Seine-et-Marne, iriv Conseil had already worked together with a social centre in Montereau, the « Maison des familles », in 2013 in the scope of a previous training course « MigrActrices ». The social centre also offers linguistic courses to migrants with a focus on the access to the labour market. The training sessions were held in May and June 2015.



### *The mentoring*

The experimentation of the mentoring in France was implemented by Enda Europe through 2 cycles. Each cycle was composed by two sessions (two half-days). In total, 25 mentors participated in the sessions.

The first cycle was organized before the training sessions and mainly gathered associations' leaders, trainers or project officers working directly with migrants. The invitation to these sessions was dispatched through: the mailing lists of the project Diversité +, (complete with contacts of local organizations working with migrants or in the field of diversity promotion and anti-discrimination), networks created through the steering committees, information on

the Di&Di French weblog, Enda Europe's website and Facebook pages, presentations organized at the Embassy of Croatia and at the annual seminar of the AEFTI, a federation of associations working on professional training for migrants. These first sessions allowed to recruit the participants for the experimentation of the training, since some of the tutors enrolled a group coming from their associations. Specific tools (a guide for the trainers, a "tutor booklet" and documents with key-data) and a participative pedagogical approach were proposed. All along the mentoring, tutors were encouraged to share their experiences and professional practices on the issues discussed.

The second mentoring cycle took place after the first experimentation cycle of the training. This allowed to collect feedback, case studies and best practices during both the first mentoring cycle and the training sessions, and then to implement the second mentoring program. The new sessions gathered a more varied group since some representatives of companies' clubs, of migrant associations and of professional learning organizations took part in them. The mobilization strategy, before the mentoring programme, was improved through the organization of bilateral meetings with key-actors and the design and dissemination of specific communication tools (flyers, posters). The contents of the program were presented in the same order as in the first mentoring cycle (corresponding to around five modules of the European mentoring model per session). Nevertheless, the participative pedagogical approach was further implemented through the direct contribution of a jurist specialized in anti-discrimination who had participated to the first mentoring sessions. She presented concrete suggestions on how to build a support strategy for job seekers exposed to discrimination, and helped in analysing the case studies collected during the training. The pedagogical tools were developed, mainly through a "role-play" in small groups, aiming at showing the concrete roles of different professionals in fighting discrimination and promoting diversity. The participation of migrant associations' representatives was a real asset for this second cycle, since their contributions to the discussion were focussed on concrete

difficulties faced by the Di&Di target groups and allowed them to take into account the complexity of real personal situations.

The learning outcomes of the mentoring sessions included a better knowledge of anti-discrimination issues and of the target participants' strengths and weaknesses and, also, a better identification of the complementary roles of different profiles of professionals in improving equality and access to the labour market for young migrants and migrant women. The four mentoring sessions implemented in France also identified some specific needs shared by the tutors; there was a need for strengthening their capacity to support equal access to the labour market for migrants, through professional training on theory and methods, but also through the development of networks with other organizations and professionals. These outcomes of the mentoring programme were analysed by Enda Europe in order to define the dissemination and sustainability strategy after the experimentation.

### 3. Experimentation and Findings in Germany

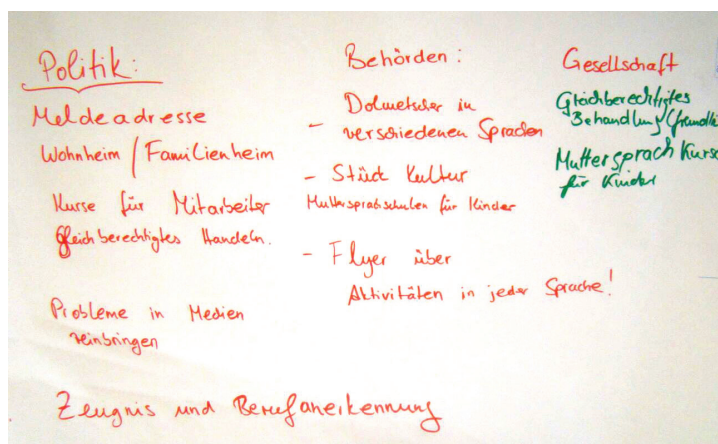
How does one work on the issue of discrimination and diversity in Berlin's labour market with a person who grew up in Berlin as a child of immigrant workers from the 1970s? She finished school with quite good marks, started but did not complete an apprenticeship in the retail sector, gave birth to children until the age of 27, always worked in between, for shorter periods (in a supermarket, drugstore, bakery). She always kept contact with her job counsellor and now, at the age of 34, has been employed for the last two years, in the so called "secondary labour market", paid by the labour office, as an integration facilitator for migrants, doing her most appreciated and most satisfying job, but which is just supposed to be a spring board for the first labour market?

