WP 3

STUDY ON THE LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATION / INTRODUCTION COURSES FOR NEWCOMERS

CASE STUDY GENEVA / SWITZERLAND

By Madalina Rogoz

January 2012
**About the Project**

While integration policies as such are not new, and in some countries date back to the 1980s and beyond, there have been important shifts in the debates on integration and in related re-configurations of integration policymaking in the past decade or so. One of the main recent trends is the linkage of integration policy with admission policy and the related focus on recent immigrants. A second trend is the increasing use of obligatory integration measures and integration conditions in admission policy, and third, integration policymaking is increasingly influenced by European developments, both through vertical (more or less binding regulations, directives etc.) and through horizontal processes (policy learning between states) of policy convergence.

An increasing number of EU Member States have, in fact, adopted integration related measures as part of their admission policy, while the impact of such measures on integration processes of immigrants is far less clear. In addition, Member States’ policies follow different, partly contradictory logics, in integration policy shifts by conceptualising (1) integration as rights based inclusion, (2) as a prerequisite for admission residence rights, with rights interpreted as conditional, and (3) integration as commitment to values and certain cultural traits of the host society.

The objective of **PROSINT** is to **evaluate the impact** of admission related integration policies on the integration of newcomers, to **analyse the different logics** underlying integration policymaking and to **investigate the main target groups** of compulsory and voluntary integration measures.

The project investigated different aspects of these questions along five distinct workpackages. These analysed (1) the **European policy framework on migrant integration** (WP1), (2) the **different national policy frameworks for the integration of newcomers** in the 9 countries covered by the research (WP2), the **admission-integration nexus at the local** level in studied in 13 localities across the 9 countries covered by the research (WP3), the **perception and impacts of mandatory pre-arrival measures** in four of the nine countries covered (WP4) and a methodologically oriented study of the **impact of admission related integration measures** (WP5).

The countries covered by the project were Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Apart from individual cases project reports generally cover the period until end of 2010.

For more information about the project visit [http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html](http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html).
Table of Contents

I  INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................................. 1

II  LOCAL MIGRATION-INTEGRATION POLICY FRAMES - AN OVERVIEW ............................................................. 1
   II.1  INTEGRATION POLICY IN THE CANTON AND IN THE CITY OF GENEVA ......................................................... 3
   II.2  SANS-PIPIERS AND REGULARISATIONS / NEWCOMERS AND LONGSTAYERS ........................................ 4
   II.3  PERCEIVED NEEDS OF NEWCOMERS ........................................................................................................ 4

III  THE LOCAL INTEGRATION LANDSCAPE - A MAPPING OF INTEGRATION / INTRODUCTION COURSES .......... 5
   III.1  COURSES AND TRAININGS OFFERED IN THE CANTON ............................................................................. 5
          III.1.1  Introduction courses ............................................................................................................................. 5
          III.1.2  Information booklets/leaflets .................................................................................................................. 5
          III.1.3  Language courses .................................................................................................................................... 5
          III.1.4  Civic integration / participation courses ................................................................................................. 7
          III.1.5  Training courses ....................................................................................................................................... 8
          III.1.6  Support in the administrative procedures ............................................................................................... 8
                 Course prices ................................................................................................................................................ 8
                 Certificate/professional activity recognition .................................................................................................. 8
                 Prevention of and fight against discrimination and racism ............................................................................. 9

IV  THE (PERCEIVED) IMPACT OF INTEGRATION / INTRODUCTION COURSES ON IMMIGRANTS INTEGRATION TRAJECTORIES ................................................................. 10
   IV.1  LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION ....................................................................................................................... 10
   IV.2  COURSES ATTENDANCE / PRICES / EVALUATIONS ..................................................................................... 10
   IV.3  TARGET GROUPS ............................................................................................................................................... 11
   IV.4  EVALUATION / IMPACT OF COURSES ON INTEGRATION ............................................................................. 11
   IV.5  OTHER APPROACHES / INTEGRATION CONTRACT ......................................................................................... 11
   IV.6  SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION .......................................................................................................................... 12

V  CONCLUSIONS ....................................................................................................................................................... 13

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................................................................. 14

ANNEX ........................................................................................................................................................................... 15
   List of interview partners ............................................................................................................................................. 15
I Introduction

Within the Swiss confederation, the Canton of Geneva is one of the smallest (with a population of 453,292 in 2009), but with the highest percentage of foreigners. In 2009, 38% of permanent residents in Geneva were foreigners, while the permanent residents in Switzerland made 22% of the entire population (OFS, 2010). Moreover, there are also thousands of French citizens who reside in France and work in Geneva, as well as Swiss citizens who commute to Geneva daily for work. Considering also the numerous multinationals and international organisations with headquarters and permanent missions in Geneva, the canton presents itself as no other in Switzerland (Türker, 2007: 6).

