

Stakeholder Partnerships for the Integration of Migrants - INTEgreat

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Section I. Public Policies Analysis

1. Context

From 2000 onwards, migration flows in Spain increased significantly and diversified. Accordingly, there were significant shifts in public opinion, immigration-related conflicts increased and many political debates on the issue raised. Thus, attempts to build a system for managing migration flows and to address the new challenges of citizenship and integration of migrants became the centre of the public agenda (Cachón Rodríguez, 2007).

In that same year the Spanish Government reformed the law of immigration, which had not been reviewed since its first publication in 1985. As a result, the Act 4/2000 of 11 January, on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Social Integration was approved. The Act 4/2000, last amended in February 2021, is still the main Act that regulates migration in Spain (Gobierno de España, 2021).

Since 2018, the country experienced a significant increase in the population of asylum seekers, particularly due to new arrivals from Venezuela and Colombia, making it one of the largest recipients of asylum seekers in the European Union. At the end of 2020, around 5.5 million foreigners live in Spain, over 11% of the population (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020).

In Spain, the Constitution grants the State exclusive competence over matters of nationality, migration, and the right to asylum (Art. 149.1.2 EC). The central government has exclusive competences in nationality and foreign policies, as well as regulation of the legal status of foreign nationals, the conditions for entering, staying in and leaving Spain, and the system of sanctions. Although the regulations relating to a large part of social policies that are most relevant to migration are also at national level, over the years Autonomous Communities in Spain have been acquiring important sectoral competences in areas such as education, health, and culture, as well as in social policies (employment, housing, social services, etc.). For this reason, regional integration plans have been drawn up in most of the Autonomous Communities (Godenau et al. 2014).

This document reviews the current state of integration policies in Spain, with a focus on the 4 dimensions of integration that the INTEgreat project covers: Healthcare, Employment, Capacity building and Training and Social Cohesion. Due to the particularities and diversification of the Spanish integration systems, the document also collects some information at regional (Catalonia) and local level (Barcelona).

2. Spanish Strategic Plans for Citizenship and Integration (PECI)

In Spain all the changes that occurred related to integration strategies happened hand in hand with changes of government. The change of legislature in 2004 fostered the development of a comprehensive policy for the integration of migrants with the creation of an annual fund to support the reception and integration of migrants, the new Immigration Regulation of December

2004/2005, and the preparations for the first Spanish Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration (PECI) (Cachón Rodríguez, 2007).

In 2007 the first Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration (PECI) was finally implemented. The plan adapted public policies in the fields of education, employment, social services, health, and housing to the needs of the migrant population. The first PEGI concluded in 2010 with the development of 928 innovative projects in 289 municipalities, 1,082 projects carried out by social entities and 62 meetings with stakeholders to exchange good practices in the integration of migrant communities in the country.

The second PEGI 2011-2014 identified 6 specific and 5 cross-cutting areas of action (Gobierno de España, 2011). Its main objective was to strengthen integration instruments and policies as well as public services and participation, in order to guarantee equal access for all citizens. The second PEGI includes the dimensions of the INTEgreat project (employment, health, education, and social cohesion) and it also focuses on housing, reception of migrants and gender. Comments upon the lack of information provided by the Government on the specific impact of the measures of the Plan were noticeable – in particular, measures addressing discrimination on grounds of race, colour, religion and national extraction in employment and occupation (OIT, 2015).

It is important to mention that in the same year that the second PEGI was published (2011) a comprehensive strategy against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance also came out. The strategy highlighted the need to intensively work for social cohesion in Spain and focused on 5 main concepts: equality, citizenship, inclusion, interculturality and tolerance. Even though it is directed to migrants in general, it gives special attention to unaccompanied minors and international protection seekers. The strategy points out the importance of education and stands that for achieving a cohesive and integrated society “it is essential to guarantee active participation for all citizens, recognising and respecting differences, while promoting critical dialogue and interaction between people from different cultures”.

The concepts of bidirectionality and mutual adjustment of migrants and local people are presented in the Spanish plans and strategies as the backbone of all integration policies of migrant communities in Spain. Following the ambitious PEGI and the Strategy against racism, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion in the Kingdom of Spain (PNAIN) 2013-2016 was approved. However, this plan does not specifically target the migrant population and only addresses the issue in a general way. The PNAIN includes migrant communities among other vulnerable groups, but focuses mainly on homeless people, elderly population, people with disabilities and people with addiction problems.

After the expiry of the second PEGI and the PNAIN, Spain has not further developed public policy on integration. Nowadays, the central government is working on a new Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration that is expected to come out in 2022.

used by these frameworks take a fundamentally unidirectional policy, which defines the measures in reference to the situation and characteristics of the migrant person, leaving aside the situation of the host society. The local population is only addressed in two areas of intervention, one in each Plan. In the first one, the PEGI 2007-2010 it can be found in Awareness

Raising and in the PECE 2011-2014 in area of Coexistence, both with a little weight in terms of measures and budget (González Rábago, 2014).

3. European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 and Strategic framework for drafting the Spanish National Programme in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the period 2021-2027

As mentioned above, national integration plans in Spain have remained in stand-by since 2014. In 2019 and with the change of legislature in Spain, the new Government announced the start of the preparations for the development of a third PECE. So far, there has not been any news on the issue.

The only document drafted to date that lays within the new guidelines of the European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 is a strategic framework for drafting the Spanish National Programme in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the period 2021-2027.

The European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 focuses on several fields of interest: education and training, employment and skills, health, and housing. The general goal of the Plan is to achieve integration and inclusion and to ultimately build more cohesive and inclusive societies for all.

