

EQUALITY IN DIVERSITY - NETWORKING FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In the district of Girona in the North-east of Spain, immigration from non-EU countries is a relatively new phenomenon since the 1990s but today the number of immigrants exceeds 5% of the total population, concentrating on some local communities more than on others. Despite an unsatisfied and increasing demand for workers, unemployment amongst immigrants is levelling at a rate more than twice as high as the average and it affects women stronger than men. In addition, the two important Roma communities living in the region are facing major integration problems on the labour market. The Igualtat en la Diversitat DP has tackled this challenge by involving all relevant stakeholders in a new territorial platform for joint action.

The DP has succeeded in bringing together local administrations, the trade unions, companies and NGOs in a common approach to improving both the “employability” and the labour market situation of ethnic minorities in the region and thereby facilitating their integration. This new platform has made it possible to better articulate and coordinate different types of action that are needed to reach this objective, including

- more effective exchange of information and experience, and joint planning, between the different stakeholders;
- awareness raising and sensitisation activities, especially in areas with a high concentration of immigrant workers, in order to encourage acceptance of cultural diversity and to prevent or reduce existing racist or xenophobic attitudes;
- establishing the new role of a cultural mediator to foster inter-cultural communication and identify gaps and needs in integration processes;
- introducing new methods for assessing and presenting formal and informal skills and competences of immigrant workers;
- designing and implementing new training offers, combining theoretical instruction with practical work experience in companies, that are tailored to employers' requirements;
- individualised job mediation to assist immigrants in contacting prospective employers, and coaching services to ;
- providing support to immigrants who want to be self-employed;
- special guidance and counselling for immigrant women and Roma people.

The project team emphasises the fact that the innovative character of the DP does not reside in the nature of the individual actions but in their combination. The new platform and networking between its members has helped to counter the risk of fragmentation that is always inherent in a project involving such a wide range of different and relatively small scale activities.

The DP does not claim to have eliminated all the problems that it set out to tackle. But it introduced a new cooperative approach to effectively complementing the work of existing public services in its region.

Contact

Jordi LLACH

Email: jllach@ddgi.cat

<http://www.igualtatdiversitat.org>

Link to [EQUAL database description](#)

[Transnational Partnership](#)