Culture - Exchange

Building Bridges

Combating Social Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities and Immigrant Communities through Culture

Building Bridges

Combating Social Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities and Immigrant Communities through Culture

Written by:
Fouli Papageorgiou, Ph.D, Managing Director, PRISMA -Centre for Development Studies

In co-operation with:
Filio Diamanti, Ph.D, PRISMA -Centre for Development Studies
Raúl Martínez Ibars, Gabinet d'Estudis Socials (GES)
Eoin Collins, NEXUS Research Europe
Jacques Reiners and Rob van Duijn, Studium Generale, University of Maastricht
Tomasz Marciniak, Department of Cultural Studies, Institute of Sociology, N. Copernicus University

For further information, please visit the project website: www.culture-exchange.net

Contents

Introduction

The project

This Guide presents and illustrates the lessons learnt from the pilot actions carried out in four different locations in the European Union, in the context of the project "Combating Social Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities and Immigrant Communities Through Culture", which has been funded under the EU Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002-2006.

The aim of the project has been to investigate and pilot-test a strategy for promoting the inclusion of immigrant communities and ethnic minorities through culture. The strengthening of minority cultural expression and cultural exchange with the host or majority population are important concepts underlying this aim. These concepts were put to test in four pilot areas: Dublin in Ireland, Barcelona and Murcia in Spain, Maastricht in The Netherlands, and the Cyclades Islands in Greece. In three pilot areas, the project activities focused on immigrant communities, originating from Central-Eastern Europe, North Africa or Latin America (in Greece, Spain and The Netherlands); and in two pilot areas, on ethnic/cultural minorities (Travellers in Ireland and Armenians in Poland).

The project team conducted five workshops, one in each participating country, to exchange experience and share the evaluation of their activities and results with the local communities, including educationists, the local authorities, media and local activists in the field of minority rights and inclusion. The publicity of the project has been supported and enhanced by the constant presence of the website www.culture-exchange.net in the internet.

The project partnership brought together organisations with institutional, research, academic or local action experience in the filed of social inclusion, covering five Member States: Ireland, Greece, Spain, The Netherlands and Poland. They are:

- The Development Agency of Cyclades - project promoter (Greece)
- PRISMA - Centre for Development Studies - project coordinator (Greece)
- Studium Generale, Foundation of the University of Maastricht (The Netherlands)
- Gabinet d'Estudis Socials, GES (Spain).

● Consorcio de Entidades para la Acción
  Integral con Migrantes, CEPAIM (Spain).

● Associació per la Cooperació, la Inserció
  Social I la Interculturalitat, ACISI (Spain).

● PAVEE POINT Travellers Centre (Ireland).

● NEXUS Research Europe (Ireland).

● Department of Cultural Studies of the Institute
  of Sociology, Nicolaus Copernicus University,
  (Poland)

The Structure of the Good Practice Guide

*T*his Guide is divided in two Parts.
Part I presents the context which gives rise
to the inclusion issues dealt with in the five
countries included in the project. The context is
defined, first of all, as national, and refers to the
immigrant or ethnic minority groups that are
present, the attitudes of the host or majority
communities and the policies and measures that
aim to promote inclusion, especially those
included in the National Action Plans for
Inclusion (NAPs).

Part II discusses the pilot actions undertaken in

Greece, Spain, Ireland and the Netherlands to
promote awareness of cultural diversity,
challenge xenophobia and contribute to the
social inclusion of immigrant communities and
ethnic or cultural minorities. The discussion is
structured along the four "themes" of the
proposed inclusion strategy, which imply
directions for policy and action:

● Raising the "visibility" of the target groups'
  cultural heritage and artistic talents.

● Capacity building of the target groups through
  training and suitable support, to enable
  cultural expression and promote talent.

● Reinforcing networking of associations and
  NGOs representing the target groups

● Promoting cultural exchange between the
  host/majority communities and the target
  groups.

An Annex is also added, discussing the issue of
inclusion through culture in Poland, focusing on
the first and second waves of Armenian
immigration from the ex-Soviet Republic of
Armenia.

The Guide is published in print in three
languages (English, Greek and Spanish). It is
also published electronically in the website of the
project www.culture-exchange.net.

Part I: The context

Chapter 1:
Social inclusion through culture: addressing the issue

*I*mmigration and belonging to an ethnic or
cultural minority is defined as one of the
main factors significantly increasing people's
risk of poverty and social exclusion, at
individual and group level. At social level, ethnic
and cultural diversity, multiplied by interna-
tional migration, is identified as one of the main
structural changes across the EU which "can
lead to new risk of poverty and social exclusion
unless the appropriate policy responses are
developed" (Joint Report on Social Inclusion,
Council of the European Union, December
2001).

Growing cultural diversity at national and EU
level is one major implication of increased
foreign immigration. The latter, far from being an
accidental phenomenon has been recognised as a
structural phenomenon bearing implications that
Member States have to deal with. Depending on
the reception model that a society favours,
cultural diversity can either be a source of
mutual enrichment or a source of conflict.
Similarly, depending on policy choices, segre
gation is one of the risks. Inversely, assimilation
is another risk, when members of the minority
group are expected (or even forced) into no-
choice situations where they feel they must shed,
deny or minimize their cultural identities to
enjoy equal access to jobs and services and avoid
discrimination. There is, of course, a third
option, social integration which is based on
embracing cultural diversity. This option
promises more positive results not just for
immigrants and other minorities, but for the
European society as a whole, by contributing to
its strategic goal for social cohesion.

Another major implication of the phenomenon of
immigration in modern societies is that it has
contributed to raising awareness on discrimi-
nation issues concerning, not only immigrants,
but also other minorities with distinct cultural
identities and life-style, such as the Roma, the
Travellers and the Gypsies. Indeed, the debate on
immigration has raised the broader issue of

difference and has made these groups more
visible. This, however, has not been followed by
increased awareness of their contribution to the
wider national and European heritage, economy
and society.

There is indeed a strong relationship between
socio-economic exclusion and cultural repres-
sion. The marginalisation of immigrants and
ethnic minorities is commonly reflected in their
reduced representation in cultural production.
Moreover, some aspects of immigrant or
minority cultural profile may be challenging to
the majority's system of values (e.g. different
religious beliefs, nomadism). This has often been
the underlying factor of social marginalisation
and exclusion of the groups who claim this
distinct identity. In some cases (e.g. Travellers) it
has even been the crucial issue leading to
exclusion in other fields. Access of the minority
groups to resources that would allow them to
cultivate the arts and enhance their cultural
heritage might seem a luxury, when viewed in
the light of their overall disadvantage and might
thus be dismissed as unnecessary. The argument
that this project brought forward is exactly the
opposite. That is, cultural manifestations and
cultural production have an important role to
play in bringing about attitude change in favour
of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Indeed:

● Active participation of immigrants and
  members of ethnic groups in the production of
  culture and in the arts projects a positive
  image of them and, thus, contributes to
  combating the general tendency to associate
  immigrants and ethnic minorities with social
  problems (e.g. high rate of unemployment,
  offensive behaviour) which, in turn, reinforces
  negative stereotypes about them and, thus,
  their social isolation and exclusion.

● Cultural exchanges with the majority or host
  populations contribute to cultural cross-fertili-
  sation, which helps to eradicate ignorance and
  mutual mistrust, i.e. the basis of xenophobia.

● Involvement of immigrants and other minority
  groups in cultural production fosters self-
  expression and a positive sense of identity at
  group and at individual level, thus facilitating

their integration.

In conclusion, recognising the relationship between socio-economic exclusion and cultural repression is the basis for developing the potential of culture as a "tool" for social inclusion of the groups "at risk".

How do we define culture?

"*Culture is the totality of the knowledge and practices, both intellectual and material, of each of the particular groups of a society, and of a society itself as a whole. From food to dress, from household techniques to industrial techniques, from forms of politeness to mass media, from work rhythm to the learning of family rules, all human practice, all invented and manufactured materials are concerned and constitute, in their relationships and their totality, culture.*"

(Guillaumin, in Crawford, 1988, p. 41)

Chapter 2:
The Policy context

*I*reland, Greece and Spain share similar migratory history, marked by the reversal from traditional emigration countries to countries receiving considerable numbers of foreign immigrants over the past 15 years. Due to similar historical experience, all three States are also at similar stages in their policy approach to immigration: they have only recently left behind the view of immigration as a merely public order issue and are now recognising the mid and long term social, economic and cultural implications of the phenomenon. This shift of policy has also raised awareness on issues relating to other ethnic and cultural minorities established in these countries, such as Travellers and Roma.

The Netherlands and Poland are somewhat different. The Netherlands, a country with a colonial past, and host to waves of immigrants from the 1950s onwards, faces new challenges with the influx of refugees and asylum seekers from African and Asian countries. Poland, a new EU member is characterised by a multitude of ethnic minorities and a new wave of Armenian immigrants from the former Soviet Republic of Armenia.

This chapter summarises the policy context of the project referring in particular to the provisions of the National Action Plans (NAP) against Poverty and Social Exclusion in the participating countries (from 2001 to 2006) and other relevant policy initiatives. The NAPs identify immigrants and members of ethnic-

cultural minorities as two of the most vulnerable groups, facing systematic negative discrimination. Indeed, the NAPs/inclusion give priority to facilitating the access of these groups to education, formal labour market, accommodation etc. More specifically:

● The Spanish NAP/inclusion discusses the need to assist immigrants in their socio-professional integration and in particular immigrant women who accumulate disadvantages. It also stresses the need to ameliorate the quality of life of the Gypsy population threatened by exclusion. The Second NAP/inclusion 2003-2005 addresses the issue of integration through culture by promoting action for immigrants in a situation of exclusion or facing the risk of exclusion. This is done by promoting inter-cultural awareness and anti-discriminatory measures through sensitisation campaigns and sharing experience involving good practices. The NAP refers also to the establishment of a pilot programme for the integration of immigrant families with economic and social difficulties at centres of learning, so as to provide information and training on social skills, customs and culture of the host country as a form of educational support for children.

● The Greek NAP/inclusion states that the integration of foreign immigrants and the promotion of multiculturalism "through smooth integration of immigrants is a challenge and a priority of the NAP/inclusion". Emphasis is given on combating xenophobia and on intercultural education. The establishment of the Institute for Migration

Policy points to similar lines, while special emphasis is given to the problems of repatriated Greeks and the adaptation of foreign and returning ethnic Greek children to education in the regular schools. However, in the Action Plan for the Integration of Immigrants for the period 2003-2005 there is no emphasis placed on culture. Renewed calls for the integration of immigrants through culture could be detected in the NAP/inclusion 2005-2006. It is stated that there is a need for the operationalisation of the existing Integrated Action Programme so as to cover issues of "assimilation of third country citizens who legally reside in the country". To assist the process of integration, a programme of Greek language instruction is offered to legal immigrants employed in Greece which has been developed by the General Secretariat of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education and Religion and implemented by the Institute of Continuing Adult Education of the same Ministry.

● The Irish NAP/inclusion identifies Travellers as one of the most vulnerable groups within Irish society and refers to specific approaches for ameliorating their quality of life and social inclusion in various fields (education for Traveller children, health care and housing). The NAPincl 2001-2003 established the kNOwRacism initiative in 2001, which was extended with the NAPincl 2003-2005 to provide for cultural activities as a means of

integration. Grants were awarded to relevant projects. In January 2005 the government published its first National Action Plan Against Racism, entitled Planning for Diversity, where under the objective of "recognition and awareness of cultural diversity" a range of measures were listed to "develop the potential of arts/culture policy to promote interaction and understanding of cultural diversity" with direct reference to Travellers. The Plan is not an end in itself and in particular envisages further, more detailed, targeted strategies focusing on the integration of Travellers and other vulnerable groups. Given that funding for programmes combating exclusion is very important for any initiative to succeed, one of the largest funding sources for community groups has been set up by the Community Development Programmes (CDP) administered since 2002 by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

- In the Netherlands, during the second half of the 1990s, asylum seekers formed more than 50% of the total number of foreigners coming into the country. In the Dutch NAP/inclusion of 2003, the –rather limited- focus on minorities concerns the need to improve housing, access to employment and education, access to public services, and to fight discrimination and improve integration. The minorities were expected to maintain their own culture. As the implementation report of the NAP/inclusion in 2005 shows, the focus has

changed. A general obligation to integrate was introduced for all immigrants between the age of 16 and 65 who want and are allowed to stay permanently in the Netherlands: this obligation concerned learning Dutch and respecting Dutch values. Culture features explicitly in integration policy only in the Actienplan Cultuurbereik (Cultural Outreach Plan) of 1999. The Cultural Outreach Plan aimed at initiating co-operation between culture institutions, schools, multicultural organisations and social organisations. Its main objective was to improve the participation in culture of young people and ethnic minority groups.

