

Training Course for Intercultural Mediators for Immigrants



Part IV
Practical Training
Methodology

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Good practices in IMfl practical training.....	5
3. Recommended structure for practical training.....	7
3.1 Duration and timing	7
3.2 Placement in institutions.....	8
3.3 Definition of tasks of trainees, supervisors and institutions.....	10
4. Supervision	12
5. Coaching	15
6. Country specific recommendations	17

1. Introduction

Practical, on-the-job training is an essential aspect of vocational training. It is one of the most important ways to implement learning-by-doing in adult education. Training of intercultural mediators is no exception to that. The interpersonal, social and intercultural skills in particular that are required from IMfl can be acquired to a satisfactory level only through training in real working conditions.

On-the-job training systems in VET vary greatly in the partnership countries. Therefore, the purpose of the practical training methodology recommended herein is to present guidelines and a general concept that can provide a qualitative framework for practical IMfl training in different contexts, rather than providing a detailed implementation methodology for each country. Specific aspects of national/ regional practical training contexts that may have significant implications for the sustainability of the recommended methodology and might require amendments to it, are presented per country in the last part of the document.

Good practices in IMfl practical training that have provided the inspiration for the recommended training scheme are briefly described at the document's start. These good practices were either presented in intellectual output O2 of the TIME project (*Description of 10 good practices in IMfl throughout Europe and suggestions for transfer*) or detected through research during the project's implementation.

2. Good practices in IMfl practical training

A. Good practices identified during the TIME project

- 1) In the early 1990's the Belgian government designed *an intercultural mediation project in health care* (good practice no 1 in O2), the first step of which was to train mediators through a 1200 hour training scheme that included formal tuition (theoretical), learning on the job, supervision and coaching. On-the-job training had duration of 300 hours. After 3 months of theoretical training in the basics, practical training and coaching were introduced, so that theory, practice and coaching alternated within the week. Coaching was more frequent in the beginning and became less intense as trainees acquired experience and practical training was intensified. Coaches were holders of degrees in pedagogical studies, psychology of community nursing. They were coordinated by a coach who was internal to the project. Practical training took place in hospitals, mother and baby health care centers, primary health care centers and psycho-medical centers for the follow-up of trainees. It was supervised by staff members of the institutions. They cooperated with external coordinators / supervisors who were responsible for 6 mediators each.

Elements adopted: The gradual introduction of practical training, alternating with theoretical training within the week (see Option B); gradual increase of training intensity and responsibilities of trainees; structure of supervision and coaching; duration of theoretical and practical training.

- 2) In Brussels, the course for *Developmental Agents and Intercultural Mediators* organized by CBAI (good practice no 3 in O2) lasts 2 years (750h): 540h theory, 150h practice and 60h coaching. Practical training is embedded in both years of training: the 1st year involves 50h of professional practice while the 2nd year involves 100h of professional practice.

Elements adopted: Practical training is provided in different phases of theoretical training (see Option B). Intensity of practical training increases with time. Coaching is an important part of training. The TIME IMfl course proposes a similar ratio in the provision of theoretical training, work placement, and coaching.

- 3) The master course on *Social and Commercial Mediation and Interpretation* (MISC) offered by the Paris Diderot University in France (good practice no 6 in O2) has a duration of 2 years (700 hours). In the second year of the course trainees have the apprentice status and a week of work placement alternates with a week of theoretical training. For certain months (in spring) trainees work full-time in a professional environment. They can choose among a variety of institutions such as¹: private and public healthcare services; transcultural consultancies; institutes for ethno-psychiatry; public services related to migration movements (OFII, OFPRA, CADA); associations like the Red Cross, Primo Levi, Médecins du Monde etc.; courts; the police; primary and secondary schools; municipalities; socio-educational and socio-medical structures.

¹ <http://www.eila.univ-paris-diderot.fr/formations-pro/masterpro/misc/index>

Elements adopted: The alternation of theoretical and practical training after the completion of significant part of theoretical training (see Option B). In addition, the types of institutions recommended for work placement.

