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## Socio-educational activities for the generation of intercultural citizenship: evaluation of results

Pilar Arnaiz Sánchez, Remedios de Haro Rodríguez, M<sup>a</sup> Paz García Sanz\*

*Universidad de Murcia. Facultad de Educación. Campus de Espinardo. Murcia 30100, España*

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate the results from 129 projects involved in different socio-educational actions designed to meet the reception and integration needs of immigrants and contribute to the development of an intercultural society. To this end, through evaluative research, structured interviews were carried out with project coordinators. The results indicate a good global rating of the projects as well as a high degree of attainment of the project objectives and take-up by the intended users. We found no statistically significant difference with regards to the type of project and the lines of action taken.

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### 1. Introduction

In today's cities people with many differences and identities coexist. The diversity of origins, languages, cultures and customs of its inhabitants is a characteristic of its fluidity. This reality has been encouraged and provoked by migratory movements and the displacement of human beings seeking refuge or asylum and, consequently, has raised in leading states challenges and threats linked to existing democratic values like justice and equality. Thus, Banks et al. (2005) suggest that states, to enjoy cultural democracy, must know how to unite all its inhabitants in a common project capable of hosting national and global cultural identities. As has been shown by Joppe & Morawska (2003), the plan must be based on a particular way of understanding integration, distinct from static and discriminatory views

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\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +34 868 88 40 56; fax: +34 868 88 42 02.

*E-mail address:* [maripaz@um.es](mailto:maripaz@um.es)

which only promote fragmentation and social breakdown, which also appear and intensify in times of crisis, thus increasing discrimination and denial of the other (Vertovec, 2010).

In this sense, it is possible to conceive of integration as a project where all are called upon to participate in building a better society based on respect for human rights and the pursuit of equity. Aparicio (2005) defines integration as a process to be recreated day by day, where there are trials and achievements in which psychological, structural, legal and political factors acting on immigrants and the native society are present. It is a process of open convergence and negotiation for all the concerned parties in order to achieve a peaceful and harmonious coexistence. This idea, as described by Sebastiani (2014), is contained in the European framework for the integration of immigrants established between 2004 and 2005 by the European Union. The same eleven basic common principles appear in the integration policies of member states. From these principles, we highlight the definition of integration as a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and residents of Member States and the search for an intercultural dialogue.

As noted by several authors (Banks, 2007; Escarbajal, 2015; Soriano, 2008; Zapata Barrero, 2001), faced with this scenario we must work to promote intercultural citizenship. Specifically, Arnaiz & De Haro (2004) suggest that citizenship has to be considered as frameworks linked to justice, equity, continuous dialogue and openness with others. Within this line of argument, intercultural citizenship is referred to as citizenship committed to the development of multiculturalism, with the knowledge, acceptance and appreciation of the existing multiculturalism in order to draw up a civic community, which through dialogue, elucidates and draws closer those elements considered indispensable when it comes to building a more just and harmonious coexistence.

To achieve these goals, national, regional and local administrations should design and develop policies to manage multiculturalism, thereby encouraging and promoting the development of multiculturalism. Concretely, the regional and local dimension is particularly relevant in the attempt to develop the integration model described. To do this, we should promote a series of socio-educational actions which facilitate the needs present in the initial reception process and develop an intercultural citizenship with interventions aimed at the population as a whole. Similarly, aspects present in the daily life of a region or city should also be addressed: reception, education, social services, employment, housing, health, participation, child and youth care and those lines of action which identify and promote opportunities for the development of the countries of origin of immigration. All such actions are part of the integration plans present in the different autonomous communities. However, their existence alone is not sufficient, but requires an evaluation of their effectiveness and their impact on society. Godenau, Rincken, Martinez Lizarrondo & Moreno (2014), suggest the need to establish a model for the measurement of the European, national and regional integration of foreigners into Spanish society in its various dimensions. This requirement has been present in regional governments responsible for the management of this reality and from that interest arose this work.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the results of a series of existing projects in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (Spain) involved in different socio-educational actions designed to meet the reception and integration needs of immigrants and contribute to the development of an intercultural society. The specific objectives of the research were: 1) To study the take-up of the projects; 2) analyse the attainment of the planned objectives; and 3) evaluate the projects globally.

## **2. Method**

The study is located within evaluative research, particularly in the summative evaluation phase referred to as "cycle of educational intervention" (Garcia Sanz, 2012, p.167).

### *2.1. Participants*

The research involved 129 coordinators from pertinent projects from a total of 69 accredited organisations in the Autonomous Region of Murcia (Spain), within the Plan of Action for the Management of the Support Fund for the Reception and Integration of Immigrants and Educational Support.

Table 1 shows the sample distribution of projects, based on the typology and line of action.

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