- Poland joined the EU in May 2004 and in its first NAP/inclusion 2004-2006 is stated that the number of immigrants and refugees has increased. The question of culture is raised in the NAP/inclusion in relation to the worsening of the economic situation of a part of households in Poland and the decrease in public expenditure for culture, which make access to culture uneven. A common phenomenon is the worsening state of culture infrastructure, a decrease in the number of culture establishments and of recipients of culture. The NAP/inclusion 2004-2006 expresses its hope that the operation of the culture industries would contribute to improvements in the culture institutions network and thus increase the possibilities of social integration through culture but no specific measures are mentioned. Special reference is made to the actions supporting

cultural activities of national and ethnic minorities, like festivals, panel discussions, publishing books, magazines, organising concerts, competitions, etc. Such support is awarded to the non-governmental organisations of the Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Czech, Armenian, German, Russian, Slovakian, Jewish, Tartarian, Karaite, Lemkan, and Roma minorities.

The above NAPs of the second round seemed to have taken into consideration the suggestion of the Social Protection Committee of the European Council in 2002 to "ensure a better integration of areas such as health and culture with other policy domains." Similarly, the complex and multi-dimensional nature of exclusion is acknowledged by the Committee that called for "the mobilisation of a wide range of policies under the overall strategy". The importance of "culture" was acknowledged in all NAPs mentioned in this section although to differing degrees.

The profile of the target groups: Immigrant communities and ethnic minorities

*T*his chapter provides a short overview of the present situation in each participating country, in relation to the target groups of the project.

The Travellers in Ireland

*U*ntil the late 1990's, Ireland had one of the most homogenous populations in the European Union in terms of race and ethnicity with the notable exception to this general rule the existence of Irish Travellers, an indigenous minority now generally accepted as being a distinct ethnic group. Travellers do have their own language, called "cant" or "gammon", which is sometimes referred to by academics as "shelta". This is a language mostly used by Travellers to speak with each other. Travellers have a number of things in common with European Travellers and Gypsies, especially around nomadic living patterns and experiences of discrimination and social exclusion. Nearly 24.000 Travellers were enumerated in the 2002 Population Census representing 0,6% of the total population of the country.

A comprehensive study on Travellers is included in the "Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community" (1995). This report

showed that Travellers experience high levels of social exclusion and disadvantage, evidenced through:

- insufficient accommodation
- high infant and adult mortality rates
- extremely low education participation rates among Traveller children, particularly at secondary level
- high levels of illiteracy
- the disappearance of their traditional economic activities
- a very low rate of participation in the mainstream labour force with high levels of unemployment and reliance on social welfare payments.

In a recent report, it was established that from all reported cases in 2002 relating to racism 50% per cent of them were taken by members of the Traveller Community. Efforts have been made to address these problems in the past two decades but progress has been slow. To address the issue and fight for a just solution, the Irish Travellers have established their NGO, Pavee Point in 1985, to press through action research and campaigns for a fair treatment of their community and provide the means to their members for cultural expression and wider visibility. Pavee Point's Cultural Heritage Programme made a contribution not only in breaking down anti-Traveller prejudice in the wider society, but also in building the collective self-esteem of the Traveller community through their involvement in cultural actions.

Foreign immigration in Greece

Social and economic evolution of Greece during the last two decades has been marked by the phenomenon of foreign immigration. Far from being an accidental phenomenon, immigration signifies a structural change and has produced a social and cultural turning point for Greece, which has traditionally been an emigration country.

The importance of the phenomenon of immigration for Greece is highlighted by the following findings of a recent study carried out on behalf of the Institute of Immigrant Policy(2004).

According to this study, which was based on official statistical data, 10.3% of the population of Greece are immigrants (1,15 million), including repatriated Greeks from the ex-Soviet Union and citizens of EU Member States. 68% of the permits issued to foreigners, were issued for dependent work, roughly 12% were for reuniting with family members and 12% for independent economic activity.

High concentrations of immigrant populations are observed in the big urban centres (Athens, Thessalonica) and in the regions with intense tourism activity, like the islands of Cyclades. The majority of the immigrants (65%) come from Albania, while 10 countries of origin account for 91% of all immigrants (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Pakistan, Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, India, Egypt, and Philippines).

Immigrants in Greece have entered the process of integration, as a recent study by MRB Hellas showed. The survey was conducted in 2002 on a sample of 491 foreign immigrants living in Athens. A first observation, with many implications in the social inclusion field, is that a significant proportion of the respondents (about 50%) declared that they wished to stay in Greece permanently. Regarding leisure activities, the immigrants seem to differ from the indigenous population in their overall patterns: they tend to avoid the more expensive pursuits, such as the cinema and the theatre, while they favour the more passive, home or family-centred activities.

It is worth quoting here the words of an Albanian actor living in Greece who directed the first theatre play performed by Albanian actors, in both Greek and Albanian language: "the aim [of the play] is to approach the Greek public, but mainly the Albanian one– that is why the performance is bilingual... We want these people [the Albanian immigrants] to get out of their homes and re-discover theatre".

Foreign immigration in Spain

Immigration in Spain is also a relatively recent phenomenon. In a space of a few years, Spain has passed from the state of being a net emigration country (with important emigration flows towards Central and Northern European countries) to a country receiving immigrants of various origins (mainly from the Maghreb countries). Spain has become one of the southern borders for migrants entering the European Union, especially from Africa, reaching the Spanish shores through the cities of Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands. At the same time, most of the Latin American immigrants arrive at the airport of Barajas in Madrid.

According to data of the Spanish Ministry of Interior, at the beginning of 2005 the total number of immigrants in Spain was 2.054.453 out of 42.300.000 inhabitants or 4,85.% of the population of Spain. Latin Americans - Ecuadorians count for 11,1% of all immigrants, Colombians for 7%, Peruvians for 3,6%, Argentineans for 2,9% and Dominicans for 2,2% forming the largest immigrant groups, accounting for 26,8% of the total immigrant population. Amongst the African groups, the Moroccans remain the largest one. Asian immigration is rather limited in numbers, but it is the most distinct from a cultural point of view.

Employment is the essential factor behind immigration towards Spain. Migrants from outside the EU (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) who arrive in Spain looking for a job and for a better quality of life find it difficult to integrate into a labour market the conditions of which are quite precarious even for the native population. As the above communities established themselves in the Spanish cities, issues like employment and unemployment, housing, access to culture and bureaucratic obstacles have become increasingly important.

Foreign Immigration in the Netherlands

The tolerant nature of Dutch society and its economic prosperity made The Netherlands a desirable country for refugees and immigrants alike. This was mostly evident in the period following the Second World War (1945-1965), when around 300,000 Dutch ex-colonial citizens from Indonesia, Surinam, and the Caribbean returned home. During the same period, labour recruitment campaigns were in force resulting in a wave of "guest" workers from primarily Mediterranean countries like Turkey, Morocco, Italy, Spain, the former Yugoslavia, and Greece.

In the 1980s and 1990s refugees and asylum seekers came to constitute a large part of the total number of immigrants in the Netherlands with applications for asylum reaching the level of 40,000 per year. As it is mentioned in the Dutch NAPincl of 2003, at the dawn of the 21st Century, the percentage of immigrants and minorities has settled at around 10% of the population but in the larger cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague), immigrants and minorities constitute about one-third of the total populations. Among the younger generations, they already form a majority.

Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans, constitute the largest non-Western minorities. The main problems immigrants face, apart from

discrimination, has to do with the quality of housing, access to employment and education, and access to public services. In the region of Maastricht, where the pilot action takes place, immigrants come mostly from Africa and Turkey while there is a presence of young unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The Armenians in Poland

*A*ccording to the National Census of 2002 there were 34.1thousand immigrants in Poland. Two thirds of this group are long-term immigrants, who reside in Poland for 12 months or longer, while one third - from 2 to 12 months. According to the definition adopted in the National Census 2002, an immigrant is a person living permanently abroad and residing in Poland periodically more than for 2 months

Poland is a country where ethnic and national minorities constitute about 3% - 4% of the total population (38,000.000 millions). According to the Ministry of Interior and Administration's 2002 Nationwide Census data, Poland is inhabited by representatives of nine national minorities: Byelorussians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Jews and four ethnic minorities: Karaites, Lemkos, Roma, and Tatars. Except for large-scale national minorities: Byelorussians,

Ukrainians, Germans, Lithuanians and others, there are some groups which at the moment consider themselves as Poles: Kashubians, old Armenians, Tatars and Masurians.

Since the early 1990s, to the above groups should be added the influx of immigrants and refugees. A new special group, as far as older ties with Poland are concerned, is the Armenians who immigrated to Poland after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. These 'newcomers' seem to have little contact with the old community of Armenians which have settled in Poland since the Middle Ages. As studies have shown, the 'oldcomers' identify themselves both as Polish and Armenians keeping n touch with their culture while the elite of the 'new-comers' seem to slowly assuming their cultural identity though participation in cultural associations and making their presence felt in cultural activities like festivals.

PART II. The pilot actions

Introduction

*T*he main assumption behind the project is that culture is a dynamic sphere of life that affects directly or indirectly the attitudes of individuals and communities towards the "new", the "different" and the "other". Therefore, culture may influence attitudes towards the minorities, especially those that are visibly different and "other" such as the immigrants and ethnic groups. But how can culture affect the chances of these groups to integrate within their host or majority communities? The project team, based on an investigation during the initial phase of the project, came to a proposal for a strategy, built on the interplay of four "thematic" concepts which reflect different mechanisms of using culture as an inclusion medium, defining at the same time the dynamics of cultural expression as such. The four themes are:

● The "visibility" of the cultural capital and heritage of a given minority community or social group, which in many cases remain unknown to the majority population or are negatively perceived.

● The "trans-cultural exchange" that takes place between the majority and minority groups, which may result even to joint production of cultural outcomes

● "capacity building" of immigrants or members of cultural minorities (through skills development and training) so that they become able of acting for themselves instead of being represented, thus assuming full control over cultural production in various fields.

● "networking" of organisations that represent immigrant communities and ethnic minorities or are working with them, to add value to their cultural objectives and multiply their effect.

Project activities have been built along the above themes, using a methodology of action research. They have included research and studies, exchange of experience between partners, mobilisation of public opinion, but most important of all, they set up cultural events and created structures and cultural products that had a long term prospect and impact. Each national team

assumed responsibility for one of the above themes, making it the focus of their project activities. However, all national action plans included a mixture of themes, and pilot–tested a variety of concepts and methods. The leading partner in each theme also undertook the horizontal evaluation of the successes and failures of the related thematic activities across the participating countries. The division of responsibilities has been as follows:

The Spanish partners took the lead in networking

The Dutch partner took the lead in raising visibility of minority cultures

The Irish partners took the lead in capacity building

The Greek partners took take the lead in transcultural exchange.

The **target groups** of the project are mainly members of immigrant communities and ethnic/cultural minorities. The project addressed all ages, but gave special attention to children and young people. The target groups in the participating countries include:

● Greece: Immigrant school children (6-15 years) and their families, mostly of Albanian origin in the islands of Santorini, Paros and Mykonos, in the Cyclades region

● Spain: Immigrant teenagers (13-18 years) and young people (18-25 years) mostly of North African origin in the regions of Catalonia and Murcia

● Ireland: The broader Traveller community with a focus on younger Travellers (16-22 years)

● The Netherlands: Various immigrant communities with a focus on youth and students in the region of Maastricht.

In addition to the above, the Polish partners investigated the inclusion patterns of the established Armenian community in Poland vis-à-vis the new wave of Armenian immigrants from ex-USSR, which started in 1994. A summary of the research finding of the Polish team, on the basis of the four themes, is presented in Annex I.

Chapter 4.
Raising Visibility of minority cultures

Raising the "visibility" of the minority groups' cultural capital, heritage and artistic talents, is the first step towards a positive change of attitudes and perceptions within the host/ majority community. Different methods may be used for this. The project team tried three different approaches, which include:

1. organising cultural events, such as concerts, festivals or fairs, which presented to the general public and promoted the cultural production of immigrants and ethnic minorities

2. setting up cultural centres for the immigrants and ethnic minorities, to encourage their involvement with culture, both their own and that of the host community's

3. creating cultural products that represent the values and history of the minority groups, to make these elements widely known and shared by the majority population.

The first approach was tested by Studium Generale of the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands, aiming to make the immigrant cultures in the wider area of Maastricht more visible and friendly to the host community and to help integration of immigrant young people. The second approach was tested by CEPAIM in Murcia and by the Greek partners DAC and PRISMA in Santorini, while the third approach was tested by Pavee Point in Dublin.

Studium Generale took the lead in testing how multi-cultural events may raise the visibility of minority cultures, thus facilitating the acceptance and appreciation of these cultures by the host society, and eventually contributing to the inclusion of the minorities. Studium Generale has been well placed for such a task, having a history of organising events for cultural minorities since 1992, offering opportunities especially to young musicians to show their work and share their artistic achievements with other people, mostly university students. In this context, the concept of Global Culture Nights was developed, responding to the Dutch National Action Plan to promote inclusion through culture (Cultural Outreach Program), an initiative of the Minister of State for Culture at that time.