Between 1998 and 2001, active in the field of foreigners’ integration in the canton of Geneva was the Foundation for Integration of Immigrants (Fondation pour l’Intégration des Immigrés – FINIM), replacing the Communauté de travail d’accueil et d’intégration des étrangers which functioned between 1962 and 1992. Since 1996 the Centre d’accueil – Geneve international (CAGI) receives international officials and their families. However, CAGI was never part of the policy aimed at the integration of the whole immigrant population (Türker, 2007: 9), as it has a specific target population and addresses integration only for a limited period of time (interview Fátima de Souza, SIT).

In June 2001 the cantonal law on integration of foreigners (loi sur l’intégration des étrangers) was adopted. The law proposes for the first time an administrative framework, specifying the need for clear action lines with regard to integration. However, these lines have not been yet drawn (Cattacin et al, 2007: 19).

In order to promote social cohesion, integration of foreigners and equality in terms of rights and duties, the 2001 cantonal law on integration introduced three new public bodies dealing exclusively with these issues: the Bureau for Integration of Foreigners coordinated by the Delegate of Integration (le Bureau de l’intégration des étrangers – BIE – dirigé par le Délégué à l’intégration), the Interdepartmental Group for Integration (le Groupe interdépartemental de l’intégration) and the Consultative Commission for Integration (la commission consultative de l’intégration).

II Local Migration-Integration Policy Frames - An overview

In its report on the law on integration submitted to the Great Council, the State Council sums up the results of three evaluations, namely: the 2005 evaluation of the independent commission presided by Sandro Cattacin; the report of Diminique Föllmi, responsible with mediation in regard to integration of foreigners within the period 2003-2005; as well as the report of the delegate for integration regarding the activities

1 In 2007 around 40,000 French citizens were working in Geneva without residing there (frontaliers), as well as about 26,000 Swiss residing in the Canton of Vaud were commuting to Geneva to work (confédérés).
3 The legislative of the canton
4 The executive of the canton
in the field between June 2004 and March 2006. The evaluations converge towards the same conclusion – the mechanisms and institutions set up by the law on integration have not been functioning in a satisfactory manner (State Council Report, 2006: 1). All three evaluations note the lack of coordination in terms of policy at the cantonal level. While there are plenty of involved actors, no clear objectives seem to be aimed at and no clear defined groups are targeted. Moreover, the State Council’s report raises the following question: how can one draw the lines of an integration policy (which addresses the local level) when decisions regarding the foreign population are being made at the federal level?

This question addresses one of the core matters of this study – the link between the integration and immigration policies in Geneva. At the time this research was conducted, the BIE has started to draw the lines of an integration policy in Geneva. However, as the integration policy is still under development, the link between integration and immigration policy in Geneva is rather inexistent.

BIE is developing the cantonal policy on integration by preparing also a revision of the cantonal law on the integration of foreigners. The revision is planned to include, among others, the following points (interview André Castella, BIE):

1. Definition of integration
2. Rights and duties of the host society and of the migrants
3. Integration as a mainstream issue
4. Prevention and fight against racism
5. Reduction of obstacle to integration
6. Information for migrants and for the host society
7. Communication

Apart from the above mentioned points, the BIE has developed a list of main areas of interest on which the policy would be developed:

a. Learning French with the purpose of integration (socialisation, alphabetisation etc.)
b. Social and professional integration of persons with temporary residence permits and refugees
c. Communitarian interpretation
d. Language and culture of country of origin
e. Prevention and fight against racism and discrimination
f. Welcoming and information
g. Early childhood/preschool integration

According to some of the interview partners, the idea that the BIE is perceived to have on integration, seems to be learning the official language of the canton. Organisations that offer French courses are subsidised by the BIE, while others, which would emphasise mainly on learning or improving one’s mother language, are not funded by the Canton (interview Magueye Thiam, MIGRAF). However, most of the interviewees agreed that the BIE has indexed the integration courses offered by separate institutions and at least tries to sort out what is being done in the field of integration by different organisations. An example of a course index is the booklet – *Cours de français pour adultes migrant-e-s dans le canton de Genève* – printed by the BIE. This brochure gathers

---

information on language courses organised in the communes of the canton and in the city of Geneva by 24 NGOs and independent institutions.

