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Migration & Lifelong Learning in Europe

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Migration in Europe

- Levels of migration within the EU have reached an historically high point.
- European Commission documents state that 15% of primary school children are from migrant families (PISA 2006).
- In Ireland, Italy and Spain the percentage of school pupils born in another country has multiplied by three or four since 2000.
- In the UK there has been a 50% growth in two years of school children newly arrived from another country.



The reasons for migration

The main reasons for migration to the EU:-

- To seek work (economic migrants and their accompanying families);
- To rejoin families living in the EU or for marriage;
- For humanitarian purposes (refugees and asylum seekers);
- Other, e.g. ethnic repatriation.

Each group has a different legal status in different EU countries relating to the rights to remain, work, education, benefits, citizenship, etc.



Challenges

Employment

- The unemployment rate for migrants is double that of the non-migrant population.
- The under-employment rate for migrants is double that of the non-migrant population.



Challenges (cont'd)

Education

- The OECD PISA survey found that migrant pupils aged 15 systematically performed less well than host country pupils in science, mathematics and reading.
- They were more likely to leave school early.
- In some countries the attainment gap worsened from the first generation of migrant pupils to the second.



Barriers to progress and integration

- Language and culture.
- Lack of networks and knowledge relating to the mainstream.
- No value given to experience and qualifications gained abroad.
- Discrimination and 'selective hiring' practices.



Reasons to address the barriers

Economic

Despite the recession there are labour market shortages in the EU in high and low skilled occupations, where employers rely upon migrant workers to fill the gaps. Sectors include agriculture, social care and IT. Greater employment levels increase national tax income.



Reasons to address the barriers (cont'd)

Social

Social cohesion suffers and alienation increases when marginalised communities including migrant groups are excluded from participating in mainstream society because of poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunities for progress.

Human Rights

Some groups of migrants are denied the rights that other people living in the same country enjoy, including the right of access to education and training, and the labour market.



Proposals for Lifelong Learning policy and provision

- Establish an entitlement for all migrants to a minimum period of learning.
- Consult migrants about their learning needs and aspirations.
- Undertake research into the particular barriers facing different migrant groups.
- Design programmes to meet needs – not a 'one size fits all' approach.



Proposals for Lifelong Learning policy and provision (cont'd)

- Establish systems to validate experience, learning and qualifications gained abroad within national and international frameworks.
- Ensure that women gain access to adult education opportunities.
- Involve the social partners (employers and trades unions) in developing vocational learning opportunities for migrants.
- Involve local community groups in providing local learning opportunities for migrants.



Conclusions

Adult Education can make a contribution to:

- The integration of migrants within new neighbourhoods;
- Helping migrants build new lives;
- Raising employment levels and improving careers;
- Raising the educational attainment levels of migrant children.



Conclusions (cont'd)

Examples of successful systems and approaches can be found in some European countries provided by both Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations. These 'good practice' examples could be publicised and considered for transferability and mainstreaming.



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Thank You

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