MODULE 6

Topic 2

The Cultural Mediator
I. The Cultural Mediator’s Profile

II. Programme Phases, Actions and Techniques

III. Current situation in the work with individuals and families of the Partnership Countries
An accurate description of the cultural mediator’s professional profile who works with immigrants is reflected in the following definitions (1):

“The cultural mediator is someone who is able to be in contact with migrants and their specific social context, fostering the removal of linguistic and cultural barriers... and allowing them to access services. Moreover, the cultural mediator helps organisations in the process of making the services offered to migrants accurate.” (Chiarenza, as cited in Pöchhacker, 2008)

“Cultural mediation refers to all activities that aim to reduce the negative consequences of language barriers, socio-cultural differences and tensions between ethnic groups and local professionals”.

MODULE 6. The practice of cultural mediation in the reality of refugees. Topic 2: Cultural Mediator
Introduction

According to these definitions:

...Cultural Mediation refers to the facilitation of the integration process through the removal of both linguistic and cultural barriers, covering a broad range of tasks that are between the two ends of a spectrum: pure linguistic services provided by interpreters, on the one hand, and strict conflict resolution provided by legal experts or other types of mediators, on the other. Effective communication is the core issue in cultural mediation (2)

Graphic 1: The task range of Cultural Mediation. Source: Time Project.
The Cultural Mediator’s Profile: Characteristics

1. The Cultural Mediator’s Professional Profile:

✓ Owning a good training and handling specific knowledge and techniques (Navaza, Estévez & Serrano, 2009).
✓ Knowledge about the origin and resolution of conflicts in multicultural contexts.
✓ The ideal profile is people with studies in Translation and Interpreting with specific training in cultural mediation (Ponce Márquez, 2011). Knowledge of the language as a communicative bridge.

- Mastering skills and abilities such as:
  
  I. Memorising, taking notes, linguistic-cultural documentation (Ponce Márquez, 2011), mastering interpreting techniques (consecutive-simultaneous), using key words (anchors).
  
  II. The ability to develop empathy without losing neutrality (Giménez, 2010).
  
  III. Communicative, open, impartial, close and flexible attitude.
  
  IV. Ability to sum up proposals between the different parts involved in the conflict.
  
  V. Negotiation and conciliation ability.
2. Acknowledgement as a mediator and the entity in charge of it:

- Confidentiality
- Impartiality

3. Cultural Mediation Limits:

- In cases of criminal acts, the case must be brought to court.
- When one of the parts does not accept the mediator, it is useless to start the process, it is a waste of time.
- When mediators face a manifested injustice that makes them lose their impartiality and side with one of the parts.
- In cases of resolution of a conflict, when one of the parts cannot be present in the process.
Reception Programme Phases
Reception Programme Phases

We have to bear in mind that EU reception programmes are thought to help people whose characteristics fit in any of the humanitarian protection figures.

WHAT ARE THE RECEPTION PROGRAMME PHASES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-phase or Reception Phase</th>
<th>Integration Phase</th>
<th>Autonomy Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception until the allocation to a new centre 30 days</td>
<td>Reception in Asylum Centres Six months (extendable to nine in cases of vulnerable people)</td>
<td>Integration Six months (extendable to eleven in cases of vulnerable people) Autonomy Six months (Reduced to four in cases of vulnerable people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next we will see each of the phases regarding:
- ✓ Objectives
- ✓ Actions
- ✓ Potential Problems

Source: General Directorate of Migrations
PREVIOUS PHASE (PRE-PHASE), RECEPTION PHASE OR TEMPORARY RECEPTION:
It is the period between the arrival of refugees in the host society and their allocation to Reception Centres.

- OBJECTIVES:
Covering the basic needs of the person from the moment they arrive in Spain, specially providing learning skills that will foster an independent life outside the reception centre, as well as, information, psychological assistance and legal advise, among other services.
Reception Programme Phases

- ACTIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE PRE-PHASE:

**Healthcare Sector:**

- At first instance, health services are carried out by the Spanish Red Cross, doing **ACCOMPANIMENT tasks and HEALTH mediation.**
- Accompaniment and **INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE** in health intervention.
- **MEDIATION** with health staff and professionals.
- **TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING** tasks in certain accompaniments.
- **GENDER** perspective in interventions.

