

DIVERSE

Diversity Improvement as a Viable Enrichment Resource for Society and Economy



Policy Brief Andalucía (Spain) ¹ – English version

Andalucía is one of the Spanish regions with greater number of immigrants in Spain, following Catalonia and Madrid. The evolution of foreigners has been very similar to the Spanish one: a very fast increase of immigrant population from mid-nineties in the 20th Century and a stabilization and decrease coinciding with the current economic crisis.

In 2013 the foreign population registered in Spain was 5,546,238 (542,314 in 1996). The foreigner's rate stands at 12.6% (4,943,627 foreigners with residence permits). In 2013 we find in Andalucía 729,725 immigrants (the foreigners rate is 8.6%), while in 1996 only 89,641 immigrants were registered in the region.

There are territorial differences depending on the immigration rates by municipalities and provinces. Diversity by country of origin, and ethnic diversity also is today an important trait of this region. Most foreigners settle in municipalities along the Andalucía coast, which is linked both to the development of agriculture, the importance and dynamic tourism, and tertiary activities in the region. Segmentation by nationality is also an important feature of the Andalusian labor market.

Europe is the main continent of origin of foreigners in Andalucía, especially immigrants from the European Union, followed by Africa, and in a third place by America (those from South America). In Spain there are similarities with regard to Andalucía but there is a greater importance of Americans (overall South-Americans) and less importance of Africans and Europeans. Today some nationalities contribute with more citizens to the region, standing out United Kingdom, Morocco and Romania.

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The region receives immigrant from very different places in the world, especially Europe, Africa and Latin America. Globally, the number of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) in the region has increased from only 39,237 in 1996 to 345,169 in 2013, what suppose a real increase (near nine times bigger than in 1996).

With regard to their insertion in the labor market, activities rates are markedly bigger for TCNs, representing that most immigrants came for working. Rates are especially high for men (84.43%). Nevertheless, TCNs have the biggest unemployment rates reaching almost 40 per cent.

TCNs are in a worse labor situation than Spanish, UE-27 citizens and North-Americans, with proportionally less incorporation to manager, technical, professional or other skilled positions. The opposite occurs regarding non-skilled workers, 49.8% (non-EU 27), I contrast to only 14% of Spanish, or 28.1% of EU 27. TCNs globally are more frequently found in low occupational groups. We find important differences among foreigners in Andalucía by nationalities concerning their level of achieved qualification. The bigger number of illiterates is found in Africans and Asians who reach near 10% of their population. But if we sum the number of immigrants that have not even reached primary education, African resulted as the worse situated with two-thirds of their population with this profile.

Migratory Policies in Andalucía are trying to manage the Diversity installed in the region, and caused by the increasing presence of residents from several countries of origin. Andalusian Government has tackled the new situation in the last years through the establishment of different Integral Programs for the Integration of Immigrants in the region (2001-2004, 2006-2009, 2014-2016) that present basic principles for intervening on migration issues.

This is the global frame in the region in which the valorization of TCNs skills, knowledge and competences (SKC), diversity management (DM) in organizations, and the participation of TCNs in voluntary organizations and NGOs occurs. Next sections will summarize how these three issues develop in the region.

1. Recognition of Skills, Knowledge and Competencies for social inclusion

The importance of recognizing TCNs skills, knowledge and competences in a Diverse Europe presents today little room for doubts. Moreover, there are demographic and labor market reasons that justify the existence of the recognition process and the need to encourage it, both because there are workers that do not have a formal accreditation of their professional skills, and immigrants who in turn would require the participation in recognition processes to enhance their inclusion in the labor market. However recognition is a task full of complexity, as different legal and administrative frames in several countries are confronted at national, regional or local level. At the same time, the ease or difficulty to get SKC recognized is different depending on the educational level.