The way they aim to achieve this is through different types of actions that support the effective integration and inclusion of migrants in all the sectoral areas. These actions are further described in the Action Plan, and they include:

- Building strong partnerships for a more effective integration process.
- Increasing opportunities for EU funding under the 2021-2027 Multi-annual Financial Framework.
- Fostering participation and encounters with the host society.
- Enhancing the use of new technologies and digital tools for integration and inclusion.
- Monitoring progress: towards an evidence-based integration and inclusion policy.

The upcoming Spanish National Programme in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the period 2021-2027 falls under the second area of the European Plan (Increasing opportunities for EU funding under the 2021-2027 Multi-annual Financial Framework) and is still subject to review and approval.

The Spanish framework shares the main objective of the new European plan: achieving integration and inclusion and to ultimately build more cohesive and inclusive societies for all. However, the Spanish framework takes a different perspective as it mainly includes measures to be adopted in areas such as the improvement of the Spanish resettlement system, the promotion of regular migration, the cooperation and partnership with third countries to manage migration or the fight against human trafficking of asylum seekers.

Other things the European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 and the forthcoming Spanish National Programme in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the

period 2021-2027 have in common is that both coincide in promoting measures to establish efficient monitoring and evaluation, as well as in upgrading the digital tools and systems related to integration and migration.

With regards of integration, the Spanish National Program only foresees a few actions. These include to support the development and implementation of policies that promote regular migration, in particular family reunification and the application of labour standards and to implement integration measures that enhance the economic and social inclusion of third-country nationals, protect vulnerable people in the context of security, facilitate family reunification and prepare active participation of third-country nationals in the host society and their acceptance by this one. The document stands that these measures should be adopted with the participation of national and regional authorities or organisations and civil society organisation. Leaves out of the design and implementation phases the target groups to which the measures are addressed to.

To make sure these goals are achieved the Spanish Program plans the following actions to be implemented:

- Restructuring and reinforce upstream and reception capacities (number of seats, adequate geographical distribution, comprehensive services for asylum seekers), considering the framework of the Covid19 pandemic.
- Establishing efficient monitoring and evaluation of procedures and reception capabilities including mechanisms to enable establishing reassignment of locations.
- Establishing a national platform for the coordination of care for asylum seekers, and possible contingency actions in case of massive influx of asylum seekers.

As it can be seen, in terms of dimensions of integration and beyond some general objectives and actions, the similarities between the European Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 and future Spanish National Programme in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the period 2021-2027 are not many. We will have to wait for the publication of the new PEI to properly analyse the adequacy of the Spanish integration policies with the EU's approach for the upcoming years.

4. The role of regional local authorities

As mentioned above the Spanish integration system currently lacks a robust national strategy on integration. On the contrary, the country integrates a differentiated and complex framework of competences with major differences between Autonomous Communities. It is worth to mention that opportunities, the demographic weight of immigration and the socio-demographic profiles of migrants vary a lot within regions as well (Godenau et al. 2014).

According to the national law the Autonomous Communities are responsible for managing the integration of migrants beyond the first six first months in which the central state administration is involved in reception, assessment and referral and basic care, apart from Autonomous Communities such as Ceuta and Melilla that are responsible also for the first care unaccompanied minors (MENAs) in their respective territories (Gobierno de España, 2021).

The cases of Catalonia and its capital, Barcelona, are described below as examples of regional and local integration frameworks in Spain.

3.1 Catalonia (regional)

Catalonia, as an Autonomous Community, has some competences in areas directly related to the integration of migrants. The main areas are education and health. The central state controls and approves the basic legislation on these competences but it is Catalonia's responsibility to develop and implement them. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that Catalonia has exclusive competences in two other fundamental areas related to migration: housing and social assistance, although in both areas agreements with the state are needed.

Catalonia, as well as Spain, experienced a considerable increase in arrivals of migrants and refugees. Particularly between 1996 and 2015, the number of foreigners registered in Catalonia grew from 97,789 to 1,023,398 and, nowadays, it represents the 11,6% of the total population.

In 1993 the Catalan Government approved the Interdepartmental Immigration Plan (1993-2000) and, since then, seven plans have been approved, but also other relevant public policies in the form of laws, national pacts and various documents that have placed immigration on the centre of the political and social agenda of the region.

The main policies in Catalonia have been implemented in comprehensive programs and projects focused on the different dimensions of integration, especially the structural, social, cultural, civic and political dimensions, as well as in relation to identity and gender. The main legal frameworks and policies related to integration in Catalonia are:

- **Statute of Catalonia 2006:** the main organic law of Catalonia claims that the Catalan Government must develop immigrant integration policies and regulate and promote measures for social and economic integration, and that that the Catalan government must generate a framework to promote immigrant reception and integration policies. The Statute includes several articles regarding competences in certain key areas, such as policies on welcoming newcomers and integration (Casademon and Serra, 2021).
- **Law 10/2010 on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia.** It regulates the rights and obligations of immigrants to receive reception services and knowledge on Catalan society from municipalities. The law deploys a wide range of services and resources to help newcomers become more involved in society, especially concerning the functioning of public services, cultural issues, and knowledge of the Catalan language as a useful tool for integration, particularly in terms of access to the labour market and expanding social networks (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010).
- **Seven integration plans.** Interdepartmental Immigration Plan (1993-2000); Interdepartmental Immigration Plan (2001-2004); Citizenship and Integration Plan (2005-2008); Citizenship and Integration Plan (2009-2012); Citizenship and Migration Plan Horizon 2016; Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-202; and Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020.

