

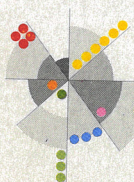
Edited by Laura Zanfrini

The Diversity Value

How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration



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DIVERSE
Diversity Management as a
Visible Enrichment Resource
for Society and Economy



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The Diversity Value

How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration



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The Diversity Value

How to Reinvent
the European Approach
to Immigration

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The scientific management of the project was entrusted to a Scientific Board composed of Laura Zanfrini (Scientific Director of the project), Massimiliano Monaci, Rosangela Lodigiani, Patrizia Cappelletti, Giovanni Giulio Valtolina and Giampietro Marcassoli, assisted by Annavittoria Sarli (Scientific Director Assistant) and Francesca Mungiardì.

Further documents and reports produced during the project are available at: www.ismu.org/diverse. Both this book and the other texts produced reflect the view only of the Authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Abbreviations

APEL – Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

APL – Accreditation of Prior Learning

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

DM – Diversity Management

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunities

EOP – Equal Opportunities Plan

EQF – European Qualifications Framework

EU – European Union

HRM – Human Resource Management

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

KPI – Key Performance Indicators

LLL – Lifelong Learning

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

SKC – Skills, Knowledges and Competences

TCN – Third Country National

1

DIVERSE Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy

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The European approach to migration has traditionally been characterized by an emphasis on the labour dimension: this is pivotal for the social acceptance of Third Country Nationals (hereafter TCNS), but has nurtured the idea of *complementarity* between the autochthonous and the foreign labour force, thus favouring the concentration of migrants in low-skilled and low-status jobs. At the same time, European countries, consistently with their historical focus on human rights, have formally extended a wide set of protective measures, rights and opportunities to foreign workers and their family members, with the result of transforming “temporary migrant workers” into “semi-citizens” (or *denizens*), and protecting them by means of strong anti-discrimination rules. The attempt to keep these two contradictory philosophies together – the “economicistic” philosophy which regulates the system of entry (and stay) and that of solidarity and equal opportunities – has generated a historical and unresolved paradox, which makes it difficult to fully appreciate the value of migrants’ contribution to the economic and social development of European societies (and also of their sending countries).

Based on these premises, the project “DIVERSE – Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy” – has chosen to pursue the overall and long-term aim of “reinventing” the European approach to immigration, overcoming its historical paradox through three major changes: *a)* encouraging a shift from the perception of migrants as contingently instrumental resources to the recognition of their human capital as a structural resource for the economic and social development of European societies, *b)* enhancing awareness among different types of or-

organisations as to the importance and potentialities of Diversity Management (hereafter DM) strategies, *c*) improving TCNs' social participation and civic engagement (and especially their participation in volunteer, non-profit organisations) in view of the construction of an inclusive European society and in order to change TCNs common perception as people who need to be helped and assisted.

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The project involved 10 EU countries, or more precisely ten regions included in their national territory: Tallinn (Estonia), Ostrobothnia (Finland), Karlsruhe (Germany), Pest County (Hungary), Lombardy (Italy), Nijmegen (the Netherlands), Łódź (Poland), Lisbon (Portugal) Andalusia (Spain) and Västerbotten (Sweden).

The scientific management of the project has been guaranteed by a Scientific Board composed by Laura Zanfrini (Scientific Director of the project), Massimiliano Monaci, Rosangela Lodigiani, Giovanni Giulio Valtolina and Giampietro Marcassoli, assisted by Annavittoria Sarli (Scientific Director Assistant) and Francesca Mungiar-di.

In this first chapter I will present and discuss the main theoretical premises on which the project is based (sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3), I will describe its broad areas of intervention (section 1.4) and I will introduce some of its findings which will be thoroughly analyzed in the following chapters (sections 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7).

1.1 The Unresolved Paradox of the European Legacy

International migration, as we construct it socially and institutionally in the contemporary European landscape (Zanfrini, 2015), is a “national” phenomenon, forged by those very ideological constructions that enabled the birth of the nation-state (Sayad, 1999) and representing the limit of the nation-state, which, in order to exist, surrounded itself with national borders and adopted the criteria necessary for discriminating between nationals and “others”. Unmasking the historical and contingent nature of the fundamental ideas on which our national communities are founded – borders, citizenship, the cultural homogeneity of the nation, the attachment to a specific territory (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003) – the phenomenon of migration was destined to become an object of “special” attention. Right from the start, the development

¹ WWELL Research Centre, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, Italy; Associazione Nazionale Oltre le Frontiere – ANOLF, Varese, Italy; Commission on Filipino Migrant Workers, the Netherlands; Fondazione ISMU, Italy; Karlshochschule International University, Germany; MENEDÉK – Hungarian Association for Migrants, Hungary; Nova Universidade de Lisboa, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Portugal; Radboud University, the Netherlands; Società San Vincenzo de Paoli, Federazione Regionale Lombarda, Italy; Umeå University, Sweden; University of Huelva, Spain; University of Łódź, Poland; University of Tartu, Estonia; University of Vaasa, Finland.

of legislation regarding citizenship has addressed not only the issues of a practical and symbolic nature associated with the process of nation building, but also the issue of regulating migratory movement. Above all, with the end of free migration at the outbreak of the Second World War and the introduction of new forms of policing of frontiers, the concept of border took on its present-day meaning: besides delimiting the territory under the authority of the State, it serves as a filter for selecting those who, although not citizens of the given State, aspire to reside and work there. Finally, with the establishment of national variants of the Welfare State, the nationalistic project reached its zenith and accomplishment: from that moment on, State boundaries were to mark the limit of access to the privileges guaranteed by belonging to this community of mutual solidarity.

The constitution of forms of *institutionalized solidarity* (Atkinson, 1989) or of *collectivity of redistribution* (Ferrera, 2005), or else of *political mediation of the modalities of inclusion and exclusion* (Bommes, 2008) actually represents one of the most meaningful historical outcomes of the process of nation building. Social rights have revived cultural identity and promoted citizens' loyalty to public institutions, reinforcing political and social cohesion thanks to the promise of equality for all members of a national community. Hence it is certainly not by chance that welfare systems have developed at the same pace as the process of policing the borders (Ferrera, 2005). At the outset, in fact, access to welfare benefits was confined to the citizens; moreover, the *model of temporary work*, typical of the European experience (Papademetriou and Hamilton, 1995), with its "aversion" to the prospect of a stable settlement of immigrant families and communities, contained within itself the reasons for legitimizing a differential treatment towards the *Gastarbeiter*, by limiting, in particular, their access to social security systems, denying them political rights, encouraging their "natural" concentration in the lower layers of the professional stratification.

The rhetorical figure of the guest worker allowed European societies to postpone the problem of the inclusion of non-nationals in the community of their citizens *and to also postpone the opportunity of benefitting from their contribution to the long-term economic, social and institutional development of the hosting communities*. However, with time, the need to come to grips with the question of the boundaries of the political community has become a matter of urgency as the latter has lost its congruence with the community of residents (and that of taxpayers)². As they have been defined within the nation-state, *these boundaries are no longer capable of adequately forging the notion of belonging, of functioning as a filter for the allocation of the rights – and duties – traditionally associated with citizenship, of legitimizing participation in those groups of solidarity that are represented by welfare regimes, of selecting the target for the practices of human capital training, recruitment and develop-*

² Despite a widespread stereotype, at the beginning of the European migratory transition, many "Guest Workers" were actually only "guests". To give an example, in the first wave of recruitment agreements signed by Germany and various sending countries after the end of the Second World War, 11 out of 14 million guest workers returned to their home countries. But, particularly after the closure of the recruitment programs, many "temporary" migrants decided to stay, giving birth to large migrants' communities within the borders of European states.

ment. Expressed in clearer terms, the aspiration of States to be able to “choose” those belonging to them, excluding foreigners, appears increasingly less legitimate (Walzer, 1983) while, at the same time, the ethics of systems of redistribution and protection based on the “fiction” of societies surrounded by national “fences” are becoming more and more disputable, and the practices of institutional discrimination more and more disruptive for the competitiveness of European societies. Hence the imposing debate about the question of *citizenship* (Zanfrini, 2007), the *borders of membership* (Ferrera, 2005) and the *inclusion/exclusion practices* implemented by European education systems (Heckmann, 2008) and labour markets (Wrench *et al.*, 1999).

What emerges from this impressive number of contributions is *the ineradicable tension between petitions for inclusion and exclusion that characterizes the relationship between immigration, citizenship, welfare regimes and the main institutions of European societies*. As suggested by the title of the present section, European societies seem to be afflicted by a sort of “schizophrenia”, i.e. the attempt to bind two contradictory concepts together: the “economicistic” philosophy which regulates the systems of entry (and stay) and the philosophy of solidarity and equal opportunities. Actually, on the one hand, the European countries’ approach to migration management is traditionally characterized by an emphasis on the labour dimension: this is pivotal for the social acceptance of TCNs, nurturing the idea of *complementarity* between autochthonous and foreign work, and thus favouring the concentration of migrants in low-skilled and low-status jobs. At the same time, European countries, consistently with their historical focus on human rights, have formally extended a wide array of protective measures, rights and opportunities to foreign workers and their family members, thus transforming “temporary migrant workers” into “semi-citizens” (or *denizens*) protected by strong anti-discrimination rules, and also into potential targets of affirmative actions.

In any case, even where the political-social compromise has reached the most inclusive solutions – for example the incorporation of migrants into the community of nationals, or the extension to foreigners of the same rights guaranteed to citizens as regards access to social rights and services, or even the recognition of specific needs that require *ad hoc* solutions – immigrants and those belonging to ethnic minorities are, with few exceptions, over-represented in the categories at risk of exclusion, from school drop-outs to the unemployed, including elderly people with no adequate income, just to cite some examples. From a *statistical* viewpoint (Zanfrini, 2011b) – i.e. a systematic disadvantage with respect to the natives (regardless of the reasons determining this disadvantage) in terms of access to resources, opportunities and social institutions – the category of discrimination can be very useful for looking into “what is not working” in the policies of inclusion and of individual empowerment, revealing all the ambivalence – at times bordering on hypocrisy – with which European societies tackle the embarrassing question of inequalities, as well as the counter-intuitive effects often generated by policies designed to promote greater social equality. It would seem that immigration does not cease to exert its function of *disturbance*, becoming a living metaphor for the broken promises that European societies had aspired to fulfill. And *it is precisely because they witness the discrepancy between formal and substantial equality that migrants and their children come to represent an object of*

study that is particularly productive in the reflection on the present and future of social cohesion and economic competitiveness. Moreover, on account of the demographic weight of people with a migratory background, apart from the problem of social equality, *their experience evokes a strategic question for the survival of democracy and the development of knowledge economies.* Finally, in the contemporary European scenario, discrimination is an issue that takes a new meaning (*ibid.*): contrary to what social closure theories had assumed, i.e. that minority group discrimination would undoubtedly benefit majority groups (who would thus take advantage of the best opportunities and benefit from low-cost services provided by immigrants), discrimination produces costs and consequences in terms of loss of competitiveness and social fragmentation.

The literature on these themes is so vast that it cannot even be summarized here. We shall limit ourselves to referring to three main aspects, representing the fundamental background of all the activities envisaged by our project. They were particularly inspired by the experience of Italy, whose institutional framework is paradigmatic of the weaknesses and risks of the European approach to immigration.

The first aspect lies in the above mentioned *tension between the principle of equal opportunities* – indicated by Europe as being the main way forward to the construction of a cohesive society and a competitive economy – *and the philosophy that continues to inspire migratory policies, explicitly or implicitly based on the idea of complementarity between autochthonous and immigrant labour*³ (see section 1.6). Here we come to the core of *the unresolved paradox of the European experience*, the paradox of a population of “guest workers” transformed into *denizens*, without any significant change in the expectations of Europeans concerning immigration, summed up by the expression “those who have a job can come in; to be more precise, a job that we don’t want to do ourselves”⁴. An approach that could hinder the effective management, by national authorities, of immigration – which, in this way, is relegated to the market with all its shortcomings and failures – and that reveals its limits when migrants become, as in the present time of crisis, less necessary. Furthermore, alongside accusations of social dumping and the probability of interethnic conflict, there is a growing resistance to sharing resources and opportunities. Not to mention the risk of an involution of the whole work culture if migrants’ employability is based on their willingness to adapt to working conditions below the threshold of acceptability.

A second aspect is that *discriminatory phenomena arise from the “normal” functioning of the institutions much more frequently than when they are the consequence*

³ Note that it is the European regulations themselves that embody this type of contradiction, whereby in recognising the unlawfulness of discrimination, they leave unchanged the prerogatives of the Member States to define the conditions of entry and access to the labour market for citizens of other countries. Cf. in particular Council Directive 2000/43/CEE.

⁴ The tension between the concept of guest worker and that of *denizenship* can also be seen in the fact that, on one hand, rights which are recognized as being universal, claimable in conditions of equality with the citizens (for example, the right to a job or to housing) are, at the same time, necessary requisites for obtaining the status of regular migrant, exactly the same status that confers the possession of rights.

of intentional decisions, possibly inspired by the crude propaganda of xenophobic movements. Within the theoretical picture delineated by the various “post-assimilationist” approaches (Alba and Nee, 1997; Brubaker, 2001), focusing on the interactive nature of the integration process, the attention of researchers moves from individual and family deficits to the architecture and functioning of the main social institutions (from school to the labour market and the welfare apparatus itself) which, when in operation, tend to reproduce social inequalities, transforming what at the outset was a privilege into a merit. In particular, given the growing relevance of schooling in terms of future professional careers, great emphasis is placed on the education system, the efficacy – or inefficacy – of which is revealed in a paradigmatic manner when considering young people with a migratory background. This brings us to the heart of the debate about the future of welfare systems, where the priority is childhood policies, in accordance with a prevention approach that truly achieves equality of opportunity. Another crucial issue, specifically addressed by our project, is the possibility to accede to and assess formal, informal and non formal learning, according to the philosophy of individual empowerment and activation. Moreover, practically every institutional system embodies, often unknowingly, cultural practices and models, producing as a consequence phenomena of *cultural discrimination* (Bommes, 2008) which are transformed into systematic disadvantages for migrants and those belonging to ethnic minorities. This problem has been addressed with a variety of laws and measures, not always equally effective, but which have, at times, actually resulted in perpetuating the condition of segregation (as in the striking case of the policy of “institutionalisation of minorities”, thus transformed into a sort of “*minorisation*” of the groups that it was formally intended to support). However, what we consider should be underlined is the tendency to overestimate the significance of ethnic and cultural differences, which ends up by *obfuscating the causes of a structural nature consisting in the mechanisms by which inequalities are generated, reinforced and transmitted inter-generationally*. Emblematic of this is the labour market, where the category of ethnic discrimination – and of interethnic conflict – may become a far too easy expedient for distracting the attention from the transformations that mark the decline of the *société salariale* (Castel, 1995), highly jeopardizing not only the workers’ rights, but also the competitive prospective of our economies. It follows that the tensions described in the previous point have become more visible due to the economic crisis. Indeed, at least in some countries, migration seems to reflect the impact of the economic crisis, which, besides increasing both the number of unemployed workers and the rate of unemployment, has downgraded the employment structure and has brought about a deterioration in overall employment quality, an increase of the incidence of low-paid jobs and the exacerbation of the traditional forms of segmentation by gender and nationality. In this case, both the migrants’ resilience at the beginning of the recession and the following deterioration of their occupational status and conditions may be seen as the “mirror” of a low-profile pattern of insertion/model of development that, instead of investing in quality and human capital, has preferred to follow a “myopic” strategy, relying on the reduction of labour costs⁵. In short, *we are not on-*

⁵ Italy represents, in this matter, a case in point. See: Zanfrini, 2014.

ly dealing with a problem of social equality, but with a crucial wager for the future of our civilization and of our economic competitiveness.

The third aspect refers to the fact that *this pattern of occupational incorporation has nurtured mechanisms of both segregation and self-segregation in highly ethnified environments from the standpoint, on one hand, of work relations, and, on the other, of generating an imbalanced model of integration.* As a consequence, migrants have not been stimulated to invest in their human capital with respect, for example, to language learning, professional training, recognition of their education credentials; they have not been encouraged to be involved and engaged in the social, cultural, political life of their hosting communities; they have not concerned themselves with the need to be regularly employed in order, among other things, to mature work-related pension benefits. These factors inhibit migrants' potential contribution to the sustainable development of both their hosting and sending communities. In the light of these considerations, the capacity to exploit the migrants' potential (and, eventually, to make Europe more attractive for high and medium-skilled migrations) is deeply influenced by the achievable advent of a new model of integration, able to overcome the limits of the present one and to promote a greater involvement of migrants in the civic and political sphere, through various forms of volunteer work, civic activism and active citizenship. I will focus on this last point in section 1.3. Let us now analyze the characteristics and prospects of migrant labour.

1.2 Beyond the Complementarity Axiom: the Role of Immigration for a Smart and Inclusive Growth

In the past decades, international (labour) migration has acquired greater relevance in the European political agenda. Indeed, national governments have been gradually forced to take up a position with regard to the rapidly growing inflows of foreign workers, not only in order to deal with public concern, but also in response to both the ageing of the population and labour – as well as skill – shortages. Thus, they have been showing increasing interest in managing migration pro-actively and selectively: on one hand, so as to tighten control over incoming population flows – especially unauthorized ones – and reassure public opinion that they have home affairs well in hand; on the other hand, in order to meet domestic labour requirements. Actually, economic growth and labour market restructuring, along with demographic changes, have been generating a higher and different labour demand, which could not be entirely filled by the natives: this is paving the way for a structural recourse to migration, although generally limited to low profile jobs. Finally, during the last years, in the face of the worsening of migrants' employment condition in almost all countries as a result of the dramatic recession, many governments have decided to stop entries of new labourers, or to admit only seasonal/temporary and highly selected migrants. This has exacerbated even further the traditional weaknesses of the European approach, as it is described above.

Indeed, national policies for managing migration can be divided, according to their nature and objectives, into two main groups, following the traditional distinction between the so-called “settlement countries” (Australia, Canada, the United States) and European countries (Papademetriou and Hamilton, 1995). The former, primarily due to the multiethnic profile of their populations, show a greater openness to migration, especially to high-skilled migration. Coherently with human capital models, they select and admit candidates on the basis of some traits which are deemed to contribute to social and economic inclusion, such as educational attainment, work experience, language proficiency and so on. Moreover, they mainly have (and particularly had in the past) permanent labour migration schemes which are not set up on prior job offer. This kind of approach is difficult to sustain in the European context, where labour movements from Third Countries have been normally more limited and strictly managed in response to actual labour market needs. As a matter of fact, *the entry of migrants has been traditionally conceived to face specific staff or skills shortages and therefore has been demand-driven* (with employers defining requests) and dependent on a prior job offer. Besides, most of the time, migrants have been granted residence permits of limited duration, since migration has rarely been supposed to turn to permanent settlement and the link between the right to stay and the working condition is deeply rooted in European public opinion.

More in detail, in many European countries, the aim of satisfying labour market needs has been achieved through recruitment systems such as labour market tests, occupational shortage lists and the fixation of a yearly contingent of admissions, usually subordinated to the unavailability principle⁶. These methods have certainly contributed to filling skilled vacancies and professional areas with few or no eligible native-born workers; above all, they have identified and categorized jobs that natives have not been willing to take up. As a matter of fact, *when employers have been given the possibility to decide about the selection and recruitment process, the entries have been largely restricted to specific sectors and occupations, leading to severe phenomena of labour market segregation*. This outcome was even more exacerbated in those countries – such as Italy and Spain – which mainly had recourse to mass regularizations aimed at legalizing migrant workers who had acceded to the market without authorization⁷. As a result, on one hand, albeit with substantial differences from one country to another, foreign workers are usually over-represented in some sectors: manufacturing and construction, hotels and restaurants, healthcare and social services, domestic services, care for children and for the aged. On the other hand, because

⁶ The principle stating that a foreign worker can enter only if there is no indigenous or already resident worker available for the same job.

⁷ As discussed in the national report, Italy represents, once more, a case in point. Besides a recurrent recourse to mass regularizations, the country has registered a progressive transformation of the yearly quotas for work reasons into a functional equivalent of amnesties; at a certain point, they completely ceased to correspond to the size and composition of imported labour demand, ending up with a mere procedure for obtaining – or selling through illicit intermediaries – permits of stay.

much of the unfilled demand for labour in these same sectors has been concentrated in low-skilled occupations, foreign workers largely hold low-wage and low-status jobs; i.e. jobs that the native-born labour force is reluctant to perform due to their poor (dirty, difficult, dangerous, and demanding) working conditions⁸. In any case, although immigration has been playing a leading role in meeting an otherwise unanswered labour demand, could the role of migration policies be limited to just filling labour market shortages? On the contrary, *wouldn't it be preferable to discuss the genuine "need" for migrants as well as for a migration management model which could strengthen the social cohesion and competitiveness of the receiving countries' economy?*

This is undoubtedly a strategic issue that has to be addressed. Indeed, *while appearing useful in the short term, as well as gainful for employers, the recourse to foreign labour could in time result in social and economic costs for receiving countries, if not managed with an eye on the future and on its overall sustainability*. Immigrants represent a large proportion of the whole European labour force. Even if, in the years before the economic recession, there has been a real improvement in their employment and working conditions, they continue to face difficulties in fully integrating into the labour market (difficulties that have been becoming even stronger due to the continuing crisis) and to take considerable time, even if well-educated, to become established in the host labour market. In particular, TCNs are relatively more exposed than natives to negative occurrences such as temporary employment, unemployment and long-term unemployment. Moreover, as in Europe the main political trend has been to resort to foreign workers to fill temporary and low-skilled labour shortages, immigrants often tend to be over-qualified (Huddleston and Dag Tjaden, 2012), when they have a higher education level compared to the jobs they carry out. *These phenomena might be considered an unintended and dysfunctional consequence of the way labour migration has been predominantly managed (or not managed)*⁹. Actually, by insisting primarily on the temporariness of migration and choosing to perceive foreign labour mainly in terms of complementarity with the native-born workforce – as the “Community preference” principle still somehow suggests, and in tune with the expectations of public opinion – the segmentation of the labour markets has widened further, bringing all the associated negative outcomes in its wake.

At any rate, the demand for migrant labour and the patterns of occupational inclusion of immigrants themselves also reflect the features of the local economic and productive structure. Immigration can be certainly interpreted as the result of specific needs, sometimes contingent ones, caused by the difficulty to find native-born workers; *but above all, more in depth, as the expression of the competitive strategies and human capital management practices of enterprises or even of the whole local productive system*. It thus represents an eloquent indicator not only of the level of vitality

⁸ See OECD, *International Migration Outlook*, Oecd Publishing, Paris, various years.

⁹ We must consider that a large share of migrant workers have acceded to the European labour market through the “side door” of humanitarian and family immigration, or through the “back door” of irregular immigration.

and specialization of the productive system, but also of the choices and the policies of positioning, innovation and competitiveness, at national and international level, of enterprises and territories. More precisely, faced with more intense competition on a global scale, as well as with persistent economic cyclical difficulties, two are the possible options (Zanfrini, 2001): the first is to adopt a defensive strategy based on the reduction of the labour cost; the second is to go on the “offensive” focusing on qualitative growth. In the first case, enterprises and local districts use immigration to contain or reduce labour costs, thus guaranteeing the survival of some productions – labour intensive but with low technological and innovative content – that otherwise would be liable for de-localization. In the second case, on the contrary, the productive systems choose to bet on qualitative and innovative growth and to this end mobilize and exploit all the available resources, including migrant labour which becomes a structural factor for the functioning of the local economy, and not only a means of relieving the pressure on the domestic labour market due to occasional unbalances, as well as an important element in competitive strategies that make good use of the various kinds of “diversity” among the personnel.

If, as many believe, it is true that the current crisis calls for the reorganisation and renewal of the entire productive system in order to effectively face future challenges, then it becomes crucial, in order to safeguard the future of local labour markets and societies, *to draw up a better human resource allocation plan and be ready to ensure the training, experience and necessary skills that will enable us to face the competition.* In these terms, the role of human capital and of the processes of workers professional development – also, and particularly, of migrant workers – becomes decisive given that, while the more dynamic societies will be set apart because of their capacity to attract and cultivate human resources able to contribute to the processes of competitive innovation and growth of local enterprises, other territories will continue, instead, to make use primarily of workers with medium and low qualifications – with a prevalence of immigrants among them – thus becoming more vulnerable to a bearish competition. *The quantity and the profile of migration inflows thus provide a snapshot of certain societies and labour markets.* They are the expression of the choices enterprises and local systems make about their competitive positioning, their willingness to invest in intangible goods – starting from vocational training and lifelong learning (hereafter LLL) – their orientation towards considering labour the resource for excellence, on the basis of which they plan the processes of selection, recruitment and professional growth. From this point of view, *the difficulties and discrimination immigrants face*, mainly in terms of over-qualification and segregation, not only jeopardize their own life and work trajectories but *also have a negative impact on the stability and potential of local economies.* Consequently, to keep such issues under control, managing migration means offering better opportunities to immigrants and to their descendants while, at the time, preventing a worsening of the current and future situation of local labour markets. After all, managing migration is still a topical issue. In other words, *it is a matter of how to manage migration in a way that is fully compatible with the smart and inclusive growth of the European society*, without taking only account of its immediate economic needs. Managing labour migration for the purpose of growth, competitiveness and cohesion means, on one hand, connecting

migration to specific economic and productive requirements and, on the other, implementing measures to guarantee that migration itself continues to match these requirements. By this we mean that labour demand and shortages not only need to be properly monitored and assessed on a regular basis but they also need to be “directed” by means of specific initiatives and policies.

Nonetheless, managing migration, with respect to smart and inclusive growth, implies, at the same time, *promoting and sustaining TCNs’ social and economic integration and holding back risk factors that could turn them into a disadvantaged group*. Immigrants are clearly at a disadvantage. They frequently suffer, apart from different forms of discrimination, from a lack of human capital (due to poor work experience, low proficiency in the language of the host country, difficulties in having the education acquired in the country of origin recognized) and of social capital (i.e. useful relations and references). Whether or not these and other disadvantages are tackled and solved is a matter of strategic and political choices. The option of reducing costs will hardly provide development opportunities for the immigrants. Vice versa, *if in order to win the challenge of the global market, enterprises and local societies increased – along the lines of the European Employment Strategy – the quality and the qualifications of labour, foreign-born workers themselves would also benefit*, as they are becoming a structural component of the workforce. In this eventuality, enterprises would indeed consider vocational training and life-long learning policies a strategic lever to enhance immigrant labour and make it more adequate and useful to sustain the consolidation and growth of the economy. On the other hand, reorganisation processes and the advent of a productive model that sets off the contribution, the autonomy of the individual and her/his meta-professional competences (interpersonal and communication skills, ability to cooperate, to work in a team, and so on), promote vocational training and lifelong learning – targeted towards the improvement of professional as well as language and communication skills – as ways of giving a further advantage to local economies through labour. That is especially true in the case of migrants, for whom training could be a doubly useful resource: firstly, to help them enter (or re-enter) the labour market; secondly, to help them overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way of their social and professional upward mobility. The current crisis suggests that migration policies have not been developing in line with the second aspect, yet. Indeed, in response to the economic and occupational downturn, several countries have introduced voluntary return programs for unemployed immigrants; others have reduced entries in response to the decline in labour demand (OECD, 2010). These choices confirm that *the role policies attach to migration is mainly that of adjusting to labour markets and cyclical variations in demand*. No reference to other meanings, yet. Foreign-born employment has always been more unstable than native-born employment, as it rapidly boosts during growth but it also declines steeply as a consequence of the worsening of the economic cycle. This indicates that, *while foreign workers may easily enter the labour market, they do not necessarily have sufficient guarantees as to their long-term employability* because of certain negative factors such as their occupational segregation in sectors with more volatile employment, their over-representation in temporary jobs as well as in occupations with less secure contractual arrangements, their lack in human and social capital specific to the host

country (OECD, 2009). Given these factors, *in order to get the most out of the economic recovery, in the light of the Europe 2020 strategy, migration policies may be based on three keywords: adaptability, employability, transferability/circularity* (of qualifications as well as of social rights). In some respects, they are not new on the European political agenda. However, putting them at the core of the future migration management strategy might be decisive so as to successfully act in response to the social and economic changes that have been affecting Europe. As stated before, migration policies have been, and will be, a way to meet labour demand. At the same time, *current and previous experience may be helpful to develop a more comprehensive and long-term perspective, intended both to ensure that population flows respond to labour shortages and to grant migrants more opportunities, for their own as well for the host societies' sake.*

Actually, in a broader and more comprehensive sense, managing migrations requires considering all the necessary actions which could grant social cohesion and rights, together with economic competitiveness. Particularly at a time when employment opportunities are limited and economic restructuring creates new imbalances between labour demand and supply, the primary concerns surely regard the necessity to enhance long-term employability of migrants, many of whom are low-skilled, and to give them a chance of professional reconversion (through training opportunities, counseling, skills evaluation, a better access to information and so on), of changing job or employer. The central issue seems therefore to be that *migration policies should not be planned with reference to criteria such as temporariness, return, skill profiles, but based on the assumption that a migrant, in the course of her/his life, should be able to have a "life career"* (Riva and Zucchetti, 2008) rather than simply a professional career. In other words, *a multifaceted and versatile life in which mobility and circularity between different conditions and statuses would be the norm.* This requires the adoption of a new perspective in the policy-making process, which could benefit from some elements contained in the "Transitional Labour Market" approach (Schmid and Grazier, 2002), and particularly from the suggestion to redefine the borders between the labour market and other institutional spheres. Moreover, such borders need to be more permeable so as to facilitate a plurality of transitions between different types of employment, employment and education or training, employment and care work, and so on, and render them reversible and empowering, and not associated with a high risk of precariousness and social exclusion as is the case today. Thus the focus is on the means which could guarantee the necessary support to the aforesaid transitions and reduce the connected risks. In fact, as the "life career" approach (and migration) teaches us, *in the face of an unequal endowment in resources* (human and social capital, job opportunities, etc.) *not everyone succeeds in effectively combining all the various life spheres in one coherent whole. This would imply the implementation of some institutional conditions, i.e. of enabling and coordinated* (employment, social, care) *policies and services able to enhance the options at everyone's disposal, reduce the constraints and subsequently allow individuals – irrespective of gender, family condition, ethnicity or class affiliation – to develop their real capabilities and thus contribute to creating a more cohesive and prosperous society.*

Lastly, in assessing the role of immigration in terms of strengthening the cohesion and competitiveness of the European economy, we cannot forget its contribution to promoting company strategies in line with the concept of DM. At the same time, the degree of dissemination of such policies can be seen as a strategic indicator of the quality of the integration process. As it is well known, the expression “DM” refers to a collection of practices aimed at creating “inclusive organisations”: i.e. workplaces able not only to promote the aspects – aptitudes, skills, abilities, needs, cultural norms – that are specific to certain individuals and groups of people, but also to transform them into an added value for the organisation itself, taking account of both internal management and relations with external stakeholders. Actually, there is no doubt that the issue of diversity has entered the life and the functioning of organisations as a consequence of globalization dynamics, the feminization of the labour market, the prolonging of the active age (with the coexistence of different generations at the workplaces) and, last but not least, the growing incidence of workers with a migratory background. In this scenario, *under the DM approach, diversity should be interpreted and addressed not as a problem to be solved, but as a resource to be treasured*. Going beyond the logic of equal opportunities, the DM approach does not merely remove discriminatory barriers against minority groups, but makes a positive effort to free the distinctive potential of each individual. Furthermore, in order to obtain effective results, it must be integrated into organisational strategies and culture, through the direct involvement of top management as well as through specific initiatives intended to mobilize the different components of the organisation (Monaci and Zanfrini, 2014).

Finally, we shouldn’t forget the role of migrants as entrepreneurs: in many European countries this aspect is so significant that, while the migrant factory worker represented the paradigmatic figure during the industrial phase of international migrations, the migrant entrepreneur seems to be one of the typical figures of the contemporary age. This phenomenon, addressed by a large number of studies and research (for a comprehensive review of the literature see Zanfrini, 2011a), is not taken into account in our project. Nevertheless, it has some evident connections with the envisaged approach of recognizing and appreciating the role of migrants in the development of European society.

1.3 From Guest Workers to Active Citizens: How Migrants Can Contribute to the Common Well-being and European Society Cohesion

In the present “global” society *it is virtually impossible to contemplate what it means to be a member and a citizen of a given society without tackling the migration issue*. As is traditionally the case in European democracies, to be a member of the national society it is necessary to have the status of citizen and to have access to citizenship’s rights. However, as foreigners, “temporarily” living in a given state, migrants are partially excluded from citizenship rights (especially from political rights), *calling*

into question the borders of the State, as we have already discussed. Moreover, because they belong to different cultural and religious traditions, migrants and members of ethnic minorities sometimes expect to be recognized and respected as “diverse”, and request special and differential treatment and rights, *calling into question the principle of equality* on which European democracies are based. Last but not least, as they are concentrated in the lower layers of the social stratification, migrants are perceived as “welfare consumers” (or even as parasites), *calling into question the systems of social protection* and their impact on the national budget. For all these reasons, we have witnessed a proliferation of attempts to redefine both the “borders” of the political community and the ways to include these “new-comers”, going beyond the traditional nationalistic model.

More in detail, the debates of recent years have yielded some possible “solutions” to the *impasse* in which the institution of citizenship finds itself owing to the increase in migration (Zanfrini, 2007). Let us mention some of the envisaged solutions: *a) enlarging the category of citizens*, facilitating the transformation of foreigners into citizens (through the adoption of legislations based on the principle of *jus soli* and the simplification of the naturalization process; see Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer, 2002); *b) dissociating nationality from the entitlement to citizenship rights*, linking the latter to the principle of residence – as is the case in the EU Member States after 5 years of legal residence – and increasing the rights guaranteed to regularly resident foreigners (according to the *denizenship* prospect, see Hammar, 1985); *c) establishing supra-national political communities*, giving supplementary rights to the citizens of the adhering States (as occurred in the European Union, through the institution of *European Citizenship* automatically awarded to all the citizens of the Member States); *d) dissociating the entitlement to rights from membership in a specific political community and associating it with the very fact of being a person* (through the introduction of a so-called *post-national citizenship*, which enhances the rights guaranteed to all human beings regardless of their nationality, see Soysal, 1994). Some other solutions *are even more directly inspired by migrants’ experiences and expectations*: *e) acknowledging a situation of “dual belonging”*, by accepting the possibility of enjoying rights (including political rights) in both the sending and the destination country, as well as the possession of dual citizenship (according to the so-called *transnational citizenship* perspective, see Baubösch, 1994); *f) recognizing, at a legislative, political and judicial level, the “diversity” of individuals with a migratory background*, through the introduction of “special” rights and treatments reserved to (national/ethnic) minorities (according to the so-called *multicultural citizenship* perspective, see Kymlicka, 1995).

We shall not enter more deeply into this debate. However, it is important to observe that citizenship is not only an instrument through which individuals can accede to certain rights and opportunities, including the right to vote and to take part in the decision-making process on all matters of collective interest. Citizenship also has a *participatory dimension*, expressed by the various forms of mobilization and civic activism emerging from civil society. It evokes the *sense of identity and solidarity* experienced by an individual in the public or collective sphere. Finally, it is also a manner through which a national community reasserts the fundamental principles on which it is based and expresses *its cultural identity and its values*. Moreover, it is a way of as-

serting the citizens' duty to respect these values and to transmit them to future generations. For all these reasons, the rules and criteria applied to migrants and their children in view of allowing them to become citizens of the residing state, are tremendously relevant. In their relationship with migration, citizenship and its associated rights have both an *integrative* value – considering that they seal the achievement of a process of inclusion, while stimulating this same process – and a *symbolic* value, as a means through which a national society allows the inclusion of new members and welcomes their contribution to economic, civic and cultural development. For all the above reasons *European society must pay particular attention to the process that “transforms” a temporary migrant into a citizen*, sometimes via the status of denizen. This is not merely a procedural matter, as frequently stated by politicians and the media (who often focus, for example, on the length of residence needed to become a citizen). It also implies laying the emphasis on citizenship rights and, especially, on citizenship duties and responsibilities, whether or not migrants will acquire the citizenship of the host country, as well as on the fundamental issue of the values and principles on which coexistence must be based (for an in-depth analysis of this issue see Zanfrini, 2013).

In this respect, a first point that must be stressed is that the poor “quality” of democracy in most countries of origin, together with the characteristics of the process of incorporation (especially in the case of countries with a weak culture of legality), certainly does not bode well for the maturing of a sense of civic responsibility. It is thus important to transmit the idea that being a citizen of a society should involve awareness both of one's own rights, starting from the right to be treated as an equal, and of one's duties, including that of participating in the social, cultural and political life of the country, by contributing ideas, skills and projects. In particular, it is of fundamental importance to become more aware of the fact that the “social” quality of a country depends on the capacity of the public institutions to support the citizens, but also on the contribution of the latter to the collective well-being. Especially in the case of migrants coming from countries that lack a public system of social protection (as that incorporated in European welfare regimes), *it is very important to promote their contribution and belonging, also in terms of “fiscal morality” and fair access to the welfare state*. We must also consider that migrants are usually more vulnerable and exposed to the risk of poverty, and that they might be driven by the desire to acquire levels of well-being and security that cannot be provided in their countries. As a result, they may display a behavior perceived as “predatory” in claiming social benefits. In this respect actions intended to stimulate a public spirit could be beneficial to migrants as well as to host societies, particularly in those countries which, following a large influx of irregular migrants, experience a de-legitimization of the normative structure and a decline of the sense of legality which negatively influence the development of interethnic coexistence

Another point that must be highlighted concerns the specific characteristics of the European approach and, particularly, its tendency to legitimize the presence of migrants because of labour shortages, with the inevitable effect of encouraging a perception of citizenship that is only partial. In fact, those who speak of the economic need for migrants (“to do the jobs that native workers no longer want to do”) in order to

justify the request for more open migration policies, are often the members of civil and political society who are the most favorable to immigration. This type of approach evidently contributes, as we have already remarked, to creating “unbalanced” integration models in which the economic (labour) dimension is overemphasized compared to the others. Not incidentally, the more “integrated” migrant communities, characterized by high employability and strong adaptability to labour shortages, risk, because of these traits, to be relegated to the fringe of public life, confined to ethnically separated environments that certainly do not encourage them to be actively involved in the social, cultural and political life (for a discussion of a case in point see Zanfrini and Sarli, 2009). For all these reasons, *it is necessary to rethink this kind of integration model, by promoting the role of migrants and their associations in the public sphere, and their sense of responsibility towards the society in which they live.* This transformation, the desirable result of a circular process active both in ethnic communities and among the autochthonous population, could have a twofold value: *a) on the one hand, it may foster a more “mature” relationship between the migrant population and the receiving society institutions, so as to lead the former to play an active role in promoting the integration process in the community of residence; b) secondly, it may enhance, among the natives, an image of immigrants as subjects who do not shirk the duties of participation and undertaking responsibilities also on a collective level. In this perspective, in addition to their participation in the receiving society’s labour market, the migrants’ contribution to public life in terms of civic consciousness, social engagement and political activism would be appreciated and encouraged, and thus foster their role as agents of development in European society. Rather than perceiving migrants as problematic subjects to be paternalistically supported, they would be considered proactive individuals, able and willing to participate in the collective effort for the common well-being. In particular, it is among the offspring of immigrants that such an evolution of the integration model appears to be particularly crucial. Beneficiaries of the important investments made by their parents in terms of efforts and sacrifices, and entrusted with their hopes of social mobility, they are reluctant to accept the fate of subjugation that the receiving society tends to assign to them. Hence, the practice of an active citizenship could be encouraged as a constructive reaction: a participatory strategy aimed at transforming their relationship with the society of residence.*

Obviously, the migrants’ capability and motivation to really act as civically engaged subjects depends on a large variety of factors (Vogel and von Ossietzky, 2006). For instance, the culture of immigrant groups and their expectations with regard to civic activism, largely influenced by their contexts of origin, are a relevant aspect. Moreover, their personal resources are very influential, in terms of psychological features, and social and human capital. Moreover, it is worth underlining once again the positive impact that initiatives of empowerment addressed to migrants or migrant associations may have on unleashing TCNs’ potential in terms of civic involvement. In any case, the possibility for TCNs to truly become actors of cultural, social and political change in receiving societies is largely influenced by the “discourse” on integration, which shapes the expectations addressed to migrants by the majority population component and which are often mirrored in the migrants’ behavior. For this reason *it*

is tremendously important to encourage a shift in the common perception of migrants and of their role in the European landscape, also through specific awareness-raising initiatives, such as those envisaged by our project.

In this prospective scenario, it is of great importance to encourage the civic involvement also of those migrants who do not plan to settle permanently in the host country. As a matter of fact, in a period so strongly marked by human mobility and by the increasing social relevance of transnational spaces – and with reference to a population which, through migration, has rendered these elements an essential part of its daily life – *it is crucial to forge an idea of civic consciousness and participation compatible with plans of temporary stay and anchored in the local society.* What is taking shape is a notion of citizenship not based on an exclusive sense of belonging to a particular country but which, instead, is rooted in a participatory attitude towards the context of residence, while reiterating the adherence to European fundamental values. The hosting community is not conceived as a place where to settle definitively, but instead as the portion of a transnational landscape, populated by actors constantly on the move, as also suggested by the principle of “free circulation”. Incidentally, the civic and political involvement of migrants in the receiving societies turns out to be an advantageous strategy also in terms of impact on their countries of origin and their democratization, triggering a virtuous circle able to multiply the positive effects of the migration and development nexus.

Mainstream civic organisations and so-called “ethnic” associations represent two main actors in this process of TCN involvement. The latter are usually intended as an instrument to maintain a strong link with the sending societies and to receive and offer mutual support from the community of co-nationals, with the result of often leading such associations to assume a self-centered attitude. Therefore, the desired evolution of these associations consists in a gradual departure from purely ethnic elements and an exclusive focus on the context of origin, while moving towards an enhanced interaction with the receiving country institutions, in order to fulfill the needs of full integration and participation in the society of residence. This would constitute an effective contribution to the renewal of the model of integration and the relationship between the Diasporas and receiving societies. Moreover, according to some scholars (Vogel and von Ossietzky, 2006), *migration can be considered a potential resource for inverting the declining trend of civic and political participation in European society, which undermines the quality and legitimacy of its democratic system.* While the increasing civic apathy and societal fragmentation of advanced, post-industrial societies result in a loss of social capital and social networks, migrants are very often involved in networks based on ethnic bonds, which are rich in social capital and have a high potential for civic participation and community building in receiving societies (*ibidem*). Hence, understanding how to transform the intra-ethnic dimension of these networks into a more bridging one is a matter that deserves thorough study. As we will see, this is particularly crucial in the case of some former Eastern block countries which suffer from a lack of trust towards civic and volunteer engagement.

As far as mainstream civic organisations are concerned, their capability to recruit, motivate and give voice to TCNs constitutes a meaningful aspect for at least three reasons. First of all, as we have already observed, this *can contribute to reshaping the*

migrants' image within the present European landscape, particularly in those situations where they are increasingly perceived as people who need assistance and help, or even as a “burden” on public finances. This aim is at the core of our project which, as we will describe, has devoted one of its main lines of engagement to activating previously assisted migrants as volunteers in local non-profit organisations (see chapter 6). A second reason emerges from the observation that *an effort aimed at promoting the inclusion of foreign nationals might improve the ability of mainstream organisations to welcome those native population groups which are usually under-represented* in their midst, thus increasing the potential of social activism in society as a whole (*ibid.*) or, in other words, reinforcing democracy. Thirdly, the *presence of TCNs can revitalize and “globalize” the mission of these organisations*, including new topics – connected for example with human and gender rights – and improving their capacity to accede to and build networks at a transnational level.

Finally, it is worth observing that the transformation role played by TCNs could be of crucial importance within the framework of the European integration process. First of all, as has already been hinted at, migrants usually develop good competences in managing transnational existences, relations and identities. Thus, they may feel like members of a society which goes beyond one single country's borders. Besides, they are very likely to look at Europe from a more external perspective than the native born: being less linked to identity aspects associated with a particular country, they tend to feel more detached from the history of past conflicts and from economic and social imbalances between European nation-states. Instead, they are likely to attach a certain importance to the fact that the official discourse at EU level tends to present Europe as a geographical-political unit where the value of diversity is highly appreciated. Subsequently, migrants may be more prone to identify with such a reality than with a specific country, presenting cultural and ethnic peculiarities that they cannot fully acquire (*ibid.*). For all these reasons, *while increasing diversity in Europe, TCNs – and particularly their children born within the EU borders – may also add to European cohesion, building a path towards the consolidation of a European identity and the development of an integrated European society*. Finally, while the discourse in many European countries tends to indicate as a major challenge the attraction and retention of highly qualified migrants, this is not the only way for increasing the European society's potential in terms of competitiveness and social cohesion. On the contrary, promoting a responsible and participatory attitude on the part of all migrant populations appears to be another promising strategy, more consistent with the objectives that have always shaped European migration policies.

1.4 Promoting a New Integration Model: Three Broad Areas of Engagement

Starting from previous considerations and premises, our project has been aimed at promoting a new integration model, able to overcome the limits of the current one which, as we have discussed, is characterized by: *a)* a tendency to collectively repre-

sent TCNs' work and economic role in terms of an asymmetric complementarity with autochthonous labour, a perception which is fuelled by – and simultaneously favours – immigrant concentrations in specific, mainly low qualified, job sectors; *b*) an over-emphasis on the economic and labour dimension, perceived as the key element for justifying TCN workers' presence in the host countries, and paradoxically inhibiting the development of migrants' potential and their participation in public life.

As we will describe in the following chapters, these objectives are expected to be achieved through the enhancement of *multi-stakeholder practices* able to foster equal treatment for TCNs and, chiefly, to take the best advantage of their skills and competences perceived as a precious resource for the economic, social and institutional development of European communities. More in detail, we have identified three broad areas of engagement, perceived as critical steps in order not only to improve the migrants' chances in terms of employability and mobility, but also to update the way they are commonly perceived and to promote their participation in the social life of the hosting communities.

The first area (see chapter 3) is represented by the need to *recognize TCNs' formal, non formal and informal skills, knowledge and competences* (henceforth SKC). As it is well known, the acknowledgment of SKC represents a real challenge in the contemporary landscape since it is expected to be one of the main pillars of European policies for development, employment and social cohesion. Lifelong learning, irrespective of the context (formal, non formal or informal) in which it is acquired, constitutes a fundamental lever for both economic and social citizenship. In this scenario, systems for SKC assessment and recognition represent a crucial driver for both individual emancipation (according to the logic of empowerment and activation) and the prospect of equal opportunities and the democratization of work and life chances. Moreover, with specific reference to TCNs, a mounting debate about the waste of their potential on one hand, and skills shortage and demographic change in hosting societies on the other, has been developed, preparing the terrain for the launch of initiatives and projects addressing this specific target. Within this framework, our project has not only focused on a specific category, represented by TCNs – with their specific traits and weaknesses – but it has also devoted *particular attention to SKC linked to their migratory background*. By this we mean that migrants not only possess specific competences connected with their condition of double belonging (linguistic and intercultural skills, bridging ability, and so on) but, thanks precisely to their migratory experience, they are apt to have developed special skills, such as versatility, resilience, ability to manage risks and uncertainty, particularly crucial in the present global and insecure society. The prospect of transforming these latent skills into a valuable asset for organisational and societal performances is at the core of actions carried out within the work-package devoted to the construction of a participated and transferable audit scheme (i.e. an innovative procedure of assessment) for assessing TCNs' SKC (see chapter 4). In more general terms, we confronted this first topic with the awareness that investing in such an initiative could demonstrate that the migrant represents a sort of archetype of the European citizen (as depicted in official documents), i.e. as the protagonist of a multifaceted and versatile life story in which mobility and circularity between different conditions and statuses are no longer the ex-

ception but the norm. Hence the need for new policies aimed at supporting and taking advantage of the transitions between different types of employment, between work and training, and between work and unemployment in order not only to prevent working and social exclusion, but also to exploit their personal contributions to common growth. As we will underline in the conclusions, migrants may indeed be the ideal subjects for testing new policies and approaches regarding individual activation and empowerment.

The second area addresses the issue of *improving awareness of the advantages provided by DM practices in different kinds of enterprises and organisations* (see chapter 5). Here, again, we are dealing with a particularly topical issue, as it is confirmed by the huge amount of studies devoted to the management of diversity in the workplace and other organisational contexts. DM has become a powerful and pervasive discourse of our time and has spread into the corporate world, civil society, academic research, and among national and supranational public actors. Diversity related to gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and cultural and religious background has gained increasing importance in the literature, both academic and practice-oriented, devoted to human resource management (hereafter HRM), work and life balance initiatives, corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship, internal and external communication, and corporate performance. What is surprising is the substantial lack, in many national experiences, of organisational DM practices addressed specifically to the category of immigrant (TCN) workers, despite their growing and significant presence in the workforce. Very limited attention has been devoted – in both research and organisational practices – to the issue of how the presence and contributions of TCN workers with a migratory background are or could be used to the advantage of the organisations employing them. Indeed, most of the studies have focused on the issue of discrimination against migrant and foreign workers, both in general and in terms of implications. This concern is certainly justified by the higher probability that gender these workers will be unemployed or underemployed/underpaid, even when they possess the same level of education and skills as indigenous workers. At the same time, however, the focus of this research contributes to reaffirming the migrants' typical role in the European labour market. Actually, according to our theoretical premises, this is due to the deeply rooted complementarity axiom, which not only influences migratory policies and migrant inclusion practices, but also dictates the research agenda. Considering this situation, through the realization of 100 case histories of organisations which have been implementing DM practices and a huge number of awareness-raising initiatives, our efforts were directed towards transforming the issue of diversity related to a migratory background from a problem to be managed – and a cause of inequality – into an advantage for various types of organisations, with a positive impact on HRM, on the running of the organisations and on local development.

Finally, the third broad area of engagement is represented by the challenge of “transforming” migrants, often perceived as people in need and supported by the welfare apparatus, into very proactive individuals, enhancing their role and *expressing their potential in both the economic and the civil sphere, with particular emphasis on their contribution to volunteer non-profit organisations* (see chapter 6). Apart from an inquiry aimed at describing the different ways in which TCNs are involved in the ac-

tivities of ethnic, and particularly non-ethnic, mainstream volunteer associations, our project has supported the activation – through a process of individual empowerment, skills and competences assessment and personal engagement – of 100 migrants, previously assisted by local non-profit organisations, in specific activities conducted by the said organisations for the common well-being.

In the following sections and chapters we present in detail the activities that were carried out and the results that were achieved in each of these three areas. What is important to highlight at this point is that our proposal considers these activities *pivotal for strengthening European economic competitiveness and social cohesion, reinforcing the cooperation between different stakeholders and generating shared value for all parties involved*. It is indeed important to note that, besides the aim of improving TCNs' condition and prospects, the ambition underlying the entire project was that of enhancing economic and social development by considering TCN migrants as the ideal type for testing procedures and instruments aimed at making every person living in Europe *a key actor to be involved in the construction of an integrated society, where each individual would have the means to achieve her/his life project, by combining personal achievement with the responsibility for the common well-being*.

Concretely, the DIVERSE project focused on three different types of activity.

The first was directed towards filling the knowledge gap about the three pivotal issues already mentioned, i.e. recognition of TCNs' SKC, DM practices implemented by profit, public and non-profit organisations and TCNs' civic involvement and participation in volunteer organisations. In each of the ten countries involved, between February and October 2014, the national research team was assigned the task of collecting data and assessing practices through desk analysis, interviews with leading experts, local actors, representatives of consulates/embassies and leaders of mainstream and TCN associations. Each national team selected 10 organisations which had been implementing significant DM practices and compiled their case-history following a common checklist. A synthesis of the national reports is presented in the second part of the book (chapters 7-16). Besides developing and testing the research tools together with the partners during a special meeting, the WWELL research team was in charge of the comparative analysis of the country reports, aimed at identifying key variables and actionable levers for each issue considered. The results are presented and discussed in the following chapters of this first part of the volume (chapters 3-6), together with suggestions that emerged from the other lines of activity.

The second line of activity was the designing and testing of a provisional multi-stakeholder (participated and transferable) audit scheme for TCNs SKC assessment, with particular focus on the competences linked to the migratory background. This task was carried out in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden, according to the guidelines and instructions provided by the WWELL research team. First of all, a specific work group was constituted in each region involved, through the identification of the most relevant stakeholders (public authorities at local and national level, professional chambers and unions, training and assessment experts, migrant lobbyists and associations, relevant individuals etc.). During two to five of this group's work sessions, aimed at sharing experiences and know-how, each national partner worked on the design of a provisional multi-stakeholder audit scheme for

TCNs SKC assessment. This locally constructed audit scheme was tested in each country involved, between June and October 2014, by involving 10 TCNs and subsequently collecting and evaluating opinions, judgements and suggestions. Finally, a specific partners meeting was devoted to discussing the provisional schemes and identifying common guidelines, in order to construct a common audit scheme applicable to the whole European Union. A critical analysis of the entire process is provided in chapter 4.

Finally, in two countries – Italy and the Netherlands – we supported the activation of previously assisted TCNs as providers of public interest services within mainstream volunteer organisations. This involved, first of all, a specific briefing session with the volunteers and staff of the volunteer non-profit organisations involved, in order to share with them the aims and contents of the envisaged activity. Subsequently, in each country, 50 TCNs were selected among migrants assisted by these organisations and were offered the possibility of volunteer work. This also required the implementation of a tutorship and verification service. A specific partners’ meeting was devoted to sharing the experiment carried out in six different local societies and to identifying the key variables and actionable levers. A critical review of the process is provided in chapter 6.

In order to guarantee the wider dissemination of the project’s results and suggestions, a rich calendar of awareness raising initiatives was implemented in all the countries involved, addressed to a heterogeneous group of stakeholders. More in detail, a total of 33 awareness-raising seminars were organised during the project, in order to present and discuss results and suggestions emerging from the different types of activity. A total of 18 policy briefs, both in English and in the local language, were prepared and disseminated among social and institutional actors and the media¹⁰. Some other initiatives were suggested and implemented by the partners, such as the presentation of the project and its emerging results on the occasion of national and international congresses, but also during several training initiatives, at both academic and non-academic level. All this was supported by the awareness that in order to achieve real and long-term change in the European approach to immigration and to resolve its historical paradoxes and contradictions, it is necessary to involve a large spectrum of social, economic and institutional actors, making them conscious of the fact that *TCNs life and work conditions and chances represent both a challenge and a veritable opportunity for the future of the European society, its competitiveness and its social cohesion.*

1.5 The Diversity of “Diversity” in the Contemporary European Landscape

A first suggestion emerging from the analysis of the national reports is the *diversity* of “diversity” in contemporary Europe, i.e. the different “contents” and “meanings”

¹⁰ The policy briefs and the calendar of initiatives are available on www.ismu.org/diverse.

of the notion of diversity in the various national contexts. As it is well known, this has to do with the peculiarity of each country's nation-building process, but also with its migratory history and, of course, with the current political framework, which gives special emphasis to particular issues and topics.

Just to cite some examples, starting from the countries with the longest migratory experience, we can first of all mention the German case. Despite the presence of millions of "migrants" dating back to the post World War II period, scientists agree that Germany started slowly, only in the 1990s and therefore after its reunification, to assert its role as a migration country. One of the most significant steps was the reform of the Citizenship Act, in 2000, followed in 2005 by the renewal of the Immigration Act which drew attention to duties and responsibilities related to immigration and integration. At present, the country is involved in the challenging process of accepting its multiethnic composition (more than 20% of the population has a migratory background), decidedly in contrast with the traditional ethnic perception of its national identity. Some outcomes are already visible: for example, a new legislation on the recognition of foreign qualifications represents a sort of paradigm shift, as it extends for the first time the right to claim recognition for Third Country professions in a German reference occupation not only to European citizens or late repatriates, but also to TCNs.

Besides being one of the oldest immigration countries in the European context, the Netherlands is traditionally considered tolerant of "others", to the point that this principle constitutes a cornerstone – maybe the most important one – of its institutional functioning. However, quite surprisingly, the country has recently seen this perspective succumb to the new nationalist agenda of a "growing minority", fuelled by polarized discussions on what could (should) be considered "Dutch" culture, and on topics such as the so-called Islamization of society, the costs *versus* benefits of the migrants' presence, and in the last few years, the appropriateness of celebrating of the traditional figure of *Sinterklaas*¹¹ and his helper black *Piet*.

The case of Sweden is somewhat similar. Swedish society, traditionally embracing a positive rhetoric towards diversity and everyone's equal worth, recently saw the emergence of an anti-immigrant party, triggering a debate on foreign and native employment patterns. It is interesting to note that this has gone hand in hand with the adoption of a new, "liberal" migratory policy, aimed at giving employers the faculty to freely hire migrants from abroad, in order to face the ageing process that is lowering the activity rate. In any case, the DM paradigm, especially in its original Ameri-

¹¹ Traditional figure of Saint Nicholas, celebrated in the Netherlands with the giving of gifts on the night before December 5th. *Zwarte Piet* (plural *Zwarte Pieten*) is a companion of *Sinterklaas*, usually portrayed by a man in blackface with black curly hair. Traditionally *Zwarte Piet*'s face is said to be black because he is a Moor from Spain. Today, some prefer to say that his face is blackened with soot, as he has to climb through chimneys to deliver his gifts. The figure of *Zwarte Piet* is considered by some to be racist and the character has become increasingly controversial in recent years. As such, the traditions surrounding the holiday of *Sinterklaas* have been the subject of numerous editorials, debates, documentaries, protests and even violent clashes at festivals (Wikipedia, accessed in December 2014).

can sense, does not exist in this context. Moreover, despite a legislation which makes it relatively easy to obtain Swedish citizenship (after just four years of legal stay, without any language requirements or other form of “testing”), naturalised people continue to be perceived as TCNs because of their family heritage, even in the case of people born and raised in Sweden.

Moving to consider the “new” immigration countries of Southern Europe, Italy can be viewed as an emblematic case of a nation with a long and important tradition of out-migration, which has in the last 25 years been forced to cope with a rapid change of roles. Even after the beginning of the migratory transition, Italy had for a long time continued to consider itself an “emigration country”, according to an image embedded in the collective memory and displayed by cinema, music and literature. The few foreigners living in the country were perceived as “no migrants”, while the relationship between the society and the “stranger” was, substantially, an issue of regional differences: the archetype of the stranger – or of the “diverse” – was the worker coming from another region and speaking an incomprehensible dialect. Since the late 1980s a certain number of migrants from Third World countries and Eastern Europe have been entering Italy. In the subsequent years the presence of migrants continued to register a frantic growth, up to more than 5 million in 2010, transforming the country in one of the most important and attractive poles in the international scenario. What is interesting to note is that, in the common perception, this tremendous increase has not been viewed as a demonstration of the power of attraction exerted by the national economy, but as proof of the failure to manage migratory flows.

The Spanish experience is quite similar. In 1998, registered foreigners did not reach one million, and represented only 1.6% of the total population. Ten years later their number had reached 5,648,671, i.e. 12.1% of the entire population! Faced with this impressive development, the issue of “Gestión de la Diversidad” was initially focused on diversity assistance and care of immigrants, particularly in the fields of education and health. Only in recent times have some new developments emerged, more coherent with DM in the global sense, and with the tendency to include in the theoretical framework philosophical approaches to citizenship and public policies concerning the integration of immigrants.

Also in Portugal out-migration has been the dominant process in modern times, even though large-scale immigration of TCNs started in the 1970s, following the independence of African territories. However, many of them soon “disappeared” from statistics, or never appeared, as they were or became Portuguese citizens. The Lusophone component continues to represent the largest share of the immigration picture in the country, shaping the relationship with “diversity” and introducing a further form of distinction and discrimination, based on linguistic heritage.

The former Eastern block countries included in the project present the singular situation of countries still involved in the process of nation building, following the implosion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In Estonia, one of the greatest problems discussed in the report is that of Soviet-era immigrants who lost their citizenship in the restored Republic of Estonia, becoming strangers – and TCNs – in the country where they had been living for a long time. Accustomed to perceiving themselves as people moving around within a single country, Soviet-era settlers continue

to identify themselves as national minorities (if not as “second class” residents), but not as immigrants. This “disagreement” over the definition of immigration creates some tensions in the policy process and public discussions until today. Thus, even if the share of TCNs among the resident population (14%) is among the highest in the EU, a large majority of them have lived in the country for a long period of time (most were born in Estonia) and became TCNs in the 1990s. At the same time, newcomers from Third Countries tend to consider Estonia as a way of entering the EU labour market, perceiving themselves not exactly as “migrants”, in the traditional meaning of the world, but as workers involved in international careers.

In Poland, migration influxes are composed by two main groups: those who arrive from across the eastern frontier, mostly from the territories of the former Soviet Union, whose intention is just “to cross the border”, and those who come from more developed countries, attracted by the presence of headquarters and branches of many international corporations. In this singular context, the issue of diversity and its growing popularity must be understood within the framework of the process of transition to a free market economy and of joining the European Union, with the associated flux of foreign capital and the entrance of international corporations. Anti-discrimination principles and a focus on the development of human resources brought with them a growing interest in the value of diversity.

In Hungary, TCNs represent only 0.6% of the whole population. The employment performances of migrants are on average better than those of Hungarians, probably due to their higher than average level of education and to the fact that many foreigners are ethnic Hungarian citizens and are concentrated in the capital, where working opportunities are better. Moreover, TCNs of Hungarian ethnicity or descent are granted a preferential treatment.

Finally, Finland records only 207,511 foreigners living in its territory, coming from 170 different countries and corresponding to a share of the whole population of 3.8% (2.2% if we consider only TCNs). Even if the number of migrants coming from developing countries has been growing fast in recent years, the majority of immigrants are at present coming from highly or very highly developed countries. Despite this statistical picture, the immigrants’ employment situation is weaker than that of the rest of the population, particularly for those who do not speak Finnish or Swedish. Moreover, the low number of foreigners, together with a culture traditionally emphasising equality and good HRM, contribute to rendering this issue marginal.

1.6 The Approach to Labour Migrants: Old and New Versions of the Guest Worker Model

As we have seen, since the beginning of their migratory transition, the rhetoric figure of the guest worker permitted European countries not only to postpone the problem of migrants’ inclusion in the community of citizens, but also to legitimize their presence through a relationship of complementarity with the indigenous labour force. Besides implying the underutilization of migrants’ talents and human capital,

this approach has produced, as we have already discussed, a progressive incompatibility with the logic of individual rights and equal opportunities, until the European institutions were forced to adopt binding directives in order to prevent and combat discrimination against different kinds of minorities. Quite surprisingly, despite a more and more widespread awareness of the limits and risks associated with this kind of approach, labour migration management tends, over and over again, to obey the same logic, reproducing phenomena of labour market segmentation according to national and ethnic cleavages and inhibiting migrants' sectorial and professional mobility.

A general appraisal of the legislation in force in the different countries suggests, first of all, how *entry and work permits continue to be generally issued only if no native or already resident worker is available for the same job*, which is congruent with the logic of complementarity. Expelled through the door, thanks to a set of anti-discrimination rules and positive actions, discrimination re-enters through the window, because of the prerogative, closely held on to by the Member States, to lay down the rules regulating TCNs' access to the single national labour markets (see Council Directive 2000/43/EC). Just to mention some emblematic cases, the Polish report refers to a regional regulation providing that, in a situation where candidates' qualifications are equal, employing foreigners of Polish origin is preferable: despite the fact that "Polish origin" is a general expression, the employees of the Department of Civil and Foreigners' Affairs stress the importance of speaking Polish and being familiar with Polish culture. In Hungary, a work permit request for a TCN is denied if Hungarian citizens or nationals of the European Economic Area are available for the position in question. Moreover, the wage or salary should not only reach the minimum level, but should exceed 80% of the national remuneration average for the given activity. In Portugal, obtaining a visa depends on the shortage of labour not sought by others, regularly assessed in a report commissioned by the authorities.

Within the various national contexts involved in the project, TCN workers are perceived as a possible solution for meeting a series of challenges facing their labour markets, thus confirming the assumption of a specific "need" for migrant workers, linked to their high adaptability. In almost all countries *indigenous population ageing* represents one of the key arguments recorded in the current debate, together with the presence of *specific job vacancies/shortages* (e.g. Italy, Finland), particularly in the healthcare sector (e.g. Estonia, the Netherlands, Sweden) put under pressure as a consequence, again, of the ageing process. In Italy, for example, professional nurses are among the few categories of TCN workers admitted outside the limits imposed by the quota system. Sometimes legislations are even more demand-driven, and are drawn up to satisfy *specific employers' requirements* (e.g. Sweden, Poland), occasionally related to *scarce internal mobility* (e.g. Hungary, Sweden). In Portugal, special attention is paid to highly skilled migrants (professional and students), investors, and business owners, in line with the European turn towards "chosen migration", but discrimination in skills recognition and a wage gap compared to local workers represent strong barriers to attracting highly skilled migrants. Finally, in the case of the Eastern countries included in the project (Estonia, Hungary, Poland), the arrival of TCN workers is welcomed – according to what highlighted in the country reports –, in order to *counterbalance the significant flux of out-migration of young and educated*

workers, according to the logic of substitution. Actually, in these nations migrants are openly expected to take on highly qualified or managerial jobs, and viewed as a crucial resource for the internationalisation of their (post-communist) economies and for fostering entrepreneurship (Estonia). Finally, the issue of attracting and retaining foreign talents has gained ground in the public debate, as is clearly evoked by the Estonian “smart migration policy”, where a selective and demand-based migration policy is seen as a driver for the growth of the economy (Kallias *et al.* 2014): metaphorically speaking, Estonia seems to have become a career catalyst country for highly-skilled TCNs interested in penetrating the EU labour market.

More frequently, as we have repeatedly observed, non-EU migrants are perceived as a complementary workforce, to the point of *linking the stay permit to the original employer*, thus formerly impeding their occupational and professional mobility. Also in countries which have adopted a liberal migration policy (e.g. Sweden), the possibility of entry continues to be subordinated to a specific employer request, probably related to the unavailability of another (indigenous) worker¹². In the Netherlands, only after having worked in the country for three years, migrants usually gain free access to the Dutch labour market and are allowed to take any lawful job and thus are no longer required to have an employer-sponsored work permit. Another case in point is the Polish one: here, in the administrative procedure of issuing/extending a work permit, the party submitting the application is always the employer and not the foreign worker. Moreover, permits are not only issued to a specific employer and a specific worker, but the latter may work only on the assigned position, over the period of time stated in the permit. In Estonia, previous legislation indicated that a foreigner could only receive a residence permit for a specific employer and a specific job position, thus making it necessary to start a new application process when the employee changed position or employer; changes introduced in 2013 eliminated this requirement but only for cases where a foreigner is working in educational or research institutions. As it clearly emerges, *some of these regulations blatantly contradict the equal opportunities’ principle*, reproducing what I have defined as the unresolved paradox of the European legacy. Furthermore, this kind of approach tends to discourage the process of SCK recognition, or in any case to assign to employers a primary role also in the assessment of professional qualifications.

In addition to these general rules we can in any case observe how special programs to retain foreign students and/or to attract highly educated migrants are more and more widespread (e.g. in the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal; see also chapter 2). The Netherlands, for example, offer foreign students two ways of staying in the country for up to 12 months after their graduation. The “Seeking work after graduation” admission scheme is meant for students with a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree from a Dutch University. The related residence permit allows graduates to take up any employment without requiring a work permit, while looking for a job as a highly-

¹² Even if, according to the authors of the Swedish report, the idea that each employer is free to assess her/his own needs and apply for foreign labour has opened up the possibility of labour migration in sectors assessed as having a balanced supply of labour within the country and may even stimulate greater competition for jobs.

skilled migrant¹³. Secondly, through the admission scheme for highly educated persons, Master's and PhD degree holders from top-200 Universities worldwide (Times Higher Education World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings or Academic Ranking of World Universities) can stay in the Netherlands to look for highly-skilled employment. Admission is regulated through a points-system, which considers applicants' age, education and success indicators (such as linguistic competences, previous employment in the country and so on). In Poland, foreigners who have graduated from Polish Universities and are seeking employment in the country, can apply for a one-year permit. Finally, Germany has been giving particular emphasis to attracting highly qualified migrants through the EU Blue Card, issued to workers with a recognized academic degree and a job offer of at least 47,000 euro annually (or 37,128 in shortage professions); in the latter case, however, the emphasis is not on a general but on a specific skill shortage. Despite the modest expected impact of these provisions, we must appreciate their symbolic value and potential, as they officially insert in the public agenda the idea that TCNs can represent a strategic lever for economic competitiveness (even if sometimes they tend to reproduce the traditional vacancy profile approach).

Finally, in the political debate and agenda, equal opportunities are often considered the main pillar of DM practices, with a special focus – and sometimes certain forms of positive discrimination or specific attention – on some categories of workers: Roma in Hungary, Soviet-era migrants in Estonia, humanitarian migrants in Sweden, Moluccas in the Netherlands are as many cases in point. As will emerge from the national accounts (see part II), their “cumbersome” presence tends to dominate the discourse on “diversity”, sometimes clashing with the official European policies and provisions aimed at promoting TCNs integration¹⁴.

In conclusion, as regards migrants' integration in the labour market, even if entry and insertion models differ significantly from one country to another, *discrimination (negative or sometimes also positive) is everywhere a consequence of the process of social and institutional construction of the function of TCNs*, thus confirming the crucial role of common perceptions. Above and beyond the situation concerning job vacancies and labour shortages, each society tends to “produce” its own type of strangers (and immigrants), assigning a specific “place” to them and shaping their life and work opportunities. Not to mention the role played by the sending communities: even if it is not a focus of the present research, some of our previous studies suggest that the process of social and institutional construction of the “emigrant”, which often portrays the individual as a temporary overseas worker destined to sacrifice her/himself for the well-being of the family left behind, can discourage investments in human capital development and involvement in the civil society.

¹³ In order to retain highly skilled workers educated in the Netherlands the income threshold for knowledge migrants, in general rather high and hard to fulfil, was recently lowered.

¹⁴ This misalignment repeatedly emerged during the field work, through the difficulty of identifying initiatives and practices specifically addressed to TCNs (see the Conclusions of the book).

Finally, we have to observe that illegal employment represents in some countries the main cause of discrimination against TCNs and the reason why their competences and titles are not recognized. This issue is particularly pertinent in the case of Southern European countries, such as Italy, where the current occupational emergency has redirected the attention towards that atavistic wound consisting in the employment of migrants in the most degraded niches of the economy. An extreme example of the outcomes to which the flux of migrants can lead when it is driven merely by the logic of labour costs reduction and is not accompanied by adequate policies able to handle the processes of inclusion and to promote a culture of rights and duties. Even more worrying is the situation in Poland, considering the very high incidence of TCNs irregularly residing in the country. By hindering the process of recognition, the condition of undocumented migrant inhibits a better inclusion in the labour market, thus perpetuating a sort of vicious circle which undermines the migrants' human capital.

1.7 Some Steps to Reinvent the European Integration Model: the Strategic Potential of the Three Areas of Intervention

In the light of the previous considerations it is easier to grasp the potential value of the three areas of intervention identified as pivotal in our project. The following chapters will provide a critical presentation of each one. In these introductory notes my aim is to illustrate, in general terms, their positive impact – as it emerges from the national reports – together with the main challenges the European society will have to deal with in order to maximise their strategic potential for strengthening economic competitiveness and social cohesion.

Starting from the issue of SKC recognition, the overall impact is that of contrasting the general assumption that TCNs work in low-skill jobs, showing how educated migrants can offer a net gain to the European economy (which in most cases has not funded their education). This is particularly true for sectors in which there are specific job vacancies (such as the health sector) and which can take advantage of an international staff (such as the research and technology sectors).

In a more analytical way, experience shows how this step gives TCNs the opportunity to test their skills against labour market standards and to adjust to them; reduces the risk of being employed in the informal/grey economy and also, according to some national reports, offers the possibility of abandoning marginal activities, such as prostitution; reduces time needed to become established in the labour market (particularly in those countries with highly regulated access to jobs and professions); speeds up the path to qualified and socially-recognized employment; protects workers during the periods of economic recession; contrasts the phenomenon of over-qualification; enhances TCNs career and salary mobility; helps to obtain social coverage, especially for those workers employed in “invisible” sectors, such as domestic service. At a societal level, it reduces the degree of ethnicization of the labour market, and the related risks of social dumping; improves the process of human capital development by making it possible to access different types of learning opportunities, to undertake higher

studies and make progress in education (also permitting educational institutions to better plan their activity); permits to retain skilled migrants, thus enhancing their contribution to the financial sustainability of the social security system; supports the process of internationalisation, particularly crucial in the smallest countries and in countries where small firms predominate. As can be deduced from this list, the advantages concern both the employability of migrants and the competitiveness of the system. Moreover, from a personal point of view, people who have succeeded in the process improve their self-image and self-esteem with, presumably, positive consequences as regards their general attitude towards the hosting society. Finally, we cannot neglect the advantages of recognition from a microeconomic point of view: employers themselves benefit from it, as the more transparent the TCNs' recognized SKC, the better the employer looking for potential employees can compare the individual competences and be able to appreciate the TCN applicants' quality.

Despite all these advantages, national reports have also recorded some critical points which inhibit migrants' engagement in the process of recognition. First of all the complexity and costs of the procedure (particularly for the translation of titles and documents); the presence of language barriers which slow down the process (considering that in many countries information and tools are available only in a few languages); the scarce visibility/accessibility of services and institutions in charge of technical assistance (that, in some countries, are in any case totally absent); the lack of preparation of the personnel in charge and the lack of information on the educational systems of "low-ranked countries" (from which most TCNs come). All these elements discourage TCNs from accessing the procedure of recognition. They are further disheartened by the lack of harmonized and accessible information about TCNs (and not only them) who have acceded to the procedure, particularly regarding the reasons for successful/unsuccessful applications, as well as information on the occupational career and the monetary impact of the recognition. Not to mention the low motivation and propensity registered among the owners of temporary stay permits. Another recurrent problem concerns the limited cooperation among the various stakeholders able to guide migrants in the process, and the scarce integration among the institutions involved in the recognition of formal and non/in-formal learning. Some interesting innovative practices, often promoted and implemented by civil society actors, do exist, but they are hampered by a low degree of institutionalisation and continuity. Finally, at a legislative level we have to remark the lack of an EU general rule about the recognition of professional qualifications acquired outside the Union. In various countries we come up against legal barriers impeding the entrance of TCNs in the public sector and in other regulated professions, and legal restrictions with regard to required professional qualifications. Moreover, in some countries we register an absolute lack of regulations concerning competences acquired in an informal/non formal way. In general terms, according to our theoretical premises, all these elements prove *the substantial marginality – if not the complete absence – of this issue from the public agenda* (with a few exceptions, such as Sweden), *which goes hand in hand with the lack of awareness of the potential advantages deriving from competences linked to a migratory background.*

With regard to DM practices we can distinguish between their impact on HRM, on organisational performances and on local development.

Concerning the first level, the development of initiatives in this field produces above all the advantage of improving the process of personnel recruitment and the capacity to attract talented employees (potentially from all over the world), according to a meritocratic approach: as stated in one national report, they open the doors to a “global” recruitment policy. Along the same lines, DM practices improve the capacity of retention and the sense of belonging to the company, thus increasing motivation and need for achievement. They get better the organisational climate, thus generating “inclusive organisations”. While offering, for example, new solutions in terms of work and life balance, DM practices contribute to reducing absenteeism and the burn-out syndrome. Apart from the impact on their direct beneficiaries, DM policies make the workplace more stimulating and attractive for all workers by enriching the process of collective learning, particularly in research and educational institutions; they improve the level of sensitivity and competence to deal with situations and problems of other peoples/countries, they offer the possibility to learn other languages and develop new skills and competences (for example, they foster tolerance, flexibility, respect for the others). DM practices also help to draw attention to specific (disadvantaged) categories (e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, Roma, mothers with small children, Soviet-era settlers), coherently with the policies of corporate social responsibility. Sometimes, as it will be described in chapter 5, they offer employees the chance to embark on international careers, permitting migrant workers to return to their origin countries or, in more general terms, offering workers all the economic and extra-economic advantages connected with the condition of expatriate.

As abundantly stressed by the so-called business case literature¹⁵, DM practices are supposed to produce significant advantages in terms of organisational performances. This assumption is copiously confirmed by our case-studies, which show how such practices improve the processes of brainstorming and problem solving, by looking at questions from different perspectives; they develop skill-pools within the organisation; they increase team performances and creativity thanks to TCNs’ bridging capacity between cultures and between the target group and the organisation; they support the process of knowledge transfer through the exchange of experiences acquired in different contexts, sometimes harmonizing generational differences; they enrich the offer provided to the clients (e.g. in academic institutions); they enlarge the basin of potential clients and users, at local and international level, offering new products and services associated with the theme of “diversity”; they improve the ability to fulfill specific needs expressed by the ethnic and immigrant communities living in the hosting society (e.g. in healthcare organisations¹⁶ or in the financial sector). In the mid-term, DM practices are useful for sustaining the company’s internationaliza-

¹⁵ For an explanation of this expression see chapter 5.

¹⁶ Clients and patients with a migratory background, particularly the most vulnerable ones (such as asylum seekers), can greatly benefit from being addressed in their mother tongue and from being cared for by a care-worker who had shared the same migratory experience.

tion process; for providing the possibility to externalise/delocalize some activities in the sending countries; for unlocking the door to an international or employer branding policy. Last but not least, they enhance the brand/company image, enrich public relations activities and, as stressed by some national reports, make it possible to obtain awards and rewards.

Finally, as regards DM impact on local development we can observe how these practices enrich the process of human capital development and training; contribute to attracting talented migrants and sometimes highly salaried workers; enhance the symbolic urban economy thus fuelling important tourism activities; feed social capital and permit the creation of new forms of social innovation; enhance the process of internationalisation of the European economy, thanks to the availability of professionals with intercultural skills and international exposure, able to build bridges across cultural differences and to become “ambassadors” in their home country; help to attract investments from abroad and to build transnational connectivity. Let us also not forget how they help to guarantee better social justice: more precisely, they constitute a primary vehicle for full accession to citizenship rights in multi-ethnic societies by promoting current processes of social integration and cohesion in the territories involved.

Also in this case, our research has brought to light some weaknesses and critical points. First of all, in many of the countries involved, the persistently dominating idea of complementarity between indigenous and migrant workers strongly contributes to creating and perpetuating stereotypes concerning the role of TCNs, thus conditioning the very DM practices that are being implemented: this can result in ambivalent measures and, paradoxically, can contribute to maintaining segregation and discrimination. Not incidentally, in many national contexts the attention – of scholars, public authorities and single organisations – continues to be mainly directed towards the discrimination issue at societal level, overshadowing the perspective of appreciating diversity at an organisational level. This explains why such DM practices are dominated by other types of “diversity” (women, disabled, mature workers, ethnic minorities...), different from those related to the migratory background and to the fact of being a TCN.

At an organisational level we have registered a modest degree of awareness of the advantages offered by DM practices which, in any case, have had their resources cut due to the current crisis. DM practices are prevalently of an informal type, rarely codified in formal statements and, consequently, insufficiently visible in terms of internal and external communication. Indigenous workers, and sometimes also unions, are not aware of the advantages provided by this kind of strategy, to the extent that DM is perceived as a form of inverse discrimination favouring TCNs. Finally, the limited investments in the assessment/evaluation of the impact of DM practices hamper their dissemination. Private businesses are often dominated by closed and monolithic organisational cultures, which inhibit both the recruitment and appreciation of TCN personnel, while public organisations appear to have little freedom to adopt DM practices, since they are constrained by bureaucratic rules and consolidated routines.

As regards TCNs’ civic and volunteer engagement, the most immediate and perceivable positive impact is the migrants’ empowerment and well-being. Actually, as abundantly demonstrated by our research, the very fact of being actively involved in

the activities of civic and volunteer (mainstream) organisations allow TCNs to improve their competences in local language, customs, habits and ways of life; to usefully spend time when they lack a “real” job, to find a job or a better job and to gain professional recognition. Moreover, it also allows them to overcome isolation, share time and experiences with autochthonous people. In this sense, it can be seen as a good application of the logic of individual activation, aimed also at including those who are temporarily excluded from the labour market: a particularly crucial aspect considering the current employment crisis, as will be discussed in chapter 6 (see in particular the experience of migrants’ activation realized thanks to the DIVERSE project). Furthermore, it enables migrants to be recognized as a Person, fostering the sense of belonging to the host society. The involvement of TCNs in mainstream organisations can also be seen as a social trampoline, allowing newcomers to become part of the society.

Participation in “ethnic” associations helps the process of adaptation to the host society, allows migrants to be politically active (particularly in the affairs of their home country), to lobby for their rights and to launch fund raising campaigns for both the home country and the migrant community. Great emphasis is given to the maintenance of the ethnic, cultural, national and religious identity and to the possibility of gaining, thanks to this kind of participation, a sense of community. Some researchers have stressed how, through civic and volunteer involvement, TCNs wish to give back to the host country (or to the organisation for which they now volunteer) what they have received, according to the logic of reciprocity. In this manner they feel more appreciated by the hosting society, show their social commitment, and try to demonstrate how their presence is useful for the common well-being.

Moreover, TCN involvement in the civic and associative spheres has a positive impact on social cohesion. The presence of migrants among the staff of mainstream organisations makes it possible to mediate cultural values, to promote the dialogue between cultures, to improve the linguistic and cultural skills of other volunteers. Confirming what has emerged from the study of DM practices, it increases the associations’ expertise and expands their offer; enriches the problem-solving process; promotes international contacts and cooperation with the sending countries. Moreover, it allows local communities and newcomers to meet and to become involved together in issues of common interest thus boosting interethnic interactions, enabling them to deal with social change and to recognize the opportunities arising from a society that embraces cultural diversity. This promotes an attitude of openness to other cultures both in the receiving society’s population and in the ethnic communities, and leads to the development of a feeling of mutual trust and confidence that contributes to the dynamic two-way integration process required for the creation of a shared citizenship.

