

LIFE-STORIES OF IMMIGRANTS

GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAINERS, TEACHERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS



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2004



*WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS FOR SHARING THEIR STORIES
WITH US AND WE DEDICATE THIS BOOKLET TO THEM.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

ON THE PROJECT "TRAINERS FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS"

The Trainers for European Citizens (T. E. C.) is a two-year project that deals with the question of the life of European native populations and freshly-arrived immigrants from countries all over the world. However, it is not intended that it will be a purely Eurocentric view; conversely, the basic aim is to break down the barriers of a similar focus. The common life, without *equal status* for both "Old" and "New" Europeans, is unthinkable, that is we, the inhabitants of the Europe, must work hard to meet this challenge.

This great task which is so hard to perform can not be completed without skilled practitioners in the field. It is necessary to have adult refugees and immigrants educated by such people (trainers, teachers, educators) who are well prepared to help immigrants with their formidable task. Language skills can enable newcomers to communicate in a new background but this does not mean everything because, for example, in a case of quite different cultures misunderstandings can arise. This is why trainers and teacher have to be prepared to pass on their social competencies to newcomers who need to understand the society and the system first, before they decide to join it (regardless of whether we are talking about assimilation, integration or social inclusion).

In addition, trainers and teachers should not only understand the immigrants' languages and but also their culture, habits and reasons for their behaviour. They should be able to transfer knowledge and information about immigrants to the wider society.

On the other hand, the opinions and attitudes of European citizens have to be gradually and continuously changed through open educational and media policies. A teacher should be considered as the main mediator of understanding and recognition. This can be one of the effective ways of protecting society from racism and xenophobia.

It is necessary to improve the skills of the teachers and trainers of adults in communication with both refugees and immigrants, and to help with their social inclusion. The last word of the project's name should take centre stage now – *citizens*. This is the point where an immigrant is recognised as an integral part of society. He/she really has equal status now. This procedure takes a long time but it is really worth helping with it. The task is at an institutional level – immigrants need advice and support

in dealing with authorities, offices and organisations.

The T. E. C team would like to improve the situation with its own work based on the experiences of partners from several European countries.

ON THE PRODUCT "LIFE-STORIES OF IMMIGRANTS. GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAINERS, TEACHERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS"

The Life Stories of Immigrants is the second product of the T. E. C. project after the creation of an interactive web page for the project (www1.osu.cz/socrates). The aim of this work was to create a guidebook for a trainer or a teacher whose instructions would help him/her in everyday practice. The next idea was to show it with the help of biographical stories. A combination of these two ideas resulted in the guidebook to immigrant stories from the countries concerned in the T. E. C. project – Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Spain and Sweden.

The content of the work consists of 8 chapters in which each partner briefly introduces its own immigration situation and immigration policy. Following the summarised introduction come the immigrants' stories, in some cases told by their participants, in others they are retold by interviewers. The stories in the *Guidebook* differ in duration, depth, and the situation of the storytellers – one person speaks about his/her refugee experience, another came to the receiving country as an economic migrant, another directly, whilst another had to wander from country to country until he/she found a place to settle.

A good *praxis* (or practice) depends on two complementary interconnected sets of factors – objective and subjective agents and conditions.

The *objective factors* are representations of the situation in a receiving country: the kind of immigration policy that is applied, the turnover on the labour market (unemployment rate), and the general attitude towards newcomers etc. Furthermore, immigration policy is based on the political situation which is externalised in a country's legal system. The rights given to immigrants then determine the existence of language and of other types of courses (if we leave aside the highly important role played by non-governmental organisations), immigrant relief, housing, work permits, incorporation of qualification documents (diplomas, certificates of competence) and accessibility of authorities (offices).

The *subjective factors* show the individual qualities of a newcomer

which are pre-determined socially by his/her cultural background, which is a rather stable element. Other important factors certainly include the psychosomatic state of the individual, their language skills, willpower and the ability to come to terms with the new culture, education and ability to be educated, practical skills, sociability and communicability.

Therefore, we are here dealing with the subjective level – the stories of real people – to demonstrate how the objective conditions influence their lives and how it looks when everything turns out well.

The experiences and opinions of partners show that the booklet has a wide practical and pedagogical potential. It can also be used by teachers of Civic Education as a trainer in centres for immigrant education, or by a social policy worker. *The Guidebook* gives the teacher the choice between general aspects or more specific ones and could serve to increase our knowledge about immigration, not only in the home country but also in the other partner countries. Many questions can arise out of the following texts, such as: "Discuss if there is anything you can do to improve the integration of immigrants in your environment."

The Guidebook will be supplemented by a fourth product entitled *Methodology of Intercultural Communication*, which deals with the problem of better intercultural communication, the mutual understanding of people with a different cultural background; it will include practice lessons and more detailed instructions for trainers, educators and teachers.

2. BELGIUM

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

It's important to know that in Belgium the authorities concerning migrants and refugees are divided between the federal Belgian level and the community level (i.e. Flanders, the Walloon provinces and the Brussels Region).

All matters dealing with the statute of migrants, such as admission, recognition, work permit, naturalisation, political voting rights, etc. are federal matters. However, the issues of reception, care and integration of these people and other personal matters such as education, job-hunting and social welfare, come under the Flemish authorities.

The foreign population in Belgium accounts for some 9% of the total population. (In Brussels 20% of the population are foreigners.). The foreign population has been diminishing since 1995, because of naturalisation and despite the positive net migration. Since the eighties the largest groups of foreigners in Belgium have been 1) Italians, 2) Moroccans, 3) French, 4) Dutch, 5) Turks and 6) Spaniards.

Until 1974 – when an immigration limit was proclaimed – immigration in Belgium was mainly labour-related. Since then the conditions for labour immigration have been very strict. With the exception of European Union nationals, all foreigners wishing to work in Belgium require a work permit. Two types of permits are issued: one to new immigrants entering the labour market (permits with immigration), the other to foreigners already living in Belgium who are entering the labour market for the first time (permits without immigration). The number of both types of permits has been falling sharply during the 1990s (F.i. a total of some 5200 permits were issued in 1997.) The largest number of permits for new immigrants is issued to United States nationals, followed by the Japanese and Moroccans. The main recipients of work permits without immigration are refugees and stateless people, followed by Moroccans and Turks.

Nowadays the number of foreigners is mainly on the increase due to the reunification or formation of families and by the natural growth of the foreign population. Anyhow European Union nationals account for more than 60% of the foreign population.

Since the mid-eighties there have also been a large number of asylum

requests. In the 90's the asylum requests averaged 12000 (but one dossier can count for several people). Most of the political or economic asylum seekers come from the Third World, but also from Central or Eastern Europe. F.i. in 1998 European nationals accounted for 60% of the applications. After 1993 there was a large decline in successful applications for asylum. This decline was largely due to legislative amendments that tightened the conditions governing foreigners' right of entry, residence and settlement in Belgium, in particular those of asylum seekers. Any candidate for refugee status who wishes to settle in Belgium must find a place to live and apply to the Office for Foreign Nationals. A refugee whose application is judged by the Office to be ineligible is entitled to appeal to the General Board for Refugees and Stateless persons (CGRA) which also decides whether or not eligible applicants are granted refugee status. If this appeal is rejected as well, a further appeal may be made to the Standing Refugee Appeals Commission or even to the 'Conseil d' Etat'. Anyone refused asylum is ordered to leave Belgium. It appears, however, that a considerable number of such people try to avoid deportation by secretly staying on. Since 1999 the procedure for processing applications by nationals of certain European countries like the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic has been speeded up: these must be processed in less than one month. In order to reduce the number of asylum seekers and especially to put off "economic refugees" all measures relating to the care of refugees have become much stricter since 2001: financial support to asylum seekers has been abolished and only material aid is provided; refugee centres are called in to help with the removal of those whose request has been rejected.

Yet there was a regularisation campaign for illegal immigrants in January 2000. During 3 weeks the "sans-papiers" (i.e. those who could prove that they had been in Belgium for over 5 years or on humanitarian grounds) could make an application to get a residence permit. Almost 32,000 dossiers were submitted and three-quarter of them were accepted.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Flemish policy towards "ethnic and cultural minorities" is modified by a Decree of April 1998. It provides for the implementation

of a single support structure and integrated action to assist immigrants, refugees and travelling people (mainly gypsies). The aim is to make it as easy as possible for people to take their full place in society and to become associated in the policies adopted.

This policy towards minorities is aimed at 5 target groups:

1. Migrants.

This is the largest target group. These persons are staying in Belgium legally, but do not have Belgian nationality by birth. In 2001 4.7 % of the Flemish population was of foreign origin.

2. Recognised refugees

When an asylum seeker is recognised as a refugee, he will be registered and treated as a migrant. So in 2001 there were about 5500 recognised political refugees in Flanders

3. Travelling population groups.

In Belgium 4 groups of Roma/Sinti/Travellers are distinguished. The 'Voyagers' are descendants of the former occupational travellers. Their number is estimated at 7,000. The Sinti in Belgium ((gypsies of Indian origin who came to our regions in the 15th century) call themselves the Manouche. They number around 1,500 people. The Roms (about 750) who arrived in Belgium in the middle of the 19th century from Eastern Europe must be distinguished from the Roma, gypsies from Eastern Europe who have come to Western Europe during the last decade mainly as refugees. It is impossible to tell how many Roma there are in Belgium because only a few of them have legal documents but their number is estimated to be 20,000. Most of the caravan dwellers that are permanently living in Flanders have Belgian nationality. However it is very difficult for them to find legal places to stay. Other problems they are confronted with include health problems, poor education and schooling (75% of them are illiterate) and no prospects of work.

4. The 'sans-papiers' or illegal immigrants.

In Flanders there are also tens of thousands of people living without a legal residence permit. These are mainly persons who go into hiding when their tourist visa has expired or when their request for asylum has been refused. The Flemish community guarantees the basic rights of health care, lodging and education for minors.

5. New immigrants who are non-native speakers

During the period 1994-1999 an average of 21,000 new immigrants

a year came to live in Flanders. For the most part (55%) they were EU-citizens but the remaining were foreigners from other European countries (16%), from Morocco (5%), Turkey (6%) or from other countries (19%). Over 65% of these ‘newcomers’ were between 20 and 49 years old when they entered, almost 25% were even younger than 20 and nearly 9% were aged 50 or older. So the Flemish government wants to stimulate the ability of these newcomers to live and to cope and also to promote their fast and long-term integration into our society.

Up to the nineties the Flemish government failed to recognise the importance of an adequate reception policy. In 2000 the outlines of a real policy for settling new immigrants were established and financed. Some experimental initiatives were carried out and 26 reception offices went into operation.

These reception offices for newcomers organise a free integration programme consisting of an intensive Dutch language course at elementary level, a course about life in Belgium given in various languages and a course about working and studying in Belgium. Individual assistance is also provided by a consultant at the reception office. The programme is open to newcomers who are 18 or more years of age, who live in Flanders, who have been staying in Belgium for less than one year and who are non-native speakers of Dutch. Moreover they come under have one of these statutes: family formation or reunion, asylum seeker declared admissible, recognised refugee, regularized or victim of human traffic and at risk of becoming permanently underprivileged. After this primary course they can follow a secondary course with a focus on professional training and career guidance. The Flemish Office for Employment Brokerage Service (VDAB) is responsible for this task.

On the 19th of February 2003 the Decree of Settling New Immigrants was passed in the Flemish Parliament. This new decree will come into force on the 1st of April 2004. It implies an obligation for newcomers to follow the programme proposed by the reception offices.

STORY 1: KHALDOUN

Khaldoun Sabih is currently a lecturer at PINA (Project Integratie Nieuwkomers Antwerpen), where he teaches Social Orientation to

Khaldoun is a university teacher

Asylum
seeker
from Iraq

newcomers. He is 31 and was already married when he came to Belgium. Their son was born here.

He can still clearly remember the day he came to Belgium as an asylum seeker from Iraq: 26 January 2001. After a brief stay in the asylum centre in Florennes (in Wallonia) his request for asylum was approved and he was assigned to the OCMW (public centre for social welfare) in Huldenberg, a village between Leuven and Antwerp. He didn't stay there however, as Huldenberg is a small village and he felt that he would have more opportunities in Brussels for study, amongst other things. However, the money he received from the OCMW was not enough to live in the capital, and in the end Khaldoun went to Antwerp instead, which also seemed easier. To make matters worse, he didn't know anybody at all in Belgium.

University
education

Khaldoun had studied English language and literature at universities in Yemen and Iraq. Like the majority of educated Iraqis he had always wanted to go to Great Britain, but ended up in Belgium by accident. He says that there is a long-standing tradition of interest in France among Arabs from the Magreb and that other Arabs – such as the Iraqis – have a similar interest in Great Britain. He already knew England because he had lived there for a while in the 1980's when his father was studying for a doctorate. During his stay in England he also visited most of the countries of Western Europe, including Belgium, which meant that he had no interest in coming back to Belgium.

Attend-
ance of
courses

In Antwerp he ended up at PINA where, together with his wife, he followed, among other courses, the Social Orientation course. He was also lucky enough to be sent on an intensive Dutch course at the University of Antwerp, after which he took a follow-up course at the VDAB. In Khaldoun's case this was a Dutch course for office workers offering, among other things, typing and IT. The VDAB offers a variety of follow-up courses in Dutch for immigrants and refugees: a course for manual workers, a course for office workers and a course intended for people who want to work in the social sector. The VDAB outsources some of their courses for office workers to the UFSIA, and these are more intensive than those run by the VDAB itself. It was thanks to Khaldoun's guidance counsellor at the VDAB who had spotted his appetite for Dutch and for learning in general, that he was able to get on the course.

Khaldoun has been teaching at PINA as a lecturer in SO for nearly a year now. He loves the job – and for a variety of reasons. He has always

believed that helping other people is an important task. When he was in Yemen he also worked on a UN social project and as a translator for Oxfam. Many years ago he also did volunteer work with poor people in Iraq. As a former asylum seeker himself he also knows how difficult it is for newcomers, even if they come from countries such as Iraq, which makes obtaining refugee status easy. He also needs the job to keep body and soul together, of course! After finishing the two Dutch courses and the course at PINA, Khaldoun had no further prospects and ended up sitting at home waiting for a second interview with the Belgian Immigration Service to be recognized as a refugee. He had no job offers at all until a consultant at the Mutsaert (a social agency in Antwerp) spotted this and advised him to apply for a job at PINA, which turned out to be his salvation! Khaldoun says that his job is not only useful, necessary and interesting, but that it is also his life.

Lecturer in
Social
Orienta-
tion

The job
was his
salvation

Mr. Khal-
doun with
his class
(the second
on the right)



A critique
of
Belgian
society

For this very reason he is disappointed at the lack of interest shown by native Belgians towards newcomers as regards who they are and what they can do. He is also afraid that the SO courses may be scrapped in the near future as they are too expensive for the state. In his view, the typical attitude of Flemish society towards newcomers is that it makes a lot of demands on them, while at the same time they have little real interest in them and certainly no intention of investing in them! He feels that Belgians need to realize that the majority of newcomers have not come to Belgium out of choice. Belgium and the other Western European countries should also stop thinking that they are the only countries that have to take in

“You are not the only receivers”

The importance of learning language

Unused “human capital”

A problem of incorporation

“The brains” are leaving

Little contact with the natives

Wearing a headscarf brings negative reactions

asylum seekers. Iraq, for example, has always accepted asylum seekers from Saudi Arabia, Palestine, etc.

It is important that newcomers learn the language as soon as possible so that they can get started on something and not just sit around at home all day. It is only since he has been able to follow everything which is said on TV and can talk to people that he has come to understand Belgium. This makes it particularly regrettable that asylum seekers are not allowed to work in Belgium, which would make their participation and integration into Belgian society so much easier. Instead, Belgium leaves all that ‘human capital’ unused. Even once newcomers have been recognized as refugees, they still encounter difficulties in finding work as Belgium is very strict with regard to the accreditation of foreign academic qualifications. In fact Belgium may well be the strictest country in the world in this respect! Only a handful of university-educated refugees find work here at their level. Engineers who have to work as unskilled labourers, academics with doctorates doing menial office work: this seems to be quite normal in Belgium. Even Khaldoun’s wife, who was a pharmacist in Iraq, has so far only been offered work as a cleaning lady. Lecturing to newcomers or working for a social agency is often the best that they can get. Little wonder then that hardly any of the university educated refugees want to stay in Belgium and that there is a full scale brain-drain from Belgium in progress. Only the poorly educated stay as they have no other option open to them.

Khaldoun doesn’t have much contact with native Belgians, only with people he knows through PINA or through Iraqi friends who are married to Belgians. Nor does he have any formal contact with other Iraqis, and in fact there are no Iraqi expatriate associations in Belgium. He doesn’t know very many people in the neighbourhood where he lives in Antwerpen-Zuid either. He has both native Belgians and other foreigners as neighbours, but there is no social contact whatsoever, mainly due to the fact that there is no social life in the neighbourhood. He says that he has not encountered racism or discrimination, but that this may be because he looks quite pale by Arab standards. His wife, who started wearing a headscarf when they came to Belgium (she didn’t use to wear one in Iraq), did encounter frequent negative reactions however, especially after the 11th of September. These were so serious that she has again stopped wearing a headscarf. Khaldoun tries to be philosophical about negative reactions and also tries to instil this

in his own students. Instead of looking for racist motives, you should try to look for other explanations, as this makes it easier to take, he explains.