How does one work on the issue of discrimination and diversity in Berlin's labour market with a person who has been living



in Germany for nearly two years, after escaping civil war in his home country? He had studied mechanical engineering there and briefly worked in industry, then he was forced to join the army but deserted to flee from massacres in the neighbourhoods. Now, at the age of 27, he faces the death penalty in his home country, and has received the permit to live and work in Germany, for at least the coming years, and has joined the network of integration facilitators for migrants while searching for a job as an engineer.

And how does one work on the issue of discrimination and diversity in Berlin's labour market with a group of altogether 17 job-seekers, who present 17 different stories of migration towards Berlin over the past 50 years and who temporarily work together as integration facilitators for other migrants?



- *The training*

This was the setting for the experimentation of the Di&Di training programme in Berlin. Not knowing exactly what to expect in practice, the training followed a core principle of adult education: Expecting and enabling learners to direct their own learning process, on the basis of their motivation and their rich life experience and expertise. Under the open title of “Welcome to Berlin”, it was completed in three one-day-sessions, with the time for adaptation from one session to the other.

The first session was dedicated to the question of what would be an inclusive or “welcoming” society. Participants collected ideas and formulated positive visions and even political requests which reflected their own negative experiences. Different spheres of inclusion – housing, labour, education, health – and different levels of intervention – individual, political, legal – were identified. On this basis, also those obstacles could be gathered, that persons with a migration background or experience may face at the entrance to the labour market.

The second session focused on the national legislation for equal treatment and its practical implications, as a way of dealing with the obstacles related to unequal treatment. Counselling services on equal treatment and anti-discrimination, complaint points and example cases of legal processes were presented and discussed. This appeared to be an interesting and new finding for most participants; that, regardless of their background, there is a legal act which gives everyone the right to defend oneself against discrimination, and that there are public support points to assist them in this. Another important outcome for participants appeared to be the realisation that although the rule of equal treatment is fixed, discrimination is not always evident: a single case or situation, at a subjective level, may be interpreted in more than one way.

While during the first two sessions participants freely decided how much they wanted to involve their personal story, the third session concentrated on individual competences. A self-reflection process, based on a short version of the “Migrapass”, which was accompanied by structured peer counselling and highlighted and analysed personal experiences, skills and aptitudes as possible assets for the labour market.

Through strictly activating methods such as mind mapping, facilitated plenary discussions with short input units, independent work in small groups followed by a presentation of work results, peer counselling and individual work, participants trained their skills to question and analyse, to shape and express their position in the view of others and to validate their own experience and perspective as a valuable contribution to a common piece of work.





- *The mentoring*

The training was followed by the experimentation of the Di&Di mentoring in the same network of integration facilitators, also in three one-day-sessions. Now, participants were team leaders and mentors, whose task was to develop teams of integration facilitators, to coordinate their work, to insert new facilitators in existing teams and/or to train them on the job. The mentoring, titled “Strengthening strengths” started from counselling competencies as the core competencies of integration facilitators: What they are and how to detect, acknowledge and promote them among employees or colleagues and in a team. Further on, obstacles to good team communication and supportive leadership were resolved, and finally, within this context, the sensitive question of discriminatory action at the work place and its legal framework were considered. This approach appears to be very useful in working contexts.

A compact one-day-version of the Di&Di mentoring was then developed and experimented with people who work in training and employment programs. Titled “Sensitive to discrimination?”, it addressed persons who are aware of the risk of discrimination and its legal framework and it provided a structured group reflection on one’s own experiences and practices. This appeared to be a valuable approach especially in the Berlin situation where most of the persons who work as trainers, tutors, coaches or intermediaries, have no migration background while

a high percentage of their clients do have a migration background.

The conclusions from the Berlin case of Di&Di experimentation are quite short and clear: The training and mentoring modules suggested by Di&Di are easily adaptable to different specific contexts, and they provide a way to insert issues on discrimination and diversity as cross-cutting aspects in labour market integration programmes.

#### 4. Experimentation and Findings in Italy

The Italian experimentation of the Di&Di project was held in Forlì, a medium sized city in Emilia-Romagna region, in May 2015.

On January 2014, the number of foreigners appearing in the civil registry of the Forlì-Cesena province was 44 879 representing 11,3% of the total population.

In terms of Nationality, foreign migrants living in the province of Forlì-Cesena and coming from European Union countries made up 29.2% of the total. Foreigners coming from Central Eastern Europe made up 27,9% of the total. In general, foreigners coming from Romania, Albania and Morocco are the most represented and they are followed, in terms of numbers, by those coming from Moldova, Ukraine and China.