Very briefly we can list the main critical aspects that emerged from the study regarding a phenomenon which certainly requires further research. First of all, despite a general lack of data about the citizenship of volunteers, which prevents us from analyzing the issues in depth, scholars and experts tend to share the view that the involvement of TCNs in mainstream volunteer organisations is very limited (with some significant exceptions, as we will see). Moreover, the numerous associations born from immigrant communities all around Europe, tend to be rarely involved in the ac-

tivities of mainstream “umbrella” organisations. This is due to language barriers and to the lack of specific social networks that could inform TCNs about these opportunities. The main reason, however, is that priority is given to paid work and savings, which demonstrates the lack of awareness of the role volunteer work can play in the integration process. Another motive is the unfamiliarity with the concept of volunteering, and the major involvement in informal volunteer work. Some national reports also suggest the fact of being perceived as a “second class” resident, which produces a reactive identity and a lack of trust in civil society organisations. Finally, at an institutional level, we note the marginality (if not the complete absence) of this issue in the policies for integration, and *an insufficient awareness, among the major actors of the hosting society, of the role that it can play in the process of constructing a cohesive society*. It is not surprising that migrants involved in some kind of activity tend to emphasize the individual empowering reasons and benefits, often without appreciating the systemic and long-term effects. Finally, national and local integration models usually lack a general strategy to involve TCNs in the mainstream volunteer sector.

As will be discussed in the following chapters and summarised in the conclusions, beyond having ascertained these critical points in the three main areas of intervention, our project has allowed us to identify some actionable levers, through which the European society will be able to face the crucial challenge of resolving its historical paradox, and to bear fruit from the “Diversity Value”.

Part ONE

Comparative Analysis

2

Characteristics of Third Country Nationals and Policy Frameworks

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a set of background information on the size and main socio-demographics of TCNs living in the countries involved in the DIVERSE project. It also analyses the national policy frameworks that have been developed in these countries in order to manage migration flows and the integration process of foreigners, more specifically TCNs. Its main purpose is to outline the context in which to place the research, initiatives and practices discussed in this volume, by presenting a comparative overview of TCN populations and briefly highlighting some aspects of the different approaches that national governments have adopted to address issues relating to migration and ethnic diversity. The chapter is structured as follows. The following section, based on Eurostat statistics, presents an overview of the main characteristics of TCN populations in the 10 countries. It also examines the labour market outcomes of non-European nationals across countries and compares them with those attained by citizens of reporting countries and EU-27 citizens. In the third section, which draws on both national reports from country cases and previous literature, policy initiatives and measures introduced to manage migration of TCNs and their integration in host societies are examined. The final section offers a summary of the findings and discusses their main implications.

2.2 The Profile of TCNs

2.2.1 Size and Composition

According to the latest Eurostat statistics, in 2013 there were 20,370 million TCNs in EU-27 Member States, representing 4.1% of the total population. The magnitude of TCNs and their proportion in total residents varied significantly across the countries under scrutiny (Table 2.1). In absolute terms, Germany had the largest population of TCNs (4.67 million persons), followed by Italy (3.1 million) and Spain (about 3 million); in Hungary and Poland, the countries with the lowest stocks of foreign residents, the number of TCNs amounted, respectively, to just 61,287 and 40,229 thousand. In relative terms, Poland (0.1%), Hungary (0.6%), the Netherlands (2%), Finland (2.2%) and Portugal (3%) were the States in which citizens of non-EU-27 countries accounted for the smallest shares of their populations. In contrast, Estonia clearly stood out, since percentages of TCNs were more than three times as much (14.3%) as the European average. In Germany, Italy and Spain shares in population ranged from 5.2% to 6.4%. Finally, the proportion of TCNs in Sweden (3.9%) was very close to the European average. TCNs made up the majority of non-national residents in most of the countries under investigation. The State with the highest percentage of TCNs on total foreign population was Estonia (96.1%). High shares of TCNs on total population with a migratory background were also found in Portugal (75.8%) and Italy (70.7%), followed by Poland (68.3%), Finland (60.7%), Germany (60.7%), Spain (59.4%) and Sweden (57.2%). Only in the Netherlands (46.7%) and Hungary (43.4%) was the number of extra EU-27 citizens lower than the number of foreigners from other EU-27 Member States.

Table 2.1 Population Stocks, by Nationality, 2013 (1,000 and %)

	TCNs	% of total population	% of non-nationals residing
EU-27 countries	20,370.068	4.1	-
Estonia	189.434	14.3	96.1
Finland	117.922	2.2	60.7
Germany	4,674.021	5.7	60.7
Hungary	61.287	0.6	43.4
Italy	310.517	5.2	70.7
Netherlands	334.012	2.0	46.7
Poland	40.229	0.1	68.3
Portugal	316.112	3.0	75.8
Spain	3,012.027	6.4	59.4
Sweden	377.399	3.9	57.2

Source: Eurostat

Population stocks of non-European citizens have grown substantially over the past decade across Member States (OECD, 2014). However, at a time of crisis, and specifically between 2009 and 2013, many of the selected countries experienced a decline in extra-EU-27 residents. Such was the case in Estonia (-7.5%), Spain (-10.8%), Portugal (-11.1%) and Hungary (-20%). Conversely, in Poland (+35%), Finland (+30.5%) and Sweden (+29.2%), the number of TCNs increased by about thirty percentage points. Over the same period, the amount of non-European nationals augmented also in Italy (+12.4%) and remained stable in Germany (+0.4%), whereas a slight diminution was recorded in the Netherlands (-3.7%).

The geographical distribution of TCNs in host countries is not uniform. In this respect, there is evidence of a strong residential concentration of foreign populations in specific regions, especially in metropolitan areas. In general, spatial segregation is the result of a combination of several factors including established ethnic networks, cultural frameworks, welfare services, employment opportunities, and overall labour market conditions. In some countries such as Portugal and Hungary, the largest numbers of TCNs are found in capital cities or neighbouring municipalities, which are the highest-income areas. A similar pattern of settlement is found in Finland, as more than half of total TCNs live in Uusimaa, where Helsinki is located. In other countries foreigners tend to cluster in regions with a sustained labour demand. In Italy a high proportion of TCNs settled in Lombardy, and especially in the metropolitan area of Milan, in the industrial areas of Brescia, Lecco, Monza-Brianza, and in the agricultural belt of Cremona, Lodi and Mantua. In Poland the majority of TCNs established in heavily industrialized or fast developing areas, such as Katowice, Warsaw, Łódź and Krakow. In Estonia, the majority of TCNs reside in northern and northeastern urbanised cities and counties. In Hungary, half of TCNs settled in Budapest; however, high numbers of foreigners live in the regions bordering Ukraine and Serbia, which are the main sending countries of TCN inflows.

As regards citizenship, the composition of TCN populations is deeply affected by current and previous patterns of migrations, which are the result of several causes (De La Rica *et al.*, 2015; Eurofound, 2014; IOM, 2009; Platonova and Urso, 2010). As just outlined, incoming flows may be explained by geographical proximity between sending and receiving countries. In this respect, Table 2.2 indicates that in Estonia, Denmark and Finland, but also Hungary and Poland, significant proportions of TCNs were citizens of neighbouring countries, which shared a common or similar language and cultural background with host societies. Conflicts, country break-ups and political instability also have an impact and a generous humanitarian policy framework surely lies behind inflows of refugees and asylum seekers. This is evident in Sweden, where Iraqis and Somalis accounted for a large share of TCNs. Managed labour migrations are also reflected in the structure of TCN populations. It can be seen mainly in Germany, where the Turks, who first arrived in the early 1960s following bilateral agreements on the “guest workers” programme, consisted of nearly 1.7 million persons and represented by far the largest foreign group. Colonial and historical links also contribute to explain the size and composition of non-European groups. For example, figures show that there were substantial numbers of Brazilian and Cape Verdeans in Portugal, as well as of southern American citizens in Spain. Finally, it is worth re-

calling the relevance of both a long-settled community and established ethnic networks: they definitely account for the high concentration of certain nationalities that was found in some destination countries such as Italy, Spain and Germany. Here significant shares of TCNs belonged to just a small number of national groups.

Table 2.2 Top 5 Citizenships of non-EU-27 Nationals Residing in Selected Countries, 2013 (1,000)

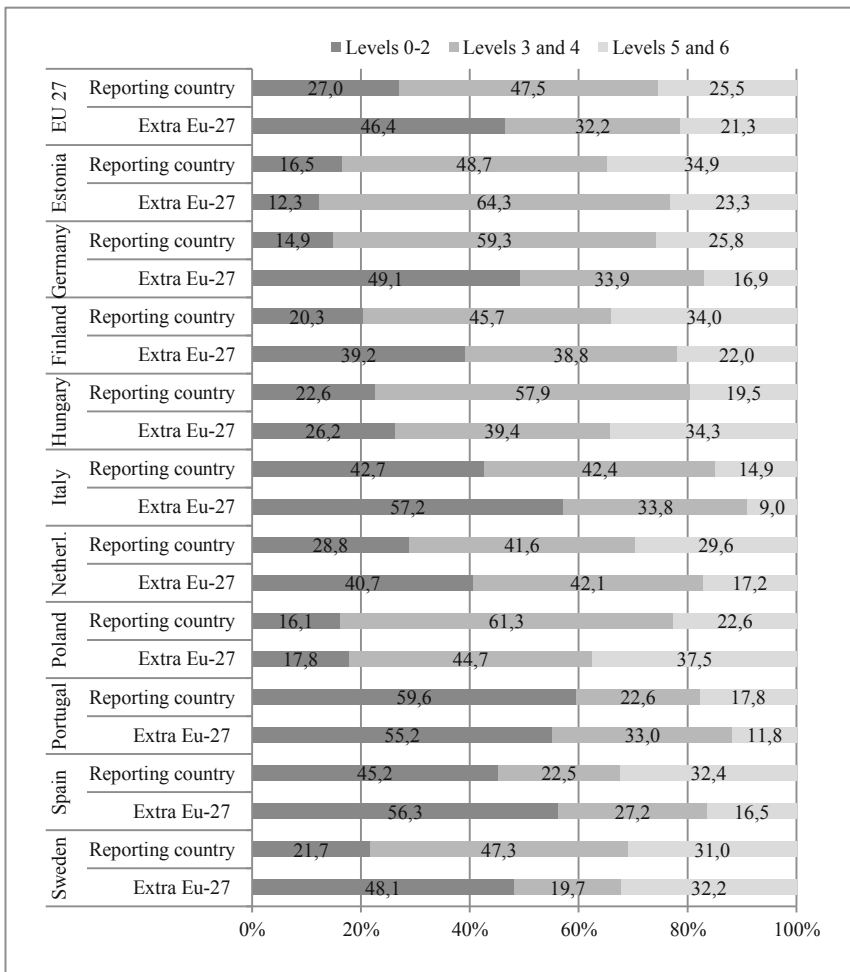
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Estonia	Russia 90.897	Ukraine 5.054	Latvia 2.058	Belarus 1.435	United States 0.394
Finland	Russia 30.183	Somalia 7.468	China 6.622	Thailand 6.031	Iraq 5.919
Germany	Turkey 1,663.936	Croatia 236.903	Serbia 216.628	Russia 216.583	Bosnia and Herzeg. 164.156
Hungary	China 11.504	Ukraine 10.849	Serbia 4.894	Russia 3.390	United States 3.102
Italy	Albania 437.527	Morocco 412.741	China 213.564	Ukraine 192.346	Philippines 139.806
Netherlands	Turkey 81.934	Morocco 51.008	China 25.906	United States 15.571	India 11.718
Poland	Ukraine 13.906	Russia 4.286	Belarus 4.040	Vietnam 2.663	Armenia 1.831
Portugal	Brazil 105.622	Ukraine 44.074	C. Verde 42.857	Central Africa 31.197	Angola 20.366
Spain	Morocco 759.274	Ecuador 269.437	Colombia 223.141	China 169.647	Bolivia 162.541
Sweden	Iraq 43.234	Somalia 36.068	Thailand 19.111	Afghanistan 16.679	China 16.299

Source: Eurostat

TCNs can be further investigated according to the levels of educational attainment (Figure 2.1). Figures on the population of working age, in which non-EU-27 citizens are normally overrepresented, suggest that TCNs had comparatively lower qualifications than their counterparts. At the EU-27 level, nearly half of TCNs (46.4%) completed pre-primary, primary or lower secondary education and just 21.3% were highly educated (ISCED levels 5-6); in contrast, the proportion of tertiary-educated citizens of reporting countries was 25.5% and the stocks of people having a low level of education accounted for 27% of the total. There were relevant differences in the educational attainment of TCNs in chosen countries. In Hungary, Poland and Sweden at least 30% of non-European citizens had a high level of education, whereas in Italy and Portugal the share of TCNs who attained tertiary education did not exceed 11%. In all remaining countries, the shares of highly qualified non-EU-27 citizens ranged from 16.5% in

Spain to 23.3% in Estonia. In the great majority of the States under review, TCNs had lower educational attainment than citizens of reporting countries. In this respect, gaps in the proportions of tertiary-educated persons between EU-27 nationals and non-nationals were larger in Spain (-15.9 percentage points), followed by the Netherlands (-12.4 percentage points), Finland (-12 percentage points) and Estonia (-11.6 percentage points). Only in Hungary, Poland and, to a lesser extent, Sweden the proportion of highly educated TCNs exceeded that of European citizens. Finally, data suggest that in all countries but Italy and Finland, TCNs were more likely than foreigners from different Member States to have completed the first or second stage of tertiary education.

Figure 2.1 Population (15-64 years) Stocks, by Citizenship and Educational attainment (ISCED 1997 levels), 2013 (%)



Source: Eurostat

2.2.2 Labour Market Outcomes

The labour market situation is generally investigated by using three indicators, which are activity, employment, and unemployment rates. The activity rate for persons aged 20-64 was 76.5% in the EU-27 Member States (Table 2.3). Participation stood at 76.7% for citizens of reporting countries, more than 5 percentage points higher than for non-EU-27 citizens (71.3%). The activity rate of TCNs was higher than that of citizens of reporting countries in Italy, Portugal, Poland and Spain, where the gap ranged between 4.7 and 5.7 percentage points. In all remaining Member States under investigation, non-European nationals fared worse than their counterparts. Differences between activity rates of non-EU-27 citizens and nationals of reporting countries were wider in the Netherlands (-20.3 percentage points), Sweden (-16.3 percentage points), Germany (-15.9 percentage points) and Finland (-12.9 percentage points). In Hungary (-0.4 percentage points) and Estonia (-2.1 percentage points) the labour market participation of TCNs was slightly lower than that of nationals. Disparities in the activity rates were mainly due to female figures. In the EU-27 as a whole, no significant gaps were recorded for men; only in the Netherlands the participation rate of non-EU-27 nationals was significantly lower (-13.5 percentage points) than that of their counterparts. In contrast, the activity rates of TCN women were, on average, 11 percentage points below that of citizens of reporting countries. In Sweden, Germany and Finland disparities between female groups were the largest, being respectively 25, 24.9 and 23.4 percentage points.

Table 2.3 Activity Rates (20-64 years), by Citizenship, 2013 (%)

	EU-27 countries except reporting country	Extra EU-27	Reporting country	Total
EU-27 countries	80.7	71.3	76.7	76.5
Estonia	68.8	78.6	80.7	80.3
Finland	80.2	66.6	79.5	79.3
Germany	80.6	66.8	82.7	81.5
Hungary	74.4	69.9	70.3	70.3
Italy	77.9	72.8	67.1	67.9
Netherlands	81.0	61.8	82.1	81.5
Poland	80.6	77.0	72.2	72.3
Portugal	79.3	83.8	78.2	78.3
Spain	82.8	82.8	78.2	78.8
Sweden	84.5	70.4	86.7	85.9

Source: Eurostat

TCNs tended to have weaker overall employment performances. On average, the employment rate of non-EU-27 citizens was 56.1%, compared with 69.1% for nationals of reporting countries and 70.9% for citizens of another EU-27 Member State (Table 2.4). In all selected countries but Italy the employment rates of non-EU-27 nation-

als were lower than those of both nationals of reporting countries and EU-27 citizens. The employment rate gap between TCNs and citizens of reporting countries was broader in Sweden (-31.1 percentage points) and the Netherlands (-26.8 percentage points), followed by Finland (-20.5 percentage points) and Germany (-20.2 percentage points). In Hungary and Poland the employment rate of natives was slightly higher than that for European citizens. Once again, the largest differences were observed in female groups. The employment rate of male TCNs was 66.1%, 8.6 percentage points below that of citizens of reporting countries. However, the employment rate of TCN women was 16.8 percentage points lower than that of their counterparts. Disparities in employment rates between the two female groups were systematically found in all selected countries.

Table 2.4 Employment Rates (20-64 years), by Citizenship, 2013 (%)

	EU-27 countries except reporting country	Extra EU-27	Reporting country	Total
EU-27 countries	70.9	56.1	69.1	68.5
Estonia	67.1	67.0	74.6	73.3
Finland	71.4	53.3	73.8	73.3
Germany	75.2	58.5	78.7	77.1
Italy	65.8	60.1	59.5	59.8
Hungary	65.6	63.0	63.2	63.2
Netherlands	74.6	50.5	77.3	76.5
Poland	79.0	62.0	64.9	64.9
Portugal	60.1	58.7	65.6	65.4
Spain	58.2	50.0	59.5	58.6
Sweden	75.5	50.2	81.3	79.8

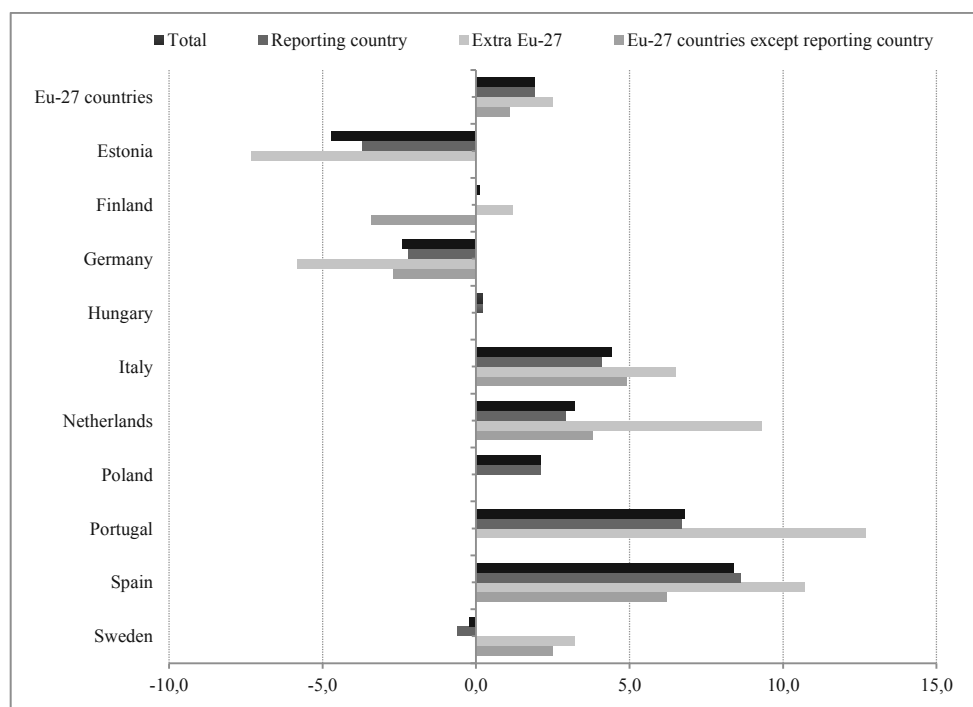
Source: Eurostat

TCNs were more exposed to unemployment, too. The unemployment rate (Table 2.5), which was 10.5% at EU-27 level in 2013, scored 21.3% for non-Europeans, i.e. more than twice that experienced by citizens of reporting countries (9.9%) and considerably higher than that of other European citizens living abroad (12.2%), too. The highest unemployment rates for TCNs were seen in Spain (39.7%), Portugal (29.9%) and Sweden (28.7%). Inversely, the lowest levels were found in Germany (12.4%), Estonia (14.8%) and Italy (17.3%). In these latter countries, also the smallest differences in unemployment rates between non-EU-27 citizens and European nationals were observed. The labour market disadvantage between TCNs and their counterparts, as measured by unemployment rates, did not substantially change by gender: male unemployment rates were 21.1% for TCNs and 9.9% for citizens of reporting countries; female rates were, respectively, 21.5% and 9.9%. In all countries under review the unemployment rates of both male and female TCNs were higher than those of EU-27 nationals.

Table 2.5 Unemployment Rates (20-64 years), by Citizenship, 2013 (%)

	EU-27 countries except reporting country	Extra EU-27	Reporting country	Total
EU-27 countries	12.2	21.3	9.9	10.5
Estonia	-	14.8	7.5	8.6
Finland	10.9	20.0	7.2	7.5
Germany	6.7	12.4	4.8	5.3
Italy	15.5	17.4	11.3	11.9
Hungary	-	-	10.0	10.1
Netherlands	8.0	18.3	5.8	6.2
Poland	-	-	10.2	10.2
Portugal	24.2	29.9	16.1	16.5
Spain	29.7	39.7	24.0	25.6
Sweden	10.6	28.7	6.2	7.1

Source: Eurostat

Figure 2.2 Unemployment Rates (20-64 years), by Citizenship, 2013 vs. 2009 (%)

Source: Eurostat

Figure 2.2 displays that, at the EU-27 level, TCNs were more affected by the Great Recession than both European nationals and citizens of reporting countries. This was evident in Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy, where total employment losses, between 2009 and 2013, were comparatively greater than in other selected countries. Opposite trends were found in Germany and Estonia. Here, the crisis did not bring about an increase in unemployment and the unemployment rates of TCNs decreased more than those of their counterparts. Finally, in Sweden and Finland, where the worsening of labour market conditions was limited, the unemployment rates registered a small increase among non-EU-27 citizens, whereas they remained unchanged among nationals.

Evidence collected for the DIVERSE project indicates that large heterogeneity in labour market performance of TCNs across selected countries is in part a product of a composition effect. Background characteristics including age, gender, educational attainment, the length of residence (which usually results in country-specific skills such as language proficiency), and the reason for migration are key predictors of activity, employment and unemployment rates. To some degree, variation in the labour market situation can be attributed to labour market segregation, with TCNs being concentrated in labour-intensive industries and mainly in low or unskilled jobs in several countries. It is also evident that cross-country difference in TCNs' employment outcomes can be explained by local labour market conditions: overall unemployment rates increased sharply in some countries, but the effects of the recession were almost negligible in other countries. Regional disparities also need to be taken into account. In Hungary, for example, as the country case report maintains, TCNs score better than natives because they are, on average, younger and have higher educational attainments than their native counterparts. Besides, as previously discussed, most TCNs live in Budapest and in the central region, where labour demand is comparatively higher. Conversely, in Estonia, TCNs are more exposed to unemployment as a result of a mix of factors such as the spatial concentration in northeastern provinces, which are more deprived than the rest of the country, and a low command of the host-country language.

2.3 National Migration Policy Frameworks

The profile and labour market situation of TCNs, as mentioned above, also mirror migration policy frameworks and the main measures that the national governments formulated in response to economic, demographic, political and social change over the years. Many countries under review have long been actively involved in managing migration, subsequent to their colonial legacy (e.g. the Netherlands and Portugal) or in a longstanding effort to govern humanitarian and labour flows since the post Second World War period (Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden). In Italy and Spain immigration emerged as a key social and political issue more recently; namely from the mid-1990s onward when all Southern European countries gradually transformed from sending to receiving countries thanks to the steep growth of low-skilled demand in labour-intensive sectors (e.g. manufacturing, construction, personal and household

services). Remaining countries, such as the most recent Member States in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Estonia and Hungary), started articulating pertinent migration policy frameworks when incorporating EU legislation into their own as part of the accession process.

On the whole, as national country reports indicate, over the past 60 years migration policy and trends in selected countries were driven, shaped, affected and eventually reformed according to the following major elements: *a)* the process of decolonization, leading to substantial inflows from former colonies after independence; *b)* the resettlement of repatriates and naturalization of people with national/ethnic descent; *c)* considerable labour shortages in Central and Northern European countries (e.g. Germany and Sweden) in the 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent signing of bilateral agreements aimed at recruiting workers from certain countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia and former Yugoslavia) to fill gaps; *d)* the oil crisis in 1973 and following economic downturn, which first halted active recruitment programmes and led to stricter migration policies; *e)* the fall of the so called “Iron Curtain” in 1989, which brought about large outflows from former Communist countries; *f)* the process of enlargement of the EU that, while promoting a common political and institutional framework regarding migration in accordance with the *acquis communautaire*, was accompanied by significant international movements from new Member States following free mobility for employment; *g)* increasing labour demand in Mediterranean countries in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, support service activities, and household services; *h)* the global economic crisis, whose outcomes, in terms of migration policy, were tighter restrictions on inflows and the implementation of assisted return policies in some countries, and a growing concern on attracting highly skilled or educated workers in other States; *i)* the socio-demographic change and population decline in net emigration countries (i.e. countries that have a negative migration balance) and overall the ageing society, with short-term and long-term predicted shortfall in working age population and skilled labour.

Hence, when analysing national migration policy frameworks and practices we should bear in mind that the underlying concepts, key elements, overall goals of legislation dealing with legal admission, employment, and integration depend on structural changes that each country has undergone throughout its history. The timing of migration flows and the presence of long-established non-nationals also play a decisive role in explaining the dynamics and intents of migration policy-making.

Against this background, this section focuses on cross-national variation in the policy approach to managing the admission and regulation of TCNs’ right to live and work in host societies. In this respect, it should be noted that in most countries the main political concern has undoubtedly been the management of economic migration so far, even though several countries received large migration flows through family and humanitarian channels. Coherently with the general scope and objectives of this volume, an overview of the most relevant features of labour migration regulatory framework will be provided and discussed; furthermore, particular attention will also be paid to the strategies and measures supporting the successful integration of TCNs.

2.3.1 Labour Migration Policy

Labour migration control and regulation may be targeted to different, and some-time competing, objectives, also based on different cultural and political orientations. It may be driven by general goals such as tackling the ageing society (OECD, 2014). Population and workforce ageing has been deeply affecting western countries over the past few years and migration has been viewed as a possible means to diminish the impact of demographic change on both society and public finances. This was the case, for example, in Finland, Portugal and Germany, whose migration strategies clearly set those policy goals. Besides, in countries, such as Poland, Estonia and Hungary, which have been experiencing large population outflows, the national migration policy framework may be intended to counteract negative net migration and thus ensure a long-term sustainable growth. Nonetheless, labour migration is predominantly meant to satisfy labour market needs and is usually demand-driven (OECD, 2010). For the purposes of this volume, it is useful to examine the underlying rationale of labour migration policy frameworks, as regards two main features, which are restrictiveness and selectivity.

In the experience of the countries involved in the DIVERSE project, a first distinction can be made, as regards limits to the number of foreigners to be admitted in host countries, between *policy frameworks subjecting all immigration to a target level and regulatory measures setting limits just to labour migration* (OECD, 2006). Only Estonia applied numerical limits as a general condition. More in detail, the Aliens Act, which was passed in 2004 and later reformed, imposed restrictions against large inflows and set an annual immigration upper limit, not to be exceeded, at 0.1% of permanent population. Such a yearly national target level for all immigration types is quite unusual in OECD countries (OECD, 2104). Conversely, when designing labour migration policy, national governments try to regulate the entry and work of foreigners based on their actual and projected needs and according to the overall goal of safeguarding labour market conditions and limiting any negative effects. Many countries under investigation restricted labour migration. In Italy and Spain, for example, annual numerical limits, as upper limits not to be exceeded, were imposed on seasonal labour migration; limits were also set, as pre-established proportions (quota), to meet the needs of specific sectors or regarding certain national groups, which were given precedence in recruitment as part of bilateral agreements. Similarly, in Portugal numerical limits were fixed according to labour market needs, as assessed by the national government once every two years and in Hungary an upper limit on the number of work permits that may be issued was set annually. On the other hand, Sweden's reformed legislation removed any limits to labour migration in 2008, leaving to employers the task to assess their own needs and recruit foreign workers accordingly. Another tool for controlling labour migration is the labour market test, which also sets restrictions to the access of TCNs to national labour markets. More in detail, the labour market test is intended to ensure precedence to local workers in recruitment and protect overall working conditions, by supporting the idea that foreign workers should complement the local workforce, rather than replace or displace it. The majority of selected countries used the labour market test as a means of regulation. Only Estonia

and Italy did not require that vacancies be opened to non-nationals only after ascertaining that suitable labour was not available within the country.

In an attempt to manage inflows in line with current and medium/long-term labour market needs, labour migration policy can be more or less selective, as regards skills and talents (Boeri *et al.*, 2012; EMN, 2013; OECD, 2012, 2014; Triadafilopoulos, 2013). In this respect, two different approaches can be identified in the countries under review, based on the rationale and target groups.

With the aim to boost economic growth and enhance competitiveness, the majority of the countries undertook actions to satisfy skills needs and mismatches by *facilitating entry and stay to highly qualified and qualified workers*. Germany, the Netherlands and Spain developed specific schemes targeting that group. The Netherlands, for example, introduced the Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme in 2004, *i.e.* a points-based system admitting workers according to their qualifications and previous work experience. Estonia and Finland did not develop separate schemes, but provisions for (highly) skilled workers were implemented just as part of the broader migration management policy framework. In Sweden, policy did not explicitly target skilled workers. However, as previously mentioned, in a move towards a liberal and employer-led approach to migration management, the possibility to recruit directly TCNs, along the entire skills spectrum, was eased. Variation in the nature and scope of strategies and initiatives for attracting (highly) skilled workers was considerable from country to country (EMN, 2013). In some cases, national policy explicitly referred to particular groups of people such as investors and/or entrepreneurs (e.g. Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Spain), self-employed, executive managers, academics and scientists (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden). Specific programmes were also designed to *attract and retain foreign students*, according to their foreseen talents. In Estonia, for example, students were granted the possibility to work while studying and their residence permit could be extended up to six months after graduation in order to seek work. Germany introduced a job-search permit for university graduates and simplified access to the labour market for workers with qualifications filling specific needs. Finland extended the duration of the residence permit after graduation so as to promote the employment of qualified foreigners. In other cases (e.g. Germany, Spain, Sweden), emphasis was placed on *recruiting foreign workers in strategic sectors* (e.g. health, information and communications technology) *and occupations* (e.g. science and engineering professionals) where skills shortages were assessed or predicted. As regards measures that were adopted with the aim of increasing the country's attractiveness, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Finland introduced simplified procedures or broadened their legislation regarding the right to work without residence or work permits for some skilled occupations. Following the implementation of Directive 2009/50/EC, the so-called Blue Card Directive, several countries also facilitated the entry of family members of highly skilled workers.

In a few States under review labour migration policy did not focus on any particular skill or education level requirements. Rather, programmes were mostly implemented in order to *address labour shortages*. Hence, they facilitated the admission of foreign workers, mainly temporary and low skilled, in response to existing or expected gaps in the size of labour supply for certain occupations, often according to

shortage occupation lists. This was the case, for example, in Poland where, since 2010, nationals of Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and lately Armenia, employed in seasonal work have been exempted from work permit requirements and from labour market testing. Neither did Italy develop a selective labour migration system, as regards skills and qualifications. Nevertheless, both in Italy and Poland, reforms in the work permit system were carried out in order to encourage foreign students who attained tertiary education to remain and work in the country. Finally, in Hungary, the limited transposition of the EU Blue Card into national legislation was the key part of a labour migration policy targeted to highly skilled and skilled workers. Yet, the most recent official migration strategy adopted in 2013 stated the national government's commitment to attract highly skilled foreign labour.

2.3.2 Socio-economic Integration

Socio-economic integration was a policy concern in several countries, such as Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. They all included references to the integration of foreigners in their migration policy frameworks and implemented apposite programmes. Conversely, in Hungary and Poland a comprehensive integration strategy was still to be developed: pertinent policy documents and legislation were issued only in the last few years. Even though at the EU level a common integration policy framework was developed (Rosenow, 2009), at the national level, the countries under scrutiny promoted the overall goal of integration according to different schemes and by means of a wide range of measures. In the great majority of selected countries, the migration policy agenda was set by national governments and delivered with the collaboration of local governments and authorities, often with the commitment of NGOs and civil society and via consultations with relevant stakeholders. Only in Spain and, to a lesser extent, Italy the policy framework was designed with shared responsibility among the national and local governments.

In Finland, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, more than in other countries, the national strategy stressed *a two-way approach to integration, with responsibility placed on both foreigners and the host society over successful accomplishment*. Accordingly, ensuring the availability and quality of integration programmes, measures and facilities was considered to be a responsibility of national and local governments, whereas individuals had to guarantee their active participation in the integration process, as usually asserted in an integration contract of some sort. In Germany, for example, integration courses have been delivered since 2005 to all legal immigrants with the purpose of increasing language proficiency, providing guidance and advice, and then supporting foreigners' efforts to integrate; and since 2011, immigrants can not renew their residence permit for more than one year unless they participate in and successfully complete an integration course. Also in Italy TCNs applying for a residence permit have been requested to sign, since 2011, an Integration Agreement; however this programme seemed *to emphasize primarily foreigners' responsibilities*. More in detail, the Integration Agreement committed TCNs to acquiring adequate

knowledge of the Italian language, democratic principles and civic life, and to ensuring that their children would complete compulsory education. The Integration Agreement is based on credits that can be increased, by means of active involvement in the integration process, or decreased, in the case of offenses, convictions and so forth. If a certain threshold of credits is not attained, the Integration Agreement may expire and the resident permit may be revoked. The Netherlands developed a similar approach, which stresses TCNs' duties in the integration process. In fact, following the Civic Integration Act, as amended in 2013, TCNs have to adhere to a civic integration requirement, entailing the participation in a course intended to improve language proficiency and the knowledge of Dutch norms and values. Failure to pass the course can cause the temporary residence permit to be revoked.

With regard to measures aimed at fostering integration, selected countries usually provided integration courses, typically comprising of opportunities to improve the knowledge of the host culture (e.g. Estonia, the Netherlands), and language training. Language proficiency was not only a prerequisite for successful integration but also became a requirement for a permanent residence permit (e.g. Poland). In addition, other initiatives were implemented such as initial guidance and counselling (e.g. Estonia, Finland), provision of information about employment and education opportunities (e.g. Estonia, Hungary, the Netherlands), actions to enhance access to social and health services (e.g. Italy). Moreover, due to TCNs' poor labour market participation and performance, in several countries national and local governments adopted initiatives targeted towards gainful employment. In particular, in Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden employment services were strengthened and invited to provide TCNs with training, counselling, career support, guidance and advice so as to increase their employability. Finland and Germany, for instance, attached priority to the recognition and accreditation of skills and qualifications acquired abroad (see chapter 3).

Finally it is worth mentioning that some national policy frameworks were built on *a broader concept of integration, encompassing active engagement of TCNs also in social, cultural and political domains*. Even if the issue of successful integration into the labour market was generally crucial, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden tried and tackled the challenges that TCNs faced in terms of social and political participation in host societies. In this respect, specific measures were undertaken with the overall aim to promote and support migrants' associations (e.g. Estonia, Germany, Portugal and Sweden) as well as their consultative contribution in the design, implementation and monitoring of migration policy (Estonia, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands). Policy was also aimed at informing TCNs, as all citizens, about their rights and obligations (e.g. Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) and enhancing their political participation (e.g. Finland and Portugal). Other programmes included awareness-raising and anti-discrimination campaigns preventing negative attitudes among the natives (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands) and the realization of local projects aimed at strengthening social cohesion (e.g. Estonia and Germany).

2.4 Closing Remarks

The chapter provided evidence of substantial differences across the countries involved in the DIVERSE project as regards the profile of TCN populations and national migration policy frameworks. At a general level, two groups of countries could be identified. The first group included countries, such as Hungary and Poland, with small TCN populations and just incipient policy frameworks: here national governments have recently started to pay attention to migration issues and adopt appropriate policy measures, and also to tackle negative net migration rates. The second group comprised the remaining countries, which had comparatively high numbers and shares of foreigners and had addressed, more or less extensively, migration and integration-related issues.

Against this backdrop, countries involved in the DIVERSE project introduced and eventually revised pertinent legislation and initiatives relating to migration issues according to various rationales and purposes. Some countries, mainly the ones that had been long dealing with migration inflows, opted for increasing selectivity in favour of highly skilled and skilled migration in response to increasing international competition and shortages in knowledge-based industries and occupations. On the other hand, Southern and Eastern European countries that have been experiencing positive net migration just over the last decade implemented strategies directed mostly to regulating migration inflows and tackling labour needs, across a broad range of skills.

For the most part, national policy frameworks encompassed measures to integrate non-nationals in host societies. A prevailing concern was labour market integration (OECD, 2013). Figures showed that TCNs were generally less economically active and employed and more exposed to unemployment. Furthermore, the “Great Recession” and the resulting reduction in employment impacted more severely on TCNs in the majority of the countries under review. Hence, confronted with the challenges associated with the weaker labour market conditions and relative disadvantage of TCNs, selected countries implemented a wide range of initiatives intended to increase activity rates, promote employment and employability, as well as reduce unemployment of foreigners and bridge the divide with natives. The overall objective was to promote TCNs’ participation in the labour market and enhance their contribution to economic growth. In most cases, measures and procedures were also enacted to protect the domestic labour markets and moderate the risk that foreigners would replace or displace native-born workers, especially in times of increasing unemployment (OECD, 2010, 2012).

Furthermore, several national policy frameworks paid specific attention to and introduced measures for sustaining social integration. With the aim of providing TCNs with the same rights and duties as any national, the necessity to uphold their participation in the social, political and cultural realms emerged as an important concern. Thus, various programmes and initiatives were approved and adopted so as to strengthen TCNs’ social and cultural abilities and competencies and enhance their sense of belonging, to endorse their civic involvement; more in general, to provide non-nationals with the necessary support for overcoming barriers to their long-term settlement in host societies. Indeed, in countries such as Finland, Germany and Swe-

den, a much broader and more comprehensive integration policy was implemented, which recognized the importance of sustaining TCNs' economic independence, through gainful employment, while encouraging their effective engagement in any relevant domain of social life.

On the whole, wide differences in the employment condition and in the profile of TCNs in the countries under review, which also mirror differences in local societies and labour markets, call for specific policy strategies and measures to be adopted with regard to migration and DM. A strong dichotomy seems to emerge. Following the effects of the recession, TCNs socio-economic integration is getting even more problematic in some countries, such as Italy, Portugal and Spain, where unemployment rates dramatically increased and overall working conditions sharply worsened. In these same countries, which over the past few years have attracted large inflows of TCNs mainly to fill low or unskilled jobs in traditional and less competitive industries, the highest concern is coping with unemployment and enhancing employability of non-European workers. In this respect policies are confronted with the main task of tackling TCNs exposure to deskilling and, to a lesser extent, overqualification, while providing them with the necessary competencies to eventually benefit from the economic and employment recovery. However, in several Member States, the management of labour migration has gradually shifted to attracting qualified TCNs, with a special focus on managers, professionals, technicians and also students who attained tertiary education. Hence, for example in Finland, Germany, Sweden, but also in transition economies, recognition of foreign qualification, lifelong learning, and DM in the workplace are at the forefront of the policy agenda. Indeed, such HRM practices are considered to be a key component of the successful integration of TCNs in host societies; moreover, they are also seen as highly beneficial to national economic effectiveness and competitiveness.

Valorizing Migrants' Human Capital and Prior Learning

International Outlook, Problematic Issues, and Steps Forward¹

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3.1 “Good Reasons” for the Growing Interest in Recognizing Migrants’ SKC

This chapter addresses the recognition of formal qualifications obtained abroad and of competences acquired in non/in-formal learning contexts (work and life experience, including migration) by TCNs residing in the EU and, more specifically, in the 10 countries involved in the DIVERSE project. In an international comparative perspective, it highlights the existing weaknesses, reflects on the manifold benefits that recognition implies and indicates possible steps towards improvement.

Most of the dynamics which will be illustrated concern all migrants living in the EU. Some others highlight differences of treatment between EU and non EU nationals. These differences are mostly due to the normative framework regulating the relationship between EU and non EU countries; in some cases, however, they can be considered forms of legal discrimination and, as such, they need to be identified and prevented.

¹ The chapter was based on the 10 Country Reports realized within the DIVERSE project. We would therefore like to thank the authors of these reports for contributing to the comparative synthesis contained herein. Please refer to the Reports for a detailed discussion of the national cases (www.ismu.org/diverse).

To delve into the issue and understand its significance at the economic, social and citizenship levels, we must first remember that in EU countries migrants are becoming an increasingly important component of the labour force (see chapter 2). Among the several challenges posed by integration, an adequate incorporation of migrants in the labour market is one of the most relevant for social cohesion, as it has important consequences on interethnic relations, the overall social well-being and the prevention of social dumping. Other challenges include the trends towards an ethnicization of the labour market that emerge, more or less strongly, in all the countries at issue; the waste of human capital due to a generalized under utilization of migrants' competences; their difficult professional mobility, their higher levels of unemployment compared to autochthonous workers, as well as the phenomena of actual exploitation of the migrant work force, are all elements which induce deep reflection on the incorporation models developed over time and their sustainability in the long term. A key imperative, in this direction, is the unleashing of migrants' full potential. This is crucial both from the human, social and economic standpoint, for satisfying short-term labour needs and, mostly, contributing to long-term manpower development, with a view to driving economic growth. Within this framework, *the relevance of a thorough reflection on this issue is highlighted by different "good reasons"* (Boudon, 2003).

The first is *the large diffusion of over-qualification among migrants employed in the EU*, a phenomenon featuring TCNs residing in all the 10 countries taken into account in this work. This is confirmed by the OECD *International Migration Outlook* 2014, which states that in OECD countries (including the 10 involved in this work):

On average, the employment rates of low-educated immigrants are actually higher than those of their native-born peers – although households headed by such immigrants are twice as likely to suffer from in-work poverty. In contrast, highly educated immigrants show lower employment rates than their native-born counterparts in virtually all OECD countries. And, even when they are employed, they are 47% more likely to be in jobs for which they are formally over-qualified (OECD, 2014, p. 37).

This situation is linked to a combination of features of both migrant labour supply and demand. On the one side, we have the receiving countries' labour markets, with their difficulties in promoting qualified work and involving migrants in the upper levels of the occupational ladder. On the other, we have the migrant workers' tendency to hyper adaptability. As stressed in the first chapter of the volume, these trends are inscribed in the "European model of integration", traditionally based on the principle of complementarity.

The issue of over-qualification appears to be particularly urgent if we consider that in OECD countries the proportion of highly educated migrants is increasing sharply: +70% since the beginning of this Millennium. Tertiary educated migrants were 27.3 million in 2010/11. About 4.7 million, or 17%, of them arrived in the past five years (OECD-UNDESA, 2013). In this regard, specific indications come from the case studies discussed in this volume.

Looking more in depth into the phenomenon of over-qualification, we can identify three different underlying situations. Certainly, a portion of migrants holding a recog-

nized diploma are prevented from using it in the receiving country's labour market due to the above-mentioned situation of professional segregation. At the same time, a large portion of TCNs do not have their foreign qualifications recognized within their immigration context, a fact that hinders their professional mobility. This is particularly relevant for those migrants with competences that enable them to be employed in regulated professions, for which recognition is mandatory. This reasoning calls into question the issue of recognition of formal learning achieved in foreign countries and of the related laws and mechanisms, which are not always well-designed and functioning and which do not always encourage migrants to undertake this route.

The two described categories experience a situation of "formal over-qualification", but there is another group of migrants who are exposed to a form of "substantial" over-qualification, i.e. those who have acquired competences, both before and after migration, in non/in-formal contexts, but who do not possess any credential documenting these skills. This is quite common among migrants, who may have acquired relevant but not certified transversal competences through migration (e.g. intercultural and linguistic competences, skills in coping with stress or in context analysis), and who, in their transit and receiving countries, may have accumulated a very heterogeneous capital of professional and technical skills, through very diverse occupations often in the shadow economy. In order to foster migrants employability and professional mobility, as well as to favour their career development through the insertion in further training routes and to promote their re-entering in the LLL process (as recommended by EU guidelines on LLL), this capital should be brought to light and certified through *ad hoc* measures of recognition of non/in-formal learning.

Aside the waste of human capital possessed by educated migrants, another issue can be identified as a further negative effect of the traditional EU integration model and its disregard for migrants' potential in terms of SKC. We are dealing with a sort of mismatch of competence regarding less educated migrant workers, who are in fact employed in the medium and low levels of the labour market, but whose specific competences could be better valorised in different professional sectors than the ones they are in. The encounter between labour demand and migrant (as well as autochthonous) workforce is not always based on adequate institutional mechanisms able to match possessed competences with the labour market's needs. Indeed, the implementation of matching instruments envisaging well-designed processes of recognition of non/in-formal learning could be beneficial for a more careful recruitment of human resources and a better capitalization of migrants' potential towards the strengthening of economic productivity, also in the case of less educated migrants as well as other weak categories of workers.

Another reason underlying the growing interest in TCNs' SKC recognition is linked to the need of an overall rethinking of productive models and labour policies, mostly triggered by the recent economic recession, and leading to an emerging awareness of the short-sighted nature of the current models of incorporation of migrant labour.

In the last decades the process of economic globalization has generated a transnational migratory élite (finance or ICT workers, managers, researchers). Also following an input coming from the EU, some countries have recently developed more or less

effective mechanisms for attracting and retaining these migrants, in order to improve the level of productivity and innovation of their economies (see chapters 1 and 2). Despite constituting a small minority within the EU migration landscape, this cosmopolitan élite still represents a reality to be taken into account when reflecting on the issue of recognition.

At the same time, a new, more widespread demand of skilled work is developing in EU countries, that on the one side implies the need to attract migrants with specific qualifications and, on the other, the necessity of suitable mechanisms for the recognition of their credentials. For instance, in recent years an important labour shortage has emerged in several EU countries' healthcare sector, which currently employs a significant part of the migrant labour force, both in the healthcare system and in services to persons. Therefore, the healthcare sector represents a good ground for studying the dynamics featuring migrants' incorporation in the labour market, including those related to competence recognition. Actually, in countries who have witnessed for years a process of brain drain, such as Eastern EU countries (for instance Estonia, Hungary and Poland among the ones here considered), this labour shortage and subsequent need for a qualified migrant labour force is expanding to several occupational sectors. Something similar may happen, in the future, in Southern EU countries which, because of the economic crisis, are currently registering a trend towards new emigration flows.

Moreover, in some contexts a new awareness is emerging about the role that migrants and their offspring could play for the internationalization of businesses and trade, thanks to their linguistic and intercultural competences.

All these trends are leading some countries to ask themselves how to attract more qualified immigration flows and, even more interestingly for our research, how to valorise the potential already existing among the migrant population residing in their territories.

A further aspect to be taken into account is the impact that SKC recognition may have on immigrants' offspring. One of the main concerns underlined in the 2014 OECD *International Migration Outlook* refers to the intergenerational transmission of disadvantages from less educated migrants to their children, for whom the risk of difficulties in finding a desirable job is very high. Apparently, less educated migrants due to their segregation in the lowest levels of the occupational ladder, will be likely to develop a social capital which, mostly in less universalistic societies, will not help their children to emancipate from a model of subordinate incorporation. However, less educated migrants may possess hidden competences acquired through non/informal learning, which, if identified and certified through effective recognition tools, may allow them to find more qualified occupations. This may have important long-term effects, widening the opportunities of professional realization also for future generations.

Moving from these “good reasons”, it is easy to understand that the issue of competence recognition is crucial for migrants' integration.

As emerged from our research and confirmed by the afore-mentioned 2014 OECD *Report*, there have been meaningful steps taken towards the recognition of qualifications and of non/in-formal learning. Nevertheless, the 10 countries taken into consid-

eration in this study present very different types and levels of development, organisation and equipment and, therefore, many further substantial improvements could and should still be achieved. Much work has been done in many countries and on a EU level to facilitate the international transferability of SKC. However, if the situation has improved for EU migrants, many TCNs still experience difficulties in fully benefitting from their training and professional experience abroad when seeking employment in EU countries.

To examine this issue in depth, we will focus firstly on the systems and procedures for the recognition of formal learning (3.2), and secondly on the institutions and mechanisms for the recognition of non/in-formal learning (3.3): whilst some significant points of contact exist between the two forms of recognition and the main related issues, there are specific aspects that need to be examined separately. Finally we will draw some concluding considerations (3.4), focusing our attention on the most fruitful reflections and suggestions emerging from this analysis.

3.2 Recognition of Formal Qualifications Acquired in Third Countries

The issue of recognition of formal qualifications acquired in Third Countries has reached a certain level of articulation in all the countries dealt with in this work, also thanks to the inputs provided on a supranational level by the Lisbon recognition Convention², the Bologna process³, the Copenhagen process⁴, and EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications⁵. Nevertheless, as emerges from our multi-situated fieldwork, several obstacles such as lack of information, high costs and long and complicated bureaucratic procedures, often hampered by linguistic difficulties, tend to account for the large proportion of TCNs who, despite being entitled, do not have recourse to the opportunity of recognition. Our findings show that, even if nuances and levels of difficulties are very different in the various national systems, the above-mentioned barriers represent a common hindering factor in all the contexts investigated.

² The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, the so-called Lisbon Convention, was promoted in 1997 by the Council of Europe/Unesco. It has now been ratified and has entered into force in all the 10 countries involved in this work.

³ The Bologna Process, initiated in 1999, is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications.

⁴ The Copenhagen process, launched in 2002, aims to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training through enhanced cooperation at EU level.

⁵ This Directive was amended by Directive 2013/55/EU.

The issue appears to be particularly critical with respect to regulated professions, for which official recognition is mandatory. Hence these regulations, put into place to guarantee the quality of certain professional sectors in favour of the public, often have the collateral effect of inhibiting the utilization of human capital acquired abroad by qualified professionals. Certain sectors appear to be even more inaccessible to TCNs in those contexts where, beyond national regulations, professional orders play the role of gatekeepers by adopting very strict, often exclusionary membership criteria. An example of this overly protectionist approach is provided by the Portuguese case, where in 2007 a new automatic system for the recognition of foreign tertiary education qualifications was adopted⁶, which gives holders of academic diplomas obtained in specific Third Countries all the rights linked to the corresponding Portuguese degrees. This greatly facilitated the recognition process, but some professional bodies created new barriers, for example by subordinating the issuing of professional licenses to the attendance of a one-year internship, usually unpaid. As suggested in the Netherland's report, all these reflections call into question the adequacy of quality assessment systems which, having been designed decades ago when labour mobility was far less developed, should nowadays be re-examined in light of the new reality of globally active professionals (Sumption *et al.*, 2013; Sumption, 2013).

As has been seen, the investigation of the recognition issue implies relevant, often complex considerations. To thoroughly examine this topic in a comparative perspective, we will identify some analytical dimensions.

3.2.1 System Structure and “Recognition Cultures”

The first analytical dimension concerns the level of structuring of the 10 investigated systems of recognition of formal qualifications acquired abroad. Even if, as has been seen, we are dealing with a topic which has been faced in normative and institutional terms in every country, the reports' analysis brings to light different levels of development, efficiency, and consolidation of practices. *Different cultures of recognition emerge, and procedures show different degrees of accessibility and usability.*

The most consolidated systems of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden show a good balance between centralization and territorial diffusion: they provide users with some pivotal reference points, on a national level, but offer also local and widespread services of information, orientation and assistance. Systems such as the Estonian and the Finnish appear to be well designed and organised, but the relatively low share of migrants, and particularly of TCNs, residing in these countries make it quite difficult to explore the actual functioning of such mechanisms. The Italian, Portuguese and Spanish systems are quite developed in legal terms, but also very fragmented, sometimes complex, and poorly organised. For this reason they lack in efficiency and user friendliness. Finally, the Hungarian and Polish cases appear to be quite poor and incomplete and need urgent innovations and adjustment, both on a legal and operational level, to the current reality of global mobility.

⁶ Decree-Law No. 341/2007 of 12 October, regulated by Decree No. 29/2008 of 10 January.

It is advisable to specify, at this stage, that the national reports analysed and compared describe a set of systems regulated by procedures designed on a national level, hence homogeneous over all the country's territory. The only partial exception is represented by the German case that, as a result of the federal nature of its constitution, registers some differences, albeit not substantial, between the various Bundesländer systems. This section will therefore develop a comparative reflection focusing on the national dimensions of the systems investigated. Nevertheless it is important to mention the fact that, in order to improve the systems' flexibility and capacity to adjust to TCN users' needs, some interesting experiences have been carried out at a regional or local level, such as the centre promoted/launched by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Lisbon (Portugal)⁷, the initiative realized in Lombardy (Italy) by Eupolis⁸, or the Short Path program, carried out on a local level throughout Sweden, arranged by universities or other educational institutions on behalf of the Public Employment Office⁹.

3.2.2 Selective Trends

A second analytical dimension regards the level of universalism of the systems, which is in contrast to their tendency to envisage privileged channels of recognition for some specific categories of users.

A first relevant consideration regards the above-mentioned Directive 2005/36/EC, on the right to recognition of professional qualifications for EU citizens who acquired their license in another EU Member State¹⁰. *This Directive, evidently aimed at facilitating labour mobility across EU countries, lays the basis for an important differentiation between EU and non EU migrants in terms of opportunities of incorporation in the labour market.* EU holders of professional qualifications, even when requested to fill some knowledge gaps through compensation measures, can rely on a positive outcome of their investment in the recognition process, and hence on the possibility of eventually entering a regulated profession in the receiving country's labour market. Moreover, the transposition of this Directive into national law often implies that the

⁷ This centre supports skilled migrants by providing information on recognition processes and, through partnerships with private actors, promoting professionalizing internships.

⁸ This agency acts on behalf of the Lombardy Region, appointed by the Ministry of Health to carry out the preliminary check of health professionals' applications for recognition. It promotes a set of activities in the field of orientation and counselling, the technical check of all the documents, and research aimed at identifying recognition trends and at improving the service provided.

⁹ This program is addressed to foreign academics, and combines several activities such as validating and documenting previous SKCs, intensive and occupationally-specific language courses, improving IT-skills and the writing of job applications, and general guidance for further studies or employment.

¹⁰ Often the effects of this Directive are extended to citizens and qualifications achieved in EFTA countries and Switzerland.

procedures for the recognition of EU citizens' professional qualifications are better defined and facilitated compared to those envisaged for TCNs. On the contrary, *for non EU citizens the outcome of the recognition process is uncertain, depending on more or less well defined procedures of formal evaluation of the previous training and professional experience, and/or on tests assessing migrants' competence.* These processes are usually complex, costly and time-consuming, and risk discouraging TCNs right from the outset. This is particularly true in contexts such as Poland where, due to an incomplete legal framework and to non-efficient operational mechanisms, the recognition of professional qualifications appears to be virtually impossible for those TCNs who, as we will see further on, do not fall in categories with privileged channels for recognition. Further provisions in some national laws tend to increase this difference between EU and non EU citizens in terms of recognition opportunities. In Hungary, for instance, certificates issued by education institutions based in the EU to EU citizens in English, French or German are accepted without translation, whilst documents issued in the same languages by a Third Country must be translated, at the applicant's expenses. If on the one side it is certainly necessary to base the recognition of professional qualifications on a good level of knowledge and trust in the issuing training system, something that has been achieved reciprocally by EU countries after years of harmonization, it is also important to identify and avoid obstacles and inconsistencies such as those mentioned above. In fact, it is necessary to reduce the differential treatment between EU and non EU citizens through national laws able to smooth the latter's recognition process, also through new technologies and accompanying measures. Another useful step could be the stipulation of intergovernmental agreements, for instance with those sending countries who provide, with reference to each receiving context, the highest portions of the migrant labour force. Actually, several countries already implement the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired in Third Countries within the framework of agreements with countries with whom particular links exist, usually for historical reasons¹¹, but further efforts should be made in this direction with a specific attention to the current migratory trends.

It is also useful to observe whether the systems taken into account pay special attention to recognition in specific professional sectors or education/training levels. Some of the countries investigated have adopted, in recent years, *options geared towards the facilitation of the recognition of the human capital possessed by highly skilled migrants.* These options are usually accompanied by normative provisions, in the field of migration policies, aimed at attracting qualified migrations. For example Portugal, whilst envisaging the simplification of the bureaucracy in admission procedures for highly qualified foreigners¹², also promoted the already mentioned system

¹¹ For example the Nordic collaboration between Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, the agreement on mutual recognition of educational documents and academic degrees between Estonia and Ukraine, the agreement of mutual education recognition signed by Ukraine and Belarus with Poland, or the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Consultation and the Luso-Brazilian Agreement stipulated between Portugal and Brazil.

¹² Law No. 23/2007 of 4 July.

of automatic recognition of higher education degrees obtained abroad¹³. For the qualifications pertinent to this scheme, the recognition procedure is significantly simplified compared to other foreign diplomas. Also in Poland highly skilled TCNs appear to be strongly favoured with respect to other TCNs, in terms of social mobility prospects. In fact, the national law transposing EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications¹⁴ envisages some categories of TCNs who can benefit from the same right to recognition conferred on EU citizens, including highly skilled migrants. Therefore, in Poland, highly qualified TCNs undergo similar qualification procedures as the citizens of EU Member States. In this way they are treated preferentially in comparison to other TCNs, who are usually obliged to enter the Polish training/education system to reach their objective. This privileged situation is reflected also in terms of migratory policies. Currently in Poland TCNs cannot change their employer, as this would mean the expiry of their residence permit. The only exception are again TCNs holding a residence permit linked to a highly qualified profession. In this way, in fact, the existing law only allows the professional mobility of this category of TCNs, substantially excluding any such opportunities for other non EU migrants.

Furthermore, some systems tend to envisage particularly favourable conditions of recognition for TCN health professionals, in particular physicians and nurses, due to the labour shortage in these fields. An interesting example is the program “Professional Integration of Migrant Physicians”, aimed at supporting the professional integration of migrant physicians legally residing in Portugal¹⁵.

All the previous reflections and examples highlight *that systems built, in principle, on a universalistic basis, leave some space also for options of a selective nature.*

A final consideration concerning this point regards the tendency of all the systems analysed to focus on the recognition of formal qualifications obtained abroad within education systems. Only Sweden seems to have developed a mechanism for the recognition of formal learning achieved in the origin country's vocational system. This is probably due to the fact that in all the countries investigated, the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is seen as a necessary precondition for exercising a profession (especially in the case of regulated professions), or for pursuing education at a higher level, hence it is implemented only when strictly necessary for reaching

¹³ This automatic scheme includes only those diplomas awarded abroad by a list of countries and foreign tertiary education institutions selected by an *ad hoc* Commission for the Recognition of Foreign Degrees.

¹⁴ Act on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications gained in EU Member Countries, of 18th March 2008.

¹⁵ This program, approved in 2008, was inspired by – and then supported - the activities carried out by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in collaboration with several public and non-profit stakeholders. This activity consisted of a series of projects envisaging financial and organisational support addressed to TCN physicians and nurses during the recognition of their professional qualifications, which were combined, in Portugal, with intensive and targeted training and activities geared towards actual incorporation in the health system.

these objectives. In Sweden, on the contrary, this operation is also seen as a way for better identifying and defining every individual's human capital, so as to improve her/his employability and to promote an effective match between labour supply and demand.

3.2.3 “Occupational” or “Learning” Approach

The previous reflection leads us to consider a third analytical dimension, regarding the “system’s approach”: either oriented towards the incorporation in the labour market or rather towards LLL. In general, all the systems investigated present both these orientations, since, as previously mentioned, recognition usually has two different main objectives: the continuation of an educational path, or the inclusion in a certain professional sector. Moreover, in all the cases analysed, *the finalization of the recognition process may imply the undertaking of compensation measures or internships, aimed at filling possible gaps in the applicant’s preparation.* In this regard, the Netherlands and particularly Sweden seem to have the best equipped systems in terms of bridging measures aimed at providing TCNs with the information and contents related to the receiving country’s culture and to the new professional context. They are also the most organised in terms of courses able to transfer certain skills, such as language or ICT competence, which can help them to better carry out their profession. However, all these training activities are usually proposed not as an additional opportunity, but as a precondition for recognition. In particular, a good, often proficient level in the local language represents an important step for the recognition of one’s professional or educational qualifications. In some cases, such as Italy, a good knowledge of Italian is absolutely necessary in order to venture into the bureaucratic wilderness of recognition. In other cases, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, the attendance of a language course and the successful verification of the related learning are formal prerequisites for recognition. This often implies a significant burden in terms of costs and time. In this light, as suggested in the Swedish report, the question could be raised if the lengthy process for TCNs to have their education recognised for employment is problematic or actually leading to better quality for both the migrant and the employer, compared to simpler processing that might not be deemed sufficient for sustainable employment. In fact the recognition process, particularly when implying further training, tends to put a lot of pressure on the individual, who is often an adult migrant needing to combine training, work and family life. To promote TCNs’ possibility to fully benefit from the recognition process as an opportunity for LLL, it is necessary to implement *ad hoc* projects, such as some initiatives implemented on a local level, e.g. in the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. We are dealing with flexible solutions able to suit individual needs and to enable the training process to be better combined with work and family.

3.2.4 Formalization, Transparency and Flexibility of Procedures

As suggested by the last point, a fourth element of differentiation between the systems observed is the degree of formalization and bureaucratization, or, instead, of flexibility and capacity to adjust to every single recognition case. Certainly the latter capacity is much higher in the more consolidated systems of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Here, notwithstanding a high level of structuring and standardization, widespread local services are available, able to adopt a relational approach and, to a certain extent, to adjust the process to the specific applicant's needs. Also Portugal seems to be quite advanced in this respect, thanks to the attention focused since 2007 on the recognition of qualifications by the government Plans for Immigrants' Integration¹⁶. This institutional input implied the creation, through collaborations between public and non-profit stakeholders on a local level, of several services of information, assistance and support for migrants willing to undergo the recognition process. Nevertheless, this flexibility is mainly possible within the framework of specific projects, specifically tailored to TCNs' needs and implemented on a local level by several collaborating stakeholders. Due to the financial burden, these initiatives are sporadic and linked to specific funds, and have not yet become an integrated, stable element in the institutional systems analysed.

A further reasoning linked to the issue of flexibility and relationality regards the level of standardization and transparency versus the arbitrariness of the system, as well as its capacity to activate mechanisms of evaluation and critical analysis. We are dealing with a subject where quality assurance mechanisms, as well as the minimization of risks of discretionary behaviours, are essential factors. If in the field of professional qualifications the degree of bureaucratization and standardization always remains quite high, for a comprehensible need of control and transparency, in the field of recognition of academic qualifications the situation is slightly different. This is particularly true in cases such as the Hungarian or Italian one, where recognition is entrusted to single higher education institutions. If this solution appears to be very positive in terms of flexibility and facilitating procedures, on the other hand it may lead to less transparent, possibly arbitrary decisions. In fact, the recognition process may have different outcomes depending on the evaluating institution. Controlling possible arbitrary behaviours is particularly important if we consider that, as underlined in the Dutch report, the dimension of prejudice may compromise an objective assessment of diplomas and determine the devaluation of migrants' qualifications. Hence, a good balance must be found between standardization and flexibility, both being of fundamental importance in this field.

Furthermore, the activation of effective evaluation mechanisms is essential. This aspect appears to be quite weak in all the countries investigated, as shown by the general scarcity of statistical data on the outcomes of recognition procedures. As a matter of fact, even the most meta-reflexive systems, such as the Dutch, German or Swedish

¹⁶ First Plan for Immigrant Integration (2007-2009): Resolution of the Cabinet Council No. 63-a/2007. Second Plan for Immigrant Integration (2010-2013): Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 74/2010, of 17 September.

one, have not yet found complete and efficient evaluation methods, despite the fact that research work in this field is much more developed in these countries than in all the other contexts investigated.

This analytical dimension brings to light a further, interesting aspect, i.e. the tendency of the analysed systems to concentrate merely on the formal evaluation of documents attesting the possession of certain skills, or, instead, to combine this operation with a thorough evaluation of the applicant's competence. Although both tendencies can be observed in all the countries investigated, given that – mostly in the case of professional qualifications – recognition is usually subordinated both to formal evaluation and language or aptitude tests, bureaucratic obstacles tend nevertheless to prevail. This can severely hinder the recognition of TCNs' competences, which may remain hidden behind linguistic barriers and organisational problems in facing complex and bureaucratic procedures. Thus, *the recognition process risks producing inequalities between those who are able to get through the process and those who cannot*. An emerging shift in the approach towards a more practical recognition of migrants' knowledge and experiences, instead of simply looking at formal educational attainment, is perceptible only in Sweden. This appears to be a very promising path for improving the existing mechanisms for the recognition of migrants formal qualifications acquired abroad, and *indicates a possible synergy between recognition of formal qualifications and validation of non/in-formal learning, as the former field could benefit from methodologies and instruments borrowed from the latter*.

3.3 Recognition of SKC Acquired through Non/In-formal Learning

Besides the recognition of formal qualifications discussed in the previous section, the DIVERSE project also focused on the analysis of systems for the validation of SKC acquired through non/in-formal learning. *This recognition does not, in itself, create human capital, but makes the stock of human capital more visible and more valuable to individuals and society at large, hence finally promoting the increase of human capital* (Werquin, 2010). *This is particularly true and important for migrants who do not necessarily have a low level of education and training, but whose SKC too often remain hidden*.

In this perspective *this issue represents an innovative, interdisciplinary, cultural and institutional challenge, even a sort of "frontier research" when related to migrants in general and TCNs in particular*. Considering our research findings, apart from a few cases, the national systems investigated appear to be very fragmented, when not nearly totally lacking in terms of norms, structures, procedures and tools. As a start, we can outline three clusters of systems: "mature" (the Netherlands, Sweden), "consistently evolving" (Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain), and "starting" (Estonia, Hungary, Poland). These clusters are quite rough, as they are based on the combined evaluation of the system as a whole and of its capacity to be TCN friendly.

This work undoubtedly sheds light on several interesting experiences in the field, which, nevertheless, are often limited to specific local or sector contexts. Moreover serious interventions of evaluation are lacking in this area, as well as mechanisms for the exchange of good practices. Hence, these experiences can hardly trigger any wider process of mutual learning towards a more developed culture of valorisation of non/in-formal learning. This is why describing and capitalizing these initiatives by bringing them to the attention of researchers is considered very important.

As in the previous paragraph, to explore the issue we will proceed by identifying various analytical dimensions.

3.3.1 System Seniority and Maturity

The first analytical dimension concerns the level of “seniority and maturity” of the national systems of validation of SKC acquired through non/in-formal learning.

This aspect tends to be directly proportional to the development of the related national LLL system and the length of the country’s migration history and volume of migration flows. In most cases, for example the Dutch and the Swedish one, we can clearly observe that the longer and more sizeable the latter, the more developed the validation system. However in a few cases, such as Germany, this link is not so evident.

Moreover, seniority is generally connected to the degree of institutionalization and centralization of the procedures and to their homogeneity throughout the country. In addition, the most developed recognition systems have implemented procedures aimed at recognising SKC wherever and however acquired both for gaining credits for re-entering the education system and for obtaining a better inclusion in the labour market. A meaningful example is the Dutch case, where recognition of prior learning (hereafter RPL) and accreditation of prior learning (hereafter APL) have been well developed since the beginning of the 2000s, when the National Knowledge Centre (Kenniscentrum EVC) began to raise awareness on the issue and stimulate the use of available tools, drawing growing attention to the positive effects of this recognition on the functioning of the labour market. Moreover, the pivotal role assigned to the Centre has ensured a good level of centralization and homogeneity of procedures throughout the country, even if the final assessment is delegated to the regional and local level and shared between employers and specific committees. The Swedish case is likewise interesting. As in the Netherlands, the issue is mainly linked to RPL. For this reason the existing connections with the recognition of formal qualifications are well structured. On the other hand, since the end of the Nineties, Sweden has been testing methods of assessing, recognising and validating individuals’ competences and abilities acquired through non/in-formal learning for work purposes.

In those countries where the system has received a recent impulse, RPL and APL are the main focus (Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain).

In Germany, Italy and Spain the system is characterised by regional sub-systems, differently developed and structured, featuring the involvement of many stakeholders within a complex set of different institutional competences. In Italy, for example, this

generates several conflicts and a high heterogeneity in rules and mechanisms. This situation derives from the fact that, according to the 2001 reform, the State should have defined a general framework containing a set of guidelines for regional implementation, but for several years this task was not accomplished. Only very recently (2012), mainly due to solicitations from the EU, the State has developed a national legislative framework, with reference to the national system of competence certification. During the long period of immobility on a central level, some regions remained in a situation of stasis, some others started acting on an autonomous basis, developing very different legislative frameworks and methodological tools. For example, Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this field. Anticipating the national legislation, it elaborated a Regional Framework of Professional Standards, adopted in 2008 and constantly updated with further profiles and competences¹⁷. Hence, the current challenge in Italy is the homogenisation of the various regional contexts. However it is important to highlight that in this country the issue of non/in-formal learning risks being to a certain extent disregarded due to the socio-cultural tendency to give a higher value to formal learning.

In Spain, the system is both centralized and fragmented, thanks to the initiative of the Autonomous Communities. Spanish legislation recognizes and supports the validation of SKC acquired through non-formal training, work and life experiences. Nevertheless, this practice is scarcely implemented. In 2014, in order to assess the situation following the Royal Decree¹⁸ on the recognition of SKC acquired through work experience, most of the Spanish regions have developed calls for the accreditation of different professional families, qualifications and skills. Moreover, an accreditation process leading to the issue of certificates of vocational training, professional certificates and learning credits was established. A pioneer in this field was the Andalusia Autonomous Community, which in 2009 carried out an experimental and pilot process (in line with the above-mentioned Real Decreto) in order to introduce mechanisms of official recognition and certification of professional competences. At the same time, an infrastructure of evaluators and assessors was created.

In those countries where the system is at a very early stage, the aim to develop connections between LLL and different levels of study is the first objective of the validation system (Estonia, Hungary, Poland). For example, since September 2007 a big share of higher education programmes or professional training in Estonia can be obtained through accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). However, institutions cannot award any diploma or certificate on the basis of prior and experiential learning and the admission to higher education institutions cannot be based exclusively on the APEL procedure, as an upper secondary school diploma is required. The system is still not institutionalized, as a central body in charge of defining national guidelines for SKC recognition does not exist, neither at national nor at local level.

¹⁷ This framework is formulated in accordance with the EQF and matches the national framework.

¹⁸ N. 1224/2009, July 17th.

In Hungary and Poland as well, the system is at an early stage. In Hungary the recognition of SKC acquired through non/in-formal learning falls under the responsibility of either the employers or the bodies/institutions that mediate between employers and employees, such as head-hunter companies or NGOs. Therefore, institutions in charge of validating non/in-formal qualifications are basically non-state institutions. Likewise in Poland there are no regulations governing the recognition of SKC acquired informally. As regards applying for a residence permit to work in a non-regulated profession, TCNs' competences acquired in an informal way are assessed by the employer her/himself. Rarely, the competences may also be evaluated by officials from the Civil and Foreigners' Affairs Departments at Regional Offices. This may be the case when a certain profession requires the knowledge of Polish and the candidate cannot present any certificate confirming her/his knowledge of this language.

3.3.2 Working as Learning Goals

The second analytical dimension concerns the "system orientation" towards re-entering either the labour market or the educational system by stressing employment or learning goals respectively.

It is obvious that the outcome of SKC recognition procedures could be used everywhere both for employment and LLL purposes. However, as mentioned before, the prevailing tendency is to use the recognition outcome for achieving formal education certifications. Nevertheless, in those countries where the system is more developed (i.e. the Netherlands and Sweden), over time the LLL orientation has been enhanced with the inclusion of benefits in terms of employment status and working career.

In the Netherlands, for example, the precondition for starting any RPL procedure is that an individual is well-aware of her/his career goals, has enough relevant experience in that field and wishes to advance in this career. Moreover, on the Knowledge Centre website RPL indications are given on a number of methods that can help to identify someone's career goals. Similarly in Sweden the orientation towards employment is strongly stressed. As indicated in the introductory section, *the synergistic integration between the systems of recognition of formal and non/in-formal learning is aimed at promoting a better placement of the workforce – especially with reference to migrants – in the labour market.*

Paradoxically, an employment orientation seems to emerge also in Hungary and Poland, mainly due to the scarce diffusion and institutionalization of RPL procedures able to facilitate the re-entering into the education system. Generally the employers may themselves recognize and validate the skills required, by hiring a person for a work position even if their SKC have not been officially validated. For work positions targeted at people of a lower educational status, often non formally and informally acquired SKC are what matters the most. Access to the formal education and training system is also encouraged, but the formal education system is still dominant and not very flexible.

On the contrary, the Portuguese system is focused on the recognition of different kinds of learning. It aims at valorising competences which otherwise would risk being wasted, and at supporting the re-entering in the educational system by those people who had prematurely abandoned it, also thanks to courses that allow to fill gaps which hinder the achievement of a formal qualification.

Similarly, in Spain, while the possibility to use the validation outcomes in the labour market is in principle at the forefront, the system is evidently shaped by the LLL rationale and the logic of sub-units of competences. The process of recognition of prior learning implemented at the national level is like an open door through which people can access the Educational System, the Vocational Training system and the labour market. The path to unleashing the full potential of the system, however, is still long.

The German case is somewhat peculiar. Although, also in this country, RPL is the main pillar of the system and many tools for competences registration and assessment have been developed, the spread of RPL is limited and the lack of standardized procedures at the national level emerges. On the other hand, the sophisticated German vocational education system hinders the innovation process as employers and institutions still adhere to conservative documentation and accreditation (Seidel *et al.*, 2008).

Mostly everywhere, however, the main problem remains the transition from competence registration (e.g. in a portfolio) to competence formal recognition (certification). Outside the education system, which recognizes learning units and credits required for reaching a formal title/qualification, in all countries the validation (assessment and certification) of registered SKC is an exception. This becomes extremely rare especially for TCNs, not because they are not entitled to this right, but because they are disadvantaged when they have to move from the formal to the substantial level.

3.3.3 A “Test Bed” for Inclusiveness

A third analytical dimension concerns the universalism or degree of inclusiveness of the systems. It considers whether inclusiveness refers to the whole population and, on the other hand, how and to which level specific procedures are envisaged for migrants and, particularly, for TCNs.

At first sight, the systems analysed adopt a universalistic approach with respect to the recognition of SKC: the latter is seen as a concrete opportunity offered to every individual willing to benefit from it. It is also for this reason that the availability of statistical information on TCNs' competence recognition is generally very limited or totally missing, since tracking beneficiaries' nationality is not deemed to be relevant.

Migrants residing legally in the receiving country can enjoy, practically everywhere, the same services as native people and can benefit from technical assistance, in particular with regard to information and career guidance, access to training and LLL, employment and unemployment benefits etc. The universalistic perspective depends not only on the shared principle of non-discrimination, but also on the fact that this issue has been developed under European pressure and in line with the EU ap-

proach, clearly expressed since the beginning of the 2000s through both the Memorandum of LLL and the Lisbon Strategy. It fosters the development of a LLL system capable of including and enhancing any learning context and its outcomes, and of pursuing goals such as offering a “second chance”, the democratization of opportunities and the reduction of learning inequalities.

This universalistic approach means that migrants can see their skills and knowledge recognized and certificated through a common process, and not through a mechanism envisaged specifically for non-nationals. The most meaningful case is the Dutch one, where the lack of a specific attention for TCNs depends on a solid cultural frame of equality. While this idea is clearly expressed in every country report, there are differences in the ways it is implemented. For example, in Spain there are no *ad hoc* procedures for the recognition of competencies for TCNs and the latter have to follow the same route as nationals or migrants coming from EU countries. However, this means that the “merits” that are valued – especially professional experience – must have been obtained in Spain, as the professional activity carried out in another country is not valued. Hence, the entire certification procedure is based on work experience achieved in Spain.

On the contrary, in countries with a recent immigration experience the lack of specific attention to TCNs essentially depends both on the weakness of the recognition system and on the small size of migrant flows from Third Countries, as in Estonia.

On the other hand, in some countries there emerges a more or less structured and developed attempt to utilize specific procedures and tools for promoting the access of foreign people, in particular TCNs, to the validation system. The assumption is that migrants generally have to face stronger weaknesses and higher barriers (not only in linguistic terms). This attempt is carried out mainly through ongoing pilot projects and local experimentations.

In Hungary, for example, the Artemisszió Foundation, an NGO that promotes intercultural communication and multicultural values, in cooperation with MENEDÉK Association, has deployed a tool to recognize skills, qualifications and competencies of TCNs. The integration program is customized for each participant based on her/his different needs. With a tool called “Digital Life Cycle Map” (DLCM) (*Digitális Életpálya Térkép*), the individual’s informal and non-formal skills, qualifications and competences are mapped and measured. Competence measurement is based on a person’s whole life cycle and not merely on working experience, and priority is placed on the objective of raising in individuals awareness of their own competencies. It is interesting to note that DLCM is being used also in France by several organisations, but not in other European countries¹⁹.

On the one side, this kind of focus on TCNs shows the will to make equality of opportunities concrete. On the other side, in some cases this focus becomes itself a factor of differentiation that can produce other forms of inequalities, between natives and migrants or between different categories of migrants. For example, in Sweden the

¹⁹ Artemisszió plans to develop this tool, creating specific CVs along the model provided by the EUropass, and also provides training on the DLCM-method to other interested organisations or HR companies.

so-called “individual establishment plan” for newly arrived migrants is accessible only to TCNs under international protection and their relatives, while no clear division of responsibilities or direct gate of entrance to the system of validation exists for other migrants (Länsstyrelsen Västra Götalands Län, 2012).

3.3.4 Migrant-friendly Procedures

The above issue is connected to the degree of user-friendliness of the systems with respect to TCNs, which represents the third dimension of our analysis.

As previously mentioned, except for some specific local/sector-based projects, the principle of universalism that inspires all countries has not led to the development of *ad hoc* procedures for migrants. However, some countries have developed procedures of validation meant for all citizens, which could potentially be also suited to migrants (who, nevertheless, do not fully benefit from them, as will be seen further on). Good practices can be found in many countries or regional areas (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden). In contexts where particular attention has been paid to special categories (not only migrants, but also less educated or disabled people), some interesting and innovative methodologies have been developed, such as portfolios comprising photographic or video recorded materials which are helpful for overcoming language barriers. Moreover, the presence of effective supporting measures, such as personalized coaching services implemented by professional operators, appears to be essential. In this regard, the Dutch case presents many interesting examples such as the “EPortfolios”. Moreover, it is worth mentioning some tools utilized in Germany, such as the “ProfilPASS”, the *Kompetenzbilanz für Migrantinnen*, and, at local level, the Agentur Q Project developed in Baden-Württemberg, funded on scientific grounds and characterized by a high level of transparency. These instruments are suitable for registering the most relevant key and professional SKC, by considering different learning settings (Bretschneider, 2006). They use different kinds of attestation methods, including photos, audio files or letters, and tools for self-assessment. Furthermore, always referring to the German case, it is interesting to note an established procedure which offers experienced professionals a smart means of acquiring recognition of their professional competence: we are referring to the “external examination” that allows professionals direct access to the final exam if they can prove to have worked at least one and a half times the vocational training duration. Periods of occupation abroad are particularly to be considered. Moreover, the participation in a re-training-course (and therefore a formal learning-setting) in order to prepare for the external examination is strongly recommended for foreigners due to the theoretical and sociological components of the exam.

However, even in those countries, regions or sectors where a certain level of systematization and expertise has been reached in the field of recognition of non/informal learning, migrants tend to be scarcely involved. This is linked to several factors, such as the mechanisms set up for the involvement of beneficiaries, the nature of the professional sectors concerned, which tend to be the most qualified, the presence of linguistic barriers, and the costs implied by validation procedures, which are often high and borne by the candidate.

Not surprisingly, one of the main factors that keep migrants from taking advantage of SKC recognition opportunities is the linguistic barrier: good linguistic competences are very important for the success of the recognition process, in terms of both the correct implementation of the procedure and the effective expression of non-standard skills, which are essential in this field. It is obvious that without documentation the description of informal SKC depends on TCNs' ability to describe them. Indeed, not only language proficiency but also cultural understanding of the receiving society's norms, LLL opportunities, labour market functioning, and employers' expectations is required. To overcome these critical obstacles, the involvement of TCNs (for example through their associations) in the designing of systems, procedures and tools for the validation of non/in-formal learning is crucial. This is exactly what we tried to do with our project (see chapter 4). Moreover, professionals involved in validation procedures need to be well trained to meet migrants' "special needs".

In the absence of specific measures for TCNs, *the implementation of procedures for the validation of non/in-formal learning, in principle so important for contrasting migrants' discrimination in the labour market, risks becoming itself a powerful instrument of discrimination. Nevertheless, ad hoc measures do not necessarily protect TCNs from the risk of penalization.* The few data available show for example that also in the Netherlands and Sweden, among the most advanced countries in this field, a lack of effectiveness of RPL and APL both for natives and foreigners emerges together with some paradoxes. Let us take the Swedish case and examine some of these paradoxes in detail.

Sweden has been testing methods of assessing, recognising and validating individuals' competences and abilities acquired through non/in-formal learning for working purposes since 1997, and with a more explicit focus on migrants since about 2008 (Thomson, 2010). Nevertheless, some field studies give a lot of examples of weaknesses and failings in the validation system, as well as of limitations to its effectiveness caused by the level of training and interest of the evaluators and their own motivation and understanding of labour market needs (Diedrich and Styhre, 2013). While validation has been conceptualized with the aim of potentially furthering social justice in relation to individual opportunities, and increasing individual self-confidence and self-esteem, some studies have found that the validation process can have the opposite effect for TCNs. Some have claimed that SKC recognition has unintentionally enabled discrimination processes to persist and have thus weakened migrants placement in the labour market. The rationale behind the system of competences recognition is effective to the extent that it leads to a certification (that is, it brings competences to some professional or learning standards). Therefore, it can be asserted that any recognition system could be interpreted as a "divisionary tool", enabling to select the immigrants considered in line with certain standards (professional or not) whilst excluding others. In other terms, despite the best intentions, any process of selection and assessment is inevitably influenced by wider power dynamics and special interests (Anderson and Osman, 2008).

3.3.5 Flexibility and Relational Approach of Procedures

The fifth analytical dimension concerns the degree of bureaucratization versus the flexibility of validation procedures and their relational approach.