B. Good practice from Germany: Training for Language and Integration Mediators

Since 2002 the Diakonie Wuppertal has been training people as language and integration mediators (Sprach- und Integrationsmittler / SprInt). The effectiveness of the training model implemented (the so called „Wuppertaler Modell“) led to its recognition by the Federal State and its further development and institutionalization as the official training for professional language and integration mediators. Training lasts 18 months and follows nationwide uniform quality standards. Theoretical training lasts 13.5 months (approx. 2000 teaching units/lessons) and covers nine fields of knowledge (reflection competence; social and communication competences; migration and participation; education; social services; health; interpreting theory and practice; German terminology; supporting fields like ICT skills, job searching and social studies). Practical training in the form of internship (Praktikum) lasts 15 weeks (588 hours or 700 teaching units). Three theoretical learning phases of six months each alternate with three internship phases in which participants get to know intensively their future fields of intervention and acquire institutional knowledge.

Training is competence and resource oriented. Upon successful completion of a final examination, graduates receive the SprInt Certificate, which is recognized throughout Germany. The final exams are carried out by three Higher Education Institutes (the Alice-Salomon-Hochschule Berlin for social services and education, the Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf for health, and the Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz for interpreting)².

Elements adopted: Practical training is provided in different phases of theoretical training (see Option B). The purpose of practical training is for trainees to get directly involved in their future fields of intervention and acquire institutional knowledge. Practical training takes place in real working conditions where trainees become an integral part of the institution.

² For more information see: <http://www.sprachundintegrationsmittler.org/index.php/sprach-und-integrationsmittler/qualifizierung>

Die SprInt-Qualifizierung: Inhalt und Ablauf (pdf) available at

<http://www.sprachundintegrationsmittler.org/index.php/infothek/basisinfo/detail>

Poster: Berufsprofil Sprach- und Integrationsmittler/-in (pdf)

<http://www.sprachundintegrationsmittler.org/index.php/infothek/basisinfo/detail>

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprach-_und_Integrationsmittler

3. Recommended structure for practical training

3.1 Duration and timing

The TIME IMfl training course has been designed both for initial and continuing VET. Naturally, the practical training scheme will differ between courses implementing the whole training package and upskilling courses that address only specific modules or topics. However, according to the training methodology presented in O4-A2, practical training should make up in both cases 25% of the total training.

The actual duration of the training courses may vary not only depending on the type of VET (initial – continuing), but also on the training provider and the classification of the course in the NQF or similar framing regulations. The recommendations made below refer to a 1200 hour course, of which 900 hours theoretical training and 300 hours practical training, plus coaching sessions. This duration corresponds to recommended module duration presented in the training methodology. When duration is adjusted according to the local circumstances, it is recommended that adjustments are made in line with the proportional weight of each ECVET unit which is presented in O6.

For **initial training** two different training schemes are recommended, in line with the different structures in the partnership countries. **Option A is to provide first theoretical training in its entirety, along with frequent study visits.** After the completion of theoretical training, on-the-job training along with coaching would take place.

Option B is to gradually introduce on-the-job training and coaching, in parallel with theoretical training. In such a case it is recommended that the first period of training introduces trainees to the core knowledge of intercultural mediation and the related fields through theoretical training, enriched with frequent study visits. After the completion of about 77% of theoretical training, practical training and coaching would be introduced, at increasing intensity. At a glance, the second scheme proposed is the following:

Phase 1	690 h theory and study visits (23 weeks) 6 hours/day x 5 days/week
Phase 2	150 h theory + 150 h practice + coaching (15 weeks) 5h/d x 2d/w theory 5h/d x 2d/w practice semimonthly coaching sessions
Phase 3	50 h theory + 150 practice + coaching (10 weeks) 5h/d x 1d/w theory 5h/d x 3d/w practice semimonthly coaching sessions
Conclusion	10 h theory (2 days)
Total	900 h theory + 300 h practice + coaching

In the case of **continuing VET**, i.e. upskilling courses where one or more topics are delivered, we recommend that practical training takes place after the completion of the theoretical part, maintaining the 25% to 75% ratio.

