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# LABORATORIES OF INTEGRATION

Lessons from Belgium, Great Britain,  
Catalonia and Portugal

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## LABORATORIES OF INTEGRATION

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In the following publication, we present the analyses of results of chosen some concrete good practices applied to the integration policies in Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. When implementing the project “*The laboratories of integration. Integration of citizens of the third states in the chosen countries of the European Union in the institutional context*”, we assumed that Poland should learn about more efficient integration of foreigners from member states that are most successful in this field. The best measurement of these achievements is the Migrants Integration Policy Index (Jan Niessen, Thomas Huddleston, Laura Citron; *Migrants Integration Policy Index, British Council and Migration Policy Group, Brussels 2007*) that compares various dimensions of the integration policy in 28 countries.

Taking the index as the starting point, we have selected the EU member states with the best recommendations. Next, consulting experts from these countries, we decided to go to the chosen towns, where the integration policy is implemented on a daily-basis. We intended to visit definite institutions and to speak to definite people who work with and for migrants day after day. We wanted also to supplement the knowledge of experts doing certain syntheses and observing the integration policy from “a bird’s eye view” with the experiences and observations of people who implement best practices.

The other important aspect regarding the selection of places, allowing a closer look at best practices, was the possibility of rendering such practises into the Polish conditions.

In this way, we chose as a part of our study visits to the following places: Brussels in Belgium, Barcelona and Mataró in Spain, Lisbon in Portugal and Peterborough in the UK.

In this publication, we are attempting to answer the question what should be taken as the basis for the integration process. The first chapter was written as the effect of conclusions drawn from the observations of the good practices. We understood the importance of conducting the initial activities, pre-integration, which we described as *showing around the house*. We are showing the evidence that at the moment is the most essential issue for the effective implementation of the integration policy towards foreigners the living in Poland.

In the next chapter, we describe actions taken up by concrete institutions that we visited. These are lessons that the creators and producers of the integration policy in Poland can learn from. The whole work closes with the summing-up, where we draw conclusions from the presented lessons and recommend what kind of actions should be undertaken in our country.

# Showing around the House: what should be done before integration?

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In the following chapter, a theoretical framework was necessary toward understanding the integration of migrants. Proving that integration is a long-term and very difficult process requires conducting systematic and well-planned initial actions. This article is an introduction of integration proposed as the working title *Showing around the House*; which aims to convince our society, and its institutions as well as for groups of migrants currently staying in Poland. These considerations are based on visiting studies in selected EU countries, whose experience with immigration has been longer than in Poland, along with the analysis of the literature regarding the subject of integration.

## Understanding of integration

The Polish debate on integration is under the influence of a set of definitions proposed by Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska in the book titled *Guests and Hosts (Goście i gospodarze)*<sup>1</sup> and then repeated again by the same author in the work entitled *Refugees. The Manual for People Working with Refugees (Uchodźcy. Podręcznik dla ludzi pracujących z uchodźcami)*.<sup>2</sup> Actually, it is a discussion and rendition of Berry's propositions from the beginning of the 90s.<sup>3</sup> *Integration* in this proposal is one of the possible courses the *acculturation* process might take, thus the emphasis is put only on the cultural aspect of the functioning of migrants in the host society. The remaining three courses of *acculturation* according to Grzymała-Moszczyńska are following: *assimilation* (rejection of "own cultural identity and inclusion in the group representing the culture of the settlement country" which results for immigrants in a no return and irreparable breaking of ties with the sending country<sup>4</sup>); *separation* (maintaining/ preserving migrants own lifestyle and culture – caused by their own decision or separatist behaviour of the host society<sup>5</sup>); *marginalisation* (pertaining to

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<sup>1</sup> Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Ewa Nowicka (ed.) *Goście i gospodarze (Guests and Hosts)*, Nomos, Kraków 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, *Uchodźcy. Podręcznik dla osób pracujących z uchodźcami (Refugees. The Manual for People Working with Immigrants)*, Nomos, Kraków 2000.

<sup>3</sup> John W. Berry, *Refugee Adaptation In Settlement Countries: an Overview with an Emphasis on Primary Prevention*, In Frederik L. Ahearn, Jean L. Athey (ed.), *Refugee children: Theory, Research and Services*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, *Refugees*, *ibid*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> That is how Grzymała-Moszczyńska presents it. In reality, we often deal with a very complicated process of reciprocal dialectic game of separation by the minority group and separating by the majority or host group.

people who lost contact with their own culture, considering it as an inferior, less valuable in relation to the culture of the new settlement country, at the same time failing to join the network of contacts within the new culture. This leads to the feeling of alienation and a loss of identity. "This situation often leads to psychological disorders and predisposes to criminal behaviour"<sup>6</sup>). *Integration* itself in the opinion of this author is the best possible course of *acculturation* that consists in "both the will to sustain one's cultural identity as well as the will to maintain contact with the new culture"<sup>7</sup> - it is bilateral just as in the Penninx's definition adopted by the EU Commission, demanding some effort and change in one's own culture by both immigrants and the host society.<sup>8</sup>

The next important considerations in the Polish academic discussion regarding integration have been presented by Maciej Ząbek.<sup>9</sup> He is less enthusiastic about this course of *acculturation* - his considerations regard mainly cultural aspects of migrants' presence in Poland. According to this author, separation of various cultural groups in the history of the human race has been a frequent phenomenon, and often taking place without mutual conflicts between divided groups. In his opinion, it is now a strategy that is often rejected owing to tragic experiences of WWII and the fear of the state losing control over the enclaves within the society it governs, due to the dissimilarity of a separated culture to which has a limited access.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, *assimilation*, although possible to apply, is a strategy rejected by civilised countries due to diagnosed failures in the migration policy up till now. It is, according to Ząbek, also a symptom of political correctness - today it is in bad taste to discuss *assimilation* in political discourse and this word should be replaced by the word *integration*, even if, de facto, the meaning is identical. It is often, in his opinion, "a hidden, more sophisticated form of the assimilation policy"<sup>11</sup>, where "something" is demanded from the side of immigrants, whereas the other direction of the process - the change in the host society is very insignificant or only seemingly.

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<sup>6</sup> Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, *Uchodźcy (Refugees)*, *ibid*, p 23.

<sup>7</sup> Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, *Uchodźcy (Refugees)*, *ibid*, p 18.

<sup>8</sup> Rinus Penninx, *Elements for an EU-Framework for Integration Policies*, in: Rita Sussmuth and Werne Seidenfeld (ed.), *Managing Integration: The European Union's Responsibilities towards Immigrants*, Migration Policy Institute and The Bertelsman Foundation, Gutersloth 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Maciej Ząbek (ed.), *Miedzy piekłem a rajem. Problemy adaptacji kulturowej uchodźców i migrantów w Polsce (Between Hell and Paradise. Problems of Refugees and Migrants Cultural Adaptation in Poland)*, the Trio Publishing house of the Ethnology and Anthropology Institute of Warsaw University History Department, Warsaw 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Maciej Ząbek, *Wstęp. Miedzy piekłem a rajem. Problemy adaptacji kulturowej uchodźców i migrantów w Polsce (Between Hell and Paradise. Problems of Refugees and Migrants Cultural Adaptation in Poland)*, *ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Maciej Ząbek, *Wstęp. Miedzy piekłem a rajem. Problemy adaptacji kulturowej uchodźców i migrantów w Polsce (Between Hell and Paradise. Problems of Refugees and Migrants Cultural Adaptation in Poland)*, *ibid*, p. 18.



Despite his focusing on immigrants *adaptation* in the cultural sense, Maciej Ząbek notices that cultural issues depend on economic conditions of migrants' life: "The underlying condition to recover from the cultural shock and to adapt successfully is the chance or its lack to have the economic success (for each group its scale can differ, however it is always indispensable). Given that, it is finally the main aim of migration for all the groups, even if the causes for migration were not economic. The economic success allows living and fulfilling the ambitions, getting in contact and making friends and maintaining ties, both with the Polish people and with the members of their own group."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the author underlines that the key issue for the situation of immigrants is related to the economic capital; however he does not deal with it in the work edited by him.

Both mentioned above authors were interested mainly in the situation of refugees in Poland (although in the work edited by Maciej Ząbek, part of the articles are devoted to other migrant groups present in Poland). Refugees are the group, with regard to whom we assume in the conducted migrant policy that will need considerable assistance while starting their life in an entirely new country. Hence, the inclusion of the integration programmes for refugees within the framework of social policy. From our point of view, it is not appropriate to consider migrants as a one entity (especially regarding economic migrants) as the potential recipients of the social services assistance. The actions undertaken within the social assistance programme towards these migrants would have a labelling character and in a sense could be threatened with the effect of self-fulfilling prediction – migrants bonded from the very beginning social services could become its permanent clients.

Apparently, restricting the *integration* of migrants into the host society only to cultural issues sets limits to problems of a much broader character. References to literature focusing on the *integration* as type of *acculturation* or cultural adaptation in the above text result from the fact that the paradigm of this kind has dominated considerations of migrants' *integration* phenomenon in social sciences in Poland.

We propose the reference to the Pierre Bourdieu's concept of three types of capital<sup>13</sup>, to demonstrate that the cultural aspect is important, but not the only one, as it is impossible to separate from the social and economic aspects of migrants functioning in the host society.

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<sup>12</sup> Maciej Ząbek, *Wstęp. Między piekłem a rajem. Problemy adaptacji kulturowej uchodźców i migrantów w Polsce (Between Hell and Paradise. Problems of Refugees and Migrants Cultural Adaptation in Poland)*, *ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, in: John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, New York 1986.

### Three forms of capital – three aspects of integration

Cultural, social and economic capital is mutually interchangeable; however, this interchange frequently takes place in the course of complex transformations and conversion processes. Large resources of one of the forms of capital usually result in an easy access to other forms of capital. According to an extended and complicated sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu, the groups that possess large amounts of cultural or social capital usually produce social mechanisms that prevent obtaining the capital by those that are at the disposal of only the economic capital (*nouveau riche*).

The migrants' situation in a given country is the outcome of three forms of capital that they have at their disposal. The person who can be regarded as integrated is the one, who has enough cultural and social capital and thus not to be pushed off to the margins of social life. Of course, the question arises in such considerations about the distribution of these types of capital in the host society and which groups they can be compared to while assessing the degree of migrants' integration. We think that this question is one of the most difficult to be asked in the discussion about the integration. Moreover, it seems that the final answer cannot be given. The social "model" with which the migrant is compared will always be changing. It can be also predicted that due to the social phenomena of shifting distinctions described by Bourdieu, it will always be for migrants a "disappearing point" in a given country. It means that according to the definition created by the host society regardless of the course of migrants' adaptation; they will continually be considered as not satisfactorily adapted; whereas the target of adaptation will be shifting closer as they are approaching it.

The internal social differentiation within the population of the host country will also be a problem while indicating such "a model." In the case of Poland, the number of groups are excluded or threatened by the social exclusion – they themselves lack the cultural, social and financial capital to function in the society on the level that is expected from life by representatives of other groups, or on the levels that are made as an attempt to indicate objectively the minimum subsistence level, minimum level of poverty. There are also in Poland minority groups that frequently maintain more or less significant separatist strategies, and are not seeking dense relationships with representatives of the rest of the society. They are hardly a "model" for integration targets.

Hence, among other things, while considering the migrants integration, a paradox occurs that we call the paradox of "the model." Quite frequently, there is an

apparent attempt at integrating or at “something being done” to migrants which is to lead them to the state that in reality does not work, moreover, a majority of the host society representatives cannot achieve such a state either, nonetheless, they are not demanded to achieve it. This paradox occurs in Poland in cases of awarding the Polish Charter (Karta Polaka) to applicants or the endorsement of settlement in Poland resulting from the Polish origins. The examination checking the acquaintance with standard facts from Polish literature or traditional customs is set by the consuls or employees of the voivod (regional) offices. The paradox of the “model” consists in the fact that there can be quite a considerable number of Polish people whose nationality or citizenship of our country could never be questioned; however, they would never pass such an exam.