When accessing and during validation procedures, the active involvement of beneficiaries is extremely important. Hence, it is interesting to analyse the systems' capacity to promote individuals' activation, and sustain their capability to elaborate and clearly express their own life/work experiences. To accomplish this task the presence of a case-manager/counsellor and the development of specific instruments for guidance and "skills balance" are crucial for enabling procedures to meet differentiated individual capacity, needs and objectives, and to put in place personalised and tailor-made solutions. Moreover, *the relational approach of counsellor and tools make the difference in that it really promotes the empowerment of subjects and their motivation.*

On the other side, the presence of mechanisms of evaluation and control is decisive to limit arbitrary behaviours on the part of professionals in charge of the service.

In all the countries involved in the project, *the promotion of more standardized procedures is a key issue to ensure the transparency, cost-effectiveness and efficacy of validation systems.* Tackling this issue appears to be particularly urgent in Italy and Germany, where procedures largely depend on the different bodies and authorities in charge. The negative consequences of the lack of standardized procedures are even more evident in those countries where each education institution, labour market actor, company, NGO etc. can produce its own validation mechanism.

However, the issue is controversial. In fact, an excess of bureaucratization risks making the system incapable to grasp the heterogeneity and complexity of the skills to be brought to light, assessed and certified, and of the different routes leading to their acquisition. Moreover, it risks decreasing the level of awareness of the actors involved as regards the meaning and objectives of the process.

The Dutch case provides some interesting elements of reflection: the effort to regulate and standardize procedures risks promoting a kind of "procedural thinking" that hinders the beneficiary's empowerment and active involvement, and overshadows the importance of tailor-made solutions which, as such, are capable to meet individual needs and specificities, and in the case of TCNs, to valorise migratory experiences and intercultural competences. Similar comments are provided in the Hungarian Report: the lack of official procedures for the recognition of TCNs' SKC does not necessarily imply a weakness of the system. In fact, it avoids the risk of bureaucratic redundancy whilst enlarging the range of recognizable competences.

On the other hand, when procedures are less bureaucratized and standardized, and the high number of involved players widen the flexibility of recognition paths, the users' difficulty to choose among different opportunities also increases. Difficulties also appear to increase when procedures are based on the applicant's preliminary self-evaluation, as in the Estonian case.

The centrality given to individuals in a lightly structured system can lead to contrasting effects: on the one side a higher involvement on the part of users, with positive consequences for their empowerment, motivation and subsequently for their em-

ployability; on the other hand the penalization of the “weakest” individuals, with a lower ability to move independently and less power to enforce their rights.

The presence of a caseworker could help to mediate between two equally important needs: standardization and flexibility of procedures. In Sweden, for example, it is through caseworkers at the employment office that a person can access different measures for validation. Depending on the outcome of the initial mapping, other measures may be applied aimed at completing documentation and certification of SKC.

In conclusion, systems, procedures, and tools for recognizing competences are highly diversified, both among the different countries and within the same country, region, employment sector, and lifelong system. It is extremely difficult to define standard procedures and methods applicable to every context and, to a certain extent, this is not even a desirable goal. The diversity of tools and procedures can in fact be considered an asset that can encourage their use by individuals with diverse characteristics, including TCNs. *As the saying goes: “one size doesn’t fit all”.*

3.3.6 Stakeholders' Participation and Cost Sharing

The sixth analytical dimension concerns the degree and forms of stakeholders' participation and cost sharing.

Where SKC validation systems are more advanced, stakeholders' participation is also well developed. The Dutch system is once again emblematic. On a national level, alongside the Knowledge Centre RPL, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in collaboration with social partners, also carry out different tasks aiming at sustaining the quality and effectiveness of procedures. In particular social partners play an important role by including the right to RPL in many collective agreements, promoting employer responsibility as regards the costs of RPL procedures, and requesting that financial benefits be connected to RPL both for employers and employees.

In countries that give particular attention to the positive occupational and economic implications of competences recognition wherever and however acquired, the involvement of companies and employment services stands out. In Sweden, for example, the system involves different players. The overall responsibility is on Public Employment Services, who sub-contract validation services to the private or semi-private sector. The system is centralized: agreements with sub-contractors are made at the national level. However the actual supply of validation services at the regional level is heterogeneous, as a number of players are involved.

In countries where the system is still at an early stage and, as shown, presents a clear orientation towards LLL, the stakeholders involved are mainly linked to the educational system. The task of carrying out validation procedures falls mainly upon them. *The involvement of different stakeholders is crucial for promoting the “culture of recognition” and the idea that recognising SKC wherever and however acquired is an advantage not only for workers or job seekers (native and migrants), but also for the labour demand, and for society as a whole.* Significantly, every Country Report

underlines that a big effort is still needed to inform all the actors potentially involved of all the existing opportunities. The involvement of employers and of many different stakeholders is fundamental to ensure that recognition, once obtained, can be used in any learning, working or life context.

More generally, the participation of all stakeholders, far from being limited to a formal, merely institutional dimension, should imply the presence of an actual space of action and the possibility of an active contribution by all the actors involved. This is strategic for preventing the risk that the need for institutionalization and standardization (to ensure standard and transparent mechanisms) turns into the mere bureaucratization of recognition procedures which, as highlighted in this work, leads to negative effects. Affirming that the stakeholders involved are not only individual workers and job seekers but also society as a whole, has important implications in terms of cost sharing. The expenses related to validation procedures represent the main factor which discourages public authorities, companies, and public or private services from promoting validation mechanisms, and which, at the same time, prevents individuals from requiring and undertaking them.

As the literature confirms (CEDEFOP, 2009), the sustainability of national validation systems is becoming increasingly important. In some countries it represents a key national issue, at least for policy makers and stakeholders. The successful establishment of procedures represents only one side of the coin. The other is the capability to secure continued financial support.

In many countries it is not clear whether, and to which extent, candidates should bear the costs. While there are reasons for promoting individuals' responsibility, on the other side the cost should be shared among all the stakeholders, since individual users are not the only actual beneficiaries of validation. As the Swedish report states, the validation process tends to put a lot of pressure on the individual, who is required to be responsible, motivated to continue LLL while being employed, and to be actively engaged in the validation process. Insufficient economic support can be a severe hindrance for completion, especially when the process is long and entails the participation in a training course. These reflections are particularly relevant for TCNs, who are mostly employed in low qualification and low income jobs, and for whom the costs for competence validation could be unaffordable. On the other hand, with specific reference to migrants, an economic compensation appears to be needed also for the institutions in charge of the validation process, as registering migrants' SKC may be particularly time and resource consuming.

3.4 SKC Recognition Benefits and Actionable Levers

Improving mechanisms and tools for the recognition of TCNs formal and non/informal learning may contribute to many positive processes.

Migrants often hold a stock of unutilized competences, also acquired through the migration experience, which should be brought to light and valorised through effective and accessible measures implemented in receiving countries. This would improve migrants' awareness of their potential, hence enhancing their employability and the

possibility to find jobs corresponding to their skills. Furthermore, when associated with effective and efficient mechanisms for matching labour supply and demand, recognition measures can contribute to the reduction of migrants' involvement in the shadow economy, by providing them with better opportunities to find regular employment. Likewise, as has been seen in the introductory section, the valorisation of TCNs' SKC can have a positive repercussion on the transmission and inheritance of disadvantages from one generation to another.

Recognition of SKC however and wherever acquired could also favour a more effective management of labour migration flows, as it may help attract labour migrants whose specific skills are needed in the receiving country's labour market. To this aim, the stipulation of bilateral agreements between receiving and sending countries and the implementation of pre-departure recognition measures could facilitate TCNs' employment in those professional sectors where their contribution would be more effective and beneficial for the economy. In the same direction, "bridge trainings" could be put in place, in order to allow migrants to complete their set of competences acquired in their countries of origin with elements specifically linked to the receiving country's professional context.

The specific valorisation of competences acquired outside formal education adds some advantages that do not regard only migrants and in particular TCNs, but also other groups of vulnerable people and, more generally, all citizens. In a nutshell we can affirm that:

- a) *with reference to training*, measures of recognition and validation of competences acquired in non/in-formal learning represent a lever for the democratization of opportunities and contrast training inequalities. They also promote motivation for remaining in or re-entering LLL processes, promoting integration between the different forms of recognition systems;
- b) *with reference to the labour market*, the capitalization (through recognition and certification) of competences acquired both in formal and non/in-formal learning transforms competences into a "common language" and an asset to be used for facilitating exchanges among learning, working and life experiences; this would also favour the match between labour supply and demand, thus improving the allocation of resources. Consequently, such a valorization of prior learning could produce outcomes in terms of democratization of occupational opportunities, reducing the risk of brain waste.

Moreover it impacts on individual work and life paths, because the perspective of recognition and certification fosters the capitalization of knowledge and competence acquired over time, allowing for their progressive accumulation.

Benefits of recognition mechanisms regard not only migrants, but also receiving societies as a whole, in particular the local economy, and companies which can better utilize, valorise and allocate migrants' human capital by taking advantage of the transparency of the competence stock at their disposal.

Hence, the beneficiaries of recognition and validation measures are several. For this reason a proactive involvement, within the development and structuring of recognition systems, of all the stakeholders concerned is of essential importance. Only in

this way will all the stakeholders perceive the recognition system as a set of opportunities and tools able to answer their specific needs and will the culture of recognition spread through society.

In particular, it is essential for employers to know and trust this system as an asset for their businesses. This does not mean leaving the responsibility of competence recognition in the hands of companies (and to their arbitrary choices). Rather it means that companies become “institutional actors” of the process, together with the other actors responsible for the development and implementation of the system. For this reason companies (directly or by means of their representative organisations) should participate in the system’s designing and implementation. Otherwise, the latter will remain opaque, unable to give them perceived benefits and guarantees. Hence, their involvement should not take place only at a micro level, through their participation in the validation process of the competence of a single worker, but at a macro level, through the active contribution of their representative organisations in the definition of recognition procedures and tools. This is crucial for enhancing the social value – hence the actual opportunity to use – of the diplomas and certificates obtained through recognition mechanisms.

Furthermore, another reflection is fundamental in this regard, which calls into question the power of the actors involved in recognition processes and more specifically the voice of the candidates to these processes. Indeed, in order to exist as such, a competence must be socially recognized. More precisely, the definition of a competence is based on three elements: the subject’s self-perception, the interaction with objective indicators (standards), and social recognition. It is this third element which gives meaning to the first two. This reasoning implies that candidates should participate in processes of social construction of recognition mechanisms and tools, including competence repertoires (Lodigiani, 2011). In particular, with specific reference to migrants, the possibility of their having a voice and being involved, through their associations and representative organisations, in the designing of recognition systems is essential, especially in order to valorize from a social standpoint a series of competences which otherwise would tend to remain hidden, notwithstanding their potential for economic competitiveness (see chapter 4). We are dealing, in particular, with the entire stock of competence acquired informally through the migratory experience, starting from intercultural competences, which represent a paramount asset in the current globalized economy, but still tend to be disregarded in the labour market. These competences can undergo a process of registration, through the use of portfolios or other *ad hoc* tools. However, in order for them to be formally recognized and translated into certifications that can be effectively used in the labour market, their social acknowledgment is crucial. Migrants and their representative organisations, if given the opportunity to express their claims, could have a strategic role in this direction.

Beyond analogies and differences between the 10 systems investigated in the DIVERSE project, in general the analysis carried out in this chapter highlights some common problems and challenges:

- the knowledge of the opportunities offered by recognition systems, the related modes of use, and the benefits potentially deriving from them are still lit-

tle known and widespread among the different stakeholders: the culture of recognition is still scant;

- the standardization of procedures, necessary to guarantee the transparency and quality of the recognition systems, is rarely counterbalanced by tailor-made and flexible modes of implementation, able to promote the active involvement of beneficiaries;
- the need to evaluate not only procedures but also the system as a whole is less acknowledged: the system's effectiveness, financial sustainability, and friendliness with respect to the most vulnerable subjects, do not find adequate space in qualitative and quantitative research, currently developed only in few countries;
- also in the most developed systems, the effectiveness of recognition methodologies and procedures is scant with reference to TCNs, who can hardly benefit from the related opportunities.
- In this regard it is advisable to underline the importance of focusing specific attention on TCNs' special needs, without at the same time disregarding the unforeseen, sometimes paradoxical effects of a selective approach and of the implementation of *ad hoc* measures. The specific target group represented by TCNs presents particular necessities and difficulties, which should be taken into account by institutions providing recognition and validation services, in order to promote the possibility for TCNs to fully benefit from this opportunity, and to avoid its transformation into a form of indirect discrimination.

Linguistic barriers certainly constitute an important element to be considered, but they are often associated with difficulties and uncertainties linked to a lack of knowledge about the overall institutional and cultural receiving context. To face these problems, the existence of widespread information, orientation and assistance helpdesks appears to be fundamental, as well as the adoption of a relational approach by institutions providing recognition or validation services to TCNs. Another aspect is the precarious employment situation of most migrants, often associated with the lack of social networks able to reduce the difficulties in combining professional and family life. This accounts for TCNs' difficulty to engage in long and complex procedures for the recognition, validation or strengthening of their qualifications and skills. In order to allow TCNs to get involved in such practices, projects envisaging financial support or flexible solutions tailored to every single case, prove to be very fruitful, even if this poses important questions in terms of financial sustainability.

Moreover, even after a successful recognition outcome, TCNs' strong investment in terms of energy, time and costs may not lead them to the desired form of professional mobility. This could be partly linked to TCNs' lack of a relevant professional network and of knowledge about the functioning of the receiving country's labour market. Such problems imply that recognition and validation services should be combined with training initiatives on the receiving country's labour market and better mechanisms for matching labour supply and demand.

Another factor hindering TCNs' professional mobility, also in cases of successful recognition, is linked to the dimension of prejudice in receiving societies. As noted in

the Swedish report, invisible discrimination dynamics may lead local employers to mistrust competences acquired in another country or outside the education and training system perceived as the norm. Hence, one of the major challenges is contrasting such misconceptions. This demonstrates that tools, procedures, norms and systems of SKC recognition are not sufficient on their own, since socio-cultural attitudes and underlying assumptions influence their effectiveness (Diderich and Styhre, 2013).

These considerations lead us to some important closing remarks.

3.5 Closing Remarks

At first sight, recognition measures may be considered mere “technical tools” particularly if we look at them as a set of bureaucratized and institutionalized procedures aimed at establishing a system of functional equivalences between learning paths and outcomes. As such, technical tools are not good or bad *per se*. They are an instrument whose positive nature depends on the way it is utilized. The specific technical tools under analysis, nevertheless, consists of processes and services with a high relational content and a profound meaning at the economic and cultural level. Hence, instead of a “technical tool”, we are rather dealing with a policy which, as such, is far from being neutral (Lodigiani, 2011). A policy is a place where values, norms and preferences are called into question. This becomes evident, for instance, when criteria for access and use are established, when decisions are made about who will be in charge of expenses, when the range of competences that can be recognized is defined, when the standards of reference are identified, and so on.

All these choices, and subsequently all the recognition systems, procedures and practices are embedded in the socio-economic, institutional and cultural context. Hence, their impact cannot be assessed without considering this context. Only the analysis of the latter makes it possible to understand the explicit objectives underlying recognition practices, as well as their critical aspects, unforeseen effects, and implicit objectives. It is precisely in the light of this consideration that it becomes possible to explain why even very well designed and structured systems and procedures often do not produce the desired effects.

4

Building a Multi-stakeholder Device for the Validation of Non/In-formal Learning

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4.1 The Need For a Shared Multi-stakeholder Approach

This chapter describes the process and main results of the designing, construction and management of a multi-stakeholder validation device for the assessment of TCNS' SKC. The aim of this activity envisaged in the DIVERSE Project, as mentioned in the first chapter, was to strengthen synergies among different social, economic and institutional actors in a common effort to generate and validate an innovative device. This experience was carried out jointly by a group of organisations¹ based in five different European countries: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden.

The methodological approach guiding this operation revolved around a constant activity of process sharing as a means to achieve the outcome, exchanges between selected stakeholders as the hub where different perspectives converge, and the sharing of procedures as a way to set guidelines for comparison and action on a common ground.

The need for a multi-stakeholder audit scheme for TCNs' SKC validation is linked to the consideration that the migratory background comprises multiple formal and non/in-formal learnings. Besides possessing qualifications and degrees obtained in origin countries, migrants often have skills acquired through various employments,

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sometimes non regular and hence difficult to be documented, or other meaningful and peculiar experiences linked to migration. These SKC are learned in very different times, countries and contexts, but migrants are not always aware of this kind of competence and, if they sometimes activate the procedure for the recognition of their qualifications obtained abroad, they very rarely engage in a process of recognition of non/in-formal learning, which instead could significantly contribute to their employability.

Also, societies and economies of receiving countries could derive important benefits from the valorization of TCNs' SKC, especially those linked to their migratory background (cfr. chapter 3), but awareness of the value of this potential resource needs to be enhanced. For its full recognition and valorization, and for the promotion of validation practices, the involvement of all the main economic and social actors is necessary. In fact, each stakeholder may provide specific contributions in the validation process: public institutions could design and fund *ad hoc* programs to enhance migrants' employability; companies may validate the actual mastery of competences and promote the social value of final certifications; non-profit organisations and voluntary associations could help in the promotion of initiatives for raising migrants' awareness of the potential benefits of non/in-formal recognition. Nevertheless, currently, a great gap exists between the theories collected in literature, offering many insights, and the concrete, albeit limited, experience and knowledge of all these stakeholders.

In this scenario a multistakeholder approach becomes a fundamental means for achieving two objectives: on the one hand, it helps to disseminate information and to raise awareness, among migrants and all stakeholders, on the value of practices of non/in-formal learning recognition; on the other hand, it creates the conditions for the development of a network of expertise where each actor can contribute to ensure the effectiveness of a validation device.

The above reasons influenced the designing and the development of our work process. The latter is articulated in three main steps, which are analysed in depth in the following sections of this chapter. The first step (section 4.2) consisted in the sharing of guidelines and instructions among all the partners involved. This stage was very important in order to define the logical framework and, particularly, to model a provisional shared audit scheme for TCNs' SKC validation, to be developed through the subsequent phases. The second step (section 4.3) concerned, in every national context involved, the identification and involvement of the public and private actors interested in the issue of validation, and the collection of information about experiences already implemented in this field. These experiences were observed and discussed in depth, and the most interesting among their aspects were integrated in the provisional audit scheme, then tested on the field. This made it possible to collect information, suggestions and proposals regarding the effectiveness and possible improvement of the validation device. The third step (section 4.4) concerned the common evaluation by all partners of the results achieved on a national level, in order to gather suggestions for building a final common audit scheme.

4.2 Guidelines for the Validation Device: Steps, Activities, Methodology, Tools, Professionals Involved

During the first meeting of all partners the findings highlighted in chapter 3 were confirmed, that is, the high level of deconstruction and fragmentation of the national validation systems taken into account. It was also underlined, however, that several methods and tools have already been developed and tested in the past. In this perspective it was agreed that the shared audit scheme should be inspired by validation practices already implemented in the different countries, respecting and capitalizing the wide range of existing models, methods and tools.

EU orientations and the guidelines formulated by CEDEFOP highlight the need «to strengthen the comparability and transparency of validation approaches and methods across national boundaries. These objectives reflect the overall aim of giving value to a broader range of learning experiences and outcomes, supporting lifelong and lifewide learning» (2009, p. 12). Therefore, EU orientations underline the importance of sharing a validation process and some basic requirements.

This is precisely the main objective of our work, aimed at overcoming the rigidity of local rules and constraints. The provisional audit scheme, built through the initial exchange between partners, which will be illustrated further on, can be seen as a reference framework or a meta-model that helps to compare the practices of different stakeholders in various countries and in very different contexts. This provisional tool is organized in four stages: *a)* information and counseling; *b)* identification of skills and gathering of evidence; *c)* assessment, *d)* certification.

These stages correspond substantially to the EU Council Recommendations of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non/in-formal learning, which identify four fundamental stages in a recognition process: Identification of learning outcomes, Documentation, Assessment and Certification of acquired learning. In fact, these stages represent a mandatory route for all those who wish to plan a validation device of SKC acquired in non/in-formal contexts. Differences may however regard the methodologies and instruments adopted, the activities proposed, and the weight (also in terms of time and costs) assigned to each stage, based on the needs and characteristics of the candidates. The proposal which will be presented is to be considered, in this perspective, as an attempt to adjust these stages to the end of valorizing TCNs' migratory background: some options adopted are common to other devices addressed to different disadvantaged categories, but most methodological and organisational choices are linked to the peculiarities presented by both the experiential field where learning is achieved (migratory background), and the specific target group (migrants).

4.2.1 Information and Counseling

This stage is composed of two different actions, tightly intermingled, which were identified as fundamental for carrying out a validation process addressed to TCNs: before exploring the SKC possessed by candidates, the need emerged to build their awareness on the meaning and usefulness of the validation process as a means for the

enhancement of their employability and mobility. Building awareness implies working on two different levels:

- a) Information represents the introductory step to the validation process. To be fully effective, this activity should combine two different needs. On the one hand, the need to provide homogeneous and standardized indications to all candidates on the features of the validation process: single stages, duration, activities envisaged and costs. Candidates should always be informed about the process' costs, also in case of full cover by public institutions: this can contribute to a greater personal responsibility and to respecting the commitments undertaken. On the other hand, information must be customized and adjusted to the candidate's profile. Given the variety of TCNs' biographies, it is necessary to envisage communication instruments and modes tailored to each candidate. These should allow them to understand the meaning of the validation process and to interpret it autonomously according to their objectives and expectations from the service. During this preliminary activity the privileged instrument is the individual interview. Moreover, the operator will avail of a series of instruments both of a traditional kind (multi-lingual information leaflets, Europass CVs, reports coming from professional environments), and of a digital nature (e.g. a multi-lingual portal presenting the validation process and collecting the main information on the opportunities, constraints, and value of certifications). In this second case, however, a guided consultation is always advisable, either face-to-face or online.
- b) On a second intervention level, information is provided through a counseling interview, where the main objective becomes supporting candidates in a transition phase whose outcome is tightly linked to their capacity/possibility to build a personal and professional plan of which the validation process represents only one of the main steps. The concept of counseling is utilized in this context in its general meaning of "helping relationship", without any specific professional connotation (career counseling, orientation counseling, psychological counseling, etc.). We are dealing, therefore, with a form of relationship which is created in this first stage but which represents the foundation of the whole validation process. On a methodological level, this implies envisaging the constant presence of a professional who can assist the candidate in the most crucial steps (precise identification of her/his personal objectives and professional fields of interest, and documentation of her/his acquired learnings), and who is able to support her/him in a complex process of valorization of her/his resources. In this process the dimension of formal and non/in-formal experience interweaves with the dimension of time (past as the field of experience, present as a moment of reflection for triggering decision-making processes, and future as a plan) and with the dimension of identity (personal, professional, ethnic etc). The migratory background represents a special field where all these dimensions, which characterize all people and not only migrants, become particularly complex due to the distance of the environments and places where learning took place (migratory dimension)

and of the candidates' social and cultural representations with respect to the environment where validation is carried out.

4.2.2 Identification of Skills and Gathering of Evidence

The aim of this activity is collecting the evidence that demonstrates the candidate's SKC. If from the information collected in the first phase the conditions emerge for starting a validation process, then it is possible to share and plan the modes (and times) through which the competences acquired by the candidate can be documented. This stage is very important as it represents the moment when the migratory background is not simply declared (as in the first information and counselling interview) but also explored and brought to light through an activity of verbalization and documentation. The most common instrument utilized to this end is the balance of competences but there are several variants of this methodology and not all of them are suited to the characteristics and needs of TCNs. Our proposal suggests, in particular, to utilize those practices of balance which adopt a psychosocial perspective. These allow us to observe TCNs' experience within the following framework:

- a special focus on the experiences of transition and on their various implications which can meaningfully influence people's possibility to be included into the labour market. In the case of TCNs this perspective is particularly important since transition develops on a double track: it presents some typical aspects of a professional transition (from inactivity/unemployment to employment, from one occupation to another) but within the specific life transition implied by migration. It is through the convergence of these two levels that it becomes really possible (and useful) to valorize the candidates' migratory background;
- the observation of non/in-formal learning within the wider relationship between subject and context. In this perspective the migratory background should be seen as the matching between the subject's resources and the external environment. On the one side, this means valorizing a complex mix of knowledge and competence, social and cultural representations, and personal identity, all factors which orient one's self-perception, self-evaluation, personal motivations and attitudes towards others and the social context of reference; on the other side, the external environment determines a series of expected behaviors and requests (e.g. the offer of certain jobs specifically to migrants). The validation process could help the candidate define an effective strategy to fulfill the requests of the labour market, combining one's resources and expectations with the economic and social context's needs;
- a conception of competence as a personal feature which, consequently, cannot be reduced only to technical and instrumental ability, but involves the subject in her/his totality, and includes a complex mix of personal and social resources (soft skills), cultural instruments (knowledge) and professional capacities (technical abilities and competences) acquired throughout one's life and work experience.

This framework has deep operational implications on the methodology and tools utilized. The balance of competences is to be planned based on the analysis and assessment of the candidate's resources and of the context of reference. Nevertheless, the process is not to be predetermined based on, for instance, the concrete requests of

the labour market. In a first stage it is advisable to analyse the candidate's experience in its totality, helping her/him to recall the various steps of her/his life and work trajectory. The expertise of the professionals intervening in this stage should allow to highlight the segments of this experience which can be more easily translated into documentable competence, hence leading the candidate to deepen some aspects whilst neglecting others.

A lot of practices of balance of competences utilize methods based on portfolio (the so called declarative methods) which consist of the collection of documentary evidence for attesting the presence of certain experiences, hence the possession of the related competences. We are dealing with materials referred to the past: references of a former employer or documents produced during previous employments) able to highlight certain experiences and the related competences. However, these documents are often unavailable since the candidate might have never felt the need to keep track of her/his experience, whose retracing *ex post* can be very difficult, even more so for people who had this experience in very distant places or in irregular working conditions.

To overcome these limits a "narrative" variant exists, of French origin, based on the construction of a personal dossier. The candidate documents her/his history through an oral and written narrative, based on the assumption that the argumentation of an experience is a very effective way of showing that one possesses certain competences, not only social and communicational, but also technical. In this way the evidence is built directly during the validation process through a written work in which the experience of the candidate is translated. Existing documents referred to the past (if any) can support the experiences and competences declared, but they are not essential. The candidate tells her/his experience following a predetermined track. The professional must be very competent in guiding this process by asking questions and inviting the candidate to deepen some aspects whilst neglecting others. The dossier approach fully adopts the argumentation techniques, but precisely for this reason presents some problems which must be taken into account. The first regards the linguistic barrier. Building a dossier requires a mastery of the oral and written language which few TCNs possess. If this methodology will be chosen it will be necessary to consider the possibility to use the candidate's mother tongue with the assistance of a cultural mediator, a means which can certainly contribute to improve the final dossier. A second problem regards the level of active participation by the candidate. Building a dossier requires various meetings; moreover, between an interview and another the candidate should work autonomously, if possible assisted by the mediator. In order to obtain a good result, a great deal of willingness, autonomy and motivation on the part of the candidate is necessary. For this reason it is essential to check, in the information and counseling stage, the existence of these conditions, and to decide together the most convenient working mode. Finally, the third problem regards the training of professionals. This methodology requires the mastery of specific techniques and a strong experience on the ground, necessary in order to learn how to support people in retracing their personal experience.

4.2.3 Assessment

This phase is devoted to the actual evaluation of competencies. The main activity is the designing and implementation of field tests.

The recognition of non/in-formal learnings envisages various methodologies, among which the already mentioned production of documentary evidence (through portfolio or declarative methods), and the implementation of field tests (assessment methods). Our device envisages both these possibilities, but if the collection of evidence often proves to be useful for personal empowerment (promotion of motivation, active participation, and self awareness) it is not sufficient for evaluation. In fact it is very difficult to show the existence of a competence only through pieces of evidence. More commonly, instead, the latter only represents a preliminary step of the field assessment and a way to provide assessors with some additional information on the candidate's past history. Therefore, assessment becomes an essential and crucial stage of the validation process, as it represents the moment when competences, however and wherever acquired throughout one's personal and professional life, must be tested, thus eliminating all distances from learning places and times: the decision of the assessors' (experts in the specific sector of the competence to be assessed) will be based on the level of adequacy of the candidate's performance with respect to a formal standard (e.g. a framework recognized within the VET, Vocational, Educational and Training, system) or a social standard (e.g. a framework recognized by all the stakeholders of a certain professional field).

Assessment can avail of several kinds of tests, planned on the basis of TCNs' characteristics and on the type of competence to be validated. According to the CEDEFOP classification we can identify two categories of tests: those based on "doing" and those based on "writing". The first category includes simulations: practical tests in companies or laboratories, or the direct observation of a work process (for employed candidates). The second category includes written examinations (e.g. multiple choice tests).

Actually, tests based on "writing" can be utilized in a limited number of cases, for instance for the verification of linguistic competence or to assess the general or specific knowledge of a certain subject. The advantage of written examinations is linked to the times of administration and processing, and to the large diffusion of standardized tests which could be included as instruments of our device.

Nevertheless, written examinations cannot guarantee the same effectiveness as tests based on "doing", which instead are suited to the assessment of many different competences. This kind of tests present some particularly interesting advantages for a validation device addressed to TCNs. The first regards their predictive power: these tests, being based on the candidate's direct action in a real or simulated working context, can detect her/his performance better than other kinds of tests. Besides, mostly for technical competences, through field testing it is possible to observe the interaction between the candidate and her/his working instruments and technologies. A lot of migrants acquired technical competences working in their origin or transit countries, whose technologies are often obsolete compared to those utilized in European productive systems. Observing migrants' in a real working context allows to evaluate to

which extent a certain competence is updated or to which extent migrants' are able to rapidly learn the use of new instruments. The second advantage regards the presence of a setting very different from the traditional learning environment (classroom, desk, paper and pencil), which can often produce discomfort mostly in adults and in people with a low education level, two conditions quite common among potential TCN beneficiaries. The presence of a working environment limits this risk, reproduces a context very similar to that where those competences were acquired, and can represent for TCNs a first occasion of encounter with the labour market. This aspect represents the third advantage of this kind of tests, which allow to involve the network of stakeholders in the validation device. This means contributing to reinforce the effectiveness of assessment and the possibility to spend certifications within the labor market, hence favoring a real increase in candidates' employability.

4.2.4 Certification

This is the moment when the recognition of possessed competences is formalized through a public document (certificate), but it is also the action which renders the validation outcome spendable within a certain network of economic and social actors.

The frequent reference of literature to the certification's double value (both public and social) certainly hides the current difficulty of capitalizing non/in-formal competences both within the education and training system (e.g. for the re-entry in a formal learning path), and the labour market (e.g. for valorizing human resources both in the recruitment and career development phase).

With respect to the public/formal value, our device cannot define specific procedures, since public certification follows rules that differ greatly from country to country. Usually these rules define the bodies that can issue certifications, the forms to be used, the times and costs to be envisaged, the modes of documents' publication, and the extension of their value.

Differently, our device supports the importance and usefulness of widening, as much as possible, the social value of certifications through the involvement of the network of stakeholders, so as to guarantee the greatest visibility and usefulness of the validation outcome. This aspect appears to be very important for TCNs, and particularly for those who experience a situation of marginalization, and hence, as has already been mentioned, could largely benefit from being involved in a social and professional network.

Table 4.1 The Validation Stages

Phase	Objectives	Activities	Tools	People in charge
Information and counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing about the validation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing about opportunities and commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselor (tutor, advisor, coach)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering information about the candidate's skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valorizing the candidate's experiences and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europass CV National/regional standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting people 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports coming from professional environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local stakeholders group (including organisations representing the target group)
Identification of skills and gathering of evidence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underlining the candidate's skills (including those linked to the migratory background) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselor (tutor, coach, advisor)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting and documenting skills evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying skills gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio methods/declarative methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining possible training programs to bridge the gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National/regional standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts in specific industries Local stakeholder group Training providers
Assessment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQF 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing competences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing and implementing the assessment tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National/regional standards Written or practical tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation grids 	
Certification		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing the final certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certifying the skills possessed in accordance with the procedures in force in each country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving public and private stakeholders in order to improve social recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National/regional standards Format of certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit board
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Format of certification

4.3 From Modeling to Field Testing: Identification of Some Key Issues in the Validation Process

In each country, 3-5 work sessions were organized which were necessary in order to develop the following process: the first phase was aimed at the composition of the stakeholders network; the second phase was focused on the presentation and analysis of the experiences carried out by the main economic and social actors involved; the third phase included a field-testing of the most interesting experiences, methods and tools through the involvement of a certain number of migrants; the last phase was dedicated to the collection of the results that could help improve the final device.

The construction of a stakeholders network was carried out according to some criteria. First, organisations that have regular contact with TCNs (for example migrant associations, volunteer associations, consulates) were invited to join the working group, especially for their capability to contribute in terms of information-spreading and awareness-raising among TCNs. Nevertheless the experiences carried out in most countries show that often these organisations are not prepared with respect to this objective, and should themselves be sensitized to the importance of the theme of competence recognition for migrants' integration, so as to enhance their potential in terms of dissemination and promotion. Moreover, an important role was assigned to organisations representing the labour market (companies, unions, employers associations, job agencies). In fact these organisations represent the main hub of the network. They may act at different stages of the validation process, with different levels of expertise: in the dissemination of information, in the financing of certain stages, and in the final assessment of competences through field testing and subsequent certification. Another important hub is represented by public institutions working in the field of labour policies. These actors were invited to the "table" since they play a crucial role in the designing and financing of programs and projects related to validation of skills acquired in formal and non/in-formal contexts. Finally, the world of education and training was invited for its capacity to give a key contribution to the implementation of the validation process. In particular, institutions such as training centers and vocational schools can help migrants to improve their motivation and self-awareness, provide them with support and guidance, prepare them in building a portfolio, or provide them with opportunities of training or skills upgrading. Table 4.2 shows the main potential contributions of each actor in a stakeholder "table" and, more in general, in the promotion of validation practices especially addressed to TCNs.

Table 4.2 Main Functions and Contributions of the Various Stakeholders

Field	Stakeholders	Functions
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Authorities • Consulates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing experience about norms and practices • Creating and diffusing financing opportunities that can favour the implementation of the validation process • Sharing and valorizing practices on the ground • Promoting the use of recognition practices as a way to improve mobility and supply-demand matching in the labour market
Labour Market Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade unions • Professional associations • Business representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting recognition practices as a way to improve integration of migrants in social and economic contexts • Valorizing recognition practices in the management of human resources
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Centers • Vocational schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scouting opportunities of financing on a national and European level • Designing formal training, taking into consideration the learning already acquired in non/in-formal contexts • Learning new methodologies and tools for the recognition of competences acquired in non/in-formal contexts
Third Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant associations • Volunteer organisations • Local work groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing and valorizing practices on the ground • Informing migrants about the opportunities linked to recognition

Once the work group was established, all the stakeholders involved filled a check list on which the following items were examined in detail: organisation background, projects related to the topic of SKC recognition, target group, methodology and tools adopted, interesting links with the DIVERSE project.

The most interesting practices were presented and analyzed during some of the work sessions. The observation of these experiences and, subsequently, their testing on the ground, highlighted some key issues for the improvement of the validation device. Specifically, it emerged that three aspects should be taken into particular account in the planning of an audit scheme addressed to TCNs.

The first issue concerns the target group and its features, which should strongly influence the device implementation. For instance, activities and tools should be different for migrants who already have a job or for those who are unemployed. Highly ed-

educated migrants should have access to a specific validation path whilst for less educated migrants new paths, suited to their abilities, are to be studied and defined. Field testing showed, for example, the importance of language skills and how language barriers may affect the access to validation practices and the effectiveness of their results. The latter elements are deeply influenced also by migrants' length of stay in the receiving country, often one of the most important factors influencing the level of integration in society and in the labour market.

The second issue concerns the aims of the validation process, which are influenced both by the personal features of the candidate (biographical characteristics, or legal and occupational status), and by the role played by some stakeholders, such as companies. According to the experiences observed and tested it is possible to identify three main different kinds of aims:

- *Personal empowerment*: on this first level the validation process works on the motivation and re-motivation of migrants. The primary objective is to strengthen self-awareness as a prerequisite for increasing the active participation of candidates. This aim is particularly important for less integrated migrants.
- *Employability*: on this second level the validation process works on the improvement of the candidate's profile and of the conditions which may favour the search for a better job (for job seekers), the prevention of unemployment (for already employed migrants) or professional development (for migrants who have specific career ambitions).
- *Promotion of the match between labour supply and demand*: on this third level the validation process has a more instrumental value. It becomes a tool for improving the information on migrants' SKC through CVs, portfolios, references and other types of documents. Companies can quickly assess whether the candidate has the characteristics for a given job. Migrants, in turn, can better prepare for a job interview and improve their self presentation.

These aims are not necessarily alternative but they often represent different facets of the same process. However, these aims can be put on a priority ranking based on the needs of the people and stakeholders involved. This must be taken into account in the designing of the final device: the time to devote to each phase of the process, the professionals to be involved and the methods and tools to be used must be flexible and consistent with the target group and related objectives.

The third issue is linked to the identification and enhancement of the migratory background. Which are the skills that could be potentially acquired through the migration experience? The practices observed were mainly focused on two kinds of skills: language skills and technical skills (usually in the fields where the highest number of foreign workers are employed). The methods and tools used to identify and assess these skills are several. But there are many other skills acquired through migration which could be useful to the receiving countries' economies. Companies working in a global context increasingly need soft skills such as intercultural skills, marketing and communication skills, or competences in team building and team working. The migration experience often develops these skills but stakeholders are not always aware of this and lack the necessary tools to valorize this type of competence.

These and other issues were exchanged among all the partners involved in order to collect the commonalities and differences observed in each national context. A cross analysis was carried out, organized in the four Ts model, that is, according to four dimensions: *Target* (typologies of beneficiaries), *Tools* (instruments utilized in the different validation stages), *Team* (professionals involved), and *Transferability* (elements favoring or hindering the transferability of validation experiences in different contexts).

The following tables show the complexity of the experiences compared through the cross analysis, and highlights both the analogies and differences of the various realities explored on a national level.

Table 4.3 Target

Germany KIU	Italy WWELL/ISMU	Netherlands SKU	Portugal FCSH-UNL	Sweden UMEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TCNs placed in a German language class (level B-2 and C-1) ▪ Aged between 19 and 35 ▪ High level of education ▪ None of them was in Germany for more than three years ▪ All having German language skills at level B2 ▪ Different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TCNs who have been in Italy for several years ▪ Employed in companies in the building sector (excavator/crane conduction) or unemployed who are following a retraining program (field: CNC machine tools and maintenance) ▪ High professional experience ▪ Different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TCNs just arrived who are willing to gain awareness of their competence ▪ TCNs willing to qualify for a certain job ▪ TCNs willing to find a job ▪ TCNs who are already employed and want to improve their career ▪ Different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TCNs who are working and/or studying, in Lisbon, in the cultural sector ▪ Aged between 27 and 53 ▪ Who have been living in Portugal for several years ▪ High levels of education (different fields of employment: language teaching, journalism, literature, migration studies) ▪ Several occupational status ▪ Different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TCNs' who are studying or completed a Swedish language training and want to work in medical and academic professions ▪ Asylum seekers (who, in Sweden, have access more easily to validation) ▪ Different nationalities

Table 4.4 Tools

Germany KIU	Italy WWELL/ISMU	Netherlands SKU	Portugal FCSH-UNL	Sweden UMEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Testing limited to the phases 1 (Registration) and 2 (Assessment) ▪ Questionnaire inspired by the method Profil-PASS ▪ Scale based on the EQF ▪ No language skills assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Testing limited to steps 3 and 4 of the audit scheme ▪ Several tools: training, interview, multiple choice test, practical test ▪ Integration between formal and non/in-formal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools already implemented and tested with other target groups ▪ Online tools ▪ Not all the tools are suitable for all categories of TCNs (some of them require good digital skills or competence in the Dutch language) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview exploring the migration background and the level of social and professional integration focus on professional experience (cv, portfolio, job interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exchange/integration between formal and non/in-formal ▪ Oral, written, and practical tests (if necessary), especially in the 2nd and 3rd step of the procedure ▪ For medical professions the process is more formalized

Table 4.5 Team

Germany KIU	Italy WWELL/ISMU	Netherlands SKU	Portugal FCSH-UNL	Sweden UMEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommended support by an advisor during the validation process (in particular self-assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tutors to support and help the candidates ▪ Assessors for skills evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The process requires the support of professionals (coaching) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviewers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessors, guide to validators, education providers, public employment services (AF)

Table 4.6 Transferability

Germany KIU	Italy WWELL/ISMU	Netherlands SKU	Portugal FCSH-UNL	Sweden UMEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The tested procedure is suited only to TCNs with a high level of education and who have a good knowledge of German ▪ It is very important to understand the goals of TCN beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties for TCNs less integrated or just arrived ▪ It is important: To increase awareness and information among TCNs and stakeholders (especially employers) To promote the audit scheme in programmes for the social and labour integration of TCNs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intensive collaboration between a consortium of partners ▪ This integrated approach requires a lot of time and money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weak coordination between the institutions involved ▪ Importance to test the validity of tools with different categories of TCNs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties for less educated TCNs or for migrants with weaker social networks ▪ Long time for validation ▪ Lack of scientific data ▪ Lack of overview of the whole system by stakeholders (need to strengthen the collaboration between actors) ▪ Need to update the skills of validation professionals

As has been shown, this cross analysis highlighted several analogies and differences in the realities observed. Both contribute to enrich the knowledge on the theme of validation and inspired the construction of the final device. The main differences, which rendered the comparison particularly challenging, regard the diverse nature of the target groups involved (legal and occupational status and education levels), and of the skills tested (linguistic, cultural, technical, social competences). On the contrary, the main analogies concern the importance of an active involvement of stakeholders (especially employers), the promotion of information and awareness among stakeholders and TCNs, and the risk of exclusion for less educated TCNs and those with weaker social networks. All these points provided useful insights for the development of the final results as shown in the next section.

4.4 Closing Remarks

In this final section some considerations will be drawn, based on the results of the testing phase and on the main issues highlighted by the cross analysis. The comparison among the experiences investigated proved to be quite complex, given the variety of contexts taken into account, very different in terms of historical, social and economic features and, more specifically, norms and procedures characterizing recognition systems. However, the constant activity of process-sharing helped underline

some issues that influence the validation process beyond local features and constraints.

Labour market stakeholders

The crucial role of the group of stakeholders is confirmed by all the experiences. Within this network a particularly important role is played by actors representing the labour market.

The business world is the privileged field in which people can enhance the skills learned in their life path, in a formal or non/in-formal way. With specific reference to TCNs, the activities of competence validation can therefore become a meeting ground between the enterprises' need for human capital and TCNs' need to integrate into the receiving country's labour market.

In particular, companies may be very interested in having an independent evaluation tool for the recruitment (a phase whose costs and times are becoming an increasing problem for enterprises) and development of human resources. With regard to TCNs, this would help improve the match between labour supply and demand, valorizing the human capital possessed by migrants beyond the stereotyped representation of their role in the labour market (see chapter 3). Nevertheless, some experiences showed the difficulty of engaging employers within the network of stakeholders. Often they are not aware of the benefits they could derive from the implementation of validation practices or believe that the latter are interesting but too challenging due to their cost and time. The promotion of information among employers and their representative associations might not be sufficient to overcome this problem. As will be detailed further on, a better coordination should be promoted between public policies and the strategies of human resource development implemented by companies'. This could facilitate the synergies between already existing programs and projects, hence improving the canalization of resources and favouring strategies of cost sharing.

Moreover, trade unions may be interested in supporting the practices of skills validation as a means for promoting citizens' and foreign workers' rights. In this concern it is useful to highlight that not all trade unions, beyond rhetoric, have yet fully included lifelong learning as a crucial element of their policies and strategies, and that often they are not sufficiently aware of the pivotal role of non/in-formal learning recognition within this new perspective.

Connecting the validation process to other services of active labour policy

European guidelines and national legislations on validation of learning converge on the principle of voluntariness of people. Everyone should be able to follow the path of non/in-formal recognition as one of the possibilities to improve their employability.

Nevertheless, the observation of all the national contexts involved sheds light on the fact that the effectiveness of this instrument remains very weak if private bodies (in particular companies) and mostly public institutions do not play an active role in the diffusion and promotion of the validation process. In the absence of this commitment, if validation is considered a service to be offered to individuals who autonomously request it, two main problems will occur: *a)* the service will be very expen-

sive, either for public funds or for self-financing; *b*) validation practices will not be socially and publicly disseminated, within a context where the knowledge and the perception of the usefulness of validation are still very limited both among people and organisations. Besides, people who could benefit most from these activities are likely to remain excluded in favour of those who are already integrated into the labour market and in society.

To avoid these risks, public services should envisage validation practices as instruments to be included in an integrated strategy towards social and economic inclusion. The comparison among the experiences analyzed highlights that validation instruments can have a meaningful impact on the social and economic inclusion of TCNs only if connected to other services of active labour policy (training, guidance, internships) aimed at promoting migrants integration into the regular labour market.

The most effective way for ensuring the link between validation and services of active labour policy strongly depends on each country's legal framework and on the role that in every context is played by the main public and private actors. For example, in some countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden) the role of public employment services is very strong and can significantly contribute to the coordination between validation practices and other activities. In other countries (e.g. Italy) only a small percentage of job seekers (even smaller among migrants) apply to the public employment service and the third sector plays a more active role for the inclusion of TCNs in the labour market. These differences must be taken into account when designing a validation device and planning its integration within the system of active labour policies.

Crossing formal and non/in-formal recognition systems

As suggested by the experiences observed, a fruitful route for enhancing the skills acquired non/in-formally by migrants is their recognition through the assignment of credits valid in the formal learning system. The interaction between formal (training and updating) and non/in-formal (expertise gained through work and life experience) learning is one of the most interesting opportunities for TCNs integration. On the one hand, the formal recognition of competence acquired in non/in-formal settings can improve people's employability and integration into the labour market. On the other hand, the validation and certification process also becomes an opportunity to enter/re-enter into contact with formal contexts of learning, in order to improve one's skills. This integration between formal and non/in-formal recognition systems may help limit the risk of marginalization for TCNs, by promoting their active participation in the economic and social life of receiving communities.

Sustainability

The issue of sustainability is underlined in all the experiences observed. Some existing practices are holistic and adopt a wide and pertinent perspective but they imply long periods of time and high costs. Each stakeholder is in charge of a single part, but no actor can sustain the entire process; and only a small portion of costs can be charged on candidates. The process is further delayed when, as often happens in an

attempt to fulfill comprehensible needs of formalization and standardization, it is burdened by a complex bureaucracy.

The possibility to design an audit scheme combining non/in-formal recognition practices and formal recognition procedures appears to be a promising way to overcome these problems. As a matter of fact, it creates important synergies able to improve economic sustainability, since it contributes to support networking among social and economic actors who provide their expertise in the recognition process.

Counseling and guidance for increasing awareness

On the basis of all the experiences analyzed, when dealing with TCNs and more in general with disadvantaged target groups, the main challenge for the entire system (i.e. private and public bodies operating in this field) is that of changing perspective from audit, intended as an evaluation of conformity to standards, to counseling, conceived as a form of guidance during the validation process (see section 4.2).

Indeed, any device envisaged for this target group must be focused on the person and should aim to help her/him to transform her/his aspirations and expectations into an achievable plan and in realizable objectives. We are not dealing with an ideological position but with a work method. It is the person who actively participates in the recognition process: the candidate does not receive a service passively. Moreover, it is the person who intentionally envisages a plan and, based on her/his priorities, chooses what to valorize of her/his personal and professional experience, also (but not only) according to the competence which can better fulfill the labour market's requests. Therefore, if, as has already been mentioned, the involvement of labour market stakeholders can meaningfully contribute to the effectiveness of the device, it is nevertheless necessary to avoid slipping into a demand-side approach, even when the person has an urgent need to find a job. This kind of approach would not only distort the meaning and aims of the validation process, but would also end up by orienting activities only towards the labour market's needs. The examples analyzed show that when the process is driven only by the demand of employers, and in general of the labour market, the migratory background risks not being taken into account, if it is not pertinent to the needs of the job at issue. In addition, if we consider the usefulness of the migratory background only for inclusion in the labour market, we disregard that some of the skills learned by TCNs can be useful in other fields of social and civic life, such as the volunteer and non-profit sector, cultural mediation, and communication.

For all these reasons our proposal insists on the importance of implementing the counseling action during the whole validation process, in order to support the increase of self-awareness on the part of candidates.

Professional skills

The comparison among the different European experiences analyzed shows the current absence of a full sharing of professional standards among those who should manage the validation process and a common need to develop specific competences necessary to utilize the validation device: the complexity of this audit scheme implies the need to enlarge professional teams, and to improve the latter's skills in team

working. A very important role should be assigned to the skills linked to counseling, tutoring and assistance to disadvantaged target groups, who should be helped in identifying and valorizing their competence acquired in non/in-formal contexts. This role is usually played by a counselor (who in the various experiences is named also differently: coach, advisor, or tutor) who, nevertheless, should be able on the one side to analyze professions and the functioning of the labour market and, on the other, to help the candidate in collecting and documenting her/his competence, and in preparing assessment examinations. Moreover, with specific reference to the enhancement of the migratory background, counselors should update their skills on new methodologies and tools for the validation of TCNs' non/in-formal learning.

Consequently, bearing in mind the perspective of LLL, it would be advisable to include the issue of non/in-formal recognition especially in undergraduate and post-graduate courses. Within this framework, *ad hoc* studies of migrants' specificities could be envisaged, to promote and improve the methods and instruments able to bring to light and capitalize the potential, in terms of human capital, contained into the migratory background.

At a glance: One process and different paths

The field testing highlights the importance of building a flexible validation device, able to adjust to the needs and features of each TCN target group. The validation process should always be customized and start from the identification of skills and the reconstruction of the migratory background. The experiences observed show that a standardized, non flexible validation device tends to penalize migrants with a low level of education and with weak social networks.

Also the overall strategy of competence valorization, which will include the implementation of the device, should be planned based on the specific target needs. For TCNs who have just arrived in the receiving country, the recognition of skills learned in a non/in-formal context should be just one step in a longer process of integration into the formal education system and in the labour market; for TCNs who had a longer experience in the receiving country and are unemployed validation should represent an important instrument for self-promotion and for enhancing their employability. In this case, the validation should be linked to specific programs of training and retraining towards reintegration into the regular labour market; for employed TCNs validation can represent an opportunity for maintaining their level of employment (avoiding the risk of expulsion from the labour market), or for improving their position by participating in professional development programs offered by public institutions or, more frequently, by companies, in the perspective of LLL.

How can we concretely decline all these issues into activities and instruments for TCNs? How can we proceed with the construction of a final shared audit scheme which takes into account the analogies and differences emerged from the comparison of the experiences of the countries involved? We are dealing with a process still in progress, which will be based on a shared planning approach and will be grounded on the discussion, among all partners, of the findings that emerged from the cross-analysis.

To date this comparative work has allowed us to identify some examples of activities, methodologies and instruments that will become part of the work kit which will support professionals in managing the single stages of the final device. The latter will be articulated in two sections: a first part will consist of a set of methodological guidelines describing the planning criteria which oriented the tool's construction; in the second part, for each of the stages illustrated in par. 4.2, instructions on its use will be provided and specific instruments and working modes will be indicated.

This contribution highlighted some of the main critical issues that this subject still presents. Even in those realities where the level of reflection and experience is thought to be more advanced, significant problems exist concerning not only the integration of validation instruments in the national legal systems, but also social and cultural barriers linked to the scarce awareness of the usefulness and value of recognition practices. Our hope is that this work has contributed and will contribute to sensitizing the main economic and social actors who could promote the diffusion of these practices and their social recognition on the territory.

5

Diversity Management and Migrants in EU Organisations Views of a Challenging and Promising Landscape

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The chapter offers an overall synthetic presentation and cross-country analysis of the most relevant points emerging from the part of the DIVERSE project dedicated to DM actions addressed to migrant workers from Third Countries. This part was implemented in all the local regions belonging to the ten EU countries involved in the project through the carrying out, in each of these areas, of 10 organisational case histories. Consistently with the general aims of DIVERSE, the main assumption underlying this international field research was that producing in-depth knowledge – and therefore enhancing collective awareness – about practices of recognition and valorisation of non-EU migrants' presence in different types of workplace (that is, for businesses as well as for public and non-profit organisations) represents a key step towards a re-orientation of the European approach to immigrant work in accordance with the tenets of a real “human capital” perspective.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, as this was a sort of initial obligatory point of passage for every national study, a brief outline is provided of the existing research and experiences regarding DM interventions addressed to migrant workers. Second, the whole research architecture is described briefly by outlining the sample of organisations considered in the national field studies and the methodological approach employed in conducting them. The third section begins to dwell on the empirical evidence from the national studies; this is done through a discussion of several basic aspects characterising the employment of a migrant workforce in the selected organisational settings, like the reasons for recruiting them and their main roles and functions within the organisational structure. The fourth, fifth and sixth sections represent the heart of the present analysis in that they focus primarily on the variety of

the observed practices of immigrant inclusion and on the “virtuous” direct and indirect effects that such endeavours tend, or appear, to engender. Attention is also paid to a couple of points which contribute to enrich both our understanding of the experiences that have been investigated and their practical potential: the former refers to constraints and criticalities in managing diversity when this is related to the presence of migrant personnel; the latter concerns a set of mechanisms and conditions which seemingly emerge as facilitating factors in these organisational trajectories in DM. Finally, some suggestions are formulated with regard to prospects of organisational commitment to DM in the future.

5.1 Existing Studies and Experiences in Cross-culture DM: An Underdeveloped, Yet Emergent, Field

Developed in the United States in the mid-1980s, the emphasis on diversity in work organisations has gradually consolidated a recognizable discourse in Europe since the late 1990s. In the overall and growing debate on workplace diversity, the conceptual framework that has been mainly applied is that of DM; a notion, originally deriving from the domain of organisational analysis and management practice, whose guiding ideas and central suggestions were adopted in the realisation of the international research of which this chapter intends to give an overview. From this standpoint, and combining the views of the classical works on the topic (e.g. Cox, 1993; Kandola and Fullerton, 1994; Thomas, 1990; Thomas and Ely, 1996) with what suggested by the most recent international literature (e.g. Bond, 2008; Klarsfeld, 2012; Kumra and Manfredi, 2012; Primecz *et al.*, 2011), DM can be defined in the following terms: an approach to HRM which is *voluntarily* oriented to the creation of an inclusive work environment; i.e., *an organisational context capable of recognising the personnel’s diverse experiences and identities, facilitating the expression of this diversity and valorising it to the advantage of the organisation’s functioning and goals.*

It is also very important to note that *this definition has substantially a central role within the frame of the Europe 2020 strategy for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”*, in which the aim of promoting a “high employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion” involves – and intermingles with – the conception of heterogeneity in workforce as an asset for firms’ competitiveness and performance improvement (European Commission, 2014a). More in general, the stress placed on DM by the present EU growth strategy represents the most recent step of an emphasis which has increasingly developed throughout the 2000s, as testified by a seminal study on the benefits of diversity sponsored more than a decade ago by the EU Commission (2003).

As hinted at above, and in line with the project’s overall aims, the empirical research revolved around a specific kind of workplace diversity, consisting in the co-presence and interaction of employees of different national origin. When referring to organisational practices which are attentive to such a dimension of personnel diversity, we may also speak of *cross-culture DM*. This expression is not meant here as co-

incident with what is also known by the name of “strategic international HRM” (SIHRM, Schuler and Jackson, 2007), although some findings of the research show interesting points of contact with it. The latter typically focuses on dynamics and problems that distinguish large multinational companies, particularly by emphasising the role in them of both internationalisation and transnational integration of human capital (especially managers and professionals) equipped with key skills for the organisation. Rather, in the following discussion the cross-culture “lens” is primarily applied to the case of organisations which are not necessarily large or included in transnational networks and *whose personnel composition, due mainly to the migration phenomenon, is marked by the presence of TCN foreign workers*¹.

Given these premises, a starting point for our analysis is that to date in the considered national contexts *meagre attention has been dedicated – in both research and organisational practice, as well as in more institutional policies and initiatives – to the specific issue of how the presence and contributions of foreign workers with a migratory background are or could be valorised to the benefit of the organisations employing them*. This fundamental point, however, must be complemented by several relevant observations.

The first is that we find at least one interesting exception in this general picture, given by the Estonian case. Here, in addition to a traditional stream of studies focusing on the integration of Russians (including Soviet-era settlers) in Estonia, we find a more recent line of debate which, linked to the governmental strategy 2011-2015 for so-called “smart migration policy”, puts considerable stress on attracting highly skilled foreign employees (a point to which we will return later).

Secondly, *the scant awareness and engagement towards cross-culture DM reflect, in part, the modalities of the recent diffusion of the DM discourse as such in many countries (and, usually, their local areas) involved in the study*. Within the majority of them, albeit to varying degrees, over the last fifteen years the DM rhetoric has undoubtedly gained visibility, especially through the publication of studies dedicated to a conceptual and sensitising treatment of the topic and, sometimes, to the results of empirical research projects on existing practices among national organisations. This is the case, for instance, in Germany (e.g. Köppel, 2013; Köppel *et al.*, 2007), Italy (e.g. Cocozza, 2010; Cuomo and Mapelli, 2007), Spain (e.g. Chinchilla and Cruz, 2011; Torre and Borrajo, 2012) and Sweden (e.g. Omanovic, 2009). On the basis of the reviews provided by the national reports, though, *there is a persistent gap between the growing theoretical and “espoused” interest in the perspective of DM, which often exhibits the same stress on competitive reasons we find at the heart of canonical models of Anglo-Saxon origin, and the real consistency of the interventions implemented by organisations to treat diversity as a strategic resource*. For example, a certain dis-

¹ This choice does not rule out the awareness that it entails assigning a somehow narrow meaning to the cross-culture theme. As argued by Cox and Beale (1997), this concept may even play a broader role when applied to the various cultural influences (cognitive styles, values, conduct rules) that characterize social groups (e.g.: professional communities) from which organisational members can obtain significant materials for the construction of their identity.

proportion between what is suggested and what is concretely acted emerges from empirical studies that have been conducted on significant organisational samples in Italy (Pezzillo Iacono *et al.*, 2009), Germany (Köppel, 2013), Hungary (Tardos, 2014), Poland (Lisowska and Sznajder, 2013) and Finland (Louvrier, 2013). In such situations, as well as in other countries involved, *the key point reported lies in the low degree of structuration of DM practices, understanding by this the systematic presence of forms of planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions*; i.e., to cite some indicators identified or recommended in current international literature, the explicit integration of diversity concerns in organisational life by means of processes such as recruitment policies, *ad hoc* training and mentoring activities, performance assessment, the creation of positions formally devoted to the internal management of diversity, and measurement of the impacts of diversity initiatives. Against this background, we may argue that, *when considering foreign immigrants as a possible target group of DM actions, the aforementioned gap between the general rhetoric of DM and the reality of its practical application tends to reach a considerable extension*; not incidentally, in the great majority of the reviewed national studies about the diffusion of DM practices the target group of workers on which the investigated organisations declare to focus most are women followed by people with disabilities and senior employees, *while migrant workers represent one of the categories least involved in DM initiatives*. As a result, aside from some sporadic attempts to explore how organisations manage the immigrant workforce for their benefit (e.g. Monaci, 2012), the research available on migrants' presence in workplaces has predominantly focused on equality issues and, more in particular, on discrimination of this group in employment settings (as for recruitment, advancement chances, economic treatment etc.); for example, this is remarkably the case of the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

The last consideration allows us to introduce a third main point. This is that – shifting from the level of research to the one of action – *in many of these national and local contexts the institutional promotion and enforcement of equality policies, and particularly of Equal Employment Opportunities (hereafter EEO), have been and keep on being a pivotal mechanism enhancing general awareness, as well as forms of concrete engagement, about diversity and its role in the workplace*. As with all EU countries, such contexts have been influenced by the EU's directives concerning the promotion of equal treatment, which contributed to the development or strengthening of national – and, sometimes, even regional² – regulatory and policy frameworks about EEO and non-discrimination. This trend, highly visible also for EU's "new" Member States (such as Hungary and Poland) in their post-accession compliance efforts, has resulted in a variety of programs and initiatives entailing significant practical implications and prospects of development for the improvement of equality and attention towards workforce diversity. Aside from the implementation of some measures that are mandatory for certain types of organisations (e.g. "Equality plans" in Finland, "Equal opportunity plans" in Hungary, "Gender equity programs" in Spain), *these institutional initiatives often have assumed a role as catalysts in stimulating broader projects with the participation of other social stakeholders and involving different lines*

² As in the case of Andalusia in Spain and the Łódź region in Poland.

of intervention such as training programs, surveys, the preparation and diffusion of guidelines, competitions and awards aimed at comparing national companies in the field of equality and diversity. This is the case, for example, in Hungary with the “Diversity Index”, an initiative stemming from a project on inclusive practices coordinated by the ILO in 2006-2007; and in Poland, especially through the research and publications promoted by PAED (Polish Agency for Enterprise Development) and the “Diversity Index Project”, co-financed by the European Social Fund and run in 2013 and 2014. Furthermore, within this context, *in various countries involved a vehicle for the popularisation of the diversity construct is being represented by the “Diversity Charter” initiative*³ (e.g. Germany since 2006, Italy since 2009, Finland since 2012, Poland since 2013). In some ways, this looks consistent with the core results of a recent EU Commission study (2014b) on the diffusion of the initiative over the period 2004-2014, which, aside from reporting a remarkable increase in numbers (now covering more than 7,000 organisations and more than 13.5 million employees), suggests that the signing of the Diversity Charter has produced a discernible impact on the development of organisational policies in the realm of EEO and inclusivity (with substantial differences from country to country, depending on the start date of the project and the employee groups mainly targeted).

A final observation to be made is that *some types of non-governmental entities have been key actors in the implementation of the initiatives sketched above, by cooperating with public institutions* (be they supra-national, national or even regional/municipal) *or even by playing directly planning and coordination roles*. These actors include private organisations such as consultancy firms (e.g. Synergy Consult and Ernst & Young in Germany, PricewaterhouseCoopers in Poland) but especially associations of entrepreneurs and business networks (e.g. FIBS in Finland, the Circle of Völklinger in Germany, Hungarian Business Leaders Forum in Hungary, Sodalitas in Italy, Confederation Lewiatan in Poland). Amongst other things, it is mainly through the actions participated or managed by this kind of stakeholders that *the nexus – constantly emphasised by EU institutions – between inclusion-oriented practices in the workplace and Corporate Social Responsibility* (hereafter CSR) *is gaining increasing attention in these national contexts*, drawing the attention of the business community to the idea that *social responsibility through non-discriminatory and diversity policies can contribute to relevant organisational benefits like, in particular, reputational improvements*.

To restate, taken as a whole, the picture emerging from the national studies is that *the focus on DM, both in research and practice, has developed chiefly by means of its intermingling or even overlapping with the, somewhat more traditional, discourse of EEO*. *In this interplay, however, a prevailing stress has been placed on equality issues and policies*. While there are some plausible reasons supporting this sort of imbalance, since the need to deal with employment and workplace discrimination re-

³ Promoted in 2004 by the EU Commission and supported by national authorities, the “Diversity Charter” is a document signed by organisations, both companies and public entities, which voluntarily commit themselves to the attainment of goals – and the implementation of measures – related to EEO and diversity.

mains strong everywhere, on the other hand it may obscure the fact that DM – as a *voluntary management strategy* – is neither simply an adaptation to new legal frames, nor simply the presence of demographically and socially heterogeneous human resources in the workplace. Notwithstanding this, *the diffusion of promoting activities in the field has generally engendered positive change, with a growing number of business and public organisations that are becoming interested in diversity*. An exemplary case in this respect is that of Hungary, where recent research on national companies (Tardos, 2014) shows that, if on one side half of the organisations surveyed still do not have any inclusive policy, on the other side more than 95% of the not-engaged ones plan or intend to have it in the near future. Even more important here, though, is the fact that, to date, the diversity categories being mostly addressed involve first of all gender, by dealing with the “basic problem” of equal treatment of women and men in the workplace as well as formulating proposals and programs for work-life balance (typically conceived as a women’s concern); and then dimensions like age and disability. *Very few studies and initiatives can be found which focus on foreign workers, let alone the group composed by TCNs*.

In conclusion, this scenario leads us to explore more in-depth the reality and prospects of cross-culture DM in the considered countries, suggesting that *there is great potential for the development of knowledge and adequate tools in this area of organisational practice*.

5.2 Organisations Involved and Methodology

The international research on DM practices addressed to TCN human resources entailed, in each of the concerned countries, the carrying out of a number of organisational case histories. This had to be done in accordance with a set of common guidelines related, in particular, to a couple of basic points: selection criteria and methodology.

As regards criteria for choosing organisations for the study, the selected organisations had to: *a)* be operating in the profit, non-profit or public sectors; *b)* be situated in the specific region identified for each country involved; *c)* have developed some significant experience in the workplace inclusion and valorisation of immigrant personnel (and – if possible – also with respect to other categories of difference, such as gender etc.). Besides these requirements, in the most part of the national studies there was an attempt to ensure a certain heterogeneity within the group of selected organisations, in particular as to size variety (in terms of the number of employees) and sector variety (through the inclusion of organisations operating in different domains of activity, in addition to the basic distinction between for-profit, non-profit and public sectors). Sometimes, taking into account specific situational factors at the national or local level led to select and investigate organisations mainly belonging to a distinctive area of activity. This firstly applies to the Dutch and Portuguese studies, which focused respectively on the healthcare sector and on the culture sector; but, in a sense, it is also the case of the Estonian research, in which, as for the group of non-profit organisations, the choice was to select international schools, based on the fact that they

represent a crucial support mechanism for TCNs who opt to migrate to Estonia with families. On such grounds, *each national sample is not to be taken as representative of the organisational population from which it was drawn.*

Generally speaking, the identification and the subsequent involvement of organisations suitable for the study were not an easy undertaking. In many cases, a significant number of the identified and contacted organisations refused to participate, due to different reasons such as lack of interest and lack of available time to dedicate to fieldwork-related tasks. A recurrent difficulty faced in the interaction with the participating organisations was that, normally, *they do not use the notion of “TCNs” or “non-EU citizens” as a category in registering the specific diversities of their workforce*, and limit themselves to adopting the more comprehensive category of “foreigners”. An additional complication is that *national legal constrictions about anti-discrimination and privacy protection*, as notably in the Dutch and the German cases, *may prohibit employers from asking and recording information about employees’ nationality and ethnicity.* All this resulted in the fact that, on several occasions, it was not possible to obtain a full picture of the demography of the observed organisations.

Table 5.1 provides a brief outline of the international sample, which – taken as a whole – was composed of 34 public organisations, 42 profit organisations and 28 non-profit organisations operating in a wide range of activity domains.

Table 5.1 A Brief Description of the Organisations Observed in the International Research⁴

Organisation	Type of organisation	Sector of activity	Personnel (TCNs)
<i>Estonia</i>			
Ericsson Eesti AS	Profit	ICT	1,400 (20)
Playtech Estonia OÜ	Profit	ICT	516 (22)
Viru Keemia Grupp AS	Profit	Manufacturing (oil shale processing)	2,172 (20 nationalities)
Eesti Energia Narva Elektri-jaamad AS	Profit	Energy	695 (30%)
Tartu Catholic Educational Center	Non-profit	Education	80 (1)
Tartu International School	Non-profit	Education	14 (6)
Tallinn University of Technology	Public	Higher education and scientific research	2,052 (82)
University of Tartu	Public	Higher education and	3,739

⁴ The total number of case histories is 104 – i.e., higher than planned (100) – because in some countries the opportunity arose to include additional organisational cases which the local research teams considered as being of great interest. In particular, two cases were added in the Hungarian study and one case, respectively, in the German and Italian ones.

Estonian University of Life Sciences	Public	scientific research	(87)
		Higher education and scientific research	953 (9)
SA Teater Vanemuine	Public	Culture	361 (25%)
<i>Finland</i>			
Wärtsilä NSD	Profit	Manufacturing (ships, power plants)	3,160 (20)
ISS Service	Profit	Cleaning services	400 (40)
VAMK (Vaasa University of Applied Science, Healthcare and Social Services)	Profit (mainly)	Higher education and scientific research	13 (1)
Sion Church	Non-profit	Christian Church services	4 (volunteers)
Setlementti yhdistys	Non-profit	Various voluntary services	49 (2)
SPR, Finnish Red Cross, Vaasa	Non-profit	Voluntary services and charity work	5 (volunteers)
K5-Rannikko-pohjanmaan sosiaali- ja terveydenhuollon kuntayhtymä	Public	Social and health care	300 (-)
VAAK (Vaasa Vocational Adult Education Centre, Unit of Languages and Culture)	Public	Adult education	31 (5)
Town of Vaasa, Office for Alien Affairs	Public	Municipal services for immigrants	45 (15)
THL, Unit of Vaasa	Public	Research and development in social and health care	2 (0)
<i>Germany</i>			
SAP SE	Profit	ICT (software applications and instruments)	67,651 worldwide (-)
DM-Drogerie Markt GmbH + Co. KG	Profit	Retailing (household products and toiletries)	36,216 (-)
EnBW (Energie Baden-Württemberg) AG	Profit	Energy supply	18,700 (-)
WWV Wärmeverwertung GmbH & Co.	Profit	Industrial services (trace heating, electrics and instrumentation)	500 (< 5%)
DRK (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz) Kreisverband Karlsruhe e.V.	Non-profit	Emergency services and humanitarian aid	240 (-)
BGV-Versicherung AG	Public	Insurance	752 (< 5%)

Diakonissenkrankenhaus Karlsruhe-Rüppurr	Public	Healthcare	1,250 (-)
Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe	Public	Arts, culture and entertainment	fluctuating (146)
Fraunhofer ISI (Institut für System und Innovationstechnik)	Public	Research (energy policy and technology)	250 (few)
KIT (Karlsruher Institut für Technologie) Stadt Karlsruhe	Public	Higher Education and scientific research	9,439 (-)
	Public	Municipal services	5,703 (-)
<i>Hungary</i>			
KPMG Hungary	Profit	Professional audit and advisory services	700 (150)
MOL Group	Profit	Gas and oil supply	(-)
Tesco	Profit	Retailing (grocery and general merchandise)	20,000 (-)
Marriott International Budapest	Profit	Hotel industry	300 (6)
Prezi	Profit	ICT (software)	150 (-)
“Organisation A” (participation under anonymity)	Profit	Professional audit, tax and advisory services	(-)
European Roma Rights Center	Non-profit	Promotion of Roma rights	25 (4)
Reformed Mission Centre	Non-profit	Humanitarian and relief work	75 (3)
Minority Rights Group Europe	Non-profit	Promotion of human rights	5 (2)
Tom Lantos Institute	Non-profit	Promotion of Roma rights and human rights, protection of Jews	9 (1)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary	Public	Public administration (international relations)	1,225 (150)
Katica Kindergarten	Public	Child care	53 (3)
<i>Italy</i>			
Autogrill	Profit	Food and beverage, travel retail and duty free	4,857 (491)
Cooperativa Viadana Facchini	Profit	Warehouse and handling services	390 (355)

FBC Bonfanti & Bisteel	Profit	Metalworking (metal carpentry)	22 (6)
BonBoard	Profit	Business recruiting and consultancy	3 (2)
Biocatering	Profit	Catering and distribution of organic food products	5 (5)
Yalla.it	Non-profit	Communication (internet blogging)	49 (48)
Cooperativa sociale "La Rete"	Non-profit	Social and health services (mental health and social exclusion)	81 (7)
Fondazione "Don Carlo Gnocchi"	Non-profit	Social and health services (rehabilitative, socio-assistential, socio-educational services)	2,035 (189)
CGIL – Camera del Lavoro di Brescia	Non-profit	Trade union representation, social and assistance services	110 (7)
Azienda di Servizi alla Persona "Golgi-Redaelli"	Public	Healthcare	1,274 (64)
NRDC – ITA (Nato Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy)	Public (supra-national)	Military	2,000 (-)
<i>The Netherlands</i>			
Synthon LTD	Profit	Pharmaceuticals	420 (-)
NXP Semiconductors PLC	Profit	Semiconductors	2,300-2,500 (-)
ABN-AMRO Bank PLC	Profit	Financial services	18,550 (-)
Inter-Lokaal Foundation	Non-profit	Welfare and social services	62 (-)
Radbound University Medical Centre	Public (Non-profit)	Healthcare (patient care, scientific research, higher education)	9,931 (285)
Rijnstate Hospital	Public (Non-profit)	Healthcare (patient care, applied research, training)	4,748 (-)
Pro Persona	Public (Non-profit)	Healthcare (mental health)	3,500-4,000 (-)
Dichterbij	Public (Non-profit)	Healthcare	5,171 (-)

Zahet	Public (Non-profit)	Healthcare	42 (6)
Municipality of Arnhem	Public	Municipal services	1,700 (at least 40)
<i>Poland</i>			
Flextronics	Profit	Logistical services and warehouse	200 (10)
P.U. Hatrans	Profit	Logistical services	19 (1)
Sharda Europe	Profit	Household textiles (production and retailing)	10 (2)
Sonoco Poland	Profit	Packing services	1,796 (4)
The Factory of Power Transformation Devices and Drives, The Factory of Electrical Engines	Profit	Manufacturing (electrical engines, wind transformers)	576 (1)
The Regional Economic Chamber, Łódź	Non-profit	Entrepreneur representation, services for businesses	13 (5)
Association for Russian Speaking Persons in Łódź	Non-profit	Social and work assistance services	37 (29)
Polish-Lebanese Association in Łódź	Non-profit	Cultural and economic cooperation	70 (20)
University of Łódź	Public	Higher education and scientific research	4,697 (17)
Łódź City Council	Public	Municipal services	1,944 (1)
<i>Portugal</i>			
Leo Burnett Lisboa	Profit	Advertising and market research	32 (7)
Jazzy Dance Studios	Profit	Cultural education	(-)
Language Craft	Profit	Education	35 (8)
Academia de Produtores Culturais	Non-profit	Arts and entertainment	5 (0)
Casa do Brasil	Non-profit	Social work activities (support for immigrants)	14 (12)
Associação Caboverdeana	Non-profit	Social work and cultural activities (support for immigrants)	12 (0)
Start-up Lisboa	Non-profit	Business consultancy	8 (1)

Orquestra Gulbenkian	Non-profit	Arts and entertainment	80 (22)
Bleza	Non-profit	Arts and entertainment	12 (6)
Conselho Municipal para a Interculturalidade e a Cidadania (CMIC)	Public	Municipal services	7 (0)
<i>Spain</i>			
Abengoa	Profit	Energy and Environment	4,000 (-)
Agromartín	Profit	Agriculture (strawberries)	1,300 (200)
Atlantic Blue	Profit	Agriculture (blueberries)	4,100 (1,200)
Cortefiel	Profit	Retailing (clothes)	17 (1)
Leroy Merlin	Profit	Retailing (do-it-yourself)	170 (19)
Monteconquero Huelva	Profit	Hotel industry	22 (3)
Cruz Roja	Non-profit	Social and Health Intervention	15 (3 + volunteers)
Codenaf	Non-profit	International cooperation and development of North-Africa	26 (11)
Fundación Cepaim	Non-profit	Social Intervention (immigration field)	19 (3)
The JRC Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS)	Public	Technological and socio-economic research and consulting	290 (16)
<i>Sweden</i>			
Goodtech Products and Services AB	Profit	Electrical and Industrial Engineering	1,100 (few)
Polarbröd	Profit	Bakery	382 (19)
Swedish Church	Non-profit	Charity and social work	1,400 (few)
Project for Integration (PREI)	Non-profit	Integration of Immigrants, Cross-cultural exchange	6 employees 850 members (80%)
Umeå Kommun	Public	Municipal services	11,000 (800)
Umeå University	Public	Higher education and scientific research	4,359 (-)

County Administrative Board of Västerbotten	Public	Regional administration	245 (2)
Västerbotten County Council	Public	Healthcare and other regional public services	10,000 (653)
Norrland's University Hospital (NUS), Operations Centre	Public	Healthcare	5,600 (45)
Public Employment Service	Public	Employment services	10,200 (-)

N.B.: in the last column the “-” sign means that it was not possible to obtain precise information about the number of personnel or the number of TCN personnel.

The second key aspect that contributed to the framing of the national empirical studies within a common structure was methodological and entailed *employing a qualitative approach based on:* a) the use of a checklist shared by all national research teams in conducting fieldwork as well as in the following phase of data analysis; b) the use of the same types of primary and secondary sources for collecting information in/about the observed organisations. The check list utilised in both fieldwork and interpretation related to seven central thematic areas: organisation profile, organisational demography, organisational culture and climate, HRM practices, emergent perceptions about socio-cultural diversity at work, DM actions and initiatives, outcomes and impacts of cross-culture DM practices. The checklist is reproduced in full in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 The Check List Used in Fieldwork and Analysis

<i>Organisational Profile</i>	
- Name and legal form	
- Type of organisation	- profit oriented, public or non-profit
- Location of the head/main office(s)	
- Brief history of the organisation	- foundation, critical stages, recent evolution
- Sector(s) of activity	- main sector, goals, services/products - sector competitive conditions
- Current strategy of the organisation	- main specificities/distinctiveness with respect to other organisations in the sector
- Organisational structure	- hierarchical levels and specialised functions (organisation chart)
- Main present challenges for the organisation	- internal and external
- Organisation's customers/users	- main customers/users - changes in customer needs and behaviour in the near future
- Other main external stakeholders	- especially in the surrounding economic, social and institutional context
<i>Organisation Demography</i>	
- Total number of personnel	- (disaggregated by gender, age, level of educa-

- Number of autochthonous personnel	tion, assigned functions)
- Number of TCN personnel	- (disaggregated by gender, age, level of education, assigned functions)
- Prevailing nationalities of TCNs	- (disaggregated by gender, age, level of education, assigned functions)
- Forms of employment contract	
- Forms of employment contract for TCNs	
- Positions held by TCNs	- e.g. unskilled labour tasks, specialised tasks, coordination roles, management roles
- Percentage of unionised employees	- total, autochthons, TCNs

Organisational Culture and Climate

- Key values and ethical options underpinning organisational life and functioning	- espoused values and enacted values
- Presence of internal “conduct rules”	- degree of internal sharing
- Motivation and involvement of personnel, in particular of TCNs	
- Individual traits appreciated (or not appreciated) in the organisation	
- Organisational openness to new ideas, innovations, challenges	- methods and instruments to collect suggestions from personnel
	- incentives and rewards for personnel’s contributions
- Proactive and innovation capacities of personnel, in particular of TCNs	
- Degree of cooperation in the organisation	- globally
	- in work groups/units
	- between operative levels and management
- Collaborative capacities of personnel, in particular of TCNs	
- Degree and causes of conflict in the organisation	- various organisational levels (see above) (examples of the involvement of TCN employees in conflict situations: reasons and outcomes)
- Mediation and negotiation capacities of personnel, in particular of TCNs	
- Management actions for coping with conflict	
- Prevailing leadership style(s) in the organisation	
- Prevailing communication style(s) in the organisation	
- Circulation of information in the organisation	

Human Resource Management Practices

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel recruitment methods, in particular of TCNs - Mechanisms of insertion of new staff, in particular of TCNs - Training practices, in particular for TCN personnel - Performance assessment practices, in particular for TCN personnel - Forms of career development, in particular for TCN personnel - Incentive mechanisms, in particular for TCN personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - main selection criteria and channels - e.g. training on the job, formal training - formal mechanisms for measuring results? - individual and/or team evaluations? - e.g. advancement to coordination roles - e.g. economic incentives, forms of social and/or professional recognition |
|--|---|
-

Diversity and Perceptions Towards Diversity (in particular towards TCNs)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin and reasons of the employment of TCNs - Formal statements on diversity - Differences in personnel composition which have a significant impact on organisational life and activities - Areas in which the presence of TCN personnel tends to, or can, create more difficulties - Areas in which the presence of TCN personnel tends to, or can, bring about particular advantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from document analysis - e.g. gender, age, educational background, nationality, religion, individual character - positive and negative effects? - in general, what role is played by diversity in the organisation? More as a problem or as a (potential) resource? |
|---|--|
-

DM Actions and Strategies (in particular towards TCNs)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practices and interventions to recognise and valorise diversity (in general) - Organisational factors facilitating the integration and development of TCN personnel - Contextual factors facilitating the integration and development of TCN personnel - Diversity actions addressed to TCN personnel (if the case may be, in the frame of the overall diversity policy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. previous organisational experience in multi-ethnicity, aspects of organisational culture - e.g. territory's socio-cultural openness to the presence of TCNs - e.g. strategic actions, HRM practices, cultural interventions |
|---|--|
-

Effects of DM Practices Targeting or Involving TCN Personnel

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barriers to diversity management practices toward TCN personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e.g. reaction of internal and external stakeholders |
|---|---|

- Benefits for the organisation of DM practices toward TCN personnel
 - Assessment tools for evaluating organisational impacts of DM practices, especially of those addressed to TCN personnel
 - Benefits for TCN staff (and for personnel in general)
 - External economic and social impacts of DM practices, especially of those addressed to TCN personnel
 - Prospects in the near future
- e.g. organisation of work, personnel commitment, innovation
-

Considering the entire international research, the process of fieldwork took place from March to November 2014. Field data were collected, primarily, through individual semi-structured interviews using the checklist as a guideline; the interviews were 2 to 5 for each case history, with a duration of 45 to 90 minutes on average. Generally, the interviewees were both foreigners and nationals, from different hierarchical levels and, especially for large organisations, from various functions (with HR directors or managers given a certain relevance as interview partners). In addition, a secondary data collection was conducted by using sources like the materials provided by the participating organisations (e.g. internal reports), their websites, and external documents regarding them.

5.3 The Inclusion of TCN Human Resources: Reasons, Assigned Roles, Perceptions

This section dwells on a set of contextualising aspects which are of considerable importance to frame and understand the cross-culture DM practices implemented in the selected organisations.