3.2 Placement in institutions

An important key to the success of on-the-job training is the selection of proper hosting institutions. Ideally, the hosting institutions should have the following characteristics to a reasonable degree:

- **Relevance.** The activities of the institution trainees are involved in have to be relevant to the phase and scope of the training, i.e. whether training is field specific or at a more general level, the experience of trainees etc.
- **Opportunities.** Adequate opportunities for meaningful interventions should be offered in the frame of the trainees' capabilities for effective training to take place. At the same time, workload should be controlled in a way that trainees can spend sufficient time on preparation, cooperation with the supervisor and focusing on qualitative aspects. New trainees should not be assigned critical interventions that may have serious implications for participants if not carried out efficiently. Trainees should be able to receive training in tasks following the ladder model proposed by Verrept & Coune³, progressively assuming more complex and responsible tasks.

³ The ladder model represents and orders the tasks of intercultural mediation according to increasing visibility, complexity, involvement and responsibility on behalf of the mediator. The first step of the ladder (min. visibility etc.) is linguistic interpreting. Facilitation activities follow such as resolution of misunderstandings, cultural

- **Culture.** Training providers need to make sure that the hosting institution has a culture that favors learning and is trainee-friendly. Trainees should not be viewed as intruders, cheap workforce or a mere presence in form.
- **Structure.** The organizational structure of the institution needs to allow for the placement of trainees in a fast and flexible way, without overly time-consuming bureaucratic procedures.

As long as these criteria are met, the institutions and organizations that could be suitable as hosts of IMfl on-the-job training (either for general practice or for field specific training) are:

Health

- Hospitals
- Regional/local Health Centers
- Services for torture victims/humanitarian migrants
- Mother and baby health care centers
- Psycho-medical health care centers for pupils
- Primary health care centers
- Centers for mental health disorders (for specialization only)

Education

- Pre-schools
- Primary schools
- Local services for school enrollment

Public services and labor

- Employment offices
- Services for job orientation
- Municipality services addressed at migrants
- Reception centers for applicants and holders of international protection

Police and legislative services

- Prefectures
- Immigration offices
- Police headquarters
- Courthouses
- Police stations/ offices

Housing

- Regional/ local departments and services for council housing / social housing

The steps necessary for placement are:

1. To choose the hosting institution or organization among the ones cooperating with the training provider (sending institution). Choice should depend on availability, scope of training (general or field specific) and the preferences of the trainee.

brokerage, and support to staff and migrants. At the top of the ladder is advocacy (max. visibility etc.) (H. Verrept & I. Coune, 2015b).

2. All three parties (host institution, sending institution and trainee) need to be informed and agree on the detailed task description applicable during training.
3. Trilateral signing of the formal training agreement in accordance with the laws applicable in the country.
4. For the sending institution to assign a supervisor (more on the role of the supervisor in section 4).

3.3 Definition of tasks of trainees, supervisors and institutions

In order to start the on-the-job training, the first step is to fill in the agreement between the hosting institution and the sending institution (training contract). The agreement has to be signed by the hosting institution, the sending institution and in some countries the trainee as well. Alongside with formal information (duration of training, working hours etc.) the agreement needs to present in detail the tasks of each part involved: 1) tasks of the sending institution, 2) tasks of the hosting institution, 3) tasks of the trainee, and 4) tasks of the supervisor. Documentation of the agreement will naturally occur according to the applicable legislation.

Tasks of sending institution

- To prepare the detailed task description and adjust it in collaboration with the hosting institution
- To introduce the trainee to the hosting institution
- To carry out all administrative /bureaucratic procedures in order to start the training
- To inform the hosting institution on the content of the training received that far and the scope of practical training
- To choose and assign a supervisor

Tasks of hosting institutions

- To go through the detailed task description and suggest any adaptations necessary to the sending institution
- To assign a responsible person for all issues related with the training
- To inform the staff on the role of the trainee and the supervisor
- To introduce the trainee and the supervisor to the staff
- To inform the trainee on the institution's structure and procedures
- To involve the trainee according to task description and respect task limitations of trainees
- To participate in the evaluation procedures

Tasks of trainee

- To comply with the institution's administrative rules
- To comply with the training and evaluation rules
- To cooperate with the assigned supervisor(s) and responsible staff