In terms of Gender, in the last 5 years, the number of migrant women has been increasing in comparison to the number of men. In January 2014 this number made up 51.9% of the total number of foreign people living in Forlì-Cesena (in 2009 it was under 50%).

In terms of Age, 22.5% of foreigners are between 26 and 35 years of age while foreigners between 36 and 50 represent 29.3% of the total. The percentage of people over 51 is much lower, 13,2% of the total. Notably, there is a progressive aging of the foreign population (January 1st 2011 only 10.4% of the total foreign population was more than 51 years old).

With regards to the “qualified young migrants” (aged below 30 years), the group

was mainly represented by women who took their diploma in their own country before arriving in Italy. The “low-qualified women” group was represented mainly by a heterogeneous group of women coming from Eastern Europe (Macedonia, Romania and Ukraine).



- *The Steering Committee's contribution to the experimentation*

The University of Bologna played a central role in the Steering Committee as a selected group of professors helped IECOB both in elaborating the modules and animating the lessons during the experimentation. Another key actor was the “Foreigners’ Council” of the Municipality of Forlì (the Council’s President and Vice President are foreign citizens and permanent members the Municipality). IECOB also involved “Dialogos”, a big local cooperative working with migrants, and several associations representing foreign citizens of a same nationality, such as the Association San Lorenzo (Romania), Juvenilia (Albania) and Burkinabé (Burkina Faso). Furthermore, IECOB contacted the local offices of two national trade unions (CGIL and CISL) who were active in the recruitment phase and during the implementation of the experimentation (a representative of CGIL was invited to one of our training session to speak with trainees). Last but not least, other key actors of the Steering Committee were: Raoul Mosconi (Councillor for “International Cooperation”, “Human Rights” and “Social Integration” at Municipality of Forlì), Enzo Samorì (Head of the “Social Integration” unit at Forlì municipality) and Edera Bratti (HR Manager at Fiorini Industries).

In order to design both the training and mentoring sessions and adapt them to the program of proposed modules, IECOB organized several meetings with professors of the University of Bologna (mostly anthropologists, lawyers, sociologists, and area experts given the migration context). In addition to trainers, IECOB relied on two experienced tutors who actively followed the implementation of the training sessions and played a crucial role in connecting the topics, the interactive lectures, and the follow ups, according to the modules’ structure here below described.



- *The training*

The experimental training phase in Italy involved a group of 13 people (11 women and 2 men) with a mixed profile in terms of origin (Albania, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Macedonia, Morocco, Romania and Ukraine) and age (between 23 and 36). The training program took into account the 10 foreseen modules and was divided in the following 3 phases:

1<sup>st</sup> Phase (Modules 1, 2, 3, 4) - Frontal lessons:

- Introduction of Lifelong Learning Programme, Di&Di Project and course presentation
- The European Union Law and protective measures against discriminations in the working world
- Employment Regulations and Policies in Italy from a comparative point of view



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase (Modules 5, 6) - Interactive lessons:

Participants were divided in working groups and teachers animated classes starting from trainees' experience. They also worked on case studies representing examples of discrimination. During the 4<sup>th</sup> class trainees and mentees were put together in a common session (a role play game with an interview simulation allowed our target groups to exchange their experiences with an enjoyable working methodology).

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase (Modules 7, 8, 9, 10) "The follow up"

Based on the outcomes of the interactive lessons, teachers and trainees elaborated an action plan for self-empowerment. A trade union representative was also invited to answer participants' questions on several subjects regarding their rights and the ways to keep them protected.

The planned schedule included 6 sessions (each one lasting half a day) which took place on the following dates: 4, 5, 14, 22, 28 and 29 May, 2015.



### - *The mentoring*

The experimental Mentoring phase in Italy involved a group of 14 people between the ages of 25 and 45. All participants had a mixed profile in terms of working background and they were involved in the following organisations: Fiorini Group (1 HR manager), Municipality of Forlì (the President of Foreigner's Council), Association San

Lorenzo (the President), Association Pensiero e Azione (3 volunteers), Association San Martino (3 employees), Papa Giovanni XX-III (3 employees), Dialogos (1 employee), Consorzio e Mestieri (1 employee).

The mentoring program was designed to evolve parallel to the training programme and was divided in the same 3 phases:

## 1<sup>st</sup> Phase (Modules 1, 2, 3, 4) - Frontal lessons

- Introduction of Lifelong Learning Programme, Di&Di Project and course presentation
- The European Union Law and protective measures against discriminations in the working world
- Employment Regulations and Policies in Italy from a comparative point of view

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase (Modules 5, 6) - Interactive lessons

Mentors were asked to share their own experience in order to compare the different approaches that participants had in dealing with discrimination on the labour market. Furthermore, they worked on case studies proposed during training lessons. Finally, during the 4<sup>th</sup> class, they worked together with trainees: a role play game with an interview simulation was proposed (as aforementioned).