5.3.1 Reasons for Resorting to TCNs

Prevalently among for-profit companies, but quite recurrently also in the public and non-profit sectors, *according to the most part of the interviewees in the whole international sample their organisations have a “colour blind” approach: i.e., their recruiting strategies and their resulting personnel composition are determined by professional pre-requisites* (e.g. mastery of the local language), *competencies and merits*; national and cultural differences, as such, do not have a role in the workplace. Although in a more or less direct way a correspondence is found between this contention and the situations studied (as will be seen), the reasons for employing migrant workers emerge as being multiple.

The primary and most general one lies in *the need to fulfil specific job vacancies being produced by national labour shortages. This often regards sectors characterised also, if not mainly, by relatively low-skilled jobs*: for example, in Italy to fill vacancies in the healthcare (nursing) sector and the manufacturing sector (or related ones, like handling services); in Spain, in the agriculture sector and mainly according to patterns of “circular migration” (foreign workers are recruited in their country of origin, go back home at the end of the season and return to work the following year); in Sweden, jobs related to homecare and personal assistance.

A significant variation on this theme is represented by *the organisational search for human resources with some needed highly qualified and specialised competences*. Most evidently, this is the case of Estonia. Here, a small stock of national workforce (linked also to limited possibilities for specialization through higher education) is the main reason for attracting and recruiting foreign talents from abroad (non-EU countries included), and especially technology-oriented specialists, within those sectors that are turning out to be strategic for the current economic development of the country (like ICT, energy industry and some manufacturing niches). Furthermore, this kind of motivation appears to be important for other cases examined in the research: for example, Finland and Germany, with respect to universities competing in the markets of research and higher education; the Netherlands, as regards some technological fields and, particularly, scientific/research areas within the healthcare sector; Portugal as to some “creative” professional profiles in the field of cultural production; and Sweden, with regard to the academic field and engineering specialisations in the area of programming and maintenance of computer-driven machinery.

Slightly different from the previous one, albeit occasionally intertwining with it, is a third driver, which is given by *multinational companies’ strategies of staff internationalisation or “global mobility”*. This strictly business-driven process consists in recruiting foreign employees, and particularly managers with the needed know-how and international experience in some specific fields, who are from some other company’s subsidiary in the world. Within our entire sample, the role of this mechanism is apparent in the German and the Spanish cases, and it is explicitly noteworthy, again, for Estonia as well as for the other EU new countries (Hungary and Poland), which in the last decade have moved to the free market economy and whose markets, since the 1990s, have been increasingly penetrated by international corporations.

A fourth reason suggested by respondents is the *linguistic and/or cultural “match” between foreign personnel and clients or users*. Even this motivation seems to be ultimately related to the search for organisational advantages, since *cultural similarity is intended as a tool for offering services successfully through a better understanding of the needs, experiences and expectations of specific segments of clients*. Although variously present in the profit sector (e.g. where an international clientele is served), this driver looks highly significant for organisations in the public and non-profit sectors which deal directly with immigrant users or whose goals involve activities and projects handling migration-related issues. In this regard, organisations in employment services and especially in the healthcare sector are involved, to the extent that they serve a regional population which is becoming more culturally diverse. Of particular interest, in the Dutch sample, is the case of a large provider of mental

healthcare which, with immigrant groups becoming less reluctant to call for psychological help, sees a growing “market” comprising, precisely, users with a migratory background. Aside from other examples, the types of entities that are explicitly engaged in assuring this “matching mechanism” are also non-profit organisations that pursue specific aims in the field of cultural diversity; for instance, this occurs with reference to activities dedicated to Roma rights and refugee groups living in the country (Hungary), and to Russian-speaking people (Poland).

The previous reason for recruiting TCNs – i.e., having a human capital that is crucial for the relationships with key categories of users – borders on (and sometimes intermingles with) a further situation, in which *the inclusion of foreign employees is openly and directly incorporated in an organisational mission revolving around civic and social objectives*. This is exemplarily shown within the Italian study, through the case of a non-profit group in internet communication that, with a staff fully composed of young second-generation TCNs, aims to give voice to these “new Italians” to the benefit of the country. Although in a different vein, *this mainly social and ethical motivation to engage TCNs can also be associated, in the case of public institutions, with a commitment to helping people with employment difficulties in entering the labour market, or to mirroring the traits of the society which they serve*.

5.3.2 Roles Assigned to TCN Personnel

In the whole international sample, migrant human resources’ roles and functions depend considerably on the sector and size of the organisation and, to a certain extent, vary from organisation to organisation.

Quite logically, *in the case of organisations needing specific professional skills that are “imported” from abroad, TCN human resources are highly educated, involved in core organisational processes and with interesting career prospects*. While chiefly occurring in the case of profit-oriented companies operating in technological fields (as, markedly, in the Estonian sample) and/or within a multinational corporation’s network, this is also apparent for other kinds of organisations like, principally, universities with respect to their research and teaching activities and non-profit organisations engaged in cultural diversity-related issues in which TCNs often play remarkable roles in managing teams and projects.

An important observation to be made is that *usually the organisational contexts mentioned above provide daily work environments which are English language-based, thus facilitating the professional experience and effectiveness of foreign personnel, for whom an advanced competence in the local language is not required*. On the other hand, in several circumstances (and perhaps with the sole exception of internationalised companies) *this same factor may have a constraining character, hindering TCN mobility to relevant organisational positions*; for instance, this clearly emerges in the Dutch study, which reports how for immigrant researchers in medical centres the option to work in patient care is hardly feasible due to the fact that a certain mastery of the Dutch language is essential to handle instructions safely and do paperwork.

This said, and – once more – apart from the case of organisations with a distinctive international profile, *in the majority of the investigated organisations the highest levels of management and responsibility are composed of national staff*. Furthermore, *many of them, especially in the for-profit and public sectors, employ migrant workforce mainly in a range of low-skilled jobs* (cleaning, catering, distribution of supplies, personal assistance etc.) *or in operative tasks* (e.g. in manufacturing), although on several occasions such positions may extend to roles of some responsibility (as documented, in particular, in the Italian and the Spanish studies).

5.3.3 Perceptions Towards TCN Personnel and their Competences

For several reasons, the issue of the views emerging, within the observed organisations, about the “diversity” brought to the workplace by TCN staff was one of the most challenging to explore. First, *diversity, and in particular this dimension of diversity, remains a somewhat unclear subject to frame*; thus, while – as seen – in several of the countries involved the category of “TCN” is not formally registered, it may happen that organisational members describe their co-workers with heritage from a non-EU country as being “(non-western) foreigners” although the latter may be national citizens or even have been born and raised in the country. Second, *talking openly with respondents about the “otherness” of immigrant colleagues or subordinates was often not an easy task* because of its possibly perceived contrast with two widespread rhetorics: on one side, *the assumption of organisational “neutral effectiveness”*, according to which any worker has to be described and assessed merely in terms of objective professional criteria; on the other side, *the principle of everyone’s equal worth* regardless of her/his specific background. Third, even when in interviews it was possible to delve into the issue of TCNs’ characteristics emerging in the workplace, the reported perceptions, and especially those about traits that can be evaluable as “positive” or “negative”, *not rarely – and, perhaps, unavoidably – included a combination of experience-based considerations and cultural clichés*.

Generally speaking, we may underline three points: *a) aside from certain specific types of organisational contexts* (e.g. internationalised companies with explicit investments in DM, non-profit entities whose mission revolves around diversity/immigration issues), *cross-culture diversity is not openly discussed or talked about within the studied organisations*; *b) particularly in profit and non-profit organisations* (given also the fact that in public organisations the number of TCNs is less significant), on average, *we find a high level of acceptance and appreciation of immigrant presence*, i.e. co-workers and managers tend prevalently to represent foreign employees’ traits in positive terms; *c) the integration of TCN workers*, and especially of newcomers, *is smoother for organisations which have had previous experience with recruiting foreign human resources* (e.g. branches of multinational firms).

As for perceived benefits of having a multicultural workforce, *this attribution often starts at the level of the social and relational dimension, pointing to a sort of added value for all people involved that arises from the possibilities of reciprocal acquaintance and exchanges between autochthonous and migrant workers*. This hap-

pens through organised events (e.g. having meals together), daily work-related interaction and the establishment of new “unexpected” interpersonal relationships that develop step-by-step as native and foreign workers get to know each other better. In this respect, one remarkable example is offered by a Polish packing service firm, where Nigerian young women employed as physical workers give English lessons for free to colleagues on the factory premises, thus strengthening bonds of friendship and mutual appreciation. These social and mainly informal outcomes, signalled particularly in the case of non-profit organisations, *are frequently considered not simply as a source of individual enrichment and learning in the workplace but also as a resource for the organisational performance itself* (fostering internal commitment and fidelisation, playing an integrative function by means of a positive organisational climate etc.). Even more remarkably, *on many occasions respondents’ accounts clearly allude to traits and competences linked to migrants’ national and/or cultural background that contribute directly to achieving better organisational results*. Quite obviously, this first occurs when specific professional skills are explicitly sought through the recruitment of foreign employees (e.g. internationalised and/or technological companies); as well as when the “matching” mechanism is at work, be it getting performance benefits from linguistic and cultural similarity between particular groups of clients and TCN personnel providing services to them, or managing social projects abroad effectively thanks to personnel with in-depth knowledge of the social, political and legal features of the targeted regions.

Furthermore, within the whole sample other broader traits allegedly traceable to cultural otherness or national diversity – such as negotiation skills, adaptability or the propensity to become committed – are mentioned as advantageous for organisational action. *Attitudes of this type are often perceived as distinctive “styles of work” that offer something extra to the pursuit of organisational goals, particularly bringing specific ways of operating* (e.g. open communication and interaction with users in the fields of healthcare and personal assistance) *and new or alternative perspectives for framing and tackling problems*. Two exemplary cases in this regard can be found in the Dutch and the Polish studies respectively. The former is about how some TCN researchers in a pharmaceutical company, having been trained differently from Dutch colleagues, contribute to a more “holistic” research approach through their meticulous way of scrutinising data before abandoning a research route. The latter deals with the different teaching style of a group of TCN academics employed in a university, who, by running classes in their national language and being specifically open to the students’ concerns, are represented as more easy-going than local professors and as capable of adding a new dimension to the learning experience of young people.

On the other hand, some studies *clearly show how bringing in foreign employees creates new challenges and problems to the work environment*. From this standpoint, *the main reported criticality is related to the linguistic factor* and goes beyond those situations in which an advanced linguistic competence in the local language is simply essential for performing everyday tasks. *A limited knowledge of the local language can be perceived as a problem even if the working language is English*, since the contact with non-English speaking interlocutors – be they within or around the organisation – cannot be avoided. According to respondents in several organisations, this may

not only hamper effectiveness at work but also *engender mechanisms of “felt exclusion” both on the side of other employees* (e.g. when a preferential interaction between foreigners belonging to a specific national group, based on the speaking of the same native language, results in the formation of a sort of closed circle) *and on the side of immigrant workers* (e.g. when they feel left out of informal, often work-related, chats and corridor conversations).

Moreover, some drawbacks of working with TCN personnel and co-workers are depicted as stemming from different “frames of mind” and interpretive schemes. For example, *this aspect is seen as possibly having adverse effects on work relationships when involving dissimilarities in the definition of social roles* (e.g. hierarchies established between genders and between different professional profiles) *or in behavioural expectations* (e.g. characterising as “passive” and “not being good team players” TCN employees who have not been socialised into adopting a pro-active attitude and therefore are unlikely to display this kind of stance in organisational meetings and discussions).

5.4 DM Processes and Practices Addressed to TCNs

Turning to the central topic of DM practices having TCN workers as a target, a concise overview could be expressed as follows: *in general, few organisations within the whole international sample design and implement DM actions on the basis of the specific category of “TCNs”* (as already suggested, this concept is frequently not relevant, or – at any rate – not considered systemically, in the collection of information on the demographic composition of organisational personnel). Many DM practices and even strategies emerge which involve TCN human resources; however, *in the main these initiatives are not adopted with special regard to (let alone, with an exclusive focus on) TCNs* and appear to be at the same time applied or applicable to workforce from other EU countries. This said, the picture stemming from the national studies is full of elements worth delving into.

5.4.1 The Organisational Development of Cross-culture DM Practices

For the selected organisations, the emergence of cross-culture DM practices can be traced back to a variety of processes and factors, which, intuitively, often intermingle with what outlined before about the “organisational reasons” for resorting to foreign staff.

Not surprisingly, *almost everywhere, some practices have been developed in order to comply with legal requirements in the sphere of EEO*. This influence, which – paraphrasing neo-institutional sociological theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) – we may also describe as “coercive pressure”, is quite visible in the case of public and business organisations, sometimes resulting (particularly in the former case) in mandatory initiatives like the adoption of *ad hoc* organisational plans (e.g. Finland, Hungary, Spain).

A second key condition favouring the development of DM practices regards mainly (large) profit organisations engaged in strategic changes in light of which the “caring” of employees from abroad, recruited specifically for their professional skills and qualifications, is regarded as pivotal in a policy aimed at obtaining competitive advantage. This is evidently the case of companies pursuing international expansion but involves also businesses dealing with sector-specific challenges; a nice example, in this regard, is provided by a Hungarian company in the oil industry, which combines the attention to foreign staff with the attempt to facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer by integrating young but inexperienced talents and senior experts who are difficult to replace.

Also, *the role of internationalisation dynamics proves noteworthy for companies operating as subsidiaries of multinational firms, where the topic of DM frequently emerges – at least in internal and external communication – as a reflection of a stream of engagement already established in the parent company* (e.g. Estonia, Hungary, Poland). Again, internationalisation represents an important source of DM practices when it is referred to two broader factors that can somehow be identified in all three organisational domains (profit, public and non-profit sectors): *a) the internal workforce composition as such, typically when its international character is due to demographic changes in the country* (since the pool of candidates for employment is “naturally” more heterogeneous than in the past) *and to the need to countervail the shortage of autochthonous workers in certain sectors, be it involving mainly low-skilled jobs or qualified positions* (as in universities and research centres); *b) the influence exerted by the growing international and multicultural character of the wider national society*, with an increasing view to how to manage, motivate and retain foreign human resources whose activity is crucial for relating successfully to clients and users with a migration background.

Several national studies highlight the role of another significant vehicle favouring an increasing practical attention to cross-culture diversity, that is, *the emergent importance – chiefly among large (internationalised) companies – of the firm’s social perspective.* In the first place, this regards Germany, Hungary and Poland; however, it is also the case of Italy and the Netherlands, although to a lesser extent, due to the inclusion of only one multinational company in the local sample. Differently from equality-based measures that comply with legal requirements, CSR programs are adopted by profit organisations as *voluntary socially oriented initiatives*, in which an ethical concern arising from the awareness of being a “corporate citizen” of society usually mingles with business-related motivations such as the aim of gaining brand and reputational advantages. As suggested by various case histories, *the presence of a CSR strategy may constitute a central condition underpinning a firm’s experience in DM, since within these programs the implementation of inclusion policies (focusing on different target groups) is normally regarded as both a key line of action and a relevant indicator of the organisational social performance.* Moreover, as will be discussed later, conducting DM actions in the frame of CSR helps to promote and communicate their benefits in the local community and to enhance a positive perception of such practices among external stakeholders.

The previous allusion to the social significance assigned to DM actions allows us to emphasise a fourth general dynamic underpinning the emergence of these practices, which can be clearly grasped, over the entire sample, with respect to non-profit entities. This is when *at least some kind of attention to cross-culture diversity (and often to other categories of difference) has principally arisen from ethical motifs and values linked to the organisation's culture and mission*, regardless of the specific nature of this cultural ethos (be it, as in Finland, the Christian ethics of a modern Church or the inherent openness to everyone's need for assistance and support of a Red Cross organisation). *Such a mechanism is absolutely visible in those cases where cross-culture diversity is in itself the goal towards which organisational strategy and action are formally aimed*, as exemplarily shown by some cases in Hungary (two organisations devoted to the promotion, respectively, of minority rights and Roma rights) and Italy (the afore-mentioned group in the communication field with the explicit social goal of valorising second generation immigrants).

To some extent, the importance of an exquisitely ethical factor can also be noted for both public and business organisations. In the first circumstance, and aside from public entities' institutional engagement in equality policies, this takes place mainly *either through an increased awareness of their own broader role in the context of ongoing societal changes* (as in the case of a German municipality where a typical "equality office" has evolved into a more wide-ranging "intersectional equality office"), *or for reasons related to the specific sector of activity* (e.g. healthcare organisations and universities with their traditional focus on values such as, respectively, the respect for the human person and the role of international exchanges in scientific research). As for businesses, besides the case of being involved in a CSR path, an ethical driver behind the development of DM endeavours is *the formation over time of socially oriented organisational cultures that, more or less explicitly, revolve around tenets consistent with the ethical options posed by diversity as such.* When discernible, this cultural platform is mainly connected to the influence of the founder's – or the entrepreneur's – personal value-system; a notable case in point, here, is provided by some Italian small-to-medium enterprises operating in different sectors like catering and metalworking. *But a visible relevance of a sort of ethical vision, nurtured by people in top level positions, also emerges in some large companies.* For instance, it can be detected in a couple of firms whose recruitment policies, well beyond the necessity entailed by labour shortage, have "undertaken the risk" of employing, on one side, TCNs living in a reception centre (a Hungarian grocery retailer, which has also a huge number of employees with disabilities) and, on the other side, many female workers – mostly aged 50 or above and with a part of them being TCNs – who had been rendered unemployed by the decline of a local industrial sector (a Polish packing service firm). Significantly, in both cases top management is aware and proud of *the "alternative" message sent to the outside economic and social context.*

The last examples, showing how coping with contingent issues like workforce shortage can be re-elaborated into a more reflective approach, bring to light an underlying general mechanism in the development of DM practices which is apparent in many organisational trajectories studied. This lies in what can be seen as *an evolutive factor, i.e. the fact that a focus on diversity (and on cross-culture diversity) has arisen*

– at least in part and more or less spontaneously – from both the acquired and the ongoing experience of and within the organisation. In this sense, also an organisation's "natural" history impacts on how diversity is dealt with, as clearly suggested, for instance, by two Dutch cases. The former is given by a university, in which the gap between the research departments' strong commitment to promoting cross-culture diversity and the medical centre's little attention to this topic can also be brought back to the development over time of a structural separation (in physical and social terms) between these different organisational units. The latter example involves a company in the field of semiconductors (a traditionally male-intensive sector in the country), where an increase of attention to diversity issues is being currently fed by recent changes related to the internationalisation of the firm and in particular by the inclusion of several US nationals in the board of directors.

Furthermore, *this evolutive process in the experience and the practice of diversity may entail a real longitudinal learning process*. This is the case, among others, of some Italian organisations: the provincial office of a national trade union, for which the challenge induced by an unexpected increase of TCN users in workplaces has resulted in a path of innovation centred on the placement of foreign human resources in important functional and bargaining roles (as well as on the promotion, in the surrounding community, of the idea of a multicultural society based on the full citizenship of everyone); and a couple of large businesses where the initial mere focus on migrants' adaptability to certain low-skilled jobs has gradually evolved into giving them some responsibility roles or explicitly identifying some of their traits (e.g. specific linguistic competences) as an organisational resource.

The issue of the development of DM conducts within the studied organisations involves two points that were openly investigated in the international research: the identification of key actors in the process, and the presence and role of formal statements about organisational commitment to DM.

Regarding the first point, some distinction can be drawn between the sectors involved. *For profit organisations, the main actors in the promotion of DM are, in the first place, HR managers and staff*. Especially within some large organisations of the whole sample, *HR officers have acquired a role as "gatekeepers" of cultural diversity* by making relevant contributions to the development of initiatives devoted to it (e.g. training events), which are sometimes implemented also with the help of external professional experts and advisors. *The second category of actors with a key role in the process is given by top executives in the company*; when there is no HR department, as mainly in small enterprises, *the leading role in the practice of DM is assumed by the entrepreneur at the head of the firm*. An interesting intermediate (or "mixed") case is represented by one Hungarian medium-sized enterprise in ICT, where a focus on cultural and gender diversity has been anticipated and proactively developed by both the HR director and the co-founders, based on their firm personal belief that diversity improves organisational teams' performance. Sometimes, a significant contribution to the promotion of DM practices is given by *staff in CSR departments or positions*. However, *only in very few cases* – included in the Dutch study – *we find the presence of (and a relevant role played by) organisational teams or*

*units formally devoted to diversity issues*⁵ (e.g. a bank operating internationally, but also a public organisation specialised in care for disabled people). Incidentally, the Dutch research offers interesting suggestions also with regard to *the direct involvement of top management*⁶; again, a remarkable example is offered by the aforementioned case of the internationalised bank, whose board of directors has included diversity among the company's "Key Performance Indicators" (and, again, within the same national sample the commitment to diversity objectives has been formalised in the same way by a public healthcare organisation).

In a certain number of the studied organisations, the adoption of DM practices can be traced back, more or less considerably, to the initiative and the activities of individual staff members particularly dedicated to the issue; a not uncommon example is represented by employees having either a professional interest in intercultural relations (e.g. people with a background in anthropology or psychology) or a personal involvement stemming from past direct experience as a foreign organisational newcomer. The influence of individuals highly motivated and committed towards DM goals can be detected, to varying degrees, in all three considered sectors. In this regard, though, the domain of non-profit organisations is of particular interest for two reasons: first, more frequently, a bottom-up mechanism can be found through which this promoting role is played by people at various organisational levels; second, the organisational effects of individual members' commitment are enhanced and amplified to the extent that they take place within a collective context which, by itself, is oriented toward diversity-related aims or culturally marked by a global and "normal" inclusive style of action.

As regards public organisations, throughout the whole sample, the officials or HR staff formally concerned with equality plans and measures are the main actors in the setting up of policies which, in many cases, may be seen as a starting point to possibly more proactive forms of DM (especially when public authorities are expected to set a good example in society). However, in this domain too, other "agents" of DM development can be at work, as is shown by the explicit engagement of directors and the activities of a diversity team that were mentioned above with respect to the Dutch study. But this is also the case, for example, of academic organisations attracting needed TCNs, and then helping them to settle in the host country, through the initiative of specific research units or individual supervisors. In particular, the relevance of this "situated" mechanism emerges in the Estonian sample, where the chief reason leading TCNs to apply and accept a position is not given by the name of the organisation (as in the case of prestigious technological companies), but rather by the presence

⁵ It is worth noting here that, within the "canonical" (Anglo-Saxon) literature in the field, the creation of an internal *ad hoc* structure, in charge of planning and coordinating organisational diversity-related activities, is often regarded – and recommended – as the most advanced tool in the practice of DM (e.g. Kalev *et al.*, 2006).

⁶ This aspect too appears to be particularly crucial in light of the emphasis that current international literature on DM places on the engagement of top managers and leaders (who provide guidance, communication, role models etc.) as a key to the success of DM practices.

of top-level scientists and research teams working in certain domains of knowledge production.

As concerns the presence of documents displaying commitment to DM, *many organisations in the most part of national samples have formulated formal statements which more or less openly refer to diversity and even to cross-cultural management*. This is more directly discernible among large companies, in particular if internationalised. In the case of subsidiaries belonging to a multinational network, statements on commitment to inclusivity are in the main already determined by the foreign parent organisation and this may give rise to *interesting processes of “translation”*. For instance, this occurs when the local branch, on the one hand, disposes of a well-designed and professional statement that can be proudly exhibited in internal and external communication, while, on the other hand, has to take into account its specific national socio-cultural environment by selecting among the diversity categories which are the focus of the original statement (e.g., in one Hungarian case, leaving aside gay/lesbian and black groups that are explicitly targeted in the original US-based approach). Other relevant instruments by means of which engagement in DM is formally – and rhetorically – stated are organisational reports and codes of ethics. Once more, this is especially a prerogative of large companies but is apparent also among public organisations (e.g. in the healthcare field) as well as non-profit ones. In the latter situation, this is mainly associated with the fact of having an international scope or being part of an international structure, and with the presence of an institutional mission naturally reflecting cultural principles of inclusivity and openness to otherness (if not goals explicitly aimed to the promotion of cross-culture diversity). A final observation to be made regards *the inherent ambivalence that emerges when dealing with the issue of the adoption of formal documents for displaying and fostering commitment to diversity-related goals*. In this respect, *the research provides clear examples of strong and convinced efforts on the front of the formalisation of involvement in DM*. This is paradigmatically shown by an Italian multinational in the food and beverage sector (with headquarters in the country) which has developed a complete repertoire of written tools that contain references to diversity and anti-discrimination aims, ranging from the code of ethics to the sustainability report and the adoption of the SA8000 social standard. At the same time, even within organisations which are engaged in this kind of endeavour, *we also find a cautious attitude towards the risks possibly entailed by an artificial commitment to DM* which is “not linked to the natural flow of things” (employee in an Estonian energy firm).

5.4.2 Cross-culture DM Practices: an Emerging and Multifaceted Landscape

Looking at the whole picture offered by the international research, a variety of practices of recognition, integration and valorisation of TCN human resources emerge. Two initial points are worth underlining here.

First, as previously hinted at, *these policies and actions are not predominantly planned and/or implemented on the basis of a special or restricted focus on employees’ national origin or on the fact that they have a migration background*. Rather,

such practices often assume a recognisable role out of a general “sensitivity” towards the idea of creating an organisational environment in which all employees are respected and can express their personal predispositions and traits while at work, and/or within a wider context of attention involving other diversity dimensions (like gender, age and disability). Among several examples, we find three noteworthy cases in which practices addressed to TCNs and attention to other employees’ diversities intertwine and tend to mutually reinforce each other. The first regards a large German ICT company, which, in order to benefit from a wide array of potentials, has developed an all-around approach to DM by creating four focal areas of activity that are considered equally important (“gender intelligence”, “cross-generational intelligence”, “culture & identity” and “differently able people”). A second notable example is provided by the experience of a Hungarian group in the gas and oil sector. This international company has implemented, and is presently strengthening, an array of initiatives such as: intercultural training courses for newcomers, which focus on ethnic, national, gender and age diversity; educational programs addressed to “next generation” employees; the setting up, in its Budapest headquarters, of a prayer room where Muslim workers can fulfil their religious duties; and a very recent gender program in its Pakistani premises, which has been launched for tackling problems of labour shortage linked to gender imbalance and whose current chief challenge lies not only in making employment in the oil industry attractive for women, but also in overcoming cultural obstacles to accepting that Muslim men and women interact in the same working area. The third case in point, again within the Hungarian sample, regards a Ministry, which since 2010 has given a certain continuity to its efforts in the field of diversity by participating in the implementation of several national and EU programs designed to enable members of specific groups (like Roma, students with disabilities and mothers with small children) to gain experience – or to obtain a job – in the public sector. As can be imagined, initiatives addressed to foreign personnel as a particular target can be more easily identified in companies pursuing internationalisation as a human capital or market strategy, and in organisations, like some non-profit entities, whose specific civic and cultural goals imply the presence and the valorisation of personnel with a migratory background.

In second place, especially in some national samples (e.g. Italy, Portugal, Spain), the practices of cross-culture DM are frequently informal and marked by what we previously named “the evolutive factor”; i.e., *DM has not taken shape as a structured or targeted system of policies, but, rather, as something that “is done”* (an interviewee talked of a “natural, non-deliberate management of diversity”) *and that is closely connected to the continuing experience of the organisation*. In this evolutive dimension, a key influence is exerted by forces as different as *the development in time of distinctive internal organisational cultures and outside social dynamics* (like an increased possibility, for instance in healthcare, of finding some required formal qualifications within the immigrant labour supply).

By resorting to a general classification, it is possible to single out four broad areas of action in which the observed organisations carry out DM practices involving TCN human resources.

a) *The creation of conditions enabling migrant workers to manage basic work and life issues.*

This form of attention, detected especially in some national samples (e.g. Estonia, Italy, Poland, Spain), entails *an array of interventions which concretely help TCNs to handle a set of fundamental needs that are prevalently related to their “status” of migrants*. Common practices in this respect are the following: the granting of extended leave periods and of the possibility of praying during the working day (which is very important for some Muslim people); assistance in the process of family reunion; support to workers with health or financial problems; providing consultation to newcomers from abroad during the beginning or the transition time (and occasionally even before their arrival), about the practicalities of daily life in the host country (local services etc.); flexibility in work schedule so as to permit employees to take care of children and other family members.

In various cases, these actions are performed quite regularly or based on some type of formal protocol. This occurs recurrently through insertion practices, for instance whenever foreign new employees – before they arrive – receive assistance for the arrangement of visa and work permit processes, which (as for a couple of Dutch companies) can involve the outsourcing of paperwork to professional lawyers. Another interesting insertion practice consists in the “Welcome Day” or in providing foreign newcomers with a “welcome kit” (containing information in different languages about the organisation). As evidenced by a Spanish case in the agriculture sector, the former tool assumes multiple roles, since, while aiming to make newcomers acquainted with the organisational structure and with co-workers, it represents a way of communicating key rules and instructions from the very beginning (e.g. about the fact that, for hygiene and safety reasons, workers cannot wear jewellery and sequins when picking blueberries). Not rarely, though, these actions are unplanned and not formally regulated, or even implemented on a case-by-case basis. Nonetheless, irrespective of their degree of structuration and more or less contingent character, *they emerge as crucial mechanisms for making immigrant workers feel integrated in the workplace and achieve an individual condition of serenity – and of productive engagement – at work.*

b) *Solutions and changes in the area of HRM.*

From a certain standpoint, some of the afore-mentioned practices could also be conceived as “technically” falling into the category of HRM interventions and policies. A case in point is given by flexibility in working hours, when recurring. This kind of opportunity for employees can also extend to a maximum degree, as shown by a Hungarian non-profit organisation in the field of human rights which allows working from a home office, so that foreign personnel sometimes have the possibility to perform tasks from their respective countries. Another type of organisational initiative actually involving the HRM sphere consists in the promotion of forms of work/life balance, which in some instances take shape as *real “good practices” in employee welfare*. Advanced actions in this area are discernible in the Polish and German samples; for example, in the latter case, a large energy company has arranged an articulated system of employee-friendly solutions that comprises day-care centres for workers’ children, “children-offices” allowing parents to go to work accompanied by their

kids, and a vacation-care service for employees' children to be used during school holidays.

This said, and generally speaking, in many of the studied organisations – even in large and structurally complex ones – *immigrant workers have the opportunity to benefit from the presence of an informal positive climate based on direct communication and personal relationships regardless of professional and hierarchical distinctions, as well as on respect for individuals and their needs*. Sometimes, organisational management displays a recognisable concern for these aspects, for instance (as in some Estonian enterprises) by striving to investigate employees' well-being in the workplace through annual climate surveys. Even more remarkably, though, attention to TCN employees appears to be extended so as to include a series of processes which directly regard the organisation's system of HRM.

In the first place, *recruiting practices are involved*, starting from those situations in which targeted hiring is carried out in order to provide the organisation with some highly qualified or specialised competences that are to be imported from abroad. A noteworthy role of recruiting practices also clearly emerges through *formal agreements with foreign partners aimed to facilitate the hiring of TNCs* (especially, again, when dealing with difficulties in finding national applicants for a professional position). In the recent past this mechanism has regarded some healthcare organisations which hired considerable numbers of nurses on the basis of country-level bilateral programs with various Third Countries (in the Netherlands) or of a direct agreement with an Albanian training centre (in Italy). *Such actions have been successful thanks also to the extra-effort of the involved organisations, for example as concerns additional training or assistance in the process of obtaining equivalence of degrees*. We might also say that their commitment in this respect was not substantially different from that shown by a Dutch company in the semiconductors sector, which did not hesitate to undertake a costly and time-consuming check process in order to obtain a work permit for candidate professionals from Iran. Also, an outstanding example of commitment to offering opportunities to national or ethnic minorities in the recruitment phase is provided by one Hungarian non-profit organisation, which – in line with its institutional goal of valorising cultural diversity – encourages Roma to apply for job openings irrespective of their educational credentials. Moreover, *recruitment practices tend to intertwine with initiatives at the insertion stage of newcomers*, which, apart from the examples depicted above, sometimes entail *mentoring processes and buddy schemes* deriving from a more general “coaching” system in the organisation (e.g. Estonia, the Netherlands, Spain).

A second key HRM area involved by cross-culture DM practices is organisational training. As expected, *relevant training opportunities are often offered to TCN employees that are regarded as crucial professional resources or high (young) potentials in specific activity sectors*. Interesting interventions in the field of training, though, emerge even with respect to migrant workers assigned to low-skilled tasks (e.g. Italy, Spain). Here, what suggested by national researchers may leave space for the interpretation that *the availability of training opportunities plays a central role as a “compensatory” and incentive mechanism for people placed in organisational areas and positions with limited advancement prospects*. However, in several of the ob-

served organisations, *such initiatives do widen the margin for improving one's function and being assigned to roles of some responsibility* (e.g. coordinating work teams or playing a “linking-pin” function between teams). Similarly, in various cases especially involving companies and non-profit entities (e.g. Hungary, Spain), TCN employees – like other co-workers – can take advantage of the opportunity, provided by the organisation, to select the training courses they wish to attend or even to make proposals for new courses; often, foreign workers use this possibility to improve their knowledge of the local language. Over the whole sample, though, *it is difficult to identify the form of training that scholars and experts in the field recommend as the most ambitious one associated with DM and particularly with cultural diversity; namely, the implementation of programs focused on awareness-raising about the issue among employees and firstly among HR specialists*. Strictly speaking, this only happens for a Hungarian gas and oil company doing intercultural training addressed to newcomers (who are often of different nationality, age and gender), and in the case of two large and internationalised Dutch companies (the bank and the semiconductors firm), which have developed programs with the aim of helping staff members to avoid selective bias in hiring processes and in interaction within teams and to improve one's own “visibility” in daily work. Significantly, in one of the Dutch firms the initiative is proposed as “sensitivity training”, which seems to mitigate *the potential risk of cultural otherness (such as that of TCNs) being overemphasised*.

Indeed, initiatives like the preceding ones can also be seen as belonging to *the more challenging sphere of “organisational development”*. What is meant by this expression does not relate simply to employee career development, which – as said – within some national samples is an opportunity that, *de-facto*, frequently arises also for TCNs originally employed in low-level operative positions. More broadly, “organisational development” refers here to a strategy for organisational change and improvement pursued principally by means of the (not exclusively professional) development of human resources. Albeit in an embryonic form, this approach aimed at incorporating cross-culture DM concerns into on-going processes of organisational development can be identified in other situations as well. For example, within the Italian sample, this emerges in a couple of different cases. The former involves a multinational in the food sector, which has lately started a systematic procedure for mapping the linguistic competences of employees working in all the national stores of the group, with the aim of strategically valorising these resources in the context of both adaptation to a growing multi-linguistic clientele in the country and internationalisation (i.e., opening new stores abroad). The latter example is provided by a public healthcare organisation, whose recent engagement in action-research initiatives aimed at depicting the professional characteristics of foreign staff and at highlighting different conceptions of care practices may be considered as an early attempt at *knowledge management in the diversity domain*.

As for the HRM area, a final point regards *performance appraisal and remuneration mechanisms*. In this respect, consistently with an equal opportunity logic and its legal requirements, *almost none of the participating organisations have implemented practices specifically addressed to TCNs* and no differentiation is made between national and foreign employees. Only in the case of a Dutch healthcare provider, quali-

fied TCN care workers have been offered attractive salaries to come and work for the organisation; this measure was taken as an *ad hoc* solution – and not as a standard policy – in a period when the demand for foreign care workers was rapidly growing in the country. This means that *migrant workers normally can benefit from practices addressed to all personnel*. For instance, this is the case of the Polish packing service company, where employees at all levels (from managers to physical workers) regularly receive in-kind prizes for their individual contribution to the improvement of the production and work system. At the same time, *in general, we do not find a type of practices that many scholars today regard as central for developing a DM system, namely, associating both the assessment of top managers' performance and their total remuneration package with goals and results related to diversity*. The only exception to this is given by the two above-cited Dutch organisations having diversity among their Key Performance Indicators; although here DM objectives have a role of little relevance in the overall assessment, this practice *sends a strong signal that diversity counts in the organisation*.

c) The socio-cultural development of inclusion-oriented work environments.

A third crucial area in which the observed DM interventions are implemented regards *the development, communication and socialisation of internal inclusive cultures*. Frequently, *such processes are carried out through formal channels, like in the case of organisational codes of conduct and mission statements* containing an explicit reference to diversity issues and goals. Formal communication about organisational objectives and strategies involving diversity is internally diffused also by placing this information on the company website and intranet or by exhibiting it in common spaces and on announcement boards. As seen before, these types of sensitising tools are especially used by large and internationalised firms; but they may have a certain relevance for non-profit organisations too, as displayed, for instance, by two Hungarian cases in which internal diversity guidelines have been developed (in the form of a handbook) or are under development. *Another formal practice is represented by the appointment of cultural mediators* (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Spain); since these employees mostly have a migratory background themselves, among other tasks they may act as role models for foreign co-workers.

On the other hand, as already hinted at, several national studies depict *the crucial role of more informal and "spontaneous" dynamics for the creation of an integrated – and productive – work environment*. This firstly occurs through underlying social processes like *transparent communication between workers and managers/supervisors and collaborative leadership styles* (which, however, emerge with greater difficulty within the bureaucratic and hierarchical context of large public institutions). These processes concur to shape *recurrent situations of mutual exchange and recognition* that engender the involvement and satisfaction of employees, including TCNs. Other mechanisms that make the experience of cross-culture diversity – so to say – “normally accepted” in organisational life are *working practices such as the utilisation of multi-ethnic or multinational teams and holding regular meetings within organisational units as occasions of both dialogue and conflict management*. In particular, such practices appear to be noteworthy in light of the “golden rule” according to which direct interaction fosters mutual knowledge and reduces the routinary adop-

tion of cultural stereotypes. The importance of shared and “co-constructed” work experiences within organisational groups appears to be exemplarily illustrated by a couple of Dutch healthcare organisations, where most teams are large enough to include a multiplicity of identities and work styles, but also small enough to feed the types of communication and mutual relationship that prevent disagreements or minor (unavoidable) conflicts from degenerating.

As shown, for instance, in the Hungarian and the Spanish studies, *mechanisms facilitating direct mutual understanding develop also through the promotion of social events like intercultural parties*. These gatherings often involve also workers’ families and, besides strengthening ties between employees, *permit them to explain aspects of their national culture and to delve into the ones of co-workers* (while doing apparently futile things like sharing typical foods or, as in one Estonian non-profit organisation, celebrating holidays from TCNs’ home countries). Another original example of a social event permitting intercultural exchange of experiences between co-workers is provided by the Polish packing service firm; here, all employees know their TCN colleagues also thanks to informal meetings, supported by corporate management and widely participated by personnel, which are held after hours with the aim of discussing a variety of issues related to diversity (e.g. Muslim culture, African culture).

Actually, the afore-mentioned processes, involving the development of participative work practices and the organisation of common events, suggest that *the formal and the informal dimensions often interact in the gradual construction of inclusive organisational climates and cultures*. An exemplary case in this respect is that of a Spanish company in the agriculture sector, where an initial and contingent event promoted by the entrepreneur in order to mitigate one foreign worker’s “nostalgia of home” over time has been institutionalised in the form of periodic parties organised for celebrating the birthday of entire groups of workers. Furthermore, the intermingling of formal and informal vehicles in such a way that diversity experience is collectively shared emerges as being particularly powerful when an organisational style of doing things “naturally” inspired by openness to diversity adds to the explicit pursuit of goals related to the promotion of cultural pluralism (e.g. several public and especially non-profit entities in the whole sample).

d) The implementation of formal programs and roles dedicated to managing diversity.

Although the importance of structured DM interventions already filters through the previous points (e.g. insertion practices and training courses), we can identify several cases in which *formal and/or planned initiatives devoted to DM, and more or less directly involving TCN employees, assume a leading role*. For instance, this regards an Italian small firm whose owner and union representatives have signed an agreement specifically aimed at guaranteeing TCN workers’ religious rights, as well as – in a very different way – a Dutch municipality which is actively engaged in reaching the quotas of workforce diversity required by law and involving employees with an immigrant background and disabled people. But *the most advanced manifestation of a formal and targeted approach to the implementation of DM is given by the creation of an organisational team or unit dedicated to diversity*. As anticipated (cf. 5.4.1), within the international sample this tool has been adopted only by a couple of large Dutch

organisations, in which the diversity team members carry out *a wide array of practices such as counselling (to employees) and advising (to high-level managers), acting as trainers and holding regular meetings to discuss emerging diversity matters* (e.g. the possible need to include workers with a different cultural background in a specific organisational department). Moreover, and again within the Dutch study, we find a remarkable variation on this theme; that is, the creation of a network organisation participated by various providers of care and welfare in the area and aimed, on the one hand, to enhance the tailoring of services addressed to migrant users, and, on the other hand, to provide opportunities to TCNs starting a career in the sector.

5.5 Criticalities and Supportive Conditions in Cross-culture DM Practices

5.5.1 Constraints in the Implementation of Cross-culture DM Practices

A number of *both contextual and internal constraints* can be singled out with regard to the implementation of DM practices in the observed organisations.

As for criticalities deriving from the environment in which organisational action is embedded, *the most important difficulty reported by a significant part of the national studies* (e.g. Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden) *relates to budget cuts, especially in the case of public and non-profit organisations operating in the healthcare sector*. Increasing pressure to make cost reductions has a negative impact particularly when it results in efforts and projects in the DM area being put to a temporary halt or even being abandoned, a situation that sometimes involves businesses as well (e.g. Italy). It is also worth noting that some of the studied organisations have (proudly) emphasised the continuity of their engagement in programs aimed at valorising diversity, despite a growing shortage of financial and human resources; this notably is the case of a Hungarian public institution in child care.

Other contextual challenges are either generally social or more situation-specific. In the first case, for instance, they concern *the possibility that interventions in the workplace “to the benefit of foreign people” could be criticised in a context of economic crisis and high unemployment* (e.g. Spain), or even *uncertainties related to how settlement in the country is considered in career decisions of non-EU employees* (e.g. Estonia, where employers often have to deal with the fact that TCNs regard work opportunities as a stepping-stone to employment in other European countries). Furthermore, a general factor that has to be taken into account is that DM actions cannot help with everything; i.e., *their success, more broadly, depends on what happens outside the workplace and on other forms of support that TCN employees can utilise for becoming integrated into the subtleties of the host society*. With regard to situation-specific problems, a good example is provided by an Italian cooperative in handling services which, recurrently, must cope with reactions on the part of those clients who get disappointed with the long leave periods conceded to TCN workers they are accustomed to collaborate with.

As far as internal organisational reality is concerned, a set of criticalities can be identified. First of all, particularly in some national samples (e.g. Italy, the Netherlands), *the well known phenomenon of perceived reverse discrimination is involved*, which typically takes place when autochthonous employees nurture the idea that foreign co-workers are hired and “cultivated” on the basis of their cultural specificities only. In a sense, this brings fully to light *the possible – or, perhaps, inherent – ambivalence of the commitment to diversity policies when the latter are pursued by organisations that represent themselves as being “colour blind”*. Occasionally, *obstacles to the practice of DM arise which are directly linked to differences in cultural background and experience*; for instance, in the healthcare sector (e.g. the Netherlands, Sweden), conflict is sometimes experienced to the extent that foreign nurses and doctors come from medical systems where, compared to the national one, the former have less responsibilities and the latter do more tasks. Also, as seen before (cf. 5.3.3), *an important criticality emerges in settings where TCNs lack a sufficient knowledge of the local language*. This may involve workers in low-skilled positions (e.g. Hungary) as well as professionals within internationalised companies (e.g. Estonia, where one question that frequently arises is whether work and life issues should be addressed by switching into English); in both cases, implementation of DM initiatives towards TCN employees is made difficult.

A further pack of problems that can hamper DM processes is connected to exquisitely organisational factors (e.g. Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain). Among them, we can cite the following: *organisational size*, which, in the case of small organisations, results in very concrete barriers to the possibility of making investments in DM or devoting some staff tasks to it; *organisational complexity*, which, for instance, makes it difficult to circulate ideas and practices when the organisation is composed of various local facilities and offices (and the same applies to some local subsidiaries of multinational groups); *time pressures*, which can easily lead to view DM engagements not as a priority, especially if managers in charge of them have not a personal interest in diversity issues and if the staff involved in the initiatives (e.g. training) feel obliged to participate in them; *a lack of resolution in the transition from statements to implementation*, particularly when this entails changes in culture and mentality that can generate discomfort in the organisation. As argued by several respondents, *the bulk of such points could be traced back to the lack of a coherently formulated strategic frame for DM interventions*, which is more evident when these practices have originated as *ad hoc* solutions to contingent problems. Signalling another ambivalence, this suggestion seems to conflict with an idea that, on its turn, emerges from the interviews, namely *that the main risks for the development of DM practices stem from attempts to engineer it*.

5.5.2 Facilitating Factors in the Implementation of Cross-culture DM Practices

Taken as a whole, the national studies also shed light on a number of conditions and mechanisms that play a facilitating role in the practice of cross-culture DM. *First,*

a remarkable factor in this respect involves conditions and opportunities provided by the institutional environment surrounding organisational action. This positive influence may take shape in various ways. For instance, on the front of governmental initiatives (and aside from the push coming from EEO regulations), it can be found in the Dutch IND (“National Immigration and Naturalisation Service”), which allows organisations that have obtained the status of “recognised referents” to follow an easier procedure for recruiting foreign candidates, while, at the same time, enabling TCNs themselves to know which organisations in the country have previous experience with hiring employees from abroad. Similarly, for Spanish agricultural companies that follow patterns of circular migration, the participation of the State is relevant to ensure that the selection process for hiring foreign low-skilled workers already begins in the country of origin (e.g. through Visa authorisation). *On other occasions, institutional dynamics favouring DM efforts are subtler, as in the case of non-profit organisations depending on the financial support of external stakeholders – like foundations – which encourage the implementation of DM practices and consequently expect conducts in accordance with this from their beneficiaries (e.g. Hungary).*

A second, more situational, contextual influence is connected with the organisation’s sector of activity. This aspect emerges as a factor favouring TCN employees’ integration and their valorisation in organisational performance to the extent to which, for example, *it specifically entails the opportunity of having direct and continuous relationships with clients* (e.g. some healthcare organisations in the Dutch, Italian and Swedish samples). Another key sector-related feature lies in *the degree of its “constitutive” openness to innovation.* From this standpoint, several examples in the international sample regard high technology fields. For instance, in some Estonian ICT enterprises the willingness to obtain new contributions from employees is reflected in practices aimed at sharing ideas and collecting input for innovation, such as “collective training sessions” in which all levels of staff participate. Other interesting insights are offered, in particular, by the Portuguese study. The organisations considered in it, in fact, mostly carry out artistic and cultural activities, i.e. a field where creativity and innovation are simply central; in this context, TCN staff’s performance often relates directly to the organisational core business, involving roles as musicians and dancers, teachers in schools, professionals who design and organise advertising campaigns, experts in advisory bodies. Also, *sectors where English is frequently adopted as a common language for daily operations* (e.g. universities, ICT companies and, in general, organisations belonging to internationalised networks) *tend to more smoothly absorb and appreciate foreign staff and competences.* Furthermore, as regards the relevance of the sector of organisational activity, a general suggestion stemming from the research is that *non-profit organisations may possess – so to say – an intrinsic potential in the promotion of DM practices.* In other words, looking in particular at some national studies (e.g. Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain), it seems that *these types of organisations usually have a set of resources for the valorisation of cross-culture diversity (and of other categories of difference as well) which are naturally “inscribed” into their organisational forms (especially when open to stakeholder participation), goals and cultures;* and this has an impact on the ordinary work practices deriving from them, as exemplarily shown by the case of an Italian so-

cial cooperative, where, in the absence of any codified DM initiative, a virtuous process of mutual strengthening has developed between dealing with heterogeneous users in the fields of mental health and social exclusion and the internal practice of diversity.

Finally, we can identify *at least three conditions at the organisational level that, to varying degrees in the national samples, concur to sustain the implementation of cross-culture DM actions*. The first consists in *the positive attitude and the engagement of high level managers (or owners)*, which affect not only how “diverse” an organisation is but, most of all, how much emphasis is internally placed on the goal of treating it as a resource. Secondly, as already mentioned (cf. 5.4.1), it is necessary to stress *the key role of self-propulsive factors which are value-based and ethical in character, particularly when they are fuelled by processes of dissemination and sharing-of-meaning within the organisation*. This cultural mechanism is more frequent in non-profit organisations, included those whose mission does not directly entail diversity-related aims; but it can also be seen in organisations belonging to the profit and the public sectors. In addition, *the influential role of a socially-sensitive cultural platform appears to be enhanced by the inclusion of an orientation to experimentation or tout court to innovation*, which (as said above) turns out to be enabling with regard to openness to situations and opportunities involving diversity.

Whereas the previous two aspects might be considered as fundamentally consistent with the suggestions of current DM literature, a third organisational mechanism emergent from the research refers to a somewhat less explored point. This is given by *the propensity to network – or, better, to share experiences, needs and competences – with context stakeholders, which in several situations not only has crucial impacts on the organisation’s ability to perform activities, but it also seems to foster the organisational “sensitivity” towards interacting with diversity*. For instance, this occurs in the above-cited case of the project partnership between different Dutch regional providers of care and welfare, with its focus on the needs of people with an immigrant background (be these clients or professionals in the field). Also, one noteworthy case is that of a Portuguese orchestra that promotes the continuous learning of its personnel by, on one side, encouraging them to take artistic sabbatical leaves at foreign institutions, and, on the other side, inviting international musicians and conductors. Even more clearly, within the Italian sample, *this process of “opening-up to the context” and, at the same time, “incorporating it”* can be grasped in the normal functioning of both a consulting firm specialised in the recruitment of multicultural personnel and an internet communication group: the former produces its services by being constantly interdependent with client companies and migrants’ associations, and is presently creating a network of “ambassadors” for managing relationships with these partner immigrant associations; in the latter case, we see a sort of constant reinvention of organisational boundaries, since the development of a network of numerous stakeholders (cultural mediators, academics, professionals in multi-ethnic marketing etc.) who recurrently animate blog discussions has rendered these interlocutors additional, albeit unofficial, members of the editorial staff.

5.6 Impacts of Cross-culture DM Practices

Even though *no systematic practices of impact assessment emerge over the entire sample*, many of the investigated organisations have developed a certain awareness of the effects – and, especially, the benefits – generated by their efforts in the area of cross-culture DM.

5.6.1 Benefits for Organisations

In the first place, albeit through the difficulties and “opacities” that previously were hinted at, *the adoption of a DM stance is bringing a set of performance advantages to most of these organisations*. This appears to be consonant with the so-called “*business case argument*”; namely, the suggestion, which we recurrently find in both scholarly and institutional sources (e.g. official EU documents), that *the presence and, above all, the management of a diverse workforce are a crucial resource for increasing an organisation’s value creation capacity – and thus its competitive advantage – in the current economic and socio-cultural scenario*. Strictly in line with the business case “formula”, in the international sample this regards explicitly profit organisations, which can obtain such various advantages as the following:

- *Valuable inputs for process/product innovation and the development of creative business or technical solutions*. This involves primarily – albeit not exclusively – large organisations whose internationalisation and/or growing strategies are remarkably based on the recruitment of highly skilled personnel from abroad. Often, a virtuous “side effect” of this kind of experience arises at the level of organisational learning, with the increasing opportunity for autochthonous staff in the firm of developing better competences in both their professional tool-kit and their “social” ability to work effectively in a diverse job environment.
- *New marketing opportunities through the multicultural composition of organisational personnel*. For several companies, a focus on cross-culture DM has resulted in obtaining a pool of human resources naturally qualified to understand and fulfil the needs of a multicultural clientele; sometimes, it can even turn into a key for expanding abroad (e.g. the Italian multinational in the food sector, where “cultivating” immigrant employees is also aimed to use them for penetrating new markets represented by their countries of origin).
- *Improvement of employee commitment, identification with the organisation and retention*. Basically, in many of the studied firms, the process of recognition of otherness implied by DM actions (e.g. training and welfare initiatives) feeds the motivation of TCN human resources, their commitment to organisational tasks and goals, and their desire to remain a part of the company (as is demonstrated, on average, by low turnover rates). As for the retention issue, it is worth noting that even in Estonia (where the problem is particularly felt) DM is growingly intended as a tool for increasing foreign employees’ willingness to settle in the country. The motivational effect of DM is more likely to occur when – as is often the case – the implementation of formal practices is supported by a socio-cultural climate in the

organisation which is based on transparent communication and constructive informal relationships. It is mainly in this way that, apparently, such practices also foster integration within the workplace and satisfaction among autochthonous workers themselves; this, notwithstanding the presence of more or less latent conflicts linked, for instance, to perceptions of reverse discrimination (which, in several of these organisations, are successfully coped with precisely by means of internal open communication).

- *Improvement of the company's reputation.* Another intangible asset that, among the observed profit organisations, is enhanced by the practice of DM consists in the firm's reputation. In particular, the effort invested in DM activities is positively evaluated by a vast array of organisational stakeholders, ranging from business partners and customers to public institutions and employees themselves (whose commitment further increases through the awareness of belonging to an organisation which is widely respected, if not admired). In most of the involved countries, implementing and communicating DM practices convey a legitimising image and are considered as a pivotal CSR indicator, thus contributing to give the adopters a certain visibility within competitions and contests held in this domain. Furthermore, especially in some contexts (e.g. Hungary, Poland), large firms promoting DM are perceived, in the surrounding environment and beyond, as open "corporate citizens" that actively participate in the economic and social life of the local community.

As a matter of fact, to varying degrees, *all the previous forms of DM-related benefits can be identified also in the case of non-profit and public organisations.* For instance, several healthcare organisations which have hired and developed TCN staff succeed better in reaching out to users with a migratory background (e.g. Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden). As for innovation opportunities and problem-solving capacity, especially organisations in the scientific and cultural sectors can gain relevant advantages from the heterogeneity of perspectives and "styles of thought" that is fed by an increased internal diversity (e.g. Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal). Similarly, also in the case of public and non-profit entities possible benefits emerge which relate to the development of a good organisational reputation among key stakeholders, such as a strengthened capacity to attract skilled or talented new candidates (e.g. many academic institutions) and, sometimes, external financial resources. However, *the ultimate expression of virtuous effects deriving from having and managing cultural pluralism in personnel is to be found in some situations involving mainly non-profit organisations, where personnel multinational and multicultural composition represents the key resource – if not the prerequisite – for "getting the business done"*. This is clearly shown by an Italian organisation in the field of communication, whose mission of contributing to the development of a "diverse" national society is pursued through the creation of collective debates that are stimulated by an editorial staff composed entirely of young second generation TCNs, i.e. "new citizens" who live in two worlds simultaneously and can grasp interesting or contradictory aspects of both such worlds. Other significant examples are offered by some Hungarian organisations engaged in the promotion of social projects dedicated to national and ethnic minorities as well as to solidaristic initiatives to be realised abroad.

For instance, one of them decided to employ TCN social workers speaking the language of some target groups of its school and tutoring programs for youths, with a twofold purpose: providing these users with more credible role models (i.e.: professionals with a migration background who managed to build a full life in Hungary) and creating a sort of “structural” intercultural bridge between them and the organisation as a whole.

5.6.2 Benefits for TCN Employees

As suggested by all national studies, *the second actor gaining perceptible advantages from cross-culture DM actions is organisational employees. This, firstly, refers to TCN human resources*, who are usually provided with a range of forms of support for managing problems related to their migrant condition and, more widely, for enhancing the quality of their life in both the work and the private/family spheres. As previously said (cf. 5.4.2), in some instances such benefits may involve the provision of a rich package of services (e.g. medical care), as in the case of several Polish organisations (also within the public sector), where they are often part of a more general system of employee welfare that is addressed to all workers. A distinctive situation in the production of work-life advantages for immigrant employees appears to be that of Estonian non-profit organisations, where most TCNs are students and spouses of professionals in local firms, who are mainly employed on a part-time basis; this permits them to fulfil their preference for having flexible working hours, while making them earn some money and benefit from the interaction with a “workplace community” that is simultaneously local and international.

Another advantage for foreign employees regards *opportunities for professional development (mainly through training) and job advancement, which may arise even when TCNs are employed in low-skilled organisational roles*. Besides this, a noteworthy point suggested by several studies (e.g. Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain) is that *formal and informal DM practices can generate specific symbolic rewards for immigrant workers*. These relate to conditions of personal satisfaction and the ability to find meaning in one’s work, which stem from feeling engaged and integrated in the workplace; *this sense of identity and social belonging is crucially heightened by the experience of being considered and appreciated by co-workers and superiors*.

Finally, and more broadly, *it is possible to detect benefits for organisational staff seen as a whole, in terms of both professional development and personal enrichment*; to paraphrase the words of some respondents in the international sample, working in an environment where cross-culture diversity is promoted “is highly motivating because it means continuous learning” and “allows to know other countries without travelling”.

5.6.3 Benefits for Social Contexts

Thirdly, it seems reasonable to claim that *many of the DM actions carried out by these organisations have engendered, and are producing, positive outcomes in their social and economic contexts*. Generally speaking, once it is acknowledged that the empowerment of immigrant workers is a primary means for the realisation of citizenship rights in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies, *the observed DM practices are likely to be contributing to on-going, more or less laborious, processes of social integration in the local territories involved*. Moreover, specifically when mechanisms valorising foreign personnel's potential are actually in action (e.g. by giving them relevant functions in the management of clients), *we may recognise a role in the development of a local territory's human capital*.

Also, *cross-culture DM initiatives and results are important vehicles for sensitising external stakeholders in society on the issues of diversity and inclusion*. From this standpoint, several cases of companies in the sample lead into viewing that, perhaps, *the fundamental role of DM efforts in the context of a CSR strategy lies exactly in this sort of ability to "send a message"* (as occurs, for example, for some Hungarian large enterprises engaged in Roma programs). In those circumstances in which the ethical tenets of the diversity concept underpin the organisational mission as such, *this social contribution takes shape, more ambitiously, as a function of cultural dissemination, education and awareness-raising* (like in the case of the afore-mentioned non-profit organisations in Hungary and Italy). Finally, it must be emphasised how *certain organisational advantages brought by attention to cross-culture diversity overlap with social benefits*. For instance, healthcare services that, through the contribution of foreign staff, deal more effectively with the expectations of patients with a migratory background, at the same time, and more profoundly, represent a response to the emerging needs of a changing society.

5.7 Closing Remarks

The picture painted by the international research on DM practices is rich and, in several respects, more intriguing and promising than expected. First, *a multiplicity of organisational processes and initiatives emerge which, to a variable extent, are oriented (and, sometimes, openly aimed) to the integration and valorisation of TCN personnel in the workplace*. Secondly, the studies throw light on *a number of positive impacts related to cross-culture DM, in and around organisations that implement them*. Generally reflecting a *win-win logic*, such effects often tend to be to the advantage of the several parties involved: TCN employees; organisational personnel at large; the organisation itself with its aims and strategies; the social and economic context, given in particular by the local community where organisational life and action take place. Also, in most cases (even involving large organisations) *cross-culture DM practices appear to be under development, in the middle of the ford – so to speak – between a spontaneous evolution primarily dictated by organisational experiences and contingencies and a more targeted approach*. This somehow confirms the sug-

gestions of the national literatures on cross-culture DM (and DM in general) within the countries involved in the DIVERSE Project. Nonetheless, as said, we are allowed to grasp an overall promising trend for actions, awareness-raising processes and, to some extent, development of know-how in the field; i.e., *we are left with the plausible conviction that “the machine” is on the move, albeit often “under track”*, and that in the near future further improvements are to be expected.

In conclusion of this chapter, four implications of the international research are briefly spelled out which provide key areas on which to work from the standpoint of both forthcoming research and the promotion of policies and interventions.

- *A process of cultural dissemination of attention to diversity within organisations is the basic mechanism by which they build part of their identity around such priorities*, so that, ultimately, employees themselves become an important catalyst of DM practices. This complex dynamic depends significantly on the capacity to contrast the inertia of some traditional management values and styles of action (e.g. short-termism), as well as to cope with collective and individual resistances typically provoked by cultural change.

- Embarking on DM efforts should entail, among other things, *a certain awareness of the ambivalences inherent in them*, starting from *the delicate balance between the logic of equal treatment and the emphasis on valorising differences*. Another crucial point concerns the issue *whether diversity and DM are more “a natural development of things” or a deliberate, structured and managed process*. Both of them seem to matter. More informal and “spontaneous” elements of the organisation’s evolution provide an essential condition for the consolidation of DM practices and their continuity in the medium to long term. Specifically, *they facilitate the creation of an organisational climate coherent with a lived practice of diversity*, as well as the direct participation of the different parties involved (top managers, supervisors, foreign employees, other workers). On the other side, and once acknowledged *the possible risks associated with proceduralisation* in this field (e.g. the strengthening of a sense of internal division, the establishment of official roles and programs that are perceived as separate from organisational everyday life), *some development of formal tools for planning and implementing DM actions favours the exploration of implicit potentialities entailed by diversity, the codification and circulation of DM practices among organisational units and external partners, the internal stabilizing of a repertoire of experiences* that is not strictly dependent on some individuals’ knowledge and commitment.

- *Organisational citizenship plays a pivotal role, both as a vehicle and as a frame, in the practice of cross-culture DM*. In particular, this has to be intended not only with reference to the *“citizenship of the organisation”*, that is, CSR initiatives carried out to the benefit of social stakeholders in the local community, but it extends so as to entail *“citizenship within the organisation”*, with the presence of mechanisms of involvement and participation of human resources in the tasks and priorities pursued by the organisation.

- *DM, and cross-culture DM even more so, is an all-around endeavour*. It calls for *a micro-level of analysis and action like that of work teams*, where problems related to diversity first arise or are successfully dealt with (through mutual direct knowledge

and exchanges). But, simultaneously, it involves *perspectives of research and policies about issues that fall outside the sphere of organisational control and engagement*; for example, this concerns what central and local Governments can actually do in order to create a better life environment for TCNs in EU countries.

If anything, all this and the organisational trajectories analysed in the research convincingly suggest that *cross-culture DM is somehow emerging and, above all, should be strengthened as a participative undertaking*; a field with so many different players, such as high-level managers, HR and CSR specialists, supervisors in organisational units, groups of “targeted” employees and staff at large, and external – especially, institutional – stakeholders.

6

Building Citizenship through Volunteering Immigration as a Resource for Social Cohesion

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6.1 When Immigration Meets Volunteering

As highlighted at the beginning of the volume (see chapter 1), one of the main limits of the European model of integration is the tendency to collectively represent migrants as a complementary workforce, obscuring their potential socio-cultural contribution to the host societies. Hence, DIVERSE aims to improve the social representation of migrants, enable their potential and skills, and concretely promote their fruitful participation in social life.

Among the domains of TCNs' possible activation is volunteering. As a rich literature highlights, volunteering is one of the most significant heritages of the European tradition and an issue that deeply marks our democratic and social life. Volunteering is embedded in the great solidary and civic traditions of our continent, where religious and secular roots meet and work together towards a common goal: the human, social and cultural enhancement of people and society. Voluntary work supports social welfare and individual wellbeing: volunteering produces sense of usefulness and belonging; it strengthens relationships, active life, contrasts isolation and marginalization. Volunteering fights against social exclusion, poverty and inequalities and promotes gratitude and solidarity, social and intergenerational ties, increases social capital and cohesion, plays an advocacy role for the protection of minorities and represents a critical point of view that stimulates the respect of human rights. In this sense, it is a pub-

lic arena where citizenship and democratic participation can be activated and promoted. Furthermore, volunteering offers concrete responses to social needs in a frame of growing institutional weakness and shortage of public resources. Since the 1980s, European countries have experienced a great diffusion of voluntary work in many sectors: culture and sport, caring for the most vulnerable and children's education. The 1990s saw new Eastern countries joining Europe and volunteering became one of the main interesting trends, especially among young people. After years of limited civic participation, volunteering became one of the best assets of democratic freedom.

Volunteering has a weighty psychological meaning also for individuals and groups. According to Moscovici (1994), each of the three forms of altruism entails a mental benefit for the subject who is volunteering. In *participative altruism*, the individual does something for free for the community as a whole, not for a specific individual. This generates a special bond among the members of the group, creating an "us", inside which people feel accepted, appreciated, increase their self-esteem, and thus sacrifice themselves for the group. In *trusty altruism*, based on empathy and reciprocal reliance, the benefit is the possibility to build an "inter-subjective" world, where the distance among people is reduced and mutual understanding plays a central role. In *prescriptive altruism*, the individual internalization of the norm of mutual responsibility, according to the culture, pushes the person to act for others as a duty, not caring for rewards. The benefit, in this case, is pride for complying with the social norm of responsibility¹.

However, volunteering plays a very important economic role as well. Just think of the overall value of actions taken and the hours of free time dedicated to others' needs. Activities are often in crucial welfare areas or in community services, sectors where public offer is dramatically decreasing. Nevertheless, voluntary work is important in leisure time, sport, culture and arts, encouraging an integral development of the human being with a global impact on people's quality of life. The number of Europeans devoting time and energies in formal volunteering is impressive and this can be considered a good indicator of its importance.

In other words, volunteering tells much about Europe. It is not possible to think of Europe without this great movement that stimulates and invigorates communities and territories. Nonetheless, *the European volunteering field is characterized by great heterogeneity that marks different cultural, social and civil itineraries*. These differences have to be taken into account.

A second significant phenomenon affecting Europe in recent decades is immigration. Immigration has changed the face of Europe and globalization processes have deeply modified our world. All over Europe, society is becoming more and more multi-ethnic, with an increasing awareness of this new feature. Therefore, the issues of integration and citizenship are increasingly affecting everyday life, and need to be realistically faced by European citizens. For TCNs, Europe represents a longed-for destination. With a strategic geographical position, Europe is a continent where democratic stability meets economic and social security. Not surprisingly, it represents the

¹ As we will see in the present chapter, in DIVERSE, we found all these forms of altruism among immigrant volunteers, both in non-ethnic organizations and ethnic organisations.

natural safe-haven for people escaping from war, totalitarianism, hunger and lack of opportunities. As for volunteering, the landscape of European immigration is highly fragmented. As we have seen – in chapters 1 and 2 – immigration flows have been influenced by historical factors, linked mainly to the colonial destiny of many European countries. Other countries became lands of migration for their European neighbours, such as Germany for Italian migrants. More recently, the main streams are from Eastern Europe, North Africa and Central Africa, the Far East and South America. In the matter of migration, each European country has its own story to tell and *ad hoc* developed practices and policies. If much has been learned from experience, the way towards real integration still seems to be long. Despite the important steps forward and the introduction of innovative practices, Europe is looking for an integration model, able to guarantee the full socio-economic and cultural inclusion of migrants, supporting their active civic engagement and generating a new kind of society.

The study of this fascinating cross between two phenomena – immigration and volunteering – may reveal a little more about the real level of integration of TCNs in Europe and suggest new perspectives and directions.

6.2 The European Landscape

The analysis offered by the ten national reports provides an interesting picture of TCNs' civic participation in the context of organized volunteering. Not surprisingly, what emerges is a heterogeneous landscape as both volunteering and migration are shaped by specific local factors: national history, legislative and social preconditions, cultural resources and material constraints. In particular, two topics must be considered: *a)* the seniority of the phenomenon of volunteering and its peculiar developments; *b)* the history and features of the immigration processes and the emerging integration model.

Despite understandable differences, *the studies confirm a choral recognition of the value and social relevance of volunteering and this may represent a solid platform for the design of future paths of integration in Europe.* Everywhere in Europe, volunteering is considered the privileged arena for civic participation, although national situations are uneven and indicate different stages of development and consolidation of the phenomenon.

Volunteering proved to be a well-rooted and widespread phenomenon among the European population and the level of participation is especially significant in countries that have enjoyed democratic freedoms in the last decades. According to a German survey (TNS-Infratest Sozialforschung, 2009), 71% of the total German population state taking part in voluntary activities, at least sporadically, and 36% is engaged regularly in formal volunteering. In 2012 about 38% of the Dutch population participated in volunteer work, although this percentage dropped since 2002 when activation reached 46% (Schuyt *et al.*, 2006; Bekkers *et al.*, 2013). Also in Sweden, the number of people involved in volunteering is impressive: a study (Anheier and Salomon, 1999) estimates that 51% of the Swedish population volunteer with a primary role given to craft, sport and recreational activities. Traces of this engagement can be

found in the early 19th century charitable efforts of the élite, then in the popular movements challenging poverty and privileges that resulted in the mass formation of the Swedish labour union.

Volunteering is not developed everywhere to the same extent. In post Communist countries, for example, volunteering and more generally the activation of civil society are recent phenomena. In Estonia, freedom of association did not exist under the Communist regime and a large mobilization of the civil society and the flowering of ethnic associations followed the country's independence. Nonetheless the recent survey "*Volunteering in Estonia*" (Praxis Center for Policy Studies, 2013) confirms that 31% of the Estonian population participates yearly in voluntary activities. Also in Hungary, according to the national report, volunteering growth was deeply influenced by the communist regime and the voluntary sector is still underdeveloped: less than 2% of the active Hungarian population is engaged in non-profit organisations although the amount of hours spent in non-organisational volunteering is about nine times the amount spent in the organisational one. This study focuses on formal volunteering but informal voluntary activities carried out in non formalized groups and/or individually play a very important role in the processes of integration of TCNs, as many reports underlined. On the one hand, this type of solidarity is often closer to the migrants' culture of origin. On the other hand, it is more flexible and accessible. Informal volunteering may be very important in the early stages of the integration path to break isolation and obtain immediate support. For this reason, it should be more and more considered also because in these informal networks the idea of formal volunteering can be born and directed. This does not mean that there is an evolutionary path in civic participation valid for all. Conversely, formal and informal volunteers can live together and mutually support each other as they respond to different needs and design complementary ways to act.

In particular, micro-solidarities should be observed in the future as a crucial resource for social cohesion and informal welfare. In the Netherlands, the national report underlines an increasing consciousness of the relevance of informal volunteering because of the cuts in the national budget and their negative impact on social work and health care. In particular, two processes have to be mentioned: decentralization from the national to the local level in the health care sector and local governments' exit from the health sector. These steps are pushing the political level to promote a new participatory wave with a new "call for action" for all responsible citizens.

The idea of volunteering – as emerged in Europe – is the result of a long process, which involves solidarity and charity whose beneficiaries are usually unknown to volunteers. In this sense, volunteering may be considered an action in favour of the "generalized other", where trust goes far beyond familiar circles and returns cannot be taken for granted. Once again, the recent history of some European countries shaped different attitudes and predispositions. According to the national report, a general inclination of the Polish society to get involved in work for the benefit of known people explains the prevalence of the first type of action in comparison with an institutionalized one. This attitude may be partially justified by the belief that there is widespread malpractice and self-interest in NGOs, a further confirmation of the general scepticism towards institutionalized social forms.

In recent years, volunteer work gained higher social recognition everywhere and was considered a crucial ally of governments and public institutions. In Germany, volunteering plays an important part especially in terms of welfare and social cohesion, also because it is legitimized by public authorities who assign it a significant role. There are many measures promoting participation in voluntary work (voluntary organisations also benefit from several tax advantages and simplification in the balance of accounts, while federal and local promotional measures also exist). In Italy, formal volunteering is highly valued. As the national report confirms, it plays a crucial role in encouraging the institutional spheres to take care of the weakest and anticipates the State's responses to social needs by integrating public services. In Portugal, voluntary work is considered a complementary activity to professional work and to the action of institutions. The analysis of the documents elaborated by the current Portuguese government reveals that combatting poverty, promoting social cohesion and inclusion depend on NGOs and grass roots initiatives. Despite the declarations of intent, not everywhere political and financial support may be taken for granted. The situation is even worse after the global crises, whose dramatic impacts on the Third Sector and volunteering in Europe have still to be assessed.

Undoubtedly, civic participation and formal voluntary work are important achievements of the European social scene. It is interesting to understand to what extent these civic arenas are open to migrants, and whether TCNs are active in these areas. What happens when volunteering meets immigration? Or, more precisely, can immigration meet volunteering? On what does a migrant's decision to participate in the civic life of the host country depend?

First of all, civic participation and volunteering depends on the migratory project of TCNs. People who aim to settle down in the new country permanently are more inclined to participate and be engaged in volunteering.

According to the national reports, migrants' participation in volunteering is mostly spontaneous and the initiative is usually taken by single TCNs. Regular institutional initiatives expressly aimed at foreigners' integration through participation are rare and the public attention offered to the involvement of TCNs in non-ethnic organisations is lower than expected. This is confirmed by the general lack of data on presence and activism of TCNs in voluntary organisations. In addition, no systematic studies regarding the specific integration of "TCNs" emerge. Rather, researches refer to "*foreigners*" in general, or to "*people with migration backgrounds*" and even "*aliens*", with no distinction between countries of origin and cultural areas. It has to be remarked that the use of different terms to refer to migrants suggests the existence of different stages in the development of the migration process but also in the public discourse. A regular monitoring of the phenomenon and its trends is missing.

This indicates that the potential of volunteering in TCN integration is only partially explored and that there are important areas of intervention to be developed.

The picture emerging from the national research reports shows generally a lower presence of TCNs in formal volunteering but it is clear that important contextual fac-

tors have to be considered². This does not mean that TCNs are impervious to the concepts of charity and donation but that there are cultural backgrounds and contingencies related, on one hand, to their life and work conditions and, on the other, to social and cultural frameworks that can represent important barriers to entry. *Volunteering may appear unattractive or even incompatible with migrants' life. Consequently, it is necessary to change this way of thinking without forgetting to intervene on socio economic barriers.*

Much needs to be done also in organisational and institutional terms. Voluntary organisations should see the arrival of immigrants as a great opportunity for their renewal and acquire a leading role in articulating a new public discourse and introducing new social practices. They can brand themselves for a higher degree of openness to multiculturalism than the average society and in some way anticipate future social assets of multicultural societies. They may give an essential contribution to the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices with significant cultural progress for the whole society. Moreover, in a context of deep demographic changes, immigrants may contribute positively to a renovation of voluntary workforces.

Greater attention should therefore be devoted to the monitoring and assessment of these processes. As volunteering innovates socially, articulates new adaptive answers to pressing social needs and produces multiple benefits – personal, social, cultural and even economic – it is important to support and develop it. In addition, as this chapter suggests, it is likely to be a privileged channel for the inclusion of foreign people and a participatory arena able to facilitate the recognition of migrants and bring out their potential.

However, both civic participation and migration are not solitary choices. Immigration and volunteering come from individual drives but it is the context that promotes or hinders personal options. It is therefore necessary to understand opportunities and constraints, potential and risks of each context in which volunteering and migration happen and meet. If this match empowers migrants and transforms them from “problems” into viable resources for our communities and territories, a real inclusive and stronger Europe will be born.

6.3 TCNs Participation in Non-ethnic Organisations

Formal volunteering may take place in non-ethnic organisations and/or in ethnic organisations founded and led by migrants, where members are usually from the same country of origin or cultural area. In some cases, this distinction is purely formal. In Spain, for instance, as the national report underlines, autochthonous volunteers took guidance roles in ethnic associations. Anyway, for analytical purposes this chapter respects this distinction.

² In the Netherlands, for example, the participation of TCNs in the voluntary field and civic organisations is generally lower than that of the Dutch. Klaver (2005), on the basis of a research in the four largest cities of the Netherlands, reported that around 20% of TCNs participated in volunteer work compared to 40% of native Dutch.

The descriptions offered by the national reports suggest the existence of a process of gradual integration of TCNs in the field of volunteering. During the first phase, newcomers enter more easily into contact with ethnic organisations from which they receive help and support. Gradually their situation evolves and they are able/desire to give something back to other fellow newcomers and/or the association from which they received support. Later on, when the integration process is more advanced, migrants may join also non-ethnic voluntary organisations. Although this may not be considered a universally valid path, empirical studies seem to confirm its significance. This leads to at least two considerations: *a)* volunteering is not a primary need for newcomers but it can become more and more relevant under certain conditions in the wake of the immigration path; it is therefore important to promote TCNs' activation conditions; *b)* non-ethnic organisations appear less attractive or less open to newcomers but in the process of integration these may offer a crucial contribution in terms of social recognition, networks and skills.

Many factors direct individual choices towards volunteering. What are the most important ones? How can these elements promote and encourage volunteering? In the coming sections, an overview of migrant civic participation in non-ethnic and ethnic organisations, the underpinning motivations, promoting and hindering elements will be presented.

6.3.1 Motivations for Volunteering in a Non-ethnic Organisation

The decision to join a voluntary association is based on a complex mix of push and pull factors and elements, often described as motivations, which can be considered promoting factors as well.

The many explanations emerging from the national reports can be grouped as follows:

- a) Sociability.* One of the main reasons for volunteering in a non-ethnic organisation is the opportunity to meet new people and expand the relational networks. These links are important primarily to stem the sense of loneliness and marginality or simply make new friends, but they also proved to be very useful in looking for a job. Meeting people living in the same area increases the sense of belonging and social recognition. Volunteering is a good opportunity for improving the level of individual integration in the community.
- b) Common welfare and civic participation.* Sometimes the decision to volunteer has to do with the desire to give back something to others and to the host society. In many cases the engagement is for the benefit of compatriots in need or for sustaining other newcomers, and even for promoting the weakest people's rights and interests.
- c) Personal wellbeing and agency.* Volunteering produces personal wellbeing. Voluntary work can support the feeling of having an aim in life; it helps develop a good identity and increase self-consciousness and self-esteem as well as a more positive and confident image of the world. Not least, volunteers usually receive a better evaluation from the social environment. All this leads to a better quality of life

thanks to immaterial benefits. After a traumatic experience, voluntary work can also be positively stimulating.

- d) *Job seeking and career trajectory.* Sometimes volunteering is considered a good key for entering the labour market. It offers better chances to find a job thanks to new relationships, as already anticipated, but also new skills and competences. These experiences can enrich one's CV. Finally, volunteering can bring financial benefits. For instance, 23% of German volunteers receive an allowance, although the average remuneration barely reaches 50 euro per month (TNS-INFRATEST, 2009)
- e) *Cultural exchange and language qualifications.* Certainly volunteering can improve language skills. It promotes exchanges with the natives and this enables migrants to learn more about the culture of the host country. Besides, working in voluntary organisations can increase social trust in and improve the perception of the volunteer's ethnic group. As some reports suggest, the growing desire is to establish a "two ways" relationship, between individuals and cultures.

May we suppose that these motivations are different from those of the natives? It is difficult to give a final response also because of the lack of specific research on this subject. In any case, as the German report suggests, motivations and drives become more and more common so that it is harder to trace rigid lines of separation.

6.3.2 Factors that Promote and Hinder TCNs' Participation in Volunteering

The presence of a democratic context where participation is valued and highly appreciated is a basic condition, considering that immigrants often come from countries where this kind of opportunity is restricted. The *structural, political and legislative framework* is therefore crucial.

In Poland, as in other countries involved in the research, the main factor enabling TCNs engagement in NGOs is the favourable legislation. The only snag refers to undocumented people, who cannot join an NGO. A second problem is linked to the structure of NGOs: as only Polish citizens can found such associations, this may be a problem for grassroots initiatives³.

Social recognition is as important as the democratic context. Several studies point out how TCN-citizens of the Russian Federation in Estonia perceive their social status as inferior and their role in society as not so relevant. This leads them to be more critical towards the Estonian society, while – as the national report underlines - their civ-

³ As migration is a complex phenomenon and incorporates heterogeneous groups and legal positions, some distinction is necessary. In this chapter, migrant people are split in different clusters: a) TCNs with citizenship of the hosting country or permit of stay; b) TCNs staying in asylum seeker centers; c) undocumented people. The national dossier refers to the first group in which we decided to include also naturalized foreigners and protected minority groups. Here the legislative framework does not generally hamper migrants' activation and civic participation. For the second group some limitations are expected and sometime civic activation may be even discouraged. The third group is not considered. As we will see in the following paragraphs, many factors affect TCNs' orientation towards volunteering.

ic participation is significantly lower and more focused on local activities. The issues of identity and citizenship play an important role in civic participation. In fact, «*Why should I do something if I do not consider it my country?*».

Socio-cultural and economic conditions are also very important for facilitating TCNs' entry in voluntary work. This choice requires a social fabric sensitive to the issue of voluntary work and the development of the Third Sector. As relevant as socio-cultural and economic conditions is the level of openness of the hosting society to immigrants and an articulated civic society in terms of issues, values, objectives and collective action. The level of social responsibility – which depends also on culture – has to be considered both for the hosting country and migrants' homeland. Furthermore, a general awareness of the role civic participation and volunteering play in the path to integration may promote TCNs' civic participation. Economic preconditions have to be considered as well. Volunteering can be a temporary alternative for paid work. On the other side, the economic crisis may influence the process of participation and even the configuration of NGOs due to the strong dependence on funds.

From an *organisational point of view*, the level of openness, the activation of strategies for volunteer involvement and training (the training received is important and can be incorporated in the CV or be used to renew their permits of residence and work), the presence of volunteering campaigns and activities held in foreign languages or in English, proved to be relevant.

Important for both systemic and organisational levels are specific projects and initiatives geared towards encouraging immigrant engagement, the presence of dedicated staff with a specific TCN integration mission and the availability of information in immigrant languages.

Smaller and less structured NGOs seem to be more fragile and are not always ready to welcome TCNs. Moreover, this kind of associations proved to be more dependent on their leaders.

Individual skills and personal conditions have to be considered, too. Facilitating conditions include empathy, sociability, and civic skills; financial resources and a stable income; parental support and time availability: participation is easier when friends or other family members are already active in volunteering or do not contrast this choice.

A last point has to be emphasized: a *sense of purpose and meaning* are important to activate and support volunteering. The presence of good causes is a good driver for participation and sometimes this can be even easier when localized and to the benefit of known individuals and groups. Of course, associations' goals have to match personal interests.

In the same way, it is possible to remove some obstacles to TCNs' volunteering in non-ethnic associations. As underlined, citizenship and social recognition are important. It is possible to state that TCNs' involvement in civic participation increases in proportion to their perceived role in the society. In addition, the lack of confidence in organized volunteering and institutions may hinder TCNs' activation.

Unfavourable socio-cultural and economic conditions may represent conflicting factors. Deficiencies in knowledge or in awareness of the role of volunteering and its social value; shortages in information and lack of adequate structures to get involved

in volunteering; gaps in knowledge concerning unspoken social rules and societal structures; insufficient level of confidence in others; prejudice and stereotypes: all this can prevent the development of TCNs' civic engagement.