- **The Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020** is the current planning instrument of the Government of Catalonia in the field of citizenship policies and reception and integration policies. This plan is articulated around the concepts of interculturality, inclusion, diversity and belonging and is organised into 4 main axes, corresponding to integration in a diverse and cohesive society, social inclusion for everyone regardless of origin, the reception and integration of refugees and the comprehensive management of policies. In total, the Citizenship and Migration Plan 2017-2020 presents 433 actions, grouped into 44 programmes, which reach all the Departments of the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017).
- **National Agreement on Immigration.** The National Pact for Immigration is an agreement signed in 2008 by the Government and various institutional, political, economic, and social agents with the aim of responding to the demands made by Catalan society regarding the demographic transformation brought about by migration and its consequences. The agreement was subscribed by political parties representing more than 70% of the Catalan Parliament, trade unions, immigrant associations, and many political and social actors in Catalonia. Based on a consensual analysis of the migratory phenomenon and the needs raised by society, the document defines the public model of actions for the integration of the migrant population that must guarantee coexistence, social cohesion, and equal opportunities. The agreement aims achieve the following main objectives: 1) The effective management of migratory flows and access to the labour market, 2) The adaptation of public services to a diverse society with a universal reception service and coordinated and cross-cutting institutional management, and 3) Integration into a common public culture that fosters participation in public life, the use of Catalan as a common language, coexistence in the plurality of religion and beliefs, gender equality and the strengthening of social policies (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2008).

It is important to note that the integration plans recognise the influence of immigration on multiple dimensions of Catalan society and all the political documents mentioned above recognise immigration as an essential part and a constitutive element of Catalan society (Casademon and Serra, 2021).

3.2 Barcelona (local)

Although the Municipality of Barcelona does not have competences in asylum and refugee policies, it has developed several initiatives and programmes.

When the percentage of foreigners living in the city was only 2%, Barcelona's first plan to guide public policies for the management of cultural diversity, integration and immigration, the Interculturality Plan of 1997, was published. Since then, six more plans have been approved: the Municipal Plan on Immigration (2002), the Immigration Working Plan (2008-2011), the Barcelona Interculturality Plan (2010), the Immigration Working Plan (2012-2015) and the current schemes

the Citizenship and Immigration Plan 2018-2021 and the Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2021-2030 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018).

In Barcelona a Citizens' Rights and Participation Council oversees the municipal strategies and actions for migrant's reception and integration. The approach of the municipality of Barcelona towards the integration of migrants is governed by the principles of collaboration, inclusiveness, cultural diversity, and mutual adaptation (Chmielewska et al., 2021).

A brief description of the latter two strategies implemented is featured below.

Plan for Citizenship and Migration of Barcelona (2018-2021)

The Plan for Citizenship and Migration of Barcelona (2018-2021) sets out the bases for the integration of migration in Barcelona. It does not only refer to the administration and policymaking but also to all the actors in the city (organizations, citizens, services, companies, etc.).

The document was designed from a position of open criticism of Spanish and European immigration policies (which are accused of institutionalising irregularity, breaching immigration regulations themselves and transferring those with irregular status to the city and, consequently, encouraging the informal economy and the exclusion and social segregation of these people) and reclaiming the role of the city in the recognition and guaranteeing of full citizens' rights for immigrants with irregular status (González, 2019).

The priority areas of the plan are:

- Welcoming and good neighbourhood environment (social cohesion).
- Equality and universal access to services (education, capacity-building and training, employment, housing, healthcare).
- Citizenship rights and participation (social cohesion, capacity-building, and training).
- Combating discrimination (social cohesion, capacity-building and training, employment, healthcare).
- Knowledge and recognition of diversity (social cohesion, capacity-building and training, employment, healthcare).
- Interculturality and interaction (social cohesion, capacity-building and training, employment).

At the same time, each one of the scopes has specific objectives and detailed actions to implement.

As seen in previous plans in the country, the Citizenship and Migration of Barcelona of Barcelona takes a bidirectional or mutual adjustment approach underlining the need for interaction, shared spaces, dialogue, and shared participation among people who have diverse cultural practices: "diversity involves mutual adaptation of ways of life, practices, cultures, languages, worldviews, etc."

Interculturality and diversity are the main principals of the framework. The plan stands that "interculturality has to be a way of building the city together, based on each person's values" and

repeats several times the need to also involve the migrant community in decision-making and the design of the city.

Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2021-2030

The Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2021-2030 aims to move towards a more inclusive city and fight discrimination. It is the strategic umbrella for the set of public policies that the City Council will deploy over the next ten years with an intercultural perspective. The document highlights the increase of migrants to the city of Barcelona and stresses the need to develop effective measures to combat the rise of populism and demagogic discourse, as well as to improve coexistence between newcomers and locals. The plan defines 5 strategic areas based on the principles of interculturality, 26 specific objectives and 106 measures. The 5 areas are:

- To advance towards real equality of rights, duties, and opportunities for all people, based on a commitment to non-discrimination and equity.
- To advance in the recognition and respect of diversity as a structural reality of the city.
- To favour the generation of spaces and opportunities for positive interaction and the creation of links and relationships under conditions of equality.
- To promote intercultural dialogue and participation, and a concept of active citizenship that deepens democratic values and practice.
- To ensure that the whole of municipal government action incorporates intercultural principles and approach.

At the same time, the plan highlights the commitment to interculturality implies the identification and visualisation of inequalities, as well as the analysis of their causes from the commitment to fight against any type of discrimination as a political and social priority. It also stands that public policies with an intercultural perspective must incorporate a feminist perspective. It must be considered that there are several variables traditionally linked to cultural diversity, such as ethnicity, culture of origin, religion, or country of birth, which intersect and are not homogeneous. And that these, in turn, converge with other variables, such as age, gender, socio-economic position, administrative situation or ability. The intersectional approach seeks not to forget these realities to work in a convergent manner against discrimination; and, in this sense, identifying the interrelationships of exclusions is key to overcoming and eliminating them.

