

TRAINING OF EDUCATORS FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND TRAINING OF  
UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS IN SPAIN

FORMAÇÃO DE EDUCADORES PARA A INCLUSÃO SOCIAL E A FORMAÇÃO  
DE MENORES ESTRANGEIROS DESACOMPANHADOS EM ESPANHA

FORMACIÓN DE EDUCADORES PARA LA INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL Y LA  
FORMACIÓN DE MENORES EXTRANJEROS NO ACOMPAÑADOS EN ESPAÑA

José González-Monteagudo<sup>1</sup>

Alberto de la Portilla<sup>2</sup>

Mario León-Sánchez<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** The article begins with an introduction to the Spanish context, focusing on migration, diversity, and the specific profile and needs of immigrant minors arriving alone in Spain, which raises the new professional roles of social educators working in intercultural diversity contexts. The second section of the article deals with educators' training of immigrant minors and young people, a relatively neglected and under-served field. Sections three and four are dedicated to present two training experiences we have carried out, on a four-month online course for under-age educators and a short-term face-to-face course on the same topic.

**Keywords:** Intercultural education. Unaccompanied foreign minors. Social inclusion. Immigration. Spain.

**Resumo:** O artigo começa com uma introdução ao contexto espanhol, focalizando a migração, a diversidade e o perfil e as necessidades específicas dos menores imigrantes que chegam sozinhos à Espanha, o que eleva os novos papéis profissionais dos educadores sociais que trabalham em contextos de diversidade intercultural. A segunda seção do artigo trata da formação de educadores de menores e jovens imigrantes, um campo relativamente negligenciado e mal atendido. As seções três e quatro são dedicadas a apresentar duas experiências de formação que realizamos, em um curso on-line de quatro meses para educadores menores de idade e um curso presencial de curta duração sobre o mesmo tema.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação intercultural. Menores estrangeiros desacompanhados. Inclusão social. Imigração. Espanha.

<sup>1</sup> Doutor em Pedagogia e professor titular da Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de Sevilha (Espanha). Foi professor convidado e pesquisador em universidades da Europa, América e Ásia. Pertence às associações francófona (ASIHVIF), an- glófona (ESREA) e brasileira (BIOgraph) para pesquisa e formação biográficas. Email: monteagu@hotmail.com. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3094-8092>.

<sup>2</sup> Asociación “Encuentro Acción Educativa Intercultural”. Educador social. Email: formacion@encuentrointercultural.org. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4234-5333>.

<sup>3</sup> Doutorando em Educação na Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de Sevilha (Espanha). Email: marioleon95@hotmail.com. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2649-944X>.

**Resumen:** El artículo comienza con una introducción relativa al contexto español, centrada en las migraciones, la diversidad y el perfil específico y necesidades de los menores inmigrantes que llegan solos a España, lo cual plantea el tema de los nuevos roles profesionales de los educadores sociales que trabajan en contextos de diversidad intercultural. La segunda sección del artículo trata sobre la formación de los educadores de menores y jóvenes inmigrantes, un campo relativamente descuidado y poco atendido. Las secciones tres y cuatro están dedicadas a presentar dos experiencias formativas que hemos llevado a cabo, sobre un curso online de formación de educadores de menores de cuatro meses de duración y sobre un curso presencial de corta duración sobre el mismo tema.

**Palabras-clave:** Educación intercultural. Menores extranjeros no acompañados. Inclusión social, Inmigración. España.

## Introduction

This article focuses on social and intercultural educators' training for the accompaniment, integration and learning of unaccompanied foreign minors and, by extension, students of immigrant origin. In Spain, this subject is very closely related to the profiles and functions of intercultural mediators. Thus, we continually refer to the mediating dimension of social and intercultural educators (GUICHOT-MUÑOZ, FERNÁNDEZ-GAVIRA AND GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, 2014).

This text arises from the collaboration between the association "Encuentro Acción Educativa Intercultural" and the University of Seville. More than a decade ago, we started our partnership in the development of courses for multicultural educators. In this context, we have developed in partnership a European Social Fund project, which led to the publication of a book on the training, social integration and labour insertion of minors of immigrant origin (DE LA PORTILLA, SERRA AND GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, 2007).

With this article, we hope to offer a clear and synthetic vision of the current context and the challenges that Spain faces regarding educators' training of immigrant minors. We have also presented and justified training proposals already developed and evaluated, based on an experiential, engaged and community-based training model, in the perspective of a participatory, critical and tolerant intercultural education.

## New roles for social and intercultural educators in contexts of diversity

The Spanish context of the last 20 years reflects an important socio-cultural change. This is reflected in the growth and development of new professional profiles, designed to cope with new social realities and new needs. The case of educators (a professional denomination that in Spain is usually expressed under the label of "social educators") is a clear example of

this. This article presents a discussion on this professional figure, with particular attention to educators' training about immigrant minors. We will offer both an overview of recent scientific literature and contributions from associations and the territory in our journey. We will also present the training experiences that the co-authors of this article have been carrying out over the last few years, in a perspective of collaboration between the University of Seville and the association "Encuentro Acción Educativa Intercultural".