The most important actors in organising integration courses are thus the NGOs. Since 2001, when the cantonal law on integration was adopted, both the Confederation and the Canton of Geneva financially supported many of the organisations that already worked in the field of integration.

II.1 Integration policy in the canton and in the city of Geneva

As Geneva is a relatively small canton it has been argued that the cantonal government is so close to the administration of the city that no much space is left when it comes to differences in terms of policy. The city of Geneva contributes to different projects, to the welcoming meetings, but the rest is being done by the canton (interview André Castella).

However, by the time the interviews were conducted (August 2010), an interview partner mentioned a difference in applying the law by the city of Geneva and the rest of the canton. One of these differences is the integration on the labour market of graduates of compulsory education. In order to be able to enter the labour market after completing the mandatory school, graduates must work for an employer (apprentissage) while continuing school, which has been called the double contract – with the school and the employer. While all foreign children are entitled to mandatory school even if they don’t have a residence permit, this becomes a problem when they want to continue school and find employment. The city of Geneva allows these people to make the apprentissage even if they do not have, in theory, the right to reside. One of the explanations could be the different political orientation of the canton (right wing) and the city of Geneva (left wing party) (interview with Anahid Pasha Khani, UNIA). In August 2010, this law allowing the sans-papiers to follow an apprentissage was applied only in Geneva and made the notable difference between the canton of Geneva on one side and the rest of the federation on the other. In September 2010, however, the law project (motion) initiated by the Christian-Democrat Luc Barthassat (PDC/GE) was adopted by the second chamber of the Conseil des Etats after it has been already adopted in March by the Conseil National7 (the two chambers of the Federal Parliament). Thus, a new law allowing all youngsters to follow an apprentissage, no matter the status of their residence, is being expected.

Regarding the difference between the canton of Geneva and the city of Geneva, one interview partner stressed the importance of the city when it comes to carrying out actions that are not directly oriented towards foreigners’ integration, but who contribute to their integration (interview Anne Humbert-Droz – OSEO). The interviewee provided the following examples: the green spaces, owned by the city, have been designed as open spaces where people can meet. More towards this idea is the celebration of neighbourhood (la fête des voisins) or grilling days (des journées grilades) during which the municipality provides open air grills where people can come together and cook food. Another example brought up by the interviewee was the municipal policemen (îlotiers) who patrol around the city in order to solve and even prevent quarrels between neighbours. The city offers every year an amount of 750 Francs for each person who has been a legal resident and a tax payer in the canton of Geneva for at least 1 year and has a certain annual income (Chèque annuel de formation)8. This money

---

8 For more information on the requirements visit: http://www.geneve.ch/caf/etape_1.html (16.02.2011)
is to be used exclusively for training courses, such as language courses, informatics courses etc. (interview Anne Humbert-Droz, OSEO).

By the time the interviews were conducted, the city of Geneva and the canton of Geneva have signed an agreement regarding foreigner's integration courses. Under this contract, the canton is responsible for the courses’ content, while the municipality is responsible for the venues where the courses are held. The municipality also funds certain activities undertaken by schools which might contribute to foreigner's integration, such as painting on the exterior of schools anti-discrimination messages in French as well as in other languages. In schools' venues French language courses are being organised not only for non-francophone pupils, but also for their parents (interview Anne Humbert-Droz, OSEO).

II.2 Sans-papiers and regularisations / newcomers and longstayers

Regarding sans-papiers, the particularity of the canton resides in the following: foreigners without legal status who are working in Geneva can pay their taxes although they are not allowed to reside in the canton nor in Switzerland and do not have a work permit. Trade unions such as the Syndicat interprofessionnel de travailleuses et travailleurs (SIT) militates for people without legal status to register with the social services and pay their taxes. By doing this, the workers are, as long as they have an employment, covered in case of work accidents, maternity leave etc. However, if they lose their job they are not entitled to unemployment funds because they do not have a work permit. This tolerated status allows the canton of Geneva to satisfy the need of labour force in different economic sectors (interview Fátima De Souza, SIT) as well as to obtain the tax contributions.