The plan covers all the dimensions (Healthcare, Employment, Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion).

5. The role of the third sector

The increase in irregular administrative arrivals by sea and land and the increase in applications for international protection in the country has meant that Spanish migration policies have been marked by reception and humanitarian emergency. Thus, the state budget in this area has also been geared towards urgently addressing the humanitarian needs of new arrivals across the southern border, or people seeking international protection. This reorientation, although necessary and fundamental, has been detrimental to the development of policies and actions for

the integration of the migrant population. As a result, the role of associations and non-state actors in reception and integration strategies has been fundamental in complementing municipality efforts in the field of integration of migrants and refugees in Spain.

In the recent years, non-profit organisations, and other stakeholders all around the country have been providing, among other things, language classes, legal and employment advice, spaces for exchanges, dialogue, and intercultural activities to migrant communities to overcome the continuously growing needs (Chmielewska et al.). Accordingly, the work of the third sector in Spain has proved to be essential in guaranteeing the reception and integration of the migrants and refugees in Spain.

Multiple collaboration agreements have been signed between organisations, entities, and governments, to manage the reception and integration of migrants, at local, regional and national level. In Spain, migrants turn to social services mainly in search of information on public services such as education, health, employment, and legal support (Fernández-Suárez, 2017). These requests from migrants cannot always be resolved by the public sector due to a lack of means, resources, etc. Thus, interaction with the third sector is essential.

It is important to mention that, although non-profit organisations and associations play a key role on the integration of migrant communities in Spain most of them depend significantly on public funding. This could lead to important limitations in terms of the diversity of projects implemented and affect their independence from government policies (Lacomba and Berlanga, 2022).

Being such a key actor in the management of migration in Spain, the third sector is constantly mentioned in integration plans and policies. Many organisations are taking part in the design sessions of such strategies, especially at local and regional level.

The Spanish Act 43/2015, of 9 October, on the Third Social Action Sector strengthens the capacity of the Third Sector of Social Action as an interlocutor with the General State Administration for the design, application and monitoring of public policies in the social field “in order to ensure a harmonious development of social policies, a correct identification of the needs of the affected groups and an optimal use of resources” (Gobierno de España, 2022).

Section II. Literature Analysis

1. Integration dimensions of interest for the INTEgreat project in Spain

1.1 Healthcare

In 2012 the party Partido Popular (right coalition) passed the Royal Decree Law 16/2012, of 20 April, on urgent measures to guarantee the sustainability of the National Health sustainability and improve the quality and safety of its services. This Act introduced a new healthcare model that implied the abandonment of the universality that characterised the Spanish public health system in favour of an insurance model that represented a clear step backwards in terms of health protection and integration for anyone living in Spain. In practice, this regulation meant that thousands of people had great difficulty accessing health care or were directly excluded from it. The issue of access to health services for irregular immigrants has been a source of conflict in Spain. After the decision of the PP government to deny such access, eight Autonomous Communities, including Catalonia, decided not to implement the law, and kept offering universal access to healthcare (Franco-Guilén, 2018).

On 2018, the Royal Decree Law 7/2018, of 27 July, on universal access to the National Health System was approved by PSOE to reverse the situation and guarantee de jure universal health access. The Act expressly mentions the need to guarantee the right of access to healthcare to the foreign population, as a particularly vulnerable group. However, the recovery of universality has not been fully complete, and the Spanish health system continues to reveal major shortcomings and obstacles. Administrative barriers and a lack of ad hoc tools to better meet the health needs of migrants end up limiting the right to health (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020). The framework also leaves out of the health coverage certain groups of population such as migrant people in an irregular situation who have been registered in the country for less than 90 or elderly people who have arrived in Spain through a process of family reunification (Perna and Moreno Fuentes, 2021). Other handicaps found on policy are the introduction of healthcare co-payments, which increase social inequalities when it comes to receiving health benefits, or the lack of homogenised access procedures (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020).

The Inter-territorial Council of the National Health System is aimed at coordinating health issues in general and works as a Sectoral Conference. The Council's annual reports (2005–2014) only mention very specific aspects related to the health of immigrants (as specific targets of the National Plan to Prevent VIH), but not related to immigrants' integration into the health system (Franco-Guilén, 2018).

Among the Autonomous Regions there are significant differences in the access of migrants to certain health services. The Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Navarre, the Basque Country and Andalusia stand out for their extensive care for the migrant population without a residence or in an irregular administrative situation while in Extremadura, Castilla la Mancha or Galicia migrant people find more barriers in this aspect (Godenau et al. 2022).

On the other hand, the policy of containment applied to irregular arrivals in most of the entry points of migrants in Spain pose a great danger to the wellbeing of migrants. The volume of irregular arrivals in Spain increased by 29%, from 26,168 in 2019 to more than 41,000 in 2020 mostly for the reactivation of the Atlantic route with the Canary Islands as a destination point. In autumn of this year, more than 2,000 people who arrived in the Canary coasts were forced to spend weeks outdoors without the required reception or legal assistance. This policy of containment assumes that most arrivals will be deported. However, the so-called "return policies", present in the Spanish policy framework, are not easy to implement in practice (only one third of those who receive a return order are eventually deported) and are a major obstacle to the health of newcomers (Arango et al. 2022).