Cultural clashes may arise when immigrants have little understanding of the role and expectations of society (i.e.: parents' engagement in school) or when there are contrasting values or religious beliefs. Even gender issues may affect participation, as in the case of Muslim women who often live a "separate" life.

In Sweden and in Finland cultural barriers may be seen in a different approach to long term planning with which TCNs do not seem to be so familiar.

The unfamiliarity with the concept of volunteering is another important point.

Elements that are more general refer to the economic context: as anticipated, socio-economic crises may represent emerging negative conditions to be considered in order to understand migrants' behaviour.

Organisational barriers include a lack of mediators to help TCNs understand and reproduce the organisational culture and communication patterns and the presence of too formal rules. Other negative elements are deficiencies in international orientation by local organisations. In addition, the fact of being the only TCN in a non-ethnic organisation may obstruct the participation of foreign members in autochthonous associations.

Other factors that must also be reckoned with are the lack of specific recruitment procedures, prejudices towards foreigners (migrants are often linked to terrorism and criminality), closure to new members, social perception of immigrants as beneficiaries and not actors of the development, lack of recognition of TCN skills and intercultural competences. More generally, organisations may be not aware of the role of volunteering in the integration process.

Coming to the *individual plan*, the most reported hindering factor is language. This is true for both migrant people – it is very difficult for them to take part in activities in an active and fruitful way – and organisations and authorities, lacking information and training in languages other than their native one.

Negative or lack of volunteering experiences may also obstruct the way to volunteering. Economic conditions and contingencies have to be considered as well: priority given to paid work; little time for family and children; homesickness or traumatic experiences. Not least, the lack of self-esteem and of general trust in others proved to be determining elements.

If volunteering seems to be meaningless, it becomes difficult to join a voluntary association. A weak sense of belonging to the hosting community and unfamiliarity with the social fabric may likewise be crucial. The lack of a desire to become part of a new group/community and the distrust towards different values and lifestyles may play a decisive role.

TCNs' voluntary work may even be manipulated: their free involvement may substitute paid employment, especially in times of lack of resources.

6.3.3 The Added Value

How is the civic participation of TCNs and their engagement in voluntary work generally considered? Overall, their contributions are highly appreciated. In particular, national reports underline their specific role as mediators between different ethnic groups and cultures. More in general, they offer an international perspective, opening the way to a plural society.

Their activity is both of *bridging* – with other countries, international organisations, networks – and *bonding* – linking natives and migrants, tackling prejudices and recognizing the opportunities coming from a multicultural horizon. Their presence stimulates the organisations’ openness and they facilitate international contacts thanks to their language skills and knowledge.

In voluntary organisations, TCNs contribute to frame newcomers’ situations and experiences. This helps native volunteers to understand the needs and condition of others and to design specific and more efficient actions. As TCNs bring new views on things, they can stimulate non-ethnic organisations to get involved in migrants’ problems, take action in supporting equity and social justice, promote more favourable living and working conditions for all and increase social sensibility.

Sometimes TCNs are described as positive, emphatic and very energetic persons, deeply engaged in their work and perseverant. Considering that these individuals operate in foreign contexts, these comments confirm the role of migrants as an important resource for voluntary organisations and society.

In conclusion, *TCNs are seen as transcultural bridge builders and are highly valued for these competences*. They are important resources to be involved in the development of new and more mature integrative paths and community developmental projects. Difficulties can be related to intercultural barriers and misunderstandings. Contentions are here always possible.

6.4 TCNs Participation in Ethnic Associations

TCNs’ participation in ethnic associations is a widespread phenomenon in Europe. As mentioned earlier, it is possible to design an ideal, typical integration track that brings TCNs into contact first with ethnic associations from the same cultural area, allowing them to decide only later whether to join non-ethnic associations.

The landscape of ethnic associations is highly fragmented. Some associations are very small and poorly active, not well structured and dependent on their leaders. Others are big, well organized and play a political role in representing their ethnic group and keeping contacts with local authorities and embassies from their native country.

The organisational path depends on many factors but also on the context, in particular on the seniority of the immigration phenomenon in the host country and the presence of the second or third migrant generations. According to the national report, in Germany, members of the first generation often concentrate in migrant organisations while second and even third generations prefer to get involved in “German” organisations. Here differences with their German counterparts are less.

The rule for migrants' engagement here seems to be quite simple: the longer an individual is bound to the new country, the more she or he is integrated in wider social scopes and active in volunteering, especially in formalized organisations. This may not be true for the first generations, while the second and third generations show different preferences and multi-memberships.

6.4.1 Goals and Roles of an Ethnic Organisation

The principal goals of an ethnic organisation are: *a)* maintaining cultural roots and promoting transnational activities with the home country; *b)* improving members' living conditions and, more in general, the situation of their compatriots; *c)* facilitating mediation between the ethnic group and local authorities.

Ethnic associations usually act as bridges between two cultures. They allow migrants to maintain a relationship with their native country, while facilitating their inclusion into the new reality. TCNs usually look for people with similar experiences and solutions to current problems. Many of them do not know the hosting country, so it is important for them to find key-persons available to introduce them to the new cultural environment, offering information and psychological support.

Moreover, these NGOs try to improve social contacts between migrants and locals by organizing intercultural events, promoting the image of their original countries. What characterizes these associations is their bilateral transnationalism: the country of origin is always present, as is demonstrated by the use of native language, food and music.

Their activities include language courses, cultural events and Sunday schools for children that constitute the most common way of passing on traditional cultures. Second and third generations often prefer to be engaged in other kinds of activity mainly based on personal attitudes and interests. Young people also set up separate ethnic associations dedicated to sports, music, and art.

Members of these associations are usually willing to integrate in the host society but they attach great value to their original identity. Maintaining a link with their native culture is a way for passing on their heritage to their families. On the other hand, migrants are usually well aware of the importance of good integration for the future of their children.

Not all ethnic groups are similar. Although it is impossible for the purposes of this chapter to explore this theme, it has to be mentioned that one of the major distinctive coordinates includes the cultural area of origin and the type of migration.

In Finland, there are numerous ethnic associations. The most famous ones are the League of Finnish American Societies and the Finland-Russia Society. All these associations have a very good relationship with the original countries and develop a lot of activities (events, cultural exhibitions, trips and language courses) offering information and knowledge. Many ethnic minorities have their own organisations (e.g. Somalis). Most of them support humanitarian activities in their native country. For instance, the Finland-Russia Society promotes cooperation between citizens and non-governmental organisations in Finland and Russia. The Finnish report underlines that the organisation acts according to European values such as tolerance and openness.

Sometimes, maintaining the original culture may lead to a real defence of ethnicity with a polarization of the society into national and ethnic groups. This distinction can even be dangerous when the ethnic association becomes a parallel world: on the one hand, this can reduce migrants' desire to get involved in the host country; on the other hand, natives may find these groups irrelevant, exotic or too distant to become involved in.

As one of the interviewed Estonian leaders suggests, one of the main goals of an ethnic association should be contributing to the creation of a multicultural civic society. This means working towards "*integrating the society*"⁴.

Most of these associations plan and carry out transnational activities. They concern different areas: economic (in particular collective remittances and business investment in the country of origin); political activities (advocacy or membership in political parties at home and voting); socio-cultural activities (social remittances, social capital exchange between TCNs abroad and those living the native country).

These associations may receive support from their sending country but this depends mainly on the economic and political situation of the homeland. Usually their links with embassies and consulates in the host country are strong and these institutions may support some of the associations' activities.

Most of the ethnic-associations are spontaneous but their development may be promoted and supported both by receiving countries (especially in case of co-development policies) and by sending countries. This is the case of some "Diaspora policies" or "Diaspora engagement policies" aimed at maintaining links with expatriates. Many policies are focused on "attracting remittances" and develop strategies to improve emigrants' political rights (dual citizenship or the right to vote abroad). The approaches to Diaspora engagement are different and they depend on the social representation of the people who emigrated: either as persons who abandoned their families or as national heroes (as in the case of the Filipino Diaspora). Diaspora ministries generally support migrant organisations in structured ways. They aim not only to preserve national identity but to also promote the self-organisation of the Diaspora, the implementation of educational paths and to provide assistance to the economic project through the involvement of entrepreneurs.

Sometimes this kind of activity is not directed towards their homeland but is also in favour of other countries or other EU states. Often activities are focused on international experience exchange, advocacy, supporting economic activities among similar migrant organisations.

A second important rule of any ethnic association is to provide concrete support to newcomers. These associations offer material (practical help, information, support, networks) and immaterial support (psychological and emotional support, understanding and encouragement, trust). Besides, they help to break people's isolation and marginalization. TCNs are often vulnerable and ethnic associations act as "homes away from home" able to soften the hardships of migration.

⁴ "*It is important to feel oneself not as an object, but as a subject presuming a fully-fledged integration*" (L., leader).

Participation in ethnic associations can be very active and meaningful. TCNs can identify themselves more easily with associations created by TCNs and entry barriers are lower. The atmosphere is generally informal and somewhat familiar, as these groups usually share the same culture and language, values and codes. TCN organisations tend to be more flexible and need a lower number of volunteers. On the other hand, these are also their main weaknesses: weak structure, limited social network, restricted funding possibilities.

Another important goal is the mediation between the ethnic group and the local authorities. In this sense, associations may act on behalf of the whole ethnic group. This may be a natural process, as in Portugal, where the need to support the mass settlement of migrants arriving after the independence of the African colonies was dealt with through the spontaneous emergence of associations as *ad hoc* answers to local problems. According to the national report, they appear as institutions when the State was still not ready to recognize immigration. These associations were incorporated into the welfare system developed by local authorities.

The process may also be activated with top-down policies. In Italy, local authorities have the mandate to promote newcomers' integration also through ethnic associations. Even though many ethnic associations have been recognized by law so that they may receive funds, they were overshadowed by Italian associations which were considered more reliable intermediaries between public institutions and ethnic communities and hence received most of the funding. Today the situation has changed also thanks to EU provisions according to which TCNs are a way of promoting civic engagement and the development of transnational projects.

In Hungary, many local authorities find it difficult to cooperate with migrant communities because of linguistic and cultural barriers. On the other side, the Hungarian system is complex and bureaucratic and this is a problem for many migrant associations. A "Migrant Round Table" initiative of the Metropolitan Municipality of Budapest (funded by the European Integration Fund) aims to improve communication between migrant associations and local authorities.

In Germany, the first migrant organisations were established in 1960s and were geared towards maintaining home culture, language and religious services. The German State encouraged migrants to maintain a bridge with their native countries; this trend is now criticized and considered the beginning of segregationist tendencies. The perspectives and goals of these organisations have since changed. New topics have emerged such as general social assistance, education, healthcare, job orientation, anti-discrimination activities and, more generally, shaping the society. The practice of religion is mainly in their hands (Muslim communities, different Christian currents, Jews, Bahá'í, etc.). As the German report remarks, migrant organisations are nowadays respected political subjects, engaged in lobbying and participating in wide networks.

When ethnic associations take on the role of spokesperson for their ethnic group they may cooperate with local authorities; they may express their opinion in the name of the local ethnic group regarding political issues and communicate with Embassy staff and representatives of their homeland in the host country.

Their activities may include lobbying and advocacy in favour of the rights of migrants, worldwide.

A common phenomenon is that of “umbrella” organisations. These entities can draw together a huge number of formal and even informal ethnic associations. Their role is to represent the interests of their ethnic groups, maintain contacts with their countries of origin, embassies and consulates and promote transnational projects and initiatives.

6.4.2 Motivations, Promoting Factors and Hindering Obstacles for TCNs Involvement in Ethnic Associations

Although many motivations underpinning TCNs involvement in ethnic associations are the same as those of non-ethnic associations, some peculiar features linked to the specific role and value of this kind of organisations should be highlighted.

In the early stages of the migration path, it is essential for migrants to have access to material and immaterial support, but it is also crucial to maintain a living relationship with their homelands. Joining an ethnic association is often primarily motivated by the desire to cultivate symbolic roots and ties with the native country; help compatriots in trouble and be recognized in the host society as a group with the right to develop its own cultural differences.

Among the most important promoting factors we find: the level of openness of the host countries; a favourable legislation for establishing an ethnic association and the lack of bureaucratic barriers and constraints; social recognition and appreciation; the possibility to participate in humanitarian activities in the motherland; a common cultural framework among members.

The structural and organisational weaknesses of these associations constitute hindering elements: many activities are occasional, and information about them is rare and not always accessible. Many organisations do not properly communicate their activities and it is even difficult to get in touch with them. Most of these associations operate at a local level and sometimes only for their members; they depend too much on their leaders and it is possible to join them only through personal contacts. Usually no regular training is expected for new members and it is difficult for them to get legal and economic expertise. If the organisation is country specific, its potential in terms of new members is very low with impact on the financial situation and the association’s social status.

Their influence may be also limited by the perpetuation of attitudes or conflicts inherited from the home country.

One of the main weaknesses of this kind of organisation is fundraising. Membership fees, donations, corporate or ambassadorial aids can finance them but in many cases, there are no stable funds. Although these associations are eligible to apply for funding, it is difficult for them to be financed because of the lack of bureaucratic skills and linguistic competences. In some countries, it is possible to note an improvement in terms of professionalization and organisational structure. Some organisations are investing in wider networks and cooperating with autochthonous partners.

In Hungary, to be recognized as a formal national minority is considered a good opportunity to open an official dialogue with the national authorities and receive economic support. To attract new members, they focus more on personal and direct contacts, but their growth is hindered by the fact that second and third generations tend to join non-ethnic organisations or create new organisations. Cultural preconditions and values have to be mentioned: individualism makes it difficult to find people available to work for others for free. Volunteering risks being not so fashionable and attractive.

Another factor is the social recognition of this kind of association. If autochthonous organisations are sometimes criticized for not being open, migrant organisations are accused of having segregationist tendencies. It is clear that prejudice and lack of recognition may hinder membership.

As the national report underlines, during the 1980s, the Dutch government agencies supported and subsidized initiatives by TCN associations promoting integration while maintaining their own identities (the idea of a multicultural society). A shift in the political climate, sometimes expressed as outright xenophobia, significantly changed the policy and many subsidies were cut. Due to the economic crisis available budgets have been reduced further and this is leading towards a phasing out of TCNs associations.

An important developmental step is the involvement of migrant organisations in the integration policies through governmental, local and NGO organisations. More and more TCNs' desire to be part of the public discourses and get involved in decision-making, offering their competent perspectives of immigration. Regretfully, their counterparts are not always ready for a constructive dialogue. Vice versa, where local or national authorities are willing to involve ethnic associations in policy design, these may not be recognized as legitimate partners by their ethnic groups or may be too fragmented internally to be able to assume the role of spokesperson.

Ethnic associations are central bodies in the development of a more mature integration model. Unfortunately, their recognition is still limited but they are also weakened by internal closures and structural and organisational limits.

6.5 What Model of Integration?

Which integration model emerges from the collected reports? Attempting a summary is a daunting task, as each country involved in the project follows a particular path related to local, cultural and historical factors and has a different experience in matters of immigration.

In some countries, the development of specific immigration policies is a recent conquest. In many cases, the phenomenon has not been managed, so interventions appear fragmented and responsibilities are distributed among different ministries and governmental levels. Although immigrant integration is at the top of every policy agenda, this complex process remains poorly defined and modelled. Hungary still suffers from the lack of an integrated strategy for TCN integration. Government and NGOs promote initiatives on fragmented EU funding. In this country, the promotion of civic participation through volunteering is quite new and volunteering is consid-

ered more the result of individual choices than an integration practice. The integrative aspect of volunteer work is not considered. In some cases, integration was mainly conceived as a process of bringing foreigners to the dominant culture of the host country. This is the case of Estonia. The country became independent at the end of the last century and integration policies have been shaped by the concept of “naturalization”. They included knowledge of the Estonian language, the affirmation of instruction in the Estonian language for adults and children, and the transition to Estonian as the language of instruction of at least 60% of the subjects in all schools as a first instrument for integration. An opposite movement, linked to the strong presence of Russian-speaking population, has led to the creation of the NGO “Russian School of Estonia”. As the national report underlines, this idea of integration is now undergoing a process of development: while in the mid-1990s integration concerned mainly Russian-speaking populations, now it is considered a process enhancing social cohesion.

It is worth mentioning that discontent with the national integration model may facilitate ethnic associations but also hinder civic participation through them if they focus mainly on a personal or inter-organisational level. In Estonia, the consideration for TCNs’ participation in economic and social life is increasing, although the high number of people with undetermined citizenship remains the most acute problem of TCNs’ integration of the country. The Estonian Integration Strategy for 2008/2013 stresses the need to improve measures for reducing mother tongue-related divisions on the labour market and to create opportunities for adult new immigrants to integrate into society.

Integration could be intended first as a gradual compliance to the national model. This goal may be declared but also remain latent, and even volunteer organisations can indirectly convey a “national way of life” migrants can strive for.

According to the national report, Swedish-led organisations have peculiar codes that non-Swedes often do not understand. Swedes are sometimes not aware of this problem which makes it difficult for TCNs to join and understand. Where organisations recognize this, it is possible to facilitate two-way processes based on reciprocity and mutual respect and understanding. This means moving from “one way” to a multidimensional and plural one. The report underlines that this proved to be the most successful way of engaging TCNs in the region. A good example of promoting contacts between foreigners and natives is the friend-matching network, Friend in Umeå. As the Swedish report clarifies, the project aims to involve migrants who really want to interact with native people and build a two-way relationship. The most successful pairings tended to be families with children.

Another possible drift is the affirmation of a one-dimensional idea of integration.

In Italy, the concept of integration as a mere inclusion in the labour market is dominant. According to the national report, the massive inclusion of immigrant workforce has represented one of the main factors of transformation of the Italian job market and migrants’ contribution cannot be denied. However, this brought about a great segmentation since immigrants were seen as “complementary” forces, whose presence satisfied the need to cover unattractive jobs for Italians. This led to – not without ambiguities and contradictions – a “low-profile” integration model, which limited participation in the labour market and was not accompanied by the development of

appropriate tools aimed at rewarding migrants for their contribution. Low mobility, ethnic discrimination and undeclared work are signs of an unresolved paradox: the tension between the primacy reserved to the working dimension and the growing tendency to extend citizenship, social and political rights to TCN workers and their family members.

It is clear that *the concept of integration itself is continually revisited and shaped by a never-ending dialogue between theory and practice*. If the legislative framework on immigration and the integration policies are elaborated at the national level, it is at the local stage that things happen and, not surprisingly, practices often exceed theories. The local level proved to be crucial in the development of effective integrative paths. In Finland, there are no remarkable differences among regional and local levels as far as TCNs' civic participation is concerned. However, it is interesting to note that it is at local level that integration may be achieved. The Act on Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010)⁵ plays an important role. Integration implies a multi-level approach and a multi-sectoral cooperation, which involves municipalities, employment and economic development offices, the police and organisations, associations and entities providing activities and services promoting integration. On the contrary, it is more difficult to find similar alliances at a national level between the civil society and the authorities.

It is evident that *integration is a relational process and may be accomplished only with the contribution of all forces of the society*. In Germany, the National Integration Plan (2007) was shaped by a wide group of experts and civil actors and became a sort of *vademecum* for German integration policy. It states also that integration cannot remain a governmental task but should become a common goal to be pursued thanks to a strong civic society and responsible persons. In this context, volunteering plays a significant role. Volunteer work is a symbolic arena in which integration relationships and networks may be woven and where individuals may learn how "to be part" and "take part" through participation. Migrants' contribution may take place in ethnic and non-ethnic organisations but sometimes the value produced by ethnic associations is less clear and less recognized. It is necessary to point out that, not infrequently, ethnic organisations' efforts are directed exclusively towards their own members or ethnic group and their main declared goal is to cultivate their cultural roots seen to be in danger of extinction. Contacts with other organisations may be rare and the level of involvement in activities and projects in favour of the whole community limited. The risk is therefore self-segregation or an ambiguous position linked to too strong political and/or religious relationships with the motherland and its authorities.

Despite these negative trends, migrant associations remain fundamental bodies for the development of more effective integration paths and crucial partners for a synergetic effect of any integration policy. According to the German dossier, they are the "*fire department*" of *integration politics*. It is evident, however, that ethnic organisations should ensure greater openness and readiness for cooperation with other organisations. On the other side, recognition and support of the host community are essential for the ethnic associations' evolution. Many are the initiatives in this regard.

⁵ Unofficial translation.

In Portugal, Lisbon Town Hall created in 1993 the pioneering Municipal Council of Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Communities in the country, playing a buffer role between local authorities and immigrants' representative bodies. Later on, the model was imitated by other municipalities but with very different modalities, as a result of the autonomy Portuguese municipalities have in matter of immigration.

The municipality of Milan, Italy, supported the creation, in September 2013, of *Associazione Città Mondo*, a second level association composed of 80 different ethnic associations aimed at integrating migrants into the host society and involving them in the development process of both their country of origin and destination. The association aims to foster interethnic dialogue between the different ethnic communities and become a qualified interlocutor between them and the Municipality of Milan. At the national level, ideological issues about national identity and social cohesion sometimes limit the Italian debate, where integration is mainly focused on the access to the labour market. This approach is not only restrictive but has an exclusionary nature that has to be considered. On the contrary, at the local stage, concrete inclusive practices design a more mature, multidimensional path and cultural, social, emotional and symbolic dimensions are included. Local is the privileged "locus" where people meet and mediate and social changes can occur.

Another interesting initiative was launched in 2008 by *Amici del Fai Onlus*, a voluntary association that worked with FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano) with the mission of promoting a tangible culture of respect for Italy's cultural heritage. The project aimed to stimulate immigrants' interest in art, culture and environment, increase their sense of belonging and boost integration. The idea was born when the association noted the absence of TCNs at national large-scale events during which it is possible to visit hundreds of important historic and artistic sites which are usually closed to the public, by providing free guide tours to visitors conducted by trained volunteers. The idea was tested in Brescia with free-guided tours in Italian and in the languages of the most representative TCN communities in the town. The first objective was to train people able to pass on what they had learnt about the local history and culture and to create opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges. The project proved to be successful and demonstrated that the main motivation underpinning TCNs decision to join was the opportunity to become part of a group.

Local practices are therefore crucial to promote social innovations and foster a better assessed idea of integration: *on the basis of successful practices, also lexicons and grammars of the model of integration should be reformulated.*

Today, although the discourse on integration has already exceeded the debate on synergy versus segregation, in reality much remains to be done. The ethnocentric vision is not yet outdated at the ideological level while the economic dimension continues to be privileged. Pockets of resistance remain, contrasting the idea of society – but also of culture and identity – as a "process" constantly evolving and generating new possibilities of existence for all.

Too strict separations and the fear of contamination risk igniting social tensions and cultural clashes, especially in times of economic crisis, with a dangerous trend of mutual distrust and reciprocal closure between migrant and native groups. Certainly, we must solve the dilemma regarding immigrants' possible contribution to Europe:

should they constitute a complementary workforce confined to some specific sectors of the labour market or should they be considered citizens who offer their original added value to European growth?

6.6 Pioneering a New Model of Integration through Volunteering. Activation of TCNs as Participants in Voluntary Non-profit Organisations

6.6.1 Towards a New Integration Paradigm

There are many clear signs that the integrative paradigms adopted to date by most EU countries are obsolete.

On the one hand, the goal of “normalization” – the assimilation of foreigners into the autochthonous culture – is jeopardized by the idea of multiculturalism, where diversity is not something to be cancelled and smoothed over, but a value to be cultivated and enhanced. On the other hand, giving priority to the economic dimension, the starting point of the integration process can be the access to the labour market which is often the key to obtaining shorter or longer residence permits. Nevertheless, it is clear that integration cannot merely coincide with labour inclusion.

Integration remains everywhere a mere declaration of intent if not accompanied by policies and practices aimed at creating a real path for the acceptance of foreign people by the host communities. The situation is worsened by the dramatic crisis which has seriously affected European States and has resulted in further restrictions of the integrative perspectives; at the same time, growing unemployment rates have been producing worrisome social tensions between natives and migrants. The spending review adopted by most European countries has reduced public resources available to governments and local authorities, and cutbacks in social service and innovation makes it hard to plan and invest in experimental paths able to pave the way to more sophisticated and mutually enriching models of coexistence. The aspiration of transforming Europe into a land of integration is still to be realized.

In this context, DIVERSE suggests possible steps forward starting from the recognition of volunteering as one of the greatest achievements of European civilization. Thanks to its capillarity and vitality, motivations and care-oriented ideals, its ability to create relationships and networks, voluntary work represents a high-capacity space for pioneering experimental projects in the field of civic participation and inclusion. The first objective of this effort is the *promotion of a new model of integration thanks to a network of volunteer organisations sharing the same practices aimed at the empowerment of already assisted TCNs*. What changes is the approach: immigrants are no longer a social “problem” but a “resource” for themselves and for the whole community.

DIVERSE hopes to facilitate a paradigm shift towards a new care model: from an “assistance approach” to an empowering one. This means going beyond a model of intervention based on the provision of goods, services and money to one based on the

development of foreigners, who assume a proactive position. The goal here is no longer the satisfaction of basic needs, but the full well-being and social integration of migrants.

The theoretical reference is the approach inaugurated by Amartya Sen in the '1970 and then developed by philosopher Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993; Nussbaum, 2001 and 2012). The basic idea is quite simple: every person has an allocation in terms of capacity (to be and to do), but they must then be capacitated, i.e. put in the right situation to work. Individuals can express their abilities only in favourable environments. Each person has capacities but not everybody is in the position to deliver her or his full potential. The context must foster the full development of an individual's skills.

This line of approach constitutes not only a change in the practices of help but represents a *cultural change* that asks for a new interpretation of the phenomenon of immigration and passes from new educational processes and social practices. In this sense, *volunteering is a favourable context for social innovation*: volunteer work creates new relationship and cooperation, produces new ideas, projects, services and products; contributes to changes in social practices and empowers people and organisations.

DIVERSE aims to develop a repeatable model where people already assisted by volunteer organisations can recognize themselves as the protagonists of their existence, develop a sense of identity and belonging, and take action. In turn, TCNs will be recognized as "active citizens" by the other members of the community.

The project intends to achieve complex objectives and touch multiple levels.

Primarily, DIVERSE desires to significantly affect migrants' lives. The path is structured as a personal accompaniment by volunteers and professionals who help TCNs to recognize and activate their capabilities and expertise, make them more self-conscious, confident, proactive and autonomous. Not lastly, it develops a sense of belonging to the community of residence.

Secondly, the project generates a reflection on the identity and role of volunteering in this transition towards a multicultural society. In addition, DIVERSE calls for volunteer organisations to be more open in a multicultural but also an intergenerational sense. The project can be considered a good chance especially for organisations facing the problem of generational change, where the arrival of new people, often younger, may represent an important resource.

Thirdly, the project also affects the wider local community. The process makes us question what kind of society we are, the degree of the community's embedding capacity and social cohesion.

It is clear that DIVERSE leads to a review of the idea of integration and links it closely to that of citizenship. The project rests on the belief that integration has to be linked with the broader concept of participation and active citizenship. In this sense, DIVERSE affects politics and civil society, too.

6.6.2 DIVERSE New Perspectives

What DIVERSE suggests is the need for an urgent paradigm shift in immigration policies that put emphasis on migrants' capabilities and resources and their desire to be part and take part. This idea brings with it some consequences.

First, it leads to a *profound change of the idea of integration*. Access to the labour market cannot be considered the only condition for integration. Integration calls into question other dimensions; relationships and sociality, a sense of belonging and identity, civic participation and social solidarity, linguistic and scholastic integration. DIVERSE opens the way to a more mature idea of inclusion.

Moreover, the project reviews the logics that drive aid. Volunteering, especially in the welfare and social sectors, entails dealing with emergencies, amplified by the economic and social crisis. Social needs increase and material forms of aid are privileged. Though material help is fundamental, it may not be the only way to express solidarity. What is needed is a paradigm shift towards a "capacitation" approach. This perspective radically changes the way TCNs are perceived, not as problems to be solved, but as actors who can – if supported – contribute to the growth of the whole community. This new mindset requires – and we come to the third point – a specially trained volunteer sector: volunteers have to be ready to read, decode and make the abilities of TCNs visible.

For this reason, DIVERSE provided special training courses for volunteers and social workers, and started supporting the development of new tools for assessment and counselling. The project worked on the ability to bring out and highlight formal and informal skills, also arising from the migratory path, that may become not only "values" to use in the labour market, but also, more broadly, at the social level. On the basis of this new "recognition" a real inclusion may be postulated.

Some aspects of this shift are worth highlighting.

- a) *DIVERSE is a process of personalization and recognition of each person's dignity, potential and uniqueness.* This is a crucial lever for the activation of TCNs. The "enabling" listening adopted during TCNs accompaniment helps migrants to bring forward their capabilities, contributes to their self-recognition, self-worth, and faith in the future and opens new possible paths. This presupposes a relationship between TCNs and volunteers, a warm climate, a new symmetry, the idea of a migrant as a subject and protagonist of her/his own story. During the compilation of the individual card (a specific tool for the assessment of competences and personal resources) introduced by the project, it is possible that migrants' desires emerge. Of course, these expectations cannot be always achieved. In this sense, this path is a re-connection with reality: by discarding the impossible and unrealistic, volunteers can lead migrants' future steps towards areas of greatest concreteness.
- b) There is no doubt, however, that this approach highlights existing barriers. *Identifying gaps and obstacles can be the first step to a broader change in the community.* The approach appears to be a mirror for the local society: the project lays bare, sometimes without pity, the limits of the local community in which migrants live. DIVERSE proved to be a good means for mapping the strengths and weaknesses of the local level and stimulate the design of new structures and patterns of action.

c) *The project reveals the crucial role of volunteering and of the civil society in building a human-centred society; their function of human promotion and advocacy; dialogue and cooperation with existing groups; pathway to the political and administrative spheres.*

To summarise, *what has been achieved might be considered a first step toward a “generative” welfare⁶ that enables people and their potential and makes them productive of a new value for many more.* This is the “ratio” of a new paradigm shift: *from resource consumption to a new generative desire.*

6.6.3 The Project Path

The intent of the project was to design a transferable model. To obtain this result a team of researchers has carefully monitored each step of the project. Future steps could be: a) a wider reflection on which are the best instruments to be used for skills assessment and how to achieve greater homogenization to make DIVERSE more transferable; b) a deeper consideration of cultural heterogeneity of migrants and the definition of the most effective approaches to activate civic participation for different cultural backgrounds. In this regard, cultural mediators proved to be crucial. They made possible a fruitful dialogue on par with people whose cultural horizons were not always perfectly aligned with autochthonous social practices and concepts.

The project envisaged the insertion of TCNs in volunteer activities as a way to facilitate their social integration in two macro-areas: Lombardy (Italy) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands). Two distinct groups operated in Lombardy. The first, involving three local communities – Bergamo, Monza and Milan –, was assigned to the Association Saint Vincent De Paul⁷. The second group involved two territorial offices – Varese and Como – and was led by ANOLF – Associazione Nazionale Oltre Le Frontiere – Varese Onlus⁸, an NGO founded in 2001. The two associations were assigned the task of following 30 and 20 TCNs respectively, for a total of 50 individuals in Italy. In the Netherlands, only one volunteer group was involved, CFMW – Commission

⁶ For the concept of “generativity”, see Magatti and Giaccardi, 2014.

⁷ The Association, established in 1833, currently has 13,000 members in Italy and 400 groups in Lombardy. It aims to offer support for all kinds of poverty (poor families, children, psychic illness, unemployment, and people in prison). In Bergamo, the association assists 1,600 families (about 7,500 individuals), has undertaken support projects for about 600,000 euro and dispenses 350,000 euro in food. DIVERSE involved 30 volunteers in the front line and trained about 250 volunteers. The project engaged six cultural mediators, three social workers, one unit leader and one Project manager (volunteer). TCNs have been included in local NGOs and projects, some of them linked to the association. The local administrations have been duly informed and involved in developing the individual project.

⁸ ANOLF offers services to about 500 migrants monthly. Its main activities are the support of immigrated people in the renewal of the residence permit, requests for citizenship, Italian language test bookings, information about the entry and residence in Italy, the help in finding a job.

on Filipino Migrant Workers – of Amsterdam⁹. The Association was entrusted with the accompaniment of 50 TCNs.

Besides volunteers, two other professional profiles were involved in the programme: professional educators and cultural mediators. Each was given the task to monitor and support two intertwined levels: relationships and cultural diversity. As already mentioned, these professionals proved to be central for both TCNs and volunteers. They played a fundamental role as mediators between the criteria of efficiency and efficacy and relational goals and offered important elements of comparison to volunteers by sharing step-by-step thinking and practices with them.

The project included the following steps:

a) the first phase of the project was devoted to the *training of volunteers and staff* of each partner organisation. Volunteers involved along with selected professionals shared a special training and were introduced to the project, its aims and objectives;

b) the second phase was focused on the *identification of TCNs to be inserted in the programme*. The project identified some criteria for possible candidates, besides being non-EU citizens: being already assisted by one of the partners because of their condition of economic, social or relational vulnerability, and having knowledge and skills linked to their experiences and/or potential that are consistent with their assigned tasks;

c) the third phase focused on *TCNs selection procedures*. For each migrant selected, an “individual card” was filled in and sent to the project’s central coordination unit. The card contained identification data of the organisation in charge, personal information about the TCN, a section dedicated to the reasons why the volunteer organisation is acquainted with and follows the progress of the TCN, an analysis of her/his resources, the proposal and the monthly monitoring observations;

d) during the fourth phase, a *full proposal* was presented to TCNs. The volunteer activities to be undertaken had been defined with her/him and the host organisation was identified. In case of a favourable response from the TCN, the program was considered approved and ready to start. The three partners’ organisations provided a monthly supervision and at least two individual interviews involving both sending and receiving organisations guaranteed by the social worker and the linguistic mediators;

e) a fifth and final step included the *reprocessing and synthesis of results and their dissemination through seminars*; each organisation undertook to: organize a local dissemination activity, a meeting of the three-partner organisation in Milan, a final seminar of the project. A special promotional event during the Expo, which will be held in Milan in 2015, is also planned.

The project rests on the patient building of a progressive network. In this first experimental phase many individuals, organisations and institutions have been directly involved: the partner associations, their volunteers, social workers and cultural mediators, the host organisations, the WWELL Center which guaranteed its scientific su-

⁹ CFMW is located in Amsterdam. It is a Filipino Association that deals with migrants working accompaniments. CFMW involved other ethnic associations and NGOs active in the promotion of migrants’ right.

pervision. It is important to remark that the project touched other entities, indirectly: local social services, local authorities, Churches and other religious institutions, the Third Sector, the policy makers. Like a stone thrown into a pond, the project has provoked small ripples of water whose effects could be seen in the near future.

6.6.4 Promoting Factors, Hindering Obstacles and TCNs' Motivation

The interviews conducted with unit leaders, staff members, social workers, mediators and TCNs confirmed the motivations reported by the national dossiers in the first part of the chapter. The most important preconditions for the civic activation of TCNs are as follows: good language skills; relational competences and empathy; personal willingness and effort; understanding of what volunteering entails; the belief that volunteering can bring positive changes in life; confidence in the volunteer organisation; desire to be take part and to be part (recognition); desire to promote her/himself.

We can consider these points both as a premise for a successful volunteering path and as factors that enable TCNs to join the projects. In any case, the final results of TCNs individual projects also seem to depend on other important factors that can be related to both the partner organisations and the host organisations: *a)* the level of local roots and connectivity of these organisations (the more extensive the networks, the higher the possibilities to find cooperation); *b)* the level of diffusion of volunteering and the development of this sector in the context; *c)* the degree of openness of local organisations to welcome migrants; *d)* the level of support offered to new members from the hosting associations.

Each of these points is both a potential promoting factor and a barrier to entry for TCN volunteers. They also represented the major challenges DIVERSE poses to the partner organisations. In this perspective, the project may be understood as a development opportunity for all organisations involved.

One of the main drives for TCNs' positive reaction to the proposal was the possibility to make use of their own resources – in particular language skills – in more or less professional environments offered by formal organisations (in the role of cultural mediators in charities offering support to newcomers). In addition, this experience was seen as a prerequisite to the acquisition of competences to be transferred into the labour market. The possibility to develop a wider social network, regain confidence, overcome depression caused by unemployment and isolation, obtain a recognized position in the community: all this has proved to be of great importance in seeking a job¹⁰.

¹⁰ The story of X, 30 years old, unemployed and living in Monza with his elderly mother may be considered paradigmatic. X was depressed. He has been invited to join as a volunteer a local organisation that deals with the collection, storage and distribution of food surpluses. To this purpose, X attended a course for learning the use of a forklift. His volunteer work produced psychological well-being and a more positive attitude towards others and life and this change helped him to find a new job.

Regretfully, obstacles have to be mentioned, too. First of all, every TCN had to face the more or less explicit *dilemma between volunteering and work*. The proposal was made to unemployed persons but during the project a few TCNs found a new job (partially also thanks to the project): in these cases, the activities were suspended or renegotiated (with a new timetable, for example).

A second obstacle was the difficulty of *finding volunteer organisations* willing to be involved in the project.

Another critical point was the *continuity*, on the part of TCNs, in undertaking the volunteer activity required by the project. We should remember that it is not easy for migrants to ensure continuity in volunteer work because of the instability and vulnerability that often characterise their lives. Getting a job or other family priorities may constitute an obstacle to honour their original commitment.

Undoubtedly volunteering depends on the possibility to satisfy basic needs first. A sense of belonging and desire for integration are surely important but, in an imaginary list, these needs are positioned after “economic stability” and “health”. Work situation and family conditions proved, therefore, to be the factors that mostly influence the availability of TCNs.

An added difficulty emerged regarding the *concept of volunteering*. The idea of volunteer work and civic participation was very new for some TCNs, but not for young people educated in Italy. The promotion of volunteering at school proved to be crucial. Other TCNs, who had already experienced volunteering in their countries of origin, were very pleased to become involved in the activities. Where the concept of formal volunteering does not belong to migrants’ cultural horizon, solidarity and participation are most prevalent in their ethnic group or family circle. In this respect, DIVERSE has enlarged their possibilities by indicating the whole community as the place in which to express solidarity.

Volunteering offers the possibility to contribute to local welfare. For some TCNs it is important to first “give back” to the association that helped/is helping them and, only later to the society, although among migrants the idea of participation prevails over that of “giving back”.

In general, the proposal was well accepted by all selected TCNs, who saw it as a great opportunity and a show of trust towards them.

6.6.5 Project Results

DIVERSE may be interpreted as a path of change on three levels: *individual* (of the migrant), *organisational* and *societal*. In this perspective, DIVERSE is a community-building project, starting from the goal to increase the community’s capability to integrate.

The individual level: the three organisations selected TCNs among already supported people who expressed the intention of making a long stay. Even though not everybody proved to be ready for this proposal and not everyone showed the same level of resources, the project demonstrated that even individuals with a very difficult life and few resources might flourish again if trusted and included in empowering contexts.

The organisational level: DIVERSE represented an opportunity for an evolution of the partner associations' care model. This required special training in order to share operational steps and underpinning reasonings. Moreover, the project introduced new practices and tools for the assessment of competences and personal resources. The individual card proved to be an excellent tool for classifying the person and the local context as well, identifying chances and constraints. In this sense, volunteering worked as a catalyst of integration and as a social innovator by proposing new solutions for migrants' activation.

The community level: even if DIVERSE did not aim to intervene expressly in the community and society, the project's potential for change is clear. As DIVERSE tries to suggest a new approach to immigration, it opens a dialogue with the Third Sector and Volunteering, social policies and services, local authorities and institutions. Concretely, the project promoted a paradigm shift from a model of care centred on economic and material support to a new one based on a new social representation of migrants and their activation.

This can be considered the main contribution of the project: the proposal for a new and more mature look to the issue of migration, starting from a different approach to each TCN, where migrants are no longer perceived as people to assist but as bearers of knowledge and expertise, crucial for the growth of the society as a whole.

The individual work with the TCNs engaged in the project proved to be a path of empowerment: through the recognition of their value and their ability by the leader organisation, they were ready to take on new social responsibilities and offer their skills and competences voluntarily for the benefit of the local community. This engagement was the basis for a new, wider social recognition by the whole community.

The added value generated is particularly significant, especially during the economic crisis. *In addition to the undoubted economic and social value produced by volunteer activities, the symbolic contribution of this project can be considered a lever for cultural change.*

DIVERSE has sparked new relationships, new meanings, and new social representations. Perceiving migrants as a resource for the whole society means overturning the traditional views on immigration: instead of labour market competitors or unsustainable social costs in the welfare arena, migrants become fully-fledged contributors to economic and social life.

In a dramatic moment like the one Europe is going through since 2008, *it is necessary – to exit the crisis – to put into circulation new resources and energies. A step forward may be the enhancement and the use of up to now underutilized and unrecognized capitals such as the potential of migrant people.* These resources could be put into circulation with little cost, since migrants' relationships, networks and knowledge are already available for use.

The concrete life improvements obtained in a few individual paths confirm – despite the difficulties encountered – the initial intuition of the project: a renewal of the common perception of migrants and the promotion of their participation in social life may be a good lever for designing a new integration model but also for a new economy and a new society.

6.7 Closing Remarks

If volunteering may be considered a crucial field to facilitate migrants' integration, the study has highlighted some critical points.

Everywhere in Europe, the legislative framework appears conducive to volunteering, but campaigns and policies for raising awareness of volunteering objectives, values and benefits among migrants are rare. Also, the lack of information about NGOs and their activities has to be reported, while recruitment and training paths in foreign languages are still underdeveloped.

More in general, at present there seems to be little public awareness of the fact that migrants participate in civic life and volunteer. In this sense, greater social recognition of migrants and of their civic contribution may surely encourage their social participation and stimulate their joining voluntary organisations.

This indicates that much has still to be done. Investing in the dissemination of volunteering practices and ideals among migrants, reaching out to them in their life and meeting places and in their language may be an essential step to raise their awareness.

However, it seems important to raise awareness on the value of civic participation and volunteerism more in general, with educational paths and activities dedicated to the entire population, as the German experience seems to suggest. Germany is one of the European countries with the longest migration history. The very few studies available on the processes taking place in relation to migrants' engagement in volunteer associations indicate that *participation of foreigners in volunteer work is a little lower than the participation of the population in general* (IFD-Allensbach, 2009) but it is difficult to clarify to which extent this is due to other socio-demographic factors rather than to the migrational background. One correlation is clear: *"the longer a foreigner has been living in Germany, the higher is her or his commitment to volunteer work"*. This suggests that, especially during economic crises and periods of weakening of institutionalized forms of solidarity, the promotion of volunteering may be the more appropriate lever for promoting the wellbeing of the whole society, by activating the whole population, and especially young generations, so as to produce relationships and social bonds, solidarity and integration. It seems therefore essential to invest in new participatory waves, involving both immigrants and natives and involving groups with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the participation of migrants in ethnic associations, it should be more visible and get higher social recognition. Ethnic organisations have to avoid the risk of closure and self-segregation, by opening up to outsiders and making clear their crucial role of bridge builders between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures, their country of origin and the host country, the ethnic group and local institutions. On their part, the host societies should bring out these realities, promoting their openness and contacts with other ethnic and non-ethnic organisations and offering financial help and knowledge transfer.

It is evident that ethnic associations may contribute to shaping the public discourse about immigration and national and local authorities have a strong interest in supporting them and building their capacities. Governmental institutions, Third Sector and

Universities on their part should increase their attention to these phenomena, developing *ad hoc* surveys that may facilitate the development of new integration policies.

Further possible steps are the creation of transnational networks of information about migrants' civic participation and of platforms of best practices promoting the exchange of experiences and reflections on integration. Likewise important is the definition of standard European criteria to assess integration and the impact of integration projects. Paths able to generate positive results for the whole community should be funded at local, national and European level.

The national reports stress the importance of the local level in the establishment of integration practices. Effective dialogues with the reality of immigration proved to be efficient and fruitful at the local scale. It seems to be the more indicated level to capture population needs, expectations and possibilities, and involve local stakeholders.

The achievement of these ambitious goals may be realized also thanks to the great experience and diffused energy of volunteering. As DIVERSE confirms, volunteering is a privileged space of participation, belonging and responsibility but, as regards the society, there is a risk that volunteering may remain closed in obsolete structures and mindsets.

Nowadays Europe is at an important crossroads. On the one hand, our continent can further evolve into a fragmented society, a simple agglomeration of separate micro-worlds internally homogenous, sharing nothing but the local space where people live, fearful of others. On the other hand, Europe may accept the challenge of immigration and try to build a society ready to invest in what people share: the same desire to be part and take part. DIVERSE may be considered a small step in this second direction.

Part TWO

Synthesis of the National Reports

7

ESTONIA

An Entry Point into the EU Labour Market

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The history of immigration into Estonia in the post Second World War period, followed by the political upheavals after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the return to independence, led to the large share of TCNs in the population. The share of TCNs among the resident population (14%) is among the highest in the EU. A large majority of TCNs have been living in Estonia for a long period of time (most were born in Estonia) and have acquired Third Country nationality in Estonia; rather than being TCNs from birth they became TCNs in the 1990s after the dissolution of Soviet Union and during the restoration of Estonian statehood. The significant difference compared to post-war labour immigration in Western Europe is that most TCNs do not see themselves as immigrants since their relocation to Estonia took place at a time when there were no borders between the Soviet republics. This disagreement over the definition of immigration creates some tension in the policy process and public discussion until today.

Half of the TCNs living in Estonia are citizens of the Russian Federation. They are predominantly first generation immigrants characterized, on average, by older age and low levels of integration into Estonian society. According to the 2011 integration index there is a significantly higher share of people with Russian citizenship among those with very low levels of integration. Lower levels of integration of Russian citizens are explained by their older age, low levels of Estonian language skills and a geographical concentration in the former industrial centres of north-eastern Estonia.

The other half of TCNs are so-called people with undetermined citizenship – former citizens of the USSR who have not acquired the citizenship of any State; this phenomenon is unique to Estonia. While somewhat better integrated, this group of residents is similarly characterised by lower levels of Estonian language skills, a geo-

graphical concentration in north and north-eastern Estonia, as well as higher unemployment. There are more people from younger generations among them and this indicates the need to continue with policies to encourage naturalisation.

In contrast to many other countries in the EU, Estonian TCNs do not differ from the host population in terms of educational level. Owing to the nature of post Second World War immigration, Soviet-era settlers had either vocational, technical or higher education. However, despite their high educational attainments, the position of TCNs in the labour market remains vulnerable. Unemployment of TCNs has been higher since the establishment of the free market economy, at times reaching twice the unemployment rate of the host population. Higher unemployment is explained by structural factors such as the geographical concentration of TCNs in economically deprived areas of north-eastern Estonia, as well as by the lack of sufficient knowledge of Estonian and low mobility within the country (which can also be partly caused by the lack of knowledge of Estonian).

Therefore, the challenges related to the SKC of TCNs in Estonia are mostly focused around the improvement of linguistic skills and, more recently, to equality of opportunity. A large share of the budget for LLL, skills training and qualifications standards for TCNs is devoted to teaching the Estonian language as the main prerequisite for professional careers in the country. While diploma qualifications acquired during the Soviet era either in Estonia or elsewhere are recognized in the current labour market, the main barrier for TCN professionals remains the lack of sufficient knowledge of Estonian that is required in the specific field of work.

The latest immigrants – people who have moved to Estonia since 1992 – constitute a rather small group and have thus not yet raised the question of SKC recognition. However, given the increased government efforts to attract and retain skilled and highly skilled migrants from Third Countries, there is a growing need in Estonia to address the issue of TCNs' SKC recognition.

Foreign qualifications acquired outside Estonia are evaluated centrally by the Estonian Academic Recognition Information Centre (ENIC/NARIC) which was established as a structural unit of the Archimedes Foundation¹ in 1997. The main tasks of this Centre are: assessing foreign access and higher education qualifications; determining the correspondence of qualifications and providing information on education systems and recognition issues. Information about the regulated professions, competent recognition authorities and application procedures is also provided by the Estonian ENIC/NARIC, which is the contact point for the professional recognition. There are no regional recognition centres.

Government regulation consists in a national overarching legal instrument for the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention which includes the nomination of competent assessment and recognition authorities, the role of the Estonian ENIC/NARIC Centre in assessing foreign qualifications and providing information, general principles of assessment and academic recognition. As regards assessment

¹ The Archimedes Foundation is an independent body established by the Estonian government with the objective to coordinate and implement different international and national programmes and projects in the field of training, education and research.

and academic recognition, the Estonian ENIC/NARIC is guided by the purposes and tasks of the NARIC Network of the European Commission and the ENIC Network of the Council of Europe and Unesco and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 1997) and the subsidiary documents.

The “Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act” regulates the professional recognition procedure for foreign qualifications. In order to work in a regulated profession with foreign qualifications one must apply for the recognition of these qualifications by a competent authority. The main task of the competent authority is to compare, according to the law, the professional qualification of the applicant with the professional qualification required in Estonia for working in the regulated profession, and to decide whether the applicant has the right to work in the given regulated profession in Estonia.

Assessment, recognition and validation of competences acquired through non/informal learning is known in Estonia under the term Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and also as Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) or VÕTA in Estonian. The process of implementing APEL started around 2003. APEL offers the possibility to recognize prior learning (including continuing education) and professional work experience in order to complete study curricula or to acquire professional qualifications. The “University Act” requires universities to accredit prior and experiential learning and assigns them the task of elaborating the rules and procedures for APEL.

The aim of APEL is to develop connections between LLL and different levels of education, as well as with the labour market. APEL is based on the substantial compatibility of previously acquired knowledge, skills and experiences. Since September 2007 there is no limitation as to how big a share of higher education programmes or professional training can be obtained through APEL. However it is stated that higher education institutions cannot award a full diploma or certificate on the basis of prior and experiential learning. Neither APL nor APEL could be used for dispensatory access to university, i.e. by replacing the necessary qualifications for entering. Within the APEL framework the following skills and experiences are recognised: previous studies accomplished in educational institutions; continuing education; professional work experience; and skills/knowledge acquired through volunteer activities or hobbies. For example, the process reviews learning that may have been mastered through a variety of life experiences, including professional responsibilities, civic and volunteer experiences, military and corporate training, and independent study. APEL can be used to fulfil admission requirements, continue unfinished studies, as part of studies, and to change the study curriculum. However, in Estonia, as a rule, admission to higher education institutions cannot be based on the APEL procedure and an upper secondary school diploma is required.

In a situation characterised by the increasing importance of the LLL agenda and the pursuit of a better match between education and the changing needs of the job market, developing a nationally effective APEL system has become a priority for Estonia. However, as mentioned above, due to the small numbers of recent immigrants from Third Countries into Estonia, the issue of SKC recognition has not received at-

tention in terms of policy or research. There are no reports, policy papers or research articles identified via desk research that focus on SKC recognition of TCNs in Estonia.

For the purposes of this project, statistics were obtained about SKC recognition of healthcare workers from Third Countries. The shortage of healthcare workers has existed in the Estonian labour market since the country joined the EU. It has been caused by the emigration of trained healthcare professionals, mostly to neighbouring Finland, Sweden and Norway. According to the forecast made in 2005, there will be 500 doctors less in 2025 and this poses serious challenges to the quality of healthcare services. The Estonian Health Board (Terviseamet) is a competent authority that certifies the qualifications of healthcare professionals in Estonia. According to the data provided by the Health Board, the main countries of origin of TCN healthcare workers are Russia and Ukraine (see table 7.1).

Table 7.1 SKC recognition of healthcare workers from Third Countries 2004-2013

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Azerbaijan				1						1	2
Armenia						1					1
Belarus	2		1			1			1		5
Chile							1				1
Egypt							1				1
Georgia						1				1	2
Jordan		1									1
Kazakhstan							1			1	2
Kyrgyzstan							1		1		2
Moldova						1			2		3
Russia	2	7	6	6	9	7	8	10	15	9	79
Ukraine	1	1	2		4	6	1	4	4	8	31
USA							1		1		2
Total	5	9	9	7	13	17	14	14	24	20	132

Source: Estonian Health Board

While there is an increasing trend in immigration of healthcare workers from Third Countries into Estonia, the numbers are still rather low. There are no statistics or data about SKC recognition of TCNs in other professional fields. The Estonian ENIC/NARIC centre deals with the academic qualifications of diplomas of foreigners. According to the ENIC/NARIC, there has been a steady annual increase in applications for certifying academic qualifications by TCNs in the last 10 years (Table 7.2). Again, by far the highest number of applications are filed by citizens of the Russian Federation.

Table 7.2 Applications for academic qualifications by TCNs 2004-2014

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Bangladesh	7	44	8	1	2	11	12	5	13	24	45	172
China	10	108	60	94	68	28	22	21	24	33	39	507
Georgia	0	2	4	3	2	6	6	35	29	45	93	225
India	103	42	13	7	34	7	0	11	33	68	135	453
Nigeria	5	15	15	8	7	6	31	28	44	62	176	397
Pakistan	6	5	1	5	1	11	34	17	32	48	62	222
Russia	141	157	175	171	180	156	188	186	226	253	192	2025
Turkey	1	6	2	4	6	12	15	28	34	66	57	231
Ukraine	2	19	14	18	20	21	14	36	58	92	105	399
USA	24	34	30	27	24	26	36	43	38	58	38	378

Source: Estonia ENIC/NARIC Centre

Due to the lack of data it is not possible to estimate the benefits of TCNs immigration and SKC recognition for the national labour market. Based on some information, it can be argued that in the last 10 years the immigration and SKC recognition of healthcare workers from Third Countries has alleviated the labour demand in the healthcare sector. In 2005 the National Audit Office of Estonia analysed the situation of the resource of health care professionals as well as the system used to evaluate the needs for employees in the healthcare sector. As a result of the establishment of a register of healthcare professionals in 2004, the data on healthcare professionals has essentially improved and a systematic evaluation of the need for employees has been developed; the Audit Office came to the conclusion that, based on the available resources and training capacity, the State is not able to provide the healthcare system with a sufficient number of healthcare professionals and this jeopardizes the sustainability of Estonian healthcare. According to the audit, 10% of healthcare professionals have reached retirement age while there are not enough young doctors to replace the older ones who will leave the labour market soon.

After the opening of the labour markets of EU Member States in 2004, the brain drain of healthcare professionals added another stress on the domestic market. The audit concluded that it is impossible to maintain the existing number of doctors and to increase the number of nurses sufficiently through state-commissioned education. Under these circumstances, the immigration of healthcare workers from EU Member States or Third Countries is inevitable. However, while the number of healthcare workers immigrating to Estonia from Third Countries has been increasing steadily over the last 10 years (see Table 7.1), it still does not cover the need for labour in the healthcare sector.

In 2014, the Estonian Doctors' Union (*Eesti Arstide Liit*) addressed a complaint to the Health Board concerning the SKC recognition of doctors from Third Countries. The Union expressed its concern regarding the professional qualifications and sufficient level of professional training of doctors from Third Countries whose SKC have been recognised by the Health Board. According to the Union, there is a need for additional qualification compatibility tests prior to the recognition of SKC. The need stems from the practical experience of doctors from Third Countries whose training

and professional expertise does not match Estonian standards.

In its response the Health Board considered the recognition of professional qualifications of TCNs as lawful and according to existing standards. While the dispute is still ongoing, the Ministry of Social Affairs announced an audit in September 2014 of the SKC recognition process regarding doctors from Third Countries.

In conclusion, due to the small number of immigrants there is little or nearly no experience as regards the recognition of SKC of TCNs in the majority of professions in Estonia. The Unemployment Office or the Estonian Qualifications Authority have not encountered any cases related to SKC recognition of TCNs. There are also no studies conducted on the issue of SKC recognition. Statistics show very small numbers of SKC recognition applications even in the healthcare sector. While the number of doctors arriving to Estonia from Third Countries remains low, we are beginning to see problems related to the recognition of these doctors' SKC. As the experience with the levels of professional qualifications of doctors from Third Countries is relatively short, the problems are only just arising. It can be estimated that in the coming decade, when due to labour market demand the number of healthcare professionals from the Third Countries will be increasing, the issues related to the SKC of these professionals will be more prominent in national policy debates. Similarly, in other sectors of the economy which have seen practically no immigration of professionals from the Third Countries until today, the labour market demand will stimulate immigration which, in turn, will foster practices of SKC recognition for TCNs.

TCN and diversity related studies in Estonia have, for a long period, mainly addressed the integration of Russian-speakers (Soviet-era settlers). Yet, during recent years the focus has been on another trend, i.e. how to fill the shortages in the employment market by attracting highly skilled TCNs (smart migration policy). Because of the limitations of the local workforce – a relatively broad educational preparation, an overall small stock of people and an ageing population – Estonian organisations need to attract foreign talents in order to be internationally competitive. That said, the study realized is based on the organisations that have had experience in recruiting highly skilled TCNs.

The group of profit-oriented organisations comprised IT-companies together with one large energy company and one manufacturing company (dealing with oil shale). The group of non-profit organisations covered international schools, offering elementary and basic level education with instruction in the English language. Public organisations in the sample are three Estonian universities and one national theatre.

The reasons why organisations have recruited TCNs vary according to the organisation. In the case of profit-oriented organisations there is a clear need for specialized skills and knowledge. The study showed how ICT and large manufacturing companies take active measures to recruit foreign people with competencies and skills which are hard to find in the local employment market. For example, the closeness to larger countries (Russia) with traditionally strong engineering curricula gives companies near the border with Russia an advantage in recruiting. Also, for the graduates of technical institutes from Russia, Estonia can be seen as an entry point into the EU employment market with attractive career prospects.

In the case of public and non-profit organisations, although people find their way to Estonia also through open calls, recruitment often tends to be through personal contacts. For example, TCNs working for the universities have usually had some previous contact with a supervisor through seminars or conferences, who introduced them to (research) possibilities in Estonia. The same applies to non-profit organisations, where informal networks (church groups, kids that go to the same school, etc.) provide knowledge of possible openings.

In general, both TCNs and organisations described their organisation as open and friendly, which means that organisational culture is supportive and tolerant. In fact, the main difficulties appear not in working life but outside working hours, and include language barriers during everyday activities (starting from Estonian street signs and food labels in the shops, to visiting a doctor or an immigration office, finding a school or kindergarten for the children and work for a spouse, etc.). Here, organisations who have recruited TCNs, try to help as much as possible. In profit-oriented organisations, mentoring during the settling-in period is usually handled at the central level by the personnel office; in public organisations (universities) it is delegated to the faculty or unit level, to the direct supervisors and colleagues. Since non-profit organisations are relatively small, support is mostly given by colleagues and the director. In addition, in organisations with more international employees, there tends to be collegial support and experience-sharing among fellow employees.

DM is a continuous and conscious activity in the case of international organisations with branches in Estonia, but in the majority of cases diversity has been achieved as a result of the natural development of organisational working life. It is the skills and competencies and not the nationalities, gender, age or cultural background that become the priority when recruiting an employee. However, organisations admit that if the Estonian labour market had enough people with the required qualifications, the local workforce would be easier to recruit (with respect to temporal considerations, since in many cases it may be several months before the TCN finally arrives in Estonia). Often organisations cannot wait months to fill the opening, but need someone as soon as possible. Yet, when TCNs are already in the EU or Estonia (for studies, previous work, etc.), temporal differences disappear as well.

Organisations which have had longer experience with recruiting international staff have also developed a unique know-how of the support system needed. For example, in ICT companies the working language is often already English and, in many cases, also all documents and communication flow are either in English or both in English and Estonian. Such practices are the result of a more long-term development – the more international people have been recruited, the less language difficulties there seem to be.

Then again, in the case of universities as representative public organisations, although the language of science globally is English, universities are facing difficulties with the full involvement of international students into everyday activities. These difficulties are centred around the readiness to provide more courses and curricula in English, organizing events in English and not in Estonian, incorporating international people into the university administration, ensuring that the central information flow in the university (e-mails etc.) are at least in both languages, and so on. All in all, repre-

sentatives of the universities admit that a lot has been done, and as universities are becoming more and more internationalized, there is room and a will for further development.

Non-profit organisations in the sample comprised international schools, where English is the working language, whose staff composition is highly international and language barriers are less evident.

Impacts from the recruitment of TCNs are clearly evident. New perspectives, openness and tolerance are just a few keywords mentioned by the organisations and TCNs themselves. In many cases, diversity gained by the recruitment of TCNs has also been seen as a competitive advantage. Since TCNs often have a different educational background and highly specialized skills they make up a valuable addition to the existing stock of employees. From the perspective of TCNs themselves, work in Estonia is often seen as a stepping-stone in one's career path. Since for the majority of the interviewed individuals Estonia was a relatively unknown (in many cases totally unknown) country, and Estonians were often described as rather closed and reserved people, it is the occupation related challenges (in a few cases also the fact that a spouse is Estonian) that attract a person to apply for a job. The country has been described as having a well-developed infrastructure at governmental level (e.g. easy handling of bureaucratic procedures); freedom at work was also highly appreciated: the opportunity to share one's ideas and the trust expressed through the assignment of challenging work tasks.

Whereas the phenomenon of volunteering is relatively new in Estonia, it has become a growing trend. The public sector does not distinguish between organisations involving or not-involving volunteers and there is no definition of a volunteer organisation as such. Nevertheless, in recent years various strategic documents have been developed to support voluntary activity and the development of a civil society at both State and third sector levels. The third sector is composed of various organisations and associations, the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations being the single largest Estonian organisation uniting public benefit non-profit organisations.

In general, the legislative environment for non-profit organisations in Estonia is favourable. There is no specific legal framework in place for volunteering, but it is affected by a range of laws. Legal definitions exist for two different types of non-government organisations, which are the main types of organisations engaging volunteers: associations and foundations. Any two or more legal residents in Estonia can found an NGO. Estonian legislation does not set limits or specify the purposes for which a non-profit association can be established. There are codes of good practice in fields like participation, public service delivery, funding and volunteering. These are voluntary agreements between civil society and the public sector, based on the principles of cooperation from which both sides can proceed. As a result of the better coordination, strategic collaboration, action plans, and in particular the new civic initiatives, volunteering in Estonia is growing. There are several comprehensive studies on different aspects of civic participation and volunteering in the country.

There is no special legislative framework concerning TCNs volunteering and civic participation, while more than 9% of all volunteers are TCNs. Neither is there a prac-

tice of signing contracts for volunteer work. There are no associations limited to only TCNs and there is no publicly available information on the citizenship of volunteers. The issue of not having Estonian citizenship is a sensitive issue among many Estonian residents and few interlocutors were willing to elaborate on this subject.

The income level of TCNs in Estonia is on average lower than that of Estonian or European citizens, which impacts on their civic participation and volunteer work. In addition, TCNs perceive their social status as lower, their role in society as less important or valuable, and their competence in politics as inferior to that of their Estonian fellow-countrymen; they also have a lower assessment of the Estonian civil society, are more critical of it, and their membership in various associations is significantly lower. On the other hand, the appreciation of their role in Estonian economy and governance by Estonians shows a growing trend: from 24% in 2005 to 64% in 2008 and 70% in 2011.

The factors promoting TCNs volunteering and civic participation are social connections with private recommendations, the existence of associations ready to engage foreign volunteers; openness of the society; foreign language skills; organisational strategies of foreign volunteer engagement and training of volunteers; higher appreciation of TCNs when they are volunteering; and localization of the public benefits of civic participation.

The impeding factors are language barriers, lack of English language skills among the authorities; an insufficient level of openness in the society; lack of internationally-oriented organisations that are ready to promote volunteering in a foreign language; Estonian language skills; scarcity of information; lack of strategies for the engagement of foreign volunteers; lack of training for volunteers; lack of volunteering contracts; and the limited number of internationally oriented organisations not requiring Estonian language skills.

TCNs engage in volunteer associations from a sense of mission, to learn new skills and in order to feel more appreciated in society. Volunteer work is easier to find for a TCN than a good job or even an internship. Young TCNs often come to volunteer in Estonia within the framework of the European Voluntary Service and other international programs. They are quite satisfied with the general level of life and especially appreciate the possibility of conducting many necessary everyday transactions by internet.

There are 274 TCN ethnic cultural associations in Estonia. Ethnic associations are registered as NGOs. In order to be eligible for funding from the Integration and Migration Foundation, they should be consolidated under umbrella organisations. The minimum number of associations under one umbrella organisation is five. This creates certain impediments with regard to financing. The skills of writing projects and reports are often better managed by the second or third generations. Yet, the involvement level of the second and third generation is varied across different communities and often depends on personal preferences: some communities and their cultural associations emphasize national identity more than others and their children are more involved in the activities. The primary objective of the ethnic volunteer organisations in Estonia is to preserve national identity. The small size of TCN communities and

the lack of resources and/or interest of the sending country may result in their receiving little public support also in the host country.

Due to generational differences, second and third generation volunteers often prefer to engage in activities oriented towards young people. For example, they are actively involved in organizing urban summer camps for children lacking parental attention, sport competitions, games, get-togethers etc. Young generations also found separate ethnic associations dedicated to sport, music, dance, art or other interests. The involvement of the sending countries institutions depends largely on the political, economic and social situation in the sending countries. Usually foreign embassies in Estonia support some of the activities of the ethnic associations.

The Estonian national integration model sets the limits of the official rhetoric on the expected mode of integration and many ethnic cultural associations indicate the intent to integrate into Estonian society as one of their primary objectives. The informational and other support provided by this integration model is enjoyed by many TCNs. Apart from the discontent caused by being the object of integration and perceived as having a lower social status which is verbalized in private communication, the inclusion of representatives of ethnic associations in discussions on the development of the integration programs is regarded very positively.

In conclusion, TCNs and diversity related policies and studies in Estonia have mainly addressed the integration of the Russian-speaking minority population (Soviet-era settlers). Most of them are Estonia-born. Yet, the focus in recent years has also been on another issue, i.e. how to attract highly skilled TCNs (to develop a smart migration policy). Because of the small size of the Estonian workforce, its relatively broad (rather than specialized) educational preparation and ageing, Estonian organisations need to attract foreign highly skilled workers in order to be internationally competitive. That said, the aim of the current study was to find out how TCNs' skills, knowledge and competences are recognized in Estonia, reflecting the experiences of the organisations and TCNs themselves on Estonian DM practices, and shedding light on TCNs' participation in volunteer organisations.

Since immigration to Estonia, especially from Third Countries, is very limited nowadays, Estonian authorities have paid no attention to TCNs SKC recognition. There are also no legislative documents regarding SKC recognition of Soviet-era immigrants, who now have either a Russian passport or no citizenship at all. The largest sector where some kind of TCN SKC recognition is starting to develop is healthcare. There is growing concern about TCN immigrants' professional qualifications and because of the increasing inflow of TCN doctors and other health care professionals, it is expected that in upcoming years the authorities will start to regulate TCNs SKC recognition more systematically.

In order to find out how diversity is managed in organisations, 10 organisations were interviewed. The group of profit-oriented organisations comprised two It-companies together with one large energy company and one manufacturing company (dealing with oil shale). The group of non-profit organisations consisted of two international schools, offering elementary and basic level education in the English lan-

guage. Public organisations in the sample are three Estonian universities and one national theatre.

The reasons why organisations have recruited TCNs tend to vary case by case. In the case of profit-oriented organisations there is a clear need for specialized skills and knowledge. The study showed how profit-oriented organisations take active measures to recruit foreign people with competencies and skills that are hard to find in the local employment market. For example, the fact of neighbouring with Russia – which traditionally has strong engineering curricula – gives companies near the border an advantage in recruiting since Estonia, being a small country, is unable to provide large array of highly specialized education courses; therefore, the Russian pool of talents is a good input for the Estonian labour market.

In the case of public and non-profit organisations, although people find their way to Estonia also through open calls, recruitment often tends to be through (in)formal networks providing knowledge of possible openings.

In general, both TCNs and organisations found organisational culture supportive and tolerant. The main difficulties appear in everyday life outside working hours, mostly due to language barriers. Here, organisations that have recruited TCNs, try to help as much as possible with mentoring and providing collegial support.

DM is a continuous and conscious activity in the case of international organisations with branches in Estonia, but in the majority of cases it is the skills and competencies and not the diverse background itself that become the priority when recruiting an employee. Organisations have admitted that if the Estonian labour market had enough people with the required qualifications, the local workforce would be easier to recruit.

Organisations which have had longer experience with recruiting international staff have also developed a unique know-how of the support system needed including switching working language to English. This is not easy in case of public organisations (e.g. universities) where the readiness for switching the information flow is much lower.

All in all, impacts from the recruitment of TCNs are clearly visible. New perspectives, openness and tolerance are just a few of the keywords mentioned both by the organisations and TCNs themselves. Because the different educational background, organisations see TCNs as valuable addition to the existing stock of employees. TCNs themselves often see work in Estonia as an occupational challenge and a stepping-stone in one's career path. Estonia's biggest advantages described are the country's well-developed infrastructure at the governmental level and freedom at work in terms of expressing one's ideas.

All in all, as highly skilled and educated individuals in general tend to be more mobile, Estonia is seen among talented TCNs as a good place for gaining occupation-related opportunities, yet in most cases it is still merely a stepping-stone to the next place. Thus, metaphorically, Estonia seems to be a career catalyst country for highly-skilled TCNs.

The legislative environment for non-profit organisations is favourable but there is no special legislation or regulations regarding TCNs' participation in or founding

these organisations. Although TCN participation in NGOs is modest, it is not non-existent.

FINLAND

At the Beginning of the Road to Diversity and Diversity Management

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In the current context, migration can be understood as the movement of foreign citizens into Finland and particularly in the region of Ostrobothnia. People are motivated to leave their countries for a variety of reasons, including a desire for economic prosperity, political issues, family re-unification, escaping conflicts or natural disasters, or simply because they wish to change their surroundings. In the case of immigrants moving to Finland, all the above issues can certainly be included among the reasons for migration. Additionally, in this report, TCN countries are defined as all the countries excluding EU-28 countries and the USA.

The number of foreign citizens remained fairly constant at slightly over 10,000 for a long time; the exact figure in 1950 was 11,000 (0.3% of the population) and it was still just 12,000 in 1976. A slow increase in the number of foreign citizens in Finland began to take place during the 1980s. More extensive immigration on the Finnish scale started in 1990, when Ingrian Finns, living in the area of the Soviet Union at the time, were given the right to migrate. This contributed significantly to the rise in the number of foreigners resident in Finland. The steepest annual rise of all was recorded in 1991: over 11,000 persons, with the largest groups being Ingrians and refugees from Somalia. The next large annual increase was only recorded in 2009: 12,449 persons. At the end of 2012, there were 279,616 persons who were of foreign origin; 41,408 were second generation immigrants, of whom 92% were aged under 30. At the end of 2012, 195,511 foreign citizens were living in Finland, 285,471 persons had been born abroad and 266,949 were speaking a foreign-language as their mother tongue. Among foreign citizens living in Finland, 90.5% were born abroad and 93.5% were speaking a foreign-language as their mother tongue.

Finnish immigration policy and the phenomenon of migration to Finland are an integral part of the country's history, economy and politics. Until the late 1990s immigrants were considered a risk to national security when, instead, they should have

been seen as production factors. *Compared to other European countries, immigration and ethnic diversity have been rare in Finland, but they are now visible in everyday life, which is also politically relevant. Traditionally, native inhabitants have moved away from Finland while, on the contrary, immigrants are moving in.*

In 1990, the share of foreign citizens in the total population was 0.5% while in 2013, the equivalent share was 3.8%. Similarly, the share of foreign TCN citizens in the total population in 1990 was 0.2% (12,128 TCN citizens), while in 2013 the equivalent share was 2.2% (120,816 TCN citizens). In 1990, the share of TCN citizens in the total foreign citizen population was 46.2% while in 2013 the equivalent share was 58.2%. In terms of continents, the share of citizens of other EU-28 countries is the biggest, followed by other European countries and Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.

The data of our study on DM was collected from many sources. The study material consisted of former research, statistics and interviews with organisations and experts in the field. The data was analysed with the normal content analysis method, typically used for qualitative research. The sample of interviews in case studies consisted of three profit organisations, four public organisations and three non-profit organisations. In addition, the statistics were analysed with help of basic quantitative methods.

DM originates in the increasing diversity encountered in working life; DM practices varied among the different organisations and were often seen as part of HRM. Few formal procedures exist regarding the commitment to DM on behalf of organisations. However, diversity within an organisation was considered useful from a practical standpoint, given that groups consisting of different kinds of people tend to be more effective than homogenous groups. DM has several possible positive impacts on personnel. Its impact on TCNs could be considered positive if it results in better use of their knowledge and skills and to equal treatment. *The prospects of organisational commitment to DM were quite positive because of the economic and social impacts. It is assumed that in the future there will be more foreigners working in Finland and therefore the importance of DM will increase.* There are no differences in Finland at national and regional level as regards DM practices. In the region of Ostrobothnia, in particular, most of the large companies are international and undertake DM practices similar to those applied globally. In addition, all the organisations in general operate according to national legislation. DM in Finland differs compared to other European countries because of the short experience the country has of diversity and because the main emphasis is on gender issues. However, there have been many projects aiming to promote multicultural work environments which have resulted in good practices, even though DM was not always mentioned.

Recognition of a qualification refers to a decision on the type of eligibility that a foreign educational qualification provides for a job or a place of study. In every case, SKC recognition was performed in a similar way for every member of the organisation irrespective of their nationality or background. A weakness from the viewpoint of TCNs is that in Finland everyone needs certain kinds of formal competences to get a

job. One of the strengths of the procedures used for TCNs' SKC recognition is the propensity to treat workers equally and therefore nationality does not prevent the career development of a TCN. In educational institutes there are many kinds of personal study plans used in SKC recognition.

Capabilities were mentioned most often as reasons for hiring TCNs. The other reasons were special knowledge of TCNs needed in an organisation. TCNs may not have certain formal competences, nor are their language skills as good as those of native speakers, but they have cultural competences, language skills and other qualities. *Roles and functions depended strongly on the characteristics of an organisation. In organisations employing expert and highly educated staff, TCNs were typically employed as experts. In other kinds of organisations they were mainly employed as workers.* Profit organisations adhered to values that were closely connected to their business; in volunteer organisations a positive attitude towards diversity was clearly a value, while in the public sector the most common values were equality, respect of other people as well as customer focus. The study found that communication was also considered important as well as the fact that everybody should have opportunity to use their own language. This is typical of the bilingual Vaasa region in Ostrobothnia. There were no recruitment methods, personnel training and development or performance assessment practices meant specifically for TCNs. Only different languages were used according to the situation in the various organisations.

Volunteering is regulated by a number of laws in Finland. The number of volunteer associations has increased since the 1920s to the present day, but membership-based volunteering is in decline. Bureaucracy in the volunteer associations has been growing through the increase of project work and some of the work is transferred to professionals. The highest levels of volunteering have been recorded in west Finland, of which the Ostrobothnia region is part. Almost 80% of the Finnish people become members of a volunteer organisation(s) during their lifetime. The most common form of volunteer organisation is an association. Other forms of volunteer or civil society organisations include religious organisations, political parties, trade unions, co-operatives, foundations and informal, spontaneous alliances between citizens. There are a number of public organisations to support volunteering. In this study there were two case organisations: "Finland–Russia" Society and the Trade Union for Service Industries (PAM). PAM was used as an example of non-ethnic volunteer organisation targeted for people working in the private services sector. It brings earnings-related unemployment security to its members. The union plays an important role in Finnish working life and service industries are typical workplaces where immigrants can get work. The union emphasises the principle of equality which means that everyone should have the same opportunities, regardless of their nationality and ethnic origin. *Some factors promote and other factors hinder the participation of TCNs, like for instance problems with Finnish language. With the help of immigrants it is possible to develop a good working life, because there are many problematic things which can be identified thanks to their help.* One successful experience at regional level was when one immigrant became the Vice Chief Shop Steward. Through his efforts the union got many new members. The other case organisation was the "Finland–Russia" Soci-

ety, which is a cooperative organisation between citizens and non-governmental organisations in Finland and Russia. It is also building cultural, environmental and economic relations. Basic values of the association are tolerance and pluralism, openness and transparency, and reliability. The Society was chosen as an example of “ethnic” association in this study. The “Finland-Russia” Society in the city of Vaasa in the region of Ostrobothnia has cooperated many years with the town of Aunus, Russia. The society’s operation is hindered by scarce resources, but there was one successful case of humanitarian cooperation with the town of Aunus. *By participating in and being in contact with a member of the association the integration process could become easier*; however, the Society cannot help migrants to find jobs, at least not in the present economic situation.

**Participation, Recognition
and DM Practices in Germany**

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At the very time of writing these lines, the increase of refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany in 2014 is being taken by some conservative and populist political sectors as an excuse of reopening an obsolete debate on the need of assimilate foreign citizens and also stand up against an alleged progressive Islamisation of the society. One might perceive this as a sign that nothing has changed in the good old Germany. However, a closer glance at the recent evolution of the perception of migrants and their roles in society rather points towards a paradigm shift. Therefore, in the following pages we will briefly present an overview of the current condition of the German multicultural society, focussing on the above-mentioned shift. Subsequently, a closer insight concerning legal aspects and the state of the art with regard to the recognition of SKC, the so-called “welcoming culture” and migrant organisations will be provided. We will then introduce our research project’s findings in all three categories. The conclusion highlights crossovers among these three topics. We argue that there is a remarkable interconnection between them with respect to issues like the operability of the concept “TCN”, the need of integrating SKC recognition as a DM tool, the suitability/usefulness of establishing a welcome culture in volunteer work organisations that also comprises existing local diversity and the interdependence of SKC recognition and volunteer work commitment.

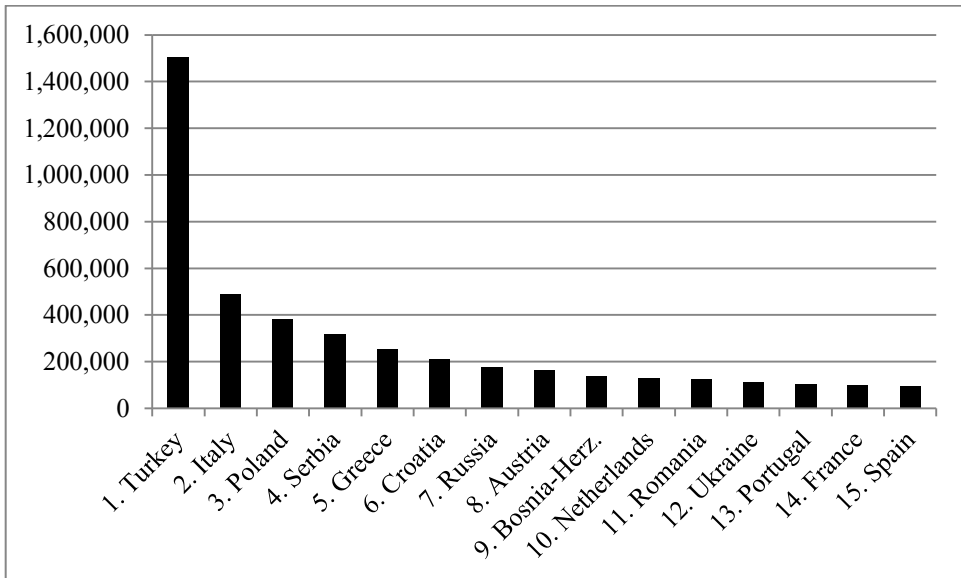
Germany is a country with a wide experience in migrational in - and outflux. It is often mistakenly thought that migration in Germany starts with the Guest Worker programmes in 1955. In fact, the territory of today’s Germany has experienced migration at all times. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that Germany is located at the core of Europe and has frequently experienced fast moving social and political changes in the course of history. Thus, there has always been a demand for concepts to

manage non-Germans' participation in the crucial spheres of society, and particularly in the labour market. Throughout the years pragmatic *ad-hoc* solutions have been developed. Yet, strategic measures which facilitate the participation of TCNs still need to be adopted.

Today, Germany has 8.5 million inhabitants. The number of foreigners is 7.6 million (9.4%). The majority of foreigners are EU-citizens (3.3 million = 4.0%) while 4.3 million (5.4%) are TCNs: *a)* Rest of Europe, including Russia, 0.8 million; *b)* Asia, including Turkey, 2.5 million; *c)* Africa 0.3 million; *d)* America 0.2 million; *e)* Australia 0.01 million (Statistische Bundesamt, 2014b, own calculation).

The fifteen most relevant nationalities in Germany can be seen in the Figure 9.1. Amongst them ten EU-countries and five Third Countries appear; by name and rank: Turkey (1st), Serbia (4th), Russia (7th), Bosnia-Herzegovina (9th) and Ukraine (12th).

Figure 9.1 Foreign nationalities in Germany



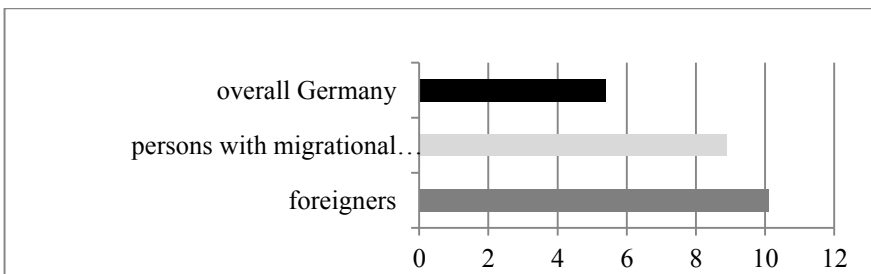
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014b (own calculation)

In any case, it is necessary to emphasise that the term “TCN” is not common in the German integrational and migrational discourse. In 2005 a new concept was introduced in Germany, aiming at encompassing both the migration experience and the familiar background of people: the “migrational background” (*Migrationshintergrund*). This term refers to all foreigners (TCNs and EU citizens) living in Germany as well as all naturalized persons and all descendants of foreigners who immigrated to Germany after 1955 (Statistische Bundesamt, 2013, p. 26). According to the latest data, 16.3 million people (20.2%) in Germany have this so called “migrational background” (Statistische Bundesamt, 2014a). As this concept is used much more frequently than the concept of TCN, most statistical data refer to people with a migra-

tional background instead of TCNs. Furthermore, as it will be shown later on, neither organisations implementing DM strategies nor volunteer associations classify their target groups according to whether they are TCNs but – if at all – according to whether they have a migrational background.