The need to train educators in migratory contexts and intercultural mediators arose in Spain during the last decade of the 20th century. In particular, from 1995 onwards, the first educators and intercultural mediators were trained in Madrid. Around the same time, the first experiences with immigrants in training in intercultural skills began in Andalusia to work as intercultural educators and mediators. These pioneering experiences were carried out by Andalucía Acoge and the CITE network of the left-wing trade union *Comisiones Obreras*.

Spain has undergone major historical and demographic changes in the second half of the 20th century. Indeed, during General Franco's dictatorship, particularly between 1950 and 1975, there were massive emigration processes to other countries as a result of poverty and the difficulty of finding employment in the country. In recent decades, following the political transition enshrined in the 1978 democratic constitution, this trend has been reversed due to immigrants' massive arrival, attracted by Spain's economic development and the quality of life of European societies.

It should be borne in mind that between 2000 and 2008 almost five million immigrants arrived in Spain, bringing the country's population up from 41 to 46 million. This massive arrival of migrants led to an increase in diversity and, consequently, new social needs and new professional profiles appeared, intending to favour the integration of immigrant groups and increase the intercultural sensitivity of the native population, favouring social inclusion and working on the conflicts derived from the new contexts, especially in the big cities. This has led to the development in Spain of new professional figures of educators and intercultural mediators who accompany immigrant minors from the end of the 20th century. The recent economic crisis has raised unemployment and caused an increase in poverty and social exclusion. In this difficult situation, there is a greater need for accompaniment, training, social inclusion and intercultural mediation, in social and educational contexts, to promote tolerance and resolve potential conflicts between different groups. The population born abroad and registered in Spain in 2012 was 5,700,000 people, or 12.1% of the total population. Of this foreign-born population, approximately one million had Spanish nationality and around a

third came from other European Union countries. This percentage of foreign residents in Spain has fallen in recent years. In fact, in 2016, the migrant population represented only 9.6% of Spain's total resident population due to the economic recession and the increase in unemployment. These factors have led to the return to their countries of origin of part of the immigrants who arrived in Spain during the economic boom before the economic crisis (LABOUR FORCE SURVEY, 2016).

The recent refugee crisis, the growing migratory pressure, and the improvement of Spain's economic situation are key factors in understanding the increase in the number of immigrants arriving in Spain from 2015 onwards. In 2018 Spain was the second EU country in terms of immigrants arriving irregularly, only behind Italy. Consequently, the number of underage immigrants arriving in Spain is also growing. According to the association *Save the Children*, in September 2017 there were 5,380 children under public guardianship in the Spanish regions, an increase of 30% compared to 2016. The regions with the highest presence of minors were: Andalusia (2,076), Melilla (724), Basque Country (566), Catalonia (410), Ceuta (204) and Valencia (238) (SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2018). We know that this problem has a European scope (FERRARA, 2016). In the case of Spain, only recently has research been published on unaccompanied migrant minors, their profiles and their needs for training and social and labour integration (MENDOZA, 2017; ETXEBERRÍA, 2012; SÁNCHEZ-FERNÁNDEZ, 2017; SÁNCHEZ-NÚÑEZ AND RAMOS, 2016).

In this context of new needs, both recent and current, it is logical that specialisations have been appearing in the academic world, aimed to meet the country's structural requirements. It is essential to mention that it was precisely at the end of the nineties when we began to see "a transition from the figure of the 'specialist educator' [...] to those of the street educator or the family educator, to finally arrive at the consolidation of the professional figure of the social educator" (DE-JUANAS, LIMÓN Y MELENDRO, 2014, p. 92). From the period of political transition until the beginning of the 21st century, this new figure has been consolidated. It has been officially recognised with the approval of "Royal Decree 1420/1991, of 30 August, of the Official University Degree in Social Education" (DE-JUANAS, LIMÓN Y MELENDRO, 2014, p. 93), sponsored and supported by the Faculties of Education (LIMÓN, 1992). Later, after the Bologna process (1999), which initiated the unification of European countries' university systems, the Degree in Social Education and the Degree in Social and Community Intervention will be created, a matter which will be further developed later on. However, it was not until 2007 that the figure of "intercultural educator or mediator"

became a reality, with the incorporation of the profile of "community mediator" into the training catalogue recognised by the National Institute of Qualifications".

## **Training and professionalisation of educators of minors and young people from immigrant origins**

When trying to identify a professional's training, we have to refer to the most common profiles held by the people who carry out that particular work. In the case of educators and intercultural mediators, the question is diffuse, since these professional figures are born in a specific context and take on characteristics of various occupations in the social sphere, including the professional figures of the pedagogue, the adult educator, the social worker and, above all, the social educator (TERRÓN-CARO et al., 2015; VALLÉS-HERRERO, 2011). Over the last few decades, a major effort has been made to consolidate educators' work in contexts of intercultural diversity as an autonomous professional field.