This example could be seen as a difference addressing integration in regard to newcomers and 'longstayers'.

II.3 Perceived needs of newcomers

The most important perceived need of the newcomers (like it is phrased in several interviews) is information. When they arrive in Geneva, many foreigners do not know their rights and duties, the informal networks being the most important mean of information. Some young organisations legitimize their existence through the need of providing newcomers with information. This is the case of Association Decouvrir, made in 2007, whose main goal is to inform highly educated migrant women about their possibilities to continue their careers in Geneva. However, the information provided is also more practical (as orientation within the administration, schools for their children etc.). If the target group of this Association is made mostly of women, there are also other organisations which address school aged children or migrant adult (Le Centre d'Intégration Culturel from the Croix Rouge genevoise). Active in the area of integration are also trade unions, like SIT and UNIA whose main focus is integrating the migrants on the marker labour. All interviewees justified thoroughly why their organisations have chosen these groups, but they never exclude other groups, expressing that, at least in principle, any migrant can attend the (integration) courses they organise. Some of the justifications for publishing the "Practical guide for migrant women searching for employment" (Guide pratique pour les femmes migrantes en recherche d'emploi) refer to
the higher rate of unemployment of women compared to men and also to their hard
time in fulfilling their familial duties (Guide pratique, 2009: 4).

III The Local Integration Landscape - A mapping of integration / introduction courses

III.1 Courses and trainings offered in the Canton

III.1.1 Introduction courses

The most visible actor in providing introduction courses is the Bureau for Integration of
Foreigners (BIE). Together with Université Ouvrière de Genève, BIE offers a 2h
introduction course to all new-comers into the canton of Geneva. The program is called
“Séance d'information et de bienvenue à Genève” and is designed to address issues
regarding cantonal and municipal administration, law, migrant communities, health,
education, accommodation and to refer the participants to different competent
organisations for more specific inquiries. This program is offered 2 times per year in 7
languages.10

III.1.2 Information booklets/leaflets

In 2010 BIE edited the leaflet “What are the opportunities for foreigners after 5, 8, 10
and 12 years of residence in Geneva?” (Quelles possibilités pour les personnes de
nationalité étrangère après 5, 8, 10 et 12 and de séjour à Genève?)11 designed to offer an
overview of residence rights for foreigners who have already been living in Geneva for a
number of years, mentioning also the authority responsible with processing different
cases. While some procedures are almost automatic, for others a certain degree of
integration is required (e.g. language knowledge, financial autonomy etc.).

Together with several NGOs active in the canton of Geneva, BIE published a “Practical
guide for migrant women searching for employment” (Guide Pratique pour les femmes
migrantes en recherche d'emploi).12 The Guide gathers basic information on most
available programs designed to help women in finding employment, as well as programs
for training and professional certification.

III.1.3 Language courses

The main actors providing language courses are the NGOs. Some of them are local
organisations made in Geneva and which work only in Geneva – Association Découvrir

9 For more information visit: http://www.uog.ch/fr/articles/index/156 (23.02.2011)
10 For more information visit: http://www.ge.ch/integration/information-orientation-et-conseil/
(16.02.2011)
11 For more information visit: http://www.geneve.ch/integration/doc/publications/brochure-
possibilites.pdf (22.02.2011)
12 For more information visit: http://www.geneve.ch/ofpc/doc/guides/guide_femme_emploi.pdf
(22.02.2011)
for instance) and organisations which function in the entire Switzerland or beyond, but have branches in Geneva (such as Croix Rouge). Another differentiation can be made between migrant organisations (Tierra Incognita – Latin American migrants, MIGRAF – African migrants) and organisations that have a broader scope, but which also address migrants’ integration in their projects (Oeuvre Suisse d’entraide ouvrière – OSEO). Most of the organisations providing these courses, although targeting more or less specific groups – women, under school aged children, children coming from a specific country of origin or at least geographical area – offer their courses, at least in principle, to all other groups of migrants. The language courses in Geneva are not compulsory. For a long term residence permit, though, one has to speak French equivalent with the European level A and for naturalisation\textsuperscript{13} one has to speak French equivalent to level B (interview André Castella).

