

General Situation of Young Immigrants in Spain:

Although before mid 80s there were already immigrants in Spain, it is from 1995 on when Spain becomes an immigration country and when a “new immigration” begins: new due to its origin areas and its development levels; new due to its diverse cultures and religions; new due to economic motivations. In this period Spain entered into a new stage, with multicultural challenges, with co-inclusion and with challenges related to citizenship.

The “immigrant young people” are consolidating within the “immigrant Spain”, since it is consolidating more and more in Spain and it will be, just like in another countries, one of the big political challenges in the next future in the immigration and citizenship reconstruction fields. The lack of opportunities in their own countries has brought young people who search for better working conditions and salary through the immigration in an European country such as Spain.

The immigrant women who in the 90s came to Spain with her kids, now they live with teenagers and young people who have a different accent and who are integrated into a Spanish society that is more and more multicultural. This adaptation process in a host society is fundamental at an age in which the young people personality will be formed, who have not a clear idea of who they are and the place they belong to.

The immigration raises one of the main challenges for the citizenship reconstruction in the occidental societies because this phenomenon directly affects every dimension of the crisis of the citizenship classical model. Therefore, a series of institutions play key role in the learning process of the citizenship; family, school, leisure, church...

What can be done in some of these fields in order to improve the social inclusion of the young immigrants? At this point it is fundamental to think about the need to contribute solutions, of practising an antifatalism culture, of the capacity of being flexible and resistant, and all this must be done both at a public and private level. Definitely, it is a learning process for respecting the differences and the shared responsibilities.

Of course, when speaking about immigration and specially about the young immigrants, we cannot forget the situation of the Spanish young people nowadays since it is one of the main deficits when their situation in Spain is compared to that of the European countries. The deficits of these young people are even bigger if we speak about the young immigrants: employment, access to housing and social participation.

The foreigner young people in Spain are very plural and the challenges for each origin in the host society are very different, the biggest challenges are those related to the fight against exclusion of those persons who are in risk situations and to the guaranty of the opportunities equality of those young persons coming from non communitarian countries which are less developed than Spain.

A relevant aspect in the deep changes which are taking place in the Spanish society is the “multiculturalism”. The coexistence among different cultures will be an unquestionable reality. The cultures of the Spanish State, of Europe and those coming from other countries will share the same space which will be managed by the 21st – century young people. Before this sociocultural transformation, the coexistence from a positive intercultural perspective will be only achieved through an education based on the respect to differences what favours tolerant and caring attitudes. Without forgetting

that young people in disadvantaged situations require institutional and social efforts in order to favour their integration, and with it to reinforce the social cohesion and cohabitation. One of the characteristics of every alive and modern society is the development and consolidation of the equality of opportunities. Therefore, the multiculturalism, cohabitation, respect to the differences and equality of opportunities are four basic pillar to face the reply to the challenges raised by the immigration in the “Immigrant Spain”.

The integration is a bi-directional process that implies the adaptation of both the immigrant and the host society. The integration is a long term process and it is necessary to pay special attention to the second generation immigrants. In this context, the family and women should be an important collective of the integration politics. The key of success is in the establishment of measures at very low levels (for example at local level). Each individual has a role to perform in the design and application of the integration programmes that must count with the appropriate resources. This horizontal approach requires both a national and local coordination. Most Autonomous regions and some local corporations (especially big city halls) have elaborated and developed their own immigrants integration plans and employment plans, of social inclusion and young people.

The immigrant young people problems in Spain is not well-known, essentially since it is a quite new phenomenon. The challenges that the young immigrant people raises to the host society are not just the demand of elaborating a coherent speech that favours the mutual inclusion between the host society and immigrants, both individually and collectively, but the demand of stable and efficient politics that support this inclusion and that are useful for fighting against the marginalization and discrimination risks. The young immigrant people must face the clash of their internal world build according to their origin society with the new context that is suggested (and imposed) by the host society. The splits that come from this clash may lead to the loss of self-esteem and to an identity crisis.

Moreover, in Spain the number of foreign students has increased considerably in the last decade. Spain pretends to integrate the new immigrants population in the educational field as well as to favour the enrolment in school and to assist the immigrant learners in a specialized way. In order to turn the education into a mechanism for the immigrants integration within our society, specific educational programmes are carried out for immigrant population segments since the education process becomes more difficult for them. One of the fundamental topics that will mark the possibility that the education is successful in establishing the basis of a new citizenship among the young immigrants, is that the educational system achieves that these boys and girls achieve an intermediate and advanced level of academic and professional training that can, certainly, compensate another difficulties related to their ethnic and national origin when trying to incorporate to the labour market. Two criteria that will probably mark the possible success of establishing the basis of a new citizenship among the immigrants through the school : the restrain of the school failure in order to avoid exclusion and the way in which the school system can contribute to the identities formation and civic competences. The educational centre is a privileged place for training civic competences and for training in diversity going from multiculturalism to interculturalism. Therefore, it is essential the teachers’ training and the need of involving the families in the learning process.