Another aspect to have in consideration is that many migrants face linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as limited knowledge of the reception context, which can result in insufficient access to health care, especially preventive care. Migrants, especially those who are in an irregular situation or have short-term visas in Spain, do not enjoy the same rights of access to public health care as locals. Progress in this area would require initiatives to eliminate the linguistic, organisational, and administrative barriers that prevent these groups from having full access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment services (Perna and Moreno Fuentes, 2021).

Policies in Catalonia highlight the communication barriers and cultural incomprehension that people of diverse origins usually face when accessing the health system. Thus, the framework emphasises the need to incorporate intercultural mediators in the healthcare environment to provide better attention to the health needs of migrant communities. The health care telephone service in Catalonia is aimed at both locals and migrants and offers a translation service in more than 90 languages and dialects. Apart from mediating, translating, and offering support to health professionals, intercultural health mediators in Catalonia dedicate their efforts to carry out health education programs as well as to promote health in the community. In practice though, the lack of human resources to efficiently deal with ever growing influx of migrants puts barriers to the proper integration and access to health of people with a migrant background.

In Catalonia, the Act 9/2017, of 27 June, on the universalisation of publicly funded health care through the Catalan Health Service guarantees the right of access to the public health system for all residents of Catalonia, regardless of their administrative situation. This Act together with the agreement of the signed between the Catalan Health Service and the Red Cross in 2015 to facilitate access to health services for people in vulnerable situations provides health coverage to people who, for exceptional reasons, lack an essential requirement, mainly registration on the census register (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017). Although, in general, Catalan policies tend to incorporate an intercultural and diversity perspective regarding health, there are still certain aspects of that hinder real, universal, and effective access to the health system for all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Barriers in the access to the healthcare system are also identified in accessing mental health care services and resources for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. In fact, the Barcelona Mental Health Plan 2016-2022 identifies as a challenge (Challenge 5) the need to "look after the mental health of the most vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities". Especially once

the irregular situation or other emergency situations have passed, migrants and refugees no longer have access to the mental health care services offered by large humanitarian NGOs in Spain.

Finally, above mentioned Plan also identifies, among the deficits of primary health and mental health care services, a lack of intercultural competences of professionals and a lack of knowledge of community resources as an alternative to medication. This is something to have in consideration as many mental health professionals are often trained in a Eurocentric system that does not take into account the importance of cultural differences in the experience, expression and treatment of mental health. There is also a lack of knowledge of alternative resources available in the city, and a lack of coordination and articulation with the associative network, when it comes to patients from vulnerable groups.

1.2 Social Cohesion

In Spain, there is still widespread prejudice towards migrants among the local population, which often sees migration as a threat. This thinking was especially reinforced since the beginning of the 2008 crisis when a large part of the population fell into a vulnerable socio-economic situation. Differences between nationals and foreigners in the labour market are affected by variables such as gender, country of birth, educational level, and social class, along with the tendency to prefer certain nationalities over others (Fernández-Suárez, 2017).

In recent years, the rise of far-right discourses in Europe also affected Spain. In 2019 the far-right Spanish party VOX entered the Spanish Parliament, and, in March 2022, it officially became part for the first time of a regional government in Castilla y León. Needless to say that the increasing hate speeches of the far-right parties, more and more present in today's society, directly affect the integration of migrants, damaging social cohesion and the good coexistence between locals and migrants.

The idea of social cohesion refers to the degree to which individuals are linked to each other and to their sense of belonging in relation to the political community to which they belong. According to MIPEX, Spanish anti-discrimination policies show substantial shortcomings. In Spain, the victims of racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination are protected by the law (Organic Law 4/2000 on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social Integration), but it is a protection that lacks concreteness and efficacy. This set of rules fails to cover all cases and all different forms of discrimination. It is a highly general legal framework in which everything fits, but which lacks the necessary effective protections, enforcement mechanisms and provisions to achieve equality in the access to and supply of goods (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020). In 2018, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, in its fifth cycle of monitoring of Spain, criticised the Spanish state for its inactivity in developing integration plans that promote the well-being of migrants in the country and social cohesion.

Although the situation in this aspect is worrying, there are also many movements, organisations and public policies in Spain aimed at combating discrimination, creating awareness-raising campaigns, and facilitating processes of intercultural encounter, contact and coexistence.

In February 2022 the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration together with the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia and some Universities and organizations published the integration guide *Caminos de Convivencia* (Pathways to Coexistence). The guide aims at defining and promoting an intercultural agenda for local and regional integration of migrants. The document summarises the current challenges in this field to contribute to the design and development of public policies that lead to effective integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Spain. The guide is important for social cohesion as it sets it as the first line of intervention. Establishing a series of universal and far-reaching social cohesion policies in different social spheres (labour, economic, residential, educational, etc.) is described as essential to promote effective integration of migrants.

Principle of non-discrimination and social cohesion are also included in most legislation elaborated by the Spanish state and the Catalan Government. In the Catalan political system, social cohesion is notably linked to the participation in the social and cultural life of all citizens, migrant and locals as whole. Civic participation and the design of initiatives, exchange within local communities, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue are set as central aspects to eliminating stigma and discrimination of migrants and to strengthening social cohesion.

The Department of Equality and Feminisms of the Catalan Government is the body that mainly ensures social cohesion in the region. Following the Law 19/2020, of 30 December, on equal treatment and non-discrimination it elaborates anti-racism, migration, and refugee policies with the aim of offering a life of dignity and equality for all people. To make this possible, it works to:

- Denouncing, preventing, and eradicating the violation of rights caused by structural racism, especially in institutions but also in all service providers and in public life.
- Incorporate the cross-cutting and intersectional view of racialised, migrant and/or refugee people in public policies, nourishing them with their different backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences.
- To accompany migrants to guarantee equal treatment and the right to live in dignity, security, and autonomy, free from exploitation, mistreatment, and any kind of discrimination.
- The commitment to human rights also translates into co-responsibility for the guarantee of the right to asylum in conditions of dignity and equality for all refugees in Catalonia.