Specifically, Richarte Vidal and Díe Olmos (2008) propose a division by stages of the evolution of this figure within Spain:

- A first stage of origin or genesis, between 1994 and 1997. Among the positive points we can point out the socio-cultural reference to both immigrant and Roma populations, allochthonous and autochthonous minorities; and the plurality of promoting entities (non-governmental organisations, professional entities, universities and public administrations, especially the municipal ones). It should be noted that the challenge of migration is faced with the potential of mediation. Still, it should also be pointed out that the need for educators and mediators for the whole population and society as a whole is not perceived, whether or not there are immigrants. In most experiences, educational and mediating practice and action were far ahead of the conceptual foundation and even necessary training.
- A second stage of development, between 1998 and 2002. In this second stage, the number of projects and services was increased, the quality of courses grew, the first books were published, the first specialities and postgraduate courses were designed and implemented in the universities. Likewise, both the educators of minors and the mediators began to be incorporated into regional and municipal immigration and integration plans. The number of autonomous communities that opted for intercultural mediation increased.
- A third stage of expansion, between 2003 and the present. In this third phase, we can speak of an emergence, a "boom" and even a fashion, characterised by the strong and accelerated

expansion, extension, growth, and intensification of the teams and entities incorporated into the work developed by educators mediators with immigrant communities.

Finally, it seems that another stage is now beginning, in which the professional profile is beginning to be defined with more precision and convergence, while there is a more insistent demand for professional, institutional and social recognition in line with the functions performed by professionals working with immigrant children, minors and young people (RICHARTE VIDAL AND DÍE OLMOS, 2008, pp. 148-149)

One of the most recurrent issues in the debates on educators and intercultural mediators' training is the link with the voluntary sector, which has sometimes made access to professionalisation difficult. It should be noted that non-governmental organisations have contributed in an exemplary manner to the development of educators' training of immigrant minors and young people, through the voluntary sector itself, and the creation of manuals that systematise the practice that initially arose from an urgent need.

As we can see, finally, the first experiences of training for educators and mediators are based on experience and work in the field. Therefore, it is not surprising that we initially find non-university training offers that do not go so deeply into theoretical reflection but rather into "know-how". To illustrate this point, we will mention the prototypical case of intercultural mediation (BERMÚDEZ, PRATS AND URIBE, 2000; IGLESIAS-ORTUÑO, 2015; LLEVOT, 2002 AND 2003; MECEA, 2016), which has had a significant development in Spain.

On the other hand, the 1994 *National Classification of Occupations* did not include any reference to mediation as a labour occupation, a situation that changed in 2007. In this sense, from the official point of view, the only information we know about specific professional training (different from postgraduate university training) refers to the professional qualification on "Community Mediation" (within the professional family of "Socio-Cultural and Community Services"), approved by the Spanish government in 2007, under the supervision of the "National Institute of Qualifications" (INCUAL), dependent on the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. It is a 420-hour course, with qualification level three (on a scale of 1 to 5).

In the training and professional profile of the educators and intercultural mediators, we highlight the following tasks regarding the accompaniment and social inclusion of minors and young people of immigrant origin, which reveal a series of specific functions of these new professional figures: accompaniment in the first phases of installation in Spain; learning

Spanish; social and citizen training; schooling and educational integration of immigrant children, minors and young people; educational and employment guidance; advice in the employment search; translation and accompaniment services in institutional and administrative areas.

Hernández (2013) has succeeded in identifying and describing social and intercultural educators' tasks and functions, based on the needs, motivations, expectations, and difficulties of immigrant children and pupils. These actions should include five main areas: a) social and educational intervention with immigrant minors, addressing a work plan in coordination with school staff, concerning language support and reinforcement, reduction of distrust of minors, avoidance of conflicts through work on the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes, and finally work on the construction of identity with the minor and the promotion of participation in the neighbourhood; b) accompanying, advising and mediating with families, connecting parents with the school, and helping families with administrative procedures, available aid and the development and fulfilment of protocols in force; c) supporting the centre's management team, favouring follow-up meetings and advising teachers on the family and intercultural context of the families; d) supporting the team of tutor teachers, coordinating academic, educational guidance and learning issues; e) coordinating with social services and similar entities, with regard to the needs of minors.

It is important to mention that there has been very little interest in the professionalisation of social educators in contexts of intercultural diversity and training of immigrant minors in Spain. Escarbajal (2009) 's important contribution is one of the few examples we can offer of monographic research on this field, including a solid training proposal aimed at social workers and educators.

For our part, we ask ourselves how to highlight the importance of making possible the inclusion among educators of people of immigrant origin, with their own elaborate experiences, with their genuine cultural knowledge (cultural, religious and spiritual values, ways of understanding the world), which can serve as a reference point for the minors, as well as a fundamental help to their fellow educators and Spanish mediators to understand this other world, so complex, of the other.