As the Spanish Constitution establishes, the State has the exclusive responsibility on accreditation of titles and the recognition of formal qualifications acquired in Third Countries. The Ministry of Education, through the General Sub-Directorate of Titles and Recognition of Qualifications (*Subdirección General de Títulos y reconocimiento de Cualificaciones*) and its representative bodies in the Autonomous Communities, in the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla and in Spanish embassies, is in charge of receiving, assessing and resolve applications of validation of foreigner titles. On the other side, the recognition of SKC of TCNs and their incorporation in Spanish Vocational Educational Training systems (VET) or in the labor market occurs through processes specifically regulated for foreign qualifications.

In earlier level of teaching, the legislation states that if a foreign student younger than 18 years of age (TCN or not) accesses from a foreign educational system and wishes to join to Compulsory Primary Education or Secondary Education (ESO), it is not necessary to perform any formal

validation of previous studies, and Schools and High Schools establish the way prior learnings are going to be recognized in order to guarantee a good inclusion of minors in their centres.

For reaching the University, unless there is a mutual recognition of titles and qualification agreements that allow a direct access to university, students with titles from countries with no agreements with Spain, or whose qualifications do not permit the access to university in the country of issue, but are equivalent and comparable with the Spanish title of *Bachiller*, must pass the university-qualification exam (*Selectividad*).

In superior levels, the validation of university foreign studies is a responsibility of universities in which applicants wish to continue their studies. With regard to the resolutions of validation of university degrees, between 56 per cent and 68 per cent of them are favorable showing a bigger difficulty for immigrants in obtaining such accreditation than for gaining access to the University. Other problem is the slowness of the process also for Europeans resident in Spain.

In sum, the procedure for the validation of official degrees of TCNs requires formalities, stakeholders, time and economic costs in a gradient ranging from the relative simplicity in obtaining the Grade of Secondary Education to the difficulty, delays and costs of the university degrees.

Regarding professional competencies, national legislation regulates the common process for the recognition of competencies, in terms of objectives, principles and instruments of the process, by the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training (SNCFP) and other expanding national and regional legislation. After some pilots experience Spanish and Andalusian legislation introduced mechanisms for the official recognition and certification of professional competencies. TCNs and other immigrants have access to the processes that end with the issuance of *Professional Certificates* of great useful for the labor market (in charge of the Andalusian Institute of Professional Qualifications, and applying the Royal Decree 112/24). The process begins with the publication of a public call for accreditation. The greatest difficulty which workers from third countries find is that all the accreditation procedure is based on the work experience obtained in Spain. Sometimes a vicious circle of difficult resolution occurs: to provide foreigners with residence or work permits a contract is required, but to hire immigrants also a company requires documented workers.

The process of certification of non-formally and informally learned competencies, together with the impulse of creating equivalencies among vocational and educational certificates, is consequently opening doors through which people (and nationals from Third Countries in our case) can access to the Educational System, to the Vocational Training system and to the labor market. This means that non-nationals can see their skills and knowledge recognized and certificated through a 'normalized' process, and no through a specific for non-nationals one. This new process of recognizing professional skills, knowledge and competencies presents consequently innovative opportunities for this target subgroup. Moreover, though the law provides certain capabilities, the practice of non-formal and informal learning recognition in Andalucía is not completely and well carried out and there are needs in some groups. It is hoped that this type of recognition can help to raise the educational level of citizens and increase their connection with processes of lifelong learning. On the other hand, it allows that skilled workers that perform functions without having recognized their skills could demonstrate them through these more accessible procedures for them. Immigrants who access the system of continuing education for adults, because they cannot prove their previous training or because they lack of it and want to get it, will probably prefer a more employment-oriented training, e.g., linked to vocational training. But the Continuing Education for Adults system (EPA) provides only general education (Secondary School, Baccalaureate).

Other completely different case is presented when recognition of skills is in charge of private companies or NGOs. Companies, as well as other NGOs we interviewed, can produce their own system for the "approval" or "accreditation" of skills acquired in professional performance. The "talents recruitment" use to be a strategy of international companies. But in global terms companies and NGOs were especially interested more in the recruitment of workers by competence-based recruitment processes than by titles.