The Global Culture Nights have a threefold aim:

- to bring a wider public in contact with the culture of ethnic minorities
- to inform a wider public about the backgrounds of different cultures
- to bring people with a divergent ethnic background in contact with one another

The Global Culture Nights that have been organised in the context of the project adopted a more diversified profile that before: they were evenings filled with various cultural events and happenings, such as music, fashion, theatre, dance, comedy, traditional cuisine and the like, performed by diverse ethnic groups such as Iraqis, Latin- Americans, Turks, Kurds, Black Africans and Moroccans. Studium Generale also developed the concept of the Global Culture Festival which transfers the idea of Global Culture Nights in the outdoors, offering a full-day's programme of events in an open space, suitable adapted for the occasion, aiming to reach a wider-audience. Closer cooperation was established with other organisations for the organisation and running of the festival. It is worth noting that each global Culture Festival attracted more than 4000 people, an audience by far larger and more varied than that of a single Global culture Night. The extension of the Global Culture Nights to a nearby town, Venlo also took place, although with limited success

Nine Global Culture Nights and two Global Culture Festivals were organised between March 2004 and September 2005 in Maastricht (plus three Global Culture Nights that took place in Venlo: a Salsa Night in October 2004, an African Night in November 2004 and a Moroccan Night in December 2004) attracting altogether an audience of approximately 9.000 people.

Global Culture Nights
- Yeleen, African dance and music (March 2004)
- Mimosa, Turkish dance and music (April 2004)
- Lagash, Iraqi music (October 2004)
- Papa Boni & Kundi Bora, African dance and music (November 2004)
- Funda Müjde, Turkish comedy (December 2004)
- Moroccan Night I, discussion, music and theatre (January 2005
- Moroccan Night II, comedy, fashion-show and music (January 2005)
- Kikwetu, African dance and music (March 2005)
- El Hadj N'diaye and Papa Boni & Kundi Bora, African dance and music (November 2005).

Global Culture Festivals
The **1st Global Culture Festival** was held in cooperation with the Global Culture Centre in Maastricht by Studium Generale on 12th September 2004. The festival formed a part of a big cultural market and its location has been agreed with the cultural market organisers. The Festival was organised in the context of a big cultural market (Het Parcours) that marks the beginning of the cultural season in Maastricht. The Global Culture Festival included:

- Concerts of world music
- workshops of world music and dance like African dance and djembe
- information "market" where ethnic minority organisations present their work
- world drinks and foods

The **2nd Global Culture Festival** was held on 29th May 2005 in connection with the Jetto festival, organized by the Multicultural Knowledge Centre and a group of youth. Despite the fact that the festival had to be reallocated ten days before the due date (because of changes in the license policy of the Maastricht municipality) it was a big success. Thousands of people came to enjoy the music and dance performances of immigrant and native performers.

These multicultural events had a thematic character usually, to give them a special and easily recognisable identity. Often, a special message was intended to come forward. For example, the play Pig Factory combined comedy with raising serious issues about racial prejudice, confronting the audience with their own stance towards ethnic minorities; the play was well received by the audience. Also, in another event that presented East African culture, the lyrics of the songs, specially written for the occasion, talked about peace and harmony, themes that play an important role in East-African society where many different cultures – local and international – meet.

Impact

*T*o assess the impact the Global Culture events had on the public, an evaluation of both the Global Culture Nights and the Global Culture Festival was carried out on the basis of a survey of the audiences, conducted by Flycatcher, the Research Institute of Maastricht University. The survey showed that the audiences attracted to the events shared the following characteristics:

● well educated people, from foreign descent, who study or work in Maastricht and whose way of life makes them globally orientated

● people in their 40s or 50s, also highly educated, who have widely travelled

● more women than men

● many single people

For the Maastricht people it was important that the events had given them the chance to renew their contact with far away cultures, including swinging music in beautiful venues and great dancing, at an affordable entrance fee. However, it should be noted that the people sharing the above characteristics are not the primary targets of the National Action Plan for social inclusion. The issue is still how best to attract a more mixed audience, both in terms of ethnic origin and socio-economic status. However, a number of very positive elements have also emerged from the evaluation:

● The Global Culture Nights and the Global Culture Festivals succeeded in bringing people together. The informal atmosphere has often been cited by the public as one of the most positive characteristics which the Flycatcher-research of the audience confirmed.

● The culture of the ethnic minorities has been placed firmly on the political agenda in Maastricht; The contacts with welfare departments ensured that, although they cannot guarantee action.

● The events cultivated a huge amount of goodwill, created informal networks, awakened enthusiasm, expressed support for those with similar ambitions and mindset, provided information, encouraged expertise, brought people together, and most importantly created friendships.

● A slowly but steadily increasing amount of young people from ethnic minorities have been attending other activities of Studium Generale, as a result of the wide publicity of the Global Culture Nights and Festivals, such as lectures, becoming thus more involved in mainstream intellectual activities of the university.

Success factors and problems encountered

*T*he success of a Global Culture event depended on a number of factors. Apart from the quality of the programme and the appeal of the bands or dance and theatre groups, the entrance fee and the accessibility of the event also played an important role. Even more important was the networking between the organisers and informal or formal networks and associations of the ethnic groups, as well as official organisations supporting the target groups. It was evident that when public welfare officials gave their support and local community leaders of the target groups were involved, there was a higher number of ethnic group members attending the Global Culture Nights.

The Global Culture Festivals could be seen as a great success in terms of reaching a wider audience, because of the factors mentioned above, as well as the more informal and "open" atmosphere, which allowed people to stroll in, join the events w they liked and also totter off at will. The Global Culture Nights had a more "formal" ambiance, mostly because the venue was, unavoidably, a theatre or concert hall, and attracted smaller audiences. A notable exception was the two Moroccan Culture Nights, which were co-organised with local Moroccan groups.

The attempt to organise a Global Culture Night in another town, also taught the project team some useful lessons. First was the funding of the event, which could not be wholly covered by the project, and depended on the community of Venlo and the government of the Province of Limburg, which was unexpectedly stopped and the Culture Nights could not continue. Second was the cooperation with a youth club that lacked the necessary experience to mobilise the audiences, and at the same time contact and cooperation with the local ethnic group leaders and networks was not achieved

TV specials were also proved a useful means to draw the attention of a wider Maastricht public to the Global Culture Nights and Festivals. Studium Generale made and broadcasted four TV-specials about Turks, Moroccans and Black Africans for TV Maastricht, the local television provider, in 2004 and 2005, timing them in connection to the organisation of the Global Culture events. The TV specials succeeded to draw the attention of the public to the multicultural events and the particular culture of certain ethnic groups, but at the same time boosted the morale of the ethnic groups themselves, enjoying their presence in such a mass medium as TV.

Chapter 5.
Networking

*N*etworks and associations or other NGOs either representing ethnic or immigrant groups or working for their benefit, play an important role in mobilising the process of inclusion in general. The cooperation between these organisations and the authorities that implement government policy on social inclusion is crucial for the success of such policy. In the field of culture, the voluntary sector is exceptionally active, providing many opportunities for networking with similar organisations or with public providers of services. As already shown in the previous chapter, networking proved to be one of the most critical factors affecting the success of a cultural event in two ways: ensuring good participation in the event by a varied audience, including the targeted minorities, and giving the local minority communities the opportunity to "own" the event by taking part in its organisation.

However, the value of networking as a factor facilitating the inclusion of minority groups through culture is far more reaching than the organisation of cultural events. Networking may lead to empowerment of minority groups, and to strengthening their lobbying capacities and influence over public policy. The pilot actions of the project tried a number of different networking models, in order to evaluate their potential. These include:

1. Networking at regional or local level between voluntary associations representing the minority groups or working for them, other NGOs or informal groups initiated by the host/majority community, taking a formal shape.

2. Networking between members of the immigrant or ethnic communities, taking also a formal shape as an NGO.

3. Informal and ad hoc networking for a particular purpose, such as the organisation of a cultural event, between different types of formal and non-formal associations of the targeted minorities, and other public or semi-public organisations and agencies.

Networking has been encouraged and promoted in all pilot areas of the project. In the two Spanish pilot areas, networking has been the core of the pilot actions. In the other pilot areas, in Greece, Ireland and The Netherlands, networking has been a complementary activity, which supported and enabled capacity building, transcultural exchange or visibility raising activities.

Multi-actor networking, of a formal type, was pilot tested by the Spanish partners, i.e. CEPAIM in Murcia and GES and ACISI in Catalonia. In the Region of Murcia the intention was to create networks of immigrant associations and to develop "spaces" of participation at the local level. In Catalonia the focus has been on creating a working group at the local level, composed of representatives of youth associations, cultural associations, immigrant associations and public authorities, in order to debate and develop different experiences for young migrants' integration through art and culture.

Reinforcing networking of immigrant associations in MURCIA

*T*he local partner, CEPAIM, took up the initiative to approach voluntary associations and NGOs operating in the region of Murcia, explore their attitudes towards the planned pilot action, make a list of their activities and capacity for action among the immigrant communities, and organise the process for building a formal network among them. The methodology for doing this was based on establishing Regional Discussion Committees as a platform for dialogue amongst the different agents. The pilot

actions in Murcia followed this sequence:

A. Selection of towns for setting up the Regional Discussion Committees.

B. Planning specific actions to study and solve problems reported by the immigrant communities.

C. Organisation of cultural and artistic activities performed by members of the immigrant communities as "integration tools".

Thirteen associations accepted to become members of the network, coming from an equal number of towns. They included a wide range of nationalities (Latin American, Moroccan, African and Eastern European), and they had either a strictly-ethnic profile or were mixed associations composed by immigrants and natives. These associations were defined either on a geographical basis (territorial associations) or on the basis of sharing cultural characteristics (collective associations).

A meeting was held every month with the representatives of the thirteen associations. A cultural, ethnic and linguistic exchange has been generated through these meetings. The process focused on gaining knowledge of the different associations' objectives and activities aiming to empower them so as to work effectively with the rest of the associative fabric and public entities. The associations were helped by the project team to identify shared inter-cultural experiences, to present these experiences and their objectives in a more efficient way to the host society and to work together to build social consensus. The Regional Discussion Committee of Murcia set the following objectives:

● define common objectives and activities/interests between associations;

● remain open as a network, and incorporate new participants in the process;

● gain a deeper understanding and mutual knowledge, leading to the rapprochement among the associations;

● develop structures for working as a network;

● plan future action and define methods of work and common activities to express themselves culturally.

In parallel with the discussion meetings,

CEPAIM used its own cultural centre, Sala Orillas, to host cultural performances initiated by the networked associations. Sala Orillas is an "open space" facility, aiming to facilitate free interaction between different cultures; it is managed by a public-funded network of information centres for immigrants operating in different regions in Spain.

Building contact between diverse associations and public authorities in Catalonia

*T*he local partners in Barcelona, GES and ACISI planned their networking activities in the region of Catalonia in a similar way to those of Murcia. These activities included research and meetings, and in particular:

- Contacts and interviews were carried out with different organisations involved in the field of culture, migration and youth with the aim of knowing them, their activities and their work methodologies.

- A Round Table Seminar was organised in Barcelona to bring together all the interviewed organisations aiming at promoting mutual knowledge and exchange of experiences centred on their efforts to influence both migration and culture policies

Four kinds of organisations were involved in the networking actions:

1. Migrant associations: the aim was to know the type of cultural activities they carry out; to whom these activities are addressed to; what relationships they have with other associations and public administration, etc.

2. Cultural associations or organisations that carry out work in a multicultural environment: the intention was to learn what kind of work they carry out, what is the "integration value" of their cultural activities, what difficulties this work has encountered and what are the benefits and results.

3. Youth associations: the aim was to know the level of participation of migrant youngsters in these associations and the intercultural work they carry out.

4. Public Authorities: aiming to know the policy

guidelines and the actions developed in the fields of culture and migration.

A total of eighteen organisations took part in the networking activities, including the round Table Seminar mentioned above, which was opened by Mrs Adela Ros, Secretary for Migration of the Catalan Government. This seminar took place on 20-21st September 2005 divided in three discussion "spaces":

- The first space was devoted to both migrant organisations and territorial networks.

- The second space was devoted to cultural organisations that use art as a tool for communication and building a relationship between populations of different origin, and in particular the youth.

- The third space was devoted to Local and Regional Public Administration, especially those directorates that are responsible for migration, culture and youth policy.

The seminar attracted a total of 40 people, including representatives of the Department of Culture, the Directorate for Migration and Youth of the Catalan Government and experts from the Town Councils of Barcelona and Granollers.

In order to favour the cultural exchange and to promote networking further, the project partner ACISI organised a series of intercultural talks –Circle de Xerrades Interculturals- to which members of migrant communities from Latin America, Asia and Africa have participated. These talks gave rise to vivid exchanges of opinions between members of immigrant communities and the host community on the benefits of mutual enrichment of different cultures.