Khaldoun came to Belgium as an asylum seeker, and is now a political refugee, but he never wanted to leave Iraq. Ideally, he would like to go back, if everything could go back to how it was before. Most of the other Iraqis he knows also feel the same way. For a long time he saw himself only as an expatriate Iraqi but he is now beginning to see Belgium as his country too. He now feels affection for Belgium just as he still has an affection for England and Yemen, which has led him to apply for naturalization. The fact that Iraq, after the second war, is now in American hands and no longer really exists as a country has strengthened this attitude. He would still like to be able to return to Iraq and this may be easier as a Belgian citizen.

STORY 2: DANIELA

Daniela Toma has only been living in Belgium since March 2003, which makes her a real newcomer. She is 29 years old and came here from a small village in the north-west of Rumania with her 10-year-old daughter. Three years earlier she had met Herman, a Belgian who came to the village as part of an aid and outreach operation organized by the municipality of Kapellen in Flanders.

Her statutory cohabitation contract with a Belgian citizen gives Daniela a legal right to live here. In the end it proved relatively easy to obtain the necessary papers. Her file was initially prepared in her village in Rumania and then sent on to Bucharest, which in turn made it easy for her file to be submitted to the Belgian immigration service and in 2 weeks she already had her ‘white identity card’.

Daniela’s relationship with a Belgian citizen does not mean that she meets all the conditions of the Flemish naturalization policy. She is an adult and not a Dutch speaker, but has no characteristics of social disadvantage which might lead to her being at a permanent disadvantage. This meant that she did not receive any help from the Reception Agency – she didn’t even know that there was such a thing! – and so, for example, she has had to find out for herself where she can learn Dutch. In August she did a four-week Dutch course consisting of 40

How to deal with misunderstandings

Forced migration - political refugee

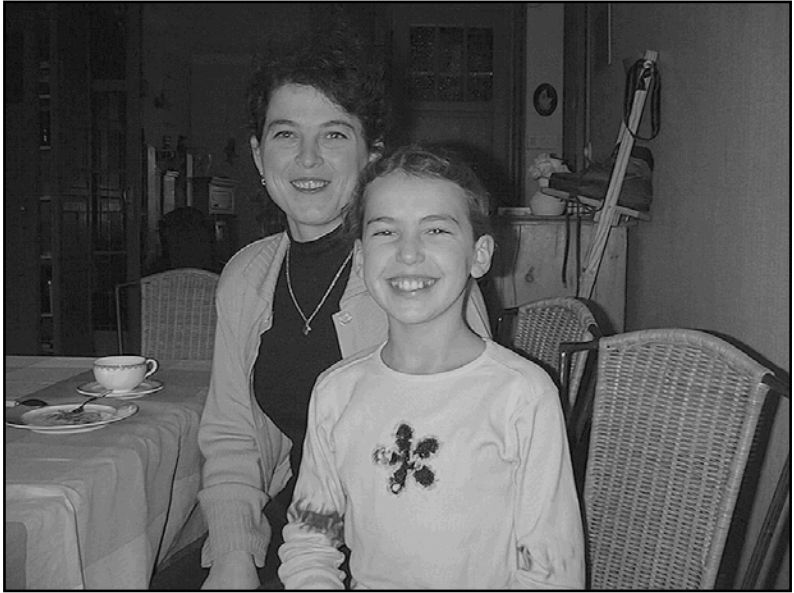
Homesickness

Statutory cohabitation contract

Not speaking the official language yet

lessons (120 hours) at Athena, an Open Study Centre in Antwerp. She is so keen to learn, in fact, that she is also trying to improve her Dutch on her own initiative, by, for example, going to the library.

Daniela
with her
daughter



Course for
education-
al qualifi-
cation

The teach-
ing is in
Dutch

She is currently following a GPB course at the same institution (i.e. a course aimed at obtaining the Certificate of Teaching Competence (*Getuigschrift Pedagogische Bekwaamheid*)). These courses are intended for adults who would like to teach in secondary or short-study tertiary education but who have no educational qualifications. Daniela has ten years' experience as a primary school teacher in Rumania. She would also like to work as a teacher here and she thinks and hopes that the GPB course will allow her to do so. What attracted her to the course was not just the content, but the fact that it is taught in Dutch and that all the other 15 students on the course are also foreigners. This means, among other things, that there is also another Rumanian woman in her group. The course, which she has been following since September, is an intensive course, consisting of 3 full days and 2 half days per week and lasts 15 months. As Daniela is registered with the Flemish Office for Employment Brokerage (VDAB) as a job-seeker, she need only pay half the course fees, as the other half is paid by the VDAB. She will shortly have an appointment with a VDAB guidance counsellor, who may suggest another training opportunity to

her. Even so, Daniela says that she wants to finish this course first, before starting a new one.

In the meantime she is also trying to get her Rumanian primary school teaching diploma accredited in Brussels. She knows that the accreditation committee has very strict rules, but she is still optimistic about getting her diploma approved. Daniela hopes that maybe this will allow her to teach in a primary school in Flanders, which is what she most wants to do.

There is a great difference between Belgium and Rumania. Here she lives in a flat in the city, whereas in Rumania she lived in a house in the middle of the country, with a large garden. Rumania is also a lot warmer than Belgium. Even so, she is very positive about the Belgians. So far she has not encountered any negative reactions and had the impression of being accepted everywhere right from the start. She admits that Belgians have a reputation for being cold and that that was also her initial impression, but that once you get to know them this is no longer the case. She is also intrigued by the fact that many people also speak English or French.

Her biggest problem is still the language, as her entire social life depends on this. In Rumania it was much easier for Daniela to meet people than it is now, which is why it is important for newcomers to learn the language as quickly as possible. She is in favour of integration: ‘you have to do as they do, the Belgians’, she says, which means that you need to learn the normal rules and customs as quickly as possible. Something which Daniela is doing very well!

STORY 3 : LAHCEN

Lahcen Ilken was born 41 years ago in Meknes in Morocco. At the age of 26 he went to France to continue his education. From there he moved to the Netherlands in 1995 with his then girlfriend (now his wife), who is Dutch. He has been living in the north of Belgium for some two years now. Lahcen chose Belgium because he was not happy with the Dutch mentality. He found that everything in the Netherlands was overly planned and found this hard to connect with. Actually, he would rather have lived in the Walloon provinces both for the atmosphere and for the French language, but nevertheless he is perfectly happy in Flanders.

In the Netherlands he studied Dutch in a Regional Education Centre

Incorporation of her diploma

Language problem

A will to integrate

15 years in Europe

In Flanders finally

France as a multi-cultural country

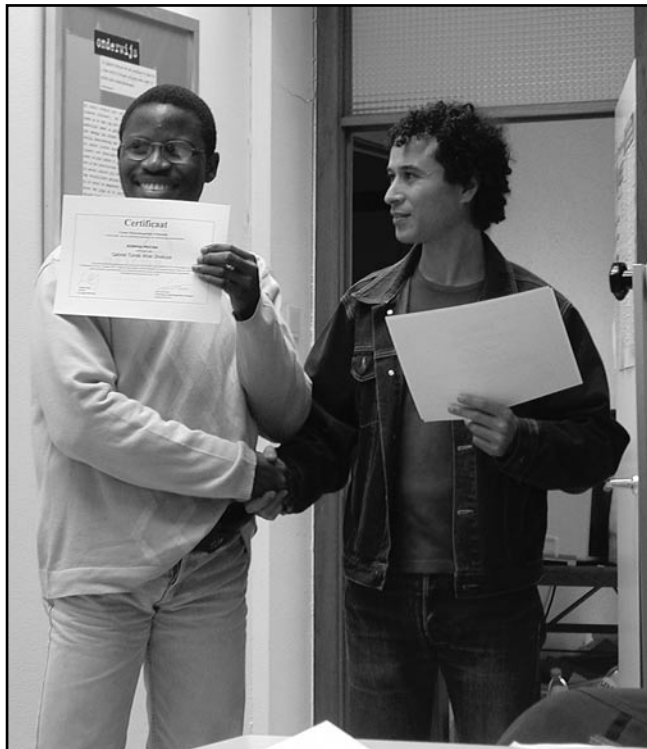
In the Netherlands

Mr. Lahcen congratulates his student on his recent graduation

(a school for adults) as the university was too expensive. Even though he followed an intensive course of 20 hours a week, he was still frustrated by the pace of the course, which seemed to him much too slow. This was due to his previous education in Morocco and France. He had studied English as a degree in Meknes in Morocco and had gone to France (where he lived in Lyon and Montpellier) on his own because he wanted to do a doctorate. He started the doctorate in France, but in the end never finished it, although he did obtain the ‘Diplôme des Etudes Approfondies’ before starting on his Ph.D. course.

In France Lahcen had no difficulties integrating. There are long-standing historical ties between Morocco and France and it was easier to get along with his fellow students. Furthermore, about half of the students of his group were of African origin in any case.

Things were very different in the Netherlands. His educational qualifications were regarded as not being at the appropriate level simply because he was Moroccan, which led him to contact the University of



Nijmegen and there he was told that he would have to start again from the beginning because his academic certificates were not recognized as valid. It was assumed that the academic qualifications of immigrants could not have the validity of the equivalent Dutch qualifications. Even his French diploma was not recognized! This was a great disappointment. He was later able to get a partial accreditation of his qualifications at the University of Tilburg, where he was allowed to participate in an academic research project, but was only used for field work. Lahcen feels that he is now too old to have much chance of being able to continue his studies.

In the Netherlands he worked initially in a leather factory as a manual worker, and then later found work teaching French and Arabic in a private school.

He now lives on a farm in the small village of Weelde, near Turnhout. He deliberately chose a rural setting as he wanted a peaceful environment for his 2 children. He describes the farm, on which he will still have to do a considerable amount of work – which as a former construction worker in France he is well able to do – as his ‘life project’.

Living in a village in Flanders is no easy matter: there was a considerable gulf between himself and the other villagers and he had almost no contact with them. He was the subject of a great deal of gossip, especially in the beginning, although everyone was surprised that he spoke such good Dutch. The other inhabitants continue to remain aloof, still see him as an ‘exotic’ phenomenon and keep their distance. Lahcen is struck by the fact that these prejudices and clichés still persist even among neighbours and acquaintances. They seem to find it inconceivable that he might be a modern man who is perfectly prepared to look after the children while his wife goes to a meeting or a tea party. This would probably have been even worse if his wife had been Moroccan.

Lahcen says that immigrating to another country is much more difficult than most Flemings realize. Immigrants who go to live in cities have a particularly difficult time because there are no references to their past background. No one in the surrounding area knows who their father and grandfather were, what family they come from, etc. In effect they become nameless people. Yet where they came from they were very far from nameless.

Lahcen is currently a lecturer in Social Orientation for Newcomers at PRICMA (the Antwerp Provincial Integration Centre for Immigrants) in

French diploma was not recognized

Job under education level

Farm as “a life project”

Acceptance

Immigration as a namelessness

Job as a commitment

Language is the culture itself

Mr. Lahcen and his class (first on the right)

Integration of “monkeys”

Turnhout. He teaches this course in Arabic, Berber, English and French. He sees his job first and foremost as a commitment. He wants to do this work because he understands the problems of immigrants and newcomers. After all, he had been through it three times himself! For this reason he sees it as his duty to explain to them the possibilities and facilities which exist in Belgium, without lapsing into paternalism. This is something which is important for both their future and ours!

He is also in a unique position to understand the importance of language. Language is more than just the vehicle for culture: it is also the culture itself. This is true for Dutch, but also for the native languages of the newcomers themselves. At the same time, language is definitely a big barrier in Flanders. His own experience is that he was treated with more respect in France, where he has a strong link through French, than here. For this reason he is also against compulsory language learning. People should be given the opportunity to do so, but should not be forced. Our politicians are often very short-sighted in this respect!



Furthermore much too much is asked of immigrants and newcomers: they have to do this, that and the other, they have to integrate, as Lahcen puts it: ‘as if they were trained monkeys’! A much better idea would be to promote ‘acceptance’ instead of ‘integration’, the rest happens anyway once they get going. This means leaving newcomers their authenticity, only then can we talk about genuine diversity.

He takes a very critical view of the SO course which he has to teach: even

the course itself contains prejudices! He tries to put this into perspective for his students. For him the most important element is communication. He finds it striking that there is so little contact between newcomers and Belgians: it is exactly that contact that he wants to promote, and in so doing to remove the obstacles. Here too he again emphasizes the importance of the necessary acceptance on both sides.

Although Lahcen feels that work and learning the language are very important, he feels that there must be something more for newcomers as well. Even if you have work and speak the language, you are still only a robot and you still can't really participate. For this reason in his course he places a lot of emphasis on self-development, free time and voluntary work, because these are also important issues in our country.

A course with prejudices

Importance of self-development and voluntary work

3. THE CZECH REPUBLIC

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

The Czech Republic [as its predecessors used to lie in this territory] lies at the crossroads of Central Europe. Even the existence of the Iron Curtain before 1989 did not prevent spatial mobility here, but only decreased it. Yet at the beginning of the 1990's waves of migration started to roll again. "In contrast to previous decades immigration and transit migration now clearly outweigh emigration" [Drbohlav 2001: 203].

The Czech Republic (CR) became a transit and receiving country in the 1990's. The major part of the migration structure consists of *economic immigration* (the work and business activities of foreigners). The number of economic migrants on the Czech labour market rose between 1991-1998 from 9,000 up to 153,000.

Permanent immigration (this consists of foreigners with a permanent residence permit) constituted a lesser part and its status was based, to a large extent, on family reunion. The number of those who have this status has grown steadily from 27,000 to 64,000 (1991-1998 again).

Asylum seekers and refugees make up another proportion of the international migrants in the Czech territory. Between 1990-2002 2,212 asylum seekers were granted asylum, from a total number of 60,467 submitted applications (an average of about 4 % during the period).

Due to the conflict in the countries of the former Yugoslavia between 1992-1996 the CR provided *temporary refuge* to more than 5,500 war refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (700 people were later repatriated by plane, 120 seriously handicapped individuals were granted permanent residence status and were allowed to participate in the integration programme).

Ethnic Czechs Between 1991-1993 1,800 people of Czech birth were repatriated from Volhyn in the Chernobyl region of the Ukraine back to the CR. Compatriots from Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina were also repatriated, together with and re-emigrants from Western nations (the U. S. A., Great Britain, France, South Africa).

Transit migration comprises those who do not consider the Czech Republic to be their final migration destination. They place a certain pressure on the Czech border with their – successful or unsuccessful – illegal crossing (trespassing). The renowned Czech author on the topic

of migration, Dušan Drbohlav, argues that "estimates that there are more than 100,000 transit migrants at any one time in the Czech territory are not unrealistic" [1998: 211].

The total number of foreigners in the CR (as of 31 March, 2001) was 222,329 – 151,227 foreigners with a long-term residence permit and 71,102 foreigners with a permanent residence permit. The most numerous nationalities were: Slovaks (57,364), Ukrainians (54,821), Vietnamese (25,761), Poles (17,039), Russians (12,726), Germans (5,136), Bulgarians (4,376), Chinese (3,299), Americans (3,287) and the inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia (3,285). Those numbers show the official statistics only – e. g. the total number of people with Vietnamese nationality is estimated at almost 70,000.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

International migration and asylum is included in the sphere of competence of The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the CR which has established The Bureau of Migration and Asylum Policy. The legal status of foreigners in the Czech Republic is based on Act No. 323/1999, on the residence of foreigners in the territory of the CR. The law states that a foreigner has the right to stay temporarily (on a visa) or permanently (with a permanent residence permit).

The acquisition of Czech nationality is governed by Act No. 40/1993, on the acquisition and loss of Czech nationality and the subsequent amendments. A foreigner can acquire Czech nationality as amended by Act No. 40/1993 by birth, adoption, affiliation, finding on the Czech territory, declaration (only for former citizens of Czechoslovakia) and naturalisation. A foreigner can be naturalised if the following conditions are fulfilled: he/she has held a permanent residence permit for at least five years, previous nationality is lost (not required in the case of refugees or people with no nationality), the applicant has had a clean criminal record for five years and can prove a knowledge of the Czech language. Some of conditions can be waived in special given cases by a decision-making body. The problem is that 5 five years of permanent residence is available only after 10 years of temporary residence, which means an applicant has to wait a long 15 years before applying for naturalisation – the standard of the European Treaty on Citizenship is no longer than 10 years, whilst the average in Western Europe is about 5 years. The limitation of the Czech legal system lies in its

simplification of the naturalisation process for second and third generation immigrants (slow implementation of *ius soli*) as well as in cases of double nationality where the applicant must apply for an exception.