As to the participation in the labour market, the overall unemployment rate in Germany (5.4%) is relatively low compared to other countries of the EU. However, there is a significant difference between the overall unemployment rate and the unemployment rate of people with migrational background (8.9%) and of foreigners (not specifying TCNs and EU-citizens) (10.1%). As shown in the Figure 9.2, foreigners are twice as often unemployed as autochthonous Germans.

Figure 9.2 Unemployment rate in percent (2012)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014d)

Foreigners are not only less integrated in the labour market, they also more often work below their level of qualification and need the support of social welfare more frequently. The crux is that while a considerable number of TCNs is quite well qualified; getting a job is often hindered by restrictions *inter alia* in the recognition of their foreign qualifications (Englmann and Müller, 2007). Thus, a major challenge is the development and achievement of transparent and fair recognition procedures for formal, non- and informal SKC. In past centuries, in the face of a high demand for manpower and a considerable influx of migrants, a too strict formalization of qualifications would have obstructed success stories like the realignment after the Thirty Years' War. The industrialization process in the mid-nineteenth century and the reconstruction after the Second World War, however, shaped society and policies into modern, dynamic and focused frameworks, generating a demand not for basic handicraft but for specialized skills (Maier, 2004, pp. 4-5). In light of current challenges, new solutions for the recognition and insertion of foreigners' skills must be contemplated.

Fortunately, it is an opportune moment to think about contemporary solutions and to shape a modern and diverse Germany and Europe as significant paradigm shifts have taken place in some aspects of intercultural coexistence – at least in Germany.

The major paradigm shift has taken place in relation to the recognition of foreign formal qualifications. In the face of a negative demographic change and a skills short-

age in several professions (particularly engineers with different specializations and specialists in medical and healthcare professions) the “Act to improve the assessment and recognition of foreign professional qualifications” (*Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz* – BQFG) was enacted in 2012. This act has been flanked by supplementing laws in the German States (*Bundesländer*). An intense debate about the waste of TCNs’ potential on the one hand and skills shortage and demographic change on the other hand, had taken place before. The keywords of the debate centred on the “brain waste” and the skills shortage (*Fachkräftemangel*) which may affect Germany in a couple of years (Englmann and Müller, 2007). Data from the Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt* – StBA, Seidel *et al.*) present a projection which calculates the decrease and at the same time the ageing of the German population. Accordingly, the loss of population until 2050 may rise to 8.5 million people with a distinctly higher rate of retired persons (Seidel *et al.*, 2008, pp. 64-65). According to a study of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie* – BMWI), the skills shortage already costs the economy today 20 billion Euro (Bigalke, 2007). To face this situation, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales* – BMAS) has suggested a better participation of migrants and an influx of qualified immigrants as one of several recommendations (BMAS, 2013, pp. 62-72). This includes measures like: development of indicators for integration and immigration, better recognition of foreign qualifications, especially in medical and healthcare professions, decrease of bureaucratic obstacles for qualified immigrants, implementation of a “welcoming culture”, provision of information (e.g. by means of the web portal www.make-it-in-germany.de) and facilitation of European mobility.

The new acts for a better recognition of formal qualifications and the role of relevant stakeholders in the German context have been studied in the present project. The acts were ratified in 2012 (BQFG) and in 2014 (LANGBW, the particular law for the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg). Until then the possibility to have foreign qualifications recognized was restricted to European qualifications (BiBB, *n.y.*) as well as to qualifications of ethnic Germans from the Eastern Bloc, the so-called late repatriates (*Spätaussiedler*) and partially to refugees (Bosswick, 2013, p. 72). Stateless residents and TCNs were excluded (Bosswick, 2013, p. 72). The new act has the character of an *omnibus bill* «with a long list of modifications of existing laws regarding the acquisition and recognition of formal qualifications. It is subsidiary to existing specific regulations for single professions» (Bosswick, 2013, p. 75; BMBF, 2014, p. 21).

We consider now the appraisal of non/in-formal SKC. In contrast to formal qualifications, competences acquired through non/in-formal learning are not valued in the same way. This affects domestic learners as well as European or TCN learners. Nonetheless, in the last decade more and more voices put emphasis on the potentials of informal and non-formal SKC and the related learning processes; slowly but steadily the attention was drawn to how non- and informal learning could be brought to light, appreciated and formalized (Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 7-8). Not surprisingly, this is discussed in terms of its interest and benefits at a social and economic level (Bretschneider and Preißer, 2003, p. 4).

Skills shortage and the demographic change do not only influence recent political and legislative developments and oblige society to strive for a “welcoming culture”, but also have an impact on the understanding of diversity in companies and organisations. Accordingly, diversity and the systematic approach to integrate foreign skilled workers has become a factor of success for market-oriented enterprises during the first decade of this century. Generally speaking a process of institutionalisation of DM as a managerial activity can be traced back among large corporations on the basis of two indicators: their explicit declaration of commitment to diversity by signing the *Charta der Vielfalt*¹ and the appointment of an officer responsible for DM (Köppel, 2014, p. 3).

Nonetheless, even though this evolution is a fact, some limitations are also evident. First of all, such an institutionalisation process seems to be an exclusive feature of large enterprises, whereas medium sized and small ones don’t systematically invest in its implementation, hence the supposition that DM has already reached its higher possible degree of diffusion. A second question regards the “real” aims pursued when implementing DM practices: apparently the introduction of a number of practices without further interconnection but good public relations potential is at least as frequent as an authentic strategy-oriented approach to DM (Köppel, 2014, p. 12). This will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Diversity has also gained importance on a terrain which seems to be different in some regards: the volunteer work of migrants. In general, volunteer work is very important in Germany. According to one of the major expert in that field (Huth S., Ceo of the INBAS-Sozialforschung GmbH), German public authorities consider that volunteer work plays a very significant role within the framework of welfare and social cohesion. Until a short time ago, this appraisal did not concern migrant organisations explicitly. Indeed, for many years migrant organisations were suspiciously eyeballed for allegedly pursuing segregatory aims. The first migrant organisations were established in Germany in the 1960s when a large number of guest workers settled in the country. Right from the beginning, migrant organisations mainly took care of issues which were not addressed by traditional organisations in the guest country, such maintaining home culture, language and religious services (INBAS, 2003, pp. 3 and 12). The German state even encouraged the migrants to maintain links with their countries of origin (Keser, 2011, p. 5; Hunn, 2011, p. 13). However, the perspectives of migrant organisations have been changing and by doing so the perception of them has changed as well. Migrant volunteer associations nowadays have become partners in terms of offering services as social reference points and in bridge building activities. In this context, «the importance of promoting migrant volunteering – both in

¹ The “Diversity Charter”, (see also chapter 5) is an initiative carried out by private corporations to promote diversity in companies and institutions. German Chancellor Angela Merkel as well as the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, Aydan Özoğuz, support it. Cf. *Charta der Vielfalt. Über die Charta*, <http://www.charta-dervielfalt.de/charta-der-vielfalt/ueber-die-charta.html>> (10.12.2014).

mainstream organisations and migrants' organisations – as a means of better integration is recognized widely in Germany» (Huth, 2006, p. 16). Migrant organisations have a social function of bridge builders between the migrant communities and the receiving society. Besides the preservation of customs, the new topics on their agenda are the general social assistance, education, healthcare, occupational orientation, anti-racism-work and generally speaking the shaping of society (See Weiss, 2013, p. 22; Huth, 2006b, pp. 29-30; INBAS, 2011, p. 4). Thus, it is no surprise that the leading integration concept, the “National Integration Plan” (*Nationaler Integrationsplan – NIP*) (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung, 2007) developed in 2007, picks up the guideline of promoting migrants' political volunteering.

Let us now analyse the current state of the art, starting from the recognition practices. As already pointed out, the recognition of formal, non- and informal SKC of TCNs is a contemporary task, thoroughly discussed in Germany and with some interesting and exemplary progress on the one hand and unfinished duties on the other hand. The ratification of the new recognition acts on the federal level (BQFG) and on the level of states (LAnGBW) has improved the situation for job-seeking and recognition pursuing TCNs. An alignment of the proceedings meant for the EU citizens and the TCNs in order to simplify the recognition of qualifications have been carried out. However, as experiences with the new legislative framework are not very advanced, the implementation of the recognition procedures is not going like clockwork (BMBF, 2014). Some obstacles have been revealed by desktop research; these results together with the analysis of additional expert interviews that were carried out during this research lead to the following suggestions for innovation.

A serious obstacle for the use of the recognition procedure is the high cost which, generally, falls upon the candidate her/himself. The cost is partially subsidized by public authorities. However, for a considerable number of TCNs this fee cannot be paid in advance. We argue that the development of a system of split finance which involves the candidates, public authorities and companies as the three beneficiaries of the recognition procedure would be helpful. As regards the candidates, a system of subsequent payment according to the achieved income level might be developed.

Standardized procedures are, of course, necessary to a certain extent, in order to have an applicable, objective and transparent recognition system. At any rate, there are some bureaucratic elements in the recognition procedure which complicate the application not only for the TCNs but also for the competent authorities. Bureaucracy does therefore hinder the entry of potential and qualified workers into the labour market. We wonder, for example, whether the multitude of various foreign documents must really be submitted, translated and attested. Another conclusion concerns the training of teachers: in Germany a teacher generally covers two or more subjects. The only German state which at present allows recognition for teachers with just one subject is Hamburg (Langenfeld, 2013, p. 5). This could be taken as an example for the rest of the Federal Republic.

The skepticism of German authorities over the recognition of SKC obtained through non- and informal learning cannot be ignored. Thus, it is important to increase the respect for non- and informal learning achievements. All job-seekers and

enterprises looking for capable employees would benefit from SKC. What matters «is what one knows or can do, rather than where, when and how the learning took place» (Werquin, 2009, p. 14).

The disregard of non- and informal SKC also results from the limited possibilities of assessing them in a valid, objective and reliable way. At present, most of the non- and informal assessment procedures are confined to the registration of SKC but do not make them measurable and formalized. Besides, there is a lack of scientifically validated tools.

Model solutions for validating non- and informal SKC cannot be based on the exams approved for standardized formal learning. In order to make non- and informal SKC visible and comparable, the focus should be on learning outcomes. Learning outcome units have been developed notably by the ECET-programme². The attraction of the learning units lies in their different educational approach and especially, in their focus on practical working processes needed for certain occupations as well as in their validity and usability for Pan-European contexts. A detailed and elaborated suggestion for the use of these Learning Units is in preparation.

Considering the DM, it is one of the newer measures that are used in order to guarantee the right of equal opportunities in the economy and business world. We first collected data from recently published studies and research projects on DM. At the same time, we were in contact with several companies and organisations in the region of Karlsruhe in order to enrich and complement the data that we gathered from existing studies. The contact led to the conducting of interviews. Among the companies and organisations were SAP Germany, DM drugstore markets (retail in cosmetics etc.), EnBW (energy provider), the University of Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology) and others. In these interviews we first focused on DM activities in general and subsequently on TCNs.

Summarizing our experiences, three major findings can be formulated: *a)* DM as a sort of separate management function or managerial department was difficult to identify in both the scant research studies that contain empirical data or authentic business cases and our own case histories; *b)* The pre-described category of TCN, although being a crucial political term with a specific significance in modern European societies, was hardly present in the empirical evidence provided by the data; *c)* The conclusions lead to proposals that match the main proposals of the project as a whole. These results are specified further on.

DM has become one of the main topics in many discourses that deal with new managerial trends and challenges. One of the reasons for the strengthening of the term is undoubtedly the political pressure that is applied and maintained by the public and by politics. The pressure is more obvious with reference to “gender” as different movements towards equal opportunities for women have been very active in the last decades. Beside public pressure, there is a growing and demanding challenge linked

² Nationale Koordinierungsstelle Ecet (*n.y.*). The sources Bmbf, 2010 and Bmbf, 2012, illustrate this approach appealingly.

to demographic change in Germany, “age”, “ethnic diversity” and “disabilities” became suitable categories for introducing DM activities as well. One could say, therefore, that DM is much more than just a trend; it is almost becoming a core component of management activities that is kept and maintained continuously, in all sectors and in all types of organisations. But only almost – because of two reasons.

First, DM is systematically developed, implemented, and controlled only by relatively few companies (cases of best-practice that have been implemented for some decades). A large share of German industries belonging to the SME segment neither has a systematic approach towards DM nor is necessarily intending to implement it – even though they may be aware of its advantages and potential. This might be slightly different in the case of some non-for-profit organisations such as church organisations or public services where an ethnical standpoint is more present or even constitutes the basis for value-driven management practices and styles.

Second, DM is still not a managerial function such as, let’s say, marketing or distribution and sales. It is often unclear where it belongs to in a functional and organisational perspective. There seems to be a positive correlation between *a)* the commitment of the executive board towards DM, *b)* the explicit mention of DM among the main strategic goals of the company, and *c)* the satisfaction of the manager who is in charge of DM implementation (Köppel, 2014). In the companies we studied, this correlation did not often exist, if at all (except Sap). As one of our interviewees put it: *“Diversity is still not developed in the sense of an affirmative action”*.

Many companies are still not actively opening doors to diversity, but would rather deal with diversity through a series of quite different managerial activities. The search and the fostering of a diverse workforce in Germany still are, obviously, arduous and tough, and not yet as targeted and specific as they could be. As far as “gender” is concerned, many companies hesitate to guarantee fixed percentages of Board positions for women. In the case of TCNs or “ethnic differences”, more than one tendencies can be identified or named. Research has not been able to prove an immediate correlation between DM and economic success. We can at least say that “change” has to be accompanied by a more general shift in the company’s culture. However, there is little evidence in our empirical data that DM activities have led to a cultural change in organisations. If cultural change follows strategy building, than the focus must lay on the latter.

DM activities regularly (or even automatically) overcome the cognitive biases related to diversity. Previous studies as well as our own research data show that the benefit of DM activities disappear because of the ideological patterns that are underlying decision-making-processes. In sum, a crucial point with regard to the success of a sustainable implementation of DM measures is the development of a strategic view of this dimension. Whether it is a strategy that forms part of the key directives of the companies, or a strategic option that is chosen from a series of alternatives, the explicit direction of the deployed activities towards a specific DM target is of decisive importance.

Finally, one of the major findings of the case histories carried out during the research was that TCNs were an unknown category in the companies. We would therefore make a distinction between the case histories on a descriptive level and an analyt-

ical level. On a descriptive level, TCNs are sort of “invisible” in the companies as far as their nationality is concerned. Many companies cannot even tell what the number of TCNs among the members of the workforce is. The reasons for which they are recruited range from linguistic expertise, to knowledge about a specific region, up to a specific know-how about a certain subject (e.g. engineering and IT experts from India). Another reason may be, as well and with growing importance, the mere availability of the person on the labour market. From an analytical perspective we can assume that the recruitment and integration of TCNs is following specific and particular pathways, as explained below.

Significant parts of the society that belong to a third country, be it by birth or generational heritage (like the Turks and the Turkish-German population in Berlin and in other big urban centres in Germany), simply participate in everyday job recruiting activities; the incentives that are grounded in political developments, that are advertised abroad, and that allow highly skilled TCNs to access the German labour market more easily, help to bring people in (e.g. by obtaining the Blue Card, an internationalization office in the company would help to identify potential candidates); some of the skills of TCNs might simply be helpful for the company, without a specific attention to nationality.

The recruitment and integration of TCNs – and of course of other dimensions of a diverse workforce – yields a potential. Many German companies are aware of this potential as regards their own staff and as well as other stakeholder groups, like, for example, new customer groups. However, in many cases and as far as our German research has been able to show, the potential is not yet well specified. It is not fully apparent which measures would lead to progress, both in a systemic and in a cultural sense, and how these measures could successfully combine both the strategic positioning of the company on the market, and, at the same time, a full-scale DM strategy in and for the organisation.

Passing on to the third main topic, as a first observation, in terms of a pre-analytical finding, we wish to stress once again that the term “TCNs” does not help us in formulating precise findings and in tackling the appropriate frameworks for the analysis of phenomena in this context. Preferably, we should speak of persons with a migrational background and of migrant organisations. These terms are widely accepted and applied since 2005. They refer to all foreigners (TCNs and EU-citizens) who are living in Germany, as well as to all naturalized persons and all descendants of foreigners who immigrated in Germany after 1955 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013, p. 26). A member of the association “Turkish Community in Baden-Württemberg e.V.” (*Türkische Gemeinde in Baden-Württemberg – TGBW*), for example, responded when interviewed that their organisation is staffed mainly by German citizens (with Turkish migrational background) and that their target group is the same. What might be useful in order to precisely scrutinize the characteristics of the parts of the society that we are examining, is, therefore, a definition of socio-cultural identities, mixed identities and overlaps of memberships in different parts of the segregated society. In the course of our research, it became clear quite soon that data about migrants’ volunteering is not exhaustive yet, for two main reasons. First, there is a lack of empirical research in

this area of work. Second, the concept of volunteering is too fuzzy to be tackled only from a formal perspective. Non-formal volunteering plays a significant role in the civic participation of migrants. It can be shown that they prefer non-formal volunteering in form of *ad-hoc* engagement or neighbourhood aid, rather than undertaking formal commitments (INBAS, 2003; Huth, 2006a; Huth, 2006b; TNS-Infratest, 2009; IFD-Allensbach, 2009). The latter seems to be a rather Western-European approach; it does not necessarily belong to the concepts that are commonly used amongst migrants. Thus we argue that the analytical approach is more successful when we try to describe discrete, but emic categories, stemming from the migrants populations themselves. The main result about migrant volunteering is, however, that their commitment is not significantly different to the one of the German population as far as the domains in which they are engaged are concerned. The majority of activities are concentrated in “sports and motion”, “school” and “nursery” as well as in “religious organisations”. Another general finding is that volunteer work is linked to “age”, “social milieu”, “educational background” and “gender”, probably rather than to the migrational background of the population. In conclusion, when considering these findings two aspects should be taken into account. First, as we have tried to show, the scientific approach towards volunteering activities of migrants is lacking an in-group perspective. Second, certain fields of activities are considerably underrepresented amongst migrants, e.g. their commitment towards a sustainable treatment of the environment, the respect and tolerance for homosexuals and for handicapped persons and the commitment in emergency management and in traditional charity associations.

The participation of migrants in volunteer work is considered one indicator of integration (IFD-Allensbach, 2009, p. 55). It is beneficial in two senses. On the one hand, a benefit can be attested for the society which profits from the outcomes of the wide ranging projects. On the other hand, there is also a benefit for the volunteer who acquires new knowledge, networks and who enhances her/his personal development (INBAS, 2003, p. 1; TNS-Infratest, 2009, p. 35).

Nevertheless, there are severe hindering factors which obstruct migrant participation in volunteer work. Some obstacles originate from the legislative framework. The following factors can be mentioned, among others: *a)* difficulties in acquiring a stay permit or even an unrestricted residence permit status; *b)* exclusion from electoral activities; *c)* non recognition of qualifications which have been acquired in a foreign country and/or have non- and informal characteristics; *d)* the special status of refugee which entails restricted access to societal resources. This can also lead to discrimination and an underestimation of individual qualifications (due to cognitive biases etc.).

Besides legislative obstacles, there are four other factors which impact significantly on the possibility of and motivation for getting involved in volunteering activities: *a)* structural and social integration – the probability of performing volunteer work increases when individuals are already participating in other areas of society besides formal volunteering as, for example, in the labour market; *b)* social recourse – if the activities that are undertaken are perceived positively by the social environment, then the willingness to be active and, therefore, the probability of doing so, increases; *c)* personal resources – the possibility of voluntarily participating in activities always

depend on personal resources like time and money; *d*) organisations which are not interculturally open are perceived as “closed shops”.

Bearing these features in mind, strategies for a better commitment of migrants can be deduced. Certainly, the first factor “structural and social integration” and the third factor “personal resources” can only be dealt with through a holistic strategy, together with an enduring stamina. In contrast, the second factor “social recourse” and the fourth factor “openness of associations” can be improved, for example, by campaigning. In some associations there is only limited awareness of the fact that the opening towards cultural diversity might help to gain new resources and prepare new pathways for better integration and social acceptance. At the same time, it might be advantageous if some of the larger associations of the German basic population also re-considered the degree of their openness. A representative of German Red Cross admitted, for example, that a major aim of his organisation should be to recruit more executives with migrational background. Alongside the factors which influence migrants as individuals in terms of their engagement in volunteer work, there are also challenges that obstruct the establishment and smooth running of migrant organisations. These are not exclusively linked to the work and engagement of migrants’ organisations but they nonetheless cause difficulties for the population: *a*) problems in finding resources for the financing of initiatives and the ongoing work (e.g. funding, subcontracting); *b*) problems in obtaining adequate facilities for the work of the organisation; *c*) lack of possibilities to obtain qualification in order to develop professionally (e.g. restricted access to educational environments); *d*) problems in taking part in existing vital networks (e.g. due to unquestioned gatekeeping mechanisms); *e*) difficulties in attracting new members.

In conclusion, during the research several aspects have emerged which interconnect the investigated topics:

- a*) the most salient interconnection may be the refusal to use the term “TCNs” which was described initially and was encountered by the research teams in all three topics, expressed by companies, volunteer organisations, helpdesks/information centres and, not least, by the relevant people themselves;
- b*) a transparent system for the recognition of foreign qualifications and – probably even more important – of non- and informal SKC would provide enterprises with an efficient tool for facing an upcoming shortage in highly skilled workforce. Thus, foreigners’ SKC recognition could be a reasonable measure in the scope of entrepreneurial DM. The recognition of non- or informal competences can be envisioned especially in the area of IT-professions. Firstly, because there is a vast labour force demand, and secondly, because it is already relatively common to develop IT-competences through non- or informal learning pathways;
- c*) furthermore, the absence of company-specific SKC, which foreign and non-formal professionals are not familiar with, could be integrated on the job,

- preferably with the help of job-mentors. These job-mentors would, again, be a cross-over of recognition of non- and informal SKC and DM practices;
- d)* it is not only companies (and politics) that should open and establish a welcoming culture using DM tools; volunteer organisations face similar challenges when applying for new members of their associations. Traditionally charity associations, in particular, can attract people with migrational background, and can learn from the DM practices implemented by companies;
 - e)* as migrant organisations are finally considered serious and competent partners, another field in which the areas of business and volunteer work could learn from each other and make use of their synergetic potential is the cooperation of autochthonous and migrant entities, e.g. public authorities or helpdesks can be assisted by migrant organisations due to their intercultural orientation and insights. Companies could make use of this potential as well;
 - f)* volunteer work is interdependently linked to the recognition of formal, non- and informal SKC. First, because competences acquired through volunteer work (e.g. hobbies) usually are registered as non- or informal. An improvement of structural integration (e.g. by participation in the labour market) can lead to a higher voluntary commitment, as professional recognition, networks and income are beneficial to the individual possibilities of being voluntarily active.

The following proposals for improving the situation can be formulated; they are mainly based on local best-practice examples of migrants' volunteer work, which can serve as role models. *a)* The entities that are involved should meet the migrants' specific needs; *b)* they should involve migrants in an appreciable manner; *c)* they should foster qualification and professionalisation processes among the members of migrant groups; *d)* they should represent new organisations and initiate work in underrepresented areas of activity; *e)* they should specifically take into consideration the situation of TCN refugees.

An increased engagement towards improving the resources of the related entities would, of course, be extremely helpful. This is the basis for funds, facilities, qualifications, public relations and the recruitment of new volunteers (Huth, 2006b, p. 40).

As far as the DM is concerned, specific proposals could be formulated (Köppel, 2014): *a)* it should be clearly defined what kind of resource "diversity" is. The closer this definition can be formulated along the value chain, the easier future integration will be; *b)* a synopsis and a comparison of the global strategic position and the potential of DM should clearly show what the state of the art is; the executive board should be involved from the scratch, e.g. in a workshop about the mega-trends; *c)* everybody who is involved in decision-making processes should be made aware of experiences and anxieties related to the topic – the "unconscious bias" has to be overcome in order to gain results from the potentials of diversity. This has to be done through a rational and an emotional approach; *d)* step by step, a model for cultural change has to be developed. Low level measures, pilot projects and continuous communication on the sense-making aspect will help to elaborate on a full-scale project. Arguments refer-

ring to current challenges might help. A collective legitimation through participative workshops will be advantageous; *e)* initial management activities that are built on these measures should be in line with clearly defined managerial functions, e.g. diversity in marketing, diversity in sales etc; *f)* openness towards the overall process should be maintained. The process can only be finished on the long run; *g)* the measures should be flexible enough to meet the demands of different types of industry and different types of organisations.

What might be mentioned, as an addition to these proposals, are obstacles stemming from the political framework regarding the treatment of people with migrational background. In some cases, the political and legal framework on the national and the European scale show traces of an inflexible and ethnocentric approach towards the situation. The precondition to accomplish the tasks that are related to the complex situation under review would therefore be a re-thinking of this approach. The cognitive biases that we have mentioned can also be identified within the European political framework.

10

HUNGARY

First but Stable Baby Steps? DM Practices with Special Attention to TCNs in Hungary

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For the past 25 years and until very recently Hungary has been a net immigration country. The transition from a communist society with a planned economy to a democratic market economy in the late 1980s coincided with the first major immigration wave into the country. Migratory patterns and migration policies since then have developed into a model that is characteristic of many Central-Eastern European countries. Strong immigration of co-ethnics, and blurred boundaries between migration and Diaspora politics, relatively low labour migration into the lower segments of the labour market, characteristic but weak ethnic economies, and a low-profile and restrictive asylum system have been the main attributes of migration in contemporary Hungary. As a result of these, the relative socio-economic status of immigrants in general is better than that of the majority society – which is rather unusual in a European context (see chapters 1 and 2).

As Hungary became an EU Member State in 2004, while some neighbouring countries only afterwards, the concept of TCNs migration prior to this event is hard to be grasped in legal and statistical terms. Yet, in order to understand the recent migration situation, pre-2004 processes should be taken into consideration. Although from the late 1940s to the 1980s, the volume of migration flows was insignificant in Hungary, the late 1980s showed an important wave of immigration, and for more than two decades Hungary remained an immigration county. The EU-accession moderately increased the volume of immigration, yet from 2009 onwards the number of immigrants

¹ Based on the DIVERSE Country Report on Hungary, written by Diána Berecz, Annastiina Callius, Gábor Feleky, Tünde Nagy and Eszter Somogyi.

has been declining, in parallel with an ever-growing flow of emigration of Hungarian nationals. The characteristics of immigrants have also gradually changed, which applies to the country of origin as well: while less and less immigrants arrive from neighbouring countries, half of the newcomers are TCNs (Gödri *et al.*, 2014).

It is estimated that more than 40 per cent of the foreign nationals residing in Hungary are TCNs, and this percentage is expected to grow: about half of the new immigrants come from non EU-27 countries. Based on macro-statistical data TCNs in Hungary have a favourable labour market position: they – on average – are younger and have higher educational attainment than the Hungarian population, and half of them live in the capital, where the demand for workforce is relatively high. Additional data deriving from surveys do not only give a more sophisticated – and often less positive – picture of the labour force situation of TCNs, but contribute considerably to comprehending the nature of their social and cultural integration in Hungary.

The population of Hungary is decreasing, the society is ageing, and this process is expected to continue and be amplified in the long term (Földházy, 2013). This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the emigration of young Hungarians, therefore there is an increasing need for the incorporation of immigrants into the labour market. As the Foreign Affairs Strategy of Hungary (Government Decree 1012/2008, III. 4.) acknowledges, because of the decreasing size of the population and the low employment rate, immigration can contribute to the sustainability of the systems of redistribution. The Strategy also stresses that migrants can play an important role in the building of the knowledge-based society and in decreasing sectoral unemployment. The latter is of great importance since in many jobs there is lack of labour-force, even though in several fields and in certain regions the supply side exceeds the demand side. Not only are people with a tertiary education (e.g. doctors and engineers) scarcely available, but the same applies to specific groups of skilled workers as well. In Hungary internal (transregional) recruitment is problematic, since Hungarians tend to be less mobile. This issue constitutes a serious constraint to reducing unemployment, and measures have been taken in to tackle it. Since October 2012, unemployed persons and labour market entrants who work at a distance of over 100 km from their usual place of residence are rewarded with a monthly cash support (lasting up to 18 months), as compensation for having to pay rent for living quarters near the place of work.

It must be emphasized that «migration issues in Hungary have always been a blind spot for Hungarian policymakers, that is, no significant government activity can be traced that goes beyond administrative issues and adopting the relevant legislation package of the *acquis communautaire*» (Gödri *et al.*, 2013, p. 20). Regarding policies on the integration of migrants into the labour market, Hungary scores rather low on the labour market mobility dimension of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), with a score 41 out of 100, ranking 26th amongst the 31 mapped countries. It is noted that there is a general lack of targeted measures, and labour market mobility policies are not ready to tackle future migration needs. (Huddleston *et al.*, 2011) Yet, it seems that the government has started to realize the importance of a foreign labour-force. The Migration Strategy of Hungary indicates that one of its goals is to attract a highly qualified and skilled labour force to Hungary, in order to enhance

economic development². The fact that immigrants generally have higher educational attainment than the Hungarian population endorses these expectations, especially when taking into account the age structure of immigrants which can – even if only moderately – slow the process of the ageing of the population.

It is to be stressed that in the immigrant stock there are indeed many ethnic Hungarians, and a number of non-ethnic Hungarian foreigners from neighbouring countries. However, the structure of immigrant flow shows that in order to exploit the potential economic benefits of international migration, labour market actors – as well as decision-makers – must be prepared for a diverse set of immigrants, the majority of whom do not speak Hungarian. As stressed in the Migration Strategy, most work permits are issued to citizens of non-neighbouring countries, and in 2012 this authorisation was granted to more Chinese citizens than to Ukrainian and Serbian nationals together. Therefore authorities must be prepared for future job-seekers coming from countries with a significantly different educational system, and differing certification award criteria. Recognition of qualifications is also likely to become a more important issue.

The labour market difficulties faced by refugees and persons granted the subsidiary protection offer valuable insights. As is demonstrated by the situation analysis of the Migration Strategy, although these persons are allowed to work in Hungary, they face serious problems. Besides the poor level of education, which generally does not apply to TCNs living in Hungary, three reasons may account for this phenomenon. The first one is the inadequate command of the Hungarian language, which can hamper labour market integration of other migrants, as well. The second one is the general mistrust towards foreigners, which can seriously hinder the integration of TCNs, again, not only that of refugees. The third reason why it is hard for immigrants to get a job lies in the recognition of qualifications, which will be dealt with in detail further on.

The process of SKC recognition is one of the major issues to analyse when talking about the integration of TCNs. We identified the relevant legal instruments and stakeholders, and their role in the process of recognition, with special emphasis on the tasks and responsibilities of the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre (MEIK) which is – as a general rule – in charge of the process of official recognition of degrees and qualifications. Applicants can request either only the recognition of the level of education, or the naturalization of a degree or a certification. In the first case – the recognition of the level of education, qualification, professional degree or academic degree – the procedure is called “recognition” and in the second case – the naturalization of a degree or certification – is named “nostrification”. The official recognition, and especially the nostrification represents a serious administrative and financial burden on the immigrants. The recognition process itself is relatively flexible, as

² *Az 1698/2013. (X. 4.) Korm. határozattal elfogadott Migrációs Stratégia és az azon alapuló, az Európai Unió által a 2014-2020. ciklusban létrehozásra kerülő Menekültügyi és Migrációs Alaphoz kapcsolódó hétéves stratégiai tervdokumentum.* Adopted by Government Decree 1698/2013. (X. 4.).

Hungary has a different, but not entirely distinct system of criteria for awarding a qualification. The main difficulty is obtaining the necessary documents, and paying the procedural fees and the fees for the official translations.

As regards the assessment, recognition and validation of competences acquired through non/in-formal learning, the institutions in charge are basically the employers themselves or institutions that act as middlemen between employers and TCN employees, the latter being typically head-hunter agencies or NGOs. There is ample room for state institutions to be engaged in this field. One of the exemplary procedures is the Digital Life Cycle Map that was developed for tracking informal and non-formal skills, qualifications and competences. Such endeavours apply a holistic approach, taking into account the whole life cycle of a person, instead of focusing solely on working experience. The process of quasi-recognition takes place as part of the procedure of the issuance of the work permit. In this case, the regional Employment Office – after having consulted other authorities or organisations if deemed necessary – decides whether an applicant has appropriate education and training enabling her or him to exercise a given profession. Although the foreigner in question is not granted an official certification of her or his qualification, this costless procedure provides a certain recognition.

One of the reasons for not publishing relevant statistics may be that the potential providers of such figures are «not interested in these data; they can make decisions without them» (Gárdos and Gödri, 2013, p. 14). Despite considerable unemployment, there is a high demand for certain professionals, and generally it is the multinational companies that employ TCNs. The advantages of recognition depend on several factors, most importantly on whether the profession of the TCN is regulated by the State. In the case of certain regulated professions only the holder of a nostrified qualification can exercise the given activity. The promotion of the publication of relevant statistics is needed in order to make it possible to carry out grounded researches that can pave the path for the emergence of related policy documents. The issue of protecting the Hungarian labour market while simultaneously facing massive emigration of Hungarian youth and lack of workforce in certain positions is also an apparent controversy that needs further investigation.

SKC recognition is extremely important when determining good practices as well as issues with room for improvement. In certain cases, where TCNs wish to have SKC recognized for purposes of further education, the system is somewhat flexible as much of the responsibility is delegated to the educational institutions in charge. In case of SKC recognition, assessment and validation for purposes of employment, the picture is more complicated. As noted earlier, Hungary has a high number of professions for which an official nostrification of the degree is required – a process that requires several bureaucratic steps as well as financial assets. It remains to be seen whether the economic and demographic pressures that the country is due to face, will result in a relaxation of the policies regarding the nostrification of TCNs' degrees and therefore their employment in different sectors, previously limited by protectionist legislation. With the exception of language skills, official procedures for recognition, validation and assessment of TCNs' acquired via informal or non-formal educational channels do not exist at the moment. However, an official procedure for recognizing

non-formal and informal SKC might backfire by adding redundant bureaucratic procedures and directing the process more towards inefficient bureaucratic institutions, rather than the employers and the market. Crucially, in several cases, the recognition, assessment and validation of TCNs' SKC acquired by whatever means possible (formal, non-formal, informal) fall on the responsibility of the employer and, hence, possible good future strategies could involve training personnel in Hungarian companies to be open to TCN qualifications. For the present, suffice it to say that efficient practices of TCNs' SKC recognition by employers may result in a significant win-win situation: TCNs are not pushed towards the grey and/or ethnic economy and, at the same time, the Hungarian labour market becomes more receptive to new labour forces, which the country needs in the face of mass emigration.

Harmonization of statistics and data with regard to different sub-groups of TCNs (labour immigrants, refugees, persons under subsidiary protection) would be very important, but at present these datasets are rather fragmented and correspond only partially to each other. On one hand, it can be stated that refugees are more favourably treated than other TCNs, given that they are exempt from fees and receive information about the degree nostrification procedure already during their asylum procedure. On the other hand, the extremely low percentage of refugees benefitting from the nostrification service suggests that there are inherent problems with the current procedure. Unfortunately, however, as long as detailed statistics on the number of applications from TCNs of all cohorts, the rate of approval, the proportion of different professions and the reasons for successful/unsuccessful applications are not available (as well as information on the cause of the refusals), further discussion on the topic remains speculative.

Bearing in mind not only the fulfilment of the potential of TCNs in the Hungarian labour market, but also the need for the Hungarian economy to balance its labour market in response to the emigration of Hungarian youth, it is crucial to develop a more approachable policy environment from the perspective of professions the practice of which requires an official qualification/nostrification procedure. Indeed, the SWOT analysis carried out in 2013 by the contributors to the Migration Strategy of Hungary identifies some factors that are closely related to the skills recognition of TCNs. First, it admits, that it is a significant weakness that immigrants have to take on a considerable administrative and financial burden in order to become recognized. Moreover, the Strategy considers the lowering of the number of regulated professions a great opportunity, which would increase the labour market chances of the immigrants. All in all, the authors of the Strategy are aware of the fact that «the potential of migration to contribute to the stimulation of the economy is utilized only to a moderate extent in real terms»³.

³ Az 1698/2013. (X. 4.) Korm. határozattal elfogadott Migrációs Stratégia és az azon alapuló, az Európai Unió által a 2014-2020. ciklusban létrehozásra kerülő Menekültügyi és Migrációs Alaphoz kapcsolódó hétéves stratégiai tervdokumentum. p. 74.

When mapping the DM practices of organisations and institutions in Hungary, we find a rather eclectic picture. Profit-oriented organisations' DM practices often depend on pragmatic decisions. Organisations tend to avoid any potential risk and pre-evaluate if there is any possible danger with a suggested diversity initiative; they calculate if a specific diversity topic fits into the company's core values, improves its efficacy and produces indirectly and/or directly profit for the company. A significant for-profit company in the market will usually commit itself to a specific diversity topic that does no harm its business. However, in some cases, when diversity practises are matched to the company's needs, they are not driven solely by the desire to increase the direct revenue. A well-chosen commitment to people belonging to socially excluded, disadvantaged groups contributes to enhancing the company's image and making it more attractive to society in general. However, there are differences in the motivations and practices depending on the main image of the company. While a rapidly expanding start-up company expects from its staff openness, tolerance and respect for diversity, other big multinational companies in the research did not expect that at all. Openness and the support of individual motivation that make people feel valued are manageable in one company and do not fit into the organisational model of another company, although both groups have similar DM policies. Another important (and pragmatic) reason for developing diversity practises is to increase the company's ability to find, attract and retain high quality employees with various professional backgrounds. Some companies face labour shortages in certain divisions, and they often resort to TCN staff. For-profit companies try to find more highly-qualified staff members than those available in Hungary. Another reason is that importing know-how from abroad might make the company more successful in the market. A third important reason was that diversity practices widen the "talent pool" of the company. These processes make DM practices almost indispensable.

Designing and implementing DM practices addressed specifically to TCN personnel is not on the agenda of public and non-profit organisations in Hungary, nor will it be in the foreseeable future as only a relatively small number of TCNs are employed in those two sectors. The main reason for this lies in the fact that salaries in Hungary in the above-mentioned sectors are not competitive enough compared to the ones employees receive for a similar position in Western European countries. In addition, especially in the public administration – and in most public institutions and smaller local NGOs – knowledge of the Hungarian language is a strong requirement. Properly mastering the language can take many years of study, thus many TCNs either prefer to find a position within the for-profit sector or go to a Western European country for work. According to the results of DIVERSE research, no differential treatment is applied based on the employees' nationality in the public- and non-profit sector. That is to say, from the recruitment procedure to the signing of the work contract, and later on during everyday work, no distinction is made between Hungarians, EU-citizens or TCNs. TCN employees have the same rights and obligations within the public and non-profit organisations as their Hungarian peers. No preferential treatment is applied towards TCNs unless they belong to one of the disadvantaged groups.

In the public sector DM is in a rudimentary state. Public institutions have limited freedom to adopt DM practices unless the initiative is backed up by legislation or a superior authority gives permission to apply it. In Hungary, in accordance with “Act CXXV of 2003 on equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities” all public institutions with a budget employing more than 50 people and all state-owned companies are required to have a so-called “Equal Opportunities Plan” (hereafter EOP). Based on the law the State intends to provide effective legal aid to disadvantaged groups suffering from negative discrimination, and commits itself to ensure that all natural persons residing in the territory of Hungary are treated with the same respect. All EOPs must contain a detailed description of the organisation’s internal and external policies against discrimination and the measures ensuring equality among employees. In the public sector, compiling and enforcing an EOP can be perceived as a way to promote diversity. It is a top-to-bottom initiative by the State, which is binding to all institutions, and non-compliance can result in receiving a serious fine or other pecuniary punishment. Within the limits set by law the institutions affected have some room for manoeuvre while determining which disadvantaged groups will receive more attention. In the interviewed public institutions during DIVERSE research, mothers/families with small children, single mothers, Roma staff members and students with disabilities were the focus of DM practices. It must be underlined that TCNs or foreign citizens did not receive specific attention while designing the DM strategies in these institutions. Moreover no differentiation was made between Hungarian, EU or TCNs.

DM practices of non-profit organisations differ according to the type of the organisation. In the case of international NGOs, DM is a concern coming from the headquarters, that have well-established and developed internal diversity guidelines. However in the Hungarian local/regional offices the implementation of general DM rules – although mandatory in the long run – has only just started, if at all. In the case of international organisations with headquarters in Budapest, the adoption of DM practices is strongly associated with the personal interest and dedication of the director (or the head of the recruitment unit). Typically these organisations have already adopted some DM practices (concerning the Roma, minorities, mothers with small children), but they are not yet formalized. However, plans have been made for the future to deepen DM and formalize the different practices related to it in an internal Staff Book or Code of Conduct. In smaller local NGOs the number of foreign workers is very low. Even organisations purposefully employing TCNs do not have DM practices nor do they address the issue of DM. Furthermore, practices in respect of DM are hard to find in Hungarian local NGOs. It must be emphasised that chances are high that in the foreseeable future greater emphasis will be put on promoting diversity and adopting DM practices. As European convergence strengthens within the EU – especially in the case of the public sector – Hungary will be pushed to encourage its institutions to resort to more DM practices.

TCNs formal volunteering has not been researched and evaluated consistently in Hungary, mainly because TCNs are usually not present in the formal volunteering sector of mainstream organisations but they can be found only on an *ad hoc* basis.

This hiatus might be attributed to several reasons. First, the number of TCN immigrants in Hungary was relatively small for a long time, and their presence usually short. Second, country specificities, such as a generally low civic engagement and the underdevelopment of the formal volunteer system also make TCNs volunteerism difficult. Third, there are specific hindering factors such as a strong requirement for Hungarian language skills, lack of a specific social network, gender role issues, priority of paid work, being unfamiliar with the concept of volunteering, lack of confidence to volunteer, and lack of interest in volunteerism. Volunteering as part of the integration process (as a process helping integration), does not play a significant role yet.

One must note that informal volunteering is significantly stronger in Hungary than in Western Europe, which may be the result of the distrust towards institutions and of the habit of infrequent or occasional volunteering. There are many informal TCN organisations that provide cultural, community bonding, and other activities similar to formal organisations, and their presence in the civil sector is important. The reason for their informal functioning could be financial, cultural or practical (to avoid bureaucracy). Despite working informally, they are often well organized, even more than their formal counterparts, and therefore their involvement in the public discourse is also relevant.

There are neither specific legal regulations regarding the operation of migrants' organisations, nor a separate funding system at the national or local level the way registered national ethnic minorities have. Moreover, due to the lack of a national strategy or policy on the integration of migrants, TCNs volunteerism as a separate action is not supported, which leads to the indirect exclusion of TCNs from the Hungarian mainstream volunteer sector. As the national and local integration models and their relation to TCN migrants' organisations are not standardized, migrants' organisations had to develop various adaptive strategies. These strategies, focusing on local government level, helped to establish occasional or longstanding cooperation between local authorities and migrants' organisations. Others intend to integrate their organisations into the existing legal framework by aspiring to formal national minority status which would ease their position in the dialogue with official authorities and help them receive financial support.

The need for establishing a specific legal framework for migrants' organisations is obvious. An important step would be to involve migrants' organisations in integration policies through governmental, local governmental and non-governmental organisations, considering their organisational culture, mode of operation, and cultural specificities. "*With us and not about us*" is how TCNs organisations want to be part of the public discourses by being involved in the integration, decision-preparing and decision-making processes. Migrants' organisations contribute to shaping the public discourse and foster understanding and interaction between the host society and migrants by providing essential social services. Public authorities should therefore have a strong interest in supporting migrants' organisations and building their capacities, providing training opportunities and competence development, and supporting their infrastructure development. Other than considering migrants' organisations as clients or beneficiaries, government and local authorities should also acknowledge their role

as mediators between the host country and their sending countries, as well as their economic and cultural resources and transnational networks that can contribute to the development of the host society.

11

ITALY

At a (Possible) Turning Point Between a Constraining Tradition and Promising Developments in the Field of Diversity

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As it is well known, Italy has a long and important tradition of out-migration and has begun receiving sizeable inflows of migrants only relatively recently. Since the late 1980s the few foreigners living in the country were perceived as “non migrants”. In the last part of the century, a growing number of migrants entered Italy, often without a residence permit but were subsequently regularized thanks to one of the four mass amnesties launched in 1986, 1990, 1996 and 1998. In the following years, the presence of migrants continued to register a frantic growth, up to more than 5 million in 2010. The majority came for labour reasons, and obtained a residence permit through an improper use of the entry system (that is, simulating a call from abroad after a period spent in the submerged economy); with time, more and more migrants arrived as reunited family members.

Since the beginning of the migratory transition, Lombardy has demonstrated a particularly high capacity of attraction and absorption of new migrants – hosting nearly one fourth of the whole foreign population living in Italy – some of them coming from the southern regions. Moreover, it has played a crucial role in the evolution of both migratory processes – anticipating the transformation of an “immigration of workers” into an “immigration of permanent residents and families” – and patterns of economic and social integration – thanks to the dynamism of its heterogeneous economic structure but also to the vitality of its civil society that has given birth to thousands of organisations and initiatives addressed to migrants.

During the last 30 years Lombardy has thus been turning itself from a substantially mono-ethnic society into a very heterogeneous one, with about 180 origin countries

represented within its resident population and an incidence of foreign workers that has reached, notwithstanding the recession, about 10% of the total active population; within this group, about 80% come from a non-EU country. Thanks to the size of its territory and to the diversification of its economies, the region has demonstrated a strong and continuous attractive power and has witnessed the progressive dissemination of migrant workers in different sectors of activity and in different jobs. Also, at an individual level, several examples of upward mobility (particularly through the move to independent work, sometimes also through the recognition of the titles acquired abroad) have been registered, which take shape as migratory seniority grows, and outline the paths to emulate. However, at a general level, the needs expressed by firms and families seem to reroute foreign labour towards those segments in which it is already widely present and which, in some cases, represent the need to cover jobs deserted by Italians (as in the typical case of home-caregivers). The result is that no progress has been able to actually change the general picture of TCNs' labour market participation, which continues to be characterized by *high horizontal and vertical segregation* in specific sectors and jobs; *discrimination* (with regard to retributions, working conditions and career paths); and widespread *over-qualification* (to the point that de-skilling, reaching in the country the highest levels in Europe – with the sole exception of Greece –, represents a sort of distinguishing feature of the Italian integration model). Furthermore, all these phenomena have been exacerbated during the current crisis, in parallel with a progressive increase of unemployed migrants and more and more evidence of the risk of social dumping implied by migrants' adaptability and by the continual growth of migrant labour offer.

At the same time, more than 191,000 offspring of migrants (the majority of them born in Italy) are attending the regional scholastic system (and are now visible also in the tertiary and university levels of education), and many others have already entered the labour market, bringing with them hopes and expectations completely different from those of their parents, mostly employed in “migrants' jobs”.

The exceptional growth of both active and employed migrants that – in counter-tendency to what happened to domestic labour supply – continued also during the present economic recession, has been producing a significant impact on the local labour market, well beyond what could have been expected. Within this scenario, the regional model of insertion, just like the national one, appears to be characterized by ambiguities and contradictions, representing an emblematic case of what has been defined (see chapter 1) “the unresolved paradox of the European legacy”.

Reconstructing briefly the evolution of the relationship between immigration and the national economy, we can observe how, at the turn of the new millennium, there has been a shift from a substantial invisibility of immigrant labour to a sort of celebration of its role and of the idea of complementarity, which would soon become an unquestionable theorem both in the interpretation of inclusion paths, and in the shaping of principles on which to base the management of migration and interethnic society. It is therefore in this situation, corresponding to a particularly positive phase for occupational trends (notwithstanding the atavistic territorial unbalances and the chronic difficulties experienced by some categories of workers, women and young people *in*

primis) that the foundations of a model of integration (and society) were laid; a model destined to go towards a “demand-based immigration” leeway, that is a widespread orientation intending to base the right to reside in Italy on the requirements (quotas) of labour demand (Zanfrini, 2013). The emphasis on recruitment difficulties denounced by the enterprises, the call for necessary “arms” and “hearts” to employ in caregiving activities (particularly home-based ones, where three employed persons out of four are actually foreigners), the appeal to a duty of hospitality that would find grounds in the immigrants’ inclination to do the jobs with the lowest social gradient, together with the inevitable impact of their contribution to the balance of the pension system, are all ingredients of a sort of “liturgy” strongly rooted in the major actors involved in the process of integration.

In this picture, *the massive inclusion of the immigrant workforce has been the main factor of transformation of the Italian – and Lombard – labour market*, making quite a relevant contribution in occupational terms and also in terms of GDP production, job creation and entrepreneurial development. However, this process also contributed to reinforcing the segmentation of a labour market traditionally characterized by division lines mirroring the ascribed features and the peculiar geography of the country’s development. If it is difficult to draw a line between the function of “lubricant” carried out by immigrant labour and its presence in the area of black economy, of “gray” work and, especially, of “bad work” – with scarce protection and low pay – what is indisputable is the fact that *what was generated is a low-profile integration model, constrained by the limits of labour participation, inescapably destined to be put into question with the first “winds of recession”*. It is not by chance that in the last years the focus has been increasingly on immigrant unemployment and less on the constantly growing volumes of immigrant employment. The former is a disruptive phenomenon, because it marks the “fall” of the “demand-based immigration” theorem and clearly shows a structural disadvantage that was obscured for a long time: *the occupational vulnerability of foreign nationals, synthesized by the differential in the unemployment rates as compared to the natives*, that has always been unfavorable to the former, even if never before to such a strong extent. As a matter of fact, if TCNs, thanks to their concentration in “ethnicized” jobs (and as such protected by symbolical barriers from the entrance of indigenous workers), were at the beginning of the crisis moderately protected, the persistence of a negative framework has finally rendered unsustainable even those strategies of contraction of labour costs and deterioration of the general quality of employment that seemed to have “favored” foreign labourers (considering the significant growth of migrants’ employment precisely during crises).

Thus, an awareness emerges: the degradation of the immigrant occupational picture – certainly to be ascribed to the effects of the longest and most severe recession since the post-war period – is also *the result of a development model that has imprudently turned down a “low path”*, employing migrants in (by now) mature sectors on the way to decline (and also in less efficient businesses), without considering their human and work destiny, the prospects of mobility and professional development, and without encouraging those investments (in the field, for instance, of training and of certification of skills) that could now be strategic for a reinsertion of those who lost

their job. Actually, while gaining an increasingly multiethnic composition – a trend particularly evident in those sectors where migrants are traditionally concentrated –, the Lombard labour market has registered a growing incidence of TCNs among unemployed workers, a phenomenon which poses a new and unexpected challenge to the local employment services. Apart from the ambivalent picture given by statistics – which register the growth of employed foreign nationals together with the growth of the unemployed, the increase in absolute figures of TCN employment together with the decrease in their employment rate –, the impact of the crisis has enhanced awareness of the fact that *the same factors called upon in the past to interpret the high level of employability of immigrants and the necessity to resort to their services* – e.g. adaptability to do certain jobs and to accept hard working conditions; employment in small businesses and traditional sectors; concentration in the sectors more affected by recruitment difficulties – *explain today their exposure to the risk of losing their job or ending up in even more precarious work situations* (Zanfrini, 2013b). In such a new scenario, *work, from being a source of (and a requirement for) citizenship, runs the risk of turning into an instrument of exclusion and a stumbling block on the path to the construction of an interethnic society.*

It would be misleading, however, to interpret these phenomena as the consequence of a deliberately unfavorable, or even racist, attitude on the part of employers. As shown by the same experiences investigated within the DIVERSE project, several employers have shown an empathic attitude towards TCN workers, supporting them in the process of insertion inside, and often also outside, the workplace. As a matter of fact, *the discrimination, in all its forms, that affects immigrants is an outcome that is perfectly coherent with the processes of social and institutional construction of migrants, with the migration patterns and cultures shared by the main foreign communities* (which depict Italy as a country where it is relatively easy to find a job, provided the foreigner is willing to do, precisely, an “immigrant’s job”) and, not least, with *the arguments usually adduced to legitimize their presence and their right to be received*, which unflinching evoke the willingness to do the jobs rejected by Italians. The problem, it must be noted, does not involve only social equity and the issue of labourers’ rights. *It is the competitive capacity of the economy itself that would be severely compromised, and with it the future of our regime of accumulation and of the systems of social protection.* What must be highlighted is that it is precisely the conditions of (under)utilization of human resources that make Italy risk “missing the train” of economic recovery, which in the developed countries will be founded on activities marked by a high level of professional and technological content. It is a risk clearly reflected, as in a kaleidoscope, in the relationship between immigrants and the labour market.

It is only by starting from this awareness, and therefore from the necessity to promote, first of all, a change of a cultural kind, that it will be possible to inaugurate a new and more mature chapter in the relationship between immigration and the labour market, where the former will not be seen exclusively as an adaptable and cheap work reservoir but will rather be considered a potential to be valued. The priority until now assigned to the issue of entry selection should therefore give way to a reflection on the most suitable way to manage the migrants’ impact on the labour market, to valorise

their potential and to promote a fuller and more balanced perception of TCNs' membership in the Italian and Lombard society.

The conviction that the local labour market is not able to valorise TCNs' qualifications is certainly a crucial factor preventing migrants from embarking upon the procedure of recognition of their SKC. On one hand, this idea is certainly grounded, given that the Italian labour market tends to disregard the importance of migrants' contribution in terms of human capital and to consider their added value only in terms of adaptability and cost reduction. On the other hand, the few existing surveys, to be updated and enriched with further quantitative and qualitative research, show that TCNs who obtained the recognition of their foreign qualifications saw significant improvements in their levels of employability and earnings as well as in their position in the labour market. However, TCNs willing to undergo the recognition process often give up, discouraged by a disorienting situation and by very time-demanding and costly procedures with uncertain outcomes. Moreover, the availability of statistical information on the recognition of TCNs' competences is very limited, and substantially absent in the case of informal and non formal learning. Given such a picture, fostering discussion about the potential advantage of the process of certification could contribute to stimulate a change in the general mindset of Italian management; and this would provide transparent and reliable information about workers' competence, and convey the importance of investing in training and competence strengthening.

Concerning the recognition of foreign qualifications, procedures vary and are entrusted to different bodies depending on how the qualification is to be used. Even if laws and procedures are quite well-defined and structured, their implementation presents some shortcomings, due to a lack of information on the part of the personnel in charge. This is particularly true in public administrations, while in the school and academic world procedures are managed with greater awareness and competence. The CIMEA Centre, located in Rome, provides information and consultancy to citizens and institutions on the recognition of foreign qualifications. It represents an important reference point within this field, but its action should be supported by other bodies operating in the national territory and by training initiatives addressed to the concerned personnel of public administrations.

Some interesting practices exist in Lombardy, which is definitively better positioned than the national average. They are carried out by institutional bodies, migrant associations and temporary labour agencies, and aimed at providing correct information and at supporting TCNs during the procedure for the recognition of professional qualifications in the nursing sector, where high possibilities of employment used to be available until the recent past. Currently, in the nursing sector, labour supply overcomes demand. Nevertheless, a new scenario is taking shape that could result in new, similar recruitment practices, i.e. a significant shortage of physicians. In this case, recognition procedures will probably be even more complex and articulated and good practices of facilitation and support will be needed.

As far as the overall context of non formal and informal learning recognition is concerned, we are dealing with a still undefined reality, in progressive construction: different bodies are involved and several experimentations are taking place. The 2001

Reform of the Constitution established that both State and Regions are involved, with different roles and competences, in regulating professions. This implies a very complex and heterogeneous situation within the national territory. Concerning the field at issue, since 2001, the State should have defined a national framework for qualifications, in accordance with the EQF, and a set of standards for regional implementation, but for several years, until 2013, this task was not accomplished. Only recently, also due to solicitations from the EU, has the State improved its legislative framework and tried to harmonize the various regional situations. In fact some regions remained in a situation of stasis; some others started acting autonomously, developing very different legislative frameworks and methodological tools. Lombardy is among the most advanced regions in this field. An interesting aspect of its model is that it certifies single competences rather than complete professional profiles. In this way, the certification process gives individuals the opportunity to valorise their competences even when aggregated in non standard clusters; it also gives organisations the possibility to avail themselves of versatile workers, to whom they can entrust different and often complementary tasks. The regional certification system is based on an online procedure, considered by some key informants as not user-friendly enough, since the individual is considered as the main actor responsible for her/his certification process. Some experts argue that a methodological approach giving more emphasis to the *relational dimension* and to the role and professional competence of tutors would be much more effective in promoting employability, as it would stimulate an improved awareness of one's potential. The role of a tutor, who could be replaced by a linguistic and cultural mediator, appears to be even more crucial with reference to migrant candidates, for whom the linguistic barrier could represent an important handicap.

However, the most critical aspect concerns the fact that certifications have an institutional value, but not yet a relevant *social* value. Hence, few people – and in particular a scant number of TCNs – embark upon this very time-demanding and complex process whose outcome is often uncertain in terms of better employability or opportunities of professional mobility. To improve this situation, a greater effort should be devoted to creating awareness among employers about the benefits of such a system within the labour market. Discussion groups involving all relevant stakeholders should be promoted on a territorial basis. In addition, it would be important to create a network of qualified assessors operating in particularly prominent organisations within their professional sector, and thus able to spread the culture of competence certification in their field. In return, within the framework of *ad hoc* agreements, certifying bodies could provide these influential organisations with a database of job seekers with certified, transparent and reliable competences, enhancing the importance of competence certification for an effective recruitment and management of internal human resources. Trade unions could also have an important role in promoting the value of competence certification, but their interest and awareness in this concern are still very weak. Structured initiatives in this direction could be financed through the Bilateral Inter-Professional Fund.

Interestingly, some organisations representing certain employment sectors developed different models for the certification of competences acquired in non formal and informal contexts. These certifications do not have an institutional value, but can have

a relevant social value, linked to the recognition of the certifying body within the relevant sector. Nevertheless, this value is closely linked to a specific professional sector and national territory, and hence proves to be ineffective for horizontal or international mobility. These certifications, in sectors with a high presence of migrants such as construction or the mechanical engineering sector, are often also acquired by TCNs, even though, from a methodological standpoint, the models have not been conceived bearing in mind this target's specific needs.

An interesting development regarding tools for the validation of competences acquired in non formal and informal contexts, especially for TCNs, is related to their use in synergy with formal learning. In vocational training, it is possible to envisage individualised routes which take into consideration, following a process of assessment and validation, the competences already acquired by learners in non formal and informal contexts. In these cases, formal learning becomes an integration of already possessed competences, and results in being less time-demanding and more motivating and effective. These synergies have already been put in place in the vocational training system which is usually managed at a regional level. Also in the education system, with particular reference to the education of adults, these integrations between formal, non formal and informal learning are more and more common and consolidated. In this direction, in order to strengthen the system of adult education, collaborations between schools and the vocational training system, more familiar with innovative didactic approaches, appear to be very fruitful.

Another interesting idea that emerged from the research is the possibility to implement instruments of competence certification in pre-departure contexts, as a strategy for integrating migration and labour policies in view of a more effective management of migration flows. This issue could be taken into consideration also within the framework of negotiations of bilateral agreements between Italy and countries with a high migratory pressure.

Finally, several EU funded international projects were promoted, usually by non-profit organisations or local institutions, fostering the construction of a knowledge management system based on competence development and certification. Some of these experiences were conceived with reference to labour sectors with a high presence of migrants, such as catering or private care. Within the latter, recognition of competence appears to be particularly important. We are dealing with a highly ethnized sector, increasingly important within the Italian welfare system, which tends to take little account of the issue of workers competence, notwithstanding the delicate and complex tasks they are required to undertake. For improving the quality of private care, it is strategic to develop consolidated methods for training and the certification of competences acquired in informal and non-formal contexts. All these EU funded international initiatives are useful in this direction: they have the important role of developing reflections and dialogue on the issue of competence certification. They facilitate networking among the most relevant stakeholders and foster the exchange of good practices at an international level. Nevertheless the main weakness of these projects is that they are linked to temporary financing and often are not part of a systematic and coordinated strategy. For this reason, their development and achievements run the risk of ceasing once the project is over. To valorize and strengthen the impact

of these experiences, a system should be set up able to gather and institutionalize their results and outputs and to disseminate them, also in the long term, at a national level.

Although since the beginning of the 2000s the DM approach obtained considerable visibility in the Italian context, one of the major critical points is *the persistent gap between the espoused discourse on diversity*, such as that displayed by organisational vision and mission statements or by consultants and public bodies' recommendations, *and the real consistency of the practices implemented to enhance and valorize diversity in the workplace*. This is particularly true where national and ethnic differences are concerned, despite the relevant and growing presence of foreign workers within organisations. Indeed, this gap is not inexplicable if we take into account the specific features of the Italian context, consisting in its internal model of governance of migratory flows that, as we have discussed above, has neglected to promote measures aimed at making immigrants' potential a structural resource for the qualitative development of the national economy and society.

Actually, if we consider the reasons for choosing to resort to TCN workers, in general the case-histories reflect the Italian and Lombard models of economic incorporation, founded on the logic of complementarity: in other terms, in several cases the initial recruitment of TCNs has been determined by the need to fill specific job vacancies due to the low social gradient of the positions involved. This is especially the case of organisations operating in the fields of health and social care, and those in the manufacturing sector (or related sectors such as handling services). In some other cases, what emerged (often from the beginning) was an openness to the whole set of challenges and opportunities generated by a growing pluralistic society, with the explicit intention of incorporating the valorisation of foreign personnel – or even of the presence of TCNs in society – directly into the goals of the organisation. Furthermore, in the organisational trajectories observed, sometimes more purposeful reasons have been added to the original motives, through learning processes that over time have led to consider the possible specific value of immigrants' presence for organisational goals.

Three other points highlighted by the study appear to be somehow related to this latter consideration about the evolution of organisational motives. The first concerns the roles and functions assigned to TCN personnel. Aside from the obvious fact of depending considerably on the size and sector of the organisations investigated, these positions involve chiefly operative tasks but in several situations extend to roles of responsibility (e.g. coordinating roles or delicate tasks in the relationship with clients and users). In a couple of cases it was also possible to discern how, mainly due to the specific aims of the organisation, human resources of foreign origin are central for the organisational “core business” or mission itself. Secondly, in these organisations no negative reactions and perceptions emerge with regard to cross-culture diversity and TCNs presence. In general, managers tend to underline the positive traits of TCN workers and in particular their high adaptability to organisational needs. This appreciation sometimes alludes to distinctive contributions brought by TCNs' diverse cultural patterns of conduct at work. It is worth pointing out *the inherent ambivalence of this kind of interpretations, which, while emphasizing such propensities, result in re-*

producing common stereotypes about the role of TCNs. Actually, most of the organisations involved in the process of TCNs insertion – and sometimes advancement – play a role in developing, among both internal and external stakeholders, a familiarity with people coming from different contexts, giving visibility to their contribution. However, on the other hand, concurring – in many cases – to the concentration of TCNs in those sectors and positions already marked by their presence, they feed the idea of complementarity, reproducing the traditional model of integration.

Among the contextual conditions influencing DM practices in the organisations observed, a key role is played by the specific collective cultures they have developed throughout their “natural” evolution. In particular, and leaving aside a couple of cases where the institutional identity and mission themselves revolve openly around values and goals linked to cultural pluralism and the valorisation of diversity, most of these organisations have developed value systems which, formally and more often informally, appear to be intrinsically coherent with the (ethical) tenets of inclusiveness.

Similarly, another overall area whose relevance has to be stressed is the system adopted (or “in use”) of HRM, particularly in two respects. The first regards employee motivation, especially in the form of symbolic mechanisms of involvement which – through the daily recognition of workers’ contribution – succeeds in obtaining the commitment and the retention of collaborators, including TCNs, even when employed at the lowest levels of the hierarchy. The second aspect deals with leadership styles, which, also by intertwining with socially-oriented organisational cultures, concur, on average, to sustain internal climates based on collaborative relational models and respect for individual needs and rights. Furthermore, in some cases personnel training and development processes are regarded and implemented as basic tools, resulting in the improvement of the quality of services offered and in more opportunities for professional growth and advancement also for TCN employees. However, some investments in training are visible also in the small realities included in the sample.

Coming to the key topic of DM practices addressed to TCNs, these organisations’ engagement in the field of diversity is characterized by the prevailing role of informality and evolutionary conducts. Actually, many of them have formulated and circulated formal statements which more or less openly refer to diversity; in this regard, an exemplary case is provided by the corporate agreement signed between a small enterprise and union representatives aimed at guaranteeing TCNs’ specific rights, such as benefiting from long leave periods. This notwithstanding, in general DM has emerged primarily as something that is strictly related to the evolution of the organisation, rather than as a well-defined system of planned and targeted interventions. Significantly, a variety of practices of integration and valorization of immigrant human resources emerge, which sometimes intermingle with other kinds of diversity (e.g. religious background, family status). These include, firstly, forms of practical support aimed at assisting foreign workers in tackling a number of basic needs (e.g. advances of pay). Albeit elementary and usually implemented on a case-by-case basis, such practices appear to be quite crucial in that they tend to promote individual conditions of serenity and productivity at work, which are prerequisites for favoring the expression of workers’ attitudes and potential.

A second area concerns the communication and socialization of inclusiveness-oriented organisational cultures. From this standpoint, apart from the adoption of formal statements, some organisations have implemented initiatives, addressed to the whole staff, for increasing awareness about the opportunities related to a diverse workplace.

A third type of organisational action involves the reshaping of some personnel management mechanisms by means of, for example, reaching an agreement with a foreign training centre for recruiting TCN nurses, ensuring flexible working hours, adopting tools and materials in different languages in order to better welcome foreign newcomers, and providing advancement opportunities for people in low-level job positions.

Fourthly, in some of the organisations investigated a set of practices is connected with the explicit search of organisational performance goals by means of cross-culture diversity in human resources. This is pursued – and, apparently, obtained – through various processes; for instance, the placement of foreign personnel in important positions, by resorting to them in the implementation of specific strategic lines (e.g. meeting foreign customers' needs, market penetration in foreign countries), and, *tout court*, by using the staff's multicultural composition as the key resource for reaching the organisation's institutional purposes.

As for difficulties faced in the realization of DM practices, only two aspects are worth mentioning. The first is that, in some cases, promising projects or informal "traditions" had to be abandoned due to pressures to reduce costs. The second critical situation concerns negative reactions and resistance that several of the organisations studied had to cope with, internally and sometimes externally (i.e. clients' reactions), with respect to the practice of conceding holiday period extensions to TCNs.

Shifting to another pivotal issue, that of the impact of DM practices, the research has shed light on a number of "virtuous" effects related to the presence, and especially the management, of TCN workers. These impacts are to the advantage of two actors. The first is given by foreign human resources, who can receive benefits in terms of work placement, the availability of tools for handling problems related to their migrant condition, the chance to see their contributions and skills recognized and thus have opportunities for professional development and/or career advancement. The other party obtaining benefits from cross-culture diversity (and its management) are the organisations studied. Generally speaking, they seem to have variously achieved performance advantages (though not always explicitly sought) with regard to personnel involvement and retention, the interaction with heterogeneous clients/users, and sometimes the ability to find solutions to specific operational problems. The advantages for the organisation are particularly discernible in those cases where cross-cultural diversity is, as such, the goal towards which organisational conducts and strategies are aimed. In addition, it is plausible to assume that the distinctive diversity practices of these organisations are producing positive effects on the surrounding social contexts (e.g. development of a local community's human capital). Moreover, for those organisations in which the tenets of diversity are directly incorporated in the "institutional" mission, this social contribution tends to overlap, more profoundly, with a function of cultural dissemination and education.

On the other hand, confirming the afore-mentioned low degree of structuration of these initiatives, in the whole sample – so far – the two areas of formal assessment and communication of DM interventions have not been developed.

Finally, as for the prospects of these organisations' engagement in DM action in the next future, two observations are to be made. First, for several of them, a crucial point will be represented by their actual capacity and willingness to strengthen their present attention to the issue through more targeted policies (e.g. to derive decisions and interventions from internal monitoring of diversity). Secondly, and more generally, it has to be considered that the current situation of prolonged recession will presumably require a sort of "extra-effort" for making DM investments an organisational priority.

The reflection about the nexus between TCNs' engagement in mainstream volunteer organisations and their social integration has not yet been fully developed in Italy, neither in the public debate nor in the institutional arena. There are no specific legislative references concerning TCNs' participation in mainstream volunteer organisations; the involvement of TCNs is rare – albeit not absent – and too often is promoted only through the personal initiative of the individual citizen. This is what has emerged from our qualitative analysis, considering the substantial lack of statistical data about the volunteers' nationality, despite the fact that formal volunteering is a deeply rooted phenomenon in Italy, and probably the main vehicle for active citizenship.

Hindering factors and barriers to TCNs' formal volunteerism have been identified both from the immigrant's side as well as from the side of the organisations. In the first case, lack of language competences, different organisational cultures, a weak sense of belonging and being unfamiliar with the concept of volunteering, as well as scarcity of time and of economic resources are the main obstacles TCNs have to deal with. As far as the organisational side is concerned, obstructing conditions are for example the lack of targeted recruitment procedures, prejudices, lack of recognition of TCNs' SKC and the social perception of immigrants only as potential beneficiaries and not as active participants in citizenship practices. Moreover, there are also hindering factors pertaining to the policy level such as the institutions' lack of awareness of the role that volunteering plays in boosting social inclusion and the corresponding scarcity of targeted policies aimed at promoting TCNs' engagement.

Despite this picture, the research conducted in Lombardy has permitted to identify some experiences that can be viewed as good practices, since they both consciously promoted TCNs' engagement in their activities and highlighted TCNs' contribution to the development of the whole society. The first organisation involved TCNs – in some cases past beneficiaries of its services – in providing foster care to unaccompanied foreign minors, valorizing the intercultural dimension of help. The second engaged migrants of different nationalities in its mission of promoting, among old and new residents, knowledge and interest towards the artistic, cultural and environmental Italian heritage. The evidence coming from the analysis of these two experiences furthermore highlighted how *formal volunteering can be considered a privileged tool for TCNs' social inclusion as it encourages the development of inter-*

community relations by enabling volunteers, host community and organisations to integrate. Furthermore, it allows newcomers to actively participate in the development process of the host society and to be fully recognized as active actors in their integration path.

TCNs' ethnic associationism has been widely explored in Italy and particularly in Lombardy. The existing literature depicts it as a very heterogeneous phenomenon in terms of history, degree of formalization, ethnic composition, internal structure, temporal stability, type of activities promoted and type of relations established with other local actors. However, despite its high level of fragmentation, it is possible to highlight some general tendencies and common features. The first one concerns the genesis of TCNs' ethnic associations: their main aim is nearly always the desire to integrate their members into the host society and almost all the activities they promote can be related to this general objective, which nonetheless does not consist in a desire to be assimilated into Italian society. As a matter of fact, most of them are fully committed to maintaining the cultural identity of their motherland, which is often promoted through cultural activities addressed to both second generation immigrants and the natives. The second common feature regards their organisational weakness and inner structure: most of them are unstructured and often have a little influence on the social and political life of the host society. Furthermore, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, the tendency of public institutions to rarely assign them tasks and funds because of their weaknesses, impedes their gaining the experience required to achieve greater competence and reliability. The third common feature regards the hindering factors that most of ethnic associations have to face: lack of financial resources and a low level of professionalism, as well as the lack of adequate infrastructures and the high level of difficulty encountered when applying for funding.

Our research has focused also on the influence of transnational links promoted by TCNs' associations in terms of economic, political and cultural activities. With regard to this aspect, different "pilot projects" have been launched with the aim to involve TCNs in the promotion of development in their home countries. In particular, the Municipality of Milan confirmed this new institutional approach by promoting some initiatives aimed at enhancing TCNs' human, social and economic capital both in the sending and hosting communities, such as the Call for proposals "Milano per il co-sviluppo" and the establishment of a second level association composed of 80 different ethnic associations, aimed at integrating migrants in the host society and involving them in co-development projects.

As far as the local context is concerned, two experiences regarding TCNs' ethnic associationism have been also identified as good practices, as they both managed to become peer interlocutors with the different local actors and gained influence in the decision-making process, thus contributing to the acknowledgement of the role of TCNs as active actors of development both in the receiving and in the sending countries.

Finally, two specific measures, adopted by the national government, highlight an incipient institutional attention towards this topic. The first one is represented by the establishment of an Entry Visa for volunteering purposes: introduced in 2011, it allows young people between 20 and 30 years to come to Italy in order to participate in

a volunteering organisation or project. The second measure concerns the inclusion of volunteering among activities that allow to accrue credits for maintaining the Settlement Visa, according to the Integration Agreement that every TCN between 16 and 65 years has to sign when entering Italy for the first time; more in detail, participating in volunteering activities gives foreigners the opportunity to get 4 out of the 14 points they must accumulate within two years after their arrival.

THE NETHERLANDS

A Case Study on the Healthcare Sector in the Arnhem-Nijmegen Region

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The Netherlands has the ambition to gain a competitive edge in the global knowledge economy. At the same time, similar to most European societies, it faces demographic challenges. In 2040 it is expected that for every two persons included in the working age population (aged 15-64), there will be one person in the retirement age (aged 65 or older) (Eurostat, 2014). For these reasons, it is essential that the SKC of all workers in the Netherlands are fully used, including those of migrants. As Table 12.1 shows, the working age population in the Netherlands includes approximately 277,000 TCNs who are legally residing in the country. These TCNs face different constraints with regard to labour market entry. For example, in order to be eligible for a work or residence permit (or an extension of it), TCNs must meet strict income criteria. Furthermore, as a result of a tight labour market, approximately one third of young native Dutch at the beginning of their career are currently settling for jobs for which they are overqualified (Berkhout, Prins and Van der Werff, 2012; Kaemingk, 2012). In these circumstances, many TCNs would benefit from a well-functioning legal framework for the recognition of SKC, and from organisational commitment to DM, with the aim to facilitate recruitment and retention of TCN staff and volunteers.

Table 12.1 Third Country Nationals by top 5 nationalities in the Netherlands and the Arnhem–Nijmegen region (2012)

Nation	<i>Netherlands</i>		<i>Region</i>	
	Absolute Value	Share of the total TCN population (%)	Absolute Value	Share of the total TCN population (%)
China	23,640	9	1,036	12
Indonesia	10,467	4	444	5
Marocco	39,978	14	638	7
Turkey	65,568	24	2,455	29
USA	13,050	5	335	4
Other	123,995	44	1,277	43
Total	276,658		8,533	

Source: Statistics Netherlands, own calculations

The present chapter discusses the results of the DIVERSE research conducted in the Netherlands where there is a single national legal framework for the recognition of SKC. The research on DM-policies and practices and TCNs involvement in volunteer work was carried out in the region comprising the two medium-sized cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen located in the south-east of the country. Due to the strong presence of the healthcare sector in this region (providing 11% of TCN jobs in the region and 21% of all jobs in the region) and some effective attempts in this sector to facilitate TCNs' entry into the labour market, a large part of this research is focused on the healthcare sector. Furthermore, diversity will become a major issue in this sector as the proportion of non-western immigrants aged 65 years and above in the Netherlands will increase from 4% in 2012 to 23% in 2060 (Garssen, 2011). The issues of SKC recognition, DM practices and volunteer work will be discussed in the three following sections. In the final part, the main findings in each section will be summarised, and a number of overarching conclusions will be drawn tying the three parts together.

In the past decade and a half, policy efforts with regard to the recognition of SKC in the Netherlands have been geared towards the development and evaluation of supporting measures alongside formal recognition. In particular, the recognition of prior learning has been enhanced since the launch of a national knowledge centre – Kenniscentrum EVC – to raise awareness of the possibilities for accreditation and recognition of prior learning and to stimulate the use of available instruments.

Recognition of foreign diplomas: the Netherlands has a well developed national infrastructure for foreign diploma recognition, which distinguishes between foreign education diplomas and professional qualifications. In each case, different procedures for qualification recognition are in place and different institutions are involved.

Foreign education diplomas: two centres of expertise decide on the recognition of foreign education diplomas at the national level. The competent authority is determined by the level of the education diploma concerned. SBB (the Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market) is in charge of

credential evaluation at the level of senior secondary vocational education (MBO), including adult education, and preparatory secondary vocational education (VMBO). The Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (NUFFIC) is in charge of credential evaluation at the level of higher education (universities of applied science and research universities) and general secondary level education. These authorities operate one central desk, the Information Centre of Expertise for International Credential Evaluation (ICDW), to which applications for credential evaluation can be submitted and which functions as a central information point for individuals and organisations. Moreover, SBB and NUFFIC are important partners advising professional bodies in charge of diploma recognition in regulated occupations on the comparability of foreign diplomas as is explained in the section on professional qualification recognition below (NUFFIC, 2014). A credential evaluation is a written statement that indicates in which way foreign diplomas and study programmes are valued in the Netherlands. If possible, a detailed and systematic comparison with Dutch educational programmes is made. In cases of substantial differences between the educational programmes of the two countries, only a general comparison is made. The statement is an indication of (usually the highest) degree a person has obtained. The written statements have advisory status only, meaning that no rights can be derived from these documents (Van der Welle, 2013, p. 126; ICDW, 2014). When it comes to the recognition of foreign diplomas the following aspects are taken into account (Scholten and Lokhoff, 2008; Van der Welle, 2013, pp.123-124): «*a*) formal criteria: international treaties, agreements, conventions, national regulations; *b*) functional criteria: goals and rights attached to the specific foreign education; *c*) process criteria: preparatory training, selection criteria, educational system, content of education; *d*) preconditional agreements: role of government».

Professional qualifications obtained abroad: To find suitable employment in the Dutch labour market, it can be beneficial for TCNs to have their professional qualifications obtained abroad recognized. In the Netherlands, several professions are regulated (e.g. doctors, nurses, lawyers), meaning that permission by the competent authority is required to be legally entitled to practice them. In case of non-regulated professions, TCNs can contact the ICDW operated by SSB and NUFFIC to have their foreign diplomas recognized. In the case of regulated professions, TCNs are required to contact the competent authority to be informed about the relevant procedures, rules, required documents, and costs to have their foreign credentials recognized and to be able to practice their profession in the Netherlands. Each competent authority applies its own set of criteria, which may vary by country of origin and occupational group. A notable difference exists between foreign credential applicants holding diplomas from an EEA country or Switzerland and those with diplomas from other countries. For diploma holders from the former group of countries, European Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU are binding since these countries have signed agreements on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications with the aim to facilitate professional mobility in Europe (Bishoen and Welbergen, 2014; European Parliament and Council, 2013). However, these directives are only relevant for TCNs under certain conditions, that include having obtained their professional diplomas in one of the participating countries or having demonstrated their professional expertise in another

Member State for several years at least. Roughly speaking, to obtain the recognition of foreign credentials several common requirements are specified by the competent authorities: the completion of an application form, a personal identification document (identity card or passport), a certified copy and/or credential evaluation of the diploma, evidence of recent practical experience, a declaration of good health and good behaviour. To assist TCNs in navigating their way to the relevant authority, NUFFIC operates the National Contact Point for Professional Recognition (NCP) in the Netherlands, an EU initiative, and runs a website providing information on regulated professions and contact details of the competent authority. The actual application for foreign qualification recognition, however, is administered directly by the competent authority, so NUFFIC merely takes up the role of knowledge broker. Competent authorities may decide that: *a)* the applicant is granted immediate admission to practice the profession in the Netherlands; *b)* she/he is granted permission subject to fulfilling specific additional requirements or; *c)* she/he is not granted permission (Van der Welle, 2013; ICDW, 2014).

Recognition of qualifications and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning: Although non-regulated professions offer TCNs a set of opportunities to work in the Netherlands, these opportunities are reduced considerably when TCNs fail to have their formal SKC recognized. In this situation, the Recognition of Prior Learning (hereafter RPL) can provide an alternative assessment route for TCNs. RPL is a well-developed system in the Netherlands. The Ministry of Education, on behalf of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, is responsible for ensuring the quality of the Dutch system of RPL. The Dutch Knowledge Centre for RPL works under the guidance of the Dutch Ministry of Education and is charged with the dissemination of knowledge about RPL. Since 2012, the right to RPL has been included in a number of collective agreements (CAs). In these CAs, for example, it is stated that employees have the right to undergo a RPL procedure every five years, or that the employer must pay (part of) the costs of such a procedure, which can range from € 700-1,500 per person depending on the complexity of the procedure. In the past, a number of financial measures such as tax discounts and funds were available, but they no longer exist. A RPL procedure usually starts with the development of a portfolio, in which a candidate collects all of her or his experiences, including, whenever possible, proof of these experiences. These experiences are then compared to a relevant national competence framework used in formal education (in Dutch: CREBO and CROHO) or in a specific sector. The next step is the assessment phase, where an assessor or expert in a specific field of employment describes the competence of a candidate based on aptitude tests or criteria-based interviews (where candidates are asked for their response or reaction in specific situations). This step results in an Experience Certificate (EC). As yet, no rights can be derived from an EC; ultimately it is up to the examination committee or the employer to acknowledge this recognition (validation). The way a RPL procedure should be implemented is stipulated in the Quality Code¹, which includes the aims of RPL, the

¹ The Quality Code can be found on: http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/evc-professionals/images/toolbox/kwaliteitscode-Evc/leaflet_kwaliteitscode%20evc_codes.pdf.; An elaboration

rights of candidates following the RPL procedure, the steps taken during the development of the portfolio, the roles of assessors and trainers, the roles of recognized RPL providers (organisations providing RPL procedures according to the Quality Code) and how they are assessed, and specific advice on how to organise RPL within organisations (Kenniscentrum EVC, 2014). Currently there are around 50-70 recognized providers² that offer RPL procedures. With respect to the labour market integration of TCNs, the weakness of the current procedure lies in the validation of portfolios. First, it has been difficult to create a sense of urgency among examination committees and employers to accredit portfolios. For employers, a commitment to RPL implies an investment in time and resources. For educational programmes, this commitment implies an exemption of parts of a programme, which has consequences for their income from tuition fees, and an acceptance of the idea that the level of SKC defined in their competence frameworks can also be learned outside formal education. Also, as RPL often leads employees to feel more confident and interested to increase learning on the job, employers might need to reorganise daily task divisions (Kaemingk, 2012). For some organisations this can be an intended outcome, but other organisations could lose employees or could face demands for higher salaries (Kaemingk and van Kippersluis, 2012). Second, RPL is affordable mostly to those who are already employed (some CAs include rights to free or heavily discounted RPL procedures). People who are unemployed have to pay themselves. Third, in order for RPL providers to organise RPL in a way that reaches the desired quality, organisations need to implement a minimum number of procedures per year (Kenniscentrum EVC, 2013). This would also apply to organisations working with TCNs. Here, the appointment of a number of recognized RPL providers that are specialized in RPL for TCNs could be helpful. These providers could work together in mapping relevant competence standards for sectors in which TCNs often find work, such as the healthcare sector. To successfully use RPL in the case of TCNs, it is important that before starting the procedure the candidate has a clear idea of her or his career ambitions (Van den Dungen and Pijls, personal communication, 14 April 2014). Competences that highlight TCNs unique migration trajectories could include intrinsic motivation (e.g., self-generated willingness to learn and work), and extrinsic motivation (e.g., responsiveness to external pressures from others, the reward of a diploma or mandatory requirements) of TCNs, including the key competences that people need in fast developing societies (Frouws and Buiskool, 2010, p. 135). These could be for example: adaptability to a new economic, working, social, cultural and language environment, ability to find and absorb information, dealing with resistance and stress, proactiveness, independence, persistence, intercultural competence, etc.