Impact

*T*he evaluation of the pilot actions in Murcia and Catalonia was based on a number of surveys conducted among the targeted associations, before and during the networking pilot actions, accompanied by numerous consultations with various immigrant community leaders. The experiences of organisations that use art as a socio-pedagogic method to achieve integration of people from diverse origins and with diverse cultural characteristics have also

been analysed. The results of this research have pointed to a number of issues that are crucial for promoting the cultural inclusion of immigrant communities.

- The participation of foreign communities in the local decisions affecting them. An initial difficulty arises from the lack of long-established models and traditions for public participation in decision-making at the local level. This creates the need to investigate the terms and conditions under which immigrant communities can be involved in local decisions, by approaching local authorities and other social agents that influence such decisions, as well as recording through surveys the characteristics of the immigrant populations.

- Targeting the inclusion of young immigrants through opportunities for more creative use of their free time. One of the greatest difficulties in achieving the integration of young immigrants lies in the substantial differences observed in the use of free time between them and their counterparts from the host community. Young immigrants tend to use public spaces to pass their leisure time, such as streets and squares, while the Spanish youth tend to prefer clubs and sport centres. Segregation by country of origin is also observed among immigrant youth in their leisure time.

- Establishing working groups and a platform for dialogue amongst different agents, to reflect on issues related to young people, ethnic minorities and immigrants' social integration through culture. Good practice experience

from other regions in Spain is an important input in such a dialogue.

- Artistic events organised on a multicultural basis, bringing together different immigrant communities and the indigenous population, have proved to be very important to create encounters and common languages and to overcome cultural, ideological or generational barriers.

The results of the networking activities of the project have also been evaluated. The evaluation confirmed that the exchange between associations has been promoted, and awareness has been raised about the work of associations of immigrants, NGOs, public authorities and cultural organisations, which has been valued in a very positive way by the people involved. This had, in particular, generated a prolific process of mutual knowledge, exchange and common action. The main results achieved, mostly through the monthly meetings of the Committee in Murcia, have been the definition of common cultural objectives and activities as well as the development of formal network structures and the exchange of experiences and knowledge. Consequently, in the Region of Murcia, the stability of a sound group of associations has been achieved. These associations form the core of a future federation of associations, which started the procedure for establishing a formal network. In this context the role of CEPAIM has changed, from leading the process to providing assistance

and support.

Although the difficulties in communication between the associations should not be underestimated, it is worth noting that a satisfactory level of communication was eventually achieved, which led to an exchange between associations beyond cultural aspects to other important issues for the immigrant population, such as access to employment and access to legal aid.

Awareness amongst local and regional public authorities has also been raised about the need to include the cultural and artistic work in their policies towards immigrants and as a way to improve and facilitate social integration for immigrant communities.

Success factors and problems encountered

*T*he results of the pilot actions in Spain have been very positive, allowing a lot of optimism for the future. Culture has proved to be important as an element of inclusion, forming a priority for the activities of most of the associations representing the immigrant communities. Also a diversity of social movements that use art as an element of communication and intercultural work have been identified. This project can confirm that artistic and cultural actions are excellent working tools to achieve multicultural communication and to accomplish the integration of immigrants' groups. It is clear that the

work carried out by cultural bodies in the context of the project, through theatre, circus, photography etc, has led to the development of a universal language and, in turn, to facilitating the contact and participation of people with different origins and cultural backgrounds.

The strengthening of some of the associations has allowed them to develop specific actions together with town-halls, such as the organisation of festivals and intercultural weeks. In this way, the associations of immigrants have been recognised as key actors in the process of mobilising public involvement, having culture as the core element.

The difficulties encountered by the Spanish team were socio-political having to do with the culture of the country and the nature of the action. Examples are:

● Reaching agreements with local and regional authorities in order to establish a working group that would support the activities planned by the project was not an easy task, due mostly to changes in personnel and their duties as a result of electoral changes.

● Public authorities were often unaware of immigrants' associations and unwilling to recognise them as valid actors to negotiate with and develop joint activities.

● The working rhythms of the associations involved in the pilot actions proved to be an issue. For some the process was too fast whilst for others it was sl?ow. A common pace had to be achieved, and this inevitable was time-consuming.

● Working with a long term perspective has also been difficult for the immigrants' associations, especially due to their lack of capability to maintain a high level of motivation, in this instance, for establishing the federation of associations.

● The timetable and action plan proposed by the project team had to be flexible since the outcome of the action depended on the level of participation of the associations in the meetings. This proved to be a very important issue, given that the extent of participation may lead to significant modifications of the project as it develops.

● Some of the associations have weak structures, which may create problems of internal and external communication, affecting the collaboration with other organisations.

● The social rejection that the immigrants' associations suffer in some parts of the pilot regions have strongly affected the development of the multicultural actions.

● Working with young people added an extra dimension. Attracting youngsters requires a lot of patience and the results are only to be expected at medium and long term; this does not meet the need for politicians to achieve results at short term,. Also, working with young people in their own environment, often means to meet in public spaces such as squares and streets, which is sometimes not accepted by neighbours. Thus there is a need for raising awareness not only amongst the young people, but also amongst local authorities and neighbourhoods.

Chapter 6.
Capacity Building

*C*apacity building of the minority communities and their members through training and suitable support, is necessary to enable cultural expression and promote talent. The acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable people to become involved is the arts, or to project their own culture and make it known to a wider public, form part of capacity building. All the pilot actions developed by the project involved a smaller or larger component of building the capacity of the immigrant communities and ethnic/cultural groups to become active in the cultural field. It was however the pilot actions of the Irish partners, Pavee Point, that had as their principal aim to improve the skills and abilities of members of the Travellers' community in video production, and enable them to publicise the Traveller culture to television audiences.

A group of nine Travellers were selected to take up training that would lead to the development of a video documentary showing the work of the Oral History Unit in Pavee Point. Two women and one man, were given technical training of video production. A key criterion for selection was that participants would have at least some rudimentary technical knowledge or some basic familiarity with key aspects of video production, such as using a camera. The need to build technical skills in this respect had to be balanced against the second objective of having to produce a video film in a relatively short period of time. The pilot action also involved six Traveller women who were central players in the Traveller Oral History Project. In this role they had been responsible for helping develop interview schedules and other methodologies necessary to record the life histories of Traveller people in different parts of Ireland.

A number of planning and conceptualisation workshops were held involving all participants. These focused on:

● Discussion and agreement of the format of the production e.g. drama, documentary and the content;

● Initial assessment of the level of skills currently within the group appropriate to video production;

- Discussion on the means by which the final video production would be showcased and disseminated;

- Discussion of the most appropriate means of evaluating the pilot action, given its multiple aims i.e. individual empowerment, raising visibility of Traveller culture etc.

- Discussion on the most appropriate means of using the results and outcomes of the pilot action to influence different policy areas including social inclusion and culture/arts/media.

From these workshops, it was agreed that the production would take the form of a documentary, which would track the work of the Traveller Oral History Unit. Travellers working in this Unit are trained in ethnographic field research techniques and have been engaged in interviewing a wide range of Travellers about their lives and cultural identity. Documenting the work of this Unit, it was felt, would not only serve to document Traveller lives, but also provide a valuable demonstration of the means by which a nomadic and orally based culture can be documented.

It was also agreed that a number of other interested parties would be interviewed for the documentary to put both Traveller experiences and the process of recording oral histories in context. These would include academics specialising in this area of work.

Following the initial planning workshops and the agreement reached on proposed activity, another round of facilitated workshops were convened focusing on implementation. Key activities arising from these included:

- An initial training assessment of participants was undertaken by the Pavee Point Cultural Heritage co-ordinator through the workshops and follow-up discussions.

- Equipment needs were identified and arrangements made to source these.

- A preliminary production schedule was drawn up which was then fixed once details on equipment and training schedules were finalised.

Based on the needs identified, training sessions were held over a four month period in 2004 which were open to all participants in the pilot action. The training covered different elements of video production including camera operation, sound recording, lighting, documentary concept development and editing.

Shooting began in 2005 which focused on interviews undertaken by members of the Oral History Unit with individual Travellers in different parts of the country. Interviews with other interested parties, including academics and Traveller activists, provided an important contextual background to the work. Editing of the various interviews began in April 2005 and a final cut of the video production was then prepared and screened at the project's international seminar in Santorini.

Impact

A key issue to have emerged in the course of the evaluation the pilot action at Pavee Point was the difficulty in trying to realise the objectives of developing a good standard video production and building the capacities and skills of Traveller participants simultaneously in a relatively short space of time. Many contributors, including those who had worked on the video production, felt that the final video product was structurally weak and would need substantial re-shooting in order to complete a finished piece that participants would feel happy showing in a public viewing. On the other hand, it was agreed that the process of production had proved to be more important than the quality of the final product, insofar as it had sparked an interest among the wider population of Travellers.

There are also indications of a wider impact of the pilot action:

- A group of young Travellers had begun to use the video equipment collected through the pilot action and had accessed the knowledge of participants in the training to make a short video drama about prejudice, inter-cultural friction and racism. This video was then exhibited at a Youth Film Festival in Dublin in 2005.

- The pilot action provided an opportunity for Pavee Point to develop good working relationships with a range of organisations that can support video production and dissemination in the future. These include Dublin City TV and Failte FM.

- The production of the video and the holding of the transnational project workshop on 'capacity building' in Dublin helped raise the profile of Traveller culture in key Government organisations such as the Arts Council. The Arts Council invited Pavee Point to submit suggestions and proposals for its next strategic plan.

Success factors and problems encountered

The main outcome of the pilot action is a video production depicting aspects of the culture of the Travellers. This video has a dual purpose: to make the culture of the Travellers more visible to the wider Irish population; and to build the capacity of Travellers to carry out this type of activity, i.e. cultural and media work, as a means of combating exclusion and reinforcing their collective identity.

One of the main elements of success of the pilot action was the methodology adopted. This methodology has involved a series of workshops jointly facilitated by the Pavee Point project coordinator and Nexus Research and including Travellers who participate in the pilot action. The workshops gave the opportunity to the participating Travellers to plan and formulate the video according to their feelings and perceptions, and finally "own" it.

Other important aspects of the methodology
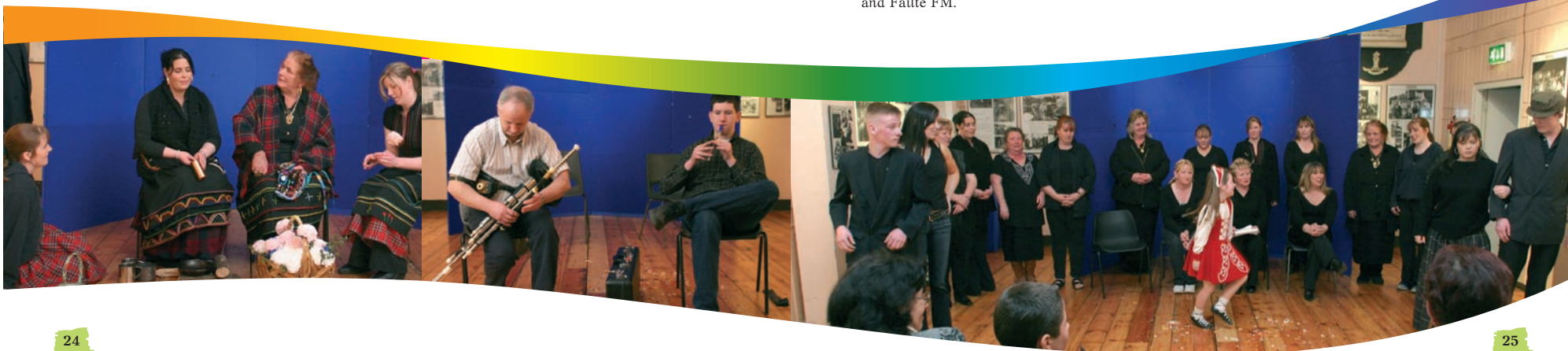
include the liaison with statutory agencies, NGOs and other institutional actors designed to promote the dissemination of the video production and to provide a mechanism for the results and lessons learnt from the pilot project to feed into policy development in areas of social exclusion and cultural/arts/media policy.

On the other hand, there have been some important barriers in involving Travellers in the video production and training process. These included:

- Travellers, particularly older Travellers had little familiarity with (and some fear of) the technical aspects of video. This was less so for younger Travellers, as evidenced by the capacity of members of the Traveller youth group to link in with the pilot project and to produce their own video production in a relatively short space of time.

- Literacy issues also featured as a barrier to participation, not just in the technical aspects of the production, but also in key areas of production such as script and narrative development.

- The mobility of Travellers also created some problems of continuity within the groups of trainees and contributors to the video production. About one third of the video team had to cancel their participation in the pilot action half way through the task, because their families moved to another location, and had to be replaced by others. However, this reflects the nature of the Travellers' way of life and had to be taken in the project team's stride and dealt with.