STORY 1: NGUYEN

Youth in Vietnam

Ing. Nguyen Huy Thang was born in 1963 in a little town, only a village really. He was the sixth child of seven children and his father supported his family as a shop-keeper and a farmer at the same time. Ing. Thang managed to complete his economic and business secondary school education but there was a great lack of job opportunities in Vietnam at that time. The older siblings scattered to other cities and towns in Vietnam, one of his brothers emigrated to Germany, and another to the Netherlands. Ing. Thang decided to leave his country too, primarily for a short time.

Arrival to Czechoslovakia

Due to the existing international co-operation accord he entered Czechoslovakia legally in 1988 (when he was 25). The agreement between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia on qualification opportunities for Vietnamese workers and engineers in Czechoslovakian factories and schools gave Ing. Thang the chance to work in the Vítkovice ironworks in Ostrava.

Language course and work

In the first half of his residence in Czechoslovakia he was enrolled, together with another ten of his Vietnamese compatriots, on a language course, and afterwards he began to work in the ironworks. He worked for short periods in several positions before choosing to become a specialist in tool-making.

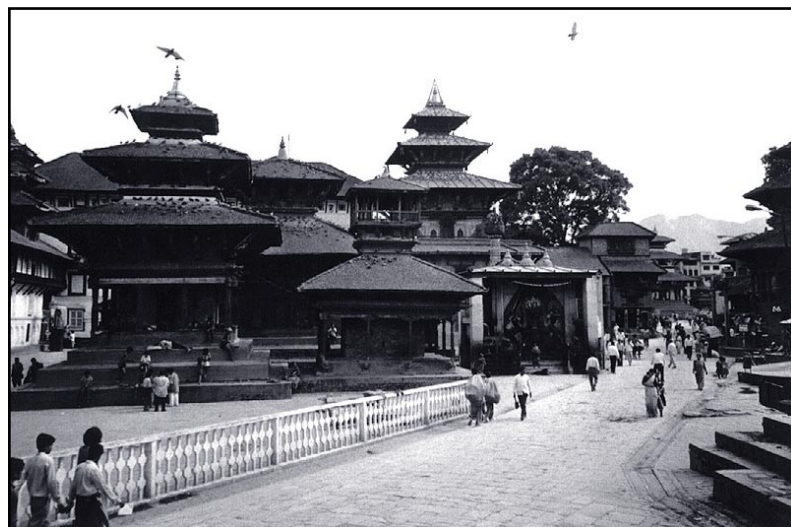
First “cruel” months

The very first months in the new country were, as he puts it, “very cruel.” He was young, and confronted by the language barrier and a very different environment. In the beginnings he even felt that his Czech colleagues had no faith in his and his compatriots’ working skills and capabilities as Vietnamese people were very different from Czechs.

Language barriers

He lived in a dormitory with workers from Poland, Slovakia and also from Vietnam. This fact drew him to speak his native language with his colleagues after work. He was aware of the language barrier which discouraged his Czech colleagues from deeper communication and prevented them from explaining work procedures (sequence of operations). This fact frequently put Vietnamese workers out of touch with events at work. Communication was then reduced merely to simple work orders.

Thang decided to change this situation. He started to study Czech with great enthusiasm and diligence, and made friends with several people in Ostrava, with whom he was able to improve his Czech language skills. Thanks to his efforts, his skill, a sense for a detail and compulsory service he rose to the top of the foreign workers and began to be regarded as a good and reliable workman. The management also often pointed him out as a good example for the local Vitkovice workers. This, however, caused some of his colleagues to sneer at him. Mr. Thang still remembers comments he had to listen to, such as "Let Slanty-eyes do it, he's the best", "Toil, you Reed wren, not to feed you here in Ostravian region for nothing" and the like.



On the other hand he remembers the positive behaviour of other Czech colleagues, who frequently offered snacks for him to taste, like traditional Czech stuffed cake.

At the beginning of the nineties the international co-operation agreements on working residence expired and the basic question of whether to return home or to stay had to be solved. The decision was not an easy one to make at that time. The behaviour of native people towards their Vietnamese co-residents had started to change. They were overlooked and many local Czech colleagues, under threat of job cutbacks, told them to go home, back to where they had come from. He decided to stay though. He had come to know the background of Ostrava during those few years

The change of attitude

Prejudices, racism and envy

Memory of Vietnam

And positive memories

Tumultuous beginning to the nineties

Translator	<p>and he had number of friends there. His Czech was good enough to get a job as a translator, later even a certified translator (at law).</p>
University studies	<p>He had always wanted to study since he was a young boy. He enrolled in the Faculty of Economics at the School of Mining Engineering in Ostrava, and got through. He considers his years spent studying at university as very fruitful and happy, although he had to earn his living by himself. He translated from Vietnamese, helped his compatriots who were arriving in droves to do business here, to get oriented in their new society. In the course of his studies he tried to do business too.</p>
Business	<p>He remembers when there was a dire lack of places for stalls in market-halls. At that time he needed to make money to pay for his studies, and he appreciated the understanding and help given to him by the administration at the district office of Ostrava. Those people found time to listen to the young foreigner’s problems and helped him. He began to sell goods in a market-hall and secure himself a regular income. ”It was not easy“, he nostalgically smiles and continues. ”Part of the day at school, from the school to the market-hall, and then standing outdoors behind the counter in freezing or sweltering weather. But I got my head round it, and today I can only laugh.“</p>
“Hard days”	<p>He felt at ease among the other students, there was very friendly atmosphere from the beginning, mutual help was offered in reading and hunting for literature, in explaining terms, and everything became a matter of course. Trips with groups of his schoolmates, getting together to drink Czech beer, visiting cultural student events and parties, all of these things have familiarized him with Czech and Ostravan life. It was only among students that he was able to find true and helpful friends who regarded him as an equal person – he was one of them. After finishing school he has kept in close contact with his former schoolmates.</p>
Friendship with fellow-students	<p>In 1998 he began to work in accounting and obtained a business licence. He has his own accountancy company with six employees, carries out accounting procedures, salary administration and performs audits.</p>
Successful businessman	<p>He met his Czech sweetheart in Ostrava too, and married her after his degree ceremony. They did not stay together for long. The differences in character and national customs proved to be so great that they both agreed to get divorced after two years of marriage. He left Ostrava, which is, he says, his second home. Nowadays he lives in Cheb (on the other side of the country) but often visits Ostrava and his friends when he is not at work.</p>
Marriage and divorce with a Czech woman	

STORY 2: ADIL, RAISHA AND HICRAN

Adil and Raisha's family comes from the Caucasian capital, Azerbaijan, from Baku. Raisha remembers the relations among people before the fall of the Iron Curtain in the Soviet Union:

No, such a problem [inter-ethnic] did not exist. It started at the beginning of the nineties. The year 1991, 1992....people led ordinary lives. Relationships were all right. We lived through a really good time, and there was no national problem.

Raisha says that she, together with her grandparents and parents lived in an interracial and inter-religious family. She is of Armenian origin and her husband is Azerbaijani. The growth of nationalism brought both neighbouring nations into the violent conflict of Nagorno Karabakh, where a large Armenian community lives on Azerbaijani territory. Armenia claimed this area as its own, although Azerbaijan of course was opposed to this. A brutal war broke out. Many soldiers and civilians died, and the people on both sides will remember these events for a long time.

Married couples were the first to suffer. Adil had problems at work with his colleagues because he was married to an Armenian woman. He lost two

brothers in the war, which put a much greater strain on the relations between the couple's families. Their daughter Hicran suffered hostility from her teachers and was even physically attacked by other pupils. The situation

escalated when somebody threw a stone at her head on the way to school. The top of her head received a nasty blow and since this event she has had a permanent problem with her left eye (such as eye-strain after intensive reading).

This situation led the parents to decide to seek asylum in another country. Although the war had finished ten years ago they could find no peace at home. Their daughter's accident was the last straw... They

Changes
in
relations

The war of
Nagorno
Karabakh

Personal
troubles

Streets
of
Baku

Attack on
their
daughter

Decision
to leave
the coun-
try



<p>Migration to Europe</p>	<p>travelled to Russia, to Moscow, where they visited Adil’s brother. The atmosphere in the country concerning Russian attitudes towards Caucasian people was quite tense because some immigrant groups included people inclined towards crime. When they wanted to exchange money to buy their air tickets they had to ask a young soldier first because they had been told by several exchange offices that it was only possible to change money for a citizen of the Russian Federation. A young soldier agreed to help them and changed their money out of good will. They bought tickets to the Czech Republic...</p> <p><i>In Azerbaijan we knew many people with similar troubles. They escaped to Germany or the Netherlands and much further. The Czech Republic was known by a few people, but an acquaintance told us we could seek asylum here. I knew the Czech Republic, or rather I knew the former Czechoslovakia. So we arrived in the Czech Republic in 2001 and we knew what to do, how to seek asylum and we drove to Vyshni Lhoty [a reception centre for asylum seekers]...</i></p>
<p>Reception Centre in Vyshni Lhoty</p>	<p>In the Reception Centre at Vyshni Lhoty (<i>Vyšní Lhoty</i>) the asylum procedure began. Adil and Raisha tried to be patient and keenly followed all the news about any change in their situation. Sorting out their asylum affairs took a few months, and after being granted asylum they moved to the Residence Centre in Havirov (<i>Havířov</i>). There they made lasting friends with, as they say, many good people – not only from Caucasian countries. Raisha remembers the help of social workers in the Centre and she names the three Czech men who helped her the most – the head of the Reception Centre, a lawyer and a social worker. Due to their professional and friendly help they also learned about the opportunity to live in a rented flat in the town as ordinary people instead of living in a Residence Centre, which still has, in spite of the staff’s best wishes, a camp atmosphere. They managed it and are happily living in a two-room flat. They say that there no troubles or conflicts with their rather elderly Czech neighbours in the old tenement house.</p>
<p>Asylum procedure and patience</p>	<p>Adil and Raisha both have a university education which would give them an excellent position on the labour market. Yet the incorporation of a university diploma is not an easy or even possible task. The problem is not due to any disrespect towards the education system in the former Soviet Union; the difficulty lies at a bureaucratic/administration level.</p> <p><i>We have our diplomas here but it is not enough. We need to get the,</i></p>
<p>The problem of incorporation</p>	

attested by offices in Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. But we are refugees...who will do us the favour of attesting them? We can not go back there...how can we solve it?

Raisha is a professional translator (English, Russian, Turkish, Azeri Turkish) and Adil is a naval machine engineer. Raisha wants to attend a Czech language course and také the state exam in Czech Language.

Their daughter has recently been attending Czech elementary school, where she fits in despite initial difficulties. She has managed to slightly overcome the language barrier by living and learning in a purely Czech school background. She herself says that she is happy there and looks forward to school every day.

STORY 3: HOYA

My name is Hoya and I have been living in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic for ten years. I am a 54-year-old woman. I am Vietnamese and my life story is special in some aspects and very typical in others. You can judge for yourselves.

I'm not going to describe my problems with immigration policy and with some administrative matters connected with immigrants. I would like to share with you some of the feelings I had and still have as a human being in a different world.

I come from a poor family in North Vietnam. My parents had to work whole days in the field and worried whether we would have enough rice for the whole family to survive. You can hardly imagine the very poor conditions I grew up in. As a young girl with this social status and with good results at school, I was sent to the former Czechoslovakia to study at university so as to be able to help Vietnam build its socialist economy.

At that time there were many young Vietnamese people studying in Czechoslovakia or who were apprentices there. To help us with our studies, at that time Czechoslovakia organised courses in Czech language for us before we started learning other things. It was very important for us, we had no language problems when we started our job or study. Also, the transition from Vietnam to Europe was spread over a longer period; it was quite comfortable for us. We were a group of Vietnamese people who knew each other. It was an advantage at in some aspects, but as I learned

Translator and engineer

Hicran has integrated

10 years in the CR

Feelings about living in a different world

Poverty in childhood

Courses in Czech language for Vietnamese students

Friendship under political control

Sent back to Vietnam with diploma

Troubles in motherland

The chance of a lifetime

Marriage to a native

Translator

later, it was also a great disadvantage. At that time we had to satisfy some expectations in Vietnam relating to political ideology.

I lived with other Vietnamese and Czech students in a student hostel



in Prague and I was able to chat not only with girls from Vietnam but also with Czech friends. I gradually discovered many things that had previously been hidden from me. And then – the most important event of my life happened. I made friends with George, a boy in my study group. We spent our study time together, he explained

some things to me with great patience and I could help him with other study problems. No wonder that we fell in love with each other. I wanted to remain in Czechoslovakia but members of our Vietnamese group informed the Vietnam embassy about what had happened and I had to leave Czechoslovakia. We were very desperate and wanted to escape. But we didn't manage it and I had to leave immediately. The only good thing luck was that I had already passed all my exams and had my diploma.

Well, I had successfully finished my university studies and I was back in Vietnam. But I couldn't live there any more. Firstly, the political situation got worse and my family had to flee to Thailand. On top of this, I had left my love and my heart in Czechoslovakia. Don't ask me how I managed it but several years later I was given the opportunity to work as a guide for a travel agency that organised trips to Europe.

I was back in Czechoslovakia to stay and some time later I married George. We had to get around many unpleasant formalities and bureaucratic obstacles but the result was that I am a Czech citizen, I have a Czech husband and our son has Czech citizenship.

Therefore I can work in the Czech Republic –I translate and work for some businessmen. I am happy in the Czech Republic. I have got my family and my job here. I am also very happy to live near our neighbours. They

consider me as an equal member of our family, as an equal neighbour. I have never heard bad words spoken against me. I have some friends among the neighbouring women.

I have noticed that Czech people have a good relationship with the Vietnamese people. The Czech language is the second most spoken foreign language in Vietnam and that is why this relation is mutual. It's true that many Czech people think of people from Vietnam as only shop owners or shop-assistants in the streets and therefore we suffer from those stereotypes. Yet they are able to clearly distinguish people with different social status and make no further differences. They completely respect my university degree and consider me equal to engineers of Czech origin.

Czech people don't make me feel like a person from a different culture. However, I have to solve a great dilemma inside me. As a child I grew up in the countryside in North Vietnam where at that time there were no communication media, little machinery and people lived very modestly. The situation hasn't changed much even today.

Now I am living in a big European city with a very busy traffic, crowds of people who are always in a hurry and who live life very quickly. Another phenomenon is the mass-media. Even if I understand in rationally, I can't accept internally this situation where many pop-stars, sportsmen and other well-known people reveal their hearts in the newspapers, magazines and on the TV. It is also hard for me to see people who communicate mostly by mobile phone. I am rather conservative and I don't like it when a real conversation is interrupted by a mobile phone ringing.

There is also a big difference in how people behaved when I was studying and now. I have the feeling that people prefer money and success in their career much more than before. This is also something strange for me.

Our son attends primary school in Prague. I am very happy that the Czech children don't exclude him from their groups. Children can be very cruel when they don't understand something. Yet our son is the only child in his class who is slightly or even completely different. Therefore he has no problems with it. He can speak Czech fluently, as well as Vietnamese. His knowledge of the Vietnamese language is, however, rudimentary.

Now, you know my life story – a story with a happy end but with many hidden obstacles. To be honest, I haven't met with any discrimination from the Czech people. They are open and say what is on their mind. Also, they

Treated as an equal

Good relations

“Fast” life in Europe

The culture of money and success

Her son is bilingual and has no problem

A common life is possible in the CR

The help
from her
husband

respect it when another person shares a common life with them –both its good and its bad sides.

At the end of my story I would like to tell you a few words about my teacher – my husband, He was the person who helped me to integrate myself into Czechoslovak and later to Czech society. He was very open and tried to explain why people do some things in a certain way, why they behave they way they do in certain situations, etc. It was very important for me to know it because I had to discover the reasons why people behaved how they did in order to be able to understand and accept it.

Integration
not
assimila-
tion

I believe that I haven't assimilated myself into Czech society but that I have become integrated into it. I have kept some of my habits and I have taken on some Czech or – better – some European ones. I respect the people in my neighbourhood and they respect me. I know that this is something which doesn't come without hard work, but if you succeed, it is a great thing.

4. FRANCE

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

In France, the official definition of an immigrant is, "a foreign person, born abroad, having thus entered France with the intention of making their home on French territory. An immigrant could, during his stay in France, acquire French nationality".

Some figures from the last census in 1999:

4,310,000 immigrants were identified in the census, corresponding to 4.4% of the metropolitan population.

- 1.6 million originating from a country in the European Union
- 1.3 million persons native of North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia)
- 176,000 originating from Turkey
- 375,000 were born in Asian countries, 160,000 of which are from the former territories of Indo-China (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)
- 400,000 come from a country in sub-Saharan Africa (The Ivory Coast, Gabon, Mali, Senegal, etc.)

The age structure of the immigrant population differs from that of the total population. Young people are thus not very numerous since, by definition, immigrants are not born in France. The under-20s constitute 25% of the total French population, but only 8% of the immigrant population.

Half of the immigrant population is between 30 and 55, and a quarter is over 60.