- To keep professional secrecy
- To respect the tasks assigned in the detailed task description: activities to be done, hierarchy, working hours and timetable of the activities, procedures, tools to be used

Tasks of supervisor

- To perform the tasks presented in the agreement: frequency of supervision, tools and methodologies to be used
- To communicate with the staff of the hosting institution
- To report on the progress of trainees to the sending institution
- To participate in the evaluation procedures

4. Supervision

Definition and scope

Supervision and coaching in training are closely related concepts, often embedding elements of mentoring and counseling. According to the definition and approach adopted, these may overlap to a great extent or be quite distinct. In this document, supervision and coaching refer to two different activities with different aims each. The main objective of supervision, as used here, is **to assist trainees in developing the professional skills and competences described by the learning outcomes of the course, moving from theoretical knowledge to action**. In a safe atmosphere trainees are guided in developing their competences, role awareness, and effective working methods, according to the developmental level they are at. An essential element of supervision is to **teach task and problem analysis**. Through this process, trainees gain the necessary **motivation, autonomy and self-awareness** to successfully move to the next level of professional development⁴.

The model of **supportive supervision** is adopted here for IMfl training. While traditional supervision is a one-way process conducted by the supervisor-in-charge, and generally focuses on job performance evaluation alone, supportive supervision is more **facilitative** in nature, **with two-way communication between the supervisor and the trainee**⁵. The main characteristics of supportive supervision are⁶:

- Establishes clear performance objectives and promotes quality standards
- Focuses on problem solving and monitoring performance objectives
- Enables trainees to continuously improve their own performance
- Provides feedback and recommendations
- Motivates and empowers
- Encourages participatory decision making

Effective supervision leads to **higher-quality services, enhanced productivity**, as well as to employees with a **wider range of skills and increased ability to function with autonomy**⁷. Supervision in social services can play a significant role in the professional development of trainees, not only in terms of technical expertise, but also in shaping professional values and ethical principles.

For the needs of the TIME IMfl course we propose that all supervisors are coordinated by responsible staff of the training provider.

⁴ http://www.risingsunconsultants.com/images/white_papers/PDFs/Supervision-Short.pdf

⁵ http://deliver.jsi.com/dlvr_content/resources/allpubs/guidelines/OJT_SCMHealFaci.pdf

⁶ *ibid*

⁷

http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/forms_documents/apprenticeships_traineeships/supervising_your_app_trainee.pdf

Supervision scheme

Supervising sessions should be held both in individual and group meetings.

1. Individual supervision

Individual supervision is particularly indicated at the beginning of practical training and when the trainee moves upwards the ladder of tasks. The supervisor is present at the pre-encounter discussion between the trainee and the professional. This procedure is not only crucial for effective supervision, but it also helps the staff from the host institution to be more aware of the training process that is taking place and the qualitative standards that have to be met.

Then the supervisor asks the trainee how he intends to proceed, what difficulties he expects and how he thinks to deal with them. Then the supervisor provides feedback as needed. Depending on the nature of the encounter, the supervisor may be either present during the intervention as an observer or not (the presence of a fourth person should not disrupt the triadic encounter).

Following the encounter, the supervisor discusses with the trainee if things went as planned, what unexpected difficulties arose and what alternatives exist in handling similar cases. The trainee is assisted in understanding the reactions of his own and of the parties involved.

Since the frequency and occurrence of IM encounters may be either scheduled or not, depending on the nature of the services provided by the hosting institution and a multitude of other variables, we propose that the supervisor spends a whole day of the week to provide guidance to the trainee(s) placed in one institution, so that his presence is guaranteed whenever the need arises. A supervisor may be responsible for a maximum of 5-6 trainees, placed in one or more institutions. This means that individual supervision in person is provided by rotation and not on a daily basis. During the first 2 months of on-the-job training, individual supervision should be provided at least one day in a week. After that period the intensity of individual supervision can decrease to once in 15 days.

Individual supervision can be also provided via telephone, when the supervisor is in another host institution than the trainee but is not occupied at that moment. This contributes to the best use of the supervisor's time and the maximum individual support to the trainees. It is particularly useful when unexpected difficulties arise that exceed the trainee's capacity.