In the educational field, Spain has taken the following measures: The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport develops in the network of Centres of Education for Seniors different formative modules for young immigrants who are 18 or over ; the access of the immigrants to the public services, Spanish courses for non-Spanish speaking immigrants, interpreters in educational centres for families whose members do not know the language of the host country, the development and distribution of the multimedia resources in order to learn Spanish; learning programme of the Arabic language and morocco culture (in collaboration with Morocco that facilitates and is in charge of the teachers' salary); training of young mediator for immigrants (in order to sensitise and make the immigrants capable to act as mediators with the young immigrants belonging to the same origin); training of sociocultural animators (in order to promote the integration of the immigrants group).

With regard to the labour market, a significant number of young immigrants incorporate into the labour market faster than the national population. A quarter of those who are between 16 and 29 years old became to work before 16 compared to the tenth part of the native young people. The young foreigners frequently live at the parents' and a 20% live together with more than 5 persons at their new homes. What is the reason for the inequality between the immigrants' offspring opportunities and those of the native population ? Is it due to a negligence or is it a political strategy ?. The perception of worse opportunities and the lack of justice in the labour market for the ethnic minorities can reduce the motivation and educational results as well as the wish for vocational training . Since there are occupations not very attractive in every working sector, it is easy to find immigrants who work in diverse activities , but generally they are located in the worst job positions in every sector. However, this situation becomes incomprehensible for the immigrants' offspring or for the young people who come to Spain with high educational level and who waiting for improving their conditions within the labour market. However, frequently they must face direct and indirect discrimination process in the labour market and in another aspects of the social life.

Some of the measures taken in Spain in this field in order to incorporate the immigrants into the labour market in the same conditions as the Spanish people are: the realization of occupational interviews in the Employment Public Services in order to detect the abilities, experiences, knowledge, certifications/degrees or vocational lack of the immigrant ; formative actions in order to make the immigrant vocationally capable ; education and literacy actions; specific programmes and informative campaigns.

Diverse entities in the whole country develops activities to achieve the total integration of the immigrants, putting emphasis on fomenting their integration as well as their laboral insertion and the normalization of their situation. According to non-governmental organization data, more than 50% of the young immigrants is in irregular situation.

Leisure and free time are also citizenship learning spaces, of sociability and cultural hybridisation of special relevancy in the case of the young people. Shared and “ hybridised “ spaces should be fomented as well as leisure activities and the immigrants access to institutional places for young people. The relationship immigrants-natives counteract those factor who obstruct the integration of young people such as overcrowding, ghettos creation...etc.

In order to conclude, and after all mentioned above it is essential the improvement of the reality knowledge of the young immigrants in order to know in depth the specificities of the most significant groups of the young immigrants in our country and compare them with those of the natives: a research on the intercultural good practices in the educative system; materials oriented to the training of educators in the interculturality and association of the foreigner young people in Spain .

According to the data provided by the Ministry of Labour in Spain , more than 50% of the foreign young people who live in Spain are from Morocco, Ecuador, Romania and Colombia.

Therefore, almost three of ten foreigners who are legal residents in Spain are young people, according to a statistic elaborated by the Immigrant Permanent Observatory. The number of foreigners with card or resident authorization in force and between the ages of 16 and 29 came at the end of the first semester of the year to 765.130. Concretely, a total of 52.854 were between 16 and 17 years old, 61.087 were 18 or 19 years old, 230.707 were between 20 and 24 years old and 420.482 were between 25 and 29 years old.

According to these data, the young people from Morocco, Ecuador, Romania and Colombia represent more than 50% of the total number of foreigners between the ages of 16 and 29. According to genre, the 53,61 % are male and 46,39% are female.

According to the residence rule, 587.505 (76,78%) were included in the General System. From those, 36,27% had authorization for initial residence , 30,47% had authorisation renovated for the first time, 17,76% had authorisation renovated for the second time, 14,35% had a permanent residence authorisation and 1,15% had another type of authorisation. With regard to the rest of young foreigners , 177.625 (23,22%), they were included in the Communitarian System in which also the citizens of countries belonging to the UE as well as their relatives are included.

At general level, Madrid, Cataluña, Andalucía and la Comunidad Valenciana are the communities where most of these immigrants live (65,98%)

Analysing the origin of these young people, these are the general lines: 38,58% are from South America, 25,79% are from Africa, 14,38% are from countries belonging to the Non-communitarian Europe, 6,82% are from Asia, 0,32% are from North America, 0,03% are from Oceania and 249 persons are considered as stateless.

According to nationality, and taking into account only those countries with more than 1000 young people living legally in the country we can point out Malta (45,47%), Slovakia (43,63%), Lithuania (42,32%), Czech Republic. The Britons, on the contrary, represent only 7,89%.

Finally, we should consider the following phrase for the British antiracism campaigns “That who does not take part in the solution is part of the problem”.