

**Report of the study visit  
London, June 2009  
Manresa City Council- Spain**

**1. Westminster Adult Education School (WAES)**

Apart from being surprised of the size of the organization itself, after visiting London we realized that there is a large distance between our Adult Schools and the British model.

Our Adult Schools system focuses on satisfying "leisure/pleasure" needs, they do not work preparing people for employment opportunities. Their offers concern basic language skills that give migrant people a general knowledge of the language, as well as an introduction to Catalan culture (but it is not a citizenship course, it is not compulsory). It may let them approach to Catalan society and it may be useful for their day-to-day life, but it is not sufficient to develop themselves in the Labour Market.

Offering employment opportunities is an "obligation" assumed by the Local Government, where we only work training in the direction of preparing people to success in the Labour Market. Regarding the language issue, we plan some Catalan lessons in all of our training courses, and it is compulsory to attend for all the students.

It seems that what in the UK is worked jointly ("Business solutions", language training and vocational training/training for employment) in Spain is assumed by two bodies which are still, and unfortunately, not linked. They do not work in the same direction, whereas they want to reach the same goal: socio-labour integration.

**2. Language**

If we consider language as a key factor to guarantee people's integration, and we also consider that language fluency will give us more opportunities to get a job, our current model does not facilitate it.

As we could see in London, WAES offers a wide range of courses, being ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) an important part of them. In Catalonia no public language courses (neither Catalan nor Spanish) are offered to foreign people. If they want to obtain any language certificate, they have to adapt to the common system, completely disconnected of the Labour Market.

The only thing specially offered to foreign people are Catalan language courses (normally oral courses) which work on basic aspects about our culture as an introduction to our country. Most of these courses for foreign people do not give an official certificate, which means that students cannot show the companies the level of qualification acquired.

On the other hand, and in general terms, those people who have accessed the Labour Market but with a very basic knowledge of the language, have few opportunities to improve their fluency:

- a) Difficulties to attend Adult Schools, due to the courses timetable.
- b) Low companies involvement.

### **3. Network and personal factor**

When educational or job qualification levels are upskilled, which involves a certain language command as in the case of Gilbert and Chris, the access to the Labour Market is easier. The personal background has here a key role.

Otherwise, and in general terms, it seems that the more technical the knowledge required is, less discrimination problems seem to exist (Gilbert's case, Shell vs Chris career as a journalist). Cultural background is still in some fields (such as mass media) seen as a problem more than an opportunity, whereas in charities or social organizations, coming from a certain ethnic or cultural group seems to be a guarantee of good work. Does the background here weight more than the skills?

In other cases, although the personal educational background is decisive, being part of one or some networks may be a factor of success to get a job, or to be able to get a job that fits with one's skills as we could see in the case of Chris Joseph.

After working in different jobs (construction, cleaning..) where he was underskilled, he won a job and he was put in touch with the "Network for black professionals", an organization whose mission is to train non white people to promote and to reach management positions. This network offered him a mentor, he won self-confidence, and he had the possibility to become responsible for "Business solutions" in WAES, where he works currently. He did not lack skills or talent, he lacked a network.

### **4. Anti-discrimination regulation**

As we have said in the other reports, and due to our recent immigration, in Spain we do not have any legal specific tool to fight against discrimination aspects due to ethnic minority background yet.

Currently Catalonia and Spain are in a first stage, where we are still taking in immigrants.

Reviewing the documents given by our partners in WAES, we can see that the existing wide range of anti-discrimination rules reflects the concern of the UK to work towards the equal opportunities in the workplace.

In Spain ethnic minorities discrimination does not take much space on the labour market agenda, whereas discrimination for gender reasons seems to be a major concern.