The possession of high social capital, belonging to a variety of social networks, strong relationships with other members of a society, helps in finding a job/ position, receiving assistance in difficult situations, or facilitates in the access to all sorts of resources (e.g. renting a flat, etc.).

A high level of cultural capital (using the terms from the Bourdieu’s theory, we can speak about main topics that interest researchers studying cultural aspects of adaptation in this way) can be understood as the command of a language, awareness of social practices applied in a given society, knowledge of complex cultural codes, or rules underlying functioning of particular institutions.

Possessing wealth does not solve problems that arise for a migrant who has low resources of cultural and social capital. They are forced to pay for their inexperience during various transactions, or have to use intermediaries, or mediators while dealing with bureaucracy and official formalities, etc.

In a sense, strong migrant social networks help to solve problems that migrants with low cultural or social capital have in a host country. By taking advantage of the social and cultural capital in social networks in their host country, they can become successful as they can have easier access to various resources. However, it is worthwhile noticing, that such a situation may make members of a given diaspora dependent (susceptible) on social networks as they can rely on contacts with representatives of such networks with institutions of the host society.

Thus, speaking of the integration of immigrants in a given society, taking into account the expressed earlier reservations regarding the model to which they are to be integrated, it is necessary to remember that it is a process that takes a very long time. Fully obtaining cultural and social capital validity in a new society seems to be in most cases impossible for the individual beginning an entirely new life. Integration understood in such a way can be described as a process taking many

generations, whereas in the case of individuals, it is the long-term process available only for individuals with special resources (e.g. high cultural and social capital originating from the mother country).

Bourdieu, writing about acquiring cultural capital that is characteristic for other social classes, meant processes connected with education and transition to another social class through the acquisition of both the cultural capital as well as habitus by the young people who part from the social class of their parents and who in consequence lose their ties with them.<sup>14</sup> A similar situation frequently takes place in the case of next generations in the migrant families. Representatives of the next generation frequently lose contact with the culture of the country of their origin to such an extent that they are not able to function properly in it.

### **Basis for the integration**

Managing integration processes seems to be very difficult for the state. It requires a specific vision and a long-term policy. If one used a mathematical metaphor, it is solving a task for which it is necessary to have the knowledge of integral calculus, while the problems that we are dealing with currently in Poland are more basic and sticking to this metaphor, they require skills such as adding and multiplying. Of course, if one does not have skills enabling him to add or multiply, the use of integral calculus is impossible.

Currently, we see in Poland, the very beginnings of the integration policy directed at the group of migrants in the biggest need, namely those who are refugees as well as people using the assistance of supplementary aid. In such cases, there are carried out individual programmes for integration. As far as other groups of migrants are concerned, the debate is only starting. There are undertaken certain activities, to a large extent fuelled by the easy access of Poland to The European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals. However, we get an impression that many of those activities undertaken towards the migrants under the heading of integration are rather either (a) pre-integration activities consisting in giving initial information – we suggest later on in the further part of this article the integrated and well-thought out course of such activities; or (b) the integration actions which, although lacking systematic foundations, just like in our metaphor, an attempt at integral calculus without an efficient command of addition and multiplication skills.

In order to enter this long-term integration process, we understand that immigrants gradually acquiring cultural and social capital in a given country affecting

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Jane Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks (CA), New Delhi 1990.

their chances in life it is necessary to have an access to certain basic resources of this capital.

In a cultural sense, such a fundamental skill is an ability to speak the language of the host country; however, the command of the language is not a sufficient knowledge of the host country. What matters is the context, in which the language is used – the awareness of cultural rules of conduct in a given country. We do not have in mind culture meant as the classic cultural canon seen in Poland frequently as traditions connected with Christmas carols and history, but the deeply rooted in culture rules of behaviour governing particular everyday life situations, knowledge of the conventions organising the functions of everyday life, including also housing, labour market, schooling and health services.

In the social sense, integration means the enlargement of social capital resources of a given migrant. In this case, the pre-condition for enabling the entering into the interactions with e.g. the local environment is spreading the knowledge about the use of social resources available in the place of settlement (various kinds of associations, or public assistance institutions).

### **The pre-integration activities as the need of the host society**

The basis for entering into integration processes or otherwise, which the given country undertakes towards migrants in its policy, is learning by migrants the cultural and social ABCs observed by a given society. We could call this process the pre-integration; however, we would prefer to put aside discussions about such integration as the initial considerations informing the migrants about cultural and social rules governing the functioning in the society that they came to. Assisting migrants in learning about basic rules of functioning in the given society does not have to be a condition for using the integration strategy. It seems to be profitable not only for migrants, but also for the functioning of the host society institutions. This was frequently kept in mind when in view of initial integration activities or previous ones were designed.

Regarding examples of such activities undertaken towards immigrants, we have been able to observe in a few European countries. One of them is the New Link Centre in Peterborough, the UK, which according to the British *cohesion* policy is applied towards migrants to direct them at the coherent way of merging with the local community of that city. This is a service, whose main assumption is assistance in the functioning of local institutions that need help in contacts with migrants not speaking English language well enough and unaccustomed with certain ways of

behaviour considered as obvious in Great Britain. The *cohesion* policy is connected with the British model of multiculturalism, however, according to the interviews we have carried out with people who have implemented this model into everyday life, to a large extent, it is important that migrants do not disturb the cohesion of the local communities with whom they join and or merge with. It does not necessarily mean "bad" assimilation. People that implement the *cohesion* policy support the idea of bilateral integration, however, from this perspective, immigrants are perceived as a potential threat to the cohesion of the local community.

The New Link in Peterborough introduces migrants to public institutions and offices functioning in town and explains the rules of how they operate, what can be expected from them, and the duties they have towards them. The New Link helps civil servants in their work when they encounter migrant customers who do not always know how to behave. There are special training courses conducted for local officials and office workers/clerks in order to teach them rules of intercultural behaviour.

From the point of view of the British, some types of behaviour that could be treated as insignificant disturb their cohesion. As the major issues were indicated, for example, situations when more people lived in the house than normally expected in Britain caused a problem e.g. finding parking space in the area or difficulties with disposal of excessive waste.

Some of the problems that the New Link deals with arise from differences in legislation between the UK and the countries of the migrants' origin, some other from different customs and norms observed in these countries. As an instance of such behaviour, there was mentioned a habit of fishing freely in the rivers by the East Europeans, followed by their caught fish consumption. According to British regulations, there is a license required for fishing, and the caught fish has to be immediately unhooked and thrown back into water. From the point of view of the angling East European migrants, such a regulation is an absurd, and throwing the fish back into water is obviously a waste. Frequently, immigrants did not simply imagine that such laws could exist in a given country and broke the law unaware, although the ignorance of law is not an excuse... For most Britons, catching fish in public waters and their consumption is a sign of barbarity. The New Link's role is explaining these kinds of differences and extinguishing the resulting from them tensions.

What the example above shows, in case of everyday life of small towns the issues that are defined as social problems from our point of view seem relatively trifle, nevertheless, disturbing for the local community, making their inhabitants feel lost in their own place is therefore disturbing social cohesion.

Intercultural mediations are also among the tasks of the New Link workers, who in this way solve the conflicts arising among neighbours caused by a lack in mutual knowledge about cultural customs.

Aside of integration attempts in Great Britain, one can take an example from Spain where the municipal institution Nova Ciutadania in the town Mataró implementing the Catalan policy called *accollida* functions in a twofold way. On the one hand, it encourages joining training courses describing the town's offer to its inhabitants; on the other hand, it requires officials of all the municipal institutions to translate (not only the language, but also the culture) in situations when they meet applicants of a migrant origin. For example, when a migrant comes to a certain municipal institution as a customer and the official experiences understanding problems, an appointment is made with the Nova Ciutadania employee who is invited to translate as well. The translation is understood in a broader sense than the rendition from one language into another. It is called mediation and consists in explaining cultural differences connected to principles observed in Spain.

This example above demonstrates that the initial actions towards migrants are useful not only for them, but also for the local governments, which makes it easier to carry out their job. It is a good argument to convince the sceptics who think that migrants (especially the economic ones) do not need any help from the state which is their host. According to that, the support is useful both for the immigrants and the local communities who host them.

### **Showing around the house**

The name for activities, which we are writing about, is important, as it expresses their sense. For that reason we would not call it pre-integration, as we have underlined it at the beginning, we would like to understand them as an opening of a number of possibilities, and not only as an introduction to integration.

In Holland, as well as in the Flemish part of Belgium integration activities are called *inburgering*. The sense hidden under this notion needs to be translated with the use of many words. Certainly, the words *making a citizen* (from *burger* - a citizen) are not adequate, as it is only an initial activity and granting citizenship does not have to be its consequence. It seems that as the more suitable translation would be the *introduction to the city* or *showing around the city*. Within the *inburgering* activities, there are courses conducted in languages understandable for migrants that combine a description of practical information regarding rules and regulations,

functioning of the institutions, which the migrants can use, but also, for example, in Brussels, practical skills such as the ability to use a city map (for those who need it) and acquisition of the transportation system rules is taught. The coaches discuss also the issues put forward by the members of the groups they work with.

Direct translations express the sense of activities; however, they such translations are not always possible. For instance, the Catalan word *accolida* cannot be translated directly into the Polish language either. The dictionary translation meaning *reception* or *welcome* fails to express its full meaning. During the talks with practitioners implementing *accolida* we have developed the descriptive translation, which best expresses its meaning – it is *showing around the house*.

Thus, we postulate to implement in Poland, special kinds of information packages about particular institutions functionings, which they may use. Recently, there can be found numerous information centres and handbooks for foreigners initiated by non-governmental organisations are the evidence of this. They are, however, supplementary initiatives, not having a systematic character. Their effectiveness depends on their association with local governments. These institutions do not have to be subordinate to self-governments, as the example of Belgium shows, or the described above New Link in Peterborough, England<sup>15</sup>, these can be consortia of self-government and non-governmental organisations or the actions commissioned to NGOs.

### **Showing around the house is essential regardless of the migration policy type**

Actions such as *anburgering*, *accolida* or *New Link* project have a lot of features in common, despite advancing completely different philosophies applied regarding migrants in the following stages. Great Britain is a country that implements multiculturalism policy, however, traditionally having liberal attitude towards its inhabitants (regardless whether they are its citizens or otherwise). According to this country's experts, there is hardly any integration policy conducted within its territory<sup>16</sup>, whereas the *cohesion* policy is carried out to prevent any disturbances in the local communities' lives they have led so far. Therefore, there is a focus on the British citizen rather than on the migrants, "to prevent the deterioration of the situation of the British rather than to improve the situation of the migrants."

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<sup>15</sup> It is important that New Link in Peterborough is also an innovative project even in the United Kingdom. Other towns and cities carry on various activities, however, it is not a unified system, and the town of Peterborough is set as an example as far as the solutions developed by them.

<sup>16</sup> The statement of Sarah Spencer from the Compas.



The attitude shown by the Flemish in Belgium<sup>17</sup> is much more “invasive” towards the migrants. In Flanders, it is obligatory for immigrants to learn the language; while within the territory of Brussels migrants choosing from the proposals of the Flemish community are not obliged to do so to such an extent. *Inburgering* is meant as an introduction to integration with the Flemish community.

On the other hand, the philosophy applied towards migrants in Spain appears to be very liberal, but in a completely different way than in the UK. The emphasis is put on preventing migrants from dependence on assistance of institutions such as social welfare. One of the ideas behind *accolida* is to lead to such a situation, when the migrant is “a normal”<sup>18</sup> customer, just like any other inhabitant of a given city. Therefore, both the migrant, and public institution need *accolida*, that is showing around the house is sometimes requires a special translation; however, the main idea is pushing, or encouraging the migrants to participation in “normal” social life.

For these reasons, we believe that using such approaches and beginning their application is worthwhile, even in the current situation, when the debate on the long-term model of activities towards migrants in Poland seems to be at a very early stage, and the voices that the discussion is premature are not completely groundless in the light of the current numbers of immigrants in Poland, their character, lack of prognosis for the future numbers of migrants or the character of migration to Poland.