2. Group supervision

In group supervision the supervisor gathers the group of trainees he is responsible for. Group supervision saves time and effort, enables the use of a wide range of approaches, and gives trainees the chance to develop through sharing of experience, observation and comparison of results. It is an important tool to promote interaction, unity of the group, and effective teamwork. This type of supervision is particularly advantageous when the group consists of trainees with comparable tasks and experience.

At least one day before the meeting, trainees inform the supervisor what cases or aspects they want to discuss, so that the supervisor can prepare accordingly. During the meeting, the supervisor guides

the discussion. A group session could be structured as the following scheme proposes, dealing with several cases:

1. Case analysis
Presentation of the case, the challenges faced and the solutions adopted
Questions for trainees: What did you find difficult? What has to change?
2. Emphasis on critical moments and needs analysis
Trainees are asked to identify the critical moments and main needs
Feedback by supervisor
3. Finding solutions
Brainstorming and teamwork to come up with appropriate solutions
Feedback by supervisor
4. Summary of key points

The supervisor has to ensure that all trainees receive as much attention and time as necessary to reflect on the cases, work on them and participate actively in the joint analysis. Session duration can vary between 2 and 4 hours, according to the need.

Frequency of group supervision should be more intense in the beginning of the training. During the first month it is proposed that sessions are held weekly, while later sessions can be held at semi-monthly or monthly basis. The level of supervision provided (in both group and individual sessions) should be adapted according to the stage the traineeship is at, and the experience and training the trainees have received in a particular task⁸.

Characteristics of the supervisor

For supervision to be effective, the supervisor should have a number of qualities and characteristics:

- Be a high-class specialist in the field of intercultural mediation or akin fields
- Understand very well the objectives and methodology of the IMfl training course in general and practical training in particular
- Have a very good understanding of the way the hosting institution operates
- Be a motivational, perceptive person, accessible and open
- Be a good teacher, allowing to explore different ideas and solutions, without bias
- Easy contacting, creating a sense of security, discreet, tactful with high personal culture
- Be a role-model in adherence to IMfl deontology

⁸ http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/aacs/advice_instructions/supervision_app_trainee_workplace.html

5. Coaching

Definition and scope

Coaching is an effective tool for personal and professional development. In the frame of the TIME training methodology, coaching refers to **individual support and guidance for the holistic development of trainees**. According to the definition by Grant (2000)⁹ coaching is *“a collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee.”* According to a comparative review of 12 studies on coaching in social work, coaching appears to be effective during formative education, encouraging **motivation** and nurturing skills such as **reflection** and **critical thinking**¹⁰.

Regardless of the model adopted, the following are typical features of coaching (Ives, 2008)¹¹:

- a) It is a **systematic** process
- b) Intended for a **non-clinical** population
- c) An **individualised**, tailor-made approach
- d) Aims to encourage coachees to assume **charge** of their life
- e) Based on developing **awareness** and taking **responsibility**
- f) Reliant on skill sets of **listening** and **questioning**, to **challenge** and **support** and raise awareness
- g) A collaborative and egalitarian relationship
- h) A relationship within which the client agrees to be held **accountable**
- i) Designed to access the **inner resourcefulness** of the client

The main objectives of coaching in this course are to assist trainees in developing **healthy stress-coping strategies**, obtaining **interpersonal conflict resolution skills**, and shaping their **professional identity and attitudes** in line with the desired learning outcomes. Through coaching trainees should be assisted in nurturing **successful professional relationships** while maintaining **balanced expectations**.

Coaching is **complementary to supervision**, as applied in this training scheme, and facilitates trainees to deal with emotional and interpersonal aspects that cannot be dealt with in individual group supervision. A good relationship between the coach and the trainee is essential for success.