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase (Modules 7, 8, 9, 10) - "The follow up"

With the help of the mentor, participants analysed the outcomes of the interview simulation and discussed, in two mind mapping sessions, diversity and discrimination issues. Additionally, the attendees were given the possibility to observe themselves in their own social and relational processes and given the chance to work on themselves by trying to deconstruct some of their defensive patterns. This allowed for authentic ideas about discriminations and prejudices to be raised.

The planned schedule included 6 sessions (each one with a half a day duration) which took place in the following dates: 8, 9, 15, 22, 29 and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

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## 5. Experimentation and Findings in Switzerland



- *A particular context for the implementation of the Di&Di*

Despite its geographical position and its non-membership in the European Union, migrations play a fundamental role in Swiss society and its economy; 100.000 newcomers reach Switzerland every year. They come mainly looking for work, but in 40% of the cases also for reasons related to family reunification. Furthermore, a growing number of asylum seekers and refugees have come, during the last few months, due to the humanitarian crisis. Migrants are a very heterogeneous population: considering their gender, age, educational background, motivations and expectations. The target group of “qualified young migrants” – as intended by Di&Di – is different than in the other countries in which the project is developed: students entering Switzerland are obliged to leave the country at the end of the studies. However, instead, there is an emerging group of unemployed or under-employed qualified women, who are reaching the country for family reunification reasons, and try after an initial phase of integration to find a decent job, encountering hard difficulties in validating their qualifications.

In the Swiss public discourse, discrimination and diversity are normally sidelined and presented as “gender related” issues; foreigners are not represented as “discriminated”, (even if some research disagrees<sup>5</sup>), and diversity is rarely taken into account, both as a potential disadvantage or possible added value (apart from in specific situations and companies). Additionally because low qualified migrants are normally included in sectors and companies in which they represent the great majority, and “diversity” is the norm (low qualified jobs, such as cleaning, tourism, etc. or specialized sectors like construction, manufacturing...). “Conformity with norms” plays a major role in comparison to “diversity” as an asset for inclusion and progress in the job market. This dynamic of the job market facilitates the integration of migrants, even if they are unemployed.

Following this approach, Federal and Cantonal policies focus on “integration” as a means for coping with discrimination, valuing to a certain extent diversity. For example, language and integration courses, sensitisation projects, a specific pilot program on “mentoring”, jointly promoted by SEM and SECO in 2014. Active measures to foster integration are practiced at different levels<sup>6</sup>, mainly addressing those unemployed, but also addressing companies and the social partners (some Cantonal bodies – like the Integration Commission of Canton Freiburg - designed guidelines and pilot initiatives addressing the companies). The above mentioned Mentoring Program directly implements some principles very close to the Di&Di approach, trying to provide mentoring opportunities for newcomers, activating the expertise and accompaniment of well-integrated migrants acting as mentors.

However, the low level of legal protection against “intangible” discriminations characterizes the job market<sup>7</sup>.

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5 See for example the “report 2014 on the racial discrimination in Switzerland” on [Rassismusbericht\\_FRB\\_IT](#) or the report *Episodi di razzismo trattati nell'attività di consulenza 2014*, Rete di consulenza per le vittime di razzismo, giugno 2015

6 see: <http://www.dialog-integration.ch/>

7 See the see the results of the last MIPEx Index survey - <http://www.mipex.eu/>





- *The training and the mentoring*

The Swiss experimentation took place with the local partner ECAP, a training institution that provides a large range of services and courses supporting a better integration of migrants. They are mainly focussed on empowering migrants, to make them more capable of upgrading their lifestyle in the host country: to improve linguistic skills, to provide advice and accompany unemployed people, to develop mentoring initiatives, in which the migrants themselves play the role of protagonists<sup>8</sup>.

ECAP piloted DI&Di in two courses addressed to unemployed migrants, aiming at providing them with training and support in finding a job. The issues of discrimination and diversity have, therefore, been included in a more comprehensive path, organized on behalf of local public employment services, enriching it with the modules and instruments developed in the DI&Di framework. The mentoring has been developed and tested in the framework of some existing initiatives already set up and implemented by ECAP in two different linguistic Cantons (Ticino and Aargau). This approach allowed for a heterogeneous target, not selected according to prior sensitivity to the topic and, moreover, to test the possibilities to draw attention to the specific theme in existing courses. Ideas and results underpinning the Di&Di model have been critically discussed and evaluated through focus groups with stakeholders, trainers and mentors already active in the field of the integration of migrants.