Centre d’Integration Culturelle - CIC (Croix-Rouge genevoise) carries out several permanent programs and activities that have a say in the field of integration of foreigners in Geneva. First, CIC offers migrants a library where they can read almost 30,000 publications in more than 256 languages. The library also contains almost 700 bilingual books for small children (in the so-called “Bébéthèque”). Moreover, volunteers working with CIC bring some of the books to 7 asylum applicants’ accommodation centres and 2 prisons.

CIC offers 2 language courses for daily life:

a. Course of simple French: 7 times per week for several levels of knowledge – beginner, intermediate and advanced, 3 sessions per year for 15 students per course. This course is held by French speaker volunteers trained by CIC

b. Course of intensive French: 2 sessions per year of 4 months each (100h of course each session) for 10 participants per course, divided in 4 different levels. During these courses, volunteers or representatives of local and cantonal organisation and institutions are invited to present different subjects, such as: basic insurances in Geneva, recycling, Swiss institutions etc.

Other courses/activities available not only, but also for foreigners, organised by CIC: homework help for children given by volunteers, drafting official letters etc. The workshop “Playing in French”, unique in Geneva, was designed for children who started school in September 2009. The workshop, organised in July and August, aims not only to provide children with basic language notions, but also to familiarise children with the school format in Geneva. Another important activity organised by CIC, together with Université Ouvrière de Genève (UOG), is the so-called “Troc de langues”. This program brings together 2 persons who work together in order to exchange information on their native languages. In 2009, French was the most demanded language. From a total of 169

\textsuperscript{13} Requirements regarding aptitudes for ordinary naturalisation in the Canton of Geneva:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ties with the canton which reflect one’s adaptation to living in Geneva
  \item Not have been subject to one or more convictions
  \item Enjoy a good reputation
  \item Able to support him/herself and his/her dependents
  \item Not supported for the social services
  \item Integrated into the community and respect the declaration of individual rights set out in the constitution of May 24, 1847
\end{itemize}

For more information visit: \url{http://www.geneve.ch/naturalisations/naturalisation-etrangers/naturalisation-ordinaire/} (22.02.2011)
applications, 106 found the possibility to form a tandem. The collaboration with UOG was formally signed in 2009.\(^\text{14}\)

**Centre d’accueil et de formation pour femmes migrantes – Camarada** is a centre for receiving and training low-skilled migrant women and their children who are not yet enrolled in school.\(^\text{15}\) The Centre receives around 700 women per year. Regarding French alphabetisation, Camarada addresses 2 types of public – women who learn French for the first time and women who have been living in Geneva for some years and thus have some language knowledge, but want to learn to read and write. Some of these migrant women attended school only shortly or not at all in their countries of origin. Their main motivation for learning to read and write is to be able to help their children with homework as well as to be involved in their children’s school community.\(^\text{16}\) The courses offered by Camarada have been developed to take into consideration: the heterogeneity of the participants (regarding age and countries or origin), the lack of alphabetisation, as well as their life experiences (sometimes traumatising).

The **Conference of Students’ Associations** (*Conférence Universitaire des Associations d’EtudiantEs – CUAE*) offered in 2010 free of charge language courses, open to all migrants interested in improving their French knowledge. The courses’ curricula were fixed together with the participants, according to their needs and interests (French for school, work, daily life etc.). Moreover, in order to be available for those employed, courses were held in the evenings and no preliminary registration was required.\(^\text{17}\)

**Open University of Geneva** (*Université Ouvrière de Genève – OUG*) offers language courses of different levels (from alphabetisation and beginners to intermediate), as well as conversation courses for adult migrants. The courses are offered 2 times per year, in the summer and winter semesters.

### III.1.4 Civic integration / participation courses

There are also civic participation courses (*de citoyenneté*) organised by some organisations, such as **Camarada, Université Ouvrière de Genève - UOG** or **Université Populaire** (interview Anne Humbert-Droz – OSEO). However, when teaching low skilled migrants, the political system is considered to be a too advanced topic (interview Adriana Mumenthaler, CIC). The courses are supported by the BIE or by the Confederation (whenever a call for projects appears), but are also made by volunteers (*bénévoles*).