The fieldwork allowed us to infer that the recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies had direct and very positive impacts on the labor market and social integration areas for third country nationals and many others impacts, more difficult to measure, affecting self-esteem and self-image of immigrants. Specifically through the interviews, the followings were reported: a) Increased employability; b) Greater possibilities to regularize the legal status of residence in Spain; c) Possibilities of abandon marginal activities; d) To improve the economic and social position working in better paid jobs and socially recognized; e) Get social coverage (unemployment insurance, pension provision, retirement pension, etc.); g) Possibilities of progressing in education; h) Improve self-image and self-esteem.

However, immigrants from third countries face the following difficulties to see their skills recognized: a) Lack of information; b) Bureaucracy and slow processes; c) Financial costs.

As consequence **some proposals** or points are desirable to be improved.

1. First, the bureaucratic-administrative complexity requires, in our view, the provision of structures to provide information and advice to TCNs claiming for precise routes to minimize difficulties for the recognition of competencies. We also dare to suggest the need of establishing “one-stop” offices or personalized monitoring of each of the records.
2. For the accreditation of professional experience, it would be desirable to find ways that would allow us to prove all the labor experience developed by foreigners not only that carried out in our country.
3. Other challenge is to break the vicious circle between getting a stay or labor permit and getting a contract.
4. For immigrants who access the system of continuing education for adults a plausible idea would be to develop a vocational training system adapted to their work schedules and oriented to their area of work, or even enlarging the responsibilities of the Continuing Education for Adults in this direction.
5. Even though different problems occur, ultimately, we found interested efforts carried out in the last years by public administrations at regional and level in Andalucía to ease the inclusion of immigrants in the educational system and the labor market, what is a hope for future. Nevertheless, some of the difficulties and actionable aspects found in the report also suppose a big challenge for future.
6. In addition, we propose to make easier the recognition of SKC of TCNs as this would not only result in social improvement of TCNs, but also be an exponent of the ability to host that has the Andalusian or Spanish society as a whole. Nevertheless these goals cannot be confronted alone, as coordinated actions and information inside the country, but also around Europe are necessary to promote better ways for the recognition of SKC, even easing for nationals and immigrants the possibility of having recognized their SKC in a European frame.

Finally, we observed agencies, procedures and tools available for the recognition of SKC in TCNs which are different depending on the educational level to be recognized (university, secondary, primary), or whether it intends to issue, approve a title, recognize, validate, etc. courses and other learning experiences. The recognition of titles of Formal Education follows a different process, depending on whether non-university or university education is. There is not a protocol or specific rules for immigrants from third countries.

2. Promoting Diversity Management in Profit, Public and Non-profit Organizations

In this section we focus on the learnings obtained having studied organizations that had implemented some kind of Diversity Management (DM) practices in the Andalusian Region considering by diversity these characteristics that are a source of social differentiation (culture, language, country of origin, etc.). The impact of diversity on productivity varies significantly depending on how well such diversity is managed. This means that in diversity management the main role is given to the decisions and actions of organizations.

We found that DM emerged more frequently depending on factors as the size of the company or its degree of internalization or economic sector. Also important were qualifications of workers and the membership of the company to a connected group where opportunities for promotion among branches that a company can offer to TCNs. Companies with numerous staff, with international or European dimension, with several offices in the world and a common language for working (English) were inclined to give more importance to DM in different areas and processes of the organization. At the same time, an important trajectory towards the defense of Human Rights in some NGOs connected well with DM experiences.

After knowing different cases, we can say that diversity management is easy to be built in an organization, and it can be made in all type of organizations (private, public; large or small; national or international). The main requirement is the will to do it, and the prioritization of this diversity management focus. It seems to be easy if from the beginning there are actions in order to achieve it (Open and Competitive Selection processes, Welcome days, etc.). DM is encouraged when rules are clear and concrete measures and strategies to achieve it are established and cross the organization. Thus workers can perceive the importance and advantages of this orientation.