The experimentation aimed at verifying to what extent and with which adaptations the Di&Di philosophy and learning model could work in the Swiss context by addressing populations who need specific support, such as those low qualified and unemployed (including young adults, both women and men) and qualified migrant women. Working in a public employment program, however, the heterogeneity of participants was accepted as a reality and a resource to activate mutual exchange. For this purpose, the use of specific reflective tools and practices, such as case studies, Problem Based Learning and “peer-to-peer” learning opportunities played a key role.

Given the context presented above, the experimentation focused on allowing participants to become more aware of their competences, rather than enhancing diversity as a potential added value. Additionally, the awareness of discrimination has been dealt with (what is discrimination and what is not discrimination), with the aim of making people more capable of planning and implementing strategies and behaviours limiting the influence of “implicit” discriminatory factors (advice on logics regulating the job market, knowledge of realistic spaces in the job market, optimization of the job search, identification of strategies for overlapping collateral factors of discrimination etc.).

The awareness of existence and multiple dimensions of discriminations has also been an important outcome for the mentors’ training. Moreover, for the mentors ECAP had the additional aim of integrating and networking their usual practices with existing reflections and local services and professionals<sup>9</sup>. These outcomes seem reached on a personal level. Nonetheless the project in Switzerland highlights the difficulties of involving specific training module professionals from firms and the public sector, as only coaches and trainers were mainly reached, both, due to cultural reasons and the underestimation of the role of discrimination. The process started with the DI&Di project should be implemented and expanded with new strategies.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance the “WWW” pilot program, MinQ, and the other courses on [www.ecap.ch](http://www.ecap.ch).

<sup>9</sup> See the Swiss weblog <http://di-di-swiss.blogspot.ch/>

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## 6. Some lessons learned

The Di&Di project was very helpful for finding indications, strategies, opportunities and obstacles which could be used by any European actor willing to develop and implement a similar type of training programme. The necessity of going beyond specificities emerged in each Country and some general guidelines and areas for improvement were found.

In general, given that “discrimination” is quite a complex and ambiguous concept, that can be hardly recognisable in a working environment, dealing with the issue was a challenge itself.

The involvement of associations, migrant communities and strategic institutions turned out to be a valuable strategy for reaching key beneficiaries and producing an effective analysis of their needs. Additionally, linking Di&Di experimentation to other existing paths and courses was helpful for the recruitment process and the project’s sustainability.

With regards to the training path, the modular approach of the model was a strength because it allowed to meet the target groups’ needs and to alter the arguments, timeframe and strategies depending on the specific target, while maintaining a common concept. Furthermore, the definition of specific and common thematic modules, allowed each partner to focus on and share the main issues and to, at the same time, insert each path in a European framework.

Participants were able to increase their knowledge about discrimination on the labour market and they acquired new understandings and skills to overcome it. This result was reached thanks to the reflective and interactive methods and the experiences exchanged with other participants. The active bottom-up approach and the use of didactical tools allowed students to develop abstract and multidimensional concepts from their personal and concrete experiences (case studies, problem based learning, mind mapping, scaffolding strategies, etc...). Furthermore, the proposed “active perspective” allowed participants to develop two aspects: a pure learning process on one side and a “can

do” attitude (“I know, I know how to act, I can act”) on the other side. In general, the empowerment process succeeded.

Joining, in the same learning process, two heterogeneous target groups (low qualified women and highly qualified youth) using their differences as a starting point for perspective exchange and discussions was a big challenge of the project. Although this approach was considered a good strategy to foster cooperation between participants, it brought out some difficulties in finding a common approach to satisfy their different expectations and learning attitudes, given their different levels of language proficiency and education. Each partner dealt with this particular challenge using a personalized path based on participants’ skills and knowledge, through personal interviews or, in some cases, with the support of mediators and tutors.



Another critical factor for the organisation and implementation of the experimentation was the choice of the time schedule. Due to the different habits of the two target groups (low qualified women were available during work day mornings while qualified youth preferred the week-end) it was essential to choose a time schedule which could satisfy the needs of all participants. Another crucial aspect emerged: even if the foreseen period for the experimentation (3 full days) was sufficient to explore a complex issue, such as discrimination, participants expressed the desire to have more time to focus further on this theme.

With regards to the Mentoring course, putting together professionals from different fields was a productive and stimulating choice and generated very useful information and interesting exchanges of experience.

Additionally, the participative pedagogical approach guaranteed the active involvement of mentors, providing a theoretical framework for generating new perspectives and a deeper comprehension of the phenomena. Furthermore, allowing participants to think together to find practical strategies for future action was another element of success.

