

MEDHUB WORKSHOP REPORT

EVENT: Migrants and migration studies in Europe

LOCATION: Colegio dos Jesuitas, Rectory of the University of Madeira, PORTUGAL

DATE: 3rd & 4th July 2019

The *workshop took place at the University of Madeira (Portugal)*. The theme of the workshop was the Euro-Mediterranean area and migration, and the integration of these themes in the existing curricula. The workshop revisited the recurring themes of migrations and the position of migrants, the perceptions of migration from the Euro-Mediterranean region, the presence of the phenomena of migration in University curricula in European universities, but also less discussed issues of the inclusion of migrants to higher education, their access to higher education in European Universities, the existing policies regarding migrant participation in tertiary education. Finally, the discussion included an evaluation of the methods of teaching and researching migration studies from Euro-Mediterranean areas from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The reason for focusing on the issue of migration is self-evident, with this phenomenon overwhelmingly dominating the Euro-Mediterranean region (and the EU alone) over the past years in both the political and public discourse. There is however little sustained effort of teaching migration in a sustainable way, and little practice of reflecting on how it could be improved. Another aspect that is also overlooked is the inclusion of migrants in the higher education. Their full and appropriate inclusion can improve the public, scholarly and students' perception of the region first-hand. The best frame for doing so is little explored, a feature that we wanted to rectify.

The *speakers* contributing to the discussion were the following:

Elsa Fernandes, Vice-rector of University of Madeira (Portugal), Mateja Sedmak, Science and Research Centre Koper (Slovenia), Gilda Esposito, University of Firenze, (Italy), Markus Meckl, University of Akureyri (Iceland), Sofia Kasola, The Aristotelio University of

Thessaloniki (Greece), Luísa Antunes Paolinelli, University of Madeira (Portugal), Cinzia Laurelli Armes Progetti (Italy), Giovanna del Gobbo University of Firenze (Italy), Barbara Gornik, Science and Research Centre Koper (Slovenia), Elsa Fernandes, Vice-rector of University of Madeira (Portugal), Alcina Sousa, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Madeira (Portugal), Teresa Norton Dias, University of Madeira (Portugal), Luciano Lombardi, Conservatory of Arts of Madeira (Portugal), José Eduardo Franco, Universidade Aberta (Portugal), Evrinomy Avdi, The Aristotelio University of Thessaloniki (Greece). In total, these were 15 speakers from 6 different nationalities, all experts in various aspects of migration. The discussion was followed also by students and postdoctoral students from the University of Madeira

During the discussions following themes were addressed:

- The role of universities in providing the paths for recognition and cultivation of the potentials of human capital in global mobility through 1) access and 2) social responsibility of universities
- The importance of properly framing the issues related to human mobility; the need to reframe existing discriminatory approach.
- The image of young people as potential; cultivating human capital and giving an opportunity to young people with full of potentials (human capital discourse)
- The importance of defining social responsibility of universities and their public engagement – what are universities' responsibilities in relation to human mobility?
- Human rights discourse; how do universities facilitate migrant students in access to higher education? How do they enhance human capital as a resource for development?
- How to tackle the challenges related to very different national situations of the students' legal status (asylum seekers, refugees) and the degree of autonomy by each university (individual commitments to inclusive policies and practices can be very important)
- A set of issued related to migrant students at faculties: recognition of incoming skills of qualifications, learning the language of study, administrative requirements, their inclusion and wellbeing in the local community, their dignity in living, tutoring services, full participation in the academic life, career services after graduation (long-term solutions).

- The engagements needed in the international and local community: specialized centres for migration studies, participation in programmes and projects, public – private alliances, communicating a different story, connecting all levels of education
- The potential of spreading good practices accomplished by Erasmus, which provide solutions that can be used in a case of migrant students but which face a lack of political will.
- Responding to an emergency and finding of a solution to an already existing challenge: a cultural issue
- Highlighting good practices: e.g. refugee welcome map, university corridors for refugees etc.
- Some recommendations for future actions were identified:
 - Spread of the results of the study in our own institutions – but there is the need to do so in a systematic way
 - Elaborate a manifesto/guidelines for promoting and making visible university social responsibilities in the field of higher education
 - Becoming included in already existing international networks but a follow-up is needed
 - Mainstreaming education: intercultural issues need to be involved in the curriculum
 - The importance of connecting universities with other education levels (high school etc.)
 - The importance of addressing the gap in knowledge of students
 - The significance of language – this is very important and the basis for successful integration, but requires time to learn

The recommendations of workshop for policy-makers:

- A shift to a positive human capital approach is needed: EU can benefit from young people, migrants from Euro-Mediterranean countries are important contribution and human capital (knowledge, skills, anti-gentrification)
- A shift from human rights to social, cultural and economic rights of migrants from Euro-Mediterranean countries is needed. At the moment policy makers are approaching and discussing migrant issues prevalently from the surveillance, security and human rights perspective. To adopt a more positive and holistic approach toward migration issues, it