Coaching scheme

Meetings should be conducted by specialists (IM trainers, practitioners etc.) trained in coaching¹². The coach works directly with the trainee in individual sessions of 45 minutes each, on a

⁹ Quoted in <http://uk.associationforcoaching.com/pages/about/coaching-defined>

¹⁰ http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/SWS/Coaching_and_Mentoring_in_Social_Work-Review_of_the_Evidence.pdf

¹¹ Quoted from http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/SWS/Coaching_and_Mentoring_in_Social_Work-Review_of_the_Evidence.pdf

semimonthly basis. The coach, in line with the desired learning outcomes of the training course according to the trainee's individual needs, will agree with the trainee on a set of **tangible, well-defined goals**. Thus progress can be tracked and necessary amendments in coaching content and methodology can be made.

Through self-analysis, proper assessment tools, discussion and targeted exercises the trainee will be helped to:

- Gain insight and self-awareness of his performance as an intercultural mediator (why does he react and think the way he does; how the IM encounters are internally processed)
- Develop neutrality and impartiality
- Better understand the intentions and needs of parties in conflict
- Acquire practical skills of conflict management
- Identify stressors and employ effective coping strategies
- Process challenges in interpersonal or group relationships (hosting institution staff, trainee group)
- Replace inefficient reaction patterns with new coping behaviors

An important aspect of coaching in this context is **conflict coaching**. Conflict coaching is a task and results oriented process that is, by nature, voluntary and confidential¹³. Trainees are helped to improve their abilities to prevent and resolve conflict in their actual working environment. They learn to identify the many elements of the conflict and to separate themselves from the dispute to the extent necessary. This approach leads to the adoption of a more objective perspective and provides opportunities to transform behavior in constructive and positive ways.

¹² For coaching in a multicultural context see the handbook *Coaching Across Cultures* by Philippe Rosinski (2003) in <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.125.5624&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹³ <http://www.mediate.com/articles/noble4.cfm>

6. Country specific recommendations

Austria

Concerning the structure of the training course, the second model, theoretical training plus parallel with the time increasing practical on the job training, is the most adequate one for Austria as a practical accompanying experience is seen of high importance in the national context.

Concerning the hosting organizations, institutions and organizations working with refugees (NGOs, housing for refugees, the Austrian Integration Fund, teaching/training institutions, etc.) would be an opportunity. Since Austria is one of the European countries with the highest numbers of arriving refugees those places and organizations would form a perfect platform for the trainees to learn, practice, experience the diversity of cultures and gain an understanding of other cultures and societies.

Content-wise, as most of Austrian immigrants come from Muslim countries and cultures, trainees have to be prepared for that target group, which means that the topics gender, religion, values, democracy, etc. have an important role. The challenge for the trainees is to show respect and create mutual respect this way.

Belgium

The training organizations will have to develop different strategies to be able to provide practical training /training on the job in different sectors.

For health care, the IMU of the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment could act as an intermediary to identify relevant practical training sites.

For education, the managers of the 'bridgepersons' program could be contacted and organize training on the job.

Things are more complicated for intercultural mediation in the legislative field. Little or no experience going beyond legal interpreting exist in Belgium. Because of the very sensitive and specific context, the training organization should address itself to the Federal Public Service for Justice and the Federal Public Service for the Interior Affairs as these administrations are in charge of the police and legislative issues.

Practical training in the domain of asylum seeking and social inclusion could probably be organized through collaboration with the department for social inclusion. This department has a lot of experience in the domain of mediators for the poor and will certainly be willing to provide support.

It will be of the utmost importance to designate persons in charge of the organization of the training on the job in the different departments / administrations mentioned above. In addition, each institution that accepts trainees should appoint a local coach/manager for the mediator.

Germany

The practical IMfl training model of TIME can be used in Germany, as far as it does not concern the certified mediator training that has to follow a specific standard. Both training options (after training completion and gradual introduction) may be used. Various opportunities to use that model for training exist.

Greece

The need for qualitative practical training of intercultural mediators is immense. The training scheme proposed is very well suited to address this need. However, given the national context certain difficulties are anticipated:

- The urgent need for interpreters and mediators due to the refugee crisis calls for fast-track trainings, compromising on quality
- Placement of trainees in public institutions such as hospitals or asylum services may not be always possible, due to internal regulations and procedures
- It may be difficult to find enough qualified supervisors and coaches, since the professionals specialized in or acquainted with intercultural mediation issues are still very few in the country

Italy

In Italy the qualification of intercultural mediator exists and there are a lot of training courses addressed at intercultural mediators. They are either academic or vocational and they are always structured with a theoretical part followed by an on-the-job training (Option A).