The involvement of private sector representatives (i.e. companies, interim agencies, etc...) and professionals was quite a challenging task for two main reasons. On the one hand, they usually have little time to dedicate to this kind of topic. On the other hand, they tend to have a poor opinion of such endeavours. In order to overcome these difficulties it would be necessary to use networks of professionals and institutional connections. Furthermore, focusing on diversity, a cross-section of the target group and the project's interests could help to involve people not initially interested in the specific topic of anti-discrimination.

Similarly to the Training course, the time schedule was a key factor for the Mentoring course too: as aforementioned, professionals lack time and, hence, it would be better to concentrate the course during a short period of time.

The heterogeneous composition of groups creates a basis for future networks of professionals working in different fields. Furthermore, once they attended the course, participants may offer valuable testimonies of new strategies and processes.

Both courses had some foreseen learning outcomes (changing perspectives through cooperation and exchange, being aware of discrimination practices related to origin, race or ethnicity, acquiring useful competencies related to a migratory background, implementing innovative strategies and tools to handle discrimination on the labour market) that are characterised by a long term

perspective. Hence, it is only possible to partially measure their impact during the project implementation. Therefore, it would be necessary to organise a follow-up, giving participants the opportunity to attend a course with a more extensive programme and considering the possibility of providing updated teaching materials.

Finally, during the experimentation, the importance of ICT and social networks emerged and their role in the sustainability of the project. Indeed, based on the work and reflections during classes, the training group exchanged experiences and information using tools such as mailing lists, Facebook and thematic weblogs.



## PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY AND POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UPS

The project partners, who implemented Di&Di in five European regions, look back on an intense cooperation with different local stakeholders and European colleagues on the topics of discrimination and diversity on the labour market. Local structures and needs were analysed and compared with each other and transformed into tailor-made training and mentoring offers. The attention to the issue of discrimination raised by the project has had various echoes in the field of job integration for migrants in the participating regions.

**New training and mentoring opportunities:** According to their individual profile – whether a research institute in Paris or Forli, a vocational training centre in Switzerland or Berlin or a development agency in Sofia or Paris – the project partners completed their portfolio by new methodologies, training and mentoring offers. ECAP (Switzerland) is introducing Di&Di training and mentoring modules in their existing instruments such as coaching for unemployed people, training for caregivers and trainers, mentors and coaches. Bildungsmarkt (Berlin) is following a similar strategy to complement its existing instruments of job activation and coaching and its very recent programmes for the labour market integration of refugees. CII (Sofia) is negotiating with government agencies, such as the labour bureaus and branch corporate organizations and the employers' union to provide training on diversity and discrimination issues, and train the trainers for their regional structures. Enda Europe (Paris) is introducing the Di&Di mentoring during events organised with migrant organisations, in the framework of their ongoing projects. By linking existing practices and paying close attention to the recognition of and the response to discrimination one can reach and involve a wider audience of job-seekers and mentors and enrich the initial instruments. Iriv Conseil (Paris) has also included the Di&Di training course in its regular training programme. Furthermore Enda

Europe is discussing with the City of Paris the option of including the mentoring programme in a local “toolkit” on anti-discrimination and developing it on a territorial basis. The Municipality of Forli (IECOB) took into consideration the possibility of using the Di&Di training and mentoring package to organise similar courses in the future. CII has used a specialised press channel to send a message to all potential stakeholders that could benefit from the courses.

**Competences:** A core aspect in the experimentation of the Di&Di training and mentoring was empowerment. The facilitated entanglement of different perspectives, the choice of a wide range of participatory methods, the active and partly controversial examination of the phenomena of discrimination and ways to handle them, the reflection of competences as an asset to diversity – all these helped to sharpen one's self-perception, self-confidence and become more aware of one's own position by effectively using information, strategies and tools. Now, a few months after the experimentation, jobseekers can present refined professional pathways, “either answering job offers or being contacted for other jobs, finding a job starting a VPL process, creating a professional activity” (Paris), trainers have “reflected and refined the methods and materials they use in job integration and train the trainer/mentor courses” (Berlin), migrant women “gather more actively the information and tools they need to push their integration into the local society and work” (Forli) or job tutors and employers “started to be attentive to discrimination as an issue in the world of work” (Sofia). Di&Di initiated processes at various levels, always depending on the individual starting point and the local public discourse. This way it addressed the gaps regarding action against discrimination and for diversity.