Increasing numbers of female immigrants appeared in the mid-1970s with the development of "family re-grouping" measures which enabled families to become re-united. This enabled all foreigners having lived regularly in France for at least one year to "benefit from his right to be re-united with his spouse and their children."

The active immigrant population: in 1999, the number of active immigrants residing in metropolitan France was 2,300,000:

- two-thirds of active immigrants were found in three regions: the Greater Paris region ("L'Île de France"), the Rhône-Alpes region centring on Lyon and Grenoble, and the Provence-Côte d'Azur region in the south of France;
- the active immigrant population is strongly represented in industry,

the construction & public works sector, and in certain parts of the tertiary sector (industrial cleaning, health);

- active immigrants typically have few qualifications: 70% are manual workers or low-qualified workers, and only 7% are managers.

The unemployment rate: immigrants from European Union countries have a low unemployment rate (10.4%) compared with 11% for the French. Conversely, the unemployment rate is three times higher than the French figure for immigrants coming from countries outside the European Union (30.3%). It even reaches 42.6% for young people under the age of 25 (26.1% for the French) and 36.2% for women (13% for French women).

IMMIGRATION POLICY

In France a *reception policy* has been put into place for those foreigners who are authorised to settle long term.

This policy comprises several stages: an interview when the initial request is made (for example, for family re-union), "pre-reception" before the family arrives, and reception of the family on arrival. A "social diagnosis" enables the family to be offered a number of measures to help their integration. Among these, learning to speak French has particular importance.

A number of partners work together in this reception framework (state and local services, social care funds, etc.) to manage and co-ordinate the various actions occurring within regional community groups concerned with the immigrants' successful integration.

The local contract for *reception* and *integration* mainly associates two groups of public initiatives:

- those concerned with the reception of persons arriving in France, or recently arrived,
- those which involve the schooling of children or the professional placement of young immigrants.

All immigrants have, in principle, the same rights in all areas as French citizens. No "positive discrimination" policy is practised in France, but there are support programmes for specific groups (such as young "new arrivals" at school, or persons wanting to re-train for another job).

The large majority of immigrants take French nationality. Refugees. Legal refugee status is recognised by "OFPRA" (The French Bureau for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless persons), via the

application of the Geneva Convention of 28th July 1951 to two categories of persons:

- to "any person that is persecuted because of their actions in the interest of freedom"

- to any person who "justly fearing persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or because of their political views, finds him or herself outside the country of which they have nationality, and who cannot or, due to this fear, does not wish to request the protection of that country; or who, if he or she has no nationality and finds themselves outside the country in which he or she normally resides as a result of such events, cannot or, due to the aforesaid fear, does not want to return there."

INTERVIEW 1: ALI

Ali comes from Morocco. He studied in Casablanca where he trained as a butcher. In Morocco he worked with his father in the food business. After several visits on a tourist visa, during which time he stayed with a cousin who lived in the Paris region, Ali decided to settle in France permanently and carry out his trade as a butcher.

Today, he lives in Clermont-Ferrand with his wife and their four children and hopes to set up his own business.



A cousin
in the
Paris
region

From
Casa-
blanca
to
Clermont-
Ferrand

Helping his elder cousin

TEC: Why and how did you come to France?

Ali: *At first I came to see my family in the Paris region and I often helped out in the shop belonging to one of my cousins. This cousin, being very old, asked me to come and work with him.*

TEC: You asked then for permission to work in France?

Ali: *No, I had to go back to Morocco and ask for another visa - this time to come and work in France.*

Trying to get a visa with a labour permit

TEC: Why?

Ali: *The visa that I had didn't allow me to work. The prefecture in Paris told me that I'd come to see my family, not to work.*

TEC: How did you get on with your new application to come to France?

Rejection

Ali: *Very badly. My application was rejected even though I had been offered work in France. They thought a job offer coming from a cousin was dubious.*

TEC: Then how did you come back to France?

Ali: *As a tourist, with the firm intention of getting my situation in order once I was in France.*

Working as a "tourist" for one year

When I arrived I set about getting a work permit straightaway. I wasn't allowed to stay more than three months. After that I'd have to go back to Morocco. I decided to stay on, despite my irregular situation. This lasted for a year - until the day I received permission to work in France. (I learnt later that the authorities had fallen badly behind.) Fortunately I hadn't been back to Morocco in the meantime.

TEC: How long could you have held out in this situation?

Ali: *I don't know. I was very hopeful and fate was on my side.*

TEC: So, you got your authorisation, and you could therefore work without any problems.

Ali: *Oh, no! It was still going to be very long and difficult.*

Because the three-month visa period had expired, I was afraid to go and collect my authorisation. I thought I'd be expelled because of my

irregular situation. I'll remember that day all my life.

TEC: So what happened?

Ali: *I went to the authorities but luckily (fate again) no mention was made of my situation. I could now work for one year, and then - depending on my professional circumstances – I'd receive authorisation for ten years.*

TEC: And all this took two years?

Ali: *Oh, yes! That's the way it is!*

TEC: Why did you come to Clermont-Ferrand?

Ali: *A friend of mine knew Clermont well and proposed that I came to live there and open a business with him.*

I decided to follow him and throw myself into a project that had been dear to my heart - opening up a butcher's shop. We did all the formalities (Chamber of Commerce, bank etc.). However, I had to get my authorisation renewed and it was then that the problems started again.

TEC: Why?

Ali: *I had to make my application in my place of residence - so, in Clermont-Ferrand. However, given that my file was in Paris, and my first application showed a work project in Paris, I was turned down.*

I decided to appeal (with the help of a lawyer) because I was faced with being expelled. At last, four months after my application, my work permit was renewed for a further year.

TEC: And what about your family?

Ali: *They stayed in Morocco, but I was able to have them brought over once I'd obtained my 10 year work permit, in other words, five years after I'd started the whole process.*

TEC: And how are things now?

Ali: *My family is with me, which is very good. I work for a shopkeeper and hope one day to set up my own business. People are nice and I don't have any problems, perhaps because my French has improved. I know how to be patient and fate has smiled upon me.*

One-year
labour per-
mit

Renewal
of the
labour
permit
in
another
region

Lawyer's
help with
an appeal

Family
reunion
after 5
long years

Satisfac-
tion
and future
plans

Continuing studies

A football player in the national team of Senegal

The stadium in Dakar

INTERVIEW 2: DIALLO

Diallo comes from Senegal. He did his studies in Dakar where he became a physical education teacher.

He now lives and works in France, in Clermont Ferrand, with his wife and their little girl.

TEC: Why and how did you come to France?

Diallo: *Simply to continue my studies. I wanted to get into the "research" field.*

TEC: Did you have any difficulties coming to France to study?

Diallo: *No. I had a national grant from Senegal, therefore I didn't have any trouble obtaining student status.*

TEC: Was this the first time that you'd come to France?

Diallo: *No. In fact I'd already been here five times to play football. I played for Senegal for 10 years.*

TEC: You were a professional footballer?

Diallo: *No. I had to work as a physical education teacher at the same time. Generally speaking, in Senegal, even in the biggest clubs, players don't get a salary so they have to have a job. They just get an allowance. Now though some clubs do pay their players a salary.*



TEC: What studies have you done in France?

Diallo: *I sat for a Diploma in Higher Studies Specialising in the*

Management of Sport Organisations. Next I studied for a Diploma in Further Studies and a thesis in Science and Techniques of Physical and Sport Activities.

TEC: You had a career in Senegal: a physical education teacher. You also had a high-level speciality – you'd played for your national football team for 10 years... Why then did you stay in France?

Diallo: *During my years as a student in France I became involved in some associations concerned with training the organizers and leaders of holiday and leisure centres. I also looked after youngsters in a sports club.*

Most of all though, I was very much involved in the supervision of holiday breaks for mentally-handicapped people. Previously, in Senegal, I'd supervised sport competitions for the handicapped. I did voluntary work in this area for eight years. One day, in 1999, the director of an organisation (The French Union of Holiday Centres) offered me a job. I was very interested.

TEC: He recruited you then without any difficulties?

Diallo: *Oh no! He couldn't. It was much more complicated than that! And it took a long time!*

TEC: But why?

Diallo: *Because I was a foreigner!*

In France, if an employer wants to recruit a foreigner, he first has to let the National Job Agency know about his offer. If after six weeks no French candidate, or citizen of the European Union, has been found who meets the job requirements, then he can make a request for work permission for a foreigner.

TEC: Were there any other candidates?

Diallo: *Yes, but none that met the job requirements.*

TEC: So you were recruited without any problem?

Diallo: *Not at all! We'd followed all the procedures, but nevertheless the authorities were saying "it's not possible". Despite everything we submitted the file. The rules said "if no response is received within three*

A sport manager

Involvement in associations

Really good job offer

The problem of a foreigner

Dealing with authorities

Rejected twice

months the outcome is negative"! So, after two-and-a-half months we took the precaution of submitting a further request!

Nevertheless, the answer came back, "rejected, given the employment situation".

TEC: Rejected even though you'd been the only candidate that met the job requirements?

Waiting for two and a half years to do a full-time job

Diallo: *Absolutely. So then, with the support of my employer, we embarked upon a "submission for a legal decision." The first request dated from 1999. We were then in 2000. The response came back. Finally, permission to work had been given! But we were nearly into 2002!*

TEC: So you had to wait two –and –a half years before you could do this job full-time? But what kind of administrative situation had you been in during this period?

Meanwhile, student status

Diallo: *I certainly didn't want to be in an irregular situation. I still had student status.*

As for the job, no, I wasn't able to do it full-time until 2002. As a student, you cannot work more than 20 hours per week. You can't work full-time until you have received the work card. I received it the following year.

TEC: So, in all, it had taken three –and –a half, even four, years?

Diallo: *Yes. I can understand then why most employers give up...*

TEC: No further problems since?

Diallo: *Bringing my wife over has also taken a little while...*

Family reunion after the labour permit

She was still in Dakar in 2002. Our daughter was born in 2001 in Clermont-Ferrand. My family could only come for a maximum of three months a year with a tourist visa. In 2002 then, having received the work authorisation, I was able to apply for permission for my family to join me. However, it took nine months before the procedure was completed.

TEC: You've described the long obstacle course which you had to overcome to stay in France. Now, on another level, have you ever personally felt any hostile, or even racist, attitudes?

Diallo: *Attitudes that are a bit hostile – I’ve experienced a few of course. Especially in the early years. But I think they are caused by not knowing the other person very well, by suspicion...You overcome them through contact, discussion...*

Racist attitudes? No, not personally. I’ve not had any difficulties finding accommodation, for example. But other Africans have had problems. Owners who don’t want them, or who impose additional barriers.

And then there are also some amusing situations. I’ve an accent, after all. So, at work, when I answer the phone I sometimes get someone saying ”No, I want to speak to the person in charge.”.....So I have to explain that, in fact, I am the person in charge...

TEC: What would you say are the main differences between life in France and Senegal?

Diallo: *In my work I’ve met a lot of handicapped people. Disability is never an easy thing to deal with. It makes us go back to how we are as people - our personal story, education...- and to how society is itself...*

The representation of the handicapped person differs greatly between our two societies. It’s the same in the case of old people. In Senegal practically all old people live with their families.

So, on first sight, their situation in France comes as a shock. At the beginning, I always asked myself ”but how can you put your parents into an old people’s home?” And then, in time, one sees that society is organised differently.

TEC: Is there anything else that you’d like to add?

Diallo: *The question which always comes round. Will I return to my home country?*

INTERVIEW 3: MADINA

Madina comes from Naltchik, a town in the Caucasus with about 250,000 inhabitants, capital of the independent Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (part of the Federation of Russia), situated to the north of Georgia.

We met Madina in Riom, a town in the Auvergne with 25,000

Hostile attitudes resolved by communication

The accent of the person in charge

France and Senegal are different societies

inhabitants, at the music school where she is now a piano teacher. She lives in Saint-Bonnet-de-Rochefort, a village with a population of about 700.

TEC: From the Caucasus to the Auvergne, from Naltchik to Saint-Bonnet-de-Rochefort – that’s a very long way! How does one end up in Auvergne when one comes from Kabardino-Balkaria?

For the first time in the France as a student...
...and as a piano teacher

Madina: *In fact I came to France - and to Auvergne - for the first time in 1992. I was still at that time a student at the Institute of Musical Art in Naltchik. I was also part of a folk music and dance group. I played an instrument, a kind of small harp, that is typical of my country. We had been invited to take part in the Festival of World Music, which is organised each year in Auvergne, in Gannat, near Vichy.*

I came back for the same reason in 1997...I'd become a piano teacher. And I met Guy...

Meeting a boyfriend

TEC: A Frenchman? And you stayed here because of him?

Madina: *Oh no... it's far from being so simple to stay in France!!*

I went back to my own country. First, I didn't have any choice...and, also, my parents, my family are there...

Penfriendship

So, for two years, we wrote to each other.

English - the language of communication

TEC: Did you speak French? Or did he speak Russian?

Madina: *No, absolutely not! Not a word. So we tried to communicate in English. But we weren't very good at it! When what I wanted to say was too complicated for me, I wrote in Russian...and he looked just about everywhere for people that spoke Russian to have it translated for him.*

Visa regime on both sides

TEC: Did you meet again during these two years?

Madina: *No. It was impossible. It's very difficult to get a visa for France. Even with an invitation, and all my papers in order, I was refused a visa. And Guy wasn't able to come to see me either. Russia wouldn't give him a visa at the time because we were too close to Chechnya.*

Tourist visa in 1999

TEC: So how did you come, and when?

Madina: *In 1999, I got an 11-day tourist visa for Italy. I went quickly to Paris and we met each other again there.*

TEC: And you were able to stay this time?

Madina: *Yes. Exceptionally, the court awarded me a three-month extension. I was able to regularise my situation. But this has been very complicated..*



Madina
playing
the piano

Everything was very complicated for me, in fact, for in 1999 I still didn't speak a word of French. So, in order to meet French people, and speak with them, I joined a choir. At first I sang the words phonetically, without understanding them. I took the scores home with me. And I looked up the words, one by one, in a dictionary...

I'd bought grammar and vocabulary books. I always had a little notebook on me. In the street, I'd note down all the words that I saw... on shops, posters and so on, and I'd translate them at home.

After six months I started to take French lessons. But I had to go to Vichy, 30 kilometres away. I didn't have a driving licence...so I'd take the bus, at 5 or 6 in the morning.

That has been a problem, in fact, the driving licence. To find work, I really needed one. I'd never taken the test back in my home country. And anyway, it wouldn't have been valid in France. I didn't speak French at that time. So, for the Highway Code test, I translated all the questions into

Learning
French
phoneti-
cally

A French
course

Driving
licence
acquired
"by heart"

<p>A stand-in temporary job</p>	<p><i>Russian, and learnt all the answers. I passed! And the driving too.</i></p> <p>TEC: Now you're once again a piano teacher. This time in France. Has it been difficult for you to find this job?</p> <p>Madina: <i>I was lucky. As part of the training that I was doing to learn French, I had to do a practical course in a company or organisation. That was in 2001. I found myself at the Vichy School of Music. A piano teacher went on maternity leave and they asked me to replace her. But it was just a temporary replacement.</i></p>
<p>Problem of incorporation</p> <p>Studying for the French diploma</p>	<p>TEC: And how did you get a permanent job as a teacher?</p> <p>Madina: <i>I had a teaching diploma. But Russian. In France you praise Russian music to the heavens. But you don't recognise our diplomas! So, although already teaching, I enrolled as a student and prepared for the national diploma (which I obtained with an "A" pass). And now I'm preparing to take the higher degree to be able to teach in the national academies.</i></p>
<p>Expensive visits to motherland</p>	<p>TEC: Have you been back to your country since 1999.</p> <p>Madina: <i>Yes. It costs a lot, of course. But it's easier now. We can go there on holiday. And my mother has been able to come to see us in France too.</i></p>
<p>Success means working hard and being lucky</p>	<p>TEC: What do your friends think? And your family?</p> <p>Madina: <i>Over there people often tell me "I dream of doing the same as you. In France, everything's easy..." I explain that it isn't like this, that it's difficult to find one's place, even for French people. That you need to work a lot...and also be lucky.</i></p>

5. GERMANY

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

Today every year hundreds of thousands of people immigrate to Germany; almost as many are leaving the country. In 2000 about 648,000 migrants came, and about 562,000 left Germany. Most of the migrants come from EU member states or are family members of migrants from third countries, but also foreign students, asylum seekers, seasonal workers, etc. Out of the 648,000 migrants who came to Germany in 2000 78,000 were asylum seekers, i.e. 12 %. At the end of 2001 7.3 million migrants lived in Germany, this is 8.9 % of the total population. Round about one quarter of them are citizens of the EU. One third of the foreign population in Germany has lived in the country for 20 years or longer; more than half over 10 years.

A much cited quotation from the German author Max Frisch says: "We asked for manpower, and we got human beings." This points at the error of the "Gastarbeiter" (foreign worker) politics. In the Sixties and Seventies (until 1973) Germany recruited foreign workers – for a limited time, on low wages, and with no integration strategies. Many of them stayed, and their families followed. They became part of German society.