There is a need for adequate professionalisation of the people who take care of minors and young people of immigrant origin (being an immigrant does not make one a good educator or mediator). Still, we must recognise that educators of immigrant origin have a lot to gain from Spanish educators and mediators. How can we integrate an intercultural

approach into the educational teams that attend to these minors, enabling a necessary bicultural or pluricultural reference for these minors?

Professional associations insist on professional qualifications. The administration makes it difficult for immigrants who could be hired to validate their studies. Considering this panorama, people of immigrant origin (minors and young people in the education system come from complicated social, academic and economic contexts), come to have these professions, how long will it take? In the meantime, we deny the possibility of covering this need to minors. Where is the interest of the minor?

We advocate an educational intervention that goes beyond a person-to-person interaction. For this reason, a group perspective is necessary to plan, carry out and evaluate the intervention. And if the group is multicultural, these steps will be much richer and better adapted to a multicultural experience that characterises these minors and young people. On the other hand, these multicultural teams will offer unquestionable vital references that the minors and young people need, in terms of personal development, integration of people from different cultures, gender perspectives and understanding between different generations.

## **Training of youth workers and intercultural learning in networks: An online collaborative course**

### **Training context**

The association "Encuentro Acción Educativa Intercultural" comes from several years of experience in training intercultural educators, very intense in the methodology of work, with a great diversity of generations and nationalities, enriched by important shared training experiences, such as having lived a winter month in the mountains of the snowy Pyrenees or having made an end-of-year trip to Morocco.

When we thought of offering distance learning, we were very concerned not to lose that intensity in our approach. Our theme is centred on learning about intercultural relations. More specifically, this online course on "Socio-Educational Intervention with Unaccompanied Foreign Minors" aimed to bring this reality of unaccompanied minors closer to us and how we can propose an appropriate socio-educational intervention from teams working in the field of child protection, in open environment intervention devices and in contexts of accompanying the educational and social integration of these minors.



This course was born in the academic year 2011-2012, due to the collaboration between the University of Seville and the association mentioned above. The course lasted four months and consisted of 15 ECTS credits, officially certified by the University, through the *Centro de Formación Permanente*. The course aimed to go beyond the academic spaces, putting university experts and social educators and intercultural trainers to work together. We are facing a multidisciplinary issue that requires the participation of different professionals. The course's training team was made up of university lecturers, psychologists, social educators, educators from youth centres, and psychologists).

We understand that high-level training and quality intervention in migration and intercultural issues require university researchers' collaboration with associations, groups, technicians and trainers working in the field. We refer to our book already mentioned above for the theoretical, content and methodological foundations of the course (DE LA PORTILLA, SERRA AND GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, 2007).

The objectives of the course were:

- a) To learn about the culture of origin, the migratory journey and the adaptation to the host society of minors and young people of immigrant origin living in Spain.
- b) Analyse the elements that influence the construction of identity in adolescents and minors who have migrated.
- c) To know the technical aspects of the intervention with minors and unaccompanied young people.
- d) To analyse, deepen and design the educational and social team of the centres for minors and care leavers.
- e) To carry out an intervention project with young people based on what they have learned in the course.

The course included the following modules:

Module 1: Migrations and intercultural diversity

Module 2: Unaccompanied minors.

Module 3: Intervention in centres for minors and care leavers (technical dimensions).

Module 4: Intervention in centres for minors and care leavers (educational dimensions).

Module 5: Intervention project with unaccompanied minors and young people.

We are dealing with a multidisciplinary issue, which requires the participation of professionals in psychology, social work, social education, intercultural mediators and experts in migration and cultural diversity. We work with a social group, migrant minors, who have already shown that they are not limited by borders and will not do so because of the differences between regions in Spain, where there is not always adequate administrative coordination. The migratory phenomenon's complexity goes beyond the reality of the borders themselves. It seemed important to us to enable the exchange of experiences between professionals from all over Europe. Our training team works in a network with several European entities, so bringing this collaboration within the course itself was a challenge and an added value of the course.

With this complex scenario, we think that online training could satisfy many of our objectives:

- On the one hand, to enable the formation of these multidisciplinary teams together. It must be considered that professionals in residential centres for minors work in shifts and online training makes it possible to access training outside their working hours and even to share training with teammates at different times.
- On the other hand, to enable the exchange of experiences between professionals who are operating in different associations, in the public administration and different regions, with different legislation and work proposals, but who often meet with minors who move between regions, looking for the place that is most convenient for them. The online course makes this work possible, which transcends specific regional areas. In this sense, we had students from various regions, who were able to share different ways of dealing with the same situations and discuss the solutions found by each other. We also expected to be able to exchange experiences with people from other European countries. During the course, we had students from Belgium and Italy. They were able to share how they face these situations in other countries of the European Union, the different development and evolution of migration in countries with a greater and lesser migratory tradition in Europe, how migratory phenomena are experienced in different European countries, how the phenomenon of the so-called second generations is manifested and, in short, to learn from each other.
- Another of our challenges was to be able to involve people from different cultures, and not just Europeans. In this sense, we were fortunate to have people from Morocco and Tunisia settled in Europe, who with their professional and also personal experience as immigrants

facilitated the group's understanding of the phenomenon in the first person. It is always an added value in these trainings to have people from different cultures. We, from the teaching team, also provided teachers of immigrant origin.