**Legal Sector:**

- **INFORMATIVE TASK** carried out with the legal-administrative professional before and in the moment of the formalisation of the application.
- Intercultural translation **OF THEIR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS** which derive from the International Protection situation in our country.
Social Intervention with the Social Worker and the Reception Technician:

- The presence and mediation of the social worker when explaining the phases and characteristics of the programme.
- Setting the applicant in a good, trusting, safe and confidential climate.
- Creating a task in which they will be able to get to know the host society where the reception itinerary will take place and formalising their International Protection application.
- Mediation to satisfy their basic needs before the allocation to assistance reception resources.

Mediator’s tasks in the previous reception phase:

- In this phase, as before, the cultural mediator’s task will be part of the negotiation and communication strategies in both directions. Whilst respecting the rest of the interdisciplinary team and the host society.
Reception Programme Phases

- PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE IN THE PRE-PHASE:

  Delays in any of the essential administration actions.

In which countries are these problems more frequent?

SPAIN AND ITALY
INTEGRATION PHASE:

It starts once applicants finish their stay in the reception facility, but they still need an external support.

OBJECTIVE:
Accompanying people in their way to socio-labour integration.

ACTIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE INTEGRATION PHASE:

- MEDIATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE ACTIVE SEARCH OF EMPLOYMENT due to the concession of the “Work Authorisation” in the identification document called “The Red Card”.
- MEDIATING IN THE COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBOURS.
- Bearing in mind the possibility of a rejection of the application, the mediator along with a law professional should carry out AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSEQUENCES that this could entail.
- SCHOOL AND HEALTH FOLLOW UP of minors and parents.
Reception Programme Phases

- PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE IN THE INTEGRATION PHASE:

- Barriers to access education due to the cost and saturation of the system.
- Limited access to UNHCR.
- Difficulties in accessing materials and healthcare assistance.
- Major administrative difficulties to access employment.
- There is a linguistic barrier that hinders finding employment and the access to educational resources.
- Delays of more than two months to obtain the work permit.

In which countries are these problems more frequent?

ITALY, GREECE AND UNITED KINGDOM
AUTONOMY PHASE:
It is the final phase. The programme offers the applicant assistance or occasional or sporadic support in areas in which refugees have more problems.

- OBJECTIVE:
Promoting a gradual integration in any area of society.

- ACTIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE AUTONOMY PHASE:

✓ When leaving the reception centre and moving to rented flats or houses, it is important to carry out an cultural mediation with the OWNERS AND ESTATE AGENCIES.
✓ AN OCCASSIONAL SCHOOL AND HEALTH FOLLOW UP.
✓ Before carrying out a possible change of municipality, it is important to MAP THE RESOURCES, ENTITIES AND ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE NEW AREA.
Reception Programme Phases

PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE IN THE AUTONOMY STAGE:

- Geographic distance that hinders the follow-up.
- Lack of personnel.

In which countries are these problems more frequent?

SPAIN, GREECE, UNITED KINGDOM AND SPAIN
To sum up...

**THE FIELDS OF INTERVENTION OF THE CULTURAL MEDIATOR** have their own particularities, therefore, any action requires the specific knowledge of the Cultural Mediator and the adaptation of conflict resolution techniques and processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education area</th>
<th>Working area</th>
<th>Social Service area</th>
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<td>• Facilitating communication between foreign students and their teachers and between the students’ families and teachers, etc.</td>
<td>• Facilitating communication between employers and employees. • Giving support to professionals of the service areas.</td>
<td>• Facilitating communication between social workers and service seekers in case of linguistic and cultural comprehension difficulties such as: educational models, religious peculiarities; clarifying to foreigners the roles and responsibilities of professionals in the social sector.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To sum up...

**Legal area**
- Carrying out certified translations; giving advise to the service staff on the characteristics of the clients’ cultures of origin; offering guidelines on bureaucratic processes involved in obtaining documents such as permit of stay, foreigner’s family admission in the country, etc).

**Health area**
- Facilitating communication during visits and interviews with foreign patients; advising and providing explanations to staff about the culture of origin of foreign patients; providing informative material.

**Familiar area**
- Facilitating communication between mixed marriages (Divorce processes)
- Facilitating communication of relationships between parents and children (because of the lack of schooling, etc)

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References


Bibliography and references

Bibliography