Lastly, the relation between education and social cohesion has also long been understood as an important element in the Catalan policies and norms. The Act 12/2009, of 10 July, on Education in Catalonia (LEC) and the Act 150/2017 on educational attention to students within the framework of an inclusive education system incorporate an intercultural perspective that reinforces social cohesion and non-discrimination of migrant students in the education system. The framework creates the ELICs, which are language, intercultural and social cohesion counselling and guidance teams that support teachers in working on the linguistic competence of all students, and in supporting students with a migrant background and students at risk of social exclusion in the context of educational centres and educational plans. The target groups are schools, management teams, teachers, students and their families and other agents of the

educational community, with the aim of promoting social cohesion and intercultural education based on equality, solidarity, and respect for the diversity of cultures.

1.3 Capacity Building and Training

As described before, education in Spain is a competence of the Autonomous Communities. However, beyond recognising that compulsory education is a right and a duty for foreigners under the age of 16, the lack of regulations specifically covering access to education and its conditions for migrants impedes their educational pathway and harms them by comparison with the rest of the population. Regarding higher education, there is a lack of measures adjusted to the needs of the foreign population: for example, to facilitate language learning, prevent school dropout and promote access to university education. Spain also has significant limitations in terms of teacher training and, in general, when it comes to recognising diversity within the educational model (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020).

As mentioned above, in the area of education, legislative competencies are shared between the state and the Autonomous Communities. While the basic principles fall under the jurisdiction of the Spanish government, it is the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities to further develop these basic principles in regional laws and decrees. The Law of Education of Catalonia (LEC 2009) attributes special attention to migrants. The Catalan department of Education also developed several regulations and policies to facilitate the integration of migrants into the education system (Act. 180/2005) (Franco-Guilén, 2018).

Both in the Spanish and Catalan policy context, language learning and communication skills are understood as key for integration as these allow migrants and refugees to directly interact with the host community, create bonds and access employment and public services.

In Catalonia, there are many public services that offer language classes to newcomers. The Consortium for Linguistic Normalisation (CPNL) or Adult Schools stand out in this respect. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that, while the first levels (A1 and A2) are usually for free, intermediate, and advanced levels aren't. In this regard, non-profit organisations, and local stakeholders play an important role to support the migrant community in the language learning process.

As mentioned above, the third sector is crucial for the capacity building and training of migrants. Organizations such as ACCEM, CEAR or the Red Cross are the main providers of training and opportunities for this target group. Most of the occupational and training programmes are aimed at language learning, digital and office literacy, and communication in the labour market.

Lastly, economic situation of migrants is also a factor that prevents them from accessing vocational or quality training. Many migrants and refugees could benefit greatly, for example, from advanced technological education, as this market in Barcelona is booming and in need of new talent. Despite this, training courses in this sector are often very expensive and many migrants no longer consider accessing them.

1.4 Employment

Labour integration policies are essential to facilitate the access of migrant people to the labour market and to foster their professional development in terms of training and specialisation. In Spain, the socio-economic inclusion of migrants is still a pending issue. People with a migrant background currently living in the country occupy the worst job positions.

The greater vulnerability of migrants in terms of economy is largely explained by the poor quality of the jobs migrant people have access to and by their strong presence in the informal economy. Nowadays migrants lack opportunities to choose stable, high-quality employment but Spanish labour integration policies are far from guaranteeing this. In Spain, only 27% of immigrants have a permanent contract and 58% earn less than the minimum wage (Iglesias et al., 2020).

Since 2015 the UN has reiterated its recommendation that the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers (ICRMW) be ratified. This remains a pending issue for the Spanish government if it intends to put an end to precariousness and promote the true economic integration of immigrants (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020).

In Spain foreigners enjoy full access to the private sector and self-employment under equal conditions to the rest of the population. Migrants also have access to employment systems with the same requirements. The main problem surrounds the official homologation of education qualifications and certificates and the lack of specific measures (Pasetti and Cumella de Montserrat, 2020). This has a negative impact on migrants' economic stability as most migrants in Spain that access the labour market are over-qualified for their job.

Although the Spanish Government counts with the legislative power on employment, the article 138 of the Statute of Catalonia (2006) attributed new administrative powers to Catalonia concerning initial work permits for migrants. Since that date, administrative competencies on employment for migrants have been shared between the state and Catalonia (Franco-Guilén, 2018).

In 2020, the pandemic of Covid-19 exacerbated the vulnerability of migrant communities and brought to light features and facets of the migratory reality that previously went somehow unnoticed. Examples of this are the reality of essential migrant workers, especially those who are in an irregular situation, who tend to live in miserable working and living conditions, or the differences in unemployment, which have increased at a higher rate among migrants than among natives.

In Spain two of the most affected sectors by the pandemic were the agricultural sector, characterised by arranging temporal precarious contracts with young migrants, and the domestic and care sector, in which the presence of migrant women is noticeable. However, the greatest impact on migrant population results not only from their precariousness and greater risk of unemployment, but also from the consequences of this (Arango et al., 2022).