Chapter 7.
Trans-cultural exchange

*P*romoting transcultural exchange could lead to a better understanding and closer cooperation between the host and immigrant/ethnic minority communities. Different methods may be used for this. The project team tried three different approaches, which include:

1. Setting up cultural centres for the immigrants and ethnic minorities, to encourage their involvement with culture, both their own and that of the host community's, including training in the Arts, ethnic or minority culture, history and language

2. Co-organising cultural events, such as concerts, festivals or fairs, which presented to the general public and promoted the cultural production of immigrants and ethnic minorities

3. Creating cultural products that represent the values and history of the minority groups, to make these elements widely known and shared by the majority population.

The promotion of cultural exchange between the host/majority community and minority communities may be based on a variety of methods based on the creation of physical, social and symbolic space to encourage and enhance cultural production.

The first approach was pilot tested by the Greek and Spanish teams, while the second approach was included in the work programme of the Dutch team and the third approach was taken up by the Irish team, as already described. The lead for developing this theme was taken however by the Greek partners, PRISMA and the Development Agency of Cyclades (DAC) who structured their pilot actions around the objective of achieving transcultural exchange between host and immigrant communities.

The Greek pilot actions were based in the islands of Paros, Mykonos and Santorini in the Cyclades region, targeting immigrant schoolchildren and through them their families, mostly of Albanian origin. The main action, the establishment of the Multi-Cultural Centre "Filia", was developed in the island of Santorini while smaller scale actions took place in the islands of

Paros and Myconos in the form of art competitions, administered through the local schools.

The aim of these activities was to promote the mutual knowledge of cultures between the host and immigrant communities, with the prospect of encouraging co-production of culture, and through it, cultural diversity and cultural inclusion. The island of Santorini was chosen for two reasons: firstly because it plays host to a numerous community of Albanian immigrants, as well as to a variety of other nationalities, who however have a modest presence, and secondly because the local education community offered unreserved support to the project and the pilot actions planned in the island.

During the preparatory phase of the project, a local "action committee" was set up in the island of Santorini, coordinated by the director of secondary education, with participation of the local authority, the education community, the Church, local associations and leaders of the local immigrants communities. The committee met several times and proposed the establishment of a Multi-Cultural Centre in the capital of the island, Fira. The Centre, named «Filia» (friendship) to symbolise the friendship between people of different cultures, was actually established in the island in September 2004, in a centrally located space provided free of charge by the local branch of the Prefectural Authority of Cyclades (Eparcheion) and renovated by the Albanian community. Two female managers, a Greek and an Albanian, both teachers (although the Albanian teacher was not exercising her profession in Greece) were appointed on the recommendation of the "action committee".

A survey of the needs of immigrant communities, with reference to culture and cultural activities, was the first task undertaken by the managers of the Centre, leading to a plan and itinerary of activities. Three types of activities had been favoured by the immigrant communities and subsequently supported by the Centre:

- Training activities, targeting children by priority, but adults as well; the classes offered language, art and music/dance tuition

- Festive events, intending to bring together both native and immigrant communities

- Lectures and environmental activities.

The training activities included:

- *Albanian language courses for children of immigrant families and other children interested in the language.*
- *Greek language courses for adult members of the immigrant communities*
- *Computer courses and cultural activity workshops using IT for children.*
- *Music and dance for children and adults*
- *Art classes and craft workshops for children.*

The festive and social awareness activities included:

- *Christmas celebrations focusing on Father Christmas in the Albanian and Greek cultures.*
- *Carnival: Costume party with Greek and Albanian music; research by the children on Balkan Customs and their relation both to the worship of the Ancient Greek God Dionysus and the Christian Religion.*
- *Celebration of the Albanian National Day dedicated to the heroes of World War II with poems and drama presentations.*
- *Tree and flower planting in the courtyard of the Centre. This was a gesture heavy with symbolic meaning. The children 'adopted' a plant and assumed responsibility for taking care of it; its roots being their own! Songs and poems celebrating the Spring recited by the children both in their native language and Greek, completed the event.*
- *Lectures celebrating Albanian culture. The lectures aimed to make known to both Albanians and native people the significant cultural contribution of the 19th century novelists Frasheri brothers, and the contemporary, internationally renowned writer Ismail Kadare.*

In the islands of Paros and Mykonos a smaller-scale action took place in the form of school competitions in cooperation with the Directorate for Primary Education and schools in the islands. Six schools were involved in total, and 88 pupils submitted their work.

The primary school competitions included:

- *An essay competition on writing a story, a fairytale or a folktale that the children heard from their parents, grandparents, etc. The best three stories were awarded a prize.*
- *An essay competition on celebrations, customs, and conventions that are of importance in the country of origin. The best three stories were awarded a prize.*
- *An art (painting and drawing) competition focusing on the following themes:*
  - *Friendship*
  - *My country*
  - *My dreams*

  The best three works were also awarded a prize.

An exhibition of the painting and essays took place in the premises of the Multi-Cultural Centre 'Filia' in June 2005 to coincide with an international seminar organised by the project.

Impact

*T*he impact of the activities of the Multi-Cultural Centre has been assessed by two factors: firstly by the participation of the immigrant communities in the events and training sessions organised by the Centre; and secondly by the long-term prospects of the Centre, judged by the intentions of the immigrant communities to take charge themselves of its activities and maintain it.

The principles on which the results and impact of the project were assessed, related to

- Active involvement of the local actors and establishment of a participatory model of preparing and managing the multi-cultural activities.
- Development of a variety of cultural activities, according to the results of the research and consultations with the local communities conducted by the staff of the Centre.
- Approaching the immigrant families through their children. This has been the main idea that was developed together with the local education community.
- Empowerment of the immigrant communities through the provision of encouragement and support to set up their own Cultural Association.

A participatory model was chosen for the set up of the Centre, which involved closely all main
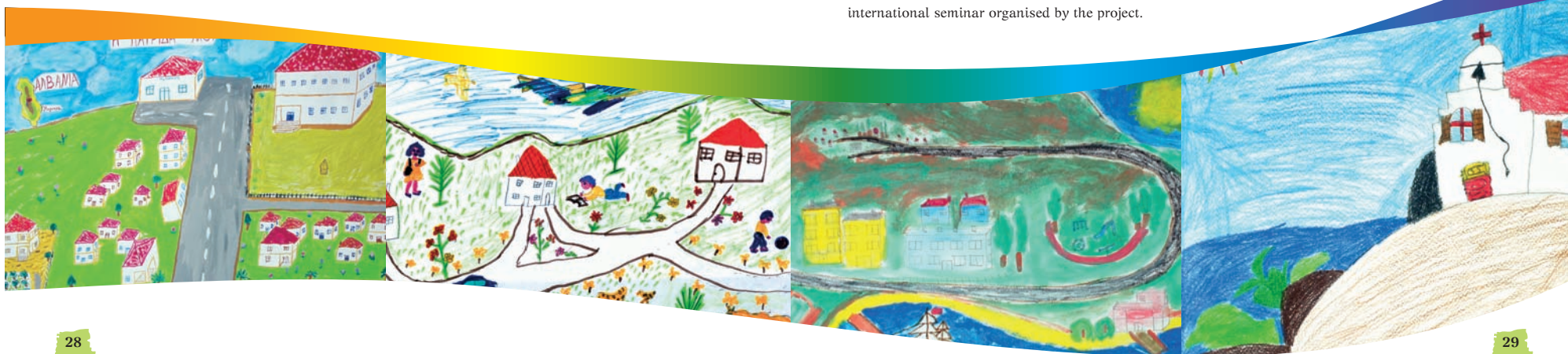
actors in the island, public, voluntary and private, while recognising a principal role in the management of the Centre and its activities for the immigrant communities. The co-management of the Centre by a Greek and an Albanian, solved many problems related to administrative matters, and at the same time secured the acceptance and support of the Centre by the immigrant communities.

The cultural activities provided by the Centre were diverse and attractive to children and young people, who were the primary target groups. The instruction of the Albanian language to children and young adults was met with enthusiasm by the Albanian community, the classes were over-subscribed and other immigrant communities, such as Romanian and Ukrainian asked for similar classes to be set up for their national language. The preservation of national and ethnic culture through language was considered to be of the utmost importance by all communities. Art activities, on the other hand, were based on computer technology, which made them very attractive to young audiences, and secured their avid participation. While the children and youth were targeted for instruction (language, artistic, etc) the families were mostly targeted for creative leisure activities and organisation of cultural events.

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements of the project in Santorini, which underlies its long-term impact, is that the Albanian community, who mostly were the users of the Centre, have

decided to create a Cultural Association open to all (immigrants and natives) and to keep the Centre open after the end of the project continuing and enriching its activities. This is indeed most encouraging as the continuation of the good work done is guaranteed. It also shows how the activities of the Centre helped to build the capacity of the immigrants for self-actualisation and cultural expression, as well as raise their confidence in making their cultural presence in the island felt. Networking within the immigrant communities and between immigrants and other important local organisations was also established and extended to include the mass media, who took an interest to the Centre both locally and at national level. It is important to note that the local radio station offered a weekly radio programme to the Centre, to present their activities and communicate with the inhabitants of the island.

Success factors and problems encountered

*T*he training activities, the language instruction and the various cultural events organised by the Centre made it a focal point for the immigrant communities. The interest shown by the Greek authorities and individuals has been quite encouraging, suggesting that actions of this kind could be repeated in other parts of Greece. A "key" element in the success of the Centre was indeed the support it received from such institutions as the Directorate for Secondary Education, the Prefecture, the Church, the local authorities and the media in

the island. Another "key" feature that assured its success has been the self-management of activities by the Albanian community, through the Albanian teacher-manager, as mentioned above, who made sure that consensus about the activities of the Centre was achieved within the immigrant community and that needs of the immigrants were met.

The factors that determined the smooth operation of the Centre and the consolidation of its role and activity in the island can be summarised as follows:

● Involving and informing the host community through its leaders and trying to get their acceptance and participation.

● Using the local media as a means of publicising the Centre and its activities and extending an invitation to all wishing to participate to do so.

● The decision to have all the events free of charge and open to the public.

● Involving the immigrant communities in the design of activities and cultural events.

● Promoting the systematic networking with other voluntary associations locally and at national level, as well as with public bodies involved in education and culture.

The main difficulty encountered in the process of setting up and operating the Centre related to that part of the initial aims of the project that addressed the co-production of culture between host and immigrant communities. Co-production of culture was not achieved within the limited period of the pilot action. It was evident that trust needs to be built amongst the host and immigrant communities before any true cross-fertilisation of culture and co-production takes place. The pilot actions have revealed that there is also an issue of mistrust between different immigrant groups, who should not be considered as a homogenous group, just because they are immigrants. Moreover, language barriers played a negative role in bringing the different national groups together.

However, trans-cultural exchange was realised in several occasions, and the mere presence of the Centre stimulated such exchange, by making the immigrant culture visible and by offering opportunities to both host and immigrant com-

munities to participate in joint events. Obstacles to widening such participation, which was limited to families with young children, were created by the attitudes of the native population towards strangers and towards active participation in cultural activities. The local population, as most island populations, tends to be rather reserved towards "outsiders", either Greek or foreign. Moreover, the Greek local community appeared to prefer attending cultural events focused on children rather than participating in cultural activities, such as the art classes offered by the Centre. For example, the cultural event organised by the Centre to mark the end of the school year, before summer holidays, was a truly transcultural celebration, which included the presentation of an Albanian short play, ethnic dances (Greek and Albanian), singing in the Greek and Albanian languages and recital of Albanian poems that had direct counterparts in the Greek demotic tradition (the poem of the dead brother). The event was followed by an ethnic meal with Greek and Albanian dishes. This was the first cultural event of its kind in the island and was attended by both the host and immigrant communities, with the active participation of both Greek and Albanian children as performers.

The way immigrants are perceived adds to the above difficulties. The image of immigrants is characterised by their function as hard-working labourers. It takes time to accept that the chambermaid of your local hotel or the bricklayer employed by your next door neighbour are also carriers of culture or potential producers of art. Finally, it is worth noting the attitude of immigrant schoolchildren, who are usually succumbing to what is called "peer pressure", i.e. not wanting to differ from other children or teenagers by projecting their own cultural characteristics.

Chapter 8.
Conclusions

*T*he implementation of the pilot actions has been a learning process for all involved, the project team as well as the participants to the actions. This chapter summarises the experience of the project in terms of the lessons learnt during its implementation; it also includes an assessment of the prospects for continuing the project strategy in the pilot areas and transferring it elsewhere in the EU, and provides some hints on how inclusion policy may be informed by the experience of the project.

8.1 Lessons Learnt

*T*he pilot actions, with their achievements and the problems encountered, have given us valuable insights regarding the role culture can play in facilitating the inclusion of ethnic and cultural minorities, including immigrants. The results are very encouraging and confirm that culture may be a powerful "tool" for the fight against prejudice and social exclusion. The increased visibility of diverse cultures and the sharing of cultural activities and products can bring people of different ethnic, national or cultural backgrounds closer, cultivate a mutual understanding and contribute towards acceptance and respect. However, the difficulties hidden in the process of achieving such results should not be underestimated; nor should it be taken for granted that culture on its own could

contribute to social inclusion without the strong support of education and, certainly, without safe employment and integration in the labour market of all parties concerned.