In conclusion, even though foreign diplomas of TCNs can be recognized if “no substantial differences” are found and from the idea that “differences are accepted ra-

ration of the Quality Code developed for RPL providers can be found on: <http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/evc-professionals/images/downloads/Toelichting-op-de-kwaliteitscode-voor-EVC.pdf>.

² The RPL registrar of recognized provider can be found on: <http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/werknemers/vind-eva-procedures>.

ther than neglected”, the latter has been a source of frustration among TCNs who find it hard to accept that their degrees are undervalued, even if they have sometimes already worked in their profession after graduation. Similarly, work experience abroad is not always considered in evaluations. A full autobiographic account and an aptitude test of current skill sets, taking the individual as a starting point, as opposed to recognizing the university that issued the diploma or the country where work experience was obtained, would be important. The Dutch system has made considerable steps in this regard. For the healthcare system – the chosen sector of this study – individual learning programmes are offered to TCNs who lack certain SKC. Policy efforts with regard to the recognition of non/in-formal learning have been geared particularly towards the development, experimentation and evaluation of supporting measures alongside formal recognition.

Compared to DM in the realms of gender and age, academic research on the management of cultural diversity within organisations has been limited in the Netherlands. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (2010) has identified four different motives for Dutch organisations to engage in DM: competitiveness in times of labour market shortages; enhancing workforce creativity; enhancing the integration of non-Western immigrants in Dutch society; and adapting to multiculturalism and diversity among the client base.

Normally, within Dutch organisations, one of two perspectives on cultural diversity dominates: either a “colour blind” approach or a multicultural approach (Otten, Jansen and de Vroome, 2014; Van den Broek, 2009). The colour blind approach emphasises individual performance and ignores cultural diversity among employees. Instead, a more multicultural approach recognises and values cultural diversity (*ibid*). A recent study on the temporary employment of operation assistants from India in five Dutch hospitals shows that the colour-blind approach is dominant in four hospitals. Here, both co-workers and hospital management expected the assistants to adapt to the prevailing working practices and routines. As a consequence, cultural misunderstandings were taken as a failure of the Indian assistants to integrate, and several contracts were ended prematurely (Van den Broek, 2014). Also, potentially valuable contributions of the assistants to working practices in Dutch operation rooms remained unrecognised (*ibid*).

Of the ten selected organisations included in the study conducted within the DIVERSE project, eight are health care organisations, one is a municipality and one is a bank. Seven of these are public/non-profit organisations, and three are profit organisations. There are two hospitals, two large providers of long-term care, one smaller provider of long-term care specializing in clients with an immigrant background, a welfare organisation, a large pharmaceutical company and a large producer of semi-conductors used in medical technology.

One of the hospitals is a university teaching hospital, which employs TCNs dominantly as medical researchers, while the other is a general hospital.

Since Dutch law prohibits an organisation from demanding information about nationality and ethnicity from its employees (this can be solicited on a voluntary basis only), the organisations have at best a partial overview of cultural diversity. Further-

more, they do not clearly differentiate between immigrant workers from within and from outside (TCNs) the EU. As a consequence, policies and practices with regard to cultural diversity apply to *all* categories of immigrants represented in an organisation, whether temporary knowledge workers or first or second generation immigrants.

According to the organisations included in the sample, there are two main reasons for hiring TCNs. First, TCNs are increasingly seen as an important category of workers, be they foreign researchers or second generation immigrants employed as care workers. By employing TCNs, an organisation can strengthen its competitiveness. In the case of research organisations, this is because TCNs fulfil important job vacancies. For care-providing organisations, this is closely related to the second reason for hiring TCNs: adaptation to a client base that is increasingly multicultural. In these organisations, a “matching” takes place between the language and cultural skills of TCNs and clients who voice a demand for these particular skills. In addition to these two main reasons, respondents provided ample examples of how the work of TCNs has led to more holistic and creative ways of medical or pharmaceutical research and patient treatment. However, workforce creativity is not an *a-priori* reason for hiring TCNs. The same applies to the motive to foster the integration of non-Western immigrants, which is identified in the literature.

The organisations in the sample use both formal and informal recruitment channels to hire TCNs. Informal channels include professional international networks of researchers. Furthermore, one of the care providers and the general hospital recruit TCNs through the social networks of employees (family members, neighbours or friends). The organisations use a variety of DM practices. A majority of these practices is developed in an *ad hoc* fashion by individuals who deeply care about cultural diversity. As it stands, the municipality, one of the large care providers is the only organisations with policies for cultural diversity. The first practice concerns buddy programs, through which new TCN workers are teamed up with employees, often TCNs themselves. Buddies can help TCNs understand and cope with common misconceptions, and make sure they do not reinvent the wheel when working out how to participate in professional situations and social events. At the care providers, the buddies have a social as well as a functional responsibility since new TCN workers are not always qualified yet. Until they are, buddies take the lead in performing work-related tasks. A second practice is to set up a “diversity team” responsible for the creation and dissemination of knowledge about cultural diversity. The specific roles and tasks of these teams are found to be rather different. A diversity team can be a fully-fledged organisational unit with diversity staff acting as advisors, counsellors trainers and role models. But a diversity team can also be organised as an internal labour pool of employees with expertise on cultural diversity. These employees can be asked to help out with specific diversity issues. A third practice is the use of so-called “cultural mediators”: employees who are committed to spreading intercultural awareness within the organisation in an organic, bottom-up way. They are responsible for identifying issues or problems related to cultural diversity and laying them out on the table. Where possible, they may suggest holistic or non-Western ways of treatment. Most cultural mediators have an immigrant background themselves. The majority of organisations offer training programs related to cultural diversity. Training topics vary from practical

issues, such as giving handshakes, but also to more intricate issues such as increasing your visibility in the department. Some training programs are not explicitly about cultural diversity, but it can become a topic of discussion. Finally, as regards sustainability of diversity initiatives, the ongoing commitment of the Board of Directors of an organisation is crucial. Formal commitment can take the form of joining societal initiatives to promote diversity, issuing a formal statement, or defining Key Performance Indicators (KIPs). Initiatives that are not backed by the Board run a constant risk of being removed from agendas and, as a consequence, are more difficult to implement. This has happened in the organisations that do not have a formal diversity strategy or policy, and/or have been faced with budget cuts.

A number of difficulties can be identified with regard to the implementation of DM practices. First, cultural diversity is not always prioritised due to time pressure. Co-workers often find it problematic to include diversity in their working routines. In the case of team leaders and managers, it makes a difference whether someone has a personal interest in diversity, or whether there are business reasons to consider diversity. Also, when cultural diversity is part of career development and training programs that managers are obliged to attend, they are not always very well motivated in this regard. Secondly, organisational complexity can pose difficulties. The diversity practices developed at the Nijmegen branch offices of the two other profit organisations are not systematically transferred to other branch offices in the Netherlands and abroad, and vice versa. Thirdly, cultural diversity is often seen as something that is supposed to develop spontaneously and therefore cannot be engineered. The argumentation behind this view is twofold: first, if there are no concrete, tangible problems related to intercultural awareness, there is no pressing need to focus on diversity; and second, since we live in multicultural societies, with time, intercultural awareness in organisations will increase. Both arguments seem to echo an underlying, more normative argument that in organisations it *should* not be necessary to have a diversity policy. Related to this is the fact that internal stakeholders react differently to the issue of using cultural and language skills to reach professional outcomes. In some situations, otherness is appreciated and adds to someone's professional profile. But otherness can be (made) suspicious as well, e.g. when co-workers fuel the idea that a colleague is hired mostly on the grounds of her/his cultural assets. Even if there are good reasons to increase language and cultural competence within an organisation, this is a struggle for both TCN and native Dutch personnel. De facto, with the exception of the small care provider, a colour-blind approach to cultural diversity dominates within the organisations.

Thus far, attention to DM within the organisations in the sample has produced two concrete societal outcomes. First, through the collective efforts of the care providers and the welfare organisation, several dozens of TCNs have been given the opportunity to get qualifications in the health care and welfare sectors, and to acquire practical working experience as volunteers or paid employees. A number of these people have since embarked on a successful professional career. Second, through the same efforts, notably through overcoming cultural taboos surrounding psychological help and practical life support, many TCN patients have been enabled to receive the care and attention they are legally entitled to. In sum, attention to cultural issues within DM policies

among health care organisations in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region is growing, but, as it stands, limited to particular key figures. The lack of a sustainable organisational commitment and strategic/policymaking attention is especially remarkable. Board commitment is jeopardised because of budget cuts and shifts in priority. Furthermore, there appears to be a perceived trade-off between emphasizing diversity or emphasizing individual professional qualities.

Let us now consider the third main issue: involving TCNs in volunteer work is important for both symbolic and practical reasons. It conveys a positive message about the willingness of a receiving society to make use of TCNs' capacities. At the same time, it enables TCNs to obtain work experience and knowledge about local working cultures. In the Netherlands, TCNs are legally allowed to do volunteer work³. In practice, however, there are various bureaucratic constraints that impede this participation. For example, the institution responsible for granting social benefits uses the principle that volunteer work done by people who are unemployed should not get in the way of efforts to find paid work. This regulation puts TCNs who wish to be involved in volunteer work particularly at a disadvantage, since the level of unemployment among TCNs is relatively higher compared to native Dutch and EU citizens (Statistics Netherlands, 2014). Also, organisations must have a certificate – a so-called “volunteer statement” – to be able to recruit volunteer workers. To obtain this certificate, they have to go through a substantial amount of bureaucracy⁴. Among others, they must sign for “liability” in case of injury or theft. Moreover, the volunteer statement is issued for specific task descriptions only. When task descriptions change, the statement is not valid anymore and a new one should be issued.

Our analysis will continue with a discussion of volunteer work that takes place in an organized context (hereafter defined as formal volunteer work). This is followed by brief discussions of volunteer work done by TCNs with transnational community organisations (TCOs) and by TCNs who are staying in an asylum centre.

Formal volunteer work. Klaver, Tromp and Oude Ophuis (2005) distinguish three organised contexts for formal volunteer work: contexts in which mutual interests are fulfilled, for example sporting clubs or student associations; contexts in which a general interest is fulfilled, such as a public library and a fire department; and advocacy organisations such as Amnesty International. In 2012, an estimated 38% of the native Dutch population participated in volunteer work (Bekkers, Schuyt and Couwenberg, 2013). The majority of volunteers are engaged in administrative tasks, advice and training, or transportation. Most volunteers are active in sports (11%), followed by church and religion (7%), health, recreation, hobbies and schools (5%). In the city of Nijmegen, there are approximately 54,000 volunteers. On an annual basis, around 70,000 voluntary activities are carried out (Nijmegen Municipality, 2012). Although

³ Exceptions concern individuals who are in the first stage of the procedure for a residence permit and are not asylum seekers (for example newly arrived spouses of TCNs).

⁴ For an overview of all legal steps: http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.nl/?content=/17/Wet_en_regelgeving.

data on volunteer work done by TCNs is not available, the research suggests that they are underrepresented in formal volunteer work. They are mainly active in religious organisations, sporting clubs and nursing and care homes. Examples of activities performed by TCNs in these homes include providing coffee, tea and self-baked cakes; reading newspapers, taking walks and playing board games with residents; and grocery shopping. Following consultations with TCNs who engage in formal volunteer work it emerged that important reasons for doing so are to enhance their professional network and to gain work experience in the Netherlands, with the ultimate goal of finding paid employment. However, the latter goal is not always achieved, as volunteer work does not provide the relevant professional contacts required to make the transition to paid employment. In this sense, TCN's experience a "hard" boundary between volunteer work and paid work. As things stand, local organisations that provide volunteer work do not know very well how to attract TCN volunteers. The local Scouts club suggests that efforts to find young TCNs did not succeed because Scouting has an "upper class" image in several countries of origin. In general, it seems that very few organisations have systematically considered diversity in their recruitment policies.

Transnational community organisations (hereafter TCOs) are actively volunteering with TCOs. There are many TCOs, in the Netherlands as well as in the city of Nijmegen. They usually concern associations of first generation migrants and offer various possibilities of social exchange. Major motives that play a role in TCN volunteer work with TCOs are meeting (former) compatriots, supporting newcomers, staying in contact with the country of origin, supporting the region of origin by setting up small development projects, and lobbying for migrant rights. However, since many TCOs are organised in an informal way, they are not usually considered as an "organized context". This informality could be a reason why TCN volunteer work tends to be underestimated. It is possible that TCNs are more attracted to informal volunteer work for the benefit of an extended family or social community than the native Dutch⁵.

Finally a note on TCN asylum seekers who do not have free access to the labour market. In a 2013 report called "Verloren Tijd" (Lost Time), a commission of the Ministry of Security and Justice (ACVZ, 2013) acknowledged that, in one way or another, asylum seekers should remain active and be encouraged to volunteer. Before the writing of this report, volunteer work by asylum seekers was discouraged. Until they obtained a residence permit, they needed to orient themselves first and foremost towards returning to their home countries, without becoming attached to the Netherlands. Due to lobbying of nationally organized civil society organisations, the most recent policy (September 2014) prescribes that volunteer work by asylum seekers is allowed in nursing and care homes, (under the condition that this does not displace paid work) and in environmental organisations that are dependent on volunteer work (this concerns work in the open air). This policy allows TCNs to obtain skills through volunteer work or through short courses in, for example, car repair, painting, carpentry, reading and writing, languages, body care, hairdressing, swimming, welding,

⁵ It should be noted that these assumptions have not been verified yet.

sewing and so on (Ministry of Security and Justice, 2013), regardless of the outcome of their appeal.

In conclusion, the Netherlands offer various opportunities for TCN professionals but only on the condition that TCN job seekers or employees are willing and able to demonstrate SKC. The Netherlands has a rather strongly developed national legal infrastructure for the recognition of credentials that are obtained abroad. However, the system has a number of flaws, as is experienced by TCN workers and is acknowledged by experts in the field. TCNs who are in the process of obtaining recognition of their qualifications often find out that their qualifications are, in the end, not considered equal to the corresponding Dutch qualifications. This can be a frustrating experience, especially for TCNs who have relevant work experience within their broader profession. Where compliance with the legal system for formal diploma and qualification recognition is a problem, alternative methods for RPL become relevant. RPL is an important alternative route for TCNs to gain access to the labour market in situations where they do not meet the requirements of the formal procedures for the recognition of foreign diplomas and qualifications. In the Netherlands, a well-developed system exists. Within this system, due attention is paid to the valorisation of non/informal learning. A key challenge identified by experts is the commitment of educational institutes and employers to valorise these learning experience as part of broader initiatives to foster cultural diversity. Indeed, the investigation of policies and practices with regard to the management of cultural diversity in ten case-study organisations in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region showed that systematic attention to this issue is still limited. Within these organisations, DM practices are often developed by individuals who are strongly committed to cultural diversity and who act as anchors of these practices in the organisation. These individuals often have an immigrant background themselves and/or they are visionaries seeing the value added of a diverse workforce for organisational performance. Successful practices include diversity teams, in which knowledge about cultural diversity is bundled and shared within the organisation, buddy programs that help TCNs to integrate into an organisational culture and training programs designed to raise intercultural awareness. At present, due to time pressure and a lack of commitment from the side of higher-level management, not all of these practices prove to be effective. However, with the growing diversity of the population of the Arnhem-Nijmegen region, the client base of the health care organisations in the sample is also diversifying. This, in turn, is likely to strengthen the case for DM in the near future. A question that needs to be addressed by many organisations is how to move from relatively isolated sets of practices, developed by individuals or teams, to a more integrated vision on cultural diversity. On the one hand, such a vision should be sensitive towards the fact that colour blind approaches can seriously hamper the integration of TCNs into Dutch organisations (Van den Broek, 2014). On the other hand, it should be open to the consideration that overemphasising the cultural “otherness” of TCNs may not be deemed desirable by TCN employees themselves. Volunteer work can be a strong tool to improve TCNs chances of paid employment, especially in a setting of mutual support, where organisations that provide volunteer work understand that by helping a TCN to develop certain competences, organisa-

tional processes can be improved, and vice versa, when TCNs develop their personal ambitions while engaging in voluntary activities. In this process, TCNs are enabled to discover or develop a professional identity, which is recognized foremost on the basis of their contribution to the organisation – in contrast to their nationality, legal status, ethnic origin, work status (unemployed) et cetera. However, the role of volunteer work should not be overstated, as formal regulations (e.g. Dutch employment law) currently hamper TCNs' involvement in voluntary activities. Moreover, the relation between involvement in volunteer work and obtaining paid employment is unclear.

This chapter has illustrated the current state-of-the-art with regard to the recognition of SKC in different stages of labour market integration of TCNs in the case of the Netherlands. In this effort we looked at the “front door” to recognition, by studying relevant legal and institutional frameworks for the recognition of formal SKC as well as informal and non-formal learning, and by looking at the recognition of these competences in the workplace. We also looked at the “back door” to recognition for TCNs aiming to gain entrance to the paid labour market through involvement in volunteer work. Even though important initiatives have been taken by national authorities in harmonizing international credential recognition, by local organisations in developing alternative routes to the recognition of prior learning, and by employers in introducing effective DM practices, many TCN competences remain unused in the Dutch labour market. Tapping more effectively into the economic potential of this group might provide the Netherlands with the human capital it requires to become a key player in the global knowledge economy.

Immigrants in a New Immigrant Country Institutions, Society, Economy and TCNs in Łódź

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In almost 50 years of socialism, immigration to Poland was minimal – 1,000-3,000 people annually (Okólski, 2011). Occasionally, Poland granted asylum to political refugees from former communist countries – e.g. in 1948-1950 to 13,000 Greeks, to the victims of the Korean War, to a number of Chileans after 1973, as well as to Palestinian rebels and refugees from other Arab countries. The number of foreign students, residents of other socialist countries, admitted every year did not exceed one thousand. The fall of socialism in 1989 initiated systemic social, economic and political changes that had a substantial effect on immigration to Poland.

After 1989, Poland experienced the first global migration flows since the Second World War. Following the socio-economic transformation taking place in our country, and the liberalization of regulations governing the entry and stay of foreigners in the Republic of Poland and many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Poland soon became a transit and a destination country for some categories of migrants and nationality groups. At that time, immigrant communities started to develop as well, the Armenian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian and Belarusian groups being the most numerous. The year 1990 brought a wave of refugees. Some of them were diverted from Sweden, which considered Poland to be a safe country, capable of providing proper care for them. Others – the citizens of the former USSR, which was in the process of dissolution, were looking for shelter to protect themselves from the adverse effects of growing ethnic and nationality conflicts. Last but not least, due to its geo-political location, the country became an important point on the routes used by illegal migrants

and persons who wanted to move to Western Europe and treated Poland as a transit country. The largest numbers of immigrants were found mainly in big cities: Warsaw, Łódź, Krakow, Poznań, Gdańsk, Wrocław and Szczecin. Moreover, most immigrants residing in Poland inhabited highly industrialized or fast developing areas, such as the Katowice, Warsaw, Łódź and Krakow agglomerations (Okólski, 2011).

The next radical change came in 2004 when Poland joined the European Union. Due to the free flow of people within the European Union, Poles migrated for work to countries with work force shortages, particularly Great Britain and Ireland. The increased labour migration, the spectacular economic growth of Poland after joining the EU and the decreasing rate of unemployment, resulted in the growing problem of work force shortages signaled by employers, especially in sectors such as agriculture or construction. This launched a discussion on opening the Polish labour market to foreigners and the need to change the current policy. As one of the transformation leaders and the fastest developing countries, Poland became attractive to the inhabitants of areas with smaller economic potential.

This chapter summarizes the results of extensive research on the effect of institutions on TCNs access to the regional labour market. The first part briefly introduces the Łódź region and illustrates the presence of TCNs on the region's labour market. We then discuss the legislative framework and regional initiatives related to the recognition of TCNs skills and competences. The third section presents diversity management practices implemented by public, pro-profit, and non-profit organisations. The last part deals with the issue of TCNs' participation in volunteer organisations active in the region.

The migration policy of Poland, both in the socialist period and during the first two decades after its decline, was highly restrictive. Its main purpose was to minimize the inflow of immigrants to Poland. The situation has gradually started to change only recently. However, the present economic crisis hampered the inflow of TCNs for a certain time (2010-2011). High unemployment – an effect of the political transformation and restructuring of the economy in Poland – was a hindrance to opening the Polish labour market to foreigners. The labour shortage due to the significant labour emigration of Poles after joining the European Union in 2004 caused a revision of Polish immigration policy so far. The labour shortages concerned employees of the secondary sector (unskilled workers in services, agriculture and industry). In reaction to these shortages, the labour market was opened to the citizens of selected former Soviet republics (work permits were issued for 6 months over a period not longer than 12 months).

The restrictive migration policy, as well as lower earnings and unemployment higher than in other post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, resulted in a very small inflow of TCNs to Poland. Currently, Poland shows the lowest share of foreigners in the total number of population among all EU countries. The marginal presence of foreigners in Poland triggered a development of the migration policy, which was accelerated as a result European Union regulations. In other words, the scale of immigration to Poland is so small that the immigration policy and regulations

are not well developed and are limited to the laws and regulations passed by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

TCNs arriving in Poland after the fall of the socialist system in 1989 came mostly from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. At the beginning of the XXI century they were joined by immigrants from Armenia and Georgia. However, these two countries are much less significant than Ukraine or Belarus. Immigration from the former Soviet republics to Poland is a consequence not only of the geographical location, but also of the historical past shared by the two countries, as well as of their cultural and language affinity. TCNs from the former Soviet republics get assimilated easily and dominate among the immigrants who decide to settle down in Poland. Moreover, many Ukrainians remain *trans-migrants* or *circulative migrants*, occasionally going back to the Ukraine (Okólski Marek. 2010, pp. 23-68).

The mid-1990s was a time when TCNs from Asia started to arrive in Poland, initially mostly from Vietnam. They worked mainly in gastronomy and trade. The area with the strongest concentration of Vietnamese and other TCN groups is the region of Warsaw and other large Polish cities. Press reports and some authors point to the poor integration of this group, in contrast to the immigrants from the former socialist countries (Polakowski, 2011). At the beginning of the XXI century, immigrants from Asia were joined by the citizens of China and India. Apart from physical workers and people finding jobs in trade, the newcomers from these two countries included managers of foreign investments. The latest National Census (2011) showed that Poland was permanently inhabited by about 63,000 foreigners, which made up only about 0.2% of the permanent residents of Poland. In the Łódź region the share of TCNs is similar to the national average.

From the beginning of the industrialization period, the region of Łódź was connected with textile production. In the initial period of rapid demographic and economic development (the turn of the IXX and the XX century), the success of the city and the region largely depended on the inflow of foreigners – mainly Jews, Germans and Russians. The multicultural character of the region ended at the end of the Second World War, but its mono-functional economic profile was preserved. It was not before the 1960s that a strong industrial function was developed outside the Łódź metropolitan area (the mining and energy industry complex in Bełchatów and the production industry in Piotrków Trybunalski, Skierniewice and Sieradz).

The fall of socialism and the beginning of the political and socio-economic transformation meant the decline of the economic base of Łódź – the main city of the region. It was a city which was most strongly affected by the adverse effects of the restructuring of the economy, which lasted there longer than in other large Polish cities (Węclawowicz, 1996). Łódź and other major cities in the region started to develop again only after 2002. In the case of the Łódź region, the deciding factor of the economic development was direct foreign investment in the production industry and services (e.g. BPO or huge shopping centres).

Despite the decline of large light industry factories in the early 1990s, production survived thanks to small enterprises. It was helped by the creation of one of the largest open-air market trading centres in Poland, which developed due to the inflow of

customers from the former Soviet republics (Marcinińczak Van der Velde, 2008). These sites, situated on the outskirts of Łódź, like other huge clothes markets in Poland, became the outposts of immigrants from China and Vietnam.

The breakdown of the economic base of many towns in the Łódź region led to depopulation (population shrinking). The area which was affected by depopulation the strongest was Łódź, which lost over 100,000 inhabitants. The demographic situation of the region, and especially its main cities and towns, is worsened by the process of population ageing. Combined with the labour emigration of the working population after 2004, the ageing of society has caused serious labour shortages, despite the relatively high level of unemployment. We must stress here that unemployment in the Łódź region is mostly structural – the unemployed are mainly persons with low qualifications and a low level of education. In the 1990s, they were mainly former employees of huge, unprofitable industrial plants, who were unable to adapt to the new economic conditions.

To sum up, despite its dynamic economic development in the last decade, Poland is not a popular country among TCNs. The majority of immigrants settle down in the region of Warsaw. The region of Łódź attracts fewer immigrants from the Third Countries than the regions of other large Polish cities, especially the so called “transformation winners” (Węclawowicz, 1996): Gdańsk, Krakow, Poznań and Wrocław. The structure of the TCNs residing in the region of Łódź largely reproduces the pattern typical of Poland: the most strongly represented were persons from Ukraine, other former socialist countries and Asia. Similar to the rest of the country, the majority of TCNs residing in the region of Łódź were persons employed in posts which did not require high qualifications.

Immigrants residing in the region of Łódź worked mostly in industry and trade, depending on their country of origin. Interestingly, some forms of ethnic niching can already be distinguished. TCNs arriving from Asia occupy specific niches in the labour market. The Chinese, who made up about 10% of all TCNs in the Łódź region thus constituting the most numerous group, found jobs mainly in industry and trade. People arriving from Turkey worked first of all in trade (60% of all Turks), making up nearly 20% of the total number of TCNs employed in this sector. A similar concentration pattern was typical of the immigrants from India. Persons who arrived from Vietnam took over the gastronomy niche. This sector employed nearly 70% of all Vietnamese immigrants, and their share in the total number of TCNs working in gastronomy was 40%.

At present, the number of immigrants in Poland is too small to stimulate work on designing and testing new institutional solutions concerning the presence of TCNs. Their presence in the region of Łódź is rather marginal, which may mean insufficient interest in this problem on the part of the local authorities.

So far, the research on TCNs’ presence on the Polish labour market has focused on the scale of foreigner inflow and their employment structure. Moreover, the available scientific papers and reports have not been focused on specific sectors of the economy, but rather on specific groups of foreigners or general conditions of employment. There are no detailed works devoted to the narrow issue of TCNs’ SKC recognition.

Nevertheless, there are interesting works illuminating the role of TCNs on the labour market in Poland. The majority of works are devoted to the most numerous group of TCNs in Poland, i.e. the Ukrainians Korczyńska and Duszczyk, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Golinowska and Brunarska, Grotte and Lesińska. The works mentioned above point to the considerable number of TCNs who are employed illegally and to the formal barriers (restrictive laws) regulating the employment of foreigners. The same trend also characterizes other TCNs: Górny *et al.* 2010; Duszczyk, 2012; Fihel *et al.*, 2011; Polakowski, 2011; Klaus, 2011. In 2013, about 30,000 immigrants were registered as living and working in Poland, while the estimated number of irregular immigrants fluctuated between 50,000 and 450,000.

Despite introducing some changes in order to liberalize the immigration policy in Poland, it is still restrictive. The available data used in this chapter refer only to TCNs legally residing in Poland (in possession of a residence and work permit). Moreover, interviews conducted with representatives of the public sector at the national, regional and local level referred to the issue of SKC recognition in the case of TCNs who were applying for legal employment in Poland. Unfortunately, as shown by the overview of publications and reports on the presence of TCNs in Poland in the last two decades, the available statistical data do not fully illustrate the phenomenon. The number of TCN immigrants working in Poland illegally is at least equal to the number of those who work legally. Unfortunately, the existing legal solutions refer to the recognition of SKC of those TCNs who reside in Poland illegally. In their case, the professional qualifications assessment depends solely on the employer. The situation practically does not change in cases where illegal immigrants (those without a residence permit) want to legalize their stay, taking advantage of the abolition of penalties for illegal immigrants who wish to regularize their position in Poland. After doing so, they may apply for a job without having to obtain a work permit.

The analysis of the existing legal regulations and administrative procedures applied for the recognition of TCNs' formal and informal professional qualifications showed many elements which need changing. A significant problem in recognizing TCNs' formal qualifications is the lack of suitable regulations. That, as well as the large number of regulated professions (the practice of which requires certificates/diplomas confirming specific formal qualifications), are the reasons why professional qualifications gained by immigrants in Third Countries cannot be recognized in Poland by the pertinent bodies for verifying them and issuing work permits to foreigners.

The existing regulations divide TCNs into two groups. The first one consists of TCNs who look for work in professions which require high qualifications. In their case, the legal loophole concerning formal professional qualifications recognition practically does not exist. These persons are subject to the same regulations as the citizens of EU Member States, which means that their qualifications recognition is clearly defined. In the case of this group of TCNs, unless the law provides otherwise, an important requirement is the validation of the university diploma, which makes it possible to recognize their education. TCNs who want to work in sector professions must

pass the state examination. Considering the fact that exams of this type are taken in Polish, it may be an insurmountable barrier to many new immigrants.

A less privileged group comprises the remaining immigrants from Third Countries, who want to work in regulated professions, i.e. those who are looking for jobs other than those requiring high qualifications. Taking into account that many professions which do not require high qualifications undergo regulation, access to them is limited for TCNs. In other words, the formal professional qualifications of many TCNs, though mostly matching Polish standards, are not recognized in Poland. Thus, immigrants are forced either to accept jobs below their qualification level, or to work illegally.

Unfortunately, none of the existing regulations concerning professional qualifications recognition refers to informal qualifications. As mentioned before, in Poland it is the employer who applies for a permit to employ a TCN worker. In most cases, the TCN may work for only one employer. Hence, the recognition of informal qualifications depends on the employer. Only the Polish origin of TCNs is taken into consideration by the public sector.

Apart from the abolition of penalties, the government abolished the crime of “illegal immigration” for those TCNs who were already living in Poland.

The abolition enabled a number of irregular immigrants to start work without obtaining a work permit. Regrettably, this measure was not very popular among TCNs.

An overview of papers and reports shows that the question of TCNs’ SKC recognition has not been widely discussed in Poland. The majority of the existing publications regard the analysis of TCNs’ presence in Poland and the scale of TCNs’ SKC recognition. The available data and afore-mentioned works reveal the growing number of approved work permit applications, which reflects the growing number of employed TCNs. However, most work permits were for jobs which did not require high qualifications. This could be a demonstration of the significant consequences of the lack of appropriate regulations, which would give TCNs wider access to regulated professions. The lack of appropriate legislation is the reason why many specialists from Third Countries, who want to work in their professions (i.e. make use of their SKC) decide to work illegally.

Increasing access to the Polish labour market for TCNs, and at the same time streamlining the procedures of recognizing their formal and informal SKC, is becoming an important challenge for the authorities at the national and regional level. Since 2004 (when Poland joined the EU), the Polish labour market has been experiencing labour shortages. Poles’ emigration to West European countries and, at the same time, the economic development in Poland caused labour shortages in professions which did not require high qualifications. Receiving EU funds meant many new infrastructure investments and a greater demand for construction workers. Poland’s accession to the European Union also meant new foreign investments in the production industry. Currently, labour shortages are observed mainly in relation to workers with low qualifications, in sectors such as agriculture, the production industry, construction, as well as services (especially as regards care for the elderly). Taking into consideration the present demographic situation and migration trends in Poland, labour shortages are bound to increase.

The lack of legal regulations regarding SKC recognition of TCNs intending to work in a regulated profession in Poland strongly affects their employment, career and earnings. As it was mentioned above, many TCNs who want to work in Poland in the profession which they are qualified for are stopped by a legal barrier (lack of suitable regulations). The only solution for them is to take up illegal work or work below their qualification level. The authors of this report believe that besides the lack of appropriate legislation, the existing regulations also significantly affect TCNs' professional career and earnings in Poland. The fact that work permits are issued for one employer only and for a specific position is very important because it means that TCNs may not change their place of work or their employer. In this way, the existing law practically excludes the professional mobility of TCNs. Considering that for the great majority of TCNs losing their job automatically means losing the right to stay in Poland legally, the question of earnings and their possible increase is becoming a very delicate matter. We must stress that the present law puts employers at a highly privileged position in relation to TCNs.

The immigration policy and regulations introduced at the regional and local level did not differ from the policy and regulations at the national level. In other words, apart from publishing the list of deficit professions, for which TCNs do not have to go through the "labour market test", no other practices were identified which would entail the recognition of TCNs' professional qualifications, in contrast to informal practices applied by public actors at the regional level. It is difficult to unequivocally assess the objectives of these practices given that some of them facilitated access to the local labour market, while others informally increased the restrictiveness of the present law.

Scientists and businessmen became interested in the concept of DM after Poland moved from centrally planned to free market economy, i.e. after the first free elections in Poland. Hundreds of scientific publications appeared introducing and explaining this particular concept of management. As a result of Poland returning to free market economy, international corporations entered the Polish market in the 1990s and especially after Poland joined the EU. They brought with them new forms of management and organisational structures, as well as the need to adjust the Polish economy to EU standards. Accession to the EU, and first of all the structural aid received by Poland, improved the Polish economic situation and resulted in the development of infrastructure and the eradication of the backwardness that had for years characterized the economy. The concept has been popularized through a variety of projects co-financed from EU structural funds for 2007-2013, within the framework of the Human Capital Operational Program. When Polish businesses first became interested in DM, they focused on the problem of equal opportunities in employing men and women. Diversity in the employment of foreigners did not become an issue until the beginning of the new millennium. The greatest contribution to popularizing and studying diversity was made by NGOs cooperating with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, which was founded in 2000. PAED is a government agency, a central administrative organ under the Ministry of the Economy, which manages the state budget and EU funds. All Diversity INDEX projects and research reports were pre-

pared by NGOs (e.g. Lewiatan, ARI, Responsible Business Forum), with financial support from the European Social Fund (Human Capital). The latest research shows that Polish enterprises have limited knowledge of this management theory and therefore a Diversity INDEX was developed, which can be used freely by all companies and institutions. The INDEX makes it possible to analyze the situation of a company, contains recommendations and examples of good practices.

Due to the fact that from the XIX century until the 1990s the Łódź region was the largest Polish producer of textiles, transformers and traction power supply equipment, it was decided to conduct the study in those enterprises which survived because they were taken over by foreign capital. The companies selected for the study included SHARDA Europe Co.Ltd in Pabianice, which had taken over the largest Łódź textile factory, UNIONTEX, founded in the XIX century, and PAMOTEX in Pabianice, the Factory of Power Transformation Devices and Drives and the Factory of Electrical Engines in Aleksandrów Łódzki, belonging to ABB Co.Ltd based in Warsaw. Naturally, the selection criterion was the employment of TCNs. Along with the return of free market economy in Łódź, several logistical companies appeared. The study included the oldest one – P.U.HATRANS, as well as FLEXTRONICS Logistics Co.Ltd, providing services to the Dell Factory, which opened in Łódź in 2006. The remaining pro-profit institution is SONOCO Poland – Packing Services Co.Ltd – the largest company in Poland specializing in packaging. The public institutions where the study was conducted included the largest employers in Łódź who employ TCNs – the University of Łódź and the Łódź City Council. The non-profit institutions were represented by the Regional Economic Chamber, the Association for Russian Speaking Persons and the Polish-Lebanese Association. The Regional Economic Chamber is a territorial government organisation which represents the interests of its members – entrepreneurs from all over Poland – and carries out projects in cooperation with non-European countries. 38% of all its employees are TCNs.

The Association for Russian Speaking Persons was selected on account of the fact that more and more people speaking this language are arriving in Łódź (migrants from former Soviet countries, including Ukrainians). The main office works the same number of hours as other enterprises and companies, and can be contacted online. The Chairman of the Polish-Lebanese Association is a Lebanese who has been living in Poland for 35 years. He is one of the few public persons of foreign origin in Łódź; in the past he was an advisor to the President of Łódź.

The ten enterprises/institutions included in the study employ a total of 90 TCNs (26 women and 64 men). The oldest of them are professors employed at the University of Łódź (17 persons), and the youngest ones (under-, post- graduate and part-time students) work at the Regional Economic Chamber. The largest group of TCNs work for free for the Association for Russian Speaking Persons (29 persons) at the Polish-Lebanese Association (20 persons).

All 90 TCNs come from 22 countries all over the world. Apart from Lebanon, the majority of TCNs come from Ukraine (19 persons), 13 of whom work for the Association for the Russian Speaking Persons and 5 at the University of Łódź. 10 people come from Taiwan – they are all employed at FLEXTRONICS Co. The most diversified

group of TCNs work at the University of Łódź – they represent 9 countries, but the majority of them are citizens of Ukraine.

The DM strategy is consciously implemented at pro-profit organisations which belong to international corporations (FLEXTRONICS, SHARDA EUROPE, SONOCO, ABB). The patterns and methods of implementing this management concept have been transferred from the mother companies, based outside Poland. DM is an important element of the employment policy of international pro-profit companies, and the employees' migration (including TCNs) stems from corporate policy (ABB, FLEXTRONICS, SHARDA, SONOCO). At SONOCO, the employment policy is monitored by means of the Diversity Index. It is the only company on the Łódź labour market which employs so many women aged 50+.

In the remaining public and non-profit institutions, DM is not formally implemented; it is not regulated by official documents. It must be stressed, however, that the mission of the University of Łódź has always been diversity and respect for the opinions of other people. The University has always employed people coming from various social and ethnic backgrounds, with various religious beliefs and sexual orientations, but these matters are not discussed; they are the ethos of the University employees. At the Regional Economic Chamber business projects determined the employment of non-EU immigrants. At the public and pro-profit institutions, TCN employees were recruited through competitions – they were chosen as the best candidates. The same choice, assessment, requirements and promotion criteria apply to TCNs and Polish workers. At ABB, all employees must adhere to the Code of Conduct, and at FLEXTRONICS, SONOCO and Łódź City Council to the Code of Ethics. The remaining institutions operate in accordance with their statutes (UŁ, REC, ARSP, PLA).

Pro-profit companies gain business and social benefits from DM. Most non-financial benefits are gained by the employees of public enterprises. In pro-profit organisations, they are less varied but sometimes more costly, e.g. employees receive a company car, are sent abroad, can use company mobile phones or laptops. Non-profit organisations (ARSP and PLA) are based on charity work and do not offer benefits.

In all the institutions included in the study the communication is bilateral – the management listens to the employees' opinions and discusses them with the staff. The bilateral character of communication helps to build a social community and makes employees identify themselves with their company. All pro-profit enterprises declared that they would develop DM. The Łódź City Council officials are currently working on the Łódź Diversity Charter. Its implementation will perhaps introduce the concept of DM in other enterprises and institutions.

The most popular forms of non-governmental organisations in Poland are associations and foundations. In 2014, the number of associations reached 106,266, and of foundations 18,244, but only a part of them are actually working. It is difficult to estimate the number of “dead souls”, i.e. organisations which in fact do not exist anymore or do not undertake any activity, although formally they have not been dissolved. An average Polish non-governmental organisation is not involved in humanitarian aid or care for children, but rather sport, tourism or hobbies, which are the

fields of activity for over one third of all the organisations registered in Poland, followed by other areas, such as social welfare, culture and art.

The scale of activity of Polish organisations differs from that in Western countries. Most of them are small, local and not nationwide associations. They deal with individuals rather than institutions or organisations. They mostly assist their members and persons under their care, but also propagate issues relevant to them.

The study shows that over 50% of the organisations have problems finding people willing to become selflessly involved in their activity. This probably results from the low level of trust in other people, which is typical of Poles. In the public sphere, only a small fraction of Polish citizens are ready to trust others. It is first of all young people, better educated and more affluent that want to cooperate and are convinced that volunteer work makes sense. A barrier to social activity may be Poles' scarce knowledge of the third sector, as well as insufficient communication between organisations and their environment.

The interviews reveal that a great majority of non-ethnic organisations in Łódź Voivodeship have never had TCNs as their members. A small number of the Łódź region organisations confirmed that their beneficiaries are or used to be foreigners, often citizens of EU countries. Only several non-ethnic organisations admitted that they had cooperated with TCNs. This is probably due to the fact that relatively few immigrants from EU countries settle down in the Łódź region. Most of them tend to choose ethnic and religious associations.

The respondents claimed that the type of activity undertaken by foreigners depends on the characteristics and areas of the organisation's activity, as well as on the personality of the foreigners themselves. Cooperation with associations usually begins with using their services which may then turn into volunteer work, and with time some immigrants become members, provided they meet the formal requirements formulated in the statutes. The respondents stressed, however, that the foreigners who became involved in working for associations were usually those who intended to stay permanently in Poland. They were usually young, university graduates, having permanent jobs, with high qualifications and satisfied with their own lives.

The organisations that attract foreigners are most often those whose fields of activity concern culture and art, or problems affecting a large number of immigrants, such as intolerance, employers' negligence, formal, legal and language problems. Another common area of activity includes fighting against social exclusion, as well as business and psychological consulting.

The TCNs' reason for becoming involved in voluntary activities most often given by the representatives of non-ethnic associations was simply their willingness to help the needy. Other popular motivations included the willingness to prove their usefulness despite being obviously different, and in this way justify their presence in the region, as well as the urge to fight against social exclusion and the feeling of alienation in an unfamiliar society (psychological reasons). Other motivations included raising the level of self-appreciation and social prestige by working for the benefit of the local community, as well as increasing public trust in foreigners, improving the living conditions of the local community, or spending free time in a different way.

As regards ethnic associations, the basic motivation is the need to have contact with their native culture, language and traditions. Another important reason is the urge to find people with similar experiences, especially as regards the process of adapting to a new environment (helping to organize living in Łódź Voivodeship, looking for a flat, a job, solving legal or communication problems). In the face of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the respondents also mentioned the will of immigrants from these countries to express their opinion about this war, as well as fight for reconciliation, mutual respect and against acts of intolerance.

Interviews with representatives of non-ethnic volunteer organisations show that the basic and highly valued contribution of TCNs is first of all their personality traits, such as their strong involvement in the association's work, persistence in achieving goals, as well as strong empathy. Another element which was truly appreciated was the foreigners' determination to overcome language barriers and cultural differences, as well as their exceptional openness and good interpersonal skills. TCNs expanded the associations' knowledge and range of services – they offer foreign language courses, popularize the immigrants' native culture or provide information about the customs and social norms observed in the immigrants' country of origin. Foreigners' skills or qualifications are often used by associations (organisational skills, business or psychological expertise or other specialist qualifications). Foreigners make it possible for associations to make or expand international contacts. A very rarely mentioned negative aspect of TCNs' volunteer activities are conflicts resulting from prejudice, cultural differences, misunderstandings due to language barriers, or acts of intolerance towards foreigners.

According to the representatives of ethnic organisations taking part in the study, ethnic associations do not automatically receive any help from the government. Support is usually limited to the patronage of the association's campaigns or activities. embassies, consulates and other institutions serving immigrants have no knowledge about local associations; they usually direct foreigners to the ethnic associations' main offices. The websites of the state institutions mentioned above sometimes contain information about large undertakings by associations, but it gets lost in the sea of "current news".

Churches and religious organisations play an important role in promoting ethnic associations. They often cooperate, organizing a variety of activities for their communities. They usually have the most up-to-date information about the associations operating in their area.

The survey clearly shows that foreigners working for volunteer organisations in Poland and Łódź Voivodeship are definitely more aware of the need for such activities than Łódź residents or Poles in general. Foreigners trust associations more and believe that they can improve the living conditions of at least a part of the community. They are also more willing to work for the benefit of strangers and devote much more of their free time to this activity. They treat working for the society in which they live as a civic duty and are proud to fulfil it.

Matching Migration and Skill in Lisbon Europeanization of Rules and Market Opportunities

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As in most European peripheries, out-migration has been the dominant process in Portugal's modern history. This is, furthermore, a centuries-long "structural constant" initiated with the formation of the empire (Godinho, 1978). As in the case of other countries with imperial pasts, connections with territories that were once under Portuguese rule constitute major migration corridors.

Contrary to other countries in the Southern periphery of Europe, large-scale TCN immigration started in the 1970s, following the late independence of African territories under Portuguese colonial rule and the democratization of the regime. On top of this, the Portuguese "Marshall plan" happened in the following decade, as the country became a full member of the European Economic Community in 1986. The inflow of significant "cohesion funds" had huge impacts in economic and political terms, and acted as a magnet for in-migration. Both the modern European engagement, and the historical experience are important contexts for understanding the present singular Portuguese migration outlook.

Because of the centuries-long presence of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa, and the difficult process of initial nation-building of the new nations, citizens from Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe were the first large-scale arrivals until the turn of the century. Today they are still among the largest TCN communities in Portugal. Many who arrived with the initial inflows "disappeared" from statistics, or never appeared, as they were or became Portuguese citizens, returned to their native countries, or moved elsewhere. Those who are officially

counted as foreign residents amounted to around 90 thousand persons in 2012 – over one fifth of residence permit-holders¹.

The massive inflows of Brazilian citizens started later; they are presently the largest TCN group. The commonality of language, the criss-crossing of the Atlantic by migrants in the past, and the consequences of the “lost decade” in Latin America, help to explain the significant presence of Brazilians – around 100 thousand persons in 2012, one fourth of the total number of legal residents. International reports, however, highlight a growing intake of return migrants in Brazil (IOM, 2013, p. 79).

The history of TCNs from countries with no common language or historical ties with Portugal is different. Flows from former USSR territories started in the late 1990s (ACIME *et al.*, 2002). The two largest groups come from Ukraine and Moldova and represent around 55,000 persons – over one in every ten residence permit-holders in 2012. Their numbers have been declining.

A fourth TCN category worth mentioning is that of Asian citizens, many of whom are small business owners with a significant presence in urban spaces. Contrary to all the former groups, this group has expanded since the turn of the century – it numbered around 34,000 persons in 2012, below 10% of the total.

Integration in global economic structures and international political arenas had a major role in boosting the economy, but also in consolidating unequal geographical and economic structures. The intensive infrastructure building following EU accession led to expanding the secondary sectors of the economy and set the ground for the over-representation of migrants therein (Baganha *et al.*, 1998; Reyneri, 2003).

Lisbon is the capital city, the headquarters of major political institutions, and the largest and richest urban concentration of people and economic activity in the country. In 2011, around 27% of the population lived in the region, which represented over 35% of the purchase power. Two municipalities (out of 18) accumulate the largest shares of legally settled foreign residents; the percentage of foreign citizens is above the regional average in five municipalities. Distinct national communities have different settlement patterns: there is a high concentration of populations from Lusophone Africa around Lisbon, whereas Brazilians, Ukrainians, Moldovans, and to a certain extent Chinese, show higher dispersion rates. Citizens from Lusophone countries represent over three in every four TCNs.

Socio-demographic data picture TCNs as a relatively young population, with a slightly larger share of women, who are, on average, less educated than men. Available data on the foreign workforce² show that, nation-wide, low and medium education levels prevail: the bulk of TCNs work as employees, and only citizens from Asian and American countries include an important share of independent workers or business owners. They further show high concentrations in services and unskilled labour. In Lisbon, the share of skilled and semi-skilled industrial labour is smaller than the

¹ PORDATA – data source: INE and SEF – Eurostat, and 2011 INE/Census are, unless otherwise stated, the sources used for statistics.

² ME-GEE (2012), GEP-MSSS (2010 and 2012). These statistics cover all paid labour, except public administration workers, non-permanent agriculture labour and domestic help (G GEP-MSSS 2012).

national average, whereas the share of service and unskilled labour is higher. The small share of the upper echelons in the occupational ladder further specifies a profile dominated by low skilled occupations.

A study made directly on these databases shows wide differences in education and training of immigrants in Portugal, with TCNs obtaining the worse scores (Cabral and Duarte, 2013, p. 89). Controlling for education and work experience obtained abroad, the authors show the existence of wage discrimination in relation to foreign labour, which is negative in the case of TCNs. The authors conclude that the bulk of wage differences is not a consequence of lower personal skills, but rather reflects the immigrant status (p. 102).

In the same vein, another official report states that «main discrimination practices in Portugal are the recognition of skills (formal and informal) and the wage differences (between immigrants and citizens)» (Dias and Bento, 2013, p. 23). It concludes by saying that «[c]oncerning labour conditions, there is mainly one barrier to attracting highly skilled: the formal recognition of school and training skills, especially in the case of regulated occupations» (*idem*). Moreover, three international reports endorse similar views: the ILO (2014) reports a high skills mismatch in the Portuguese labour market, in line with other European countries; Eurostat (2011) and OECD (2014) report high levels of foreign-born over-qualification, but way below EU and OECD averages. How do authorities cope with this?

Until the early 1990s the dominant official views were that Portugal was an emigration country; in-migration flows were ignored. This changed later in that same decade, when an institutional framework was created to specifically deal with immigration issues.

EU directives have been transposed into the current legislation on foreigners, which stipulates that foreign holders of a residence permit can have access to a paid occupation (independent or wage work), training, improvement and occupational recycling. The same is stated concerning access to welfare, trade union membership, diplomas and occupational training recognition, among other rights. Long-term residents are further recognized the same rights as nationals. In terms of labour participation, this means that no limitation of occupation applies except for jobs «involving some form of public authority» (Law 23/2007). This guarantees both conformity with EU orientations, and the constitutionally recognized national preference towards citizens from Lusophone countries (Torres, 2001).

Apart from the above-mentioned restriction, only the norms imposed by the special bodies regulating certain professions have some deterrent effect on foreigners.

Two major instruments with an impact on the TCN labour force are the Operational Programme for Human Capital, part of the national cohesion strategy for the period 2007-2013, which indicates “migrants” in general as one of its target groups, and the Plans for Immigrants’ Integration (PII), which are meant to “systematize the Portuguese state’s objectives and agreements to receive and integrate immigrants, in each sector”³. A recent evaluation report of the first programme states positive results from training as an instrument for combatting social exclusion, explicitly referring to

³ Cabinet Council Resolution 63-A/2007.

«the unemployed, the handicapped, and migrants» (Barroso *et al.*, 2013, pp. 13-4). Yet, according to another official report (above-mentioned), there are enduring barriers to recognition of migrants' formal and informal skills, described as “discriminatory practices” (Dias and Bento, 2013, p. 23).

All in all, in-migration had enormous impacts on society. Decolonization in the 1970s, the chain migration that followed, and the “spontaneous” flows thereafter had profound “denationalization” effects (Sassen, 2008) on the places where major settlement concentrations occurred (Marques, 2014). Ageing trends were attenuated, dependence on in-migration to maintain a regular operation of important sectors of the economy was reinforced, and a dynamic and multifaceted symbolic industry⁴ took wings. This is why a choice was made to focus this study in Lisbon and on TCNs presence in the urban culture sector.

But conditions have significantly changed, following what some authors calls the Great Recession. Out-migration resumed, involving also segments of former in-flows, whereas in-migration significantly slowed down, and a vast programme of reforms was launched which led to further deregulation of the labour market. We turn now to see in detail how the institutional framework deals with TCNs.

The first PII (2007-09) involved a vast kaleidoscope of measures, including “recognition, validation and certification of immigrants' skills”. The main purpose was to simplify procedures, in particular for highly skilled or investor TCNs wishing to request a residence permit, who benefitted from a “green lane” as stated in the so-called “Immigration Act” of 2007. The system of automatic recognition of High Education (HE) degrees obtained abroad, created in 2007, also intended to smoothen the process of recognition of foreign degrees, and facilitate professional integration (the 1983 equivalence regime remained in force for holders of HE degrees not contemplated in this system). Simplifying procedures aimed to attract and retain qualified human resources, both Portuguese and foreign. In 2011, the Access to Professions Regulation System eased access to certain occupations and deregulated and reduced bureaucracy, as the obligation to attend training courses and the possession of a professional title was eliminated.

In the second PII (2010-2013), “speed[ing] up the process of qualifications recognition” and the “creation of an information system about highly skilled immigrants” were explicitly mentioned. Amendments made in 2012 to the “Immigration Act” modified the conditions of entry and residence for highly skilled workers, establishing the legal requirements for the granting of the “Blue Card”.

The first centers for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) emerged in 2000, funded by the European Support Framework and following European guidelines. The management of these centers was assigned to the National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA), responsible for setting up the first network for RVCC, a service «that recognizes, validates and certifies the academic and professional lifelong acquired skills (up to secondary level) in formal and non/informal contexts, by candidates who ... are cumulatively over 18 years of age and have (in the case of a certification at the secondary level) at least 3 years of profes-

⁴ We use the term “symbolic industry” in line with Zukin's (1991) “symbolic production”.

sional experience»⁵. The RVCC system intended to assess workers in economic sectors in recession, in sectors with high technological dynamism or in key sectors for economic development, whether employed or unemployed, with low or incomplete qualifications. The RVCC integrates academic and vocational dimensions, both based on different benchmarks available in the National Qualifications Catalogue.

In 2012, the organizational structure of the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP) was set up. Among other duties, ANQEP has to: develop, coordinate and manage the RVCC system in close collaboration with other entities of the National Qualifications System; it must also manage the system for issuing certificates.

Following the creation of ANQEP, Centers for Qualification and Vocational Education (CQEP) were set up in 2013, with the mission to develop, among others, the RVCC processes. The first function of CQEP centers is to analyse the profile of those who turn to them (youths and adults) and come up with the best response, i.e. either to send them to a training course for adults or to undergo a process for the recognition of competences. Admission to a CQEP is open to all nationals or foreigners with a residence permit in Portugal, a valid passport or identity card.

Another key player in the processes of recognition and certification of competences is the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the public board ensuring the implementation of public policies on employment and vocational training. It was the first authority, in 2000, committed to designing and developing the first school RVCC processes. The IEFP is therefore a privileged partner of ANQEP in the process of qualification of the population and in stimulating public responses in terms of qualification. Since 2012, IEFP is committed to “promoting information, guidance, training and vocational rehabilitation, with a view to the placement of workers in the labour market and their occupational development” (Decree Law 143/2012).

ANQEP is the National Coordination Point for the implementation of the EQF, in conjunction with the Directorate-General of HE concerning levels 5-8 of the National Qualification Framework (QNQ).

The Portuguese QNQ has adopted European principles (EQF), both in terms of organization in eight levels and with regard to the description of them in terms of learning outcomes. There is a clear and direct relationship between the two frames, concerning both levels and descriptors.

In 2011, Portugal aligned its national framework for higher education with the European one. Thus, the descriptors for the three cycles fully reproduce Dublin descriptors. Similarly, the ranges of European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System referred to in these degrees are compatible with the Bologna framework.

This QNQ structuring both facilitates the translation of professional experience in skill levels (which values LLL), and clarifies the definition of vocational pathways and routes in secondary education. Simultaneously, it boosts employers' confidence and makes hiring more transparent. In international terms, it encourages the mobility of citizens and promotes trust between the different Member States.

⁵ http://www.igfse.pt/st_glossario.asp?startAt=2&categoryID=314&newsID=2373&offset=0.

Yet, the links on the ground between the logic of the national framework (valuation of LLL, through the certification of non/in-formal learning, and favouring higher qualifications) and TCN workers and entrepreneurs are very tenuous: neither individuals nor employers are clearly aware of the benefits. This helps to explain the limited involvement of workers and employers in the RVCC processes and the training courses.

Similarly, the relevance of qualification systems in HE is little known. The ignorance of their role and value in promoting LLL also contributes to explain Portuguese students' very limited participation in other European HE systems.

There are hardly any statistics or studies on SKC recognition of TCNs. According to a contact person, this is because institutions do not want to create situations of discrimination. It is not known, for example, how many TCNs triggered RVCC processes, who participated in IIEP courses or training actions, how many achieved certification of their diplomas. In short, the indicators do not exist and when they exist they are very basic, which does not allow measuring the results of programs and training actions.

Despite the proliferation of studies on immigrants' integration in general, little is known about issues of SKC recognition and certification. Furthermore, the institutional discourse does not seem to be attentive to the practical expression of the programs launched. There are few systematic data on the implementation of all these programs, and insufficient data to prove unequivocally that labour is more skilled and more productive now; although immigrants (defined as foreigners) are contemplated in the target audience of these programs, there is no specification on what they did, what kind of recognition they requested, what kind of certification they achieved, nor if they completed training courses, among other relevant data.

Potential benefits of TCNs SKC recognition include, from the perspective of firms: the advantage of using the knowledge they have about their native countries, which may stimulate the penetration of Portuguese companies, including migrant enterprises, and their products in these countries; achieving a better match between qualifications promoted within the education and training system and the competences necessary for socio-economic development.

In a country that has gone through a severe economic crisis and aggressive austerity measures and with high unemployment levels, the impact of TCNs' SKC recognition, in terms of employability and job mobility levels, is for the time being difficult to assess. What is known is that the crisis has had a particularly negative effect on job opportunities for the foreign population: their unemployment rates being significantly higher than the natives', a great number of unemployed left the country, and their average earnings are significantly lower (GEP-Msss, 2012; EUROSTAT and IOM, 2013; Cabral and Duarte, 2013). But no information is available neither on migrant labour productivity, nor about its possible increase for workers who have seen their competences recognized.

Furthermore, living in troubled economic times, Portugal's ability to attract and retain highly skilled immigrants is reduced, limited to some niches of the economy, to specific business projects (where the issue of SKC recognition does not arise) or to professionals in specific areas.

Benefits most often cited by institutions are, therefore, mainly subjective and motivational: sense of personal, social and professional development, parallel to the perception of greater social recognition and presumed enhanced social status; ability to mobilize new competences; new prospects for the future; confidence in their abilities to achieve new professional plans. However, as there are no data on the results of these programs for TCNs, it is not possible to prove these gains in self-esteem.

TCN re-emigration is a sign of the inability of firms and the state to take advantage of these human resources. But other issues are at play.

Some professional bodies operate as gatekeepers, overly protectionist, and neglecting academic and professional qualifications brought from abroad. Having the right to set the conditions to access professions, labour market rigidity sets in. Only immigrants covered by EU Directives on SKC recognition escape these constraints.

Another problem is the precarious employment situation of many immigrants, who experience great difficulty in initiating lengthy, costly and complicated processes of SKC recognition. According to some informants, immigrants in such conditions do not usually adhere to the initiatives on their behalf. This explains that many of these individuals are unaware of their rights, particularly in terms of working conditions, and face unworthy or dangerous situations: accident rates remain high among immigrant workers (Rosa, 2009), their wages are lower than natives', etc.

Programs designed by institutions collide with conditions on the ground. Staff providing support, advice and training, some contracted temporarily, often have precarious contractual situations, which causes the composition of teams to be constantly changing. The training about key benchmarks itself is not always assured by institutions, which is at odds with incessant legislative work that requires constant recycling. These conditions undermine the quality of interface with TCNs.

A major problem has to do with the general ignorance of the reality of TCNs living in Portugal. The absence of data or its treatment by public institutions is associated with the difficulty to obtain from these entities updated information on the processes of occupational integration of immigrants, in particular on qualifications available and underutilized in the labour market. This problem also prevents the assessment of the level of adequacy of the programs developed for SKC recognition and utilization.

One issue that stands out in this report is the top-down definition of the programs, which may help explain an imbalance between institutional guidelines and their implementation on the ground.

Apparently, Portugal has still not learned how to take advantage of the individual and social benefits brought by immigrants from their countries of origin. Nor has it learned, except in special cases, how to take advantage of the recognition of their tertiary qualifications, partly because of institutional blockages placed on professional integration of these highly skilled immigrants.

There is something wrong when nationwide statistics show an increase in the level of qualifications and this is not translated into a quantum leap in terms of economic development and productivity.

In the last decade, there seems to be a legislative frenzy in qualifications and training. In fact, constant changes in the legal and administrative framework in these areas

resulted in a permanent alteration of methodologies and requirements – many accompanied by new financial and infrastructural constraints – which require an additional effort, by the different teams of counselling, routing and training, in order to interpret the reorientations and objectives set by those who design the new RVC instruments. Extra effort is also needed to adapt these new contents to the specificities of the social groups addressed in these schemes, and to administrative and financial constraints. Not to mention the problems that arise at the level of coordination between institutions. Finally, this abundant legislation also tends to discourage immigrants themselves, many of them unprepared to face so much bureaucracy and procedural requirements. Could this partly contribute to reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities?

Few publications exist on Portuguese DM cases; most of the information gathered here is therefore the result of direct observation. The sample includes a selection of ten organizations, encompassing a wide array of activities in visual and communicative arts (publicity, design, languages), and performative arts (music, dance, and others). In some of the organizations, active promotion of civic participation and the defence of immigrants' rights are also targeted.

All organizations are located in the city of Lisbon; they operate however at different scales: some are local institutions, others encompass different cities, and some project themselves at the international level. Some are more structured than others, the bulk of them are micro-enterprises, and have minimum permanent structures; some use freelance workers (the firms), or volunteers (the voluntary associations). Two organizations were created by TCNs.

In the cases studied, a dominant strategic orientation in for-profit organizations is that personnel search is guided by specific prerequisites. Talent (a fundamental criterion in creative areas) and merit (occupational experience, literacy attainment, didactic and pedagogical abilities) are fundamental in this search; whereas no significant concern with same opportunity or inequality neutralization came up in the research⁶. In public and non-profit organizations the approach to help-search is better described as guided by values such as “solidaristic, ethical and blind approach” – in the project's terms.

TCN characteristics recognized as important are: age, immigrant status, and experience and personal and occupational trajectories. TCNs who are young but already have large professional experience stand out; and so do some factors associated with specific cultural experiences. On the latter, references were made to: the weak ties to the settlement society, which renders immigrants more devoted to their jobs; personal and occupational experience (practical knowledge) of other cultural contexts (international experience); specific knowledge of certain cultures and institutional and organizational ways of operating; having an outsider's view of Portuguese contexts.

⁶ These are verbalized motivations; but the fact that an organization seeks and hires immigrants and young people can also be an “opportunistic approach – to pursue cost reductions” (in the project's terms).

TCNs have a strong involvement only in parts of the organizations studied. They are directly involved in their core business; however, generally they are underrepresented in the spheres of power and decision-making and have weak contractual relations.

Diversity is positively perceived, in general. However, there is not much discourse elaboration on that, nor a systematic presentation of arguments (in-favour and against). Respondents value it mainly on an individual basis: it is said that diversity is mainly contributing to personal development – although valorisation of cultural understanding and experiences may have consequences in professional development. To relativize personal experiences and knowledge; to be more open to other people and realities; to transcend personal limits; to learn about new things about people and activities, techniques, artistic styles – all this can promote creativity and the development of new styles and fusions, to learn how to deal with different kinds of people, to be more tolerant and respectful.

In for-profit organizations, specific endowments such as familiarity with different or specific cultural contexts are appreciated as a potential competitive advantage for the organization: in the case of dance and language schools, TCNs' practical knowledge and experience of cultural (national) contexts which are the focus of their activities; also the training of musicians and other music professionals and technicians, and sometimes the ties with the origin and transnational music networks, are much appreciated. In non-profit organizations, having practical knowledge of other cultural contexts is most valued.

Overall, the sample showed modestly structured HR practices. In none of these organizations did the interviewees admit a clear-cut distinction between citizens and foreigners – none had programs or practices specifically targeting TCN staff. Practices concerning motivation and involvement processes, innovation, communication, recruitment and insertion, evaluation mechanisms and remuneration rules are very different from one organization to the other, and can sometimes come close to informality. In non-profit organizations, it seems that motivation derives from a more personal involvement and interest in the operation of the organization.

As for their key values one should distinguish between: organizations (for-profit and non-profit) that value innovation, competitiveness, high quality; and (non-profit) entities focused on respect and appreciation for cultural diversity, defence of rights, participation. However, they all appear to be quite open to innovation and new ideas. Because they are linked to culture, a sector where creativity and innovation are central, it is quite natural that this is also reflected in the ways of working. In practice, innovation and openness may occur at the level of teamwork and development of services and products; but not so much in the participation in management.

Most organizations in the sample recruit their staff at the national scale; only one has an explicit and deliberate international recruitment process. As regards the criteria required, the most prominent aspect valued is technical ability combined with professional experience; suitability for the job, by assessing qualifications and credentials, is less important in artistic jobs; only one of the organizations in the sample insists on a more specific qualification (academic training in languages). Recruitment processes

range from blind to informal; in the latter, portfolio-based spontaneous applications and direct involvement of people that are already close to the operation are common.

Few organizations have regular training programmes, so much of the learning is done on-the-job. However, concerns about staff knowledge refreshment were mentioned. In the same vein, most organizations in the sample evaluate their staff without specific formalized methods. All this can be related to the fact that these are small organizations with underdeveloped or non-existent HR policies.

No formalized strategies of DM were found in the sample either⁷. Yet, DM concerns do exist, which include anti-discrimination actions and others aiming at maximizing the advantages and/or minimizing discrimination and prejudice, openly valorising overall diversity, or particular aspects of diversity, such as gender, age, or citizenship, and various cultural contexts.

On a national scale, the role of the High Commissariat for Migration (ACM) should be mentioned. This public body's mission is: «collaborate in the definition, execution and evaluation of migration public policies (...) which are relevant (...) for culture, ethnic and religious diversity management and valorisation»⁸. ACM thus carries out training and/or awareness actions and seminars, upon request by public or private entities; promotes the “Intercultural School Stamp” (a prize to school projects on *diversity recognition and valorisation*); and runs a project on Intercultural Mediation in Public Service⁹.

As already mentioned, none of the organizations in the sample formally committed themselves to DM – in the narrow understanding of DM. Although perceived as positive, diversity effects are not formally systematized in the sampled organizations. Concerns about equal opportunity for all and diversity valorisation were however voiced. Those who expressed such concerns do seem the most committed to them.

Concerning gender, some organizations in the sample have a high share of women, in two of them above 70%, including in decision-making positions. As for age, a diverse workforce was also found, ranging from organizations with large age diversity (including workers in their twenties, up to workers over 60 years old), to organizations with smaller age dispersion.

As for TCN personnel, both practices involving ethical and social concerns (mainly in non-profit and public organizations) and/or aiming at strategic and economic purposes (especially in for-profit organizations) stand out in the sample. The first ones include cultural activities, civic participation, and selection and recruitment.

In terms of strategic and economic purposes, hiring immigrants or involving international members and associates may aim, among other goals, at increasing efficiency in service and/or product provision, internationalizing and/or conquering new markets

⁷ Concerning public programmes, we found only measures tackling gender equality and the inclusion of handicapped persons.

⁸ <http://www.acidi.gov.pt/acidi-i-p-/missao-e-principios-chave>.

⁹ [http://www.acidi.gov.pt/_cfn/4d346bd641db7/live/Relatório+de+Atividades+do+Acidi+\(2012\)](http://www.acidi.gov.pt/_cfn/4d346bd641db7/live/Relatório+de+Atividades+do+Acidi+(2012)).

and boosting the business. Diversity (seen as different cultural contexts, different life and professional experiences) can be useful because it brings an outsider insight on the Portuguese context: a different and innovative perception is valued. Diversity can thus enhance business optimization, while it also helps carving a specific place in the market. Some of the activities having an ethical and social overtone may also have strategic and economic purposes attached.

In sum, diversity has made its way into the discourses and the norms of Portuguese institutions; the everyday operation of sampled organizations shows that routine management at the informal level prevails. According to the analysis made there apparently are no formalized, structured programs of DM in the organizations included in the sample. There are concerns with culture valorisation, but these are concentrated in the public and non-profit organizations. In the for-profit organizations, diversity in the labour force is mainly a consequence of strategic options moulded by the market.

In our view, this is due to three main factors: the dominant organizational forms in the sample (small firms, internal segmentation); the ideological bias toward what might be termed a “republican” understanding of migration policies (any form of discrimination, including positive discrimination, often being disregarded as unlawful); and the absence of explicit and regular incentives (positive and negative) urging organizations to bring DM into their regular operation.

Finally, let us focus our attention on the involvement in voluntary organizations. This section uses information gathered both through sources and literature review, as well as by direct observation. The latter focuses on relevant institutions in the city of Lisbon: two ethnic organizations formally recognized by public authorities¹⁰, and two organizations committed to promoting and valorising cultural diversity. Again, the paucity of statistical data is problematic. On formal volunteering, for example, no nationality-related data was found.

Following EU guidelines, a policy concern exists with developing, promoting and facilitating social economy, both at the national and regional scales. The present government programme illustrates how much of the project on poverty reduction, social cohesion and inclusion depends on non-profit organizations, but also on individuals’ motivations, including the motivation to do volunteer work; this is the case of the Social Emergency Programme (PES) created to face the Great Recession.

As regards the measures targeting immigrants, the PES calls for the development of «appropriate measures to achieve full social integration, giving priority to the implementation of measures intended for the solidary inclusion of immigrant and nomadic populations, in the domains of citizenship rights and duties, primarily in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and housing». For the «implementation of these policies, the PII will be carried out with contributions from civil society, privileging as strategic partners non-governmental organizations and the im-

¹⁰ Until 2002, the Portuguese state recognized 49 associations nationwide; in 2014, 134. Cape-Verdeans are the national group with the largest number of associations (Marques, 2008; ACIDI *Relatório de Atividades* [2012, 2011, 2010], <http://www.acidi.gov.pt>).

migrants' and nomadic populations' associations»¹¹. Specific services are in this perspective rendered to voluntary bodies: at a nationwide level, the Offices of Technical Support for Immigrant Associations, an ACM service. At the regional level, Lisbon Town Hall's Department of Social Rights, in addition to promoting and encouraging their participation in various advisory bodies, also created (in 2014) a specific service to support non-profit organizations – the Social Partnership Counter.

Aiming at continuing the actions of the European Year of Volunteering (2011), the National Plan for Volunteer Work (2013-2015) was created. Non-profit organizations and volunteer work are seen as complementary to professional work and public institutions. The PES, for example, encourages the creation of incentives to take up volunteer work in the social domain as part of the strategies to strengthen social inclusion and fight poverty, «stressing the importance of supporting and promoting volunteer work and volunteer workers»¹². Volunteer workers, «among the most valuable active assets any country can have», are supposed to be operating at the same level as «public and private entities' programmes and projects», but also to be skilled and socially recognized workers, as their (volunteer) work has social and community implications¹³.

A flurry of publications (reports, manuals, monographs) on volunteer work in Portugal exists, written mainly in the context of international celebrations¹⁴. Yet there is scarce statistical information on this social reality. For the first time in 2013, the National Institute of Statistics issued the Social Economy Satellite Account, involving data collected in 2010, and the Volunteer Work Survey, with data collected in 2012¹⁵. Conceptual and methodological grounds came from the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work. Data gathered concern volunteer work in general, but do not allow a characterization of TCN volunteers as citizenship is not considered.

TCNs' civic participation can assume three distinct guises: involvement in electoral competition, political initiatives and volunteering¹⁶. Zobel and Barbosa (2010) showed modest participation in politics, both as voters and as candidates, and that im-

¹¹ Programa do XIX Governo Constitucional, http://www.portugal.gov.pt/media/130538/programa_gc19.pdf (pp. 99-100).

¹² <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1sdip/2013/05/08800/0272902733.pdf>

¹³ Guia do Voluntário – CNPV.

¹⁴ Namely: International Year of Volunteers, 2001, the European Year of Volunteering, 2012, transborder networks.

¹⁵ http://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=ine&xpgid=ine_publicacoesPublicacaoEspub_boui=157543613&Publicacoesmodo=2.

¹⁶ The right to vote and to be elected in local elections exists for some foreign citizens, including TCNs, as long as reciprocity exists. The right to submit petitions to the Parliament and to participate in local referenda is also recognized. TCNs who are Lusophone citizens have a special treatment. All these conditions are supported in the constitutional framework: the “national treatment” of foreign citizens and the bias towards Lusophone citizens (Torres, 2001).

portant barriers to foreigners' political participation subsist. In the authors' views, these include the reciprocity condition, proficiency in the official language, and the mandatory delays required before participation is possible, among others. Other obstacles exist, such as the organizational experience and the ability to deal with the institutional realm, the command of institutional languages, or the lack of time and the difficulties or limitations to mobility; in fact at least as many obstacles as those faced in accessing any other formal institution (Marques and Ciobanu, 2011).

Things are different with regard to associations. In the last decades of the 20th century the immigrant question appeared in public debate. Various types of organizations (civic, religious etc.) emerged, providing *ad hoc* answers to local problems, in major settlement and concentration areas of migrant populations, and claiming the status of representatives of immigrants' interests. As of 1999, the formal statute of publicly recognized immigrant association was created. As an immigration policy started setting in, they became incorporated into the welfare arrangements developed by public authorities, and went through a process of "goal displacement" (Michels, 2001), and began to shift to, or strengthen, cultural activities, generating all sorts of creative activities (Leitão, 2008; Marques, 2008, 2012, *inter alia*).

In the two ethnic associations contacted, regrets were voiced about community members' low participation in the activities. Both associations fear that being located in the center of Lisbon might inhibit persons who live in the periphery, and now try to decentralize activities. The fact that it is often difficult to achieve a balance between skilled help (the associations need specialists in specific areas to build and submit projects for competitive funding) and undifferentiated help, whose abilities the associations may not always be directly in need of, was also stressed. Motivations expressed by volunteers include altruistic motivations, and social and professional recognition.

Two types of immigrant associations, which have distinct geographical and motivational characteristics, are to be distinguished according to Pires (2004): those that have a localized intervention, and those that project themselves to a wider scope (operating as agents of political pressure). The ethnic associations in the sample can be placed in Pires' second type. But in both, motivations concerning cultural and identity factors are present, and so are motivations associated with material aspects and the resolution of specific issues. Only the Cape-Verdean Association develops specific activities targeting second (even third) generations, in order to prevent the weakening of ethnic ties.

As far as it was possible to elicit, sending countries do not have a direct and active role in these associations' *modus operandi* – they can however have some influence. A major external influence comes from elsewhere: the adoption of EU guidelines in programmes that fund associations' activities (Marques and Santos, 2004).

The special status recognized by public authorities and the possibility to compete for public funds and to be heard at the Municipal Council for Interculturality and Citizenship are favourable conditions for TCN associations. Difficulties arise from lack of internal resources and the need to obtain external funding. The paucity of skilled personnel (or the paucity of specific skills that volunteer help can bring along) togeth-

er with the low participation rates in some activities accrues to the associations' difficulties. These problems affect all non-profit organizations.

In the non-ethnic organizations contacted, no distinction was made between TCNs and non-TCNs; volunteer workers are valorised mainly for the experience, energy, commitment and devotion they bring to the project. Volunteers referred to the opportunity of getting an insight into the milieu of cultural production. Paucity of funds and of specialized volunteer help were equally mentioned.

To sum up, migrants' civic participation in the political sphere and in party politics is overall modest. Yet participation in volunteer organizations is quite visible, to this day, notably at the local level and among the national groups who are more exposed to multiple forms of exclusion. Associations managed to invent themselves as local development institutions and had an important role in interest intermediation (Marques, 2008).

As the third sector expanded, notably through the transformations in the operation of the public body in charge of migration issues, during the first decade of this new century, the social state associated migrants and their structures, both as addressees and partners in policies' implementation. Yet, «although the proximity to migrants' everyday life (...) through local partnerships and with agents from outside public administration can guarantee more sensitivity to specific needs, other issues arise, which may evolve as problems» (Marques and Ciobanu, 2011, p. 67). Adopting the funding agencies' agenda, while the endogenously defined agendas take the back seat, may in fact end up in segmenting associations' intervention and eroding their role as local institutions (Leitão, 2008; Marques 2013, *inter alia*).

The absence of statistical data prevents rigorous estimates of the impacts, on migrants in general and in particular on TCNS, of the policies and procedures adopted, and seriously hampers its assessment.

Integrating TCNs in Andalusia

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Integration of immigrants in receiving societies is an important objective that requires the implementation of different policies as well as tools for their support. International research on factors that affect the quality of immigrant inclusion in societies highlights different elements that have to be considered and in particular social, structural and cultural policies. This chapter, based on the research carried out in Andalusia, examines three scenarios of how the implementation of policies and social and cultural practices impacts on the integration of TCNs in the region. Furthermore, it identifies and proposes some key areas where new policies or tools could be developed in order to promote and encourage their better integration in the region. Moreover, we hope our experience, although based on the case of Andalusia and Spain, could also contribute to the global discussions on the integration of immigrants and how to promote it through public and private policies, strategies and actions in other contexts.

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

89,641 immigrants were registered in the region (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2013).

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations.

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

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

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

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

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

... For some faculties it's terrible because they ask for so much documentation, which of course must be translated and verified" (...) "there are lots of obstacles, especially for Africans, really a lot" (...) "(a student) had problems with validation because his own country did not want to lose qualified people, or

they want to earn lot of money through him” (interview with an Employment Counsellor, 2014).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We can now focus on the information obtained from studying organisations that had implemented some kind of DM practices in the Andalusian Region. By diversity we mean all characteristics that are a source of social differentiation (culture, language, country of origin etc.) (Giovannini, 2004). The impact of diversity on productivity varies significantly depending on how well such diversity is managed. This means that in DM the main role is given to the decisions and actions of organisations in a way which not only benefits the organisations themselves but also traditionally

underprivileged groups (Giovannini, 2004; Crawford, 2002; Chinchilla and Cruz, 2011; Torre and Borrajo, 2012; Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmusen, 2004; Prieto and Marcos, 2010), in line with actions by the European Commission to promote diversity (Eurofund, 2013a; European Commission, 2014).

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

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

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

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

We studied different organisations operating in Andalusia, both in the private and the public sector. During the fieldwork, we had some difficulty in selecting organisations in Andalusia that would be good case studies and representative of good DM

practices for their TCN staff. This difficulty reflects one of the main results of our research: DM is at a very early stage in the Andalusian Region and in Spain, despite their long history of attending and providing services to immigrants.

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

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

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

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

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

In our experience, big organisations or organisations oriented towards international markets or operating on an international level develop some DM practices, sometimes linked to laws on equal opportunity and CSR issues, and other times as a result of a real need or interest of the employer. Other times DM is somehow a logical result

of working with clients who put forward quality requirements related to personnel resources management. Sometimes it is difficult to understand if DM emerges as a result of legal requirements or due to a real need; however, once it is in place and employers perceive its benefits, the reaction is very positive. When observing how DM develops in local branches of bigger organisations, it is evident that it can be implemented in organisations of any size. In any case, organisations are not particularly lenient, since a common aspect that emerged is that benefits appear when workers are productive (good researchers, good salespeople, etc.). If workers were not productive they were not promoted, if workers did not do their job competently, their contracts were not renewed.

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

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

Traditionally in Andalusia, after the entry of immigrants in Spain around the mid-eighties, we initially found two types of NGOs caring and attending immigrants. First of all those providing a general service, i.e. organisations that provide care to all types of people (immigrants and natives) with different needs. This is the case, for instance, of the very well-known, Cruz Roja, Caritas or Human Rights Association. It is also the case of other NGOs that emerged in local or regional contexts, mainly composed of Spanish people, but with the aim of helping and providing services to immigrants. These were “pro-immigrant” NGOs. In later years, alongside the general service and pro-immigrant NGOs, a new type of organisation emerged, created by and composed of immigrants (‘ethnic associations’), as the majority of components were non-nationals. Today, with the settlement of immigrants in the Andalusian region, all three types co-exist and what we normally find is that some borders between NGOs are blurred as very well established immigrants begin to occupy also positions of leadership in some non-ethnic organisations. Today the landscape in Andalusia of NGOs

that give care to immigrants or are constituted by them is very heterogeneous. Therefore, it is important to address the difficulties existing in Spain, to differentiate clearly between ethnic or non-ethnic associations², because of the incorporation of immigrants in all types of NGOs and finally because immigrants are assuming leadership positions also in non-ethnic organisations. Although this distinction does not really correspond to the Spanish context and to the situation of Andalusia, it makes the comparison among countries in the DIVERSE Project easier, since volunteer organisations have been divided into “non-ethnic” and “ethnic”. We refer to “non-ethnic” NGOs when they are of a general nature (such as Cruz Roja, Fundación CEPAIM) or pro-immigrant (as Andalucía ACOGE). As a result of the crisis and of the more stable presence of immigrants living in the region, some NGOs that previously only dealt with immigrants have now undertaken projects which also take the host society into consideration (for instance, projects in neighborhoods). Therefore, the boundaries between ethnic and non-ethnic NGOs in Andalusia are sometimes blurred.

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

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

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

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

² Distinction adopted in the DIVERSE project for the fieldwork.

pation and full citizenship of immigrants in general, including those of Third Countries, and differentiate between EU and non-EU citizens in terms of political participation (voting), taking account of the limited possibilities available to TCNs.

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

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

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

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

Well, before the crisis we had up to 12 volunteers working with us, and the last time this year we had 5, and right now all of our programs have finished and we are

waiting for the arrival of subsidies. We have done everything to raise money, but it doesn't work... we can no longer continue to..., so until we get subsidies we cannot continue hiring (interview with the President, Asociación Mujeres entre Mundos, women, Sevilla, 2014).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition, we propose to make the recognition of SKC of TCNs easier as this would not only result in the social enhancement of TCNs, but would also increase the

hosting capacity of the Andalusian and Spanish society as a whole. However, these goals cannot be achieved alone: coordinated actions and information inside the country, but also within Europe, are necessary in order to promote better ways for recognizing SKC in Europe.