- Another purpose of the training was to create networks that would later endure. Once a training programme has been shared, with common case studies, it is possible to create a network among colleagues to continue collaborating once the course is over.

For all these reasons, the choice of online training was decisive in being able to cover this diversity and richness that could not have been achieved (at least not all of it) within a classroom-based training. In phenomena as complex as migration, we must offer training proposals with the same complexity that characterise the biographical and social itineraries of immigrants. If borders have not been a limitation for these people, then we cannot face these phenomena in an exclusively local way. For this reason, networking is fundamental, as well as reflection and training in networks, which make wider, more complex and critical thinking possible. The field of new technologies opened up an opportunity that needed to be seized.

## **Training built on the contributions and experiences of all**

156

We understand that training cannot be a masterly, one-way process characterised by the mere transmission of content. There is an enormous amount of information available in books, magazines and above all on the Internet. But we were thinking of focusing the training on the students.

The fundamental objective of the training is in the trainees themselves. *We train people who will later take care of people.* This field of unaccompanied minors, in particular, is one where the face-to-face relationship is the fundamental working tool. The educational team is not a transmitter of content. Still, a generator of life and learning processes, as an instrument to facilitate integration into a new culture, while at the same time guaranteeing the cultural, linguistic and religious roots of the minors and young people that this team is responsible for. Educational teams are the initiators of a new life. Let us bear in mind that there is no family of these minors that can accompany the transition to adult life.

Educational teams must know how to respond to this reality of life between cultures that minors have. What is paradigmatic is that this experience of biculturality, difficulties, discoveries, and disagreements is also present in the team members themselves when entering

this professional world. Therefore, it is necessary to work at a personal level on this reality, so that the educators themselves can later face these processes with the children.

Training becomes a field of reflection on personal experiences. The best educational work is done by example, which the minors themselves see in the educators; therefore, what is learned must first be metabolised. We do not say memorised as a theoretical content but metabolised as a personal experience that later, once understood and appropriate, can be delivered and explained, making possible the accompaniment of immigrant minors and young people.

In this sense, the training becomes a network of common work and contrast of experiences. Learning is built between all of us from our own experiences. Theoretical content is a mere excuse to structure this reflection, base principles on, and support action. However, if all this is not translated into experience and understanding of life, it remains just a theory.

## **Proposals and technical support**

When carrying out this training, it is necessary to elaborate the contents well, but above all the great challenge appears in elaborating the methodology to be followed. We had to make the students go through a personal process that would allow them to place themselves in another perspective at the end of the training course. Many participants in the training carry a monocultural approach, no doubt full of very good intentions, to deal with a multicultural reality. It is as if we want to see a reality in colour on a black and white television. This seems beautiful a priori, but we have to face the patterns and prejudices that we all have.

For this reason, it is necessary to change the way we see things, to overcome the reluctance of those who are used to seeing reality in a certain way, and this is not easy. Only in the end is one able to look at things differently, to grasp better what was before one's eyes, but which one was unable to appreciate. You have to let the different one teach you to see what is different from yourself.

It was, therefore, important to put students in a position not as receivers but as discoverers. To put them in a position to create. The first thing was to raise training topics with a great capacity for interactivity. It is difficult for us to understand those for whom distance learning is reduced to hanging a pdf document on a platform. Our themes should, at first, unsettle the students, make them reflect and make them understand that there are many

ways of seeing the world, and place them in a reflective dynamic of both professional and personal rethinking. We cannot professionally approach this work without working on the most fundamental element: the person himself. We are aware that children in difficulty, like immigrant children who have gone through so many difficulties, are capable of grasping the smallest gaps and weaknesses in educational teams. They will attack the weakest part of the group and the personal aspects that have been worked on the least to take advantage of this. It is not a moral question of being good or bad, but how they have survived in their migratory process, often in the street. It is up to the adult to put the child in the right place and help them to grow. This will only be possible if the educator has worked personally.

For this reason, bringing participants closer to the reality of the countries of origin and the stories of people who have migrated became a priority. Thus, written texts with collected life stories, audio interviews and video reports, which bring the reality closer and put a face to these young people, became essential in the design of the various modules of the course. Of course, this questioning had to be worked on and shared in a group. To do this, the use of the various communication tools provided by the training platform became essential.

Asynchronous communication: the current training platforms make it possible to use e-mails and, above all, forums where the reflections of the course can be shared. At first, it is important to invite the students to participate in the forum with contributions, as a previous step to the course tutors' participation, aimed at questioning and clarifying these contributions. The role of the tutor must be active, provocative, enlightening and motivating throughout this process.