The experience of our cases points to advantages on factors as gains in productivity and commitment and identification with the organization. Nevertheless some contradictions are also found observing particular experiences. For instance, diversity by country of origin is encouraged and integration is promoted in some companies after a first contract to workers, but in some companies there is not equal access to be hired by gender. This happens to some low-skilled labor niches in the agriculture or the hotel industry where some positions are offered to women, in a local market segmented by gender. Sometimes it was also observed how workers from some particular countries are preferred to be contracted due to international agreements and special requirements for Circular Migration.

Proper management of cultural diversity requires to overcome stereotypes, racism or discriminatory practices, and to respect and fulfill human rights, equal treatment and equal opportunities. To do this, first it is necessary to know the existing internal sources of diversity in organizations and respect them. Second, recognizing the added value that DM entails and, finally, committing with it by designing a strategic plan for diversity management, which allows for a full and proper integration of immigrant at the workplace. The development of these type of specific and systematic programs for diversity management inside the organization is still a pending in most organizations in Andalucía.

We studied different organizations that work in Andalucía, belonging to the private and public sector. During the fieldwork, we found some difficulties to find organizations to be selected as good case studies in Andalucía as representative of diversity management practices for Third Country Nationals staff. This difficulty in the fieldwork reflects one important result of our research: Diversity Management is at their beginnings in the Andalusian Region and Spain, which in contrast have a long history in attending and providing services to immigrants and diversity.

Very few organizations in the region develop systematic practices of DM inside their organizations with TCNs as target groups. We did not find public administrations or institutions in the region as examples of explicit diversity management inside the administration. We did not find

lot of small and medium-sized businesses applying diversity management principles. We found diversity management especially in big organizations, with offices in different countries or offices at national level and/ or selling products and offering services at international level.

Diversity Management is found in different areas of organizations as policies of human resources (or in the frame of Corporate Social Responsibility), communication practices, integration of workers processes, work environment or formation. Moreover, some firms manage diversity in different moments, e.g., from the entry of the worker in the company until their integration, meanwhile others only apply these techniques in punctual moments. Global principles and values in which lie organizations, as for instance, equality in terms of equal opportunities, and equal treatment or equality in diversity, are defended, promoted and concreted in a different way in the studied cases. Practices as competitive selection processes, Welcome Days, intercultural parties, promotion by productivity, language courses, go in a retreat, formation, etc. were common to promote Diversity.

As we have reported, there are clear evidences that several organizations in Andalucía apply diversity management obtaining benefits for it. We found different approaches to apply Diversity Management in Andalusian organizations. One of them is applying diversity management without explicitly have designed specific policies on this, but some organizations apply broad principles concerning equal treatment, respect and no discrimination, and in consequence they do some kind of DM. This happens to different type of organizations including the public sector. Other organizations explicitly design DM philosophies, policies and practices for DM.

Some organizations focus on cultural differences as their TCN staff was born in different countries, and other focus on diversity in a broader sense, concerning not only ethnicity or countries of origin. In addition, important differences are found concerning some approaches: based on “talents” that produce a big business for the organization, and on “diverse people” that have to be treated without discrimination by ethical reason, and from whom everybody benefit learning how to live together in harmony.

Big organizations or organizations oriented towards international markets or internationally widespread develop some DM management practices sometimes linked to laws on equal opportunities and corporate social responsibility issues, but other as the result of a real necessity or interest of employers. Other times diversity management is somehow a logic result of working with clients that demand them some quality requirements that affect to personnel resources management. Sometimes it is difficult to delimit if diversity management emerges due to law requirements of by a real necessity but once it is settled and employers notice the benefits, discourses are for it. Even observing how diversity management develops in local delegations of bigger organizations, one can assure that it is possible to develop it in organizations of any size. Organizations have not ‘rosy lens’ here, as a common aspect that we found is that benefits appear when TCNs workers are productive (good researchers, good salespeople, etc.). If workers were not somehow productive they were not promoted, if workers did not develop properly their job (competently), they were not renewed their contracts.