In Catalonia, Catalonia's employment system (SOC) is the public set of entities, services, and programmes necessary to promote and develop public employment policy and to guarantee

quality occupational services to the people and companies of Catalonia. All this, within a global strategy of economic development, aimed at achieving the objective of full employment and social welfare. Among the most relevant objectives of the system, the ones which can be related to migrant integration are:

- Accompanying people to develop skills and abilities that enable them to improve their employment or professional situation.
- To implement occupational policies that carry out comprehensive projects and interact with initiatives to promote employment, taking into account the territorial dimension, gender differences and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.
- Encourage economic development and job creation at the local level and detect support needs; promote specialised attention for different groups and personalised attention for each user.
- To guarantee the coordinated participation of all the agents that intervene in the field of specialised labour insertion services.

SOC incorporates the ACOL program which targets specifically migrants in an irregular administrative situation. The program grants employment contracts of 12 months' duration on a full-time basis through which migrants can regularize their administrative situation in the country.

2. Problems and obstacles faced by the target group in the access to services in Spain

Having analysed the main dimensions of interest for the INTEgreat project and its situation in terms of policies and efficiency, the main problems, and obstacles that migrants face to access services in all dimensions are listed below.

- **Language barriers.** Services, resources, and information campaigns are often only available in Spanish and/or Catalan and are not accessible to people who are still learning the languages of the territory.
- **Economic barriers.** Although there are free services, they are difficult to access with little knowledge of the territory's resources, and usually require a bureaucratic process of contact with institutions which, moreover, usually only work in Spanish and/or Catalan.
- **Lack of knowledge of local resources.** There are not many information campaigns addressed specifically to migrant communities. This makes it difficult for migrants to be aware of the resources available to them.
- **Isolation.** Often, especially migrant and refugee women, find themselves in isolation and do not have the social resources outside of their family ties or communities.
- **Confusing procedures and long waiting times.** Processes to access certain services are not always understood by migrants and refugees and take much time to reach because of the lack of human and economic resources allocated by administrations.
- **Administrative situation.** Having an irregular legal status means a huge barrier to access many services in the country.

3. Main approach to migrants' integration in Spain

The Spanish integration system has come to be known as a patchwork model, which is presented as unique within the EU. As shown in the previous sections, this is the result of different integration plans of the Autonomous Communities, as well as the different socio-economic realities existing in them. Despite the shared features, the differences between Autonomous Communities in terms of health or social welfare, or even cultural and linguistic (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia, for example), can have a differentiating impact on migrants' levels of integration (Godenau et al. 2014).

The policies directed at the integration of migrant population in Spain are characterised by two factors:

- The power of implementation of integration measures is strongly decentralised and recalls various government levels (state, Autonomous Communities and Municipalities) (Fernández-Suárez, 2017).
- Multiple actors take part in the design and implementation of integration policies (political parties, governments, trade unions, third sector organizations, migrant associations, and other stakeholders) (Fernández-Suárez, 2017).

This situation of administrative fragmentation and different approaches in public policies can impact, for example, access to health, social or educational resources and job training. It is well known that not all Autonomous Communities in Spain offer access to minimum incomes to the entire foreign population. The Basque Country and Navarre, for example, offer greater coverage, while Andalusia limits this resource to the population of EU origin. Most of the Autonomous Communities exclude the population in an irregular administrative situation (Godenau et al. 2014).

One of the common attributes used to refer to migration within policies in Spain is challenge: immigration as a challenge to the host society, which should be able to cope with the opportunities that arise, but that also has the obligation to supply political answers to it (Casadamon and Serra, 2021).

Another point to have in consideration when analysing the case of Spain is that in the country the political discourse and policies tend to classify foreigners according to their proximity to the Spanish culture. This means that, in Spain, some policies have more impact on certain communities (religious diversity measures, hiring intercultural mediators specialised in a certain national community, or the teaching of Spanish and other co-official languages in Spain) (Fernández-Suárez, 2017). Some laws prioritise people coming from former colonies such as Latin America or the Philippines. On the contrary, integration measures concerning other communities have traditionally been a source of controversy between the left and right parties as well as the origin of many discrimination speeches. The Muslim community, for example, has been the target of many debates around integrating religious diversity in Spain.

4. Types of governance and main tendencies in public policies

This institutional structure in Spain implies frequent tension between the central, regional, and local governments. At the same time, as described before, governance and tendencies related to integration of migrants have changed in parallel to changes of legislatures on the central government. Examples of so are the design, approval, and implementation of the above-mentioned integration plans (PECI) only when central-left coalitions have been leading the government (PSOE) or the changes in the approach of health policies over the years.

In difference to the Spain context, even though approval of these plans has come from different political parties, we can find continuity in the content of policies and in the way in which political discourse on immigration and integration has developed. Three of the plans were approved by the centre-right coalition, while the other two and the NAI and Act 10/2010 were approved by a coalition of leftist parties (Casademon and Serra, 2021).

In the Catalan framework, integration is defined as a complex process that requires time and is bidirectional, meaning that it not only corresponds to immigrants, but also involves the whole of Catalan society, although with varying degrees of responsibility. This bidirectional perspective could also be useful to understand the introduction of “citizenship” in the title of the plans since 2005. According to it, the plans put a high emphasis on the importance of the host society regarding integration, not only focusing on the role of those who arrive but also on the whole society (Casademon and Serra, 2021).

The most substantial change in integration policies in Catalonia emerged in 2009 with the National Agreement on Immigration, and the introduction of the concept of integration into the common public culture. It approaches the notion of diversity in the broadest sense and recognizes the need to find a fit in the framework of a democratic and pluralistic society such as the Catalan. The process of ensuring the existence of a common public culture should occur simultaneously. This process is defined as “a shared space for communication, coexistence, participation and recognition of our diverse society, differentiated so that the Catalan nation remains the reference point for all people who live and work here” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009).