**Networks:** The experimentation in the five regions allowed the identification of the most strategic field of intervention to develop an-



ti-discrimination and diversity programmes: network-building and direct cooperation among professionals and institutions. This leads to better knowledge and validation of each other's work and contribution. In the organisation of the training and the mentoring, accompanied by local steering committees, Di&Di established contacts between organisations: the Di&Di partners with various private and public stakeholders on integration and labour market issues, the stakeholders among themselves, contacts between professionals, mentors to mentors, company owners to company owners, public servants to public servants, and across the professional fields, as well as contacts between the target groups and those who are "managing" their integration.

### Two examples:

- In Paris, the relationship built by iriv Conseil together with various organisations (Atouts cours, Club El Taller or Maison des Familles) has clearly had a positive impact on the participation of the learners and the success of training, as before the sessions, several direct exchanges were organized to check the profiles of their trainees and the relevance of the course for them..
- In Italy, IECOB could count on the collaboration of several local partners already involved in the Italian national Steering Committee of the Di&Di project. Some of the most representative actors were the Association Dialogos, the Municipality of Forli, the University of Bologna, and a big enterprise, Fiorini Industries, represented by its Director of HR.

Networking among stakeholders and participants is supported by the Di&Di partner organisations via their national weblogs and mailing lists. Weblogs serve to "feed" the new local Di&Di community with useful information and tools, overcoming discrimination in the labour market and enhancing diversity. Mailing lists are a valuable tool to foster networking and exchange of information among participants.

Furthermore, Di&Di led to the development of new partnerships and common projects on the issue of migrants' professional inclusion, i.e. under the local European Integration Fund to combine linguistic learning and the Di&Di approach or under local funds for the integration of refugees to combine the Di&Di approach with awareness-raising processes towards employers willing to employ refugees.

**Materials:** In all partner regions, the experimentation phases were documented in detail, whether in reports or as training guides. Along with a common prototype of the Di&Di training and mentoring concept, five Di&Di-packages are available, which illustrate different local models of implementation and serve as practical tools to implement similar courses within other organisations, professional contexts and local contexts.

While discrimination against migrants accessing the labour market certainly exist throughout Europe and is widely documented by research and practice, public discourses and daily practices often tend to underestimate it. The implemented Di&Di approach increased awareness on the subject among the involved individuals and institutions, but the process must be maintained and expanded. With the aforementioned axes of sustainability, it is the hope of the partners that the Di&Di project can contribute to this task.



## CHALLENGES FOR AN INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKET

Enhancing diversity and fighting discrimination has been a central policy in the European Union since the adoption by EU countries of the directive of 2000. In the first stage (2000-2007), the focus was on its legal implication due to the national legal frameworks needing to be implemented in the different countries. Despite this common effort, and national regulations, tendencies still differ a lot from one country to another. EU member states and other countries strongly affected by migration, like Switzerland, have different attitudes towards the definition of mandatory rules for combating discrimination. However, they share the opinion they are relatively low, as highlighted, for instance, by the MIPEX Index surveys ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu)). Now, the attention seems to have turned to active measures to overcome discrimination, to facilitate integration and equal opportunities in the labour market. In recent years (2007-2015) new challenges and objectives have come to the fore, such as including key principles about diversity and equality into educational practices and learning in Europe, involving stakeholders on the ground such as employers (the Charter of Diversity was adopted a few years ago).

The Di&Di project was implemented between 2013 and 2015 in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013). Its theoretical approach – reminiscent of the non-discrimination approach – is closely linked to the practical approach – enhancing the diversity process. It gathered five European countries - France, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland - with different backgrounds both in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and in the non-discrimination approach even if sharing the same common legal references - implemented both by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU, 28 countries, Brussels) and Council of Europe (CoE, 47 countries, Strasbourg).

The Di&Di project intended to show how far the diversity approach could be a challenging issue both for the learners/trainees and

the trainers/teachers. It underlined the many obstacles (external/internal) still to be overcome on the labour market for the particular audience the Di&Di project addresses: qualified young people and low qualified women, both sharing a migratory background. The non-discrimination EU directive of 2000 is to be implemented on the ground with appropriate pedagogical tools and strategies. It involved both a first target group - learners with a migratory background facing discrimination - but also a second one- trainers/teachers and professionals working with migrants (such as Human Resources staff) - in order to have concrete impact on the ground, addressing diversity management and validation issues.

The directive of 2000 was the first step to enhance diversity in the EU. Since then, several European countries have offered different strategies to promote the non-discrimination principle, especially in the access to education or vocational training in order to include learners who might suffer from discrimination. Vocational training and education strategies were mainly focused on a legal perspective: identifying and legally characterizing discrimination in order to develop, if necessary, a legal process. The legal aspect of non-discrimination requires constant updates as new criteria emerge on a national level for describing situations of discrimination, such as the where a person lives (this new criterion appeared in France in 2014).