The courses organised by UOG with regard to integration are advanced French language courses addressing various issues, such as culture, citizenship and society, as well as organising study visits to certain cultural organisations and political institutions. The

\(^{14}\) For more information visit: [http://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/services/interculturelle.html](http://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/services/interculturelle.html) (22.02.2011)

\(^{15}\) For more information visit: [http://www.camarada.ch/Boutique/index-home.html](http://www.camarada.ch/Boutique/index-home.html) (22.02.2011)

\(^{16}\) For alphabetization courses, because participants do not have any French language knowledge, the method used by Camarada is the so-called “silent way” (developed by the pedagogue Caleb Gattegno). This method assigns each sound from a language a certain color which is then learned by the participants. Initially they learn to make simple phrases by putting the sounds together, and then learn the meaning. As the class has more participants, one of them will eventually explain the others and they will work together in the same rhythm, while the teacher will remain silent. Interview with Carole Breukel, Radio Suisse Romande – Espace 2, [http://www.camarada.ch/Docs/LcommeLire.mp3](http://www.camarada.ch/Docs/LcommeLire.mp3) (22.02.2011)

\(^{17}\) For more information visit: [http://www.cuae.ch/v2/?p=16](http://www.cuae.ch/v2/?p=16) (22.02.2011)
aim of the course is, apart from improving their level of French, to help participants to improve their knowledge regarding the city of Geneva.

III.1.5 Training courses

For holders of an F resident permit or for refugees with a residence permit B, CIC organises training courses for future employment in a library or in an office. The courses are held 3 sessions per year, 2 times per week, for 8 students each course. These trainings aim to increase the integration possibilities of asylum applicants as well as of refugees living in Geneva.

Apart from alphabetisation classes, Camarada offers workshops for sewing, informatics courses for beginners, information on disease prevention and promotion of health, as well as information on employability in Geneva.

III.1.6 Support in the administrative procedures

Centre de Contact Suisses-Immigrés (CCSI) offers support regarding: information on residence and work permits in Switzerland, the administrative process undertaken for obtaining a residence permit, as well as information on social insurance and health insurance, information on school system and school enrolment procedures. Moreover, CCSI offers support and counselling for sans-papiers.

Course prices

Although subsidised, most of the organisations chose to offer the courses at a certain (small) price (between 15 and 50 CHF / course) in order to motivate and give a certain responsibility to the participants (interview Liliana Ruiz, Tierra Incognita). Others, like Universite Ouvriere and Universite Populaire offer courses free of charge which sans-papiers can attend, as presence is not linked with the residence status (interview Anne Humbert-Droz, OSEO; interview Magueye Thiam, MIGRAF). UOG offers semester courses, charged 100 CHF, and conversation courses, charged 20 CHF, as for the latter UOG received subventions from the Federal Office for Migration (Office federal des migrations - ODM).

Université Populaire du Canton de Genève offers French courses for 50 CHF each, charging a yearly contribution of 50 CHF for each participant.

Certificate/professional activity recognition

Qualification+ is a service within the cantonal Office for Orientation, Professional and Continuous Training (Office pour l'Oriention, la Formation Professionnelle et Continue – OFPC), in charge with the official recognition of professional competences. For obtaining such recognition, one has to have: at least 5 years of experience in a certain professional area, of which some have to be in Switzerland, the actual competences, residence or be tax-payer in Geneva for at least one year (Guide Pratique, 2009: 32).
**Prevention of and fight against discrimination and racism**

By the time of conducting the interviews, BIE was developing an observatory for racism. This is regarded as an extremely important instrument for promoting integration. The third edition of the International Week for Action against Racism (*semaine internationale d'actions contre le racisme*) will take place in March 2011. The week is organised by the BIE together with migrants’ organisations and the city of Geneva.\(^\text{18}\)

IV The (perceived) Impact of Integration / Introduction courses on Immigrants Integration Trajectories

IV.1 Labour market integration

A clear example of labour market integration trajectory is offered by the Swiss Labour Assistance (Oeuvre Suisse d'entraide ouvrière – OSEO)\(^{19}\). In Geneva, OSEO has several programs, among which: Atelier de soutien à l’apprentissage du français et l’intégration (ASAFI), Parcours – Coaching, SEMO – Mentorat, Cellule Analyse & Conseils, ONEX Solidaire, Bourse à l’emploi, agence de placement. All these, successive or in parallel, prepare the participants for future employment and thus to integrate into the labour market\(^{20}\). In 2009 OSEO registered 1200 participants, with 74% more than in 2008 (687 participants). Regarding their origin, in 2008 6% of the participants were Swiss and 11% came from UE-AELE, the rest of 83% were third country nationals. In 2009 30% were Swiss, 20% UE-AELE and the rest of 50% were third country nationals\(^{21}\).