Six groups of immigrants can be distinguished:

1. EU citizens who have the right to live and work in Germany
2. Work migrants from "third countries" outside the EU, resident in Germany
3. The "Spätaussiedler" (emigrants of German origin from Eastern European states)
4. Asylum seekers
5. Refugees
6. Family members following immigrants

In group 1 the most common group are the Italians, followed by the Greeks and Austrians. Out of the other European countries the most common group comprises the Turks. The second biggest group are the Yugoslavs (from Serbia and Montenegro), followed by Polish people in third place. Topping the non-European countries is the United States of America. Iran is in second place, followed by Vietnam, Morocco and

China.

In Germany about 90,000 people apply every year for their family members to join them. The majority of them are Turks.

These are who German legislation talks about in term of "Ausländer" ("Foreigner"), and the numbers do not include "Ausländer" who have been naturalised and are German citizens today. The problems of integration are not only legislative (Germany has a very inflexible concept of citizenship; for more please see the section entitled "Naturalisation"), but are also created through the long term definition of foreigners as "guests", which are supposed, as any other guests, to leave after a certain time. The second great problem is the "community building" of some immigrant groups, which also follows the very inflexible "concept" of non-integration. This means that, especially in the big urban centers, there occurs the phenomenon of "ghettoising"; some parts of big cities are home to more than 50% of immigrants, which makes deeper contact with the rest of society quite difficult. The phenomenon of "community building" shows itself in some positive aspects (community economy and entrepreneurship, family integrity, organised childcare), but it does create problems of integration (difficulty in learning the German language, low social integration in the rest of the society, concentration of social problems etc.).

IMMIGRATION POLICY

German legislation for immigrants (Ausländergesetz). Germany's immigrant legislation is a product of the past decades in the history of immigration to Germany, and is now to be reformed by the current government (Social-Democrats/Greens). Although the legislation does not meet the needs of a modern immigration state like Germany, there are many problems in reforming the legislation – as the conservatives are afraid to allow higher immigration rates.

In fact, immigration to Germany is not quoted as being like some typically immigrant countries such as the USA, Canada or Australia. This means, that the number of immigrants coming to Germany each year depends very on the political and economical situation in the world – and it varies from year to year. In the last several years, the number of political and other refugees has decreased rapidly.

Here are a few main facts on the German immigration legislation. The legal methods of immigration to Germany are as follows: as an employee,

as a family member of someone who has legal residence status in Germany (Familiennachzug), as a fiancée of a German person or a person with permanent residence status, as a political refugee (asylum), or as a humanitarian or war refugee (in this case only restricted permission).

German immigration policy awards foreigners different levels of status to foreigners as the ways and reasons behind immigration to the country are different. During the time since the first "Gastarbeiter" ("guest workers") came to Germany in the 1960's, mainly from Italy, Greece, Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, Portugal, Spain and Tunis, many additional laws have created a real diversity of status regulations. Since the 1980's great waves of refugees and asylum seekers had to be dealt with and the Asylum Law has been changed many times (it has become more and more restrictive up to today), so it only provides a basic right to asylum on paper. There are many inner-EU regulations between member states that provide a "Third Country Solution", meaning that if refugees have entered the EU through one "safe third country", they will immediately be deported to that state, which should then take responsibility for proving asylum protection.

The developments in Germany show one large period dominated by the need for manpower for the growing German economy – "guest workers". The fact that these "guests" have begun to integrate themselves into Germany society and that, step by step, they have become a part of it, brought the Germans a situation they did not expect. From then on, Germany policy has had to find solutions for integration.

STORY 1: CYNTHIA AND PREM

Cynthia and Anton Prem Liyanaarachchy were both born in 1947 and are from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon); they have been married for more than 25 years. They had to flee Sri Lanka in early 1994, when they came to Germany, together with their two daughters Nadee and Tilini. Their journey through Germany was to take them from Düsseldorf, where they first arrived, through Bremen and several places in the former East Germany, and back to Bremen again, where have been living since the end of 1994.

The reason for leaving Sri Lanka was the threat to Mr. Liyanaarachchy from the government and police because of his political activities within

Journey
from Sri
Lanka
across
Germany
to Bremen

Political reasons for leaving the home

Granted political asylum

Stressful times in a large refugee camp

Family reunion accepted

The help from Cynthia's brother and the church community

the political opposition in Sri Lanka (JVW political party). Having been arrested several times, he had to search for a secure place for himself and his family. Living in the region of Ratnapura on a tea plantation and hiding from the police in the years before leaving Sri Lanka was a very dangerous situation. The parents were separated from their two daughters, who stayed with relatives in the region of Kalutara, on the south-west coast. Prem had a job on the plantation doing the finances, but he was not able to move freely, especially not outside the mountain region or in the cities, because of the permanent threat from the police and army. This situation lasted from '89 until their final escape from the country in '94. Contacts were rare and their fears grew by the day. Cynthia's brother and his family had lived already in Germany, and that seemed to be the right spot to feel safe.

After arriving in Bremen, the Liyanaarachchys made an application for political asylum in Germany. The German authorities accepted the application, but they ordered that the Liyanaarachchys be transferred to the city of Chemnitz (in the former East Germany). Many refugees and asylum seekers were transferred at that time, because the former west had a much larger number of people to host than the east. Those times were very stressful for the family. The Liyanaarachchys were accommodated in a large refugee camp, where Prem fell ill and had to spend several weeks in hospital. Cynthia and Prem were again separated from their daughters, who stayed in Bremen at Cynthia's brothers place. The daughters were also sick, and this seemed to be caused by their unexpectedly restricted situation, after reaching "freedom" in Western Europe.

After many applications, the court responsible ruled that the Liyanaarachchys would be allowed to resettle in Bremen in late 1994, being re-united with the rest of the family there. This was the first positive thing which happened to them after their arrival in Germany.

Being in Bremen and finally together with their daughters again, the family lived in an apartment together with Cynthia's brother and his family. It was Cynthia's brother's contacts with some people in Bremen, among them many people from the church, which was of great assistance to the Liyanaarachchys at that time. There were many helpers, ready to provide money, clothes, food and other material and non-material support for the family. Both Cynthia and Prem say that it was a "good time" with many "good people" around them, most of whom were Germans. The

Liyanaarachchys were not allowed to work in Germany, they were merely expected to wait for the decision on their asylum, and that's all. They got some material help from the state, but the brother's family was primarily responsible.

After almost 2 years spent together, the Liyanaarachchys finally had the opportunity to arrange an apartment for themselves. At this time they



Cynthia
and
Prem

also received their work permits, allowing them to find employment. In practice, this proved to be more complicated: as soon as Prem or Cynthia managed to find a job, they had to inform the employment office to receive permission ONLY for that vacant job offer. But, instead of giving them the job, the office would use this information to provide jobs for German people. Prem finally found a job in the catering industry, and has been working there more or less continuously ever since. Cynthia did some cleaning jobs in offices, and today she is helping in a church community.

Cynthia and Prem took language courses in 1995. These were organised by the "Bildungswerk der Katholiken" (Catholic Educational Institute) in Bremen. This turned out to help them make some real progress in their life in Germany. The costs for the 2-year course were borne by a church organisation, even when Prem continued his course at "Volkshochschule", a non-church organisation. The government made no contribution to these costs. The people on the courses were from very mixed groups, coming from different countries like Sri Lanka, African countries, Iran, Iraq

Housing
and
labour per-
mit

Non-gov-
ernmental
language
courses

<p>New friendships and informal learning</p>	<p>and other Near East regions, some people from the Far East etc. Several teachers ran the courses, and they gave great support to their trainees, not only in language skills, but also with social activities. A friendship even developed between the Liyanaarachchys and two teachers: Roberto and Kerstin. (Roberto was a Spaniard teaching German)</p> <p>”This time really helped us to find our feet here. It was a very nice time. We met a lot of people, we made friends, we even forgot our problems in Sri Lanka“, Cynthia and Prem say. ”Our teachers were very human people, very social and open-minded. They were open to our problems and helped us a lot. For example, they gave extra German classes for our daughters, which was a great help to them at school. They were also ready to help in many other situations.“</p>
<p>Informal integration policy</p>	<p>It was not the formal integration policy, which helped Cynthia and Prem to get their first ”taste of integration“, it was their teachers and other people who were just ready to do that little bit more than their everyday life and job, people who were ready to show their presence and look after them, and, perhaps most importantly – to take Cynthia and Prem and their problems seriously. ”We made a lot of friends here in that time and began to feel at home.” Asking about the misunderstanding, both of them told me that there were no serious misunderstandings during their time in Germany. Off course, there were some problems at work, but they were not connected to the fact Cynthia and Prem were ”foreigners“.</p>
<p>Xenophobia in East Germany</p>	<p>”Only in the former East Germany did we feel afraid, because there were attacks on refugees and asylum seekers. When we had to go for shopping for example, we only went in larger, organised groups. It was really horrible. In Bremen, however, we never met this kind of situation, here we don’t live in fear.”</p>
<p>Human relations</p>	<p>Today, Prem works at a catering company. His colleagues are Germans, Albanians, Turks, Serbs etc. He says that he has no problems there, moreover he feels very comfortable at work with his colleagues. Cynthia says the same, working in the church community. They both feel at home in Bremen, but...</p>
<p>The problem with status</p>	<p>The problem is in their status here. Although both are well integrated, with work and a place to live, both daughters have finished German schools (one of them will start her studies in September 2003) and are married to German men, Cynthia and Prem have no permanent residence allowance for Germany. Some two years ago they were even threatened</p>

with deportation to Sri Lanka because their asylum was not recognized, but a supportive circle of their friends and relatives was formed to stop them being deported and to speak up for them in their struggle for permanent residence. A petition was drawn up and given to the parliament of the Federal State of Bremen, pointing out their level of integration and the trauma they have suffered (both are still undergoing therapeutic treatment). After the medical reports had been submitted, officials prolonged their stay. At the end of 2003, they have to again take their latest health details to the immigration office to extend their stay again. So, even after almost 10 years then, they still do not have permanent residence status. "It is hard to make bigger life plans in this kind of situation" both of them say. "We are well integrated, we work and pay taxes, we can speak German, but it seems that it isn't enough". Asked about European Citizenship, they say it is a nice idea, but it is now really very far from becoming reality. So, they are preparing for the next round of negotiations with the immigration office, hoping the solidarity of their friends and colleagues will help them to find a normal life and safety in Germany.

Menace of deportation

Health troubles

The stay prolonged

No permanent residence status after 10 years

Undeveloped infrastructure in motherland

Big family with transnational connections

STORY 2: MEÏSSA

"THOUSANDS OF OPEN DOORS"

Meïssa Code Diop is 35 years old, he is married to a German woman and has one daughter, 2 1/2 years old. His home country is Senegal.

He was born in the little village of Pekesse, in the region Thiès. In Pekesse there is a little school for children, but no high school or university. The infrastructure of Pekesse is poor, there are no public buses, not a lot of streets, cars, etc. When people fall ill they have to travel to Dakar, the capital of Senegal, which is about 100 km away.

Meïssa Code Diop's family lives in Dakar, where Meïssa also grew up. He was born in Pekesse, because his father joined the army and his mother didn't want to stay behind alone in Dakar. Therefore she went back to Pekesse for one year, where she was born, until her husband left the army. Meïssa has 6 brothers and sisters. 4 of them live in Dakar, and the other 2 are in Bremen. One brother in Bremen works at the Mercedes factory, the other one studies politics at the University of Bremen. His older brother was the first to come to Bremen. Med'ssa followed, then his younger brother.

Law studies at university

“Hardness” of political system

Studies in Germany

Asylum seeker

Studying economics

A problem with a professor

In Dakar Meïssa took his school-leaving exam and started to study law at the university of Dakar. He stayed there for two years, but the situation was difficult and unsatisfying. He did not complete his studies for various reasons: there were only few places for students, and also the professors were quite discontented with their working conditions, so they went on strike nearly every week for more money. There was little opportunity to visit lectures in a normal way. When the students complained that the professors did not come and no lectures took place, the police used to come and beat the students. One of Meïssas’ friends was murdered because of his activities in the student movement. ”This is a ”normal“ consequence if you have a different opinion on certain issues or if you are politically active. Because of this crucial experience, the difficult circumstances and the bad infrastructure of the university of Dakar Meïssa decided that this was not the right place for him and he planned to go abroad. The United States was his destination, because his English was good after 7 years of lessons and because of the proximity of Gambia where he had friends and communicated with them in English regularly. He also learned German, but only once a week, as his second foreign language. He wrote two applications in order to study abroad – one to Texas/US and one for Bremen/Germany. He got a positive response from both of them, but Texas would have been very expensive, more than 5,000 dollars per month. That was a private university and he couldn’t afford it. ”So I said to myself, I’d better choose Bremen.”

In 1994 Meïssa came to Germany as an asylum seeker. By now he has residential status. He visited a German language course in Bremen for one year, then took the central exam for advanced learners at the Goethe-Institute in the summer. In Bremen students can only register in the winter semester, so he had to wait until then. To kill time during these months he applied for a students’ job at the Mercedes factory in Bremen, and got it. He worked at Mercedes for about three months.

At the University of Bremen Meïssa started to study economics. But soon he got into trouble with some of the professors who were ”not nice to foreign students“. He failed to pass an exam twice and than had to do an oral examination. The one professor who Meïssa especially had problems with said to him that the Chinese and Asian students would do much better than the Africans. Meïssa knew the material by heart and could answer every question. He spoke fluently and was content and sure that he

passed the exam. "But the professor was not content with my performance – maybe he was not content with my colour, because I am black". He went to the student advice centre and told them about his problems with the professor, but with no success, "because the professors are always right and the students have hardly any say." Then he thought, why fight to pass this exam? There were many possibilities, lots of other cities in Germany where he could study... Another professor advised Meïssa to change to the "Hochschule Bremen", a kind of university which is more practically orientated than the university, and that is what he did. He joined the economics faculty. Things turned out much better for Meïssa there. "I am contented"..

Nevertheless the experience with this one professor at the university was a crucial one for Meïssa. He did not want the professor to get into trouble, but he wanted other foreign students to be treated in a normal way. "Exams are there to test the knowledge of the students, not to compare their results in terms of nationalities". Another problem was that the professor never had time for Meïssa. He did not want him to come to his office to discuss questions. He tried several times to go to his office and to talk to the professor. "He did not want me to continue with my studies right from the beginning. I can never forget this, because it was very time-consuming and stressful." But now this is over and Meïssa wants to go on. "If one door is closed, there are thousands and thousands of doors that are open. This door is closed, go on and don't waste your time!" Now Meïssa is in the final stage of his studies at "Hochschule Bremen". He still has to go abroad for a period of practical training. In September he will go to Senegal and will work with GTZ, the German society for technical co-operation for some months. Meïssa and a lecturer at his faculty developed a project which is about ecological awareness and refuse disposal in Senegal. The two intend to realise their project together with partners like GTZ and a radio station in Senegal.

Asked if he is happy with his present life situation in Germany Meïssa says yes, he is. He feels good. "Je récolte les fruits. It is like working in the field – you sow the seeds and wait for something to grow. My aim was to get a diploma in Economics, and now I will reach my goal. Yes, I am happy." Meïssa has many contacts in Germany, he knows a lot of nice people. He has a job in the university library at the issue desk, and he likes working there. His colleagues are friendly, and he has learned a lot of

The change of school

Crucial experience

Lack of communication from the pedagogue's side

Satisfied with life

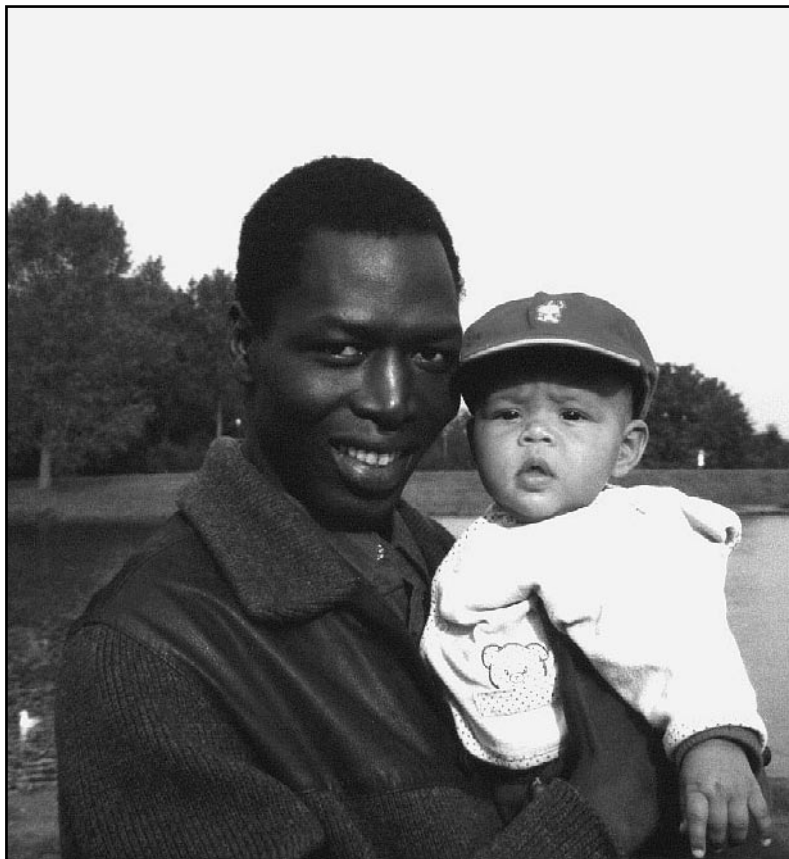
Language
and
culture

“Black
German”

Meïsa
with his
little
daughter

Belonging
“in two
cultures”

practical things. Meïssa feels integrated in Germany. He says that in his first year in Germany, while doing the German language course, he also tried to understand the German people, to understand what they like and dislike, what they do and don't do, elaborate what would be possible in Senegal, but not in Germany, and so on. "Then I tried to copy the good sides of the Germans and to leave out the bad ones. I am integrated well. Well, I am half German. A black German." Meïssa laughs. "Good integration to my mind means to live like the Germans, but to leave out the bad sides. If I



didn't feel good here, I would have been up and away long ago." He says that he can well understand the German way of living, and that he likes it. "I don't have any problems now."

