

“Gandia mediation project”

This document is part of a larger collection of examples of current policies for young people in Europe. The collection is an outcome of a European research project called “UP2YOUTH – Youth: actor of social change?”

The basic idea of the “current practice” collection is to see how current practices and policies relate to young people as active agents in shaping their lives. Therefore, our intention is not a collection of “good” or “best” practices. Rather, it includes also practices, which are interesting because of their relation to young people’s agency but which involve problematic aspects, such as restricted financial resources, a very thin spread, or no clear evaluation criteria. We have applied a searching pattern which asked for “strengths” and “weaknesses”. This explicitly opens space for your own evaluation, because also policies are included, which definitely do have weaknesses, but are highly interesting for specific reasons. Therefore we have to stress that the researchers did not evaluate these practices themselves.

The whole collection can be found at <http://www.up2youth.org/content/view/192/60/>

Section	Indications of contents
Title of programme/ practice	Mediation programme for immigrants and natives
Location	Gandía (Valencia) Gandia is a city south of Valencia, with over 80.000 inhabitants and a foreign population of more than 20%. There are immigrants of 102 different nationalities, and there is a large group of “Roma”. Only 51% of the population has been born in Gandia. The most important immigrant groups are Bulgarians, Bolivians, Moroccans, Rumanians and Ecuadorians. Local and municipal initiative.
Main theme	Comprehensive program including immigrants – children, young people and adults –, ethnic minorities and native population.
Practice/Programme-related keywords	Multiculturalism, integration and diversity, immigrants’ identity, intermediation, native culture and immigrants’ culture, young people, learning, education, social integration, social rights, coexistence.
Summary of programme/ practice	The high number of immigrants and foreigners among the total population has made coexistence problems visible. The municipality promotes <i>the mediation project</i> with the aim of overcoming the difficulties related to the coexistence between different groups of the population (foreigners and natives) during the processes of integration into labour market, education system, society and neighbourhood. The creation of mediators, foreigners who have settled in the municipality and are completely integrated, who are acknowledged and accepted by local authorities and groups of immigrants, has increased the chances of successfully dealing with

	conflicts between groups of the population. .
Target	<p>1) Target area:</p> <p>The growth of the number of immigrants, which happened in a very short period of time (only during the last 7 years) elicits reactions of acceptance/ rejection. These reactions become apparent in times of crisis, when unemployment affects workers (both immigrants and natives). Avoiding reactions of rejection and conflicts towards immigrants is the main aim of this programme.</p>
	<p>2) Target groups/issues/problems addressed:</p> <p>Immigrants come from different countries (102 nationalities), there is also a large group of Roma and several different cultures. Immigrants need some time to adapt to the new reality, above all in terms of the education system and the new living environment. Promoting mediation is not only a "life-style", but also a strategic gamble to achieve peaceful coexistence.</p>
Objectives of programme/practice	<p>Achieve peaceful presence/integration of immigrants avoiding conflicts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote plans and actions to improve integration of immigrants. 2. Promote actions directed to the immigrant population, in the city of Gandia and its surroundings (the <i>Mancomunidad de La Safor</i> – a coordinated group of several municipalities to offer shared services), with the collaboration of companies, NGO's, the Red Cross, Caritas and the unions. 3. Facilitate communication among the population through the promotion of official languages (Spanish and Valencian) and the translation of official documents into 9 different foreign languages in order to make integration and access to public services and the Administration easier. 4. 5. The program is based on the principles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equality of all people in front of the law. 2. Coexistence: guarantee a legal framework and values that facilitate coexistence and allow conflict management. 3. Interculturality: respect for the culture and beliefs of the majority and mutual acknowledgement of diversity. 4. Normalization and Participation: adapt existing structures to the new social reality. 5. Access of all people to municipal services, as well as collaboration and dialogue of all social agents and organizations.
Content of programme/practice	<p>Contracted mediators belong to the nationalities of the most represented groups in the municipality: they are accessible for immigrants and have relations with them and the institutions of Gandia.</p> <p>Different meetings are planned between cultural associations, associations of districts with a high percentage of foreigners and the corresponding administrations: their demands are taken into account. Organizations working with immigrants act as mediators and promote participation in the processes of decision-taking of the Administration.</p>

	<p>The municipality has distributed 26.000 documents in social centres, associations related to immigration and phone-call centres. These documents are translated into nine languages (Bulgarian, Russian, Romanian, English, French, German, Arab, Chinese and Spanish) in order to facilitate integration of immigrants.</p> <p>Until now, mediation and “taking immigrants into account” has allowed avoiding conflicts through better and deeper knowledge of the differences between groups. The level of satisfaction of the immigrant population, the native population, authorities, NGO’s and unions is acceptable.</p>
Time scale	<p>Duration/Sustainability:</p> <p>Due to the nature of this project, there is not a certain period of time in which it has to be developed (1 or 2 years), it is rather a political wager of the local powers on the medium or long run in order to make it possible for the population to integrate people with different origins as members of the community.</p>
Programme/ design	<p>practice</p> <p>Development of programme/practice:</p> <p>The programme started on a local level and was supported by NGO’s, unions, local companies...</p> <p>To make the program possible municipal workers were specifically contracted for the programme and political and social representatives of organizations that favoured the project – also immigrant organizations – supported them.</p>
Resources involved	See above.
Evaluation	<p>1) Evaluation process:</p> <p>Follow-up and monitoring activities will be continuous and flexible. As the social reality is changing, there has to be a certain level of adaptability to transformations in society, in terms of coexistence, integration and interculturality. To make monitoring and evaluation effective, the Plan includes a tool needed to carry out continuous analysis of the social reality: the observatory for immigration and coexistence of local interculturality.</p> <p>2) Results / impact of programme:</p> <p>The impact on the population has been positive and allows developing a level of coexistence where problems are minimized or coped with. Different actors participating in the programme are subjected to evaluation.</p> <p>3) Difficulties encountered:</p> <p>Difficulties found are typical for a project of this nature that affects a great number of people in the context of their daily life. It is easier to face the problem if there’s structured and representative associationism among immigrants.</p> <p>4) Assessment of programme/ action/ practice in terms of sustainability:</p> <p>The evaluation team is formed by a number of experts of the social services that work for the municipality. The techniques used to collect information provided by different actors are reports, surveys, individual reports and specific researches. There is also continuous evaluation of all media used: television, press, and brochures...</p>

Lessons to be drawn from programme or practice implemented	Local powers try to achieve peaceful coexistence based on the access of all citizens that live in the city to all public services, as well as participation of social agents and civic organizations. Centres to provide continuous communication and information to immigrants and mixed institutions have been created, such as libraries for immigrants and natives.
Contact information	no information
Other doc related to the programme/ practice	http://www.gandia.org/ajuntament/val/index.asp 1) Social services of the municipality. 2) Reports of the programme. 3) Reports about immigration in Gandia. 4) Cooperation and Social Integration of the municipality. 5) Comprehensive Action Plan.