manifesto for an intercultural adult education in Europe

Who speaks. The voices of immigrants on adult education

Co-ordinator:

FACEPA
Federation of Cultural and Educational Association for Adult People
(Barcelona, Spain)

Partners:

FOF Rosing Ræderske – Centre for Adult Education
(Horsens, Denmark)

CNRR – Romanian National Council for Refugees
(Bucharest, Romania)

MENTOR – Centre for Adult Education
(Bucharest, Romania)
European societies are becoming more multicultural. These are realities where cultural encounters are a source of mutual enrichment, but also situations where social inequalities can be reproduced.

The fight against these inequalities should guarantee fundamental rights which make possible to participate in the society. Rights like access to education and participation in culture, which are taken as priorities for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, contribute to real inclusion of the most disadvantaged people and collectives in the society.

Intercultural education must pay attention to different ways of living, adapt to everyone's needs and interests as well as being designed and configured on the principle of egalitarian participation of everybody who is involved in the education process. To this end, there must be spaces where immigrants and people from different cultural backgrounds have the opportunity to participate.

In this way, several multicultural groups were created in the framework of the Who Speaks. The voices of immigrants on Adult Education project, promoted by the General Directorate for Education and Culture of the European Commission. The multicultural groups have created spaces where the voices of people from different cultures (who are immigrant due to financial reasons, refugees or asylum-seekers), that are frequently ignored, can be heard.

This Manifesto has been created through egalitarian dialogue between immigrants. It's a tool used for claiming how intercultural education must be in order to provide answers to the needs, interests and motivations of participants, with the aim of overcoming social inequalities.
multicultural groups

Multicultural group of **FOF** (Horsens – Denmark): Immigrants from 10 different countries.

Multicultural group of **CNRR** (Bucharest – Romania): Asylum-seekers, namely foreign citizens who applied for asylum, from Bangladesh, Iraq, Somalia, Yugoslavia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Iran and Kuwait.

Multicultural group of **MENTOR** (Bucharest – Romania): Immigrants for financial reasons and asylum-seekers, namely foreign citizens who applied for asylum, from Iraq, Iran, the ex-Yugoslavia, China, Sierra Leone, Moldavia, Turkey, Armenia, Bulgaria, Sudan and Ukraine.

Multicultural group of **FACEPA** (Barcelona – Spain): Immigrants for financial reasons from Morocco, Algeria, Philippines, different countries of Latin America, Ghana, Senegal, Sudan and Pakistan. Spanish people who are currently participating in adult education centres are also taking part.
intercultural education – Promoting social inclusion and participation

education and participation

- Equality of differences has to be the basis of intercultural education. It has to respect differences for the development of each culture and identity, but also has to promote equality in order to promote equal opportunities and possibilities for success for all cultures. This contributes to overcoming social inequalities.

- Education has to be free and for everybody. Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education is understood as a fundamental right in which everybody at any age has to be able to participate, independently of their legal-administrative situation.

- In a democratic and intercultural education, participants who take part in educational processes have the right to contribute to the definition of the kind of education they want. Then, there must also be spaces where it is possible to participate in an egalitarian way.

- The curriculum has to have an intercultural approach, based on values such as solidarity, equality and respect to diversity. In this sense, intercultural education has to be basis in the fight against racism.

- Intercultural education must recognise and accredit adult immigrants’ prior knowledge in order to facilitate their access to training courses and jobs.

- Intercultural education has to promote the social inclusion of immigrants in the current Knowledge Society. Thus, it is necessary to encourage a democratic access to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

- Every host country should promote social policies, which facilitate access to and active participation in education, training courses and the labour market, recognising people's rights as citizens.

intercultural dialogue

- There must be more forums and discussion spaces, for sharing knowledge, feelings and experiences with other immigrants and people from different cultural backgrounds. These discussions must be through egalitarian dialogue, with the aim of finding common solutions to overcoming social barriers as well as common values for living together.

- All contributions to this intercultural dialogue have to be respected and valued based on the argument as well as respect for Human Rights, rejecting power relationships which can be generated on the basis of financial status, nationality, etc.

- Nowadays, in Europe, egalitarian dialogue among cultures is a fundamental element necessary for coexistence among people. Sharing spaces where people relate and interact, where mutual knowledge created together breaks down prejudices and barriers created by the fear of differences, can contribute to fighting racism.
• By means of the intercultural dialogue, new cultural ways are created to enrich educational processes as well as individuals and collectives.

guidance and information
• It is necessary that not only administration, but also cultural and educational associations and adult education centres to offer guidance and information to immigrants about different ways of participating in society.
• Information process must not only include information about the host country, but also about educational and labour resources. True inclusion into a new society is promoted through the access to and active participation in education, training activities, language learning as well as leisure activities.
• It's important to provide welcome processes from centres and associations, but also to offer a project in which people can take part, and where immigrants and non-immigrants can gather together in daily activities and in the classroom.
• The implementation of orientation, information and welcoming processes has to involve immigrants who are already part of the host community. That contributes to a better identification of immigrants' needs.

learning of new languages
• Learning of the language or languages of the new country is fundamental for the social inclusion process of people from different cultures.
• Education is a right for everybody, therefore it must be free and of quality. Then, language learning also has to be free in adult education centres and associations for everyone who needs it.
• Language learning courses have to be adapted to the needs and interests of the participants (contents, methodology, timetables), guaranteeing the quickest way to have oral skills of the language.
• By learning languages understanding, solidarity and dialogue between different countries and cultures is promoted.
• One of the best ways to learn languages is through dialogue, in a welcoming atmosphere, where each person is respected, maximum learning is promoted and there is the belief that everybody is able to learn.
• It's important and necessary to facilitate fair access to the Information and Communication Technologies. Intercultural education has to promote egalitarian use of different technological resources designed for language learning (such as language learning programmes by computer, Internet, radio, television).