Generally, the academic courses last between 500 and 1.500 hours and the duration depends on the typology of the course: 500 hours in the case of High Educational Courses; 1.500 hours in the case of Masters. The on-the-job training is always present but there is not any rule about the duration of the practical experience. Instead, each announcement of selection includes detailed information on the institutions, organizations, associations where students can attend their on-the-job training. Regarding the documents to be signed to start the practical experience, the Italian legal framework is very clear and it is in line with the “Definition of tasks of trainees, supervisors and institutions” of the TIME model – chapter 3.3.

In the case of vocational courses, the duration and organization of theoretical and practical parts depend on the rules designed by each Region. Lazio Region adopted the qualification of intercultural mediator in 2008. To obtain the qualification, the course is to be organized by an accredited training center and it has to last a minimum of 450 hours (duration of on-the-job training is between 35% and 50% of the entire course duration). The training providers can provide information about the institutions and organizations where students can attend their on-the-job training but sometimes this information is not present in the announcement of selection. Regarding the documents to be signed to start the practical experience, the Italian legal framework is very clear and it is in line with the “Definition of tasks of trainees, supervisors and institutions” of the TIME model – chapter 3.3.

The Italian educational framework of the qualifications for the IM does not give any detailed information on coaching and supervision. Generally the courses select a tutor that has to monitor the on-the-job training pathway and support the trainee. Given that the Italian vocational education is a very complex matter, it is possible that in the coming years there will be a more detailed definition of the tasks and role of the tutor. In this sense, TIME proposals on coaching and supervision could represent a valid tool.

Poland

In Poland, in spite of the growing amount of immigrants and asylum-seekers, the Polish academic circles did not respond properly to the demands of the market. The culture studies offered by Polish universities are offering mainly theoretical and historical knowledge on the different cultures, but without making students specialized in problem solving – i. e. the pragmatic aspects of the cultural dialogue. The experience to be obtained by students, even if somehow related to what is called here a cultural mediation seems to be insufficient (due to both qualitative and quantitative shortcomings) to provide the sufficient set of skills in the field. The interviews with the social workers related to the area of cultural dialogue show that their professional background in most cases overlap with the market needs only partially or theoretically. Such fields as culturally oriented philology, re-socialization, negotiation, geography etc. do not grasp the required set of skills.

The University of Gdansk offers culture studies, where one of the specializations is cultural communication. The core curriculum consists of such issues like: theory and philosophy of culture, history of literature and arts, practical courses related to the community organization, legislation, and analysis of social needs. The academic profile offers the specialization in the following areas: cultural manager, cultural animator, cultural mediator, cultural consulting.

The Warsaw University is also starting to adapt to the new intercultural trends. Some postgraduate (non-degree) trainings are offered, which are driven by the conceptual framework derived from EQUAL Initiative funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The studies, called: “Supporting the culturally different people on the labor market”, are conducted by the university’s Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialization. The official aim of training is to “prevent” social relations among culturally different people from “breakdown” and to support their integration. The program is officially described as “both practical and theoretical” and dwells upon legal, psychological, pedagogical and sociological issues. The participants typically represent various social institutions.

The studies are conducted in an extramural/non-stationary manner which allows the already working professionals to work during their studies. The specialization is to broaden the qualifications of professionals dealing with the introduction of the culturally different people to the education structures and labor market as well as to support their self-aware, long term and stabilized presence on this market. The curriculum includes issues such as the recognition of legal, social, psychological and pedagogical problems and the principles of “comprehensive and organizationally integrated help”.

Based upon the needs expressed by the cultural mediators and the existing programs proposed in the cultural mediation field, the TIME project has proposed a new approach. In the case of vocational

courses in Poland, for some time there is a great need to create jobs and professionals with intercultural issues. Even though the theoretical background is carefully developed during the academic learning (as described above), there is great need of practical activities such as proposed in the draft TIME coaching classes and supervisions. According to the initial phase of development of this type of activities, a special place in teaching in Poland should be paid to good practices, overlooked link in other countries. Solid analysis of foreign experience will surely be crucial in the development of intercultural mediation.