At the same time Meïssa states that it is indeed difficult to belong to two cultures at the same time. He considers it to be a choice – either

integrate oneself and accept the German way of life or go back home. He leaves out the things which he does not like about both Germany and Senegal. Take a little piece in, leave a little piece out. "It is difficult, you always have to be in the middle, because the Senegalese way of life is not only bad. You have to take on the best of both cultures." Meïssa still has a lot of contacts among his former friends from Senegal. They are spread all over the world, but they communicate via e-mail and telephone. This means a lot to him.

Meïssa attended some kind of integration course at Hochschule Bremen. "That was cool!" The course was about intercultural competence. There were about 15 people on the course, some Germans, and people from Turkey, Russia, Senegal, and so on. Everybody talked about his or her experience with other cultures, about confrontation, problems and ways to deal with them. They also put on culturally diverse theatre shows. Meïssa enjoyed this course a lot, and he had lots of interesting experiences.

What Meïssa would have wished for at the beginning of his time in Germany is more – and also more specific consultation. Consultation about practical things, more direct and quickly-accessible consultation. He would have preferred to do a course like the one in "Intercultural Competence" at an earlier stage. "I would like to have seen consultation about the German culture, about integration, about job possibilities – how can I find a job in Germany, how can I finance my studies? Because financing is a very difficult matter." Foreign students don't normally get a grant (Bafög). "Therefore, as a foreign student, you take more time to finish your studies, because you don't get a grant and have to earn money to make a living. To my mind, this is also kind of excludes foreign students. I think that if the Germans want the foreign students to integrate themselves, then they need to have the same rights."

Meïssa would like to see the students having more contact with the professors. But he says that it is often very difficult to get talking to them, to get answers, etc. "And sometimes it's not possible at all. As a foreigner sometimes you don't get a chance, or the others try to make sure that we don't get a chance. This is unfair."

Meïssa's future plans are to realise this project he developed together with a lecturer of his faculty. This would mean him returning to Senegal. "Provided that my wife agrees to join me. If not, I will come back to Germany and try to find a job here. There are always possibilities. I am


Integration course

More specific consultation needed

No grants for foreign students

Dialogue with professors

Plans for the future



open. I can live well in Senegal, and I can live well here. I would not say that I accept everything, but at least I try to be tolerant. I try to understand why people do this and that. And if I don't understand something, I ask other people. There are many people in the world willing to help. There are others, too, for sure... You look for something, then one door is closed. Then I do something else. The front door is closed, a thousand others are open. That's why I am always optimistic, come what may."

6. GREECE

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

The ratio of immigrants in Greece is approximately 52% Albanians, over 22% East-Europeans and of Balkan origin, approximately 14% Asians and little over 12% are Arabs and Africans.

Foreigners 65% of these are males and 35% females (this is a sample but during research the quotas were kept in regard to the race and country of origin). This proportion applies for the Albanians but is reversed in regard to East Europeans and people of Balkan origin where the females are prevalent (appr. 60%). With Asians, Arabs and Africans the males form the greatest proportion (85 - 86%).

Almost half of the immigrants (44,2%) are on average between 25 and 34 years old. Some of them are already 35 - 44 years old (27.6%), but there is a significant differentiation based on the country of origin. The Albanians comprise the younger people (aged 18-24) that are coming to Greece, and we found many middle-aged immigrants (aged over 45) among the East-Europeans and those of Balkan origin.

Approximately 65% of immigrants live in Greece along with their families and 44% have children living here with them. Albanians and Asians are the edges as 81.5% of the Albanians are heads of families, and 70.3% of Asians are single.

Approximately half of the immigrants have been living in our country for at least 6-10 years (Albanians are the most prevalent in this category). One in three is less than 3 years old and one in six is older than 10 (Arabs and Africans top this category).

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Before the 1990's Greece saw no reason to change her 1929 Alien Law, which determined the conditions under which foreigners were accepted on Greek soil. A new Alien law was introduced in 1991, after the influx of political and economic migrants, and it was accused immediately of being permeated with policing philosophy and xenophobia. The Greek State was not prepared to accept such an enormous influx of migrants. Besides, Greece had never experienced such a phenomenon before. In the period 1991-1998, there was no concrete migration policy, as the country was

still considered to be a net "exporter" of population. Specialist institutions, such as advice centres for the legal, social and economic orientation of immigrants, hardly existed.

The policies adopted seem to be influenced by northern European models, characterised by strict controls and regularisation. But the European policies can only be implemented if the European Union (and Greece as a member) is prepared to substitute economically for immigrant labour, indispensable for the Greek economy. The future is uncertain (crime, unemployment, underemployment) although the Greek legislators have started to make some important changes. As the Greek Ombudsman said, the aim of future policies should focus "not on the simple toleration of their presence in the country and their participation in the labour market, but on social integration, at least of those who desire it and who have created legal and stable links within Greek society" [Siadima 2001].

The status of immigrants depends on several factors. If they are political immigrants, they are granted a temporary residence permit in Greece. Also, there are some immigrants that come to Greece with temporary work or tourist visas. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of the immigrants that reside in Greece are clandestine. In 1999, government estimates suggest the number of illegal immigrants is 500.000-600.000, which represents 12 per cent of the workforce.

INTERVIEW 1: GIORGOS

Giorgos came from the capital of Albania - Tiranë in 1997. In recent years he has been living in Thessaloniki.

TEC: You said your name is Giorgos and you are an Orthodox Christian. Is this your real name or were you baptized in Greece and thus you have a new name and a new religion?

Giorgos: *My Albanian name is Vangel. When I came to Greece, I wanted to be accepted by Greek society and so I decided to become an Orthodox Christian and to change my name. Yet I will never forget my Albanian name.*

TEC: Why did you leave your country and come to Greece as an

New name
in Greece

immigrant?

Giorgos: *It was a very tough decision not only for me but for thousands of my fellow-countrymen, but we had no choice. In Albania there is great poverty and unemployment, and we had no chance for a better life there.*

TEC: When you came here, how did the Greeks treat you?

Giorgos: *At the beginning, people were friendly and they helped us in many ways (they gave us clothes, food, money). Later, they were reserved, they avoided us and sometimes they were even aggressive.*

TEC: Can you explain this behaviour?

Giorgos: *I believe that the Greeks changed because along with those of us who came to work here and live a quiet and decent life, there were also some criminals. These criminals gave all Albanians a bad name. But this not true because not all Albanians are criminals.*

TEC: Why do Greek employers prefer to hire you as unskilled workers?

Giorgos: *This happens because we accept any job, even with very low wages and with no insurance. We can allow ourselves to negotiate our employment conditions. We try to make a living. Greek workers are trying to improve their lives and thus they demand much more than we do. However, this is not good for the employers. Thus, the Greeks are hostile.*

TEC: Do you have a residence permit, the so-called "Green Card"?

Giorgos: *I received my green card three months ago. When I first came here, I did not have one. As soon as I had received my green card I informed my employer and asked for a raise and insurance. After a while, I was fired over a funny excuse. Later, one of my ex-colleagues told me that another immigrant was hired in my place, and he did not have a green card. This new employee cost less to my ex-employer. Now I work in a transportation company and I also have a cleaning job. My employer gives me a legal wage and I am insured.*

Economic migrant

From help to distrust

Bad impression

Manpower with fewer rights

Finally, a job with a legal wage

INTERVIEW 2: SERGEI

TEC: When did you leave your country Sergei?

Sergei: *Unofficially, I left Azerbaijan in 1994 along with the first immigrants, and just two years ago I finalised my immigration since I brought my family officially to Greece.*

TEC: What did you do in Azerbaijan?

Sergei: *I studied literature and was employed as a History teacher at the High School of my city, Amayak.*

TEC: What is your profession now Sergei?

Sergei: *With my residence permit, I work at a fertilisers factory. It is obvious that this job is not related to my studies or experience, but, I had to do something in order to support myself and my family.*

TEC: Could you name the reasons that forced you to leave your country?

Sergei: *There were many reasons; unemployment, lack of democracy, low standard of living, unfavourable conditions as far as education was concerned. In general, we had nothing to expect, our future was gloomy.*

TEC: Do you prefer living in Greece, and if yes, why is that?

Sergei: *Life in Greece is not a piece of cake for an immigrant at the beginning. However, no matter what the problems are, I prefer living in Greece because if you work hard and honestly here you certainly have the opportunity to make a better life. In our country, you realize early that there is a lack in democracy in the healthcare system, in the education system and in general, the standard of living in Greece is far higher than in Azerbaijan.*

TEC: Did you face any kind of social racism in Greece?

Sergei: *Unfortunately yes, I have had to deal with social racism in the past and I am still dealing with it. It is something that annoys me deeply, not only for myself but for my children's sake. Sometimes my children are insulted, wrongly and unjustifiably in my opinion, by certain Greeks.*

Studies
in
mother-
land

Manual
worker
now

Troubles
of
Azerbaijan

Opportu-
nity
for a better
life

Social
racism

TEC: What do you miss the most about Azerbaijan, Sergei?

Sergei: *In Greece, I do not like the excessive economic exploitation that goes on at the expense of us, the immigrants. Also I object to discrimination, and the distrust that is, to a certain extent, justified since there are some evil-minded and bad-hearted immigrants. However, it's wrong to lump all immigrants together.*

Economic exploitation

TEC: Do you miss your country, Sergei? Do you even dream of going back there?

Sergei: *All immigrants feel empty at times. However, I do not plan to go back to Azerbaijan since I and my family have been accepted in Greece and are now part of Greek society.*

Being accepted in Greece

TEC: One last question, do you mind telling me how old you are?

Sergei: *Not at all. I am 45 years old. I have two children, a daughter called Larsa, and a son called Ahmet Kourt. My daughter is 13 years old and my son is 18 years old.*

STORY 3: YURI

He has a different name and surname in Georgia. Everything was different in Georgia, the climate, time, places, the way slabs were placed on the pavements, friends, houses...

Yuri (as they call him in Georgia) was born in the former Soviet Union in Georgia on March 26th 1975. He is now 26 years old and works as carpenter. In 1984 his parents decided to leave the Soviet Union because they were oppressed by the state, so they came to Greece. His parents were Greeks so Yuri received Greek citizenship within two years. His name is now Giorgos and he lives at Kordelio in Thessaloniki. He works outside Thessaloniki, on the road to Drama.

His family is a part of Greek society

Greek parents

To the question "what do you miss most from your country" he replied: my first love, the romantic places we went and my friends. He did not mention his relatives at all because his family had problems with them. "Georgia", he says, "was a very beautiful country. I miss the narrow alleys, the park with the tiny porches..."

Homesickness

And now what? Now, he has his own house, he has a job and he is looking for a girl to marry. He is good looking but his accent is still

Plans for the future

Still not
feeling at
home

peculiar. Every time he meets a girl, he faces the same problem: when she realises that he is from Russia (Georgia), she leaves. He added "The problem isn't the Greek state, but the Greek girls."

When he goes out for a coffee, he usually goes with his Russian friends. He doesn't have a lot of Greek friends since people are distrustful.

Yuri refused to talk more. The only thing he said was "If only I could go back to my country..."

7. LITHUANIA

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

Lithuania is a small country. Slightly fewer than 3.5 million people live there. According to the 2001 population census 99 % of people living in Lithuania were Lithuanian citizens. There are 115 different ethnic groups among them: 83.5% - Lithuanian, 6.7% – Polish, 6.3% – Russians and 3.5% - people of other nationalities.

People of ethnical minorities have the right to develop their own culture. The Russian, Polish, Jewish, Tatar, German, Belorussian, and Greek ethnic groups have their own periodical newspapers. There are also radio and TV programs produced by national minorities. The Lithuanian government encourages national minorities to participate in the political life of the country. There are political parties and social organisations established by the national minority groups. Now there are 225 different national minority organisations: Russian, Polish (the biggest national minority), Latvian, Jewish, Georgian, Romani, German, Tatar and others.

Immigration in Lithuania, as in any European country has its historical roots and is influenced what is happening in the world.

The Immigration Law of Lithuania, which came into force in 1992, defines the rules of arrival in the country and residence there. According to this law, permission to stay in the country is given mainly for three reasons:

- Joining family,
- Business migration,
- Repatriation of ethnical Lithuanians to the motherland.

People arriving in Lithuania can acquire citizenship through naturalisation – they have to live in Lithuania for 10 years, pass exams in Lithuanian language and principles of the Constitution, have a legal income and renounce their previous citizenship.

The Republic of Lithuania gives asylum to refugees. Granting asylum In Lithuania means the issuance of a (permanent or temporary) residence permit in Lithuania and the provision of social assistance to a foreigner who is granted asylum. Asylum seekers can be granted refugee status or issued temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania on humanitarian grounds (due to armed conflict, natural disaster in the country of origin or other reasons). This permit is issued for a period of 1 year,

but if the circumstances in their country have not changed the temporary residence permit may be extended. The foreigner granted refugee status or issued with temporarily residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania on humanitarian grounds is included into social integration according to the order established by Lithuanian law.

If a person is seeking asylum, but has arrived in Lithuania illegally, he/she must submit an application to be granted refugee status immediately. After submission of the application there follows an interview with authorized officials to decide if they are to be granted refugee status. Legal and medical assistance, as well as the interpreter, are free of charge.

If the foreigner is allowed to stay in Lithuania, but does not have sufficient financial means to be able to live in Lithuania, he/she is accommodated in the Foreigners' Registration Centre in Pabrade (a town in Lithuania)

According to statistical data from the Lithuanian Migration Department there were 1818 asylum applications in the period 1997 – 2002. Of these, 70% were Russians, 22% Afghani people, 2% Indian, 2% Sri Lankan and 4% were other nationalities (Belorussian, Pakistan, Iran, Moldavia, Tajikistan, Ukraine).

Demographic division of asylum seekers (according to data from 2001): male – 45%, female – 25, dependent children – 24% separated children – 9%.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The department of Audit and Supervision of Social Establishments at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour conducts two major programs to support the most vulnerable immigrant groups:

- Program to Return Prisoners, Deportees and their Family Members to Lithuania for the years 2002 – 2007,
- Social Integration Program for Foreigners Granted Asylum.

The latter program stresses an individual approach in assisting people with social integration. The foreigner participating in it must sign the social integration agreement, which specifies what assistance the municipality or NGO will provide and also determines the rights and duties of the foreigner. Learning the Lithuanian language is the first duty during the first month of social integration, because it is necessary to have mastered the language in order to find a job and/or attend professional training courses.

Prisoners, deportees and their family members returning to Lithuania can also attend free Lithuanian language courses. These are usually organised at the Lithuanian Language Centres for Adults. Social assistance mostly means getting acquainted with governmental and public organisations and receiving assistance with social integration.

Successful integration mostly depends on the individual activities and personality skills of newcomers.

I have interviewed three families, who came to Lithuania from different cultural and political backgrounds and for different reasons.

STORY 1: LEONID AND LARISA

The family has lived in their own flat in Vilnius for about a year. They are both pensioners. Their daughter Elena is still living with her husband at the hostel for deportees and their families. She has a job, but is now looking for a better one. Her husband also works.

Almost three years ago the family came to Lithuania, dreaming of being accepted by the motherland of Leonid, exiled to Siberia with his mother and sister. Leonid was eleven years old. Nobody knows what happened to his father, but Leonid together with his mother and sister first moved to Tomsk and then to Igarka, one of the northern Russian ports. It was 1951. They worked there till 1959, when they were rehabilitated.

Leonid lived in Russia for almost fifty years. After rehabilitation he was taken by the Soviet Army to the Far East, to the Marine Corps for 3 and a half years. This experience linked him with the Marines for a long time. He worked and studied mechanics. His work duties took him to several places: Baikal, Blagoveshchinsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, And even behind the Northern Polar Circle.