Recalling once again, the mathematical metaphor, we suggest the systematic implementation of tasks from the field of adding and multiplying, which will be of use anyway, regardless; whether we make a decision that next we want to deal with a integral calculus, or a set calculus, or we shall give up altogether any of the more advanced contacts with mathematics. In all these instances, addition and multiplication will be of use. We are returning to the postulate to put aside the issue of integration. The activities, we suggest, are independent of the discussion about the shape of migrants’ integration in Poland.

The working title *showing around the house* combines elements of equipping the migrants with more considerable cultural and social capital. The cultural capital for obvious reasons, as they learn basic language expressions, ways the institu-

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<sup>17</sup> In Belgium, the responsibility for the activities undertaken towards migrants lies in various measures on local authorities, regional authorities, including also the language communities that independent bodies from Wallonia and Flanders – in this way, the inhabitants of Brussels can deal both with the representatives of the Francophone Language Community as well as the Flemish Language Community.

<sup>18</sup> Working Plan on Immigration 2008-2011, Barcelona City Council, p.102.

tions work as well as cultural rules and customs that are associated with them. When shown around the house, we teach them to use the map, meaning the culture dominating in our country<sup>19</sup> – we put emphasis on what is meant in Poland by the culture of everyday life, culture of the institutions that migrants may encounter, cultural habits related to work, with public space accepted in Poland, not the high culture, or the connected with it cannot defining it – it is a much more advanced stage (although for people conducting courses for foreigners maybe it is easier, as it does not require moving around the cultural dimensions of what is obvious in Poland, whereas it is not obvious for someone else for whom it is not obvious).

Migrants will be acquiring capital in a social sense, when they realise that they can take advantage of the institutions' support acquired in *showing around the house* in their future contacts with Polish institutions, they will be in a better negotiating position, as well as they will have an opportunity for assistance. As the experiences of *accolida* and *inburgering* demonstrate, it is also of importance that the mutual self-aid groups are formed among participants of the same courses conducted within the same programmes, therefore a reinforcement of social capital inside the group of migrants. Thanks to *showing around the house*, they should receive information on how to get to these groups, organisations and institutions that they will be able to use – in this way their social capital will be increased. The described by Bourdieu exchange of various forms of capital is shown clearly, the access to groups, organisations and institutions as the social capital is connected with awareness of the cultural codes and ways of conduct within them, as a result the cultural capital. We believe that the reinforcement of these two forms of capital will indirectly cause in the long run an increase of traditional capital of migrants. They will be less exposed to discrimination; they will save time and money taking advantage of public services in the optimum way, etc.

### **The need for *showing around the house* among immigrants in Poland**

It is our opinion that *showing around the house* would be very useful to the most numerous groups of migrants present in Poland.

The immigrants, for whom the institution of *showing around the house* could prove to be very useful, are the immigrants from Ukraine. It must be remembered that it is not a uniform group<sup>20</sup>. A considerable number of workers from Ukraine hold

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<sup>19</sup> Clifford Geertz used metaphor of culture as a map. See: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*, Basic Books, New York 1973.

<sup>20</sup> Mirosław Bieniecki, Mikołaj Pawlak, *Strategie przetrwania. Adaptacja ukraińskich migrantów zarobkowych do polskiej rzeczywistości instytucjonalnej*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2009.

visas allowing them for short-term employment without necessity to apply for work permit. Despite their stay in Poland for up to half a year each year which means that as shuttle migrants they are in our country in a sense permanently – permanently, but not all the time. Although, it seems there is no point in applying integration programmes in the case of these immigrants – the majority of them do not have any plans for the future in Poland and spend less than half a year here – nevertheless *showing around the house* seems to be of use to them, whereas the experiences of the non-governmental organisations that conduct information centres and training courses for migrants, indicate that there is a need in this group mostly for information to be delivered in a clear way. It would be a challenge for people designing actions for such groups as to plan them in such a way that migrants are not distracted from their work and at the same time they are attractive to them. The short-term migrants coming to Poland want to make the most of their time and try to do their best to earn as much money as possible. It cannot be expected that they would attend courses scheduled for early afternoon and taking many weeks (here is a good example of a good training practice within *accolida* activities carried out by the Town Hall of Mataró, where migrants indicate the best time fitting their timetable).

Professionals (people with a work permit for jobs requiring high qualifications) and students from Ukraine can be treated in the context of *showing around the house* as a separate group due to resources of cultural and social capital that they have at their disposal in Poland. Paradoxically, it is the group that is in the least need of integration activities done for them in our country, as they seem to manage well – their representatives have a good command of Polish language, as well as a social network of contacts with Polish citizens. However, *showing around the house* would be beneficial to them as well, as it would be an integrated and systematic delivery of knowledge about Poland, and the locality they live in, which might prove useful in everyday life. Thanks to *showing around the house* they would not have to fish for this kind of knowledge on their own, or ask the acquaintances to find out about it, etc. It would make life of the representatives of the group in Poland easier, since due to the information acquired by *showing around the house*, they would not lose so much time and money to solve their daily problems encountered with bureaucracy. They would have a better awareness of the legal system; it would be easier for them to avoid situations threatening discrimination, etc.

The Vietnamese group has assumed to a large extent the strategy of separation in Poland. It is a very complicated issue and therefore we are presenting it here in a nutshell. Apparently, most representatives of this group seem to be hardly interest-

ed in the deep integration. However, *showing around the house*, would be useful for many of their members, even though they spend most of their time at work, while their leisure and family life remain within the enclave of their diaspora. *Showing around the house* would make easier their contacts with institutions of the Polish society, in which they participate. It would also clear away occurring doubts that many Vietnamese people due to their ignorance of many codes of conduct and rules governing Poland depend on specialised intermediaries helping them in these contacts frequently charging outraging amounts of money. According to both English and Spanish philosophy of a go-between *showing around the house* would also make life easier for the representatives of Polish institutions who often encounter problems in contacts with Vietnamese owing to their inability to speak the language and know the cultural differences.

The Chechen people are currently the major group applying for status of refugee, receiving this status, as well as receiving subsidiary protection. The refugees and the people with subsidiary protection are the only ones that are included in the systematic integration activities, although their effectiveness is frequently deficient<sup>21</sup>. As one of the main causes of such failures, there has been reported the abandoning of systematic pre-integration activities in the refugees centres regarding people applying for refugee status. It has been caused by the doctrine of the Refugees Office in that there is no sense in undertaking such activities towards people that you are not sure about whether they will get the right to stay in Poland<sup>22</sup>. In this case, the need of *showing around the house* would be replaced to a certain extent, or would become an element of the pre-integration activities addressed at refugees that are a special group requiring a range of assistance activities than just *showing around the house*. In the view of the experiences with representatives of the Chechen nationality in Poland, it is a group, whose members are also to a large extent oriented at the strategy of separation. Preparation of effective integration programmes for them seems to be a very difficult task, and a big part of this offer may be rejected by them anyway. We expect that *showing around the house* as the minimum for this group, but also due to its usefulness could be considered interesting by them. We are underlining as well that *showing around the house* would be attractive for them, and if it was allowed to be produced in the

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<sup>21</sup> Justyna Frelak, Witold Klaus, Jakub Wiśniewski (ed.), *Przystanek Polska. Analiza programów integracyjnych dla uchodźców (Poland Stop. Analysis of Integration Programmes for the Refugees)*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych (The Institute of Public Affairs), Warsaw 2007.

<sup>22</sup> The departures from this doctrine are the actions undertaken in the centres within various kinds of projects carried on in partnership with non-governmental organisations, however, there has not been a system developed regarding all the people applying for the status of the refugee and carried on in all the centres.

refugees' centres this could be an excellent method for overcoming the predominant over there boredom.<sup>23</sup>

### **Cultural and social capital as a chance for improving the financial situation**

As we have emphasized, at all costs the tying of immigrants to the assistance of the social welfare system should be avoided – the exception are refugees, who in most cases really need such help when they come to our country without anything, or the separate cases, when the migrants are indeed in need. However, we think that activities described as *showing around the house* should be systematically separated from the social welfare assistance. It is some kind of aid, however, for the people that we consider independent, only not possessing certain cultural and social capital.

While we help migrants to obtain the cultural and social capital through *showing around the house* we enable them to improve their own financial situation according to the principle that forms of capital are exchangeable. Migrants that find it easier to move around Polish cultural and institutional reality should have increased chances to improve their financial situation in this way, through e.g. diminishing of the losses arising from ignorance, or through better opportunities of employment.

### **Conclusions**

*Showing around the house* according to the experiences of the countries conducting these types of programmes, should be implemented locally in most cases, responding to needs of local communities or counties. We have a feeling that only the local level self-government institutions and non-governmental organisations are in the position to form on their territory the maps of institutions where migrants should be shown around. The demands differ from place to place; they vary in local communities according to the profile of an immigrant group. Such activities cannot be designed centrally in details, only the main ideas can be common for the system applied throughout the whole country. The collected so far experiences of other countries indicate that a detailed *showing around the house* should depend on the situation of a given place (commune, county, perhaps region/district). It is just the opposite, however, to the financing of the *showing around the house*. According to the experiences of the countries that implement such programmes burdening the local governments and self-governments with total costs is impossible, as in many cases

<sup>23</sup> See: Maciej Ząbek, Sławomir Łodziński, *Uchodźcy w Polsce. Próba spojrzenia antropologicznego*, Polska Akcja Humanitarna, Instytut Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej UW, Warszawa 2008.

they would not be able to manage or to bear the weight of expenses. Thus, such activities should be planned locally, however, financed from the budget of the central ministry responsible for integration.

## LESSONS

### FROM BELGIUM, GREAT BRITAIN, CATALONIA AND PORTUGAL

As we have mentioned in the introduction, during the study visits in Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain and Spain, we looked at selected integration policies towards immigrants. In all these countries there was conducted a series of interviews with representatives of institutions dealing with integration of immigrants and on their basis we prepared pre-developed case studies of selected good practices. The collected material was enriched with a description of the Portuguese example, prepared by our colleague, Justyna Frelak, the Head of the Migration and Development Policy Programme at the Institute of Public Affairs. These examples are not ready-made patterns that one could graft on Polish soil, but rather illustrations that help to create a list of questions and issues to be resolved in the Polish institutional context. In practice we see, therefore, described the ideas and models from which we should reap the most, but that will be useful for us rather only after their adaptation to Polish reality. Selected examples present in the form of lessons and we hope that these are lessons from which we can learn something.

## The Belgian lesson

Belgium is a state with a federal political system of two partially crossing levels. The first one is the level of the autonomous regions: the Capital City Region of Brussels, Flemish Region and Wallonia Region. The other level is that of language communities: French, Flemish and German language speaking communities. As far as the territorial division is concerned, the autonomous regions are divided into provinces. The language communities have their own administrations; as far as their territorial competence is concerned it looks as follows. The Flemish community functions in the Flemish Region and in the Capital City Region of Brussels, the Wallonia Community in the Wallonia Region and in the Capital City Region of Brussels, whereas the German-language Community operates in a minor area of Wallonia Region inhabited by people speaking German language. In this way Brussels is a bilingual city and the equal parity of both languages in the public space is very strictly observed.

The authorities of the language communities are responsible for the integration policy, whereas the implementation on the daily-basis is handed over to provinces (thus the regional authorities do not actually deal with the integration issues).

In Flanders and the separately treated Brussels, in the Flemish-speaking community, the integration issue is taken care of by the BON (Brussels Onthaalbureau Nieuwkomers) organisation, while in the French-speaking community the CIRE (Coordinatuion et Initiatives pour et avec les Réfugiés et Étrangers) organisation is operating. In other regions and greater cities, similar organisations are dealing with similar tasks. During our research, we focused on these two organisations skipping the instances from other regions of Belgium as well as other institutions occupied with integration of immigrants in the Brussels itself. Such a choice was made due to the fact that both BON and CIRE are the institutions where the coherent and coordinated integration policy can be observed. These institutions differ from each other and although BON is the institution that specialises in the integration of newcomers, while for CIRE it is only one of their numerous tasks, both models are worth closer study. Below, we are presenting the descriptions of both institutions, while further on we precede to the initial conclusions arising from their attitude to the issue of integration.