Derived from this research **useful recommendations** are:

1. To disseminate or let public and private organizations know what is DM, how to manage an organization following DM principles, and the benefits of it, as most organizations in the region have not experience on DM
2. To develop conscious or explicit DM in public organizations (administrations), and promote it in private ones, with the help of specific regulations, and formation on it, following similar patterns to that followed to introduce Equality Plans in the last years
3. To give specific orientations and support to small and medium size companies for the introduction of DM practices
4. Develop counseling activities, tools and strategies for developing DM plans in different type of organizations

3. Third Country Nationals Participation in Voluntary Organizations

The current legal framework, and especially the Integral Programs for Integration of Immigrants that have been developed in Andalucía, pose a political scenario committed to interculturalism and diversity management. Also, these plans, and tools such as Integration Forums in Andalucía, develop actions to promote policies for the active participation and full citizenship of immigrants affecting foreigners in general.

Most experts and associations that we contacted, and legislation and programs for integration, underline that there are not specific rules and orientations for TCNs concerning participation, but for foreigners in general. Also, the legislative framework for TCNs that are volunteers in Andalusian NGOs is the same as for native or other foreigners. Nor there is a specific framework regarding service delivery to TCNs, but to foreigners in general.

Other important note to address is the difficulty existing today in Spain of clearly differentiating between ethnic or non-ethnic associations, as immigrants are incorporated in all types of NGOs, including leadership positions in non-ethnic organizations. In many ethnic associations also Spanish are working, sometimes occupying important positions. Diversity inside organizations must be addressed. Demography also affects the participation of TCNs in NGOs in the region, in aspects as, for instance, the scarce participation of second generation immigrants.

Summarizing the evolution of NGOs nowadays in Spain, (1) previous to the entering of immigrants in the country, voluntary organizations/NGOs, as non-profit groups, performed a variety of functions of general nature and others organized around specific issues, such as human rights, culture, religion, politics, etc. (2) After the entry of immigrants in Spain, we found, in a first step, two types of NGOs caring and attending immigrants: those of general service, meaning for that, organizations that use to attend all type of people (immigrants and natives) with different type of needs. This happen to very well known NGOs, for instance, Cruz Roja, Caritas or Human Rights Association, and others that emerged in local or regional contexts, mainly composed of Spanish people, but with the aim of helping and providing services to immigrants. These were “pro-immigrants” NGOs. (3) In a second step, the general service and pro-immigrants NGOs maintained and a new type of organizations emerged created and constituted by mostly immigrants (4) Now, with the settlement of immigrants in the Andalusian region, the three types maintain and what we normally find is that some borders among NGOs are blurred as very well established immigrants (or of immigrant origin, or naturalized) begin to occupy also positions of leadership in some non-ethnic organizations.

For the Spanish context we refer to ‘non-ethnic’ NGOs when they are of general nature or pro-immigrant. Even some NGOs that previously only addressed interventions with immigrants, in these times of crisis and of a more stable presence of immigrants living in the region, design projects where integral integration is raised, considering also the host society (for instance, projects in neighborhoods). Therefore sometimes the boundaries between ethnic and non-ethnic NGOs are fuzzy.

It is convenient to remark that economic crisis has been influencing the process of configuration of NGOs in the last years due to the strong dependence of funds. Especially ethnic ones were more fragile, due to their small size, and the scarcity of leaders or people with enough formation to raise funding.

