

Skills to maximise inclusion through interpreting and Mediation

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O1 Common report review



Second meeting – Berlin (10-11 September 2018)

IO1 State of art research

Start: November 2012

End: March 2013

Aim

- * To provide a detailed overview of each partner country's approach to addressing the needs of the immigrants and refugees in terms of overcoming language barriers when they interact with various public sector agencies and bodies, local communities and the general society in their new home countries.
- * To provide added dialogue with individuals with key engagement roles with the target group to seek their views on the current gaps and how these are best addressed

Target groups

1. Key public sector agencies working in the areas of Immigration; Health; Law enforcement; Education; Benefits; Social services and Housing
2. Politicians
3. NGOs working with migrants and refugees
4. People who already work as interpreters and mediators
5. Representatives of local immigrant and refugee communities

Findings – Countries of origin

1. UK – Syria, Pakistan, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, China, Afghanistan, Poland
2. Germany - Turkey, Poland, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq
3. Greece - Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, African countries, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland
4. Italy - Eritrea, Tunisia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Libya, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Guinea, Algeria, Morocco, Bangladesh, Gambia
5. Sweden - Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia
6. Bulgaria - Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Iran

Findings – Common languages/dialects

1. UK – Polish, Urdu Punjabi, Bengali, Arabic, Tigryinia, Kurdish, Dari, Pashto, Bengali-Sylheti, Indian dialects and Twi
2. Germany - Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian, Chechen, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Nepali, Khmer, Tamil and all African languages and dialects
3. Greece - Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Urdu, Burmese, Sorani, Bengali, Swahili, Amarinia, Hindi, Somali, Turkish, Tigrinya
4. Italy - English, French, Arabic, Bengali, the Mandinka, the Wolof, the Fula and Nigerian pidgin
5. Sweden - Arabic, Dari, Persian, Somali and Tigrinya
6. Bulgaria - Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Turkish, Spanish, French, Somali, Tamili and Sinhali, Chinese, Russian, Armenian and Kurdish.

Findings – Employment status

- * Language interpreting and cultural mediation are relatively new professional paths → recognition still pending
- * Cultural mediator is widely spread in Italy, UK and Germany
- * Sweden, Greece and Bulgaria → the profession is not legally defined or strictly regulated; kind of blurry
- * Germany – “cultural mediator” is an officially recognized profession, unlike “interpreter”, which is not
- * Interpreters and Mediators – freelancers; part-time workers

Findings – National approach

1. **UK** – The access to interpretation and mediation services is regulated the best; There are services based in the big cities where the institutions can access the language interpreters however the trend is to use telephone to access interpreters which makes it more cost effective
2. **Germany** – no standard procedure to employ interpreters/mediators; Each institution has own database
3. **Italy** – interpreters/mediators do not have a permanent employee contact; public institutions have access to a list of interpreters/mediators available the area
4. **Bulgaria** - authorities and institutions have their own databases created with the help of private contacts, word of mouth or another non-official way
5. **Greece** - no official authority or association in which someone can look for professional cultural mediators and interpreters. This gap is filled in a fragmentary manner, with many NGOs usually undertaking the role of the official employer
6. **Sweden** - The provision of interpreters is coordinated through service agreements between the authority and interpreter service providers; However many authorities and health services have drawn up their own agreements with interpreter service providers

Findings – Personal qualities and soft skills

- * Excellent foreign language skills
- * Deep knowledge of specific terminology
- * Being neutral, unbiased, objective and impartial
- * Communication and listening skills
- * Social skills and deep knowledge of the cultural specifics of the hosting country, as well as the origin country of the refugee
- * Deep knowledge on the national procedures for acquiring refugee or humanitarian status
- * Deep knowledge of the system of work of governmental institutions and public bodies and the ability of appropriate and fast reaction in complicated situations
- * Empathy, honesty, loyalty, reliability, discretion and open mindedness
- * Know how to keep the right distance with the migrants
- * Negotiation skills and flexibility
- * Stress and emotion management skills
- * Excellent body language and facial expression reading
- * Not afraid to ask for clarification when in doubt
- * Self-discipline
- * Constantly seeking ways to improve their skills and qualifications

Findings – Common problems and challenges

Legal Services:

- * Registration
- * How to find where to stay
- * Renewal of the cards (permits) for asylum seekers
- * TAX office registration
- * Issue of work permits/unemployment cards
- * Communication in entry points (border) and get asylum seeker status
- * Need to go in person in public organizations because of lack of telephone services
- * Enroll their children to school
- * Statutory services claiming interpretation is too costly/time consuming to use and therefore do not provide the service
- * The connection and dealing of police within their own country and lack of language is the most common problem because they fear they will get the same treatment
- * Bureaucracy and not understanding the procedures

Findings – Common problems and challenges (2)

Health Services:

- * Is very difficult to communicate with the doctors especially when there are serious health problems
- * Problems to book an appointment with doctors
- * Psychological support cannot be offered without communication in the same language
- * Children vaccination
- * Some patients can become attached to the cultural mediator who is often their only link between their home country and the new community where they now reside and wants to have continued contact and support from the mediator even after the job has been completed

Summary and conclusions

- * EU – attractive destination for migrants
- * Main reasons for migration – political and economical
- * All public institutions and authorities experience difficulties in terms of providing interpreting and mediation services when dealing with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- * Lack of community interpreters and cultural mediators with good enough language fluency, professional qualifications and personal qualities
- * Not officially recognized professions

Summary and conclusions (2)

- * Lack of financing
- * Lack of interpreters/mediators from rare languages and dialects
- * The interpreters/mediators are lacking crucial professional and language skills
- * Lack of comprehensive national legislation regulating and supervising those professions
- * Lack of comprehensive training programs
- * Lack of cooperation between the institutions and the interpreters/mediators
- * In all partner countries the vast majority of cultural mediators are people with migrant background, who are bi-lingual and bi-cultural, while the interpreters are not necessarily bi-lingual or bi-cultural, just fluent in their mother tongue and at least one foreign language