Portugal

In Portugal, the figure of the intercultural mediator is not officially recognized, nor is there a formally certified training on IM. In this sense, the transference of the practical training methodology proposed in the present document requires that some preconditions be met, such as the legal, social and professional recognition of the mediators' role and the investment in formal certification procedures. The existence of a "tutor" with specific IM competences in the institutions that receive the trainee is also desirable, in order to guide and oversee the work performed during the on-the-job training.

In this sense, the TIME IM practical training proposal is an important contribution to the development of a certified IM training in Portugal. Some specific aspects that need to be taken into account for the development of the IM training in the Portuguese context are presented in the recommendations below.

The importance of mediators' training in the community context

In the community context, the municipalities, namely through their Social Affairs Services, are crucial structures to provide training locations in articulation with the Social Network¹⁴ in place.

Regarding the public services context, services and projects promoted and supported by ACM, are key locations for the on-the-job training, such as the National Immigrant Support Centre, the Attendance Centers for Assistance to Immigrants, Intercultural Mediation in Public Services Project and the Telephone Translation Service.

The Portuguese Universities Network on Intercultural Mediation (RESMI), promoted by the High Commissioner for Migration (ACM), is an essential structure to provide coaching and supervision to the trainees.

The contribution of practice to a "training in progress"

The training organizations will have to develop different strategies to be able to provide on-the-job training in different sectors.

¹⁴ The "Social Network" is a public structure composed by local authorities, central government and public and private nonprofit entities, which aims to promote inter-institutional cooperation for the prevention and solution of social problems at local level.

In Portugal the different training organizations that had promoted IM training courses have invested in a strong practical component, particularly in some specific contexts: social housing neighborhoods, public services for immigrants (national and local level), schools, health centers, police stations and hospitals. The example of the ACM 2009 pilot project on IM training (MISP), grounded in the experience of the IMEDIS¹⁵, was considered a lab for applying new methodologies on intercultural and community mediation. Training was structured around the questions and difficulties encountered by the trainees during the on-the-job training. In this sense, a training strategy with a very practical component, based on real cases and with use of role playing and other dynamic techniques with the different actors has been considered most relevant.

The same concern about practical training has been verified in other IM trainings, namely in the community context, with a focus not so much on what a mediator could change in a specific neighborhood, but on knowing which organizations exist in the territory, and on learning how to interact with them in order to promote positive changes at community level. In this sense, the landscape analysis of the community-based organizations and field observation are key components of the practical training. This practical training is centered on the knowledge of the community actors and resources in order to promote capacity building of mediators to facilitate the engagement of communities, as well as communication and knowledge among the actors involved. It was considered a challenge to move from the individual focus to the collective approach and to mastering tools on community intervention.

Reasoning the practice with other professionals

It is considered positive for the practical training to include, besides the mediators, other persons working with them (e.g. administrative staff) to have training on developing cultural competences, in order to better manage and perceive the mediators' role and the aim and purposes of the intercultural mediation. It was stated as crucial to diminish the sense of competition between them. By this, it should be considered the possibility to include in the mediators group supervision, the occasional participation of other professionals (e.g. administrative staff, local partners).

Practical training of mediators in community partnerships – the example of training community policing teams with the participation of mediators

In Portugal, the fact that the role of mediators isn't recognized as a profession, especially in the field of conflict resolution has been a constraint regarding the mediators training. In this sense, the articulation with other professionals in the training phase, and especially in the practical training, is an opportunity to enhance the mediators' competences and skills to promote better relationships with other professionals, such as police officers, and to build capacity on partnership competences in security related issues at local level.

The contact of mediators with the Police has been mainly at the diagnosis level, which is why the IM training of community policing teams by mediators in a practical training context is an opportunity to discuss the various codes, values and practices related to each culture, their expectations and

¹⁵ IMEDIS – University Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Social Development of Madrid Autonomous University.

stereotypes towards one another, as a way to increase their self-confidence in handling, managing and resolving emerging conflict situations, and especially in preventing them.