When he was 28 years old he married Larisa. They have two daughters. Larisa grew up on the shores of Lake Baikal. She finished her high education and has been working as an accident prevention officer all her life. Their daughters also studied at university.

Larissa describes her childhood as a very joyful period. Her mother was a teacher and her father an officer in the Soviet Army. The family had everything they needed, there were a lot of people coming to their home. Everyone was one big, friendly family.

Repatria-
tion

Rehabili-
tation
after
persecu-
tion

Educated
family

Good attitudes of Russian people

I asked Leonid about the attitude of Russian people towards him as a foreigner, and he replied that the attitude of the adults was very nice. They understood that Leonid's family had got in to trouble. In his childhood, the boys from the neighbourhood used to tease him, but that was so long ago...

Leonid and Larisa



As Leonid and Larissa were working, they had the chance to go abroad on vacation. They visited Bulgaria, Turkey and have been to Lithuania several times. Now they have decided to stay here forever. Larissa has always been with her husband, their daughters try to be close to their parents, but who knows which part of Larissa's heart is still in Russia with her patrimonial living there...

Troubles in the neighborhood

Especially at those times when she had to face unpleasant events here, in Lithuania: her husband's illness, conflict with the neighbourhood drug addicts.

The help from the ministry

Leonid has a disease that led to a brain operation. The Ministry of Social Security and Labor supported the family, and advised them how to find an institution that provided appropriate treatment.

Language problem and courses

Leonid jokes that this incident might blow all his Lithuanian knowledge away, Yet he has actually never forgotten Lithuanian completely. His family members had more difficulties with the language. Nevertheless they have all finished Lithuanian language courses.

STORY 2: BIN, CHUEN AND CHUA

Came to Lithuania from Vietnam. We'll deal with Bin first. In 1988. He worked as a shipbuilder in Klaipeda, a Lithuanian port. He came here legally, because there was a treaty between the former Soviet Union and the Vietnamese Republic about the exchange of workers. His wife Chuen worked in Smolensk (Russia) under the same contract. He could even travel to see her and then return to Lithuania. Their son Chua was born in Smolensk. In 1992 there was a crisis in many plants as normal economical relations collapsed. They had been working, but not getting paid for some time.

Arrival in 1988

Bin decided to start selling clothes on the open market. He was successful and invited his wife and son to come and join him. Now they have their own business, which allows them to live independently. Language? They speak Vietnamese and Russian. Their son goes to a Russian school and learns Lithuanian together with the others. They keep in touch with their relatives in Vietnam, and have visited them.

A shop on an open market

They also have friends in Lithuania, especially people from Vietnam, who came together to Lithuania to work and stayed here. They showed me a photo of the New Year festivities, which is at a different time in Vietnam. They celebrated it in Lithuania the same way they used to celebrate it in Vietnam.

Friendships

School is the other place where Chua can meet his friends Ngo Ti and Rose from the other Vietnamese family . At school they have the chance to get more widely involved in community life.

Attending school

STORY 3: TUMISA

Tumisa came from Chechnya to Lithuania three years ago. She was forty years old, and had with her two children, eight and nine years old. After some time she found out that her husband had been shot. Her own house and her mother's burned down. She does not even have a photo.

Tragedy of her husband

Tumisa tries to explain that going abroad with the aim of learning about foreign countries is a completely different thing in comparison to the need to flee from war. These people were not very involved in politics. They were eager to adjust to any conditions, but the war made it impossible to

Refugee feelings

University
education
in
economics

The war at
the back
of her
mind

Tumisa
with her
family and
friends

Social
problems
of the
Lithuania

Under-
standing
the culture
is
a long-
term
process

adjust... It was very difficult to leave everything in her forties. She was an economist. She had graduated from the university in the Soviet period. It was difficult to leave her friends and relatives... her husband.

To adapt is the most important and difficult thing for newcomers. She says that although you see the sunny weather, smiling faces, the beauty of the town, you yourself still feel very different, like a stranger. It is so difficult to forget the experience of war, to change your inner state. "Every night I am at home, there, and every day here", she says.



Lithuania is a beautiful country, but it has serious social problems too. This is why some immigrants try to go further, to Scandinavia. The social problems of Lithuanians make communication more complicated, for example, it is quite difficult to find a job. When newly arrived refugees hear this they sometimes think that it is one more way to discriminate against them, and make them strangers.

Ordinary people they meet in the neighbourhood are very sensitive. They keep asking how they can help the refugees. "Your care officer is sometimes your first problem. Now I think, that being a care officer you can not simply and clearly explain the regulations for these people, who are somehow lost. They need concrete assistance and empathy. Now I know that it takes a year till you can start to understand the way people live here."

Tumisa says that Chechen people are very emotional and sometimes

considered too noisy, demanding, even aggressive. The press contributes to that image too. Once there was a street fight between young Chechen and Lithuanian men. It was given as a national, not personal conflict. That makes life for the other Chechen people more complicated, as society develops a negative attitude. Yes, Chechen people are different in many ways, because they are deeply influenced by their traditions. For example, you have to help another Chechen. You may only know the person you are going to visit a little, but there is no need to call in advance, to arrange it. You just come. You cannot say anything to contradict another person. You have to stand up and remain standing till the guest is seated. Tumisa's neighbour was trying to feed her daughter during Ramadan etc.

The experience of everyday living is different too. There were schools for children at home, where the teachers taught them to read and count. It was difficult for the parents to look at them and see that time is passing and they are not growing up the way they should... The anarchy during Dudaev's rule... You never got paid, but you also never had to pay for anything... a long period of destruction...

One year passes quickly. During this time you can figure out how to get along with the Lithuanians, what to do, how to organise your life, but the period of governmental support is already over and you sometimes feel yourself lost again. The neighbours help to find a temporary job. Tumisa tried to start her own business - a small farm with the help of her care officer, who provided his own property in the village for free. They received a little support, but that only worked for a about a year.

Now Tumisa is co-ordinator of a self – support group for immigrant women. She thinks this project fills the gap in the integration program, as it provides an opportunity for the immigrants themselves to discover what their needs and expectations are, to help to understand these quite new conditions, to organise some preparatory courses, such as English language, computer skills, sewing etc. Women can invite officials they would like to meet and talk to, and ask for some explanations. This project was initiated by the EU and is now implemented in ten candidate states. The Lithuanian Red Cross organisation is also involved. Tumisa is very proud of being actively involved in such an important organisation and such human and important activity.

It is very difficult for refugees, when they leave the refugee camp and start living on their own, especially for women. At the camp it felt like a

Image of the Chechen people


Different habits

On the "period of destruction"

Governmental support is over

Women's integration co-ordinator

Troubles when leaving a camp



family of refugees – people with shared experiences gathered together in front of the TV or in the kitchen, they organised parties, had the opportunity to talk. When you start living by yourself it is an achievement, but you still need some support from people, and the understanding and advice of those with similar experiences.

8. SPAIN

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

The history of Spain involves a history of active immigration, yet nowadays the number of Spanish emigrants exceeds the total number of immigrants admitted into Spain. Huge contingents of Spaniards left their homes searching for a better life in other countries. During the 19th and 20th centuries there was a number of different exoduses to several Latin American countries and Europe, especially Belgium, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. One of these, in which thousands of labourers went to France to work on the grape harvest, still goes on today. Another exodus occurred in the late 19th century, led by over 150,000 emigrants coming from Andalusia and the Levant, whose destination was the Maghreb countries, actually the same route that dozens of Maghrebi and sub-Saharan people are now taking in reverse.

The Spanish Civil War and the exile favoured by the dictatorship forced over three million people out of Spain, aiming towards Europe and the countries of Latin America. Currently, Argentina, France and Germany still provide accommodation for great communities of Spaniards who emigrated in the 1950's and 1960's.

From 1960 both migratory movements and the industrialisation process considerably transformed the human geography of Spain. Rural areas begun to become depopulated in favour of urban areas, a phenomenon that has lasted up to the 1990's.

But from the 80's this phenomenon changed and Spain became a receiver of immigrants, resulting in some social and demographic changes. The admission of Spain into the European Union and the subsequent Schengen Treaty (1994), which governs the freedom of movement of people within the EU, have made it easier for people from the European continent to enter.

As happened across Europe, the migratory pattern in Spain switched from emigrant status to immigrant status due to social-economic problems in the migrants' country of origin. In Spain particularly, the influx of immigrants has been facilitated by factors such as geographical proximity (Moroccans and sub-Saharans) and cultural and linguistic proximity (Latin American) it is also due to the demand for labour in the agricultural sector, construction industry and service sector.

Immigrants make up 1.5% of Spain's total population. 54.5% are

from the European Union. Immigration in Spain became important in the mid 1980's. The government is interested in the social integration of the immigrants, and therefore invests in campaigns for their integration. The Spanish have encouraged positive attitudes towards immigrants. Immigrant workers replace the Spanish in low-status jobs and are therefore welcome and supported. In December 1997 150,000 illegal immigrants were reported to be living in Spain. An increase in female immigration was reported - 44.8% of immigrants in Spain are women. There was also an increase in third world immigrants, coming from Morocco, China, Peru, Dominican Republic, Argentina and Philippines.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The enactment of the Organic Law in 1985 was the first immigration policy in Spain, and is also called the Aliens' Law. Spain passed this law six months before they entered the EEC. The law determines the procedure for aliens to enter, reside and work. Immigrants have to have an employment contract or a work permit of a certain duration to be able to work legally. Before immigrants get a work permit, the authorities consider the local work situation and the unemployment rate of Spanish workers in that area. If an employer cancels the contract or the time of the permit runs out, the immigrant becomes an illegal resident again. He is then again in fear of expulsion.

The government has created three new initiatives since 1985 to help illegal immigrants overcome their illegal status. All these initiatives have failed, however, because of the difficulty of renewing their work and residence permits. A new amendment to the Aliens' Law was passed in 1996 which applies to immigrants that have lived legally in Spain for six years or longer. They are now able to receive a permanent work permit. In order to work legally, the alien must obtain a short-term work permit, and for this they need to have been offered work. In studying applications for work permits, the authorities also take into account the level of unemployment among Spanish workers in the proposed occupation and in the geographical area concerned. The temporary nature of the permits means that immigrants are strongly dependent on their employers, since non-renewal of the contract means the loss of legal status and the risk of expulsion from the country.

STORY 1: SOL

Sol Onijudios V. T. is a 38-year-old Ecuadoran woman. She is studying for her driving licence at the Peafiel adult centre. She shares her classes with Spanish and foreign students and even if she has no trouble with the language she does have problems with the specific terminology of the traffic rules.



My name is Sol Onijudios V.T. and I am 38 years old. I am married with three children aged 10, 11 and 18. I live in Peafiel (Spain) with my husband and my two small children in a rented flat. Currently I am trying to get my oldest son to come and live in Spain with me.

I arrived in Spain by chance. In 2000 I emigrated to Italy but I only stayed for a month before returning to Ecuador as I was unable to adapt to their customs and language. Then, 15 days after my return to Ecuador, my sister called me from Spain where she was living and convinced me to come here. I come with another sister and the first place we arrived in was Palencia.

I found work as hairdresser but only for a short time as myimmigration papers were not ready (it took more than one year to get the papers). Afterwards I found work as a house caretaker in Valladolid and so, by the end of 2000, I was able to bring my family with me.

After working in several houses in Valladolid I found a job in a restaurant in Peafiel, where I am still working and living.

For now and up to 2004 I have a residence permit which can be extended but I decided to apply for Spanish nationality under the treaty

Sol
in
Peñafiel
Adult
Center

Family
not wholly
reunited

Sister's
invitation

Work
and
documents

Residence
permit

Documents not recognized in Spain

Good relationship

Abdelmajin in Peñafiel Adult Center

Not good at speaking Spanish yet

Traditional country of the Moroccan emigration

between Ecuador and Spain, which states that anyone who has lived in Spain for more than two years can have dual nationality.

Although my academic qualifications are at a reasonable level in my country, they are not valid here in Spain, and the same is true for my driver's licence. This is the reason why I have enrolled on the Traffic Education course at the Peañiel Adult Center. However, I expect that the agreement between Spain and Ecuador will finally be settled now and so my driver's licence will be legally recognised in Spain.

I have been very lucky in my relationships with other people as I have never felt any prejudice towards me. I get on well with my neighbours and with the villagers, and so far I have not come up against any serious problems in everyday life.

STORY 2: ABDELMAJIN



Abdelmajin B. is a 33-year-old male from Morocco. He is attending classes at the Peañiel adult centre in order to prepare for his driving test.

He attends classes together with other Spanish and foreign students where they learn the theory of traffic education. As

the most difficult issue for this type of student is the language, we deeply stress this aspect, not just the terminology of traffic education but also the Spanish language overall, together with the basic concepts of writing and understanding.

Abdelmajin's level of Spanish is not very good yet, which is why he answers our questions in a very simple manner.

My name is Abdelmajin B. and I was born in Morocco. I am married, my wife is also from Morocco and she emigrated with me to Spain.

The living conditions in my country forced me to emigrate to Spain — the first port of arrival for Moroccans. Many of my fellow travellers chose to emigrate to other European countries, but I preferred to stay in Spain.

I arrived in Spain in 1997 and the town of Caceres (Extremadura) was my first home for several years. Afterwards I moved with my family to Peafiel (Valladolid). I live in a rented flat here in Peafiel. All my neighbours are Spanish but I have had no problems with them. We are not close, but we get on okay, although they were a little distrustful of my presence at first.

Currently, I am looking for a job in Peafiel, under a work contract if possible (my wife is working under one), but so far I have had no luck. Occasionally, I am offered temporary employment with or without a contract and, if I can, I always take it because I do not want to spend my days with nothing to do.

I enrolled myself onto the Adult Education program to obtain my driver's licence. I have a driving licence from my country but it is useless in Spain because there is no agreement on this issue. I had to take the course, even though the vocabulary and syntax of the traffic regulations are way too difficult for me to understand. Despite the considerable time I have spent living in Spain, I keep on having problems with the language.

I am determined to stay in Spain for ever as my wife and I are very happy here. If possible, I'd prefer to remain in Peafiel but if there was no work we would not mind moving somewhere else.

STORY 3: ISABEL

Isabel B. B. is a 35-year-old Romany woman who attends classes at the Peafiel adults centre with a group of other Romany women. There are



Job seeker

New driving licence

Language problem

Adult education

Isabel at school

	<p>two levels in this group: Level I in Literacy and Level II in knowledge and consolidation of techniques, which Isabel is part of. During the 2002-03 term this group comprised 12 students aged between 18 and 40. These women are on this course in order to obtain family allowance, and therefore many of them brought their young children to school, so a childminder had to be hired.</p>
<p>Romany community</p>	<p><i>My name is Isabel B.B. and I am a gipsy woman. I am married with two children, a 17 year-old-boy and an 11 year-old-girl.</i></p> <p><i>I am a Spanish national and a gipsy. I live with my husband and my children in Peafiel. I have always lived here, as has my family. The vast majority of people living in my neighbourhood are gypsies, and I get on well with them.</i></p>
<p>Elementary education</p>	<p><i>I got married when I was very young, which is typical among my fellow gypsies and, as I mentioned before, I have two children. The oldest is a 17-year-old boy who is working at the moment and the youngest is a girl of 11 who still goes to school.</i></p>
<p>Manual work as a child instead of school</p>	<p><i>My academic level, at this point, is the graduado escolar certificate (equivalent to eighth grade.) I reached this level some years ago in the Peafiel adults centre as, too early in life, I dropped out of school to find work. I go to lessons and attend classes at the adult centre to continue to widen my basic knowledge. In my group we all are gipsy women.</i></p>
<p>Little respect towards Romani tradition</p>	<p><i>As I have already said, I have been working since I was a little girl and at the moment I work on a livestock farm and do the housework.</i></p> <p><i>I get on well with the payos (non-gypsies) in my township, and am even friends with some of them, and never have any problems with them. Since I have worked in some payos' houses, relations have improved.</i></p>
<p>“Losing a culture”</p>	<p><i>I have not noticed any negative behaviour on the part of the payos towards my fellow gypsies, though I believe the payos do not show any consideration for our tradition. Nothing has changed in terms of our relationship during all these years. Yett it is true that I had to adapt to their traditions in order to be considered as one of them.</i></p> <p><i>Equality is what I wish for everybody and I believe this is can be reached because the other gypsies are also adapting to the payos' culture. This change brings us benefits, such as increasing our knowledge. On the other hand, we are disregarding many of our customs. I do not like the payos' rules as currently intended either.</i></p>

I believe that education is the way to equality, which is why I am learning computer skills, calculation, writing... Because I had to work when I was a little girl and could not attend school, I have to make up for lost time.

As I have said, I get on well with the payos, and even work together with them to improve relations between payos and gypsies.

9. SWEDEN

IMMIGRATION TO THE COUNTRY

Sweden receives three kinds of immigrants: refugees, family-related immigrants and labour immigrants. The National Migration Agency is responsible for migration matters.