## **BON – Brussels Onthaalbureau Nieuwkomers**

BON is a non-governmental organisation that works under the Flemish government legislation from the 1980s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The BON's offer is addressed to grownup people of other than Belgian origins who have settled down or have come for a longer stay to Belgium and are registered in Brussels. The scheme of the BON offers the courses of social orientation conducted in many languages (advertised on the organisation website as the “honest and current information about life in Belgium”), courses of the Dutch language, careers and educational counselling and the assistance in individual matters regarding various aspects of immigrant's functioning in the social life of Belgium.

In practice, BON conducts its courses mostly in French (due to high numbers of immigrants from Africa who speak French, but need some orientation), in Arabic and in Turkish, and when the need arises (when the efficient numbers speaking the language gather) also in English, Russian, Spanish, Tibetan, Polish, Farsi or other languages. The organisation cooperates with several teachers who are able to conduct the orientation courses in various languages, whereas their second language is always Dutch.

The integration courses are intended mainly for people who have recently arrived in Belgium. In this sense, BON is assumed as “the bureau of reception, welcome, meeting of migrants that have just arrived” formed for immigrants, who have problems with “pulling themselves together” in Brussels and cannot speak Flemish.

The main condition of forming the groups is the language criterion. The groups are composed in such a way that all their members can communicate in the same language. The other criterion which is as important is something that our interlocutors called the “IQ test”, which qualifies participants to the training courses whose levels are more or less advanced. The test distinguishes two levels and divides the trainees into those who participate in a shorter and more intensive course and those who participate in the longer course. Both courses are completed at the same level of a command of Dutch language, a basic criterion being education and estimate of the ability in the mentioned earlier test for the fast learning process. The trainees are not informed about this criterion of selection to prevent their discouragement.

The method applied in designing the orientation courses consists in asking the course participants by the person conducting the course about what kind of life-related issues are of interest to them, especially those connected with getting around Belgium, in particular Brussels. Thus, the content of the course actually covers - we

write about it on the basis of the interviews with the people conducting the courses - all that comes to the course participants' minds and what they might consider useful. However, there is some standard package of information conveyed to them. The course provides them with some sort of a map, or a guidebook around Brussels. The most frequent kind of information that occurs is of practical nature: how the institutions work, how much the ticket is, how to rent a house, what to be cautious about, what are the rights of each citizen, and what are their duties, where to turn to in case of emergency, etc. According to how one of the teachers summarises it: "(...) these kinds of practical things that the person who arrives cannot know, and where could they know this from, after all? The thing is to convey to them some information, but also to enable the people to find their own way around here in Brussels." Besides this kind of information, the course provides also the general knowledge about Belgium (on history, geography, and politics).

The foundation of each course, however, is to provide the information corresponding to the specific character of each group for which the courses are conducted. The instructors underline here that issues can be completely different and they can change even for similar groups according to the varying situation on the labour market, or together with the acquisition of new rights by the group, as it was in the case of the citizens of the countries that entered the European Union after the year 2004. Here follows the fragment of an utterance of one of our instructors who presents the specific character of the courses offered by the BON:

*(...) Let's take the Polish people, for example, they are now in the EU, so they do not have any problems with the papers [i.e. the documents legalising their stay] but before that here used to be constant problems with the work permit. (...) this was a specific problem for Poles and other candidates to the European Union. This is very specific and does not recur in other groups. Whereas, when I have a group in French, plenty of Africans, then on the other hand, I have people that have lots of problems with papers, refugees and people who apply for asylum, etc. This is a very specific problem for this group. They require for example explanations about those documents, what to expect, because it is very difficult, all this administration, these papers are terribly complicated.*

According to the instructors conducting the courses, such an attitude brings much better results than a syllabus that is imposed in advance. Nevertheless, the majority of groups have similar expectations and requirements, therefore large part of topics remains the same and actually, the instructors may base their courses on the earlier prepared scenarios of the classes.

The advantage of the used method for the orientation of foreigners is here a great flexibility of teachers, who have to show themselves considerable knowledge in

various fields, as well as they can benefit from assistance of the invited to the courses guests: layers specialising in migration issues, psychologists, various experts. Thus the core of the offered by the instructors to the group aid is adjusting it to their current requirements. This results in the emphasis on “soft” capabilities, such as awareness of cultural differences, ability to communicate, etc. It is worth mentioning here how one of the teachers expressed his opinion on completion of the course: “it is not that integration is understood in such a sense that someone has to adjust to Belgian values, but they instead have to manage in Belgium.”

In the logistic sense, the courses are adjusted to immigrants’ needs: courses for the unemployed take place during the day, the ones with the job have the evening classes. The courses last from 36 to 40 hours altogether; they usually start at the beginning of the month and take about six weeks. During the course, the participants may use the help of the BON in providing the services of professional career councillors, use of the Internet, telephone. At the end of each course there is a ceremony organised during which the diplomas of the course completion are handed over to the participants. Such diplomas are official certificates acknowledged by Flanders (which is essential, as since in Brussels such courses are voluntary, while in Flanders they are obligatory – but later on they give the right to receive the communal housing.)

The course completion diploma allows the free of charge access to Flemish language courses. The diploma paves also the way for collaboration and use of the services of the organisations that are the BON’s partners: e.g. *Actiris* (the Brussels job centre), or *Trace*, where each trainee has a right to meet his own counsellor, who examines his individual situation and explains the particular person’s situation, their needs to rectify their life conditions and find work in Belgium (e.g. how to translate or verify the diploma, availability of possible training courses, etc.).

BON employs approximately 80 people. In 2009, around 1500 immigrants participated in the courses.

## **CIRE – Coordination et Initiatives pour et avec les Réfugiés et Étrangers**

CIRE was established in 1954 and is the organisation that coordinates the work of several dozen of major (like Caritas or Red Cross) and minor nongovernmental organisations dealing with issues connected with migrations, including migrants’ integration. The activity of CIRE can be divided into 5 basic thematic fields: 1) refugees and the procedures related to obtaining the refugee status, 2) migration policy, 3) integration, 4) detention, compulsory or voluntary returns, 5) migrations and development.

During our research we concentrated mainly on the issues connected with migrant integration that is mainly on how CIRE supported the people arriving in Belgium, especially in Brussels. The motto of the CIRE in this context is “promoting the integration of newcomers by providing with tools and services.” CIRE distinguishes in this area three definite goals for their activity.

The first objective covers inclusion (in French language) of refugees and foreigners to social, political and cultural reality of Belgium through “receiving” them regardless of currently binding regulations regarding the possibilities of immigrants’ stay in Belgium, (which means also practical help for illegal immigrants). As part of this objective, there are organised French language courses for foreigners, integration workshops and assistance in endorsement of diplomas and acknowledgement of their qualifications.

The second objective includes all kinds of supportive initiatives directed at refugee families to provide them with decent housing conditions and the continuation of their integration in the social environment, and also the assistance in the development of this kind of practices in the territory of the whole country.

The third objective is most general and covers all the initiatives carried out by the CIRE responding to the challenges occurring in the area of the immigrants’ integration issues. This aims both at the involvement in the political debate devoted to integration as well as participation in various social and cultural initiatives.

The main task of the CIRE is the coordination of activities taken up by the member organisations in such a way that their actions are coherent and directed at the implementation of the most efficient projects. Thus, the CIRE combines lobbying for the concrete legal and institutional solutions accepted by the regional governments and the central government with practical assistance for immigrants.

Differently than in case of the BON, the illegal immigrants in Brussels can also use services of the organisations associated in the CIRE. In that sense CIRE covers the void in the services system left by the BON. The main and basic services provided by the CIRE include, among other things, aid to people applying for the asylum (the action taken up since 1999 together with the Ministry of the Social Integration), French language courses for the foreigners (since 1945), whose aim is to introduce the refugees and foreigners to the specific social, political and cultural situation of Belgium, or the help in finding the place for living, (which covers both help in renting the places and the offer to help in getting home loans or mortgages for their own deposit).

The carried out interviews show that CIRE to the large extend uses the BON’s experiences especially in organising the language courses that introduce migrants

into specific aspects of life in Belgium and considers those experiences as the guideline for further development of their courses. The organisations associated in the CIRE can complement each other and share the tasks; however, they are de facto still the set of independent entities conducting their own policies towards immigrants. Acting within a network like the CIRE helps both better coordination of the undertaken tasks as well as allows for better providing the newcomers with assistance, however, the general programme that the newcomers could use is still lacking. That is why the representatives of the CIRE that we talked to were very enthusiastic about the patterns of integration applied by the Flemish government, and the example of full courses conducted by the BON, was for them a certain kind of indication for the goal that we want to achieve through the language courses.

### *Inburgering*

As the above examples show, the attitude presented towards the integration of the newcomers by the Flemish people is much better coordinated and practical: the main issues connected with the integration are concentrated in one institution, which actually does not bring help to the immigrants, but instead it takes care of introducing them into the life in Belgium. The BON's activity is the result of implementing the idea of the "citizenship" scheme (*Inburgering*), which would cover the whole process of newcomers' integration in Flanders. The foundations of that idea are very elevated and cover such statements as "common life in variety regardless of its origins," "active, mutual citizenship" and "common participation in society."<sup>24</sup> *Inburgering* is to be in that sense a way of forming "the new Flemish people."

The policy of "citizenship" conducted by the Flemish government is actually implemented through the courses organised by the BON organisation. Due to the fact that the scheme is addressed to the newcomers to introduce them into the Flemish community, it is much more "invasive" towards immigrants than the French-language schemes offered by the CIRE. It should be remembered that outside Brussels, this scheme is obligatory, and the participation in it is a condition for the migrant's access to numerous services provided by the regional authorities. Regardless of the ideology of "winning" new members of the Flemish community that underlies the Flemish train of thought about the immigrants' integration, the scheme is constructed in such a way that it apparently fulfils the expectations of both the immigrants (giving them the awareness of the basic facts indispensable in everyday

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<sup>24</sup> See: <http://www.binnenland.vlaanderen.be/inburgering/index.htm>

relationship with the host society) as well as the Flemish society which wins together with the graduates of the courses new “familiarized” neighbours who become “citizenries.”

## The British lesson

In the United Kingdom, as an example of good practice towards immigrants, we chose the New Link located in the town of Peterborough. It seems that the practices applied by the institution are an excellent instance of policy that aims to improve the social cohesion at the level of local communities.

Peterborough has a long tradition of migration. Since the sixties, Asian communities (mainly from India and Pakistan), the Irish (the Irishmen built the railway over there), and the Italians have been living there. However, it was only the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that brought such big numbers of migrants which forced the town to take special measures which resulted in establishing the New Link Asylum Migration Service.

The New Link Centre is an institution that has been established as a part of the City Council of Peterborough; and, as such it has become an inherent part of the 'social cohesion' policy in this town. It is an institution oriented at people who have come to Peterborough from abroad or moved from another part of the UK and need some information on how to arrange and take care of various concerns in Peterborough.

The Service was established at the end of 2001 - beginning of 2002, partly as a result of the decision of the UK government assigning Peterborough as a destination town for people were sent awaiting refugee status. As the outcome of this choice, within the period of a few days, "a very large number of people from various countries" suddenly arrived in Peterborough. Some of these people, who settled down in Peterborough at the time, were not allowed to look for a job legally and received only low benefits, and then there were the people who had already had the status of refugee so they had the same rights as British citizens.

At the same time, the European Union enlarged and new countries joined, therefore, besides refugees, workers from various new EU countries came to Peterborough as well. Apart from the Portuguese who had already been there, a vast number of Poles, Lithuanians and Slovaks arrived not long after their accession. They had various rights depending upon which country they were from (it depended on the transient agreements related to the EU accession). The common denominator for them was that both refugees and migrants often did not understand the good social welfare system in Britain did not mean that they were going to receive the same benefits that the regular British citizen had the right to, neither were they aware of how the local system of renting houses worked.