Another of the asynchronous tools used was the repository of experiences, articles and videos, which had to be built up among all the students. Anyone who had a text that they found interesting, a newspaper article or a video on the subject of the course could share it with their colleagues and teachers on the course, so that the material was enriched with contributions from everyone, always starting from the centres of interest and the concerns of the students themselves.

In the same way, in the case studies and the joint work, the students could start from the training team's proposals and provide the group with personal or professional experiences to be discussed by all. In this debate, starting from the reality itself, more can be learned. It is possible to place the precise theoretical and experiential contributions that help to the optimal resolution of the various cases. Little by little, a culture of collaboration and networking is being created, which is intended to remain a useful working strategy for the future.

As synchronous tools, we had chats, but above all the most used in the course was the possibility of videoconference rooms. Students could meet each other in the rooms and hold group videoconferences. They could meet their tutor in a videoconference. Or we could have group video-tutorials in which we could take the pulse of the course. Without a doubt, one of the great challenges of distance learning is the loneliness of the students. This tool largely manages to break this isolation. It is important to put a face and a voice to the people with whom one works in common.

The interaction that face-to-face trainers miss in distance learning can be broken with these tools. In the first part of the sessions, the group tries to tackle the more practical aspects of the work being done. Still, once the right climate is created, it is the tutor or teacher's fundamental task leading the session to be able to tackle the central issues. It is necessary to be able to move from theoretical or superficial discourses to real personal questions, to difficulties, to deep misunderstandings that clash with the students' cultural parameters, who begin to enter into a new conception of reality, with other reference parameters different from those of their own culture. It is time to raise many questions and not so much to offer answers. It is the time to give voice to people from other cultures to offer different solutions, show the voice that we are not used to hearing, and that does not come from the teacher, to listen to the voices that come from the life experiences of our colleagues.

This questioning allows for the subsequent establishment of personalised video-tutorials with the students, to finish addressing issues related to the course's development and, above all, the personal approaches and questions that arise throughout the course. Answers such as "I've never really thought about it" are among the best that can be heard. Something may be changing and growing in the person. And in the end, this will positively impact the children of other cultures with whom these social and intercultural educators deal.

## Some challenges

When we consider the challenges of designing this training and the prospects for the future, four points come to mind:

- To design training processes as transformative processes. Until now, this design that we had had in face-to-face training seemed difficult at a distance. We understand that at a distance, it is easier for a student to remain hidden. We must make a good initial design that allows the integration of all the students in the work proposal and take care of the tutors' work, both in

the proximity with the students and in the incisive and questioning aspect, which allows a real process of personal growth.

- One of the great challenges, as we have already mentioned, is the training of professionals in networks. Although it has an introduction to recover those outside the environment, this is not a basic training. It is designed for work with professionals. The training must be open to treating its students as what they are: professionals in this field. The training must provide tools, content and methodologies that enable professional growth, participation and collaboration.

- Another important challenge is the involvement of the entities and the administration in a coordinated manner. Perhaps the most difficult because it is not in our hands. Entities must value team training, which tends to work in shifts, which makes face-to-face training difficult. This approach to distance learning would enable the whole team to carry out this training in different time bands, at their own pace, favouring the possibility of carrying out joint work with the help and supervision of the trainers.

- The final major challenge is to enable networking, support and reflection beyond the course. The course is set up as a first place of experimentation. Once it is over, the links created in the course should make it possible to exchange contact addresses for further networking among the same colleagues, who work in the same sector. There is a need for sharing cases, information, and common solutions.

Therefore, after this experience of online, interactive, dynamic, engaged, interregional and international training, we are facing a training option that meets the sector's needs. It remains to make professionals, entities and the administration that work in the sector aware of the possibilities that such a course offers.

## **Face-to-face course: Children and young people of immigrant origin - who are they, and how do you work with them?**

Over the last ten years, we have been running an annual edition of a 20-hour classroom course, usually in four afternoons over two weeks. Some 180 people have already taken part in this training. This course is also certified by the University of Seville.

The objectives of the course are:

- To learn about the culture of origin, the migratory journey and the adaptation to the host society of young people and minors of immigrant origin living in Spain, in the global context of current migrations.

- Analyse the elements that influence the construction of identity in minors and young people who have migrated.
- To acquire guidelines for intervention with minors and young people of immigrant origin, based on the proven professional experience carried out by the associations and technicians who intervene in this field.

The course is organised into four work modules:

- Minors and young people in their countries of origin, with particular attention to the Moroccan case (minors before migrating, contexts from which they come, differences they encounter on arrival in Spain, influence of the journey on the migratory process).
- Unaccompanied immigrant minors (typologies, evolution of migrations in recent years, guidelines for intervention derived from the experience in centres for minors).
- What happens to these young people when they come of age? (problems when coming of age, available resources, patterns of intervention in the transition to adulthood and work).
- Minors and young people accompanied by the so-called second generation and questions about intervention with this group.

In short, in this course we intend to give a general overview of young people of immigrant origin, both "Unaccompanied Foreign Minors" (UFM) and those who do so with their families.