The countries of origin are not the same that they used to be. Nowadays refugees and family-related immigrants come from countries such as Kurdistan, Iraq, Somalia and the former Soviet Union. All ages are represented and there are many families among them. There is a mixture of illiterates and people of varying levels of education, and the immigrants constitute a very diverse group. Extra effort and resources have been put into the integration of Romany groups from eastern Europe.

Immigration to Sweden is governed by laws and regulations but how these are applied varies between urban and rural municipalities. Different government departments and the municipalities co-operate in handling the reception of refugees. Those who immigrate to be united with their families already have a residence permit when they arrive in Sweden and those who immigrate to get a job have a work permit.

People seeking asylum are covered by a special law according to the Geneva Convention. This means that everybody who comes to Sweden is entitled to accommodation, food, clothes and other necessities. All this is covered by a daily allowance. In addition, the asylum seeker is entitled to maternity and infant welfare, emergency medical and dental care and children have the right to go to school.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

In 2002, 33016 people applied for asylum in Sweden. When a refugee comes to Sweden seeking asylum, the refugee can ask to stay either with a relative or with a friend who is already living in the country. Refugees without any connections are assigned to refugee camps. These are located all over the country, mostly in normal apartment buildings in ordinary residential areas.

The asylum seeker's application is processed by lawyers and government employees. The individual asylum seeker is then informed either that a residential permit has been granted or that the application has been turned down. Those who are to be turned away from the country can

appeal against the decision and are entitled to legal assistance at no extra cost. While waiting for a decision, it is possible to take part in different activities such as Swedish language courses for immigrants, information about Swedish society, and work experience placement.

Government and municipal departments are responsible for those who get a residential permit and a refugee is assigned to a municipality for a period of 24 months. The government reimburses the expenses to the municipality according to a standard estimate of costs so that the individual costs are covered during this time. The purpose of these 24 months is to integrate the person into society and allow him/her to become self-supporting. Part of the standard allowance is paid out in cash to cover the cost of living. Those who have been granted a residential permit are enabled to set up home with the help of a housing loan, which does not have to be repaid until after the first two years. In 2003 the interest is 6.05%.

The municipal immigration unit is responsible for drawing up a program for every immigrant with the purpose of helping refugees to achieve economic independence. All adults take Swedish courses for immigrants, and they learn about Swedish society and all things Swedish. The employment agency also helps to draw up the individual program. Other important features are study guidance and work experience placement.

Pre-schoolers are registered with the child care department so that their parents can participate in the activities stated in their individual programs. School children can take part in preparatory education before they begin to attend regular classes. Young people are invited to go to classes for special Swedish instruction so that they will be able to go to upper secondary education classes. Every child in the compulsory school is entitled to instruction in their native language.

The municipal immigration unit also provides every individual with a lot of practical assistance in getting accommodation, furniture, an ID and a bank account, and with getting registered with the social insurance office. Immigrants get a lot of help in other areas as well. The municipality also supports associations for people from different countries, the so-called "länderföreningar" or "countries" associations, which form a meeting place for people from a shared place of origin. These associations are also involved in activities with the aim of increasing knowledge about the

country in question and its culture, increasing equality between men and women and working towards successful integration.

Once you have been granted a residential permit, you have the same rights as Swedish citizens with a few exceptions: you are not entitled to vote in general elections and you are not eligible for Parliament. The basic principle is that you get Swedish citizenship after five years in the country. Every year on June 6, Sweden's national holiday, all the new Swedes are welcomed to the country and their new citizenship.

In Sweden there are special laws prohibiting discrimination. However, it is still difficult for people of non-European origin to find a job. This varies between different branches of trade and industry but a general change in attitude is necessary.

All those who immigrate to Sweden take part in different activities: the small children are to be found in day care centres, the older children go to the compulsory school and the adults are involved in different kinds of education or are at work. Thus, those who have immigrated to Sweden have become visible and they make up a natural part of the street scene. The employees of more and more workplaces represent ethnic diversity and Sweden today is a multicultural country.

STORY 1: HUSSEIN

Hussein was 26 years old when he left Iraq, his native country. He lived with his parents in Baghdad, where his parents had a furriery. After going to the compulsory comprehensive school for nine years, he began to work in the family business. Early on, his parents had taught him the importance of working and earning one's own living.

During 2001 the situation in Iraq had become unbearable and Hussein was in fear of his own life. In September he left his family, his friends and his native country and, with the help of the UN, he went to Sweden by way of Cyprus. Two weeks after his arrival in Sweden, he was assigned to the community of Borlänge. The immigrant unit help him to get his own apartment and arranged for him to start his studies in Swedish. Ahmad, the refugee co-ordinator of the immigration unit, made contact with Hussein. Together they went to the employment agency to register Hussein for work.

Hussein quickly made new friends and was also able to visit his cousin who lives in Stockholm. Nevertheless, Hussein felt sad and he could not really enjoy his new life. Ahmad realised that Hussein had to find a job, because his whole identity and motivation depended on his chances of finding a job and doing his share. It was considered to be more important to have a job than to be able to speak Swedish.

Now began the difficult part for Ahmad: finding suitable work experience for Hussein. The fur trade in Sweden is small and the nearest manufacturing company was located in Malung 150 km north of Borlänge. After many discussions with Margareta, the manager of the company, and with the employment agency to get the assignment approved, Hussein was able to start his job in November 2002, only one year after he arrived in Sweden.



Today Hussein has a permanent position with the company. He works as a cutter and Margareta thinks he has brought competence as well as skills to the firm. In the future his knowledge of Arabic and Arabic culture will be a great asset if the company decides to tap the market in the Middle East. Hussein likes his fellow workers and has learnt a lot of Swedish. Margareta thinks the world has come a lot closer and she also emphasises the importance of making the workplace available to all kinds of people. It is a person's professional know-how and skills that make her decide whom she wants to employ. When Hussein took a hide and put it on the cutting table, she could see right away that Hussein knew his trade.

Hussein spends his spare time learning Swedish, taking driving lessons and seeing his friends. He likes Malung very much, where he has a

The sense of life in having a job

Ahmad looked for his job

Hussein with Margareta and Ahmad

A cutter in a fur company

Satisfaction with his work

Free-time activities

Summary

comfortable apartment, nice neighbours and many friends of both Swedish and foreign origin.

Many things have contributed to making Hussein happy and content with his life. One decisive factor has been his strong will to find a job. Ahmad understood this and concentrated on finding a job where Hussein could find adequate work experience. It was not easy but Ahmad did not give up and eventually Margareta invited Hussein to a meeting, which led to Margareta offering Hussein a work placement. The co-operation between the Immigration Unit and the employment agency made the arrangement possible.

Next summer Hussein will be going to Iraq to see his family and friends, and perhaps there is a girl waiting for him and who will go with him to Sweden...

STORY 2: OLGA

Olga is 39 years old, she is Russian and comes from Uzbekistan. Her husband is a native Iraqi, whom she met after he had fled his native country and was studying in the former Soviet Union. They have two children, a daughter who was born in Uzbekistan and a son born in Sweden.



Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russian was the official language of Uzbekistan. Olga, who has a university degree in technology focusing on agricultural machines and mechanics, worked as a teacher. When Uzbekistan became an independent

nation, Russian lost its official status and there were fewer and fewer job openings for Russian speakers. Eventually, Olga's job also came to an end and she had to look around for something else to do.

During this period a lot of things happened in the country and in Olga's family. Her husband was forced to leave the country, and since he had fled his native country, he was now stateless. It so happened that he ended up

University education

Inger and Olga

Russian emigration in the nineties

in Sweden. His wife and his daughter were left in Uzbekistan where Olga was now working in a dressmaker's workshop close to their home. Olga had always been interested in sewing and she liked her new work but she longed for her husband.

In December 1994 the family was reunited, because Olga and the couple's daughter had received an immigration permit for relatives. Now they could start a new life in a new country with a new language. Olga took Swedish for immigrants (she thinks that learning a language should be combined with work placements or a job to get the opportunity to actively use the language), she had her second child and went on to study at different levels in order to be able to train as a teacher of textile handicraft. However, Olga felt that it would take a long time to realize her dream and, furthermore, she would not be able to live with, or even close to, her family if she made this choice.

Olga felt doubtful about the future. On a visit to the unemployment agency she was informed about *MARIA*, an EU-project. Its target group was immigrant women with an advanced education. With the help of an adviser and supported by Karin, the project leader, they were offered work placements that, hopefully, would result in regular jobs. Olga got involved in the project, she pursued part-time studies and, to get practical experience, she worked as an assistant teacher in the compulsory school. However, the longing for textiles and textile work never left her.

One day Olga came to a shop called Batik and Print to buy clothes. This is a company which makes, dyes and sells clothes made from natural silk. There she met Inger, the manager of the company, who was under pressure and had far too much to do. A seamstress was ill and another had quit at short notice. Karin asked if she could possibly employ Olga as a temporary trainee. Inger has never regretted saying yes, because she saw right away that Olga was useful and competent.

Today Olga has a permanent position with the company. The co-operation between Inger, the *Maria*-project and the unemployment agency has been one prerequisite for this, Olga's professional skill another. Inger says that Olga is an asset to the company, she is cheerful, open and positive. She is enterprising and conscientious, two qualities which are important in a small company.

When we meet Olga, she is in a fine old house in one part of Borlänge, which is called the Handicraft Village. Here the houses, swathed in the

Family journeys

Family reunion in 1994

Language course

The help from the *MARIA* project

Work in a clothing company

Co-operation of organisations

“Happy ending” with a plan to study

luxuriant greenery of the surrounding gardens, are made of wood and painted red with white decorative woodwork. Olga is content with her life and she likes her work, but she thinks that one day she may take up her studies again, because she hasn’t given up the thought of going back to teaching.

STORY 3: CHARITY

Charity is 42 years old, she radiates joy and it is obvious that she is a woman who is happy with her life. In 1993 she left Ghana, her native country. At that time her husband had already been living in Sweden for a couple of years and now the family wanted to live together in the new country. Her husband already had three children that Charity took care of and after one year in Sweden the couple had a daughter of their own, who now is nine years old.



Charity, who comes from Kumasi, the second-largest city in Ghana, has completed her 10-year compulsory education and is a trained hairdresser in her native country. When Charity arrived here, she took Swedish for immigrants and she also participated in courses in Social Science, but what Charity wanted most of all was to find a job. For some years she took part in activities and projects aimed at helping immigrants

get admitted onto the labor market. Three years ago Charity had the opportunity to get work experience in one of the municipal old people’s homes. This was a result of a joint effort by Ahmad, the municipal co-ordinator of work placements, the unemployment agency in Borlänge, and Birgitta, who is in charge of the homes.

Arrival as a family reunion

Charity at work and her smile of course

Courses and job seeking

Very soon Birgitta realized that Charity would be a great asset for this kind of work and, for a short time, Charity was introduced to her new tasks. In the three years that followed she has been able to work most of the time. She has worked as a temp, she has been a substitute paid by the hour, and she has taken every opportunity she could find to work. She has taken part in on-the-job training and other activities at work. Birgitta says that Charity is very competent, that she meets a demand and that she loves to work! Her fellow workers love her too, she is a cheerful person who everybody likes, not least the patients. Since September 15, Charity has had a permanent position in the municipality and now she has a job she can go to every day.

Birgitta emphasizes the fact that the staff caring for the elderly should reflect the multicultural society we live in, and that the staff comes from many different cultures representing a variety of languages and experiences. It is important because more and more elderly in need of care come from other cultures, but it is also important since we spend a large part of our lives at work, and this is where we meet and learn about new things. It broadens the horizon of all the staff and leads to a greater degree of understanding and we are more prepared when we meet other cultures. There is no doubt that Charity likes Birgitta a lot. "Birgitta is the best thing we have", she says.

Charity and her husband have now separated and Charity lives in an apartment with her daughter and her husband's youngest daughter. When she moved into the neighborhood, she visited all the neighbors and introduced herself. She gets on well with her neighbors and she has a wide circle of friends, both old and new Swedes. Charity says it was not difficult to become integrated into society. Sometimes she may hear someone saying stupid things, but she doesn't take them seriously, she just consider it narrow-mindedness.

Charity is doing well today and she is happy with her life. She learnt Swedish at an early stage and took an interest in the society she had moved into. Charity's goal was to find a job and, with the help of Ahmad, the unemployment agency, Birgitta and her own driving ambition, she has now achieved what she set out to do. She is popular, she has many friends and two beautiful daughters and the future looks bright.

The longing for Ghana, her native country, is always present. She has long wished to see her father and her six brothers and sisters, as well as

Co-operation again
 Temporary job
 Full-time job and residence permit
 Multiculturalism in the care of elderly people
 Negative reactions ignored
 Summary of her situation
 Homesickness

New home
country

their families, and this October she will visit her native country for the first time in ten years. But her visit is only a vacation, because "Sweden is now my home country", says Charity.

CONCLUSIONS

MIGRATION TYPES AND STORIES IN THE *GUIDEBOOK*

”If it were possible, an aerial snapshot of migrant flows across Western Europe in the early years of the twenty-first century would offer a complex and confusing picture. For the purposes of international comparison, the simplest form of classification of these diverse flows is by four broad categories of entry” [Stalker 2002]:

1. *Labour migration*, which would include long- and short-term immigrants and seasonal workers. As examples we could read the stories of Nguyen and Hoya, who live in the Czech Republic and who came in the times of the former Czechoslovakia as students and workers. Sol, from Ecuador, and Abdelmajin, from Morocco, immigrated to Spain for similar reasons. As immigrants to Czechoslovakia, they obtained Czech nationality by marrying a Czech citizen and managed to become part of society partially due to their studies, where they have even made some good friends (non-formal learning of language and social skills). Abdelmajin and Sol are rather at the beginning of their journey, they haven’t been living in their new country for such a long time (6 and 3 years). Abdelmajin is studying for his driving licence and looking for a job, and Sol has almost fully reunited her family (the next bullet 2), the year 2004 sees her receiving a residence permit and she is considering applying for dual nationality.

2. *Family reunification*, which usually consists of the close relatives of those with the right to long-term residency. The stories of Ali (France) and Charity (Sweden) illustrate that such a process can take a quite long time with regard to the importance of family relationships. Ali said that he could bring his family over after an immigrant procedure lasting long five years of. Family reunification requires the person inviting his/her family members to hold a permanent residence permit. The stories of Daniela (Belgium) and Madina (France) show how a new family might get together, and a native citizen marry a foreigner who then receives at least a residence permit.

3. Undocumented workers or ”*illegal immigrants*” who have either entered the country illegally or have entered on tourist visas and have stayed for longer than the permitted duration, usually in order to work. Everyone usually tries hard to receive official status, as in Ali’s story.

4. *Asylum seekers* who, once granted asylum, are classified as refugees (e. g. Cynthia and Prem from Germany).
5. It should be pointed out that labour migration can lead to *permanent immigration* (e. g. Sol from Spain).
6. Some people who left their country of origin may return voluntarily; these people are called *repatriates* (e. g. Leonid from Lithuania).

INTEGRATION AND STORIES OF THE IMMIGRANTS

Let's briefly summarise some aspects of an immigrant's life in a new (European) society. We have seen the life-stories of immigrants in the text, each has followed his or her own path, each of them is an independent and unique individual. Nevertheless, it might be possible to discover some similar or even shared experiences and difficulties in their life-stories.

Immigration policy and rights

The problem of obtaining a status to get permanent residence permit (student, refugee, citizen).

Labour market and permission to enter it

Finding a job is another important thing which is usually hard to do. In cases where a special organisation works with skilled people who can offer assistance, job-hunting tends to be more successful. A job can even be seen as a personal "salvation", because a man/woman wants to be useful.

Incorporation of diplomas

Many European countries have a problem recognising foreign diplomas and other qualification certificates. A qualified person is frequently obliged to receive a job requiring lower qualifications.

Education

Education does not only fulfil the task of teaching immigrants the language of the host country. The stories and experiences of the immigrants show the practical importance of courses dealing with the development of social and intercultural communication skills .

Housing

Private housing is very important because a stay in special or collective accommodation facilities (camps, centres) may be stressful.

Inter-personal conflicts and the problem of misunderstanding or prejudice

Some people have a negative reaction to difference (different behaviour or people). The experiences of immigrants illustrate that misunderstanding or stereotyping can be overcome through communication and patience.

The range of problems and tasks for a person entering a new society could be much wider of course. Only the most frequently-mentioned issues have been mentioned here in the table. One group of people who comes into contact with newcomers more often than ordinary citizens comprises teachers and trainers. Although the general demands on a teacher or a trainer are high enough, a worker in this field (of integration) should be able to exceed the scope of his/her role. The task of a trainer or teacher of newcomers is not only to teach the people but also help them to understand the new culture they find themselves in, and this is the burden that both sides have to shoulder.

Life-Stories of Immigrants, a Guidebook for Trainers, Teachers and Social Workers was created as part of the team co-operative project entitled Trainers for European Citizens. The collective, comprising authors from eight regions and European countries would be pleased to know that this publication has helped a little to understand the daunting aspects of life for people who, under certain circumstances, have decided to leave their homes and to start somewhere else.

We can now conclude with Meïssa's optimistic words:
"When the front door closes, a thousandf other doors open."

THE END

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