The other major problem was also the total “loss” of municipal officials in this completely new to them situation – e.g. refugees that had no work permit were sent over to Job Centres to look for jobs. Migrants coming from different countries spoke a variety of languages, and given the was lack of local translators or interpreters, it happened occasionally that they had to be brought from distant parts of the UK just to explain a young refugee where his local post office was from which he could collect his benefit. This chaos generated high costs at the part of the town’s budget.

Facing such a situation, the National Health Service together with the local Police and municipal authorities of Peterborough approached the British Home Office (in Poland it would be more or less a counterpart of the Internal Affairs and Administration Ministry that deals with the immigration issues) with the project for organising the institution – the centre for the aid of migrants – which would meet their needs: finding out where the migrants came from, recognising their needs and the possibilities how to respond to them, next taking care of training the people who work in municipal sections dealing with the services to customers, training and employing translators/interpreters to avoid hiring and bringing them from the remote parts of the country, etc. The project assumed an initial investment in the new centre; however, in the long perspective, it meant a savings for the budget. The town received money for three years, from 2004 to 2007, and the “New Arrivals Project” came to life taking care of new arrivals in Peterborough. The foundation of the programme was to combine the work of various institutions and aim to improve the quality of the town’s life. The programme offered services such as access to information, trainings, assistance in job seeking, support for community associations, right to use of office space/Internet, etc., besides a series of community meetings.

The project of the Asylum & Migration Service was composed of several mini projects. These projects included the New Link Service itself, but also an IT project was created establishing a database for the Service’s customers to enable contact with them and to recognise the individual requirements of the Service’s regulars’. The project included the training of translators/interpreters (among people living in such a migrant place as Peterborough it was easy to find a host of people speaking English as well as several other languages). These people were lacking professional training in the area of translation in such a way that they could use their languages. Currently, the City Council of Peterborough and the Police have signed a contract with two big companies that provide translators; one of the conditions of the contract is that the employed by them translators are to be the citizens of Peterborough.



## Social cohesion

The next project is the Community Development Project. The aim of this project is to create a strong structure supporting various immigrant communities and better communication network both inside the immigrant communities, as well as between various immigrant communities and other groups living in the town. In Peterborough at present, there are 15 organisations representing groups from various countries working together and acting as a Forum of immigrant communities.

The project aiming at supporting social activity in the Peterborough community includes work with social groups, including help in forming associations. It was considered essential for immigrants to meet in an institutionalised way with other people who had encountered similar experiences, coming from the same countries, sharing the same problems and speaking the same language. The project enables this kind of assistance. As one of the New Link employees accounts: *let's say, for example, someone who arrived from Iraq does not know what it is basically about and would like to contact and to get in touch with someone who comes from the same area of Iraq not to feel so isolated, then the project's aim is to help find such people. It is one of these things that help integration, because if people feel isolated and can't really speak to someone who would understand them, who has gone through the same kind of thing, then it is unlikely they would like to integrate with their English neighbours who live next door.*

The support of their own group helps migrants improve their self-confidence and makes them feel there is someone to support them. Due to acquaintances they have made thanks to the project, it is easier for immigrants to encourage newly arrived migrants to participate in, let's say, events or parties organised by the Town Hall, or the community associations in a given region.

The next service carried out by the New Link as a part of the social cohesion philosophy is the direct aid to town citizens – both migrants and the 'local' ones. The main principle of the Service's activity is to aid not only strangers from other countries, which makes possible their communication with the local community, but also to take care of 'old' inhabitants of Peterborough, who on the one hand can come and get information and on the another hand show their readiness to help and work as volunteers.

This joined activity towards the "old" and "new" inhabitants of Peterborough was the answer to many problems, which from our point of view might seem absurd; nevertheless, they shatter the world of the "old" citizens of Peterborough. One of the employees of the New Link says: *for the people who live in one of the districts of town where everything was nice (curtains and flowers in the windows and all),*

*when all of a sudden, one day, to the house that was inhabited by the family with two children, the group of ten migrants move in, which involves the trouble with parking their cars, problems with noise, rubbish segregation and their disposal, then it is the serious problem from their point of view. For this reason, the most important thing that the New Link points out to is that there will be no integration until the problems of the people who have lived there for years are solved, since their world has been "turned upside down."*

*Let's imagine a man who is, let's say, 65, and who has spent his entire life living in the same street, well, so, one day he is sitting and looking out of the window and he sees it all... well, he is not going to be happy. And we can tell him that everything is all right, that these people are working hard and they actually would like to lead a quiet life, and they are not different from him, well, he is not going to believe it, he simply won't be interested. He'll be interested that, for example, there is a rat in his garden, that's what he is interested in, and that's normal. And this should be taken care of, since unless these problems are solved, people will not be able to speak to each other just like that, as there are going to be too many issues that would irritate people.*

## **Mediations**

Assuming that in every community, among its members, conflicts happen, the number of which being even higher especially in the society where the social structure changes through the influx of immigrants. Peterborough provided a service that takes care of calming these kinds of conflicts by means of mediation. The aim of this project is to solve minor disagreements among the town inhabitants: *if anyone has an argument with the neighbour, be it an Englishman with an Englishman, or a Czech with a Slovak, it doesn't matter; they can ask for the service with this kind of help.* After having received such an application, the New Link employee visits both sides of the conflict separately, working out his objective view of the situation. As the workers from the New Link say, certain things are frequently mere misunderstandings between the two sides of the conflict, and it might be enough actually to convey the information to both parties to solve the conflict. The Service sometimes has to engage the police department or the town hall to solve the conflict. The service seems to have been thriving, as according to our interviewees around 80% of cases have been solved successfully just through the talk to both sides of the conflict (mediations).

In the context of solving the problems among the Peterborough inhabitants and mediations, it is worth to underline the role of the local police that collaborates with the New Link as far as these issues are concerned. Responding to the needs

of multiethnic and multinational society of the town, the Peterborough police set up a special section for the issues connected with social cohesion – called the Community Cohesion Unit. This section consists of 10 people, mostly officers of the migrant background speaking languages of the communities among which they work in the view of which they are selected and trained for the service. The job of the Unit is to prevent crime by means of alleviating tensions occurring within the town's community, both connected to relationships between the “older” inhabitants of Peterborough and immigrants, as well as those that occur among or inside the migrant communities.<sup>25</sup> Such an attitude requires close the cooperation of the section both with representatives of institutions taking care of migrant issues (as e.g. the discussed New Link) and the representatives of particular migrant communities inhabiting the town. Employing bilingual officers is supposed to facilitate contacts with these communities, but it also helps the police to “sense” the problems characteristic for a particular ethnic or social group. Through the establishing of this section, the Peterborough Police have intended also to decrease the number of incidents connected with ethnic-based violence, e.g. the hate crime. It is worthwhile adding that to gain the trust of the inhabitants, the Community Cohesion Unit focuses mainly on the preventative actions, helping the crime victims and monitoring of the situation; whereas, all criminal matters are handed over to other departments. Through such distribution of tasks, the representatives of the Unit are perceived by the communities as the reliable people that can be trusted. Therefore, this activity has become an excellent element of the New Link's work and is the mild form of transition from the institutions bringing assistance to the local community towards the institutions that are responsible for the prosecution of crime and inflicting the punishment.

## Trainings

The essential element of the New Link programme is the training that is aimed at working with migrants. The training courses are open to everyone, first of all addressed to people who work in municipal offices, nurses, doctors, the police department employees. They enjoy real popularity, and the people who benefit from come and join them because *they want to know what to do to, how to help the people who come to them and how to behave not to hurt the other persons' feelings, since it is what it really matters.*

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<sup>25</sup> We owe the Polish reader an explanation that the policeman in the UK is commonly respected and has much more authority than the policeman in Poland and is perceived rather as the civil servant than the officer of a hostile state.

## Careers counselling

The other service that is provided by the New Link is career counselling. The employees of the **Service help migrants as part of this service to recognise their foreign certificates and diplomas, to confirm their professional qualifications, etc.** The New Link **Service consultative department ensures the access to the so called assistants from variety of other organisations that have a duty according to a fixed timetable and give all sorts of advice – legal, financial, etc.** In that case, assistants are not able to help and give advice, the **Service possesses a database of experts/counsellors who can be contacted on the phone and the appointment is made with the applicant.**

## Integration in schools

Besides the mentioned earlier services for the inhabitants of Peterborough, the Service carries out also the project aiming at the integration of children at schools. Its introduction proved to be necessary when a big number of children with a weak command of the English language arrived at schools. Besides the trouble with poor English language skills among the migrant groups from some of the countries there is also a problem of a lack of education experience. To make the integration at schools easier for these children, the bilingual assistants were employed to work with them. The assistants accompany these children during the classes, explain and help with their homework (the parents whose English or educational background is often relatively poor cannot do it), help to find themselves in a group, and also, which is also crucial, aid schools in communicating with families.

While employing assistants, the things taken into account are the command of language and the number of children that speak the language. In the case of numerous migrant groups, assistants work directly at schools. When the groups are smaller, the assistants are employed at the town hall education departments and sent over to concrete schools when the need arises: *if the child appears speaking, let's say, Farsi or Dari, and it is necessary to communicate with that child and to conduct the induction of the child into school, i.e. to help get accustomed to school, then the school contacts the education department, saying: we are having this kind of situation, have you got anyone speaking the language?*

## Practice

The crucial element of the New Link activity is the possibility to help those in need right away. Cases requiring immediate action constitute only the minor part of all the issues taken care of by the New Link. The rule is that the people that come are welcomed by the receptionist who asks what she or he could do for them, what kind of help they would like, what is their problem and he or she arranges appointments for them.

During the first visit, customers are registered, then they complete the registration form containing mainly personal details, but also questions regarding their situation in Peterborough, (whether he has a rented house, the contract for it, any confirmation of payment of the rent, if he/she has children, if they attend the school, if the children do not go to school, what they do, etc....). The form is filled in English, but it is done with help of an assistant who speaks the language of the customer. In critical situations, when the customers who come to the Service, **are victims of crime**, or for example have been smuggled to Britain and need immediate help, there is also someone at the Service **who can receive this person immediately**.

From the point of view of the implementation of the mentioned projects, the town has noticed good reception of immigrants by the “old” community of Peterborough. The immediate impulse for developing the PR strategy were the problems that appeared at the very beginning of the project implementation, when the local newspapers found out that the town was to receive additional money and that the money was to be used to help people who did not come from this town, but to immigrants. To make the project acceptable for the “old” inhabitants of the town, the PR expert was invited to collaborate and was advised on how to show through media the need for the functioning of the Centre for the present inhabitants and the town as the whole – to show the citizens of the town what benefits they would have out of it. It is presented best by what one of the New Link Service **employees said** about the strategy:

*[it came to this that] the daily that is released [in Peterborough] – the Evening Telegraph, won the prize for the daily newspaper best at presenting (...) diversity and communities from various countries, due to the fact that if there is something positive they simply write about it. That is, instead of concentrating only on whether somebody killed someone, and this person happens to be from some country, no matter where from, they say also that for example there was an event organised by some association, and that some people of English background came, and it was also for these English people. We have had also such an incident, when these terrorists attacks took place in London, then two young Kurds came*

*to our Service, who said that they saw it on television and that it was so horrible, and that they wanted to donate the blood, and this went to the press straight away in order to... well who would think about that two young Kurds who came to our country because they had to escape from their country, would really want to donate their blood for the victims of the terrorist attack, well, it would not really cross anybody's mind. So this kind of things to show people what's in it for them really.*

In other words, the town had to use some energy to “buy” the local community. Besides, contacts with the press, the **Service is publicised by means of leaflets, pamphlets and posters** in a variety of languages. The employees of the **Service consider** as their success also the fact that it is advertised by the word of mouth. The migrants satisfied with the services, but as well the “old” inhabitants of the town send new customers over there. The clients are sent to the centre also by representatives of other local institutions, police, municipal offices, non-governmental organisations.