Regarding the impact of these programs on the participants’ actual integration, OSEO offers some data in its annual report. Bourse à l’emploi received 393 applications in 2009 (with 10% less than in 2008 – 438 applications). A network of 250 employers has been developed, 181 persons have been temporary employed, and one has found a permanent position\(^{22}\). Therefore, courses offered by OSEO have a direct impact on the migrant’s integration into the labour market.

The goal of ASAFI is to promote socio-cultural integration and reduce unemployment and social exclusion. The courses offered in the ASAFI program vary from language courses, civic education, to practical exercises during which participants interact with local and cantonal institutions.

IV.2 Courses attendance / prices / evaluations

The only evaluation made by each organisation resides in testing the participants at the end of the language courses provided. These are recognised certificates which can help the migrants prove to a third party the level of their knowledge of French.

The non-binding character of the courses is perceived as positive by several interview partners, as the internal motivation is considered to be more important than any type of external constraint (interview Adriana Mumenthaler, CIC). Regarding the level of participation, interview partners referred to waiting lists (interview Babel-Guerin, CRG), stressing the need for more courses.

---

19 “Swiss Labour Assistance SLA has been committed to achieving a socially, politically and economically just society since 1936. It empowers people to live their lives with dignity and security. It assists people and organisations to exercise their rights. To achieve this, the SLA seeks to influence the social and political processes that are relevant to its work. The SLA is active both in Switzerland and abroad. It works with local partner organizations and is currently involved in 65 projects in ten developing countries. These projects aim to improve living conditions and a fair distribution of resources” (http://www.sah.ch/data/7FF1984F/Factsheet SAH_E.pdf, 22.02.2011)


21 Data for 2008 refers to the following programs: ASAFI, Parcours and Cellule Analyse & Conseils, while data for 2009 refers to all OSEO programs.

The cost of the courses is perceived as an incentive for migrants to continue participating. As courses are partially supported by the Confederation or by the Canton, the prices are kept relatively low, in order for migrants to afford them. Regarding course management and quality standards, this is perceived to fit migrants’ needs, especially when it comes to migrants with a low level of education and who need to learn to read and write first in a foreign language.

**IV.3 Target groups**

In general the courses are open to a large category of migrants and thus they all can benefit by participating. However, the example which appeared in several interviews is the one of ‘longstayers’ migrant women who, although live in Geneva for years, spend most of their time with their families and do not have the chance to integrate into the receiving society. The courses, more than learning French, offer these women the opportunity to get outside their family zones and interact with the receiving society (interviews Babel-Guerin, CRG; Adriana Mumenthaler, CIC, André Castella, BIE).

Apart from refugees and migrants with different residence permits, 10 – 12 000 persons without residence permit are estimated to live in Geneva. Thus, for BIE, the public which is targeted by integration courses still has to be defined, precisely because of its heterogeneity. However, those who take advantage the most of the courses available are the migrants without legal residence, as they want to learn the language and obtain the regularisation of their status, as well as migrants with a limited residence permit (B) (interview André Castella).

**IV.4 Evaluation / impact of courses on integration**

Almost all interview partners refer to the lack of studies regarding the impact of these courses on integration, but all of them stressed their importance for the integration process. Therefore, the perceived impact of courses on the level of integration is relatively high. Although no instrument has been yet developed in order to measure the impact of courses on social cohesion, the perceived impact of these courses remains high.

**IV.5 Other approaches / integration contract**

In comparison with alternative approaches to integration, especially to the integration contract approach, the views are two folded. On one hand, integration contract (introduced in some German speaking cantons as well as in France) is seen as useless, as the motivation to integrate should come from the migrant’s own interest and need. Furthermore, such a contract would raise important issues regarding its applicability opposing individual freedom, as everyone should do what the cantonal administration imposes (interview Fátima de Souza, SIT). On the other hand, an integration contract which would require migrants to assume the responsibility of learning the language of the canton where they reside is seen as positive, at least from a symbolic perspective. If this is done in a manner of involving rather than imposing, an integration contract could
increase migrants’ responsibility and thus their implication in the learning process (interview Babel-Guérin, CRG).

