

INADI¹ Establishing a culture of equality - A community project for migrants

Introduction

Attitudes such as discrimination on the basis of nationality, racism and xenophobia restrict the freedom of movement of migrant workers and their families, and prevent the development of social relations based on equality and fairness. This unequal treatment undermines the recognition of the other as a subject of rights and duties.

Migrants are among the most vulnerable groups in Argentina. Many of them are very poor and face insecurity and various forms of exclusion. The denial or restriction of their access to rights and resources due to direct and indirect discrimination -such as limited access to adequate housing, education, healthcare, services and social benefits- is the main source of impoverishment for migrants.

This is compounded by the lack of information about the legal framework that governs this issue and protects the civil, political, economic and social rights of migrant workers (Immigration Law 25,871; Refugee Law 26,165; International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Law 26,202) as well as the absence of programmes and projects to implement and disseminate public policies that benefit the migrant population. The above reasons have led us to take action by developing the project detailed below.

Background

Our main concern were the discriminatory attitudes seen in various places where migrant families with foreign children, children of migrants and Argentine families, gather and interact. For example, according to INADI's Discrimination Map, the worst affected groups are: in the first place, the Bolivian immigrant community; in the third place, the Peruvian community, in the fifth place, the Paraguayan community, etc.

¹ National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (El Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo (INADI).)

Our central challenge was to identify everyday discriminatory practices and understand why they occur, and to prevent such practices through teaching human rights and discrimination workshops. To this end, we analysed neighbourhood practices and discourses around migrants and ethnic groups, and the relationships that children and adults establish on the basis of these.

We pursued our objective through the study of everyday activities, practices and discourses that constitute significant processes of social reproduction and cultural appropriation.

Everyday life spans a great variety of activities through which parents, children, relatives, neighbours and friends meet and interact with each other, promoting local culture. We aimed to observe the way in which people build "relationships, strategies and meanings through which they constitute themselves".

Throughout our involvement we have observed themes such as "culture", "identity", "discrimination", "prejudice", "stigma", etc. The starting point of the workshops was to look at the theory behind these concepts to define our position with regards to each of them.

Objectives

- To disseminate information and offer advice to the migrant population and refugees on their civil, political, social and cultural rights according to the relevant Argentine legislation - Immigration Law 25,871; Refugee Law 26,165; Law 26,202 on Migrant Workers and their families.
- To spread awareness about the causes and effects of discrimination, xenophobia and racism through training sessions focused on developing practices that foster solidarity and respect for difference and diversity. To create public awareness that migration = racism and xenophobia.
- To develop action tools to combat, prevent and protect all the population from discrimination for reasons of ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, opinion or any other that may undermine their rights.

- To develop and promote comprehensive anti-discrimination policies.
- To coordinate the efforts of various actors, groups and institutions against discrimination.
- To promote a cross-cutting approach to non-discrimination in government policies, programmes and actions.
- To promote and disseminate a culture of non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

Activities

The core of these activities was the joint development of a set of criteria on how to discuss, communicate and teach the various issues that emerge from everyday social interactions, which are often expressed as various forms of discrimination. Our goal was to promote an absolutely inclusive and democratic model of citizenship; to this end, we worked towards training migrant and neighbourhood organisations.

The content of the presentations and workshops focussed on:

1. - Origin and nature of the concept of human rights. Why basic, fundamental and inalienable?
- 2.- The importance of acknowledging and learning from differences to enrich one's own identity.
- 3.- The experience of cultural diversity in today's world.
- 4.- The need for diverse influences to constitute a collective identity.

Methodology

Since we were aware of the need to change participants' attitudes towards social, ethnic and cultural diversity, our proposed methodology was based on collective construction and mutual learning. The key elements of this participatory methodology were:

- Attention to specific needs, in particular the need to prevent and combat discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

- Participation, since every training process must foster individual motivation and the ability to learn. In other words, we choose to learn by doing.
- Visibility, we aim to make visible the proposals, discussions and agreements that emerge from the workshops.

The content of the workshops is detailed below. The coordinators (responsible for the organisation and general coordination of the workshops) and the moderators or trainers (responsible for running and developing the tools for the workshops) were key elements of the process.

Project beneficiaries

The project aimed to work with everyday local people. The workshops were held at 48 organisations in 8 neighbourhoods of the city and province of Buenos Aires. It had 10,000 direct male and female beneficiaries of all ages, and 25,000 indirect beneficiaries.

- 6 organisations per month (four two-hour meetings with each) - We worked with 2100 people from the Bolivian, Paraguayan, Peruvian and Eastern European communities.
- 6 neighbourhoods in the city of Buenos Aires: Flores, Floresta, Villa Lugano, La Boca, San Telmo, Retiro. We worked with 1200 people.
- 2 districts in the province of Buenos Aires: Victoria, Escobar. worked with 900 people.

Training for workshop facilitators

Day 1:

- Introducing the project, objectives, responsibilities and benefits for workshop participants.
- Sharing our knowledge of discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

Day 2:

- "Learning by doing": applying the proposed participatory methodology, highlighting the aims of each exercise.

- Choosing integration, presentation and fun exercises for the workshop.

Day 3:

- Preparing materials for the workshop.
- Observing and choosing each role to develop the workshop in the best possible way.

Implementation

What follows is a day-by-day breakdown of the workshop. It helped to handle and avoid contingencies and to understand the requirements of each day.

WORKSHOP FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANISATIONS, duration 2 hours

DAY	TIME	DURATION	TOPIC	CONTENT
First	18 hours	15 minutes	Opening session	Welcome Introduction to the workshop, background and objectives
	18:15	15 minutes	Introduction of participants and review of their expectations	Guidelines for the introduction of participants
	18:30	15 minutes	Introduction to the programme and methodology	Content of the workshop, approach to each topic, rules of the workshop and logistical issues.
	18:45	45 minutes	Conceptualising discrimination, xenophobia and racism.	Choosing laminated images to represent terms and meanings. Written summary of related issues. Group

				work
	19:30	30 minutes	The political and legal context of discrimination, xenophobia and racism in Argentina and internationally.	Interactive talk - presentation video.
Second	18 hours	20 minutes	Delivery of the welcome session	Delivery of the welcome session
	18:20	20 minutes	What is the current situation regarding discrimination, xenophobia and racism?	Individual deliberation and group discussion.
	18:40	40 minutes	Round-table discussion of normative issues.	Discussion of civil, political, social and cultural rights according to the relevant Argentine legislation - Immigration Law 25,871; Refugee Law 26,165; Law 26,202 on Migrant Workers and their Families.
	19:20	30 minutes	Agreements	How to continue working towards strengthening the

				concepts and context developed in the workshops and to encourage organisations to assimilate them. Group discussion.
	19:50	10 minutes	Workshop wrap-up	Group exercise: drawing or writing a piece, script or song related to the issue.
Third	18 hours	15 minutes	Guidance on integration	Integration game
	18:15	45 minutes	Presentation of a documentary on the topic of the workshop	Screening of the documentary
	19: 00 hours	20 minutes	Discussion of the documentary	Discussion of the documentary
	19:20.	40 minutes	Presentation of the exercise	Presentation of group work
Fourth	18 hours	60 minutes	Presentation of group work	Discussion of the workshop process
	19 hours	45 minutes	Closing session	Participants received certificates of attendance from INADI.

Follow-up

This participatory methodology continued beyond the end of the workshops and had a multiplier effect, since it gave participants the necessary skills to train others.