One key aspect that differentiates ethnic and non-ethnic NGOs has to do with how participation is managed, and the possibilities for it. So in non-ethnic entities (general service and pro-immigrant associations, with more Spanish presence), participation, and channels that exist to participate, the procedures around it (legal calls, etc.) normally are addressed more easily and effectively because there are more Spanish involved in NGOs (leading, or as members, partners or volunteers), and this enables them to better understand both the mechanisms of formation and maintenance of NGOs, fundraising and justification of expenses, or mechanisms for legal

participation, dissemination in the press, etc. Apart from this, this knowledge has allowed them to better keep going through the economic crisis and have remained more stable in the Andalusian region (at attracting more grants and having the expertise to do the administrative justification of expenses best). Some NGOs have not only maintained their activity but even they have increased it, but overall the crisis has hit the voluntary movement in the region, contributing to the closing of all kinds of NGOs, ethnic and non-ethnic as well as influencing to a dramatic decrease of their activities.

Motivations that underlie on commitment of TCNs in different types of NGOs are very personal and emphasize individual reasons (receive social support, getting contacts, receive formation, improve the CV and the chances of finding a job, feeling better valued by the environment, at carrying out a voluntary activity, feeling good being useful to others, a better integration in the community, or the development of a feeling of belonging to something once it becomes a commitment and a responsibility).

Immigrants from third countries contribute with different added values to the organizations they work, ethnic or non-ethnic. Overall contributions are very positive. The TCNs contribute in NGOs enriching the understanding of the other making easier the interventions towards other immigrants from the same cultural backgrounds, and contribute to understand their lives, experiences and needs of migration. At the same time they bring a different view of some aspects that go unnoticed by the locals. They sometimes are more sensitive because they are reflected in some problems that users of NGOs.

Usually, ethnic associations have been founded by the immigrants themselves. Associations of immigrants from third countries arise mainly from the coincidence of common interests whether religious, cultural, vindictive type, and following certain identified needs that affect immigrants such as those related to search employment, language difficulties, bureaucracy (documentation), etc. Mainly associations formed by migrants' population of third countries try to promote the social integration of them and meet their specific needs. For its peculiarities, these NGOs tend to be less stable in the region than large institutions without an ethnic character. Among the most prominent facilitators of TCNs associations have referred networking and coordination with other organizations with which they collaborate.

Today, integration into societies that receive immigrants can be especially influenced by the way immigrants maintain connections with their countries of origin. If difficulties in maintaining daily contacts with home once encouraged immigrants to integrate into destination communities, researchers have found that it is possible for immigrants simultaneously to carry on lives in both origin and destination countries. Some investigations and debates in the social sciences have focused on the extent to which transnational lives or transnational organizations contribute to the integration of immigrants into destination societies and to the development of home countries. These communities can play a dual role both as groups that attract immigrants and as support networks for new immigrants and other residents. These communities can then be important for immigrants' integration into destination countries while also promoting the implementation of transnational projects in countries of origin. Some projects of this character were found in the region, but they were few, and very dependent on public funding.

Finally, some **recommendations** are:

1. To disseminate the promotion of participation to other social spaces different to the typical ones where immigrants tend to participate (ethnic NGOs). For instance, there are a lot of immigrants enrolled in Schools and High School, but anecdotal presence of their parents in "Parents Associations". Discuss how to guarantee the participation of immigrants also in this other spheres of society.
2. To promote the formation of immigrants to acquire leaderships and useful skills to manage NGOs, learning to fundraise or to justify expenditures, etc. for avoiding the no participation or decrease of ethnic NGOs by this type of reasons. These tools are important to get autonomy

and empowerment in the management of ethnic NGO. Sometimes are key for their survival in crisis time.

3. To promote the possibilities of political and social participation of TCNs with fewer opportunities for it due to legal reasons.
4. To promote the collaboration among NGOs to propel TCN participation in society and sharing and taking advantage of local resources.
5. Valorize and help transnational activities as a way to promote co-development and help third countries at the same time that is respected the concern of immigrants to help their families or localities of origin at the same time that the integration in the destination society is promoted.

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