The four themes that have provided the guidelines to structure the pilot actions of the project have also been discussed in five international workshops organised by the project team in five different countries, seeking the input of the local and national communities, experts and policymakers in each case. The horizontal evaluation and the lessons learnt from the pilot actions, at interim and final stage, have been presented and debated, regarding both process and results. Culture as a concept has been also discussed and different definitions offered, which helped the project team to harmonise their approach to the pilot actions. The definitions offered consider culture as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, that is:

1. Culture as an artistic expression. This approach identifies cultures with products of poetry, painting, architecture and so on, reflecting mainstream thinking at policy level in most countries.

2. Culture as a political expression. This reflects an ethnocentric approach on art and culture, going back to the formation of the 19th century nation-state and the creation of national symbols and collective identities.

3. Culture as a social expression. This approach links culture with social capital, viewing it as a tool for the emancipation of minorities within the "public space".

Further to the above, the horizontal evaluation of pilot actions, have pointed to the following conclusions.

Raising Visibility

*V*isibility is a sine qua non for all cultural actions that aspire to have a social and political impact. Good practice examples from the experience of the project include multi-cultural festivals, concerts of ethnic or multi-cultural music, theatre and dance performances, art competitions and exhibitions, a video production, art and language training, lectures and fairs. Moreover, the Multi-Cultural Centres 'Filia' in Santorini and Orillas Hall in Murcia helped to make minority cultures known to the wider local and regional public, holding also a symbolic meaning as "points of reference" for the inclusion-through-culture notion and activities. The conduct of the transnational project workshops on all four themes may be also added, because they attracted the attention of the media and the general public, besides fulfilling their other project-related purposes.

Although the project succeeded in making the culture of minorities more visible in all project locations through a variety of means, certain issues have been identified that need to be paid particular attention.

Ethnic music and art are usually attractive for the general public, having this extra "exotic" element to add to the event. However, the project has shown that such events tend to attract the better educated, mature members of the host or majority communities rather than a mixed audi-

ence, in terms of ethnic origin, age and socio-economic status. Indeed, to reach a wide and diverse audience is the first condition that needs to be met in any visibility-raising event. The second condition is the quality of the cultural programme and the third is the accessibility of the event.

The project actions have shown that attracting big and varied audiences can be only achieved through systematic networking with minority groups and individuals as well as official organisations supporting these groups. Networking with immigrant or ethnic monitory groups is essential to mobilise minority audiences as well as talent, so that the minority communities "own" the events to a large extent, and are prepared to work for their success. The official stamp of the authorities and public services also help to make audiences feel "safe" and add the extra prestige needed for any event to increase its appeal. The media, without doubt, play a significant role too. Access to local and national media, and in particular TV, undoubtedly boosts the visibility of a cultural event, but at the same time boosts the morale of the minority groups themselves, enjoying their presence in a powerful mass medium.

The quality of the cultural product and the quality of the atmosphere of the event have also a significant contribution to its success. Although the former is the usual evaluation benchmark, it is the latter that determines the impact of the

event on cultural exchange, recognition and eventually inclusion. A more informal and "open" atmosphere, which allows people to feel at ease, join in the events when they like, make social contact the other members of the audience and become a participant rather than spectator, stay longer in people's minds and create a positive attitude of appreciation and compassion across cultures.

Most of the experience gained on the theme of visibility raising comes from the pilot actions of the Dutch team, in Maastricht, who organised a wide range of multicultural events to test best practice. Other pilot actions, in Greece, Spain and Ireland, also achieved the objective of visibility, although as a secondary rather than primary stipulation of their remit. Setting up and operating multi-cultural centres for the immigrant communities in Greece and Spain created significant publicity within the local and regional societies, making their presence as well as their culture more "visible". However, such visibility may create enemies as well as friends. Reaction from the indigenous communities has been loaded with suspicion, and had strong support from local or national institutions not been secured, such as the local or national government and local education authorities, the sustainability of these centres might be at risk. Admittedly, the lifespan of the project has not been long enough to evaluate the real impact of such structures on the inclusion of immigrant communities; but their effect in building the

self-confidence of the minority groups, offering a physical expression to their notion of identity, has been remarkable, as shown by the "Filia" Centre in Santorini. One can argue that self-confidence is a necessary pre-condition for minority communities to start the process of their inclusion; and to the extent that self-confidence is linked to cultural visibility, the strengthening of the latter is a worthwhile policy objective.

Networking

Networking has both been studied and promoted through the pilot actions of the project. Formal and informal networking has been extensively used in all pilot areas to set up, promote and sustain the project activities. In the 2nd international workshop of the project, in Murcia, a number of conclusions were drawn in relation to the value and characteristics of networking:

● Networking is being universally recognised as an innovative methodology for building relationships amongst NGOs which improves their effectiveness and their prospects to influence policy.

● Networks impose a framework for action which allows diversity to be more efficiently approached, and relationships to consolidate. Networking improves trust and communication and builds social capital.

● Networking is a non-competitive and non-hierarchical way of doing things, adding value to solidarity.

● Culture is a powerful concept which can bring together immigrants' associations. By forming networks, they stand a better chance to make the associations known to others and re-establish their members' identity.

● To set up an association is a good way to react against injustice and discrimination, transposing the individual hardship towards a community issue.

Networking is not an end to itself. It is a methodology, a means towards facilitating the process of inclusion of minority communities and its value should be judged in the long term. The pilot actions have promoted good practice in three types of networking: amongst associations representing or working for the immigrant communities and ethnic minorities; amongst these associations and public authorities or other public institutions; and among individual members of communities.

The first and second type of networks have been extensively examined and tested in Spain. The task of bringing together immigrants associations to discuss common concerns and join forces to promote their interests has proved a challenging one. The difficulties ranged from communication and different work rhythms, to consistent participation in network meetings and grasping the long term perspective vis-à-vis current, immediate problems. Commitment on the side of the associations was vital, as the expected results were medium to long term. However, the exchange of knowledge and experience, the definition of common cultural objectives and the decision to formalise the network through the

establishment of a federation have provided also some short term benefits, such as increased ability to deal with the authorities and seek support for cultural events, improved confidence and a significant learning process that acted as "eye opener" for many network members. The lobbying and fund-raising abilities of the associations were also improved and some of them even managed, within the lifespan of the project, to develop joint cultural events with local authorities and win more visibility in the local society as well as within their communities.

A similar type of networking, although of a more informal type, was also pilot-tested in the Netherlands, to support on an ad hoc basis the multi-cultural events organised in Maastricht. As already discussed under the previous theme, networking with immigrants' and ethnic groups' associations and sharing with them the organisation of the multi-cultural events was one of the main factors that guaranteed the success of events and their impact on the communities. However, cooperation was often challenging, as the associations were sometimes inexperienced and often had an underlying suspicion towards the institutional backing of the project. Despite the problems, cooperation with the minority communities' networks has proved a very effective method of introducing a "bottom up" approach to the pilot actions, securing the participation of the target communities in all stages of implementation and the sharing of the results.
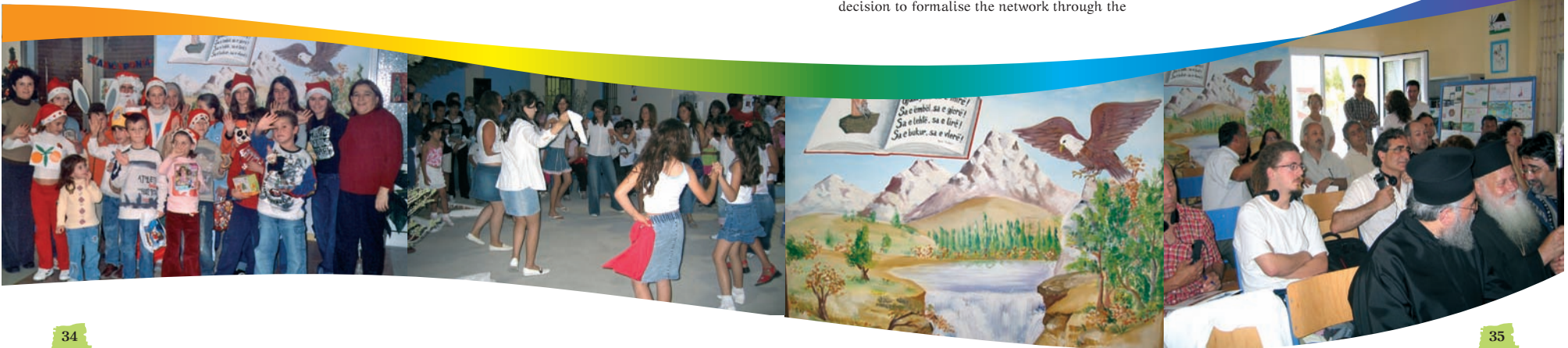
The third type of networking, which brings together members of minority communities under common cultural objectives, leading to the set up of an association, was pilot-tested in Greece. Here also the "bottom up" approach proved to be very important. Mobilisation of the local Albanian community around the "Filia" multi-cultural centre in Santorini was achieved because the community participated actively in the management of the centre. Formalising the network that was created with a focus in the multi-cultural centre was the next step, following the building up of confidence among community members and overcoming their initial fear that they might provoke a negative reaction among the indigenous people. Rallying around a common objective with great appeal proved to be also important: in the case of Santorini, the preservation of the Albanian language among the second generation (young) Albanians became the focal issue for the take off of the network and the Centre, which thus became the symbol of the immigrant community's identity. Given that "seeing is believing", the funding of the Centre from external (EU) sources during its initial period of operation, secured the successful completion of the first round of activities and convinced even the most hesitant members of the community that asserting their identity and expressing their culture is possible and does happen. The crucial next step is to strengthen the network to the extent that it can take over the Centre and continue/expand its activities.

Capacity Building

*C*apacity building has been a vital ingredient of the pilot actions of the project, which have had a strong learning component, addressing both the project team and the beneficiaries/participants in project activities. In addition to this, capacity building has been also approached by the project team as

● improvement of knowledge and skills in specific fields, so that the target groups would increase their abilities for active cultural expression in these fields

● empowerment of the target groups so that they assert collectively their cultural identity and express their culture for the benefit of the wider community, host/majority and immigrant/minority

The pilot actions used both formal and informal methods for capacity building. Formal methods were based mostly on training and to a lesser extent on advice that was provided by institutional structures, either set up by the project or by other sources but used by the project participants. Informal methods were based mostly on networking, which was promoted by the project actions.

Priority on formal capacity building was given by the Irish partners, who focused their pilot action in training a group of Travellers in all aspects video production, aiming to transmit both technical knowledge and communication skills to the team to enable them to create a series of films on the history of Travellers. This

would, in turn, be used as a central instrument in a media-based campaign to make the Traveller culture known to the wider Irish public.

The first part of the capacity building process was the involvement of the Traveller community in the decision to create a video on Traveller history and culture and to let those interested to take part come forward, having first discussed the nature of the video, its aims and the technical skills necessary for its production. By organising a number of workshops on the issue, Pavee Point gave the participants the opportunity to make an input to the video with ideas and suggestions, as well as make objectives of such a production more concrete. Awareness raising as to why such a production was needed, what they expected to achieve and how it would be realised, proved to be very important in order to increase the minority members' confidence in their culture and work out a strategy for disseminating it.

The second part of the capacity building process included the training which led to the video production. Training and production were combined, so that participants were learning by doing. In this part, certain difficulties became apparent. Firstly, the education level of many members of the video team was very low, making it very difficult to train them in script writing. Secondly, the technical skills transmitted were very new to the participants, and they needed much more time to adjust to training and become able to produce a good quality video. Many members of the video team felt that their product was not an accomplished one and needed substantial further work to improve its quality, beyond the scope and the resources of the project.

A lesson learnt from this pilot action was that capacity building, especially when it involves technical and literacy skills, needs time and commitment, as well as some basic skills that not everybody is expected top possess. Therefore, one should not be over-ambitious regarding the quality of the results, because there may be disappointments. On the other hand, the process of production have proved to be more important than the quality of the final product, not only because it had sparked an interest among the wider population of Travellers, but also because

it brought together a core group of young Travellers who became determined to build their capacity further in this direction, and indeed proceeded to a new production within the lifespan of the project.

The mobility of Travellers has also proved to be a factor that may undermine capacity building within the community, because breaks up the process of involvement in capacity building tasks and creates problems of discontinuity of tasks and lack of cohesion of the groups assigned to the task. However, given that mobility is part of the Travellers' way of life and culture, it has to be taken account of and dealt with, probably by extending the time horizon of the task and intensifying the effort.