## **Conclusions**

Every month on average 300-350 people sign up for meetings (out of which 70 up to 100 are new people who have never used the **Service's assistance before**); whereas, the whole New Link has up to 1000 visitors. With the population of approximately 16 thousand migrants in Peterborough, it makes a pretty high ratio of all people interested in help from the town.

At the moment, the main diagnosed problem to be solved by the New Link appears to be the issue of house owners who rent houses to an exceeding number of people (the phenomenon of over-occupancy), which is the cause of problems of segregation of rubbish, or problems with parking, which are very upsetting for the old-established inhabitants of Peterborough.

## The Catalan lesson

This chapter is going to present actions carried out in Spain in the area of the autonomous region of Catalonia as regards the phenomenon of immigration. We are showing in it the activities conducted within the entire region, as well as two different local centres: Barcelona (capital city of Catalonia, one of the main municipal centres of Spain, of a size comparable to Warsaw, and Mataró, the city inhabited by approximately 100 thousand people).

The Secretariat for Immigration Affairs within the Directorate of Catalonia (regional authorities) is responsible for the implementation of the National [Catalan] Agreement for Migration. It deals mainly with the coordination of local actions and subsidising (in general, financed together with the Spain's Ministry of Labour and Integration) projects regarding immigration, including those implemented locally.

The work of the Secretariat is guided by the idea of the appropriate defining of problems. For instance, if migrants coming to Catalonia often use healthcare services and it causes unusual extended waiting time for a visit to the doctor's, the problem can be defined in a twofold way, either the number of migrants is too high, or the number of doctors is too low. This metaphor, used by one of our interlocutors, is supposed to show the idea of adjusting the public services to a diversified society. All kinds of the public service inadequacies related to the presence of newcomers are analysed in the cross sector commissions located in the directorate.

The programme conducted by the University of Gerona is organised in such a way that students with immigrant origins who achieve good results in their studies, play the role of mentors to secondary school's pupils in Catalonia coming from the same immigrant group. They are able to help to learn the Catalan language, and when the need arises they can assist the pupils in their charge in their native language. They also play the role of "an older brother/sister", worth to be emulated.

The system of professional trainings covers the introductory courses for the economic migrants that take place already in the country of their origin, before the planned trip to Spain. They consist in a language course, a culture course and a professional training course to adjust to the requirements of a given vocation in Spain. Up till now, this practice has been applied by the Directorate of Catalonia in Morocco and some Latin America countries.

The elements of the system include also the agreements between the Directorate and the future potential employer regarding the vocational training for unemployed migrants staying in Catalonia. In case of these contracts, the regional au-

thorities cover the cost of vocational training of a large group of unemployed on the condition that the specified ratio of them would get employed in the company with which the agreement is signed. In this way the trainees are motivated to go on the training course since the majority of them are guaranteed a job afterwards. Those who fail to get employed are at least qualified in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, not in the way created by the job centre, which are unsuitable for the real requirements of this labour market.

The regional authorities support and direct the local authorities in their activities applied to migrants, however, the final decisions are made on the local level, as this is where, in the opinion of the decision makers of this policy, are recognised the real needs and problems connected with migrants. In Catalonia, financing of the majority of projects that are carried out locally is split fifty-fifty between the central budget and the regional budget.

The migrant policy in Catalonia assumes no segregation on any level. Due to this, the projects leading to the *normalisation* of the migrants' situation receive larger support from the regional authorities, which means stimulating them to use the services in the same way that the people living Catalonia for a long period of time have used them. The administration is required to adjust to the changing profile and the needs of its customers. This policy assumes that there are no separate institutions directed solely toward migrants.

Instances of such actions are presented below.

### **The Municipal Council of Barcelona - the Commission for the Immigration and Cultural Dialogue at the Department of Education, Culture and Social Policy**

The Commission develops, then implements and coordinates the Municipal Immigration Scheme treated as the "road map" for the municipal immigration policy. The current scheme has been prepared for the years 2008 - 2011. The following assumptions govern the Scheme:

*Equality* - all the people regardless of their ethnic and social background should be treated on equal terms with reference to their rights and duties towards the law. They should have the same access to resources and social opportunities.

*Cultural diversity* - people should have the possibility to express and develop freely their own culture while respecting other cultures within the limits allowing the maintenance of the public order and rules of co-existence.



*Living together* – (as the opposite of co-existence) understood as the shared space of participation and cross culture co-existence focused on dialogue, interaction and mutuality among various groups.

*Social cohesion* – regardless of their origin and social labelling, people should feel ties with the place where they live in, and regard themselves as its integrated part with equal chances for participation in common undertakings of the whole population.

*Normalisation* – immigrants should use the same services as the rest of the population – without the necessity to create simultaneous structures. Residents of cities with immigrant origins should use the same services, facilities and programmes as the whole population. Especially, separate “windows” for immigrants should be avoided at all costs. The only exception from the rule of *normalisation* is the initial immigrant reception policy. The initial reception (or *showing around the house*<sup>1</sup>) is assumed to take as little time as possible and lead to informing and teaching the newly arriving migrants about services, facilities and programmes available in town.

*Transversality* – the migrant policy of Barcelona is not implemented by the Department for Immigration Affairs, but by all the departments of the municipal council. A phenomenon of migration regards and affects the work of all the municipal council departments, therefore they should respond collectively to the phenomena resulting from immigrant’s presence in town.

*Participation* – the Scheme is to be implemented by all the possible actors present in the city. The Town Hall is only its coordinator; however, it is not possible to complete it without a participation of neighbourhood associations, entrepreneurs’ chambers, trade unions, schools, health centres, sport clubs, leisure centres and churches. The starting point for the scheme is the statement that the considerable increase of the socio-cultural diversity of the city may be both the source of opportunities and the source of problems. Which of the options will win depends on the interpretation as well as the management of the phenomenon.

The Scheme assumes the number objectives and means for their implementation within each of the policies conducted by the municipal council (the emphasis is put on the reception of the newcomers, education, vocational training, prevention of the housing segregation, and the inclusion in the public activity within the city). The completion of the scheme is possible thanks to the mechanisms of evaluation and monitoring of established objectives. Each assumption is written out in details and contains 1) the description of means to achieve the aim; 2) identification of subjects responsible for its implementation; 3) timetable of its implementation; 4) budget and 5) follow-up indicators.

## **The Council for Transversality**

As the result of the assumed transversality policy conducted towards immigrants in Barcelona, the council was established, in the meetings of which representatives of all the municipal council departments and city districts participate. This council coordinates all the activities carried out by the town hall towards immigrants and monitors the established immigrant policy in particular areas of the municipal authorities work.

## **The Network of Organisations Working with Migrants in Barcelona**

One of the tasks of the Commission for Immigration and Cultural Dialogue is the coordination of non-governmental organisations network operations that serve migrants and local communities, which take into account some of the crucial migrants' issues. Currently, the network includes over 100 organisations (including: non-governmental organisations, churches, neighbourhood associations, migrants' associations, trade unions, language schools, etc.). General meetings of the network take place annually, whereas, working groups conduct intensive daily activities over the selected issues. The three most important groups concern: learning of the language, legal counselling, and inclusion in the labour market. The work of the network and the working groups consists in continual mutual exchange of information on activities of particular organisations to avoid repeating of the same activities and the identification of the areas, where nobody undertakes any activities. To meet this aim, the internal Guide is published and updated all the time to describe the members' organisations and their activity.

During the meetings of the network, there are new problems diagnosed and discussed. As an example of such diagnosis and the response to it, the Commissioner for Immigration and Cultural Dialogue presented the problem articulated by the representatives of language schools in teaching Catalan language to illiterate people. After having diagnosed the problem, the Commission for the Immigration Policy commissioned the preparation of the teaching materials and methodology of teaching the language to such people and provided the language schools with these aids and trained them to conduct the courses for migrants with such needs.

The positive "side effect" of the network activity is pressurising its members to perform their work for migrants on the highest level. The mutual awareness of the work of particular non-governmental organisations increases efficiency of social control mechanisms, which causes an easy elimination of services offered to mi-

grants that are of low standard, or attempts at gaining profit by taking advantage of immigrants' ignorance.

The Commission for Immigration and Cultural Dialogue emphasises the encouraging and drawing of immigrants into the public space of the city. With that purpose in mind, there are employed various traditional events and festivals taking place in Barcelona. As an example of the inclusion in one of the city's was, a Chinese group prompted the invitation of the pop music star from China who played during the concert in the main square among the performers coming from Spain. On the other hand, the small businessmen of the migrant background are encouraged to become members of traditional guilds and other trade associations existing in Barcelona.

One of the programmes directed at immigrants in Barcelona involves adapting into the education system the newcomers' children who came due to the families reunions. As far as visas issued due to family reunions are produced by the branch offices of the central government, however, they are based on the recommendation of the local authorities with regard to the living conditions of the applicants. The employees of the town hall monitor immigrant applying for the visa for his family as regards to his or her ability to provide them with suitable living and housing conditions. Thanks to this competence, the municipal authorities acquire knowledge in advance about a number and age of newly coming to town children. The Commission for Immigration and Cultural Dialogue uses this knowledge and organises meetings with parents of the children that are to come to Barcelona informing them about the conditions of enrolling to school, requirements regarding the set of textbooks and workbooks, possibilities of using local sports centres and extracurricular classes for children, etc.

The intention of the programme is that classes are conducted among the groups of people living in the same area to help create the self-help relationships within the same group. During the meetings, parents are asked about their fears with regard to arrival of their children, next the attempts are made to solve the problems. The local schools are informed in advance about the influx of new pupils who are going to live in their area to foresee any surprises.

After the arrival, the children are directed to intensive courses that adjust them to the Catalan school system. The courses are conducted especially during holidays to prevent them from losing time for adaptation to new school conditions. During these courses, information is collected about both children's special needs as well as their abilities, next handed over to schools to provide them with better care and assistance. The courses end with a meeting with the mayor of Barcelona who greets

all the new incoming pupils. The meeting with the mayor gives to both parents and pupils the feeling of being well received by the city.

### **Nova Ciutadania in Mataró – an example of implementation of the *accolida* policy**

Mataró is a town in Catalonia several dozen miles away from Barcelona. Due to convenient railway and road connections, it stays within an easy reach of its agglomeration. It has a population of about 100 thousand.

The local authorities of Mataró were the first ones in Spain to apply systematic actions for newcomers – especially the ones who were migrants from other countries. It is worth underlining that the *accolida* policy includes also *showing around the house* not only for immigrants (including people coming from other EU countries), but also for the inhabitants of other parts of Spain (owing to differences in languages between Catalan and Castilian and other dialects used by the citizens of this country).

The model developed in Mataró is essential also due to the fact that it is going to be applied in all the municipalities (municipal communes) throughout Spain.

In 2006, a new department was established as a part of the Town Hall (*ajuntament*) of Mataró called Nova Ciutadania with two main functions. First of all, Nova Ciutadania carries out courses as part of the *accolida* policy addressed at newcomers to Mataró. Secondly, Nova Ciutadania offers help in intercultural mediations between migrants and other sections of the municipal authorities in situations where as a result of a lack of language or cultural competence problems in communication arise. Underneath this, we discuss the way Nova Ciutadania performs these tasks.

As a part of the first type of tasks, Nova Ciutadania carries out trainings for all the people registered as new in the town of Mataró. It has to be mentioned that in Spain there are frequent occurrences of registration of people who do not have a right to stay legally in the country, and the local authorities do not check a given person's status as far as the legal terms in Spain are concerned. The registered person has a right to services provided by the local authorities, such as school, health service, etc., and especially, if a person has a job contract, the taxes are paid. Due to this, it is estimated that in Spain, about 2 million people stay without a legal status, however, to a large extent they function normally.

It has been noticed that some groups of migrants after their arrival in the new city get lost in its institutional reality. The *accolida* service was provided to prevent the newcomers from finding out about the town on their own, possibly getting lost in

it, losing time and resources, or breaking the law unaware as due to ignorance and thus eventually blocking the work of municipal institutions which could be used more effectively.