A large part of the course is based on the theoretical contents and the proposals for intervention in our book already mentioned above (DE LA PORTILLA, SERRA AND GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, 2007), to work especially on the Moroccan reality since most of the minors who arrive in Andalusia come from Morocco. However, in recent years, we have been expanding the contents referring to sub-Saharan migration.

We also use recent press reports to illustrate particular issues and present the current state of affairs. Also, we use films, videos, reports, and interviews that we share and exemplify these young people's lives. Whenever possible, we invite care leavers and young immigrants to discuss with the course participants. Besides the theoretical content, we also work on analysing experiences and the discussion of real cases.

The methodology is dynamic, interactive, participative and reflexive, allowing participants to acquire the contents of the course and contrast them with the trainer and the experience of the same in the professional practice of intervention with young people of immigrant origin, as well as with young people and teachers from Spain. The idea is to start from the interior of the person, to propose dynamics that allow us to recognise ourselves in



the face of this reality. By checking the reaction and sharing the experiences of the participants, it will be easier to understand how to motivate and provoke dynamics of change and deal with situations of cultural diversity that we find in our society, whether in the centres for minors or care leavers, in the classroom, in the neighbourhood or leisure activities.

The session will start from the closest so that everyone can understand the questions worked on from their own culture and then go into an intercultural reality approach. We understand that it is not merely a question of transmitting the content or building a politically correct discourse with a limited awareness we can all share. Instead, it is a matter of provoking reflection and questioning in the face of personal situations and experiences. It is about connecting the experiences of the participants with the experiences of migrants. It is essential to understand how immigrant children and young people see and feel when they live among us, how the majority society looks at them, understand the reasons for some of their behaviour, and offer bridges that make integration and create a new society possible.

We use group dynamics where personal and behavioural questioning of our society can be opened. We bring video testimonies from young and adult immigrants that will help us reflect on how they live their migration internally, sometimes in a thoughtful way, and other times in a humorous way. All this is interspersed with some theoretical notions that help us frame and systematise what we propose during the session. We try to give meaning to the course sessions with experiences of actions carried out in leisure associations, in schools, in children's centres or neighbourhoods.

Our training dynamics always seeks to be flexible and accommodating to the group. We believe that it is crucial to link the contents with the experiences, centres of interest, and participants' personal experiences. We understand that this is the best way to get what we are trying to transmit. We need to focus on understanding the experience of young people who migrate, who, unfortunately, are often treated as mere statistics by society and the media. In this sense, we try to connect with the participants' personal experiences and make them discover the "other" as a person who also experiences a transcendental change in their life. To this end, whenever we can and have migrants among the students, we try to give them the floor and integrate their personal experiences into the course. In the last few years, we have been organising a round table with care leavers and who tell us about their migration process, their dreams before coming and their reality in the first person. This is always valued very positively by the course participants.

The profile of the participants in this training is very varied. The ages range from young university graduates to people with work experience over 50 years. Usually, young people, who are looking to extend their training, prevail. However, there are usually always a third of people who seek to extend their training and have a professional background as youth workers. The evaluation of training is ever done with an open answer questionnaire. The students usually consider the training experience very positively, about the objectives, the contents, the trainers, the atmosphere of the course, and the students' participation in the development of the different sessions.

## Concluding remarks

We have reached the end of our journey. We hope to have given some keys to know and understand better the Spanish context referred to migrations and intercultural diversity, from the specific perspective of the training of educators of minors and young people of immigrant origin. We hope that the presentation of our proposals and training experiences can be useful for people and groups who are interested in specialising as educators in migration and intercultural diversity contexts. We also hope that this text can improve the training offer of public or third sector entities that develop activities in these areas, both in Brazil and in other Latin American countries.

## References

BERMÚDEZ, K. PRATS, G., URIBE, E. **La mediación intercultural: una propuesta para la formación.** Barcelona: Desemvolupament Comunitari. 2000.

CUESTA-GÓMEZ ET AL. El educador social en la enseñanza secundaria. La mediación escolar como alternativa a la resolución de conflictos. **Ehquidad International Welfare Policies and Social Work Journal**, 7, 145-174. 2017.

DE LA PORTILLA, A., SERRA, A., GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, J. **De lo Visible a lo Invisible: Análisis de los procesos de Inserción Laboral y las prácticas educativas con menores y jóvenes de origen inmigrante.** Sevilla: Sevilla Acoge. 2007

ESCARBAJAL, A. **Estudio de las respuestas socioeducativas ofrecidas a los inmigrantes en la región de Murcia y propuesta formativa para trabajadores sociales y educadores.** Tesis Doctoral. Universidad de Murcia. 2009.

ETXEBERRÍA, F., MURUA, H., GARMENDIA, J., Y ARRIETA. Menores inmigrantes no acompañados (MENA) en Euskadi y Aquitania: elaboración y puesta en marcha de un Plan de

Formación para Educadores/as y Responsables. **Revista de Educación Social**, (15), 1-28. 2012.