- is crucial to also include other aspects of the migration phenomenon, i.e. to emphasize the hidden and unutilized potential of economic, cultural and social contribution of migrants coming from the Euro-Mediterranean region for further social and economic growth of European Union.
- Policy makers should address and promote the rise of social responsibility on human mobility. The European states and the EU as such have to follow and respect the EU directives and legislation concerning migrants and their well-being, and the European Convention on Human Rights. Again, the shift from “security” to “the role of law” and social responsibility approach must take place.
- To address the migration phenomena adequately, a more harmonized and coordinated approach among all political levels (international, national and local) is needed. The EU directive and legislations must be adopted and strictly respected by national policies and further by local, community level. There is scope to improve the implementation of directives, in accordance with their ultimate objective, and improve the practical aspects of the legislation. On an everyday community level several violations of otherwise clearly defined rights of migrants and migrants’ students can be noticed, for instance signature of documents in a language that one is able to understand.
- The discussion about migrant students is not (only) the discussion about the inclusion in the university, but also about the dialogue, exchange and interaction; this is also what the target should be. The inclusion and integration of migrant students is always two-fold process. In this regard it is important to enact at all political level antidiscrimination legislations and protocols.
- In order to foster the desired skills and attitudes of university staff working with migrant students we recommend intercultural workshops, where they can achieve necessary knowledge about the intercultural dialogue, cohabitation, discrimination, culturalism etc. in this context the organized meetings with migrant children and presentation of their experiences.

The recommendations on development of new curricula at universities or of reforming existing curricula of workshop:

- Develop the concept of social responsibility of universities. It is important for several reasons. The university is the seat of knowledge, wisdom and promoter of future social

- values. The university as educator can make a difference and had a power of construct and reconstruct social ideas, public opinion and on a long-term social actions and policies. There is the need to define a socially responsible university. At the moment the area of social responsibility is quite vague and left to different interpretations.
- A manifesto / guidelines for promoting and making visible the social responsibilities of the universities in the field of higher education should be elaborated. A manifesto should be the guide to which all University community should be bound. It could include concrete tasks and responsibilities in order to promote and advocate better the role of the university community in advocating and promoting social responsibility in the areas off: promoting equality, non-discrimination, sustainability, social justice etc.
- Mainstream intercultural education: intercultural issues need to be integrated in the curriculum also in studies where this is not the object of study, e.g. life sciences, technical sciences etc.
- It is important to connect universities with other education levels (high school, non-formal education seats etc.) in order to address the inclusion of migrant students and the topic of migration better. Universities can promote better the possibility of enrolment of migrant students among secondary schools' students and with a help of different organizations with informal educational programs. At the same time the students of university education programmes (the future teachers at primary and secondary schools) must be provided with better knowledge of intercultural coexistence, intercultural communication, interculturality, integration processes, antidiscrimination policies etc. in order to be better qualified to address the issue of migration more appropriately.
- When a gap in knowledge of (migrant) students exists, effort should be made to fill that gap, by approaches such as mentoring, bridge exams/modules, peer group. Such approaches are very labour-intensive and require extra funding.
- The migrant students can have different legal statuses. In this regard it is important to reassure that migrant students can stay in a country and at the university for the whole period of studying, so that they can achieve diploma. It is important to address this issue adequately.
- Development of additional services for migrant students such us: presence of cultural mediator and translator, tutorial system, formalized additional student support and monitoring, promotion of establishment of ethnically based students' groups etc.

- Development of tutorial system for migrant children in a form of peer-support. Tutorial system should be holistic and including support regarding the studying obligations, responsibilities and activities, but also more informal, social socializing and supporting the involvement in everyday faculty and student's life.
- Existing practices show that migrant students are more motivated and determinate to succeed. This should be taken benefit of – full participation in student life for migrant students should be ensured (students must feel part of the student community).
- Good practice “a center for the integration of migrant students within universities” could be promoted.
- Migrant students need to adequately benefit from the establishment of career services after graduation.
- Intercultural university environments are beneficial: they contribute to better research and better teaching; cultural variety is improving student and teacher's performance.
- The existing Erasmus student system prove that solutions for better inclusion of migrant students are possible. The challenge of the present time is: how to include/integrate refugee students. The universities could benefit from existing Erasmus student mobility system experiences and funds. More positive and diversified approach toward migration and presentation of migrants in curricula is needed
- In promoting better inclusion of migrant students in the European university system we must also consider the presence of implicit and more explicit nationalism, racism and xenophobia in a wider EU context and individual EU states, which can influence this process. In order to overcome negative effects of anti-migration movements and politics different campaigns at the EU, national levels and local (University) levels can be launched, promoting economic and social benefits of migrant inclusion in European university system. The higher education of migrant students leads to better integration, better participation in the host society, better utilization of knowledge and the potential. It is contrasted with brain drain.