Informal capacity building activities have taken place in all pilot actions, during the process of setting up and implementing tasks that had other primary orientations, for example for networking, visibility raising or cultural exchange. In Santorini, Greece, informal capacity building was complemented by formal methods, based on language and recreational training of children and young people, to awaken the interest of the young Albanians in their national language and culture. The courses proved to be a very effective method in bringing together the community as a whole, building their capacity for self-actualisation and for networking. In this case, also, the funding of the activities by external sources was beneficial, as it minimised the economic input of the immigrant community. The success of capacity building actions, however, is only affirmed by the results, and in particular, whether continuity of cultural and networking activities is assured and whether the minority communities take in their hands the issue of their cultural expression and exchange with the majority culture after the end of external funding.

To conclude, factors that helped the process of capacity building had to do with the involvement of the target groups in planning and implementing the actions, the support of mainstream state agencies and NGOs, and the availability of funding. Challenges in building the capacity of minority groups include the diversity of these groups that requires targeted work to ensure addressing their individual needs; the barrier of language, lack of funding for cultural project of this kind, lack of familiarity with the political

system and the fact that immigrant and ethnic minority groups are often deeply disadvantaged and need to acquire considerable basic skills to enable them to participate in further capacity building activities.

Transcultural Exchange

*C*ultural exchange and co-production of culture are the final stages of the process that leads to the inclusion of immigrant communities and ethnic minorities through culture. Exchange implies that minority and majority cultures become well known to the respective communities, they influence one another and cross-fertilisation takes place, when either culture uses elements of the other in contemporary cultural expression. Co-production is a step further, when members of the minority and majority communities come together to create common cultural products.

The experience of the pilot actions has shown that transcultural exchange is a process that takes place step by step, requiring a long time-horizon and the right conditions to reach the cross-fertilisation and co-production stages. Visibility raising of immigrant and minority cultures is the first step; then, through capacity building and networking between individuals and organisations of the different cultural communities, cross-fertilisation may occur, which, once the confidence of artists is built, co-production may occur. Signs of cross-fertilisation

have been noticed in all types of pilot actions. For example, during activities that had as their main aim to make ethnic cultures known to a wider audience, one could notice ethnic bands that mixed their own rhythms and melodies with mainstream pop and rock, creating thus a musical genre that was accessible to the young audiences and indeed popular. Similar examples have been observed worldwide, and in many cases have become great hits. However, one should be very cautious with this type of cultural products: do not necessarily mean that the respective ethnic and host/majority communities have come closer culturally within a national context. Rather, they may come under a certain fashion, which may be global, without much influence at the local level.

The pilot actions implemented in Santorini, Greece, had as their main aim to promote transcultural exchange. The methodology adopted by the project team was based in the initial steps of raising the visibility of immigrant cultures, networking and capacity building of the immigrant communities. Further to these, it was decided at the initial stages of the project, that the notion of exchange should obtain a symbolic and physical space, to which both immigrant and host communities would be invited to develop and mix their cultures. This space was indeed created, with funding from the project, the kind support of the Regional Authority, who waived the rent, and the active involvement of the Albanian community, who re-decorated the building and tended its garden through voluntary work. The Multi-cultural Centre of Santorini "Filia", oper-

ated with EC funding for one full year, from September 2004 to September 2005, co-managed by the Greek and Albanian communities. The emphasis was placed on children and young people, who, in principle are not prejudiced and are open to all forms of cultural expression and cultural practices. The experience of "Filia" taught us that:

● To search and identify common cultural elements, if they exist, helps a lot the immigrant and host communities to approach each other and accept each culturally. In this case, the cultural traditions of Northern Greece and Southern Albania as far as folk music and dance go, have been shown to have many common elements, if not roots. During a cultural event that followed the project's 4th international workshop "Building Bridges", a Greek Dance Society and the "Filia" dance group demonstrated clearly the common elements.

● Language barriers between the immigrant and Greek communities, especially regarding the older immigrants, made the exchange more challenging. Greek language classes were introduced to solve this problem.

● Mistrust between the immigrant and host communities had to be overcome. This needed time as well as building the capacity of immigrant communities to express convincingly their culture and become accepted as cultural entities by the host community. However, within the first year of the Centre's operation, the Greek community failed to participate in the art courses offered by the Centre, although

participated in the cultural events.

● Exchange, as cross-fertilisation between the different cultures, or even more co-production of culture, could not be achieved in the short period of one year. The preparation had certainly started for this, through language and art courses, and networking between the members of the immigrant communities who were convinced to join forces and set up a cultural association.

● Families with children and youth were proved to be an excellent target groups to start the process of exchange. Immigrant and Greek families were anyway meeting in the local schools, and had to a certain degree already accepted cultural diversity as part of school life.

● The support of the local education community, including the heads of the primary and secondary education authorities, as well as the support of the Regional Authority, had been vital for legitimising the Multi-cultural Centre in the eyes of the Greek community.

In conclusion, the pilot actions in Santorini have shown that to achieve transcultural exchange between the host and immigrant communities, a strategy is necessary as well as a medium-term time horizon, that would allow transcultural relationships to be built, the necessary trust and cultural acceptance to be established between the communities and adequate

skills to be developed. Furthermore, a "forum" that would host the transcultural exchange and the preparatory activities, could facilitate the process of exchange significantly, endowing it with both symbolic meaning and the necessary infrastructure.

8.2 The way forward: the legacy of the pilot actions

*T*o assess the prospects of the project results to continue, we have performed a SWOT analysis of the pilot actions..

The main **strengths** of the project are:

- Its participatory, "bottom up" methodology which guided the pilot actions. In all the pilot areas, the active involvement of the target groups was sought, as well as that of the local leaders and service providers of the host society, where appropriate, in agreeing the action schedule and content, and in the planning and implementation of the actions. In this way, the immigrant communities and ethnic/cultural minorities targeted by the project "owned" the results at the end of it, and had every motive to continue producing them.

- Its emphasis on the "empowerment" of the target groups, through networking and capacity building activities, so that their self-confidence and self-actualisation would be strengthened, to enable them continue the cultural inclusion strategy started by the project.

- The actions of the project where chosen after a needs analysis of the pilot regions, which helped enormously the implementation process.

- The project has proposed a strategy for inclusion through culture for immigrant communities and ethnic/cultural minorities, based on the four themes of: raising visibility of the targeted cultures, improving the networking abilities of the communities concerned, building their capacity to express their culture and eventually to engage in transcultural exchange and co-production with the host/majority communities.

The **weaknesses** have more to do with the process of implementation and mainly with bureaucratic structures present in the pilot areas

on the one hand and the conditions of exclusion of the target groups not only from the cultural but also from socio-political life, on the other hand.

- The immigrant and ethnic minority communities targeted by the project often tended to be either inward looking or complacent, in their effort not to offend the host society or out of mistrust. This, in some cases, has limited their involvement in the project.

- Delays in starting the pilot actions have occurred, some of which could be traced in the slow response of the target groups or the bureaucratic constrains of the authorities whose help was needed.

- The lifestyle and cultural outlook of some ethnic/cultural minorities put the continuity of the pilot actions at stake, because of the high degree of turnaround of the participants to the project activities; or their lack of commitment and consistency.

- Lack of basic literacy and language skills has made communication with the target groups very difficult in some cases.

- Local and regional authorities were very slow to respond to the call for cooperation in the pilot actions, resulting in some cases in the relative loss of momentum of the pilot actions.

The **opportunities** of the project actions to continue and have long-term results have been cultivated in each pilot area together with the local communities, the local authorities and the NGOs that have taken an interest and active role in their implementation. An assessment of such opportunities includes:

- The "visibility raising" activities have been appreciated in all project locations and will probably continue, in the new or enhanced format piloted by the project, to take place in Maastricht (organised by the University of Maastricht), in Murcia (organised by Sala Orillas) and in Santorini (organised by the Multi-cultural Centre and the local schools).

- The "networking" activities have resulted in two new NGOs being set up: the Federation of Immigrants' Associations in Murcia; and the Multicultural Association in Santorini. Informal networking between immigrant communities and local authorities or other insti-

tutional agencies has been promoted in all project locations, and will be continued as a matter of course.

- The "capacity building" activities have sparkled an interest within the wider community targeted by the project in Ireland and Santorini, with good prospects for continuing in the future and on a long term basis.

- The "transcultural exchange" activities in Santorini and Murcia, based on the "Filia" Multi-cultural Centre and Sala Orillas respectively, will be carried on with state funding or self-financing. Similarly, the Global Culture Festivals introduced by the project, have a good chance of continuing their staging through the annual budget of Studium Generale.

- The opportunities of wider application of the project strategy have been outlined and discussed in a workshop, organised by members of the project team at the EUnetArt conference in Verona in May 2005. The response of the participants was very positive.

- Wider dissemination of the project results via the website www.culture-exchange.net and the present publication will provide further opportunities for the transfer of the lessons learnt and the strategy of the project to other locations and excluded communities in the European Union.

Finally, **threats** to the sustenance of the project results in the long term, have a direct correspondence to the difficulties encountered during implementation, as outlined above under weaknesses. Further to those:

- A serious threat is posed by discontinuity of funding. to support the activities started in the project locations. An alternative to external funding, which cannot be guaranteed in most cases, would be self-financing by the target communities, mostly through voluntary work.

- An equally serious threat is emerging from lack of local leaders, or the reluctance of the key persons that emerged through the project activities to carry on. A support network has been set up in every pilot area, that could be used to encourage these key persons to continue leading the cultural inclusion strategy in their region.

8.3 Recommendations

*T*he lessons learnt from the implementation of the pilot actions of the project point to a number of recommendations, which might prove useful for public policy makers, service providers and NGOs who take or wish to take an active role in facilitating the integration of immigrant communities and ethnic or cultural minorities through the medium of culture. These are:

- The culture of the ethnic minorities should be placed firmly on the political agenda. Establishing contact and cooperation with the local authorities and local welfare services helps in this directions
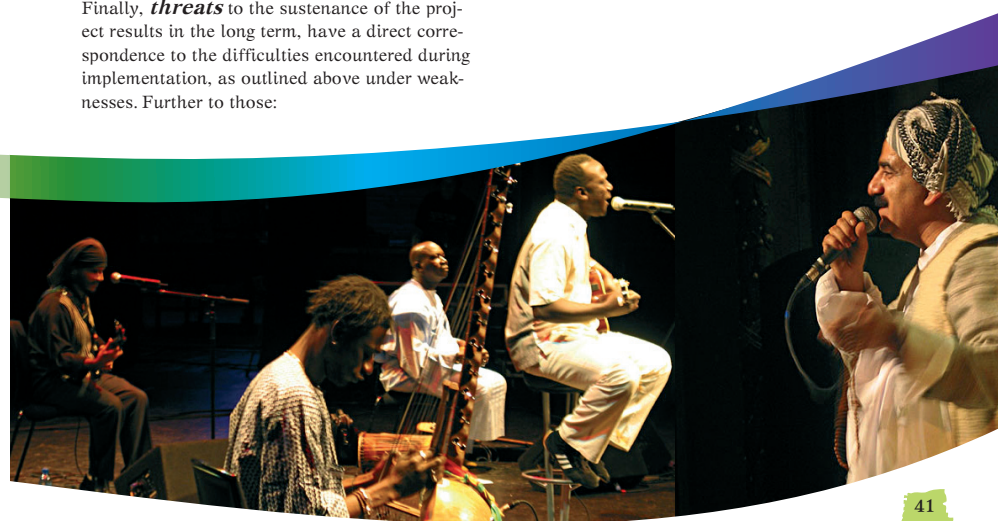
- The multicultural events help, provided that they have an informal atmosphere that brings people together, cultivating goodwill, creating informal networks, awakening enthusiasm etc

- The multicultural events should be organised with the active support and involvement of the minority communities, so that they "own" the events and can mobilise the interest of their fellow community members.

- The cultural-recreational activities are more far-reaching, if they have an educational back up, giving opportunities to members of minority groups to become involved in mainstream education and learning, if they so wish.

- The involvement of public authorities in joint cultural activities with minority communities, through, for example, co-organising cultural events with immigrant communities and ethnic groups, should be encouraged by appropriate policy measures. The official consent of a public authority helps substantially to waive the reservations and fears of the host society, and secure their participation in transcultural exchange.

- Funded projects, either by EU or national sources, have an important role to play in demonstrating "best practice" to immigrant and ethnic communities regarding the use of culture an integration mechanism.

- Such projects are also valuable for building the capacity of minority communities' members to assert their cultural identity and make

their culture visible to the host community, as well as building networks of individuals and organisations that make inclusion and integration possible.

- Raising the capacity of minority groups to enable them to use culture as a medium for their inclusion, is a long term process and should be seen as such. Cultural particularities, reflected in lifestyles, may make mainstream methods of capacity building irrelevant to some of the target groups. It is essential to create and support long-term educational and vocational trainings structures, targeted at children and the young, to build the capacity of these communities at a stable and secure basis.

- Basic skills, such as language, literacy and ICT need to be developed within ethnic or cultural minorities, before they can proceed with further capacity building and networking activities.