The bases of this common public culture are democratic values, linked to respect for human rights. Any form of diversity that respects democratic values should be recognized. To achieve this aim, the plan identifies five challenges: Participation in public life; Catalan as a common language; Coexistence in plurality of beliefs; Equal opportunities between men and women and the incorporation of a gender perspective; Strengthening of policies for the care of children, youth, seniors, and families. This notion is present in all the plans approved so far (Casademon and Serra, 2021).

5. Relevant integration programs implemented in Barcelona

5.1 Programa BCN Interculturalitat (Barcelona City Council)

The BCN Interculturality Programme is a programme promoted by the Department of Culture, Education, Science and Community of the Barcelona City Council. Its mission is to promote the incorporation of the intercultural approach in the public policies of Barcelona City Council and to promote intercultural actions, in collaboration with other actors, at city, district and neighbourhood level. Its objectives are the following:

- To create and promote spaces to encourage dialogue and intercultural relations.
- To raise awareness of interculturality.
- To make known and recognise the cultural diversity present in the city.
- To generate opportunities to build shared intercultural actions and projects.
- To mainstream the intercultural perspective in the different areas and departments of Barcelona City Council.

The BCN Interculturality Programme understands that the Catalan language has a cohesive function. For this reason, it promotes the use and knowledge of Catalan as a common language, which coexists and is enriched by the linguistic diversity of today's society. The program works in 4 lines related to awareness raising, social cohesion and education and training:

- The BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy (non-discrimination and awareness rising)
- Intercultural Training (capacity-building a training and social cohesion)
- The Avignon Area - Language and Culture (capacity building and training)
- Intercultural Projects (non-discrimination and awareness rising and social cohesion)

Dimensions: Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion, Healthcare

Link to the program:

<https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnacciointercultural/sites/default/files/documentos/pla-interculturalitat-cat-versio-final.pdf>

5.2 Service of Attention to Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER)

This is a municipal service specialised in international mobility that offers information and advice on immigration, refuge, emigration, and voluntary return to all residents living in Barcelona.

Barcelona City Council shares the management of this free public service with various organisations such as Creu Roja (Healthcare and capacity building and training), Consorci per a la Normalització Lingüística (language education) or Associació per a l'Orientació, Formació i Inserció de Treballadors Estrangers (capacity building and training and employment), among others.

SAIER counts with an interpreter service for newcomers who have been in the country for less than two years.

Dimensions: Employment, Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion, Healthcare

Link to the program:

<https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/novaciutadania/en/care-service-immigrants-emigrants-and-refugees-saier>

5.3 “Pont trans a la feina” (ACATHI Association)

Acathi (Catalan Association for the Integration of migrant Homosexuals, Bisexuals and Transexuals) is a non-profit organization that seeks to promote the recognition and inclusion of cultural, sexual and gender diversity with the aim of preventing and alleviating discrimination and persecution.

In January 2021, the organization started the program “Pont trans a la feina”, subsidised by Barcelona City Council and focused on the integration of transgender women seeking international protection into the labour market. The goal of the project is to accompany 60 trans or gender-diverse migrant women in their labour insertion process and to link 40 of them to the labour market. The program also includes psycho-social counselling, help with CVs, support on looking for a job, etc.

On the other hand, the project plans to raise awareness among companies so that when a transsexual woman arrives to the workplace, they know how to treat her in an appropriate way, without prejudice and discrimination regardless of what it says on her identity card.

ACATHI association also counts with specific program aimed at health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Heading Ponts) and other awareness raising initiatives to improve social cohesion.

Dimensions: Employment, Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion, Healthcare

Link to the organisation: <https://www.acathi.org/en/>

5.4 Barcelona Inclusive Coding (Barcelona Digital Talent)

Barcelona Inclusive Coding is a collaboration between non-profit organizations that offers tech training to vulnerable groups (including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers). The initiative promotes free quality training for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers willing to work in the tech sector and puts them in contact with tech companies that are looking for new talent.

The main objectives of the project are 1) bridging the digital talent gap while having a social impact, 2) reducing social exclusion, 3) boosting digital literacy and training, and 3) promoting social responsibility of companies.

By proving the benefits of employing well-trained migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and communicating it to the public and other companies this project helps to reduce stigma while fostering employment and economic stability of the target group. Barcelona Inclusive Coding also provides visibility to NGOs and recognizes their essential role in society. At the same time, it puts NGOs in direct contact with the private sector which can lead to partnerships and future collaborations.

Dimensions: Employment, Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion

Link to the program: <https://barcelonadigitaltalent.com/ca/bcn-inclusive-coding/>

5.5 Top Manta (Popular Union of Street Vendors of Barcelona)

Top Manta is a fashion brand created by the Popular Union of Street Vendors of Barcelona, an organization that was created to improve the lives of street vendors and all migrants.

The project involves around 250 people, most of them are young boys and girls from African countries (mostly from Senegal), Pakistan and Latin America. The initiative facilitates migrants' access to training in design, sales and marketing and their integration into the labour market with quality jobs.

The garments are produced respecting for labour rights and the environment, and the designs printed on the clothes combine the culture of Senegal and Barcelona.

In addition to facilitating access to a dignified life for migrants, the organisation also has started several activist and awareness-raising projects and campaigns. When the Covid-19 pandemic began, Top Manta produced more than 14,000 masks, which were distributed to businesses and residents in Barcelona. They also launched a campaign under the hashtag #RegulacióJa (#RegulationNow), in which they called on the competent authorities to regulate all migrants in an irregular situation.

Dimensions: Employment, Capacity-Building & Training, Social Cohesion

Link to the program: <https://manteros.org/>

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