After registration, during which the new inhabitant of Mataró gives his or her telephone contact, they get invited by phone to a meeting for new town citizens. If the official who is telephoning notices that the migrant can hardly speak Catalan or Spanish, then he or she connects the immigrant with a Nova Ciutadania employee who can communicate in his native tongue (Nova Ciutadania employs people who can communicate in major languages of the groups coming to this town: Arabic, Chinese, Wolof, Mandingo – the languages of the West Africa). The main groups of migrants in Mataró are inhabitants of Morocco, Sub-Sahara Africa, China and Latin America countries.

The meetings are not obligatory. They are scheduled to suit the participants. The timetable is usually suggested by the Nova Ciutadania's employees, who are of migrant background themselves and are familiar with customs and potential of a given ethnic group. Each meeting is conducted in the Catalan language and translated into the language understandable for participants. The aim of conducting the meetings in Catalan is getting used to the expressions, phrases and names of the municipal institutions in the language in which they function on a daily basis. Conducting of bilingual courses at the same time is considered as an exceptional programme distinguishing it from any others in Spain or abroad, where similar programmes are frequently carried out only in languages understandable for participants. Mataró believed that getting migrants accustomed with names of institutions and procedures in the local language is very useful for them in the future.

As evidence of the programme's success, the employees of Nova Ciutadania present the fact that not only the invited immediately after the registration come to the courses, but also the people who have stayed in Mataró for a long time and have learnt from other members of their migrant group about the courses' usefulness.

On the completion of the course, certificates are issued to the participants. The attendance in the course is free of charge; however, the certificates are available only to those registered in the area of Mataró.

The classes are composed of 4 parts devoted to particular services provided by the town.

The first meeting is about the registration system and the work of the Town Hall. The next ones present: education, medical services, social insurance, associations operating in town, non-governmental organisations present in the town, such as

Caritas or Red Cross, public transportation in the city and the regional connections (e.g. with Barcelona), etc.

The duration of particular meetings depends on a number of participants, the problems arising and explaining issues, and variety of questions asked. According to assumptions, the whole 4-meeting-cycle should take altogether around 8 hours. The work of two municipal institutions is usually discussed during one meeting.

At the end of the course, the participants evaluate the teaching aids used during the course, usefulness of the facilities, aptness of the timetable, the way the people conducting the course explain the issues. The participants are also asked about their suggestions regarding changes/needs for the new content of the courses.

Nova Ciutadania employees hold monthly monitoring meetings where they discuss problems arising from their work and try to improve the quality of the conducted courses. In a sense, the Nova Ciutadania activity is an open project, as it is continually modified and rectified by its employees.

The certificate of the course completion is useful to migrants as the endorsement of their connection with the city of Mataró when they apply to the higher authorities (in 2009 these competences were handed over from the central authorities branch office to regional self-government) to receive the legalisation of their stay as it confirms the will to integrate with the Spanish society.

The certificates are given out to participants in a special ceremony. The document is signed by the high official of the municipal authorities, which makes it more prestigious in the eyes of the course attendees.

After the course completion that covers *showing around the house*, the participants of the course are proposed to take part in an elementary course of the Catalan language which takes 20 hours altogether. Winning of the diploma of the completion of this course is possible only with 90% attendance. The groups are divided according to participants' school experience – some of them (especially from Sub-Saharan Africa) have hardly any educational experience, they are partly illiterate. After the elementary course, the participation in the more advanced course of Catalan is offered. Some of them are free of charge in the Catalonia area.

One of the main tasks of the Nova Ciutadania is convincing migrants to enrol in the courses. Many of them show aloofness and distrust, especially when they are invited by the Town Hall. According to the employees of this section, their success is the growing attendance in the courses due to the fact they are becoming more and more popular in town and... acknowledged as beneficial.

Nova Ciutadania answers also the questions of migrants living in Mataró about where to turn to for assistance and in what way regarding concrete issues they have

with official authorities and municipal institutions. Nova Ciutadania provides the answers and directs to immigrants to the appropriate institutions, however, in accordance with the principles of the *normalisation* policy, it is not an institution that “takes care” of migrants’ problems, but simply to direct them to appropriate offices to avoid their getting dependent on the services and forming a separate category of “customers” of public services; in this way, they are persuaded to use the services on their own.

The other task of Nova Ciutadania is assisting other institutions in Mataró. If their employees have communication problems with migrants the *mediators* from Nova Ciutadania come to the meetings in the institutions, during which they translate and explain cultural context of migrants’ behaviour. The migrants often need something more than just translation of instructions or decisions of officials from various institutions; they sometimes need an explanation of the cultural context as well. This function of Nova Ciutadania is intended to be addressed at the employees of municipal offices and institutions – they are used mainly - by the police, education department, social services department, individual schools. It is supposed to help them in communication with customers and to make their work more efficient.

Nova Ciutadania in Mataró employs 11 people. For the town of this size, it is quite a big financial effort to support this kind of organisation. According to the Spanish system, the body financing its activity is the Ministry of Labour and Integration, not the local self-government. In Spain, there is a special foundation under the aegis of this ministry that is to finance local projects and actions connected with integration and *accolida* policy.

## Conclusions

The Catalan lesson emphasises the *normalisation* of immigrants’ situation. The described above practices and activities are conducted in such a way that migrants are encouraged to use the services offered by the local society on a general basis. Of course, they may need certain help, especially this initial aid, the name of which we translated as *showing around the house*.

The other aspect of the Catalan lesson is the subject of *transversality* that is reflexive on the side of municipal structures the *normalisation* issue. Assuming that immigrants are to function “normally” in town, it is necessary to function in a normal way in the institutions and departments of a given town. Thus, the immigration policy is not only carried out by a special department in the local or regional

authorities, but it is also coordinated by it, whereas it is conducted by all the sections. The described above practices contain also a strong component of monitoring and self-evaluation. Since the phenomena connected with migration are dynamic, changing fast, also their depiction and full understanding is impeded; there is a necessity for self-observation of particular institutions work and reaction to changes of reality, occurrence of new migrant groups with different requirements. Besides the evaluation, the aspect of coordination of activities of various institutions, bodies and organisations is evident (also in the aspect of transversality), but looking further beyond the structures of particular local self-governments. As a result, these activities are carried out in a more efficient way, the “white spots” are easier to diagnose in the space of these actions, repeating of similar actions are evaded; the pressure is made on increasing the work standards.



In spite of the fact that for many years Portugal has been a country of emigration, an inflow of immigrants grows there since the beginning of the 1980s. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigrants were coming from mostly African, Portuguese-speaking countries (such as the Republic of *Cape Verde*) and Brasil.

Quantitative and qualitative changes in migration trends were launched in 2000 for the first time to Portugal, people began to arrive from Eastern European countries (mainly Ukraine), which were not associated with Portugal historically or linguistically. At the same time an intense influx of immigrants from Brazil took place. In contrast to the previous waves of immigration, they were largely unskilled immigrants, in an irregular situation.<sup>27</sup>

Due to the relatively short history of immigration, the first legal acts regulating immigration to Portugal were passed only in 1981. Despite the short experience of immigration, Portugal created a legal framework for integration policy consisting of a very favorable policies and practices. As a result, the Index of Migrant Integration Policy Index placed this country in second place, ahead of typical immigration countries such as Great Britain or France.<sup>28</sup>

Analyzing best practices in the field of immigrant integration is worth a closer look at One-Stop-Shop (OSS) operating in the National Immigrant Support Centres – CNAIs.

CNAI offer a range of services for immigrants under one roof, including support of socio-cultural mediators. They constitute part of an innovative project, both in terms of a comprehensive approach to the problems of a foreign customer service and logistics solutions and technical information, including data management and information flow.

### **Reasons for the opening of OSS in Portugal**

The Portuguese OSS was created in response to the growing number of immigrants from non-Portuguese-speaking countries. Immigrants from this group faced a number of barriers to integration and had limited access to the services

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<sup>26</sup> Chapter written by Justyna Frelak based on material gathered during the Visegrad Scholarship Program, funded by International Visegrad Fund.

<sup>27</sup> M. Abranches, *A New Answer for Immigrant Integration? Country Report for Portugal, INTI Project: One-Stop Shop*, Lizbon 2008.

<sup>28</sup> J. Niessen, T. Huddleston, L. Citron, *Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)*, British Council and Migration Policy Group, Brussels 2007.

of public institutions. These problems appear to be common to most EU countries. The most important include:

- A large number and dispersion of the institutions involved in the integration process;
- inefficient cooperation (or lack thereof) between the institutions responsible for the reception and integration;
- Diversity in *modus operandi*, procedures and bureaucracy;
- Communication difficulties arising from cultural and linguistic differences;
- difficulty in participation of immigrants in the decision making process.

Additional obstacles encountered by immigrants in Portugal, which further justified the launch of the OSS, was complex and time-consuming procedures for the verification, the lack of standard procedures and inconsistencies in providing information. In addition, authorities were not prepared to handle foreign clients - because of the lack of language skills and cultural backgrounds. Many immigrants were breaking the legalization procedure, partially because of the dispersion and the distance between the offices and impractical working hours.

OSS model was thus a response to problems arising from the dispersal range of institutions whose activities were not coordinated. This resulted in a lack of information concerning the rights and obligations of immigrants. As a result, customer-immigrant had to repeat or go through further, unnecessary procedures.

### **Functioning of the One-Stop-Shop in Portugal**

National Integration Support Centers were created in 2004 in Lisbon and Porto, the cities with a high concentration of immigrant communities. They function under the supervision of Portuguese *High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, I.P.)*. In addition, a regional branch operates in Faro and there are 83 *Local Immigrant Support centres – CLAIIs*. For example, in Lisbon CNAI is visited by 782 people a day, employs 65 mediators, 19 officers and 5 security staff.

OSS philosophy is based on the so-called shared responsibility and partnership, are also in the Common Basic Principles of Integration concerning the integration of third country nationals in the European Union. In this and other documents, an integrated approach to integration, seen as a mutual accommo-

dations, where both the host society and immigrants involved in the process of adaptation is recommended. OSS is designed to encourage partnerships between public and private institutions.

### **One-Stop-Shops' clients**

OSS services are directed primarily to newly arrived immigrants, employers and service providers. Newly arrived immigrants have problems with integration, lack of knowledge concerning the rules and regulations, language, etc. The OSS services, however, may also benefit long-term migrants (eg, applying for citizenship) and those born in Portugal. Interestingly, the OSS serves also persons living in the country illegally, which, due to a kind of gentlemen's agreement concluded by the institutions that reside in the center, do not fear arrest or possible deportation when using their services.

For example, in 2004, 223.797 people have benefited from the CNAI services, in 2008 there were 296.944. Currently, the average number of customers in both centers is 1.192 people per day. The largest group of customers in 2008 was immigrants from Basil (26.2%), Cape Verde (17.7%), Guinea-Bissau (9.9), Angola (8%), Ukraine (4.5%).

### **One-Stop-Shop structure**

There are offices representing five Ministries located in the centers:

- Foreigners and Borders Service (Ministry of the Interior)
- Working Conditions Authority (Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity)
- Social Security (Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity)
- Central Registry Office (Ministry of Justice)
- Regional Health Administration (Ministry of Health)
- (Regional Directorate of Education (Ministry of Education))"

At the same time, customers can benefit from several additional services including: legal advice, issues of family reunification, integration into the labor market, social assistance, housing, protection of customer rights and support to immigrant organizations. Additional supplementary services are: the information point, the bank branch and a room for children.

A very important element of the OSS is the first point of contact (pre-sorting, reception office), where he explains to clients of the center of the system and the whole procedure. All employees of this office are also cultural mediators,

which streamlines the communication process, reduces the ambiguity of the information provided, and thus reduces the number of visits to the OSS. At this stage, introduced to the common data base client-immigrant and describes the purpose of the visit. Information is recorded immediately in Portuguese, which further accelerates the process.

The principle of cooperation is not crossing competences and responsibilities by the involved institutions and preserving the autonomy of individuals. OSS is in fact contribute to the centralization of customer service and achieve synergy as a result of the location of many institutions in one building

### **Social - cultural mediators**

As already mentioned, in CNAI the cultural mediators are recruited from immigrant communities. They represent organizations, immigrant and work in partnership, in its role as a bridge between immigrants and public administration.