- Networking between organisations that represent the minority groups or work for their benefit, is a crucial factor in the empowerment of these groups, and for using culture as a channel for their integration in the host societies. Networking should be supported by public policy, and the animation for such networking should be funded from public sources.

- Sustainability of cultural activities that contribute to the integration of minority groups, has to be based, in the long term, on self-financing by the target communities, so that it is rendered independent of institutional or

public influence. This might involve to a large extent a commitment of voluntary work, and the charging of a modest fee for activities that require tuition or the use of infrastructure.

- A strategy for "inclusion through culture" is necessary before embarking in any kind of action to achieve inclusion. The four "themes" proposed by this project, as ingredients of such a strategy, provide a good basis for evaluating the policies and measures included in the NAPs/inclusion and for compiling the new NAPs.

Annex I.

Integration through Culture in Poland: a case-study of the Armenians

The Armenians are a national minority in Poland which dates from the 11th century, when the first migration wave of Armenians was registered. The long history of the Armenian community in Poland has resulted in a double identity for most of them, both Polish and Armenian. Although Polish Armenians have been "polonised" for a relatively long time, they have been able to keep their Armenian identity. However, following the transition to democracy in the early 1990s, a new wave of Armenians migrated to Poland, originating from ex-Soviet Union states. The question investigated by the Polish partners is how Armenian culture is used by the new migrants to integrate in the host society, given that traditional Armenian culture is known in Poland, although it is considered to be a strong one, and is based mostly on religion.

The four themes of the proposed inclusion strategy have been used to guide the research in Poland. The findings are summarised below:

Raising the visibility of Armenian culture in Poland is not an issue. Cultural events devoted to Armenian tradition are mostly organized by Poles, although this is slowly changing. 2005 was quite an exceptional year for Armenians in Poland as they celebrated two national anniversaries: the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and the 1600- year long history of the Armenian alphabet. These events seemed to motivate individuals and organisations alike. Following is an indicative list of events:

- Gaik Parsamian, an artist who has a gallery in GdaPsk organised the Armenian Days in Pruszcz GdaPski – Straszyn community; this was an event within the cycle National Minorities in Pruszcz GdaPski Community, that attracted a good number of people.

- A concert was organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to commemorate the 14 years of the country's independence and 1600 years of the Armenian alphabet, at the PorczyPski Gallery in Warsaw in September, 2005. A small event was organised at Warsaw School of Economics by a student of this school, the daughter of the Armenian ambassador in November 15th, 2005.

- Celebrations to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of inaugurating the Armenian Culture Club were held at the Polish Ethnographical Society in the Biblioteka Wojew½dzka in Krakow in April 17th, 2005;

- Armenian Double-Days were held at the Centre for Armenian Research at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in ToruP, in June 2005

The occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Genocide received some noticeable press coverage too, together with the publication of one fiction book (Edgar Hilsenrath, Das Maerchen vom lezten Gedanken, Ksiàňnica Press) and one historical study (Grzegorz Kaczmarczyk, The First Genocide of the XX Century, Fronda press).

Networking amongst Armenians is represented by several Armenian Cultural Associations which were founded before the landmark year of the Polish socio-economic transformation in 1989 and they have no more than 50 members each. Before 1989, the cultural activity of this minority group was hidden behind the cover of the Ethnographical Society, most of its members being elderly people. In today's Cultural Associations, the participation of young people from the established Armenian community is also relatively low and their place is sometimes taken by Armenians of the latest immigration wave. The networking of these associations is, however, almost non-existent. Organizations of the old Armenians do not co-operate with one another to hold cultural events, they even do not exchange information on their plans. This situation may change in the near future, following the establishment of a Council for Minorities by the Prime Minister of the Polish government, in which every minority group is represented.

Trans-cultural exchange has been mostly demonstrated in the co-organisation of cultural events by Armenians and Poles. These events are mostly organized on the initiative of Poles, usually those of Armenian origin, as in the case of the Armenian Culture Clubs, or by Polish fans (e.g. the case of an Armenian wafer in Gdańsk). An exception to this rule was an Armenian disco dance organized by youth in Warsaw during the presentation Meet Armenia in Poland (October 10th, 2004). However, even this meeting was not of much interest to representatives of the new generation of the established Armenian community. On the other hand, Armenian artists who live and work in Poland only very rarely show typical Armenian culture in their works. They vary from the Musa Ler music group to Andranik Harutunyan with his traditional sculptures for Roman-Catholic churches, but Armenian art is mostly of a universal nature. Inclusion of Armenian culture elements in the visual or musical works of artists is rather occasional.

Building the capacity of Armenians to use their culture as a channel for their integration in the Polish society has not been an issue. Usually Armenians emphasize that their culture is unique, ancient, Christian, that survived in the region of the world where it encounters the civilization of Islam. But they also emphasize that Poles and Armenians have certain characteristics in common like hospitality, Christian values, outspokenness and similar sufferings. It is paradoxical though, that the Armenians' belief in their own uniqueness is not followed by any educational activity to pass it on to the younger generations. It is true that Armenians blend into the host society relatively easily, although they don't describe this blending as full assimilation, but rather as harmonized integration. Over 10 years after the height of the third wave of Armenian emigration to Poland (1994), it can be said that the members of this migrant group have not formed close-knit colonies, they are scattered across Poland and they are undergoing partial assimilation.

Annex II.
Literature and other sources

Commission of the European Communities (2001) Communication from the Commission on 'Structural indicators' (COM(2001) 619 final 30 October.

Commission of the European Communities (2003) Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Joint report on social inclusion summarising the results of the examination of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (2003-2005) Brussels, 12.12.2003, COM(2003)773 final

Commission of the European Communities (2004) Commission Staff Working Paper: Social Inclusion in the New Member States, A Synthesis of the Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion, Brussels, 22.6.2004, SEC(2004)848

Commission of the European Communities (2005) Communication form the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, SEC (2005) 69, Brussels 27.01.05, COM(2005)14 final

Commission of the European Communities (2005) Green Paper on an EU approach to Managing Economic Migration (presented by the Commission), Brussels, 11.1.2005, COM(2004) 811 final

Department of Justice, **Equality and Law Reform (2005)** Planning For Diversity, The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 - 2008, Dublin Ireland in http://www.diversityireland.ie/Publications/upload/File/NPAR.pdf

DG Employment and Social Affairs (2004) Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

DG Employment, **Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2005)** Report on Social Inclusion: An analysis of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2004-2006) submitted by the 10 new Member States, Luxembourg:

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

Dimakos, **Ioannis & Tasiopoulou**, **Katerina (2003)** 'Attitudes against the Immigrants: What do Greek students think about their immigrant fellow students', Journal of International Education; September 2003, Vol.14 issue 3, p307, in http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=10917438&/db=aph

Directorate General Employment, **Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**, National Action Plans against Povertry and Social Exclusion, in http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/naps_en.htm

Edwards,   **Martin Baldwin (2004)** 'Albanian emigration and the Greek labour market: Economic symbiosis and social ambiguity', in South East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs, European Trade Union Institute, in http://www.migrants.gr/files/RESOURCE_123.pdf

EPC/KBF (15/4/2005) 'Beyond the Common Basic Principles on Integration: the next steps', Multicultural Europe Team, Issue Paper 27 (revised)

Estivill, **Jordi (2003)** Concepts and strategies for combating social exclusion: An overview, Geneva: International Labour Office-STEP/Portugal

European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) (2003) EAPN REPORT-National Action Plans on Inclusion 2003-2005: Where is the political energy- EAPN's response to the second round of Plans in http://eapn.horus.be/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=444 posted: [1/10/2003]

Eurostat (5/2005) Statistics in Focus, Population and Social Conditions, European Communities

Geoghegan, **Pauline (2005)** EARN Conference Report: The EU We Want-Tackling Poverty and Exclusion in an Enlarged EU, Groningen, Netherlands, 17-21 November 2004, March, in http://eapn.horus.be/code/en/publ_detail.asp?pk_id_content=1192

Grażyna Woroniecka, **Marian Kempny (1999)** 'Kultura Ormian w Polsce. Religia i język, w:, Kultura i religia w globalizującym się świecie', NOMOS, Kraków, pp. 127 - 144

Guibentif, **Pierre (2004)**, Reception and integration of newly arrived immigrants, Synthesis Report, France, in http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net

Guillaumin, **C. (1988)** Cultural Values: the Cultural Dimension of Development, in Crawford, James, The Rights of Peoples, Clarendon Press, Oxford

Hamilton, **Ian E.F. & Iglicka**, **Krystyna (2000)** Armenians in Poland after 198, London - New York, London University Press

Implementation Report 2005 on the 2003 National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (June 2005) http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2005/nl_en.pdf

Institute of Urban Environment and Human Workforce (2004), "Statistics on Immigrants in Greece: Detailed Study on Available Data and Proposals for Compliance with EU Standards", Study for the Institute of Immigrant Policy, Panteion University, Athens

Jehoel-Gijsbers, **Gerda (12/8/2004)** Social Exclusion in the Netherlands, The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands, in http://www. Scp.nl/english/publications/summaries/90377016404.html

Joint Report on Social Inclusion (December 2001) in http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/joint_rep_en.htm

Journal Metoikos(2003-2004), Athens

Kassimis, **Charalambos & Papadopoulos**, **Apostolos (January,2005)** 'The multifunctional role of migrants in the Greek countryside: Implications for the Rural Economy and Society', Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Vol.3, No.1, p.p.99-127

Netherlands National Action Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003, at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napsincl2001_en.html

Papademetriou, **Demetrios**, **G. (2003)** Policy Considerations for Immigrant Integration, in

http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=171

Petronoti, **Marina & Triandafyllidou Anna (2003)**, Recent Immigration Flows to Greece, Athens: National Centre for Social Research

Psimmenos, **Iordanis & Kassimati**, **Koula (2003)** 'Immigration control pathways: organisational culture and work values of Greek welfare officers', Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies; March, Vol. 29 Issue 2, p.337

Room, **G. (1995)** "Poverty and social exclusion: the new European agenda for policy and research", in ROOM, G. (Ed) Beyond the threshold: the measurement and analysis of social exclusion, the Policy Press, Bristol.

Social Protection Committee (2001) Report on Indicators in the field of poverty and social exclusion, European Commission

Social Protection Committee (2003) COMMON OUTLINE FOR THE 2003/2005 NAPs/inclusion National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPs/inclusion), in http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/ soc-prot/soc-incl/commonoutline2003final_en.pdf

Socjologia Armenii (2002) Bunt Młodych Duchem (dwumiesięcznik Towarzystwa Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej) grudzień, pp 26 – 27

Stationary Office (1995) Report of the Task Force On the Travelling Community, Dublin

Stopka, **Krzysztof (2000)** Ormianie w Polsce dawniej i dzisiejszej. Kraków, Wydawnictwo Universitas.

The Issue of Culture (2004), special issue of Contexts, Arts and Practice in Ireland, Vol 3, issue 4, Dublin: cafepublications

Triandafyllidou, **Anna & Vogel**, **Dita (2005)** Civic activation of immigrants- An introduction to conceptual and theoretical issues, University of Oldenburg. POLITIS-Working paper No.1 www.uni-oldenburg.de/ politis-europe/webpublications, in http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/files/WP1_POLITIS_VogelTriandafyllidou_2005.pdf

Zeitlin, **Jonathan** The Open Method of Coordination in Action: The European Employment and Social Inclusion Strategies, P.I.E.- Peter Lang

Project partners

Project Promoter

The Development Agency of Cyclades (GR)
Contact: Kostas Voltis, e-mail: info@anetky.gr
website: http://www.antetky.gr

Project Coordinator

PRISMA - Centre for Development Studies (GR)
Contact: Fouli Papageorgiou, e-mail: foulipapageorgiou@prismanet.gr
website: www.prismanet.gr

Partners

NEXUS Research Europe (IR)
Contact: Brian Dillon, e-mail: brian@nexus.ie
website: http://ireland.iol.ie/nexus

PAVEE POINT Travellers Centre (IR)
Contact: Brendan Ó Caoláin, e-mail: culture@pavee.iol.ie
website: http://www.paveepoint.ie

Department of Cultural Studies of the Institute of Sociology,
Nicolaus Copernicus University, (PL)
Contact: Tomasz Marciniak, e-mail: tomk@uni.torun.pl
website: http://www.umk.pl

Associació per la Cooperació, la Inserció Social I la Interculturalitat,
ACISI (ES)
Contact: Mario Calderon, e-mail: acisi@gabinet.com
website: www.acisi.org

Gabinet d'Estudis Socials, GES (ES)
Contact: Raúl Martínez Ibars, e-mail: ges@gabinet.com
website: http://www.gabinet.com

Consorcio de Entidades para la Acción Integral con Migrantes,
CEPAIM (ES)
Contact: Juan Antonio Segura, e-mail: participacion@cepaim.org
website: http://www.cepaim.org

Studium Generale, Foundation of the University of Maastricht (NL)
Contact: Jacques Reiners, e-mail: Jacques.Reiners@SG.unimaas.nl
website: http://www.sg.unimaas.nl