Another approach is to promote diversity - identifying and valuing diverse skills and competences, needed by the EU labour market. This is one of the main aims of the Di&Di project. The Di&Di approach focused on diversity and lifelong learning perspectives by implementing an approach oriented towards the innovation of human resource management policies and practices. This approach has been implemented considering heterogeneous situations - addressing employees and management structures in companies, unemployed people looking for a job or willing to create their own activity, facing

difficulties in overcoming challenges related to their “diverse profile”. In both situations Di&Di focused on the empowerment of the people through an exchange between learners and trainers/mentors, in order to increase the awareness and capacity to recognize hurdles and resources and set up effective strategies to make diversity an asset.

From this perspective, a pedagogical approach needs to be focused on tools and strategies to support the diversity approach. Struggling against discrimination is to be understood through access to the labour market by offering appropriate learning/teaching strategies. The educational and formative approach is essential to equip learners/trainees with relevant strategies to value their specific profile in an increasingly demanding professional environment and, hence, acquiring the ability to overcome situations of discrimination.

A general/pedagogical framework was designed during the first year of the project, taking into account the handbook on European non-discrimination law and requiring constant attention in the five national contexts. Both education and integration policies have been considered, but also the institutional context (profiles of stakeholders in charge of implementing the education and integration policies) and the local/professional context, involving professionals who are asked to support migrants in their educational/formative path. A training programme aiming at fostering the mutual exchange between graduate migrants and low qualified female migrants was designed during the first phase (2014), together with a mentoring programme for trainers/teachers & professionals working with them; in the second year (2015) training and mentoring sessions were delivered in the different countries, adapting targets and contents to the different professional realities. In order to reinforce the diversity principle, different profiles of trainees were associated to the training sessions. It has been a main challenge of the experimentation. The pedagogical approach also combined the knowledge of discriminations (mainly legal issues) together with pedagogical support to overcome these difficulties to enhance the diversity approach. This is a 3 step approach: remembering the general framework to struggle against dis-

crimination, being able to identify the main obstacles faced by migrants in the EU countries and facilitate access to the EU labour markets. The questions raised were, and still are: how far can we enhance the diversity approach in vocational education and training? Is diversity really taken into account in educational practices and learning in the EU? What could be the relevant educational strategies to reach the goals, such as empowerment processes or any other inclusive or cooperative educational strategies?

The implementation of the Di&Di Model in the different countries has emphasised how context make a great difference: the sustainability of the Di&Di approach largely depends on legal entitlements, job market conditions, sensibilities of stakeholders and actors but also on heterogeneity of target groups and potential beneficiaries. Stronger legal frameworks hamper the diffusion of major discriminatory behaviors, even if in most of the cases recruitment and career policies are questionable, but are difficult to persecute, apart from more evident cases of discrimination based on origin or gender (two criteria taken into account in the project). Sensitivity for equal rights and, above all, the conviction that diversity provides wealth, at both policy level and in HRM strategies, – facilitate the engagement of stakeholders, providing new insights and perspective, and creating a positive environment for valuing cultural differences. A job market in which the demand for workforce is high and differentiated helps learners use their resources, give sense to empowerment processes and avoid engendering frustrations and reproducing exclusion and discrimination.

Educational and formative opportunities also play an important role when certain conditions are respected. Pedagogy based on exchange and mentoring draws on the commitment of a wide range of learners, their capacity to interact and activates peer learning processes. Migrants who achieved a positive integration and professionalization pathway can play the role of mentors, providing sustainable role models for newcomers and relatively disadvantaged migrants. Peer learning and mentoring can be useful even to more qualified persons looking for integration and career opportunities.

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Moreover, the Di&Di approach implies the availability of competent trainers, coaches and mentors, capable of orienting and guiding the empowerment process, providing formative hints, moderating the discussion, activating reflection on experiences of subjective and objective discrimination, facilitating the grassroots development of positive strategies. These trainers should know the legal frameworks in which they are working and the conditions of the job market to help learners understand the situation and increase their awareness of what discrimination is and cope with the constraints hampering their progress at both social and professional levels. They are expected to play a fundamental supportive role in the process.

Finally, in order to spread pedagogical approaches designed and tested by Di&Di among a wider audience – in all EU countries and not only amongst the Di&Di partners - it is important to share the Di&Di approach with practitioners coming from various backgrounds, appreciating its methodological value. It is not possible to suggest a “one size fits all” model but a method to be contextualized and altered according to the different frameworks of application, making diversity the most powerful tool and strategy to fight against discrimination.



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This project has been funded with support  
from the European Commission.

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Project n. 2013-1-FR1-LEO05-49021