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

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

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

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

Evaluation of, and Feedback from, Sweden's SKC Recognition System

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In this detailed analysis of similarities, differences and difficulties between Swedish citizens and TCN citizens, it is necessary to first consider definitions and the implications of such definitions. The mission of this project is to focus on the citizenship status held by a person. According to this definition, there were just 6,630 TCN residents in Västerbotten County in the northern part of Sweden, the focus region of this study. The TCN residents of Västerbotten in 2010 consisted of 2,000 people with an Asian/Turkish background and 1,700 from Sub-Saharan Africa, with Iranians and Iraqis forming the third largest group (ASTRID, 2010).

Such a strict focus on citizenship is therefore somewhat disingenuous in the Swedish context given that it is relatively quick and straightforward for TCNs in Sweden to apply for and obtain Swedish citizenship (after just four years of legal stay, with no language requirement or other form of “testing”). This focus on citizenship means that a full 46% (or 5,617 people) of the potential study population for the region (as shown in demographic statistics held by the Department of Geography and Economic History, Umeå University) fall outside the study group since they officially are Swedish citizens, and thus must be ignored. This is unfortunate because Swedes with a TCN background tend to face many of the same circumstances and challenges in terms of societal and labour market integration as those people who retain TCN citizenship. Holding host country citizenship does not instantly mean that a person becomes integrated. This is a relevant and important distinction to bear in mind when viewing the findings contained herein; during the interviews it emerged that people often described and referred to their employees, colleagues or fellow volunteers as being TCNs because their family heritage or country of birth was from a TCN country e.g. Somalia or Bosnia, even though those people may actually have held Swedish citizenship, or may even have been born and raised entirely in Sweden. A person's actu-

al official citizenship status may not always even be known by an employer, or a skills evaluator. This represents an important blurring of the data that should be borne in mind.

The empirical material used in this study emanates from interviews, statistical databases and literature. In all, 25 interviews were conducted with SKC evaluating organisations (7), public, private and non-profit employer organisations (10) and various volunteer groups (8).

The most concise description of Sweden's migration is linked to the fact that its population has increased ten times since the net migrant flows reversed the trend from being a sending country to being a net receiver of immigrants in the 1930s (Figure 16.1). However, these 80 years of rising in-migration contain differences in the composition of the migrants, related to their origin, reason for migration, internal circumstances, and their legal status and permits. How far back it is necessary to go to describe the history of Third Country migration to Sweden depends on which countries are considered. Movement between some of the closest neighbouring countries has historically been significant, leading up to agreements of free movement between the Nordic countries¹ in the early 1950s (LO-report, 2013). Migration from outside Europe began much later and is still surrounded by regulation. Quite recently, as the EU expanded, some of the major sending countries within Europe have changed status from being a Third Country to that of a Member State with citizens who now have greater possibilities and freedom to migrate. For the sake of clarity it is, in the case of Sweden, simpler to separate migrants into Nordic, European and non-European (i.e. TCN) groups. Nordic citizens have been excluded from the analysis of TCNs in this research since statistics and literature show that Nordics share a similar culture, language group and socio-economic and labour market relations with Swedes. They do not experience the same barriers and challenges other TCNs face but rather, on the contrary, Norwegians in particular often hold high leadership positions in Swedish society and have higher than average incomes (ASTRID data).

Although simplistic, the immigration pattern to Sweden can be divided into a first and a second wave. The so-termed first wave immigrants were largely labour migrants from Finland and Norway (with a good number also from Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Turkey, Spain and Greece) who entered the country between the 1940s and 1960s. Second wave migrants began to arrive in the 1970s and consisted increasingly of people seeking refuge. It is open to debate whether the migratory trends in Sweden since the turn of the millennia could be described as a "third wave" where asylum seekers and refugees from the world's conflict areas are clearly dominant. The Swedish migration board estimates that 80,000 new cases of asylum will be granted during 2014 (Migrationsverket, 2014).

Labour migration has been seen as preferable since migrants start working immediately, meaning they are both contributing to Swedish society and integrating more quickly than asylum seekers and tied migrants are generally able to. New legislation liberalised the Swedish labour market in 2008. For those seeking refuge from difficul-

¹ Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, of which Norway and Iceland are not EU members and would according to the definition be considered TCNs.

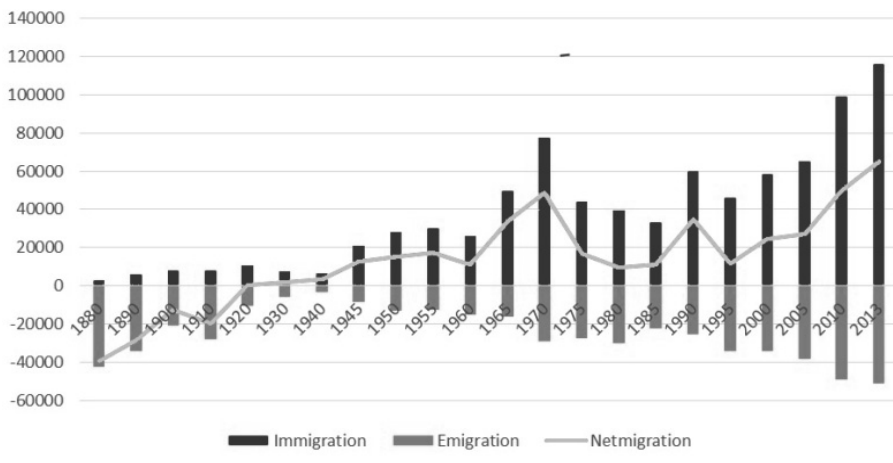
ties in their home country, the potential for labour migration also opens up another, legal, route into Sweden, at least in theory. As the findings from a study regarding the evaluation of foreign-acquired competence, diversity within the workplace, and more subtle and social aspects of a broader integration of immigrants suggest, putting an effective labour migration into practice is more difficult than theory and policy assume.

There is also a lively debate in Sweden in relation to social protection for asylum seekers, an aspect of immigration that has traditionally been quite significant within the country. Such people may come with different motivations, and can be weighed down by fundamental concerns, first and foremost those of safety and shelter. This group is, by definition, separate from any labour market and employment relationship as the following sections of the study will reveal. Their challenges are many, yet Sweden has focused considerable effort and infrastructure to supporting such migrants' transitions.

As a rule, Sweden appears to have been poorer than many EU countries at labour market integration of immigrants, but one of the best at ensuring basic human rights and providing social support from the State (Nordlund and Pelling, 2013). The country is also near the forefront in its efforts towards validating the skills and qualifications of migrants and is certainly a pioneer in its efforts to help immigrants learn the Swedish language, despite its critics, through the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language training programme(*ibid*).

The main conclusions and implications that can be drawn from national and regional statistics and trends are that migrant origin and degree of labour market interaction present differing levels of socio-cultural, linguistic and skills applicability barriers.

Figure 16.1 Historic Migratory Trends for Sweden, 1880-2013



As far migration policies are concerned, they have changed over time to adjust to the political and economic situation in Sweden, furthering different types of migration at different times. At present there are three main grounds for receiving a residence permit in Sweden as a TCN: for work/study purposes, as a refugee/asylum seeker, or as a relative of someone resident in Sweden, known as a tied-mover. Nordic and EU citizens are allowed to reside freely in Sweden for three months, and can get longer residence permits if they or their relatives have sufficient funds to cover their costs in Sweden. A TCN who has lived in another EU country for at least five years is considered to be a permanent EU resident (*varaktigt bosatt*) and can migrate to Sweden on the same basis as an EU citizen. In general, Swedish citizenship can be applied for after five years of legally residing in Sweden.

Part of the DIVERSE research project focused on the systems, tools and procedures in place within Sweden to access and recognise the formal and informal SKC of immigrants with TCN status. The research also shed light on initiatives occurring at the regional level of Västerbotten County in the northern part of Sweden. Data for this part of the study was gathered through a combination of literature review, statistical analysis and seven interviews conducted with individuals working at evaluating organisations within the region. This section will highlight the benefits and outcomes of the SKC evaluation process, both for the migrant and for the society as a whole, as well as the difficulties and bottlenecks within the system.

Sweden defined the SKC validation process in its 2003 Bill on Validation where “validation” consisted in a detailed assessment, documentation and evaluation of the formal and informal knowledge, skills, experiences and qualifications that a person possesses. SKC recognition is the responsibility of the Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen, AF*) which, in turn, sub-contracts validation services from the private or semi-private sector. The system is centralised so that agreements with sub-contractors are made at the national level, in sectors such as medicine, teaching, engineering. However, the actual supply of validation services at the regional level can differ, with a number of players being involved. At the Västerbotten County level validation is performed, for example, by at least eight different organisations, for a variety of labour market sectors.

Sweden has been held as an example of good SKC practice by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as a result of its extensive and cost-free infrastructure helping migrants to learn Swedish; its efforts towards a practical recognition of immigrants’ knowledge and experiences, especially beyond formal education; and its legislation that protects against wage dumping effects and limits possible threats to the employment security of the local workforce.

Stakeholders within the SKC system that were interviewed rated the process positively. In their view, not only does it help immigrants into employment more quickly but it can also serve as a confidence-boosting and self-awareness raising tool for the individual being assessed. An SKC process, even if it directs a person into the Swedish education system so as to update their knowledge or learn about the Swedish context, was still felt to offer a win-win to both the Swedish State and the immigrant

as it can shorten the amount of time, and hence the money, a person needs to spend on education and speed their path towards employment. There are, however, significant sectoral differences where doctors or lawyers or electricians, for example, require a longer period for “Swedish-sizing” their competence, than perhaps a nursing assistant, care worker or computer engineer.

There are a number of different validation models in operation in Sweden but all models follow a similar 4-stage procedure. Stage one consists in a general mapping of a person's knowledge and abilities in the sector. Stage two provides more in-depth competence mapping, while stage three entails a first level of independent assessment of competence. Stage four includes a formal assessment of level of attainment and may include practical tests, examinations, authorisation and/or certification. The cost of validation and the time input required vary widely between the stages and the sector concerned. An overview of how the system works, where people can enter the system, and the vast number of stakeholders involved is shown in Figure 16.2.

Statistics and studies on the effectiveness and success, or otherwise, of the SKC recognition system in getting immigrants into permanent employment faster are few at this stage and initial suggestions are lukewarm. Researchers such as Dingu-Kyrklund, 2013 and Rooth and Edberg, 2006 have described an inherent structural discrimination where employers find it difficult to assess the competence of someone from outside the Swedish “norm”. Overcoming such attitudes and misconceptions may be one of the biggest challenges. This highlights the potential value of SKC systems but also acknowledges that tools, procedures, legislation are not sufficient on their own. Attitudes, familiarities, socio-cultural norms and subtle assumptions all play a significant role.

A major blockage in the Swedish validation system is the long time it can take to get a foreign education validated, and the bias in the system which tends to encourage foreign qualifications to be complemented by Swedish qualifications. Other observed shortcomings include a lack of sustainable financing, the absence of an overall framework for quality assurance, and a lack of relevant training for validation professionals. Other criticisms include the time and resource input required from a trained evaluator; the suggestion of inherent bias towards the needs of the Swedish labour market rather than towards an immigrant's previous professional competence and employment preference; a lack of recognition of the discrimination faced; or the oversights that occur when translating informal and on-the-job skills into equivalent Swedish qualifications (Andersson and Osman, 2008). These are crucial areas where policy and methodologies require further creative input in order to improve the effectiveness of any validation system.

At the Västerbotten region level there had been few specific TCN-related SKC recognition initiatives and validation was still in the early stages. All the regional practitioners interviewed emphasised the importance of the migrant's proficiency in the Swedish language for the success of a recognition evaluation. The system requires a lot of commitment and drive from the immigrant. Interviewees also agreed that one of the weakest parts of the current SKC system is its inability to deal with informal/non-formal competence and experience. Respondents also emphasised that whilst SKC recognition can bring opportunities and benefits, it can take more than specific

subject knowledge to work in the Swedish, or any country's, context. This applies especially to sectors that work with the public, or that must deal with Swedish legal and/or health and safety standards. The informal knowledge of cultural codes and social relationships (e.g. teacher-student; patient-doctor) is important. Such knowledge requires time, familiarity and understanding. It can be taught to some degree, but experiential learning is also required.

The outstanding conclusion remains, nevertheless, that proficiency in the host country's language is of significant importance to SKC success in the way the system is currently structured. However, language alone is not the whole story. This can be seen in a persistent lack of labour market and societal integration across migrant generations where Swedish born and bred (fluent in Swedish) people of immigrant background remain below national averages.

A final conclusion regarding the SKC process within Sweden is related to the great many players and layers within the system that create confusion, a lack of transparency and a lack of coordination. Practitioners within the system acknowledge this confusion themselves. A person seeking SKC recognition as a strategy to employment cannot fail to be somewhat puzzled (see Figure 16.2).

Considering now the second main issue of the project, DM refers to the management of a variety of skills, ages, religions, genders and nationalities of people within an organisation to the benefit of the organisation. The concept has been purported to be a better way of managing people (Marvin and Girling, 2010), but has also been criticised as legitimising a more limited approach to equal opportunities where corporate benefit takes precedence. In Sweden, the management of diversity has been promoted largely by Swedish immigration policy and a growing recognition that the ninth of the population that are foreign-born experience higher unemployment and labour market discrimination (Omanovic, 2009). Sweden has invested in improving integration within the labour market. At the regional level, however, geographic and demographic contextual differences are apparent across the country.

The Västerbotten context has its own specificities that explain why Västerbotten organisations had, overall, little experience of issues related to TCN personnel and the effective integration and management of such diversity. The County is home to just 6,630 TCN residents (or 2.5% of the population [ASTRID, 2010]). The percentage of TCNs resident in the whole of Sweden in 2010 was 3.1% (SCB, 2010) putting the region below the national average. It is important, as anticipated, to note that respondents described their employees as being TCNs during the interviews because of their national background, even though the people in question may have held Swedish citizenship. There was thus an important blurring of the data. Ethnic diversity within organisations in the region was found to be a topic that was not much considered.

Figure 16.2 The Swedish SKC Recognition Stakeholders System

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SKC RECOGNITION (VALIDERING) SYSTEM IN SWEDEN

KEY

█ = indicates a government institution

* = also a public institution

Swedish National Commission on Validation
*(Valideringsdelegationen) – disbanded after 2007

Swedish National Audit Office
(Rikskontrollen) ** – carries out both performance

The Public Employment Service [Arbetsförmedlingen, AF]
(overall coordinator of Swedish validation efforts)

SWEDISH GOVERNMENT
(decisions and policies)

mission

EUROPEAN UNION
(policies and guidelines)

National Actors

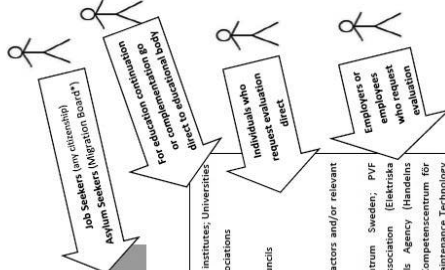
(Standard setting, validation model design, standard holding, certification)

Education Sector:	Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)* Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan, Mh)* Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitetets och högskolerådet, UHR)* Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetssamfundets, UFA)*
Medical/Health Sector:	National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen)** (21 medical-related & regulated professions)
Electrical Sector:	Swedish National Electrical Safety Board (Elsäkerhetsverket)**; Central Committee of the Electrical Trade for Vocational Training (Elektriska centrala yrkesnämnd, ECV); Swedish Electrical Contractors' Association (Elektriska installatörsorganisationen, EIO); Swedish Electricians' Union (Svenska Elektrikerförbundet, SEF)
Other Industry Reps:	Construction Industry Training Board (Byggnadsindustrens yrkesnämnd); The Paint Industry Training Board (Måleribransschens yrkesnämnd, MYN); Professional Lacquerers Board (Lackearnas yrkesnämnd); Sweater Foundry School; Sheet Metal and Ventilation Training Board (Pålj- och Vent Forum AB); Swedish Craft and Small Business Association (Hantverknarnas riksförbundet); Vocational Training and Working Environment Council (Transport Träsk) (TYA); The Service Industry Training Board (Ämne); Swedish Vocational Board of Agriculture and Horticulture (Naturbrukets yrkesnämnd, NYN); Association of Swedish Bakers and Confectioners (Sveriges bagare och konditörer); Swedish Handicraft Advisory Bureau (Sveriges Hantverksråd); Competence Centre for Energetic Materials (Kompetenscentrum för energipåda material, KCEM); Swedish National Association for Maintenance Technology Engineering (UTEK); Horticultural Central Professional Committee (TYCK); National Association of the Wood and Furniture Industry (TWF); VVS Industry Training Board.

Regional/Local Actors
(Implementing validation assessment)

Local Offices of the Public Employment Service [AF]
(commissions, validations and project manager; the process)

Education: Secondary: Local councils, local schools, colleges, folk schools, study associations
Vocational: Vocational schools and colleges; Adult education institutes; Universities
Tertiary: University Admissions Offices
National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen); County Councils
Medical: Medfarna; Lernia (private sub-contractors); plus others locally
Health & Care Sector: Lernia (private sub-contractor), plus others locally
Electrical Sector: Multiple private, public or semi-statal sectoral-focused subcontractors and/or relevant individual assessors or industry representatives.
Other Sectors: Some examples include: Medfarna; Lernia; Skärsteknikcentrum Sweden; PVF Teknikcentrum, Karlshamn; Swedish Electrical Contractors' Association (Elektriska installatörsorganisationen, EIO); Swedish Energy Retail Skills Agency (Handelskompetensmyndigheten); Competence Centre for Energetic Materials (Kompetenscentrum för energipåda material, KCEM); Swedish National Association for Maintenance Technology Engineering (UTEK).



Swedish Language Education
(run by local councils or other education units)
Immigrants: Swedish for immigrants (SFI)
Specialised: Medical Swedish, Ward Swedish, Legal Swedish

Specific/Local Projects
(sub-contracted by Arbetsförmedlingen)
Academics: The Short Path (Korta vägen)
Teachers: Foreign teachers' complementary education (ULV)

The project involved ten organisations: six public, two non-profit, and two private companies. The sectors covered ranged from a bakery to an industrial engineering company, a church, the state-run unemployment service, the local university, to a number of public and private actors in the personal home or disability assistance and/or healthcare and medical services sector. The smallest organisation had 245 employees and the largest had 11,000 regional employees. It is not easy to obtain a clear general picture of TCN personnel since the overall numbers were quite low and there was not a strong sectoral relationship. The regional pattern of origin mimicked national in-migration waves, in accordance with Swedish policies of asylum and refuge. As such, the region saw streams of Bosnians and Serbs during the conflict in former Yugoslavia, Iranians and Iraqis, Somalians and Ethiopians, and, more recently, Syrians. Interviews with those involved in healthcare recruitment also described a skills shortage within Sweden that encouraged foreign recruitment.

Swedish society has a positive and open rhetoric towards diversity and everyone's equal worth. Lines of questioning that attempted to probe for differences in work output, attitude, ability or level of payment or motivation among different people, especially among different nationalities, did not meet with a response and were felt to be antagonistic to Swedish sensitivities and cultural attitudes that put everyone on an equal footing. However, the view was expressed that TCN personnel, and those from European countries, bring new ways of looking at things, and experience of different ways of operating, that can benefit the organisation.

Informal discussion with TCNs themselves highlighted the pivotal role of personal contacts and personal references in gaining access to the Swedish labour market. The local contact did not necessarily have to be Swedish, simply someone known to the employer. The importance of social capital, rather than skills evaluations and validations or top-down attempts to manufacture diversity, as an effective strategy towards employment and labour market integration should therefore not be underestimated.

A coherent package of policies and processes of DM being implemented in a clear, necessary and deliberate manner simply was not found among the interviewed organisations. Salary differentials could not be discussed in the interview context; however, available statistics from the department's ASTRID population database suggest that, in 2010, TCNs earned on average SEK 122,000 (13,000 euro) per annum less than Swedish citizens in the Västerbotten region. The difference was higher for the more highly educated TCNs.

Organisations in the region generally receive very few applications for advertised jobs from non-Swedish applicants. Whether this is a result of the inability of non-Swedes to find job advertisements, an expression of a skills mismatch between those offered by immigrants and those the labour market requires, a factor of geographic isolation and general demographic homogeneity in the region, or a combination of all these, is open to debate. The proficiency of employees in the Swedish language was emphasised by respondents, with the possible exception of university respondents.

All interviewed organisations envisage that the diversity of nationalities resident in Sweden will increase in the future, especially in relation to current shortages in the medical, nursing and personal assistance sectors. Some organisations recognised a disconnection between the skills offered by the labour pool and the skills needed by

the labour market. Some viewed the offer of tailor-made training courses to help bridge the gap as a win-win strategy to fill a labour shortages and to boost the opportunity for integration (Interview discussions).

Private companies predict that an increasing level of technical competence will be required from the staff of the future, particularly with respect to computer-added mechanisation. This implies a greater need for more highly qualified staff. Some HR managers suggested that such a trend is also likely to have negative implications for gender equality in the workplace since fewer women tend to study these more technical subjects (Polarbröd Interview). Such technical advancements also have concomitant requirements for skills and abilities suited to the Swedish legal and regulatory context for electrical and mechanical professions, which will have associated negative implications for those trained outside of the Swedish system. These needs are also important to contrast with the general profile of the TCN migrant coming to Sweden.

Discussion with healthcare providers suggested that in the next 10 years they will need to employ an additional 250,000 qualified medical staff throughout Sweden in order to keep up with the demand for care. The shortfall will need to be filled by people trained outside of Sweden. This could be viewed as a net-gain for the country which will thus benefit from qualified personnel it has not paid to educate. It also points to the growing need for the SKC evaluation procedures to be efficient and effective, and for supplementary training schemes to be more readily available and accessible, and may suggest a need to review the level of Swedish language abilities required to be able to work in the medical sector.

Findings highlighted serious future skills and employee shortages in the healthcare and personal home assistance sectors which present job opportunities for TCN immigrants. Effectively matching this labour to needs, however, has implications for skills evaluation, acceptance of foreign experience, subtle socio-cultural acceptance of something outside of 'Swedish model', and important implications for Swedish language teaching, learning and ability.

Overall, local experience of diversity-related conflict was extremely low, within this small sample of organisations, and tended mainly to be due to a lack of familiarity with the Swedish organisational context and behaviour, and with differing expectations of roles and responsibilities. As such, this kind of conflict can be relatively effectively managed through coherent introductory packages and good communication.

In keeping with findings from the other parts of this research, was the emphasis on the more subtle and personal attitudes, aptitudes, initiatives and motivations of the players involved in any employer-employee relation. These more social, cultural and personality-related characteristics are not always the kind of factors that can be learned, or managed, and may not always even be overcome by simple fluency in the host country language. They are also two-way and require positive engagement from both sides in order to facilitate a successful labour market, and the socio-cultural integration of those living in Sweden who have a Third Country background.

For the third part of the DIVERSE project eight Swedish and TCN established non-profit organisations were interviewed about their experience of TCN participation in volunteering and civil society. A limitation of this Västerbotten regional perspective

was that the interviewed organisations generally had very few TCN volunteers. Thus, many had little experience of issues relating to TCN involvement. The studies and statistics described in this section emphasised that a significant Swedish volunteer sector does exist, with high levels of volunteering (>51% of the population), and a good degree of financial independence from the State (>62% of revenue came from own activities). What is unique to Sweden is the low engagement of the sector in traditional welfare-service provision or poverty reducing efforts, and its concentration in sporting and recreational activities (44.5% of all Swedish volunteer effort). What is also exceptional is the broad societal engagement in volunteer effort, and the low level of “professionalization” or paid employment within the sector (just 2.5% of the workforce). There is no specific legislation regarding the specificities of TCNs. There are no regional or local differences in laws or legal frameworks. In Sweden, although the regional authorities have a large degree of autonomy in how they operate, they are still bound by the same national laws and codes of conduct.

Yet despite this openness, and the prevalence of Swedish volunteering, those from Third Country nations are conspicuous by their absence from the sector. Reasons for this absence include the level of contribution and formality expected of a volunteer which put off TCNs who are possibly not used to such structured ways of engagement. Other entry barriers include, for example, a nervousness of experiencing a negative reaction, a lack of confidence in their ability to understand (both linguistically, but also culturally), and a lack of willingness to expose oneself to systemic, or even overt, discrimination. It also takes considerable time for immigrants to feel comfortable enough in society and in their lifestyle to be able to consider committing their time and resources to volunteering. Another explanation for lower TCN participation was that some TCNs choose to, or feel obliged to, send as much money as they can overseas to family members remaining in the home country. A failure to recognise such commitments and responsibilities as a hindrance to TCN engagement is disingenuous. Culturally different interpretations of gender roles can also be a complicating factor in a TCN’s decision to engage or not with Swedish civil society. Unsurprisingly however, throughout the research, language was held to be a crucial tool to integration. Sufficient competence in the Swedish language is essential, yet it is insufficient on its own. Recognising these myriad and subtle other barriers to TCNs engagement is essential.

“Save the Children” emphasises the crucial influence of the subtle, unspoken rules and codes of conduct, the cultural attitudes and expectations – both of the Swedish society, and of the societal background of immigrants – when it comes to barriers to civic engagement, volunteering, gaining work, and overall integration (interview discussion). Yet if this were more openly and explicitly recognised and understood, improvements could be made: a number of respondents during this research mentioned the need for a better introduction and explanation of these more subtle, rules, or attributes, that Swedish people tend to assume are known by those from other countries. “Save the Children” have recognised, from their long experience working with and on behalf of children, that it is not always sufficient to work only with the children, the parents must also be included. For examples helping non-Swedish parents to understand the centrality of sports and extra-curricular activities for children within Swe-

dish culture, or the need to be able to swim in order to get a pass grade in school sports, or the reality that hitting a child is forbidden by law in Sweden (interview discussion). Such parental-focused conversations and effort may help the integration process, and encourage the voluntary engagement of immigrants.

With regard to the civic participation of TCNs, the local examples investigated during this research suggest that there is quite a lot of work ahead to really increase levels of immigrant engagement in the Swedish way of interacting with sports and recreational and volunteer associations. The numerous efforts and commitment on behalf of local organisations unfortunately did not result in a great many new TCN members joining the volunteer organisations, sports groups and non-profit organisations involved. An external evaluation of the project considered the reasons for this low conversion of initial interest to a longer-term volunteer involvement. It found that TCNs prefer, or have difficulty, to commit to pre-determined days and times, they desire flexibility, and have a common aversion to the regularity of many Swedish associations (Sjöberg *et al.*, 2012). This points to a dichotomy between new-Swedes' interests and the traditional way that Swedish associations organise their activities. It also highlights a serious difficulty for the associations that need to have an idea of how many people will be involved in their activities, or that need to build sports teams with a place for all and a shared development over time (*ibid*). Consequently, there needs to be a compromise from both sides in view of a successful relationship between TCNs and such associations.

TCNs were significantly more represented in TCN-established organisations than Swedish-led or Swedish-focused volunteer groups. Research findings suggest that TCNs can identify more easily with TCN founders. TCN organisations were not seen as being led (or even imposed) by the Swedish society. The subtle structural and cultural barriers are not as prevalent in immigrants' own organisations, thus the entry barriers are lower. TCNs are often seeking something familiar with which to engage, they may wish to maintain a cultural connection with their homeland, or seek communication with and support from people who have lived through similar experiences. High competence in Swedish language may be less necessary in TCN organisations and there may even be a utilitarian use of the mother tongue. TCN organisations also tend to tolerate a greater flexibility in engagement, and have less of a need for a volunteer or member to commit themselves to a regular and strict meeting time or training regime.

It could be argued, however, that TCN organisations whilst offering important support and a chance for a TCN to become engaged in something, may unintentionally contribute to polarisation and a lack of interaction and integration. TCN organisations can be in danger of becoming a parallel structure to Swedish service providers and volunteer groups. Although they can give comfort to their members they, at the same time, reduce the need for members to engage with Swedish organisations and Swedish people. Swedes, in addition, may find TCN organisations not relevant to their interests, or too exotic or "foreign" for them to be able to engage.

Experience gathered from Swedish-led organisations indicated that there is a Swedish cultural knowledge or familiarity that those from other countries often do not have. Too often Swedes are not aware of this, or just assume that everyone has the

same knowledge and understanding of their society as themselves. This can discourage TCNs and other immigrants. Organisations that recognise this and that encourage a two-way process of respect and understanding, not limited to showing the “Swedish way”, seemed to be more successful in engaging TCNs in the region.

In conclusion, findings from this work on the Swedish case offer insights into the significant resource migrants represent in Sweden, but also provide sobering thoughts about the difficulty in translating admirable political intentions into practice in a real and effective manner. The very recent (September 2014) national election results which, for the first time in Sweden, took a far-right party that campaigns on an anti-immigrant platform (the Sweden Democrats), to the level of third largest political party in the country emphasises the need for careful reflection on current issues surrounding immigrant and native employment patterns and labour market behaviours.

Migrant origin and degree of initial labour market interaction translate into differing levels of socio-cultural, linguistic and skills barriers the migrant must overcome on a journey to integration. Despite the best ethical intentions of policymakers and decision-makers and the best efforts of skills validators, employment agencies, human resource managers or other involved stakeholders the facts remain: immigrants, and those Swedish citizens with immigrant heritage, tend to have lower employment rates and a lower average income than their Swedish counterparts of Swedish heritage, and those with TCN backgrounds lag farthest behind. The statistics revealing that more highly-educated immigrants are even more affected by such trends than lower-educated migrants also point to uncomfortable truths that those in positions of power too often fail to acknowledge: that any relationship, any interaction, any integration, has two sides, two players, and not everything can be legislated against, or processed away or systematised out of relevance. The Swedish report, while reminding us of the time required and of the socio-cultural and personality-related aspects that can greatly influence the degree and speed of immigrant integration, also offers valuable insights, models and ideas from the Swedish experience. As such it serves to signpost areas within SKC recognition, organisational human resource and DM, as well as procedural and socio-cultural practices within the volunteer sector, where further effort could yield tangible positive results for a faster, deeper interaction between migrant and native.

Conclusions

A Decalogue of Priorities

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This volume has presented a selection of the rich collection of data and suggestions that emerged from the project “DIVERSE – Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy” – supported by the European Commission through the European Integration Fund, coordinated by the Research Centre WWELL of the Catholic University of Milan, and realized in cooperation with 14 partners in selected regions of 10 EU countries: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

Maybe, Europe has not really chosen to become so much “diverse”. The very heterogeneous composition of its population is, at least partially, the result of some processes which were neither deliberated nor particularly “welcomed” by EU States. The progressive transformation of temporary guest workers into stable residents, the arrival of their family members, the emergence of minority groups following the redefinition of national borders, and the growing influx of humanitarian migrants have concurred to transform our societies into multiethnic communities, confronted with the issue of how to manage the inclusion of millions of individuals not selected according to their skills and cultural characters. The need to abide by some basic principles of the European civilization, such as that of the respect of fundamental human rights, has obliged EU countries not only to receive these migrants, but also to reinforce their judicial status, transforming them into a sort of “semi-citizens”. Finally, through the introduction of long-term or permanent permits of stay, and the adoption of legislation permitting the acquisition of the citizenship of the hosting country, Europe has become a genuine “diverse” society, notwithstanding the various attempts at assimilation. This outcome has inspired thousands of essays and passionate – sometimes violent – debates. We have not entered in this kind of discussion, asking ourselves if “diversity” is a good or a bad thing. *We have simply started from this structural and “in-corrigible” feature of the European society of today and tomorrow, asking ourselves if and how it is possible to translate it into a source of economic, social and cultural enrichment.* Starting from the condition of so-called TCNs, that is individuals only partly included in the community of citizens who, precisely for this reason present both the potentialities and the ambivalences of the process of construction of a

“common” but at the same time “multifaceted” European society, always in precarious equilibrium between petitions for inclusion and petitions for exclusion.

As described in the first chapter of the book, DIVERSE has had the overall and long-term aim of “reinventing” the European approach to immigration, overcoming its historical tensions and paradoxes through some major changes. First of all, it intended to encourage a shift from the perception of migrants as contingently instrumental resources to the conception of their human capital as a structural resource for the economic and social development of European societies. In order to achieve this goal, the assessment and recognition of migrants’ SKC has been identified as a crucial issue to be both investigated and supported through the construction of a specific innovative scheme. Secondly, DIVERSE envisioned to promote wider awareness, among different types of organisations, as to the importance and potentialities of DM strategies, that is of those policies and initiatives aiming to transform diversity into an asset to be exploited, with expected positive impacts on both human resources, organisational performances and local development. Finally, the project has pursued the improvement of the social participation and civic engagement of TCNs (and especially their participation in volunteer, non-profit organisations) for the construction of an inclusive European society and in order to change extra-UE migrants common image as people who need to be helped and assisted.

In order to achieve these aims, an ample set of activities has been carried out in the 10 countries involved. Besides this volume, the project has produced 10 national reports, other research documents, and 18 policy briefs addressed to local, national and European actors and institutions¹, and has powered up the construction of a participated and transferable audit scheme for assessing TCNs’ SKC. Interesting practices, suggestions and operational proposals have been emerging from the several seminars and work-groups scheduled during the project, and from the experience of TCNs activation as volunteers, thus helping to *enhance a change that, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is first of all of a cultural nature*. In these conclusions, I will mention and develop some of the main outcomes concerning the three broad areas of engagement identified by the project: as implied in our theoretical premises, and abundantly confirmed by the study and the other actions implemented within the project, SKC recognition, DM practices and voluntary engagement have not only a *practical*, but also a high *symbolic value*, particularly in those national contexts traditionally characterized by a “conflicting” relationship with migrants, or where they continue to be perceived as Guest Workers and not as a structural element of the society. Finally, I will formulate a “Decalogue of Priorities” addressed to the European authorities and the civil society.

The contemporary immigration picture, within the countries involved in the project – on the whole representative of the main continental trends – is the, continuously changing, outcome of a complex set of processes that occurred during the last decades (see chapter 2): decolonization, leading to substantial fluxes from former colonies and to the resettlement of expatriated nationals; the recruitment of foreign la-

¹ All these documents and materials are accessible on the web site www.ismu.org/diverse.

bourers through the temporary work programs launched after the Second World War; the significant arrival of family and humanitarian migrants following the closure of the active recruitment programs; the implosion of the Soviet empire which provoked large movements from the former Eastern block countries; the unexpected migratory transition of the Southern European nations; the progressive enlargement of the EU borders; the very deep demographic changes which have been affecting the “old” continent; finally, the global economic crisis, which has pushed the receiving States to rethink migrants’ role in the economic sphere and their impact on the welfare system. Besides all these factors, as stressed in chapter 1, migration, its regulation and its perception, is everywhere profoundly interrelated with the process of nation-building and its evolution. The result is a very heterogeneous panorama which I have defined *the diversity of “diversity”*, i.e. the different “contents” and “meanings” of the concept of diversity in the various national contexts.

As one of the consequences, *the category of TCNs, that we have chosen as the key target of our project, according to the rules governing the European Integration Fund, has proved to be very problematic*. As it is well known, this expression evokes the fundamental institutional and political border distinguishing – and discriminating –, in the present landscape, between residents. Our research demonstrates, once more, that this border is the mere outcome of a process of political construction, as has been proved by the progressive enlargement of the borders of the Union, and hence of the European citizens’ community. However, *it provides no empirical evidence of the data on an observational level*. In fact, almost all the national teams faced many difficulties in identifying projects and practices specifically addressed to this target group. This is particularly true for those countries where it is relatively quick and straightforward for foreigners apply for and obtain the citizenship of the hosting society, such as the Netherlands or Sweden; but, significantly, it is true even for a country like Germany, which has historically strongly stressed the ethnical foundations of its national identity. Countries included in traditional supra-national spaces, such as the Nordic ones, tend to view each other as “neighbours”, regardless of the fact of being or not a member of the EU. Sometimes, there are also specific legal constrictions – aimed, for example, at protecting personal privacy – that hamper the recording of information about individual nationality and ethnicity, and treating it as a specific issue. Not to mention the case of Italy, where the expression “extracomunitario”, entered in the common language since the ‘1980, is pervasively used in the political and media debate, but without a clear correspondence to the fact of belonging or not to the EU (therefore, Romanians are normally included in this category, but North-Americans and the Swiss are not). Moreover, *it happens that the main victims of discrimination and exclusion are not necessarily TCNs, but foreigners belonging to the Union, or even people who formerly were part of the community of the national citizens*: this situation, again, is relatively common among those who have acquired the host country’s citizenship without instantly becoming “absorbed” in the society and in the labour market. Not by chance, employers and other influential actors tend to perceive as “foreigners” all people with a foreign heritage or a “foreign” phenotype (assuming that it is possible to determine them), regardless of their “real” nationality and citizenship. However, the terrorist attacks which occurred in various European countries at

the beginning of 2015, perpetrated by European citizens, who had been born and grown up within the borders of the EU, have once more demonstrated the artificial and problematic character of the notion of belonging to a nation of people; or, in other words, how the main “others” are often included, from a legislative and institutional point of view, into the community of the insiders. Finally, perceptions, and labels, of a person’s nationality and ethnic identity, are not always in accordance with official papers, making it necessary to treat numerical statistics with great caution. Moreover, *the need to resort to this categorization may even artificially contribute to building problems and shaping practices, with an outcome exactly opposite to that of creating a European integrated society!*

Once more we have to deal with that ineradicable tension between the logic of *inclusion* and the logic of *exclusion* which accompanies the entire modern European history. On the one side, as it is also demonstrated by the evidence collected through this project, TCNs, since they are subjected to the rules and restrictions included in the immigration law, *continue to face limitations in their access to several work and life opportunities*, particularly when they lack a residence permit, or when they possess a “weak” judicial status (as in the case of asylum seekers not recognised as refugees). On the other side, it also happens that *it is exactly the principle of non-discrimination that* – as it prohibits to differentiate individual treatment and sometimes even to collect data and information about the national and ethnic background – *limits the possibility to know and appreciate the “diversity” embedded in the workplace and in the other organisational sets.*

Here, again, we come to one of the numerous paradoxes which mark the experience of a continent strongly shaped by the tendency to keep together two clashing philosophies and principles. Thus giving birth to several vicious circles that inhibit the full valorization of migrants’ potential. Just to cite some examples, it emerges from the Spanish report that a contract is needed in order to regulate the status of a foreigner, but companies often require some certification for hiring immigrants, and the certification procedure is based on the (official) work experience accumulated in Spain. In the Netherlands, asylum seekers face severe limitations in their possibility to volunteer, because involvement in this kind of activity is expected to reinforce integration into the Dutch society, thus making the expulsion of those who will be denied the status of refugee more difficult; as a result, humanitarian migrants risk impairing their human capital and their relational capacity. In Italy, non-governmental organisations – which have demonstrated a strong capacity of getting in touch with migrants and involving them –, thanks to their openness towards undocumented migrants, have themselves involuntarily contributed to the establishment of the image of a country where the gap between the law and its enforcement is seen as “normal”, thus discrediting the principle of legality. In many countries, the perception of being only a temporary resident, or not really belonging to the national community, was identified by the researchers as one of the main hindrances to voluntary involvement. As demonstrated by many examples, *trying to keep together both these two opposing approaches – the functionalist one and the solidaristic one – European societies maintain (some) TCNs at their margins and do not fully exploit their potential and their “diversity value”.* Significant efforts aimed at promoting migrants’ integration risk, in this

manner, to be frustrated because of less or more conscious and intentional forms of stratification in the access to rights and opportunities.

The issue of the recognition of TCNs' SKC constitutes a case in point, even when we consider formal titles, despite their "objectivity". Actually, *the line distinguishing EU and non-EU citizens, together with a series of other lines exiting from the national systems of civic stratification, continues to constitute a major factor of discrimination and, at the same time, of under-evaluation of migrants' human capital.* In general terms, as described in chapter 3, differences of treatment between EU and non EU nationals, identified in the various national contexts, are due to the normative and institutional framework regulating the relationship between the EU and Third Countries, which in actual fact constitutes a form of legal discrimination towards TCNs. The latter not only suffer from the lack of an EU general rule on the recognition of professional qualifications acquired outside the Union, but also from deficient information on the educational systems of "low-ranked countries" (from which most TCNs come). The same employers, even in the most "advanced" and meritocratic labour markets, tend to downgrade TCNs' credentials, because of poor information about the educational systems of the sending countries, but also because their perception is negatively affected by the low scores tertiary education institutions in Third Countries tend to obtain in global rankings. Once more, a stereotype shapes employers' expectations and prevents them from taking advantage of migrants' human capital. This problem is, paradoxically, even exacerbated in those contexts which traditionally are strongly in favour of investments in education and individual human capital. Germany is a case in point: as remarked in the country report, the recruiting system is conceived for engaging German candidates, with an ethnocentric understanding of the "right" education path, of the mandatory documentation and with the use of a "German" pattern of assessment.

Actually, the issue of SKC recognition, today considered a real challenge for the "democracy" of our democracies, mirrors the feeble line which separates inclusion and exclusion; or, in other words, the multiplicity of risks of discrimination. Just to cite some examples, *linguistic barriers* have emerged, in many countries, as one of the main obstacles in terms of access to the procedures of recognition; the same availability of rules and tools translated in the migrants' mother tongues can produce very different results in terms of access (and success) to the procedure. *Nationality* is another cause of discrimination: beyond the distinction between EU and non EU nationals, the multiplication of bilateral agreements, while favouring migrants coming from the signatory countries, reinforces the disadvantage suffered by other migrants; this clearly emerges if we look at the outcomes of the procedures of recognition, normally highly differentiated according to the national background of the applicants. Moreover, different *systems of civic stratification* decide about the opportunities open to various "types" of migrants, for example excluding some of them from the prospect of professional mobility. *Migratory seniority* is another discriminatory variable: the longer the permanence in a given country, the easier to dispose of the information, contacts and money needed to face the procedure. *Social status* obviously influences the capacity to afford the costs of the procedure, particularly when – as it often hap-

pens – there is no financial support to facilitate the access to the procedure. So, the question that arises is the following: *must recognition be considered an individual investment – chosen and financed by the individual involved – or must it be considered an institutionalized right supported by society?* Once again, TCNs' experiences reflect issues of a more general interest.

Moreover, beyond these “natural” forms of discrimination, two crucial issues have emerged from our study. First of all, as particularly pointed out in the Swedish report, *the recognition process may produce a sifting effect between those who are able to get through the process and those who cannot*. The process of recognition can even turn itself into a “divisionary tool” and weaken the position in the labour market, whenever the individual profile does not match certain standards, professional or not. Moreover, by focusing on tools and methods – according to the contemporary technocratic ideology – linguistic and socio-cultural barriers tend to be neglected. Therefore, despite the rhetoric of inclusiveness and individual emancipation, this kind of system can lead to the exclusion of some people, by serving wider power dynamics and special interests. And “poor” migrants are certainly a case in point. Actually, all along the tormented relationship between immigration and European society, the migrants' condition has been disclosing ambivalences and aporias of the declared “universalism” on which our democracies purport to be based. And as it emerges from an analysis of the relationship among immigration, work, welfare and citizenship (Zanfrini, 2010), in the present scenario TCNs *offer an emblematic example of the paradoxes generated by the application of the conditionality principle to the access to citizenship rights, maybe anticipating a future in which citizens' rights will be more and more strictly linked to an active role within the national economy*; or in more crude terms, where the States will be able to influence the composition of their population, thus maximising its productivity. In this light, SKC recognition emerges as a critical mechanism in deciding who is “productive” and who is not.

The second crucial issue, which however is linked to the previous one, concerns the level of qualification: this is a central argument in the current debate about the so-called “selective” (pay attention to the word!) migration policies. Actually, *the level of education/qualification not only constitutes a more and more key variable determining the possibility of (legally) migrating for work reasons – in Europe and more generally in the “global North” – but it also influences the chance of changing and improving one's position within the labour market* through some kind of institutional support. The focus on the *brain waste* issue, that is the widespread deskilling of educated migrants, paradoxically can contribute to obscuring the condition of less educated TCNs, often segregated in ethnicized niches of the labour market, with almost no chance of professional mobility. Discrimination towards non highly educated migrants is sometimes even openly institutionalised, as it happens in Poland, where TCNs with high qualifications benefit from the same preferential treatment reserved to EU migrants – as regards the procedure of recognition and the possibility of changing employer – contrary to what happens to other TCNs. It sounds, ironically, like the Parable of the Talents, «For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away» (Matthew 29). However, not-high educated migrants often suf-

fer from a lack of awareness of their abilities and aptitudes, particularly those acquired in non-formal contexts (and even more so those acquired thanks to their migratory experience): as they do not know their “talents”, they are not able to engage themselves in the process of recognition, if not specifically supported.

As it is easily understandable, these considerations do not concern migrants only; rather, *TCNs represent a real “mirror” betraying the inadequacies and shortfalls of our systems of recognition*, interpreting this expression in the broadest meaning, which includes both the institutional and the social forms of recognition. As described in chapter 1, our initial assumption was that of considering TCNs a sort of “ideal type” of citizen of the contemporary European society, confronted with the challenge of repeatedly putting her/himself on the line during her/his working and personal life history, taking advantage of the different kinds of SKC accumulated in both formal, informal and non formal environments, but also challenging institutionalized systems of assessment designed in the past and increasingly distant from the new reality of global mobility. *Focusing the attention on the notion of “diversity”, as it is particularly embedded in TCNs’ life histories, our project has tried to induce the different involved actors to rethink the process of assessment and recognition.* Not only because citizens and workers are more and more “diverse”, and cannot be easily “channelled” towards the standardized procedures defined in accordance with the “presumed” mainstream society; but also because their singular – if not unique – SKC could reveal an extraordinary, unexpected, resource for the contemporary heterogeneous and global economy.

In this line of reasoning, the issue of recognition of informal and non formal learning has proved to be a sort of “frontier research” and at the same time, as stressed in chapter 3, an innovative, interdisciplinary, cultural and institutional challenge. Actually, giving visibility to the stock and the variety of human capital, can permit the emergence of SKC not planned by the institutional education system, but constituting precious assets for the contemporary heterogeneous economy and competitive strategies. It is particularly true for SKC related to the migratory background, one of the main issues identified by our project but, unfortunately, almost completely absent among the initiatives inventoried by the various national research teams. As it is well known, meritocratic principles, if applied in an abstract manner, proved to be discriminatory.² In this context, our attempt to build a participated and transferable audit scheme, through an innovative procedure, for assessing TCNs’ SKC can be considered a sort of “historical” divide: *the bet at stake is not how to “adjust” migrants’ profile to the professional needs defined according to standardised descriptions, but how to allow the emergence of competences and abilities not already inventoried.* As described in the fourth chapter, the process of assessment is not to be predetermined on the basis of the concrete requests of the labour market, but should start from the analysis of the whole candidate’s experience, helping her/him to retrace the different tiles of her/his work and life biography. Moreover, according to the need to dismantle

² As it is known, this (often involuntary) discriminating effect produced by the “meritocratic” approach is frequently recorded when we analyse educational achievements, if school policies are not able to control disadvantages linked to the social and ethnic background.

common stereotypes about the role of migrants in the labour market, our proposal emphasises the importance of the social value of certifications, guaranteed by the involvement of an ample network of stakeholders. Finally, it stresses how the match between labour supply and demand must be achieved thanks to a process of personal empowerment and not, as it often happens, thanks to the simple adaptation to low-profile occupations.

This consideration introduces us to the second main pillar of DIVERSE, represented by the aim of promoting a wider awareness as to the importance and potentialities of DM strategies. According to our initial guess, enhancing a HRM approach aimed to exploit “diversity” as a strategic asset would actually positively influence TCNs’ role expectations, promoting a shift from a perception in terms of instrumental and contingent resource – which favours their use by marginal sectors and enterprises, including the black economy – to a new perception which looks at their human capital as a structural and strategic resource for enterprises’ competitiveness and economic development. Once confronted with the reality emerging from previous studies and experiences conducted in the 10 countries involved, this wish has been challenged with a series of critical points. First of all, we have to note the *very scarce attention – in both research, organisational practices and institutional initiatives – assigned to the “diversity” connected with the presence of staff members with a migratory background*. Not incidentally, the very few exceptions are represented by those countries, such as Estonia, which are trying to attract highly educated migrants. In a certain sense, this is the exception confirming the rule, if we consider that this situation is primarily due to the role assigned to TCN workers, whose favourite “skill” seems to be, in many national contexts, their high adaptability to low status jobs. Moreover, *DM practices are often confused with initiatives aimed at guaranteeing equal treatment and opportunities*, where the emphasis is put on the outcome of rendering individuals more “equal”, instead of acknowledging and exploiting their “diversity”. What’s more, *the rhetoric of meritocracy – referring to the principle of equal dignity of all human beings – seems to exorcise, in some organisational settings, any discourse about “diversity”*, as it would immediately risk evoking the concepts of prejudice and differential treatment³.

Finally, for all these reasons the DM paradigm has proven, according to some of the researchers involved, difficult to apply in many cases. In reality, what emerges

³ In this perspective, the same meritocratic logic can be ambivalent, if the supposed universalism results in the expectation of homologation. Many interviews emphasised that there are not (and should not be) special practices for TCN personnel, because everybody should be treated equally – or possibly according to some other types of “diversity” (such as age or family status) or individual “deficit” (such as the lack of language competences) –. Insisting on the fact that what is important is to choose the best among all applicants, who is the most suitable for the vacant position, human resource managers seem to neglect the role of individual characteristics going beyond the formal job description, despite the emphasis devoted to them in the managerial rhetoric. Finally, considering any form of discrimination – including positive discrimination – as unlawful, can discourage the implementation of DM policies.

from the international comparison (see chapter 5) is the impression, which already surfaced in our previous review (Monaci and Zanfrini, 2014), that European societies are at a “turning point” in the debate about DM, which should result in fruitful progress in terms of both managerial behaviour and scientific research. Actually, what we can register today is a multifaceted picture and in some relevant ways, even contradictory, as paradigmatically shown by the incessant tension between the logic of “competitive” valorisation of differences at the heart of DM and the tenets of social justice underlying the more traditional approach of equal opportunities (often used, as we have seen, as a reason to obscure certain kinds of “diversity” in the organisational settings, particularly those connected with ethnic background). Moreover, there emerges *a need for a straightforward, and finally explicit, reflection about the types of “diversity”, values and conceptions of the common good we intend to enact and to link together through diversity-oriented rhetoric and practices* (Zanfrini and Monaci, 2014). Here, again, we are confronted with a clear *ethical issue*, which calls into question the responsibility not only of the public institutions, but also of the civil society actors – starting from the business sector – in deciding some crucial questions: what kind of “diversity” do we need to acknowledge, protect and valorise? Do we not risk, by identifying some specific targets, impoverishing the universalism of rights and opportunities, thus feeding social fragmentation? And do we not risk, recreating the borders separating different groups of people, by channelling individuals into specific categories, which maybe do not mirror their real identities and expectations?

All this notwithstanding, what the 100 case-studies clearly demonstrate is that the positive impact of TCNs presence within the staff and the chance of their specific exploitation has often emerged in a spontaneous manner, as a result of the everyday cohabitation and sometimes also of the need to manage difficulties or conflicting situations. A particular mention must to be devoted to the health and care sector that, all around Europe, is involved in a process of personnel’ ethnicization and is destined to play a leading role in the prospective of exploiting diversity, intended as a lever for improving both performances and clients’ satisfaction, thus permitting the implementation of new strategic assets, well behind the issue of migrant workers’ inclusion. As many national reports have highlighted, besides the need to answer specific job vacancies and labour shortages, the recruitment of TCN workers involves a lot of advantages in the current scenario of growing pluralism: linguistic and cultural match, importance of cultural aspects in the diagnosis and treatment of patients and so on. Despite the existence of specific programs and policies for the recruitment of non EU personnel, also in this case the emergence of DM practices is understandable in terms of an evolutionary approach, as documented in chapter 5. Actually, what is also particularly visible in this sector is the whole ambivalence characterizing organisational action in this context, whereas the “attention” reserved to TCN workers, if not supported by specific awareness-raising initiatives, can feed ethnic-based stereotypes and labour market segmentation.

Secondly, another aspect which clearly emerged from our international research is that *the success of DM organisation practices is influenced by what happens outside the workplace*, and in particular by: *a) the attitude of the hosting community towards TCNs and their role; b) the institutional environment which can contribute in various*

ways – from legislation to the financial support – in encouraging firms and other kinds of organisations to adopt DM policies. Of course, we witness a two-way process, as on the one side the organisations’ social and institutional embeddedness represents a crucial variable, but on the other side the same organisational behaviour contributes to shape the local context and its culture (as is clearly demonstrated by the analysis of DM practices impact). All this further confirms the need for a *holistic approach*, based on the involvement of a large spectrum of actors at the economic, social, cultural and institutional level. In this regard, one problematic aspect is represented by the role of public organisations, whose standardized rules of functioning often inhibit the possibility of implementing “creative” solutions in this field, and don’t allow them to play a role of forerunner; sometimes they even have difficulty in hiring TCNs workers, becoming involuntary actors of institutional discrimination.

Furthermore, DIVERSE project’s results seem to provide us with relevant insights for tackling a problem that is often implicitly acknowledged but also easily avoided. This consists in the following, and somehow striking, paradox: just as the idea (and ideal) of “managing diversity” is spreading globally under the influence of models from the Anglo-Saxon experience and research, *there is increasingly a risk that this process of diffusion may generate indifference to local variations of “diversity at work”*, and particularly to their European expressions. This produces critical implications as far the issue of how to imagine, design and implement policies so as to turn this diversity into both a social and an organisational resource. In this sense, the national studies involved in the project offer two broad and clear suggestions: first, the reality and the issue of diversity arise according to “patterns” that are dependent on the social, cultural, economic and regulatory aspects of the specific (i.e., national and even local) contexts of life and action that frame this collective experience; second, and consequently, any policy or organisational initiative for attempting to manage diversity consistently with a “shared value” logic (Porter and Kramer, 2011) has to be crafted taking into account, in adaptive or reactive terms, this inescapable situatedness of the “institutional” construction of the experience – and discourse – of diversity. As I will highlight, this consideration implies the need of new instruments to monitor and evaluate DM practices, going beyond current standards shaped by established, Anglo-Saxon, models.

Finally, our study of DM practices has permitted to develop some suggestions also regarding the – very in vogue today – selective migration policies, aimed at attracting highly educated migrants in order to support the knowledge economy but also to reduce migrants’ burden on the welfare apparatus, an argument largely stressed by anti-immigrant and xenophobic movements. What emerges from our study is, instead, the consciousness that the possibility of becoming really attractive to this kind of “welcomed” migrants has to do not only with labour market needs and the recruitment strategies implemented by European companies, but also – and maybe firstly – with the supporting system for these “talents” and their family members (kindergarten, schooling, international schools, working possibilities for the spouse, etc.). After all, this implies a real change in the debate about the so called “welfare market”, and the awareness that the myth of the “Guest Workers”, highly productive and without expectations beyond their salary, is – today like yesterday – only a myth.

Moving to the third main area of engagement of the DIVERSE project – TCNs civic and voluntary participation – one first difficulty that emerged from the study is *the lack of data and information about their involvement in various kinds of organisations*, particularly non-ethnic ones. Available statistics usually do not record volunteers' nationality and, least of all, volunteers' national and migratory background. This particularly hampers the analysis of behaviours and attitudes of second generation members. The lack of systematic data limits the ability of making effective use of this resource, and inhibits organisations' ability to attract new volunteers and maximize their contribution: this assertion, true in general terms (International Labour Office, 2011), is even truer when applied to the phenomenon of migrants volunteering. Moreover, the very few available statistics about TCNs volunteering decidedly lack criteria of *comparability*, i.e. one of the main conditions needed to correctly approach the measurement of the phenomenon and of its impact (*ibidem*). Besides that, many reports have underlined the significance of so-called “informal volunteering”, relatively common within some migrant communities, but often almost invisible to the eyes of the host society. Once again, the migrants' experience attracts the attention as regards more general social processes, often obscured and marginalized. Actually, contemporary recommended definitions of volunteer work include also the unpaid time and work that individuals dedicate to performing activities directly for others (for example a neighbour in need) not through of organisations. While we completely agree with this trend, we have to note how, even if they certainly both produce positive effects on the common well-being, the two forms of engagement have not the same integrative and empowering impact; that is the reason why we decided to concentrate our attention on organized volunteering.

As opportunely highlighted by the authors of chapter 6, volunteering is an important component of the heritage of European civilization and represents, at the same time, a vehicle for individual inclusion and a source of social solidarity. The social value of this phenomenon has been repeatedly acknowledged by the European institutions, and the year 2011 was declared the “European Year of Volunteering”, in an effort to raise awareness of its value and importance. However, despite what happens in the European (western) context, where it is generally socially and culturally very appreciated, the concept of volunteering is not widely understood in all parts of the world, and it can even have a negative connotation, particularly for migrants coming from countries where “forced” volunteering has been a widespread practice. So, *the generally registered weak migrants' involvement can be understood as a substantial failure of the policies of integration*. Actually, some evidence demonstrates that in Europe, differently than in the U.S., migrants tend to absorb more slowly the concept of mutual trust (Collier, 2013).

According to the results of our international research, migrants' engagement in mainstream organisations tends to be highly influenced by the sense of belonging and loyalty towards the host society. When they perceive themselves as not really feeling right in the country (one case in point is represented by people with undetermined citizenship in Estonia), migrants tend to be less engaged in volunteering and civic participation. In more general terms, migrants earning low salaries and who perceive them-

selves as low-status people, having a worthless place in society and lacking political competences, tend to be discouraged in assuming an active role in the civil and political sphere. Temporary permits of stay, particularly when they are strictly linked to the working condition (or even to a specific employer, as can happen in certain countries) *inhibit the desire to participate, thus feeding a vicious circle which renders the migrant weaker and weaker*, and lacking those contacts and relationships which could be tremendously advantageous if she/he should lose her/his job. As it happens also among indigenous people, migrants involvement tend to be positively associated with a stable working condition, whereas unemployed persons tend to perceive themselves as people in need of help and assistance, not as potential volunteers who can help and support other individuals and families. Finally, once more we can observe how the “marginal” status attributed to migrants tends to feed a no-win situation that makes it more and more difficult to maintain the prerequisites (such as a stable occupation and an adequate income level) needed to obtain a permanent permit of stay.

This observation allows us to appreciate *the very challenging character of the process of activation realised in the context of our project*. First of all because, within the current “anomic” debate about the opportunity and the degree of tolerance of “other” cultures, it has identified in organized volunteering one of the greatest achievements of the European civilization, to be proposed to migrants coming from abroad and maybe “exported” to their origin countries. Secondly because, as described in detail in chapter 6, our project indicates the way for promoting of a new model of integration thanks to the mobilisation of a network of volunteering organisations, sharing same practices aimed at the empowerment of TCNs’ (and, of course, of other people in conditions of vulnerability) but also able to enhance a process of organisational change. Thirdly, DIVERSE suggests a paradigm shift from an “assistential approach” to an empowering one, which instead of merely providing help, encourages a proactive role of people in need, in order to promote at the same time their well-being and their contribution to society; what is even more challenging is that, as DIVERSE demonstrated, also individuals with apparently few resources and difficult experiences might flourish again if trusted and included in empowering contexts. If not else because they are given the possibility to become aware of their abilities, potential and vocation: a crucial premise, as we have seen below, for also pushing them to start the recognition process. Geared towards almost all kinds of people who are assisted or in need, this approach is particularly desirable in the case of migrants coming from Third Countries, often – particularly in these times of crisis – perceived as a burden and as illegitimate recipients of help. Certainly, this shift implies, but at the same time feeds, a cultural evolution in both the perception and the interpretation of immigration and of its role within the European society, with a strong emphasis on the concepts of individual capabilities, belonging, participation, social solidarity.

Lastly, the experience of countries once belonging to the Soviet empire is really peculiar. Here, foreigners seem to play a propulsive role in the field of volunteering, proposing a model of engagement for the others and the collective well-being that could break the general attitude of scepticism and distrust. The Polish report reserves a special attention to this argument, describing not only how foreigners are more involved in volunteering, but how they are also more oriented to highlighting its social

– and I can add ethical – implications. This is a fundamental indication for the construction of a “common” Europe, considering the process of progressive enlargement of its borders.

Besides these considerations related to the three areas of engagement chosen by the DIVERSE project, a basic point emerging from the different phases concerns *the role that civil society can play* in the governance of migrants’ inclusion, despite the emphasis usually unilaterally assigned to the decisions of the political authorities at national and European level. This is one of the most interesting and encouraging aspects that were revealed thanks to the DIVERSE project. Research findings offer us a lot of examples. With reference to the first issue, the recognition of SKC, many experiences witness the role of single firms, employers associations, unions and bilateral bodies. Just to cite some examples, in Portugal an innovative program for the professional incorporation of physicians was inspired and supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in collaboration with other public and non-profit stakeholders. The Spanish report speaks about the role played by single private companies, which tend to recognize migrants’ level of competence directly through their curriculum, and to value the “cross-cultural skills” they possess and skills acquired in professional performances independently from a formal assessment. It is a sort of process of talents’ recruitment – as defined by an interviewee – supported by the aim of hiring the best candidate, notwithstanding her/his origin. In Italy, the spontaneous activation by entrepreneurial associations (sometimes in cooperation with unions), has generated interesting experiences in the area of certification of non/in-formal knowledge, also in sectors – such as construction and care – that present a significant concentration of TCNs. Even in systems that we have defined as “starting” (chapter 3), civil society actors are expected to play a crucial role: in Hungary, for example, the development of a special tool to assess informal and non formal skills was due to the cooperation between Artemisszió Foundation and the MENEDÉK Association, one of the partners of the project.

Even clearer is the role of private organisations in promoting DM practices, which differ from most established anti-discrimination initiatives and equal opportunities policies precisely because they lack a mandatory character. The most emblematic case is the German one: even if diversity has traditionally been seen as a “nuisance”, some companies have benefited from their foreign “Guest Workers” and have bit by bit implemented measures appreciating their cultural diversity. In this scenario, the political and legal framework instead of representing a supporting factor – as implied in the tradition of the demand-driven recruitment disposals – risks becoming an inhibiting factor, due to its complexity, inflexibility and ethnocentric orientation. Our research in Italy identified some organisations which have even given DM practices a real political value: in general terms, in many cases the inclusion of immigrant human resources is consistent with principles of political correctness and social solidarity, rather than the result of a purely ethical, if not philanthropic, type of sensitivity; sometimes – for example in the case of a trade union unit – TCNs’ selection is imbued with a specific and declared political and cultural goal, and is intended as a component of a wider strategy aimed at encouraging a deeper change of attitudes towards diversity,

that is, “accepting” that the Italian society is no longer a mono-ethnic and a mono-national one and that the whole issue of citizenship, in its different components – rights, duties, sense of belonging and active participation – must be rethought in this perspective; finally, in another case – a “grass-roots” initiative of creating a blog displaying a predominant “ethnic” profile – the same organisational mission directs its influence towards the cultural and political level, giving voice, in the Italian cultural debate, not only to the diversities connected with the migratory background, but also to those related to the peculiar condition of migrants’ offspring, the so-called second generation.

Besides the individual initiatives of the single organisations involved in these kinds of practices, all around Europe, as highlighted in chapter 5, different types of non-governmental entities – such as consultancy firms and entrepreneur associations – have largely contributed to the implementation of initiatives based on DM principles. Not to mention the role that non-profit organisations – both mainstream volunteer organisations and ethnic associations – can play in the promotion of migrants’ empowerment and responsibility towards the host society, so eloquently demonstrated by the experience of activation realised within the DIVERSE project. Public institutions can of course orient and support the process of “reinventing” the integration model, as proved by many initiatives inventoried by the researchers – for example, the inclusion of volunteering among the activities that allow to accrue credits in view of maintaining the residency permit in Italy, according to the Integration Agreement –⁴; at the same time, they are the civil society actors who will ultimately have the task of transforming into concrete experiences the need of participation and of building a real multiethnic and multicultural European civil society.

Finally, our project suggests *the great potential, still to be exploited, of civil society actors in enhancing a new model of integration*. Just to give some examples, work-sessions devoted to the construction of the shared audit scheme (see chapter 4) have revealed how the various stakeholders involved can contribute to the process in different ways and are interested in its outcomes for different reasons; hence, it is strategic to bridge them in order to provide tailored solutions and to overall increase the effectiveness of the system for all potential users, be they immigrants or natives. The program for the activation of previously assisted TCNs suggests, in turn, the importance of creating a network of organisations and institutions pursuing the same aim of transforming and rejuvenating the approach towards people in need, and able, in a certain sense, to be transformed themselves thus giving birth to a new structure capable of providing opportunities in an empowering context.

Moreover, together with the role of the civil society’s actors, we have to signal the importance of focusing the attention on the territorial level. With regard to all the three main areas of intervention identified by the DIVERSE project, local practices have proved to be crucial for promoting social innovations and fostering a more advanced idea of integration. Therefore, territorial actors, often unconsciously, contribute significantly to redefining, on the basis of successful practices, the lexicons and

⁴ See also the initiative of the German government in order to promote migrants’ volunteering (see chapter 9).

grammars of the model of integration, putting strong emphasis on the construction of a new idea of belonging and membership. It is thus confirmed that *citizenship*, intended as the membership to a given political community, *is not a status granted from the top to a single person once a “right” level of integration has been achieved, but a process of mutual exchange and understanding as well as common effort, aimed to give shape to an inclusive and integrated society.*

A Decalogue of Priorities

1. **Reassess the Category of TCNs.** DIVERSE suggests, first of all, *the need to rethink the category of “Third Country Nationals”, and its place within the integration and inclusion policies* implemented by both the EU and the single countries. As our field work has clearly demonstrated, the actors of the European society – enterprises and Third Sector organisations, local administrations’ staff and employment offices, educational institutions and also ethnic associations and so on – do not perceive the distinction between EU and non EU citizens as relevant, if they are not obliged by the legislative framework. As a result, they go beyond this dividing line that is perceived, from time to time, as an unequal cause of social and economic exclusion or as a source of “reverse discrimination” (as occurs, for example, when specific support programs and initiatives are addressed to non EU migrants, particularly in times of crises). Going behind this dividing line means perceiving TCNs as full members and full actors of the contemporary and the future European society, the latter intended as a community to which ones “belongs” and takes part irrespective of her/his national heritage. This is even truer if we consider the demographic weight, destined to become more and more important, of people with a migratory background within the contemporary European landscape. Finally, in this scenario also migrants associations – too often self-segregated in a sort of parallel world which is symbolically part of their origin country – are expected to play a participatory role, helping to give visibility to the heterogeneous composition of European society or, as suggested by one national report, to create a multicultural civic society. Actually, *this would mean changing the way in which they have been often perceived by both the host countries* – which assign them the task of keeping “Guest Workers” attached to the specific roles they are expected to play – *and the sending ones* – interested in preserving the loyalty of their overseas workers and their propensity to send remittances. A perception currently fed by new forms of rhetoric – like that of “circular migration” – which seem, once again, to try to postpone the problem of the inclusion of non-nationals in the community of citizens, renouncing at the same time the opportunity of taking advantage of their contribution to the long-term economic, social and institutional development of European society.

- 2. Build a Transnational Network for the Sharing of Information and Experiences.** As it has clearly emerged from our study, different EU countries not only are confronting different types of migration and “diversity”, but they have also been elaborating different “cultures” of SKC recognition, more or less advanced; different approaches to DM philosophy and practices; different conceptions of foreigners’ involvement in the civic sphere and of its relation with citizenship regimes; different initiatives aimed at exploiting and taking advantage of the diversity embedded in their social structure and in its main institutions. *Supporting the exchange of information and practices among authorities and local society actors of different countries will surely improve the ability of the “diversity value” to bear fruit*, while at the same time improving our awareness of the risks and ambivalences implied in the diversity issue. On the basis of the experience gained through the awareness-raising seminars implemented in the 10 regions involved in our project, we suggest that it would be useful to systematize at transnational level such forms of information and discussion through the construction of repertoires of experiences carried out at organisational and community level and of formal tools and procedures developed by different actors; the implementation of data-banks about SKC recognition procedures and their outcomes; the collection of instruments and procedures devoted to the assessment of non formal and informal learning; the construction of repertoires concerning DM programs, the process of assessment of their impacts and the communication strategies able to maximise their effects; the instruments used to make migrants’ aptitudes more transparent (such as the individual card designed in the context of this project, see chapter 6) in order to facilitate their enrolment by volunteering organisations; the models of recruitment campaigns and so on.
- 3. Break the Vicious Circle Inhibiting SKC Recognition and Exploitation.** The current situation of TCNs widespread deskilling and limited access to the process of SKC recognition constitutes a phenomenon of grave social myopia. European societies must understand the importance of supporting the process of titles recognition, facilitating (potentially also from a financial point of view) TCNs access to the procedure and the possibility to quickly achieve, within the education system, the compensatory preparation needed to exercise regulated professions or to enter higher levels of education. Host countries did not sustain the burden of education of qualified migrants who entered as adults, but can take advantage of their human capital; we can even argue that supporting this process would be just a form of (partial) “restitution” of benefits produced by the influx of workers whose education was paid by another country. *So it is important to spread the awareness that the process of recognition is not just a cost, but a form of investment expected to produce a significant return in terms of revenues and fiscal contribution.* Moreover, besides all the indications emerging from the countries’ research reports, establishing international standard referencing systems for educa-

tional qualifications such as the EQF would be an important step forward in improving the international comparability of diplomas. This will become increasingly necessary as migrations towards Europe are continuously evolving, and countries must be prepared for future foreign workers (most of them not selected for their working abilities, since they have entered through the side door of the family reunification or humanitarian channels) coming from countries with significantly different educational systems, and different award criteria of certification. At the same time, *migrants must be made aware of the opportunity of investing time and money in the recognition process*. Too often they are subjugated by aims of immediate gains and savings, and succumb to questionable migratory cultures whereby migrants are expected to sacrifice themselves for the well-being of the families left behind. Thus feeding the irresponsibility of sending countries and families, and a model of development dependent on migrants' remittances and implying large phenomena of brain drain and brain wasting. Only through a vast sensitization campaign, addressed to both migrants, ethnic associations and the multiple actors involved in the process of integration, will it be possible to break the vicious circle that sees, on the one hand, employers that are not open to the opportunity of enhancing TCNs' educational capital and pool of expertise, and, on the other hand, TCNs that are reluctant to invest in the procedures for recognition. The production and the diffusion of reliable data about the outcomes of recognition procedures would be a strategic step in this direction. Moreover, a special mention must be made of the role of consulates and embassies, which often represent the "weak link" of the partnerships built at local level in order to sustain the process of migrants' integration⁵. This approach suggests that the positive impact of international migrations, for both the receiving and the sending countries and communities, is deeply influenced by their capacity to develop a real cooperation.

4. **Raise Awareness of How Diversity Can Become an Organisational Strategic Asset.** Given the common widespread perception of TCNs as an adaptable low-cost workforce, it is fundamental to *improve the awareness of the organisational advantages implied by perceiving diversity as a resource*. The development of cross-cultural competences, through specific training initiatives, is a first priority for organisations that, in many cases, have not really "chosen" to become so heterogeneous in their staff and human capital composition. Secondly, considering that the success and long-term impact of these kinds of initiatives are largely dependent on the "quality" of the surrounding context, there emerges a need to implement awareness-raising programs addressed to the stakeholders of different organisations. Thirdly, it is important to sustain small enterprises and volunteer organisations, not able

⁵ It is sufficient to mention the difficulties encountered by the various national work teams in their attempt to involve these actors in the different phases of the DIVERSE project.

to afford the costs needed to realise this kind of programmes, by enhancing the constitution of networks and partnerships in order to share costs and benefits. Moreover, *there also emerges the need to design and implement new methods for the identification and the evaluation of practices aimed at acknowledging and exploiting the diversity embedded in the organisational settings, often not classifiable according to the established, Anglo-Saxon, standards*, making their creators aware of their advantages and of possible ways for their further development. The research conducted within this project and the awareness seminars implemented in the 10 countries involved can be seen as a first step in this direction. In this same perspective, the tacit dimensions of organisational cultures and practices already revolving around the values of inclusivity and diversity valorisation must be brought to light, through more explicit and targeted interventions implemented both at the organisational level (for example by the formal constitution of multi-ethnic teams, the implementation of specific training and sensitization initiatives, the adoption of charters and codes, the institutionalization of measuring/assessment process, the improvement of internal and external communication and so on), and at the societal level (for example by encouraging academic and applied research on DM practices and by identifying specific incentives that may be relied upon to involve different stakeholders).

- 5. Make Companies and Other Organisations More Inclusive Towards Different Kinds of Diversity.** Our study has documented a sort of reluctance to implement HRM initiatives specifically addressed to migrants and TCNs (without considering the difficulties, discussed above, in identifying them as members of a distinctive category of people). What emerges is rather *the opportunity of repositioning the question of TCNs insertion within the workplaces according to the perspective of giving birth to inclusive organisations*, able to answer the needs of each person and to exploit the contribution of each collaborator starting from her/his uniqueness. What's more, some of the DM practices recorded thanks to this research (for example in the Spanish case) seem to demonstrate that even temporary or seasonal migrants can be the target of interesting experiences aimed at creating inclusive organisations, able to improve the sense of belonging also for those who are not expected to remain and become permanent employees. The comparative analysis presented in chapter 5 suggests – in order to maximise their effects on the personnel and on the organisation, and their communicative impact towards the various stakeholders – to include DM practices within the framework of CSR, while conceiving it, at the same time, as a transversal “umbrella” encompassing and stimulating various social innovation practices. What also emerges is the importance of intensifying efforts to create more sensitive social and institutional environments, in an attempt to bring about a real cultural change at both individual, organisational and societal level. Here, again, our project suggests a way to stimulate the participation

of different kinds of actors and stakeholders, making them aware of the various advantages which could be obtained by embracing this perspective.

6. **Defend and Promote Quality of Jobs and the Concept of “Decent Work”**. Each initiative addressed to specific groups of people or individual profiles (such as the procedures of SKC assessment, as already discussed, or the DM programs), while enhancing their potential, has an intrinsic, unavoidable, discriminating – if not really “discriminatory” – nature, and also the likely effect of reproducing various forms of segmentation in the access to occupational opportunities, viewed as sources of reverse discrimination. This awareness, which repeatedly emerged also during our field work, can even constitute an inhibiting factor for the implementation of this kind of initiative. It is therefore fundamental to highlight how *the aim of supporting individual empowerment and emancipation* – affirmed by many documents and declarations since the publication, back in 1993, of the Delors White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment – *must always go hand in hand with the monitoring of the general quality of occupation*. It is of fundamental importance not to forget how the concept of “decent work”, as described by various international agencies and, with particular vigour, by the “Caritas in Veritate” (n. 63) by Benedict XVI, should define the requisites that each job has to possess in the very civil Europe. «It means work that expresses the essential dignity of every man and woman in the context of their particular society: work that is freely chosen, effectively associating workers, both men and women, with the development of their community; work that enables the worker to be respected and free from any form of discrimination; work that makes it possible for families to meet their needs and provide schooling for their children, without the children themselves being forced into labour; work that permits the workers to organize themselves freely, and to make their voices heard; work that leaves enough room for rediscovering one’s roots at a personal, familial and spiritual level; work that guarantees those who have retired a decent standard of living». In this regard, it is impossible to ignore how, particularly in the most degraded niches of the labour market, TCNs inclusion has to do with their willingness to adapt to work conditions that are below the threshold of acceptability and outside the area of “industrial citizenship”, with the related corollary of a deterioration of our work culture (and the connected risks of social dumping). The line separating EU citizens and TCNs is in danger of becoming, in this context, a mere theoretical concept able to obscure this process of degradation. Therefore, *contrasting this kind of regressive processes is the first step towards the goal of improving the European model of integration and of implementing a right way of exploiting the migrants’ workforce and human capital, but also of guaranteeing future generations and their occupational opportunities*.

- 7. Make Volunteer Organisations More Attractive Towards Migrants.** Volunteering is not a migrant's primary concern, but it can play a fundamental role in their integration process. Furthermore, *particularly when it is the expression of altruism, migrants' involvement in volunteer organisations can become a real driver for the construction of a model of multiethnic and multinational coexistence based on mutual understanding – above and beyond individual differences – and on shared effort for the construction of a common well-being.* Moreover, third sector organisations with a multiethnic staff can give a precious contribution to the process of rethinking of the traditional welfare models, offering solutions more and more in line with the heterogeneous composition of the European population and with more and more common transnational lifestyles. Migrants for example, can suggest and support the launch of transnational policies and initiatives, providing answers to the needs of divided families, but also to the need of “exporting” rights and benefits acquired in one country to another one. Finally, given the problematic generational turnover that many mainstream European organisations are facing, TCNs – as they are often concentrated in the younger ages of the population pyramid – could give a significant contribution to the renewal of the volunteer staff and the intergenerational transmission of competences and sensibilities. For all these reasons, *it is important to develop every kind of effort in order to attract TCNs in the mainstream volunteer sector, through both specific promotional campaigns and various forms of incentives, but also, at a more general level, through a better integration between the policies aimed at favouring migrants' integration and those designed to support and reward voluntary engagement.*
- 8. Promote a Paradigm Shift in the Approach to People in Need.** As particularly suggested by the experience of TCNs activation implemented in the context of this project, volunteer organisations can play a crucial role in the promotion of a new model of integration, sharing some practices aimed at the empowerment of migrants and able to transform them into a true resource for themselves and the whole community. *In this manner, they contribute to promoting a real “paradigm shift” in the approach to people in need.* They also contribute to overcoming a crisis that has been determined by the under-utilization of many people and of their human capital. Finally, the DIVERSE project suggests inserting the issue of migrants' inclusion and assistance within a framework proposing a new idea of voluntary engagement, with an emphasis on individual autonomy, on the initiatives of the civil society and on the creation of an empowering context, i.e. a socio-cultural-institutional context focused on (each) individual development in order to produce both individual well-being and social cohesion. As described in chapter 6, DIVERSE offers a replicable model able to pursue, at the same time, several outcomes: the activation of individual capabilities and expertise; improvement of self-consciousness and confidence; stimulation of proactive attitudes; encouragement of third sector organisations to be more

open towards individuals of different ages and ethnic backgrounds and to develop their networking capacity; improvement of the local welfare offer; enhancement of the self-reflection capacity of the local community and its capacity to plan its future according to the idea of a “shared development” (Zanfrini, 2001); presenting a close link between integration goals and access to citizenship.

- 9. Enhancing a New Generation Citizenship.** Almost all EU countries are currently engaged in passionate debates about the rules which govern the access to citizenship, putting into question both the regimes based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* – which have produced not only a concrete, but also a symbolic exclusion from the community of the citizens, particularly problematic for second generation members – and those based on the principle of *jus soli* – which have been accused of having devaluated citizenship, creating an instrumental relationship with the host society. Our project confirms the need to rethink the current citizenship regimes, and the very idea of citizenship, according to a new prospective that gives particular emphasis to its participatory dimension. All this in order to valorise the contribution of each person to the construction of citizenship “from below”, through the confrontation of different – cultural, ideological, religious, experiential – perspectives, giving new life to the basic principles of European civilization: the principle of the indissoluble dignity of each human being and the principle of institutionalized solidarity, intended also as an expression of the human anthropological vocation to build relations of reciprocity and solidarity (see Zanfrini, 2013). This is even more urgent if it is true, as asserted by some influential scholars (cf. for example Collier 2013) that migrants’ children who have grown up in Europe are very reluctant, compared with their US peers, to embrace the national culture of the receiving society⁶. This would imply a greater investment in initiatives aimed at improving, among both migrant and native people, the awareness of the different dimensions involved in the citizenship concept, going beyond the “contractualistic” approach followed by many countries through different kinds of integration agreements. In the light of this expected outcome, the role of European civil society must be acknowledged and valorised. As we have seen, despite the emphasis usually put on the role of governments, public authorities, migration policies and citizenship legislation, our project has clearly demonstrated the crucial function played by different kinds of other actors in determining the “quality” of the integration process and of interethnic cohabitation, and also the ability to

⁶ In this regard, it is important to highlight how promoting a wider participation of migrants and their children in the social and cultural life of the hosting societies is also one of the better ways of maximizing the positive impacts of migration on the sending societies. Actually, besides the questionable impact of remittances and brain drain processes, the familiarity with a more advanced social model can become a fundamental vehicle for the transnational transmission of ideas and values.

transform the diversity emerging from migration into a competitive asset for European economies and societies. Moreover, civil society actors are playing a crucial role in the emergence of a “new-generation” citizenship: a generative form of citizenship linking citizens together as they live together within the polis intended as a shared space and a shared time which becomes, in turn, a place of reciprocity of rights and duties (Martinelli, 2013). I am speaking about a type of “responsible” citizenship, which manifests itself within a scenario of freedom, the latter conceived according to a relational perspective, thus connecting the creativity and innovation potential of social actors with their desire to belong and feel included.

- 10. Move from the Aim of How to Integrate Migrants to that of Building an Integrated Society.** Finally, as it emerges from our study, procedures and practices such as those concerning the process of SKC recognition, but also the implementation of DM strategies and the civic involvement of TCNs, are not neutral, but embedded values, norms, political preferences, world views. In other words, they have an ethical dimension, often obscured by a debate monopolized by questions of efficiency, financial sustainability and correspondence with labour market needs, once more seen as the main criteria for deciding about migrants’ (and not only migrants) rights and opportunities. Given this awareness, our project suggests the opportunity of overturning established approaches and shared representations regarding the migrants’ role: instead of enhancing TCNs’ adjustment to European society and labour market, according to procedures and standards defined from the top, the challenge is how migrants’ SKC can be valorised in view of promoting European economic, social and institutional development. However, several decades of studies and analyses make us aware that integration is an attribute of the society, not of the single person; migrant integration, therefore, must certainly be pursued through initiatives of individual empowerment and emancipation, but first of all through policies aimed at building a cohesive society. According to this perspective, the question of the management of differences should be reformulated in terms of policies for individual empowerment. With the specification that the emphasis must not be put only on the dimension of self-realisation and personal achievement – as stressed by the current individualistic culture –, but also on the dimension of individual responsibility for the construction of the common well-being. These two dimensions must always be kept together in the design of policies and initiatives related to the three main areas of intervention on which this project has focused. Moreover, they must be part of the “work-in-progress” consisting in the construction of an integrated European society, able to take advantage of the “Diversity Value”.

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The Diversity Value

How to Reinvent the European Approach to Immigration

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

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



EDITOR

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