The institution of the socio-cultural mediator has been launched in Portugal in the nineties of last century, but the item has been officially defined in the legislation only in 2001. Mediators are supposed to cooperate in the sphere of integration of among others, the strengthen intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. The primary task of cultural mediators in the OSS is: interpretation and translation, and mediation.

Portuguese experience of mediators shows that they play an important role in promoting the integration of immigrants, reducing barriers to access public services and distrust of public institutions.

### **Participation of immigrant communities in the OSS**

Participation of immigrant communities in the OSS is manifested mainly in the activities of cultural mediators. In addition, immigrants are represented in the consultative body, composed of institutions with their delegations in the OSS and civil society organizations.

Immigrants also work in offices that offer so-called support services. In this case, whenever this is possible, of course, they avoid creation of new organizational units (which would pose significant costs, such as training or recruitment). These services are usually implemented in partnership with NGOs. This form of cooperation includes, for example, issues of family reunification. Part-

nership can include collaboration with the private sector (employment) and media (information on the phenomenon of migration).

### **Evaluation of the OSS**

An important element of the operation of OSS is the constant monitoring of the services offered in the context of answering the specific needs of both immigrants and host society. International Organization for Migration conducted two external evaluations of the centers (2006, 2007-2008). The study included both customers and employees of the Center. The results showed that most customers are satisfied with the service, and prefers to deal with their affairs in CNAI more than in other locations. This is due to the quality of services and their availability in the OSS. The conclusions of the IOM evaluation led, among others. The introduction of specific changes, such as opening new offices, changing working hours, introducing new services.<sup>29</sup>

One of the recommendations of the evaluation was to establish an international partnership aimed at dissemination of the Portuguese experience and explore the possibility of introducing the model One-Stop-Shop for other countries. The result was a manual describing the operation of such institutions<sup>30</sup>.

A few years of the operating of the OSS have shown, locating various institutions in one building stimulated the effective cooperation between them. At the same time other services that respond to identified needs of immigrants were implemented. OSS model, used in Portugal enables rapid exchange of information, reducing inconsistencies and contradictions of the information provided. At the same time it helps to reduce the duration of each procedure and to enhance confidence in public administration.

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<sup>29</sup> M. Abranches, Evaluation of the National Immigrant Support Services in Portugal, International Organization for Migration, Lisbon 2009.

<sup>30</sup> C. Reis Oliveira, M. Abranches, C.Healy, *Handbook on How to Implement a One-Stop-Shop for immigrant integration*, Lisbon 2009.



## CONCLUSIONS

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The research we conducted demonstrates that a key to the successful integration of newcomers with the host society is application of a few basic rules with regard to these activities of which the most important are: clear formulation of targets, coordination of conducted actions and interaction of the institutions engaged in the integration and earnest evaluation of these activities. To make the integration successful such factors also play essential role: starting integrating activities towards the newcomers as soon as possible, adjusting these activities to specific local/regional situation and convincing the local communities about the need of undertaking of such actions. Though, these six basic principles do not guarantee achieving the full success, however, it seems that a failure to comply with them results in lack of success.

### **Formulating the targets of the activities**

In the cases of good practices we observed, the fact that was particularly striking included a set of definite targets to be implemented. These aims were often subdivided into more detailed objectives achieving of which was operational in carrying out the concrete activities. To make such a system work, it is essential to make decisions that are made at certain level clear to all social workers who carry them out (whether these were the organizations controlled by self-government or the non-governmental organizations). Due to that knowledge, people who carry out particular tasks have a chance to be aware of the sense of their work. On the other hand, it is easier also to control their work and make them account for it.

Defining the objectives is not an easy task and as it can be noticed from the discussed examples, these aims are often the result of negotiations between the numbers of partners participating next in their implementation. Thanks to that they do not have, however, the feeling that the undertaken by them actions are imposed on them (e.g. the way the Authorities of the Flemish Language Community with confederation of non-governmental organizations, what aims for the implementation are and what resources they need for them).

Particularly distinct and underlined aspect of planning and designing of the integration activities in a way they were achievable, was seen in the countries with the more pragmatic traditions (England, Flemish-speaking part of Belgium, Holland), where the solid financial benefits were indicated as the effects of investments undertaken while organizing the integration activities.

Also in the countries such as Spain or Portugal (that in a certain sense are mentally closer to Poland than countries with the protestant tradition with their effectiveness and pragmatism), the activities were planned in the language of the objectives possible to achieve (a trivial example from Barcelona, it is achieving successively higher and higher stages of the ratio of participants that are attending courses of the Catalan language among the population of the third states citizens).

What is essential in this context is that the effective integration policy is implemented where the needs of both migrants and local communities were diagnosed first and the undertaken activities were adjusted to these needs. The objectives of the integration policies conducted in this way are the response to such demands.

### **Coordination and cooperation**

The next crucial observation is the fact that effective integration activities require cooperation of numerous partners, e.g. various departments of a structure as large as the town hall of a big city, non-governmental organizations, representatives of various levels of authority (governmental, regional, or local). Effectiveness of the comprehensively conducted integration policies depends upon the efficient cooperation of these partners, which requires coordination of activities undertaken independently. The good examples of such coordination are Barcelona and Peterborough, where special councils work associating great deal of institutional and social partners that inform each other about their undertakings. Another solution is the developed in Belgium model of non-governmental organizations federations that being bigger bodies have stronger bargaining position in the disputes with public authorities, besides being more operational.

Coordination of the activities on the level of different thematic groups, councils or committees allows various local self-governmental agendas and non-governmental organizations to prevent duplicating of their activities, as well as it helps to complete each other. With the coordinated integration policy the deficiencies in the undertaken activities are found out with greater ease, whereas the exchange of information about carried out by various institutions actions eliminates bad practices more effectively and leads to promoting higher standards of work for the purpose of integration.

The most extreme case of coordination is a model working in the Flemish Language Community. A department of the Community authorities responsible for financing of the integration projects never undertakes any talks with non-gov-



ernmental organizations that are not associated in the federations. As the argument for such solution is the increased effectiveness of such organizations. We would not like to promote here such extreme solutions as this; however, it seems to us that by underlying the significance of the integration policy coordination, it is worth to notice such an argumentation as well. Doubtlessly, the integration policy is more effective if it is conducted by numerous subjects, but it loses this effectiveness when these subjects hardly know anything about each other; work in a dispersed way (or even anarchistic), often duplicating some actions and evading others.

We are short of solid evidence to be able to defend this thesis in a categorical way, however, the research so far and observation of the situation currently in Poland allow us to state that the lack of coordination and cooperation can be harmful to migrants themselves, who frequently have to discover on their own the world of organizations and institutions that have some offer for them, or losing their time by being sent from place to place, to wrong addresses from the doors of one organization to the doors of another.

Therefore, we postulate already here the necessity of closer coordination of integration undertakings in Poland and increase of transfer of information among particular institutions and organizations engaged in the integration.

## **Evaluation**

The next important observation resulting from the described in the publication good practices is that none of the integration policies in the studied by us countries is a closed project. All of them are constantly evaluated on various stages and permanently modified to improve their efficacy.

Actually, all of our interlocutors mentioned evaluation of their work. They treated it as a normal and necessary element of their job. The fact that they were evaluated and they evaluate their results was not in any way demonized by them.

The evaluation begins at the lowest stage, i.e. from the contacts with migrants - who are often asked about their opinion regarding the offered to them schemes. When the next actions are planned these opinions are taken into account, while the suggestions from the migrant circles are used for indication what course should the particular undertakings take.

As we mentioned when we wrote about coordination of the undertaken activities, the people implementing the projects we described (clerks, officials, social workers, mediators, non-governmental organizations activists) meet regularly in

teams, in which they work and discuss the problems which they encounter, considering the possibilities of improving their work

The implemented tasks are evaluated also to check to what extent the intended objectives were achieved. This helps to modify and adjust the practices to the targets, or in case when it appears that the aims are impossible to be met, their reformulation. The other situation should not be treated as the failure of the job; it is occasionally better to give up certain objectives that seem to be unrealistic, than to create practices that are illusionary and retain an inefficient system.

At the most general level, the continued integration tasks are evaluated by independent researchers, or teams of researchers, who can view their practices from the distance and also suggest their enhancement.

The first three points of our conclusion include general remarks about functioning of the integration systems. Our next remarks focus not so much on the integration policy itself, but rather on its implementation and the most effective practices that we have observed.

### ***Showing around the house as the introduction to other tasks***

Presenting *showing around the house*, we repeat once more the proposal from the first chapter of this publication. The experiences of the countries conducting these types of schemes indicate that they should be implemented mainly at the local level. The local self governmental and non-governmental institutions seem to be able to create maps of such institutions in their area, which would meet both migrants' expectations, as well as respond to the requirements of these communities. It is necessary to remember that in each particular local community, the integration may be related to completely different needs responding to the specifics of the migration and specifics of this society.

Assuming that, we state that in those local communities of Poland, where the foreigners are situated, it is necessary to undertake efficient and integrated actions characterized by the described *showing around the house*. Even if the debates on the appropriate for Poland model of integration will take long time, due to that kind of introductory actions in this way both the local communities and migrants will gain the chance to achieve the measurable benefits right now.

On the constructed in such a way basis, it is possible to create further and more long-term undertakings as part of the all-Poland integration policy, addressed at both the so called citizens of the third countries, as well as the refugees and citizens of EU member states, or even internal migrants.

The above conclusion is connected closely with the next one regarding the observed integration policies, but being also the recommendation for the activities undertaken in Poland.

### **Implementation on the local level**

Despite that we kept meeting with regional authorities (also with the central ones), the biggest emphasis in this publication is put on the practices implemented on the local level. It is not because we have accepted such assumptions and followed the integration on the level of towns or communes. The cause is absolutely essential: the local level is the basic theatre of the foreigners' integration.

Immigrants live in the area of specific towns and communes, and these are their institutions, offices, organizations they have to encounter and learn how to use. The national or regional schemes can indicate only general directions of tasks and sources of their financing (which is very important, as on the other hand not all the local self-governments are capable of handling on their own the costs of integration). However, it is this definite town that knows what are the needs of its inhabitants and representatives of new minorities, which depending on the locality have various ethnical and social compositions. Each commune or town is able to create a map of their institutions and organizations, which they will present to immigrants and next show around them. Also the efficient coordination of organizations and institutions is possible only on the local level.

### **Usefulness for the host society and their institutions**

The last conclusion is a purely pragmatic observation that it is not possible to conduct the effective migrant integration in societies that show hostile attitude towards them, or who are fulfilled with resentment. Studying the described local communities, we have noticed that implementing the good practices in the area of immigrants' integration the emphasis was put on benefits arising from these practices for the whole society. In some places it was treated even as the fundamental argument (Mataró and Peterborough) in their implementation. In Peterborough New Link is to help maintain social cohesion of this town and aids the work of the municipal offices. In Mataró, the main motivation to establish in the town hall the new section *Nova Ciutadania* was facilitating the work of other municipal departments and institutions. It does not, however, mean that the migrants' needs became less important. In all the studied places, the needs and opinions of the foreigners

were taken very seriously into account and to the large extent, they were the partners of the integration undertakings. The misunderstood political correctness was, nevertheless, avoided and the demands of the host society and their institutions were indicated as a key issue of the carried out integration actions. In the case of New Link, it was indicated even that in order to enhance the image of the schemes in the eyes of the local societies there were applied strategies known from the election campaigns or the business world employing the PR experts in town.

This short conclusion, of course, does not exhaust all the potentials that arise from the observed practices in the societies we studied. But it is not the aim of this publication. The published by us report is only the collection of reflections and fervent considerations, which only after the further research conducted in Poland will be applied to developing the integration strategy and recommendations addressed to particular communities in Poland. The recommendations will be included in the next publication concluding the research we conducted and presented at the Caritas Poland conference in July 2010.