DE-JUANAS, A., MELENDRO, M. Práctica profesional y formación del educador social en España. **Interfaces Científicas – Educação**, Aracaju, 3 (1), 89-102. 2014.

ESLAVA-SUANES, M., GONZÁLEZ-LÓPEZ, I. Definiendo las funciones profesionales del educador social. Aproximación competencial. **Revista de Educación Social**, 24, 362-370. 2017.

FERRARA, P. ET AL. The "Invisible Children": Uncertain Future of Unaccompanied Minor Migrants in Europe. **European Paediatric Association Pages**, 169, 331-332. 2016.

GONZÁLEZ-GONZÁLEZ, H., ÁLVAREZ-CASTILLO, J. L., FERNÁNDEZ-CAMINERO, G. Fundamentando la formación de los educadores profesionales en competencias interculturales: la toma de perspectiva. **Bordón**, 64, 89-107. 2012.

GUICHOT-MUÑOZ, E. FERNÁNDEZ-GAVIRA, J. GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, J. **Formación y mediación para la inclusión social**. Contribuciones en investigación e intervención. Sevilla: Proyecto ArleKin / Universidad de Sevilla. 2014.

HERNÁNDEZ, M. A., Habib, M. C. Escuela, inmigración y la figura del educador social. **Revista de Educación Social**, 16, 1-21. 2013.

HERRERA-PASTOR, D. Un acercamiento a la situación formativa de las educadoras y educadores sociales. **Revista de Educación**, 353, 641-666. 2010.

IGLESIAS-ORTUÑO, E. **Las competencias para el ejercicio profesional mediador**. Estudio de la actualidad formativa catalana en materia de mediación. Tesis Doctoral. Universidad de Murcia. 2015.

JIMÉNEZ-HERNÁNDEZ. Las competencias interculturales en los educadores de menores. Un estudio comparado. **Revista sobre la infancia y la adolescencia**, 1, 45-56. 2011.

LEIVA, J. J. La formación en educación intercultural del profesorado y la comunidad educativa. **Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Docencia**, número monográfico, 172-192. 2012.

LLEVOT, N. Diversidad cultural e instituciones educativas en Cataluña. El mediador intercultural como nueva figura profesional. **Pedagogía social: revista interuniversitaria**, N.º 9, 127-141. 2002.

LLEVOT, N. Actitud de los docentes respecto al mediador y la necesidad de formación en educación intercultural. **Revista Complutense de Educación**, 14 (1), 197-210. 2003.

MARTÍNEZ-USARRALDE, M. J., SAHUQUILLO-MATEO, P., GARCÍA-RAGA, L. Identidad y responsabilidades socioeducativas del mediador escolar y del mediador intercultural: hacia una clarificación de funciones. **Mediaciones Sociales**, 11, 47-71. 2012.

MECEA, M. Training in intercultural mediation in a multicultural university: contributions for fostering international stability. **AI & Soc**, 31, 393-399. 2016.

MENDOZA, K. **Adolescentes y jóvenes migrantes en Bizkaia**: Prácticas de vida y socialidad. Tesis Doctoral. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. 2017.

OCHOA-PALOMO, C., GONZÁLEZ-MONTEAGUDO, J. La mediación intercultural en España. Perspectivas biográfico-narrativas. En: ABRAHÃO, M. H. M. B.; FRISON, L. M. B.; BARREIRO, C. B. (Eds.) **A nova aventura (auto)biográfica**. Porto Alegre (Brasil): Editora Universitária da PUCRS, Tomo I, 191-219. 2016.

RUIZ-CORBELLA, M., MARTÍN-CUADRADO, A. La consolidación profesional del educador social: Respuesta al derecho para la ciudadanía. **Perfiles Educativos**, 37 (148), 12-19. 2015.

SÁNCHEZ-FERNÁNDEZ, S. et al. Los menores extranjeros no acompañados de Melilla. Análisis de su situación y propuesta de formación socioeducativa. **MODULEMA. Revista Científica sobre Diversidad Cultural**, 1, 121-142. 2017.

SÁNCHEZ-NUÑEZ, C. A., RAMOS, L. E. Análisis del fenómeno de los MENA en la ciudad fronteriza y multicultural de Ceuta. Elementos para la integración social y educativa. **Revista Internacional de Didáctica y Organización Educativa**, 2(2), 57-83. 2016.

SAVE THE CHILDREN. **Evaluación Sistema de Protección Autonómicos para menores migrantes solos**. Madrid: Save the Children (Documento de trabajo). 2018.

TERRÓN-CARO et al. La diversidad cultural desde la perspectiva de los educadores sociales: un estudio en los centros educativos de Andalucía. **Educatio Siglo XXI**, 33 (2), 141-164. 2015.

VALLÉS-HERRERO, J. **Análisis y valoración de las funciones sociales de los educadores sociales en España**. Tesis Doctoral. Madrid: Facultad de Educación, UNED. 2011.

Recebido em: 18 de outubro de 2020.

Aprovado em: 19 de dezembro de 2020.