IV.6 Sustainable integration

The main need of migrants, both long-stayers and newcomers, has been identified by several interview partners as the access to information. In this sense, BIE gathers and publishes information on available courses, on residence status, as well as organises welcoming meetings for newcomers in the canton of Geneva. When it comes to sustainable integration, BIE is currently developing, together with universities and organisations already active in the field of integration, a policy which proposes integration as a cross-cutting issue within the education policy, the health policy etc. (interview André Castella, BIE).
V Conclusions

The Canton of Geneva is currently developing its integration policy. However, as 30% of its population is made by migrants for over 4 centuries\(^\text{23}\), a lot is being done in terms of integration. Most of the courses available to both newcomers and longstayers are provided by NGOs in collaboration with and with the financial support of the federal, cantonal and municipal administration. Therefore, the one active and the driving force with regard to integration projects is the civil society.

The integration requirements set in the Federal Ordinance on Integration (ordonnance fédérale sur l'intégration) are wide-ranging, leaving the cantons the responsibility and liberty to narrow down these prerequisites. The 2001 cantonal law on integration, being still general, requires BIE to define clear action lines. However, NGOs have already identified main needs of the migrant population and proposed courses/projects in order to fill in the existing gaps.

Regarding the reference point when it comes to integration policy, the French approach is being mentioned. As phrased by the Delegate of Integration, the situation in France is being influenced by the developments in the French speaking Switzerland and the other way around. While in France the debate on redrawing French citizenship is ongoing, the federal legislation will harden the integration requirements for naturalisation. And the other way around, the initiative anti-minarets in Switzerland influenced the French populism. (interview André Castella, BIE)

References

Office federal de la statistique (OFS) (2010), Population résidante permanente selon la nationalité, le sexe et les cantons,


BIE, OFPC & Association Découverrir (November 2009), Guide Pratique pour les femmes migrantes en recherche d’emploi,

Loi sur l’intégration des étrangers (LIEtr) of 28th of June 2001,

Cattacin, S. et all (2007) Évaluation de la Loi sur l’intégration des étrangers du Canton de Genève,

Course de français pour adultes migrantes dans le canton de Genève,


Université Ouvrière de Genève, Séances d’information et de bienvenue BIE – UOG,
http://www.uog.ch/fr/articles/index/156 (23.02.2011)

République et Canton de Genève, Intégration des étrangers, Information, Orientation et conseil,


République et Canton de Genève, Naturalisation ordinaire,
http://www.geneve.ch/naturalisations/naturalisation-etrangers/naturalisation-ordinaire/ (23.02.2011)

République et Canton de Genève, Integration des Etrangeres, L’immigration en Questions,
http://www.ge.ch/integration/immigration-en-questions/ (22.02.2011)

Centre d’Intégration Culturelle (CIC), http://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/services/interculturelle.html (22.02.2011)

Centre d’accueil et de formation pour femmes migrantes – Camarada, http://www.camarada.ch/Boutique/index-home.html (22.02.2011)


Conférence Universitaire des Associations d’EtudiantEs, Course De Français Pour Migrants, http://www.cuae.ch/v2/?p=16 (22.02.2011)


Annex

List of interview partners

(face-to-face interviews conducted in August 2010, Geneva, Switzerland and phone interviews conducted in September 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>André Catella</td>
<td>Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers (BIE) Délégué à l'intégration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocio Restrepo</td>
<td>Association Decouvrir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mme Babel-Guérin</td>
<td>Croix-Rouge genevoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana Mumenthaler</td>
<td>Centre d’Intégration Culturelle (CIC), Croix-Rouge genevoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liliana Ruiz</td>
<td>Tierra Inocignita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magueye Thiam</td>
<td>Association de la Migration Africaine (MIGRAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Humbert-Droz</td>
<td>Oeuvre suisse d’entraide ouvrière (OSEO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fâtima Cilene de Souza</td>
<td>Syndicat interprofessionnel de travailleuses et travailleurs (SIT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marianne Halle</td>
<td>Centre de Contact Suisses-Immigrés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anahid Pasha Khani</td>
<td>Syndicat UNIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angélica Ibarra</td>
<td>Association de Papaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandro Cattacin</td>
<td>Université de Genève</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>