



MIGRATIONS AND CITIZENSHIP: a view from young people

An interactive investigation about migrations

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The international meeting began with the lost of a young attendant who, the day after his arrival in Paris, left the hotel in which all the attendants were registered for a transit on their way to Bogota. That event brought all the members of the project to search answers to some questions: which motivations incite a young to leave his country and abandon all that he has to risk a perilous adventure, including exploitation, non-citizenship and an uncertain future? We wondered about our role of facilitators of reflection, of political training projects, by discussing with young folks about the reasons and the risks of migration. It seems evident for us that it's worthless to strengthen the controls at the frontiers if the living conditions in the other side are not made better, if there is no political will from governments to build states, cities and quarters where citizens' rights are respected.

**Report of the 2nd international meeting of young,
Bogota 2006**

The project “Quartiers du monde” starts an active investigation about migrations

« Quarters of the world: urban stories » is a strategic project for political training in the citizenship of the young from different quarters in the world and from different associations. The training also concerns the local authorities whose main objective is to contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and more participating government in both north and south countries, so that the contribution of young folks should be considered in the elaboration of public policies.

For many years, organisations and institutions, our partners for the program have worked on the problematics of disadvantaged quarters' populations – namely those of young people resulting from urban transformations: social exclusion, youth stigmatisation, absence; the lack of application or unsuitability of public policies in disadvantaged quarters, which do not allow the same rights for all the young; the difficult or even not existent intergenerational and intercultural dialog; the depreciation of people and mainly young people by their local authorities in their ability to analyse their own situation and using this as a relevant proposal for the territory.

The project “Quarters of the world” was created, in concertation with the various partners of the different member countries, to deeply develop those problematics in three continents, based on a comparative intercultural approach between South and North:

- South America: El Alto in Bolivia; Rio de Janeiro in Brazil; Bogota in Colombia
- Africa: Salé in Morocco; Pikine in Dakar in Senegal; Bamako in Mali
- Europe: Montreuil in France, Palma de Mallorca and Barcelona in Spain.

To achieve our goal, we used participative learning methodologies such as: participative active-research, social cartography and communication as a mean of active-research (video, Theater of the Oppressed).

So, the first action of the program “Quarters of the World: Urban Stories” (2004-2007) permitted young participants (girls and boys) to erect themselves as social and political individuals of their quarter: they acquired an organisational autonomy, achieved a knowledge of themselves and of the social political system of their quarter. They developed their negotiation and analytic abilities, they also acquired some means permitting them to study their territory and its public policies.

The project also aroused a space of meeting and intercultural exchange between young girls and boys about subjects they were concerned with. They chose to work about <<discriminations>> and <<the social construction of the territory and its public policies>>.

During the project, migrations have been identified as a phenomena common to all the young of the concerned popular quarters. In fact, almost all the young residents were on their way to migrate, be it rural exodus, obligatory moving because of violence such as the case of Colombia, or migrations from south countries to Europe. Moreover, for many young people, migration means the fulfilment of their hope.

So, that question was present all through our program, much more in some teams which felt directly concerned and considered themselves as victims of discrimination, than in others.

We are working on migrations and for the second stage, we'd like to conduct a video-research in order to know and understand why people leave.

How do they feel when they are always asked where they are from?

We asked some young from Montreuil to answer that question:

- Oumar: I am French originary from Senegal.

- Niamey: *I am from Mali originary from France!*

*A girl from the Barcelona team, originary from Morocco.
International Meeting of Young- Quarters of the World, Montreuil 2007.*

It's in such an exchange situation that our project <<Quarters of the World>> was created and young from five teams suggested to work together on migrations for the second stage. Therefore, teams from Africa and Europe started an interactive research about the subject.

The cities concerned with the interactive research about migrations are the followings: Salé (Morocco), Bamako (Mali), Pikine (Senegal), Barcelona (Spain) and Montreuil (France).

Why shall we work about migrations?

*In Barcelona, we almost constitute a quarter of the world, due to the impact of migrations. In the beginning we didn't have a clear idea of discrimination, we thought it meant racism. In the quarter, there are different cultures and different languages, a fact that **amplifies the difficulty of the dialog and of the relationships between the diverse communities**. We decided to work with our group of participants as if we were in a laboratory, so that we could create within it a series of dialogs, which could be transferred outside the group in order to vehiculate trainings towards other quarter members. Video constituted one of the means we used to create this dialog. Therefore, the concept of discrimination was redefined collectively.*

Young from Barcelona, 2nd International Meeting of Young, Bogota 2006.

Since the beginning, all the teams showed their interest in that kind of research; they found it pertinent. The young from Bamako, for example called themselves <<potential migrants>>. So, the young and their supporters wondered about the objectives and the limits of this research: what do we want to/what can we change?

Sometimes, young themselves answered to our questions or showed us the directions to follow...*our team is a laboratory. We know that, only what we get from the group, could be projected to the quarter.* Marina, a young from Barcelona.

So, throughout the program, we discovered some "aggressive" words about which we had to exchange and negotiate in order to redefine them.

The word « integration » was one of them. That word includes different representations: for some people it means <<culture eraser>>, then it's referred to as <<acculturation>>, *they want us to forget where we are from, who we are, to integrate, to adapt, to be like the people of the host country... For others, it's the only way for <<a better life together>>.*

Therefore, the word « integration » implies the feeling of not being accepted as we are: different and rich of that difference, a richness that could bring much to the new territory and to the local democracy; when we ignore that feeling, the difference would neither be treated nor developed as a richness, and therefore becomes a source of conflict.

Therefore, we chose the word inclusion instead of integration. The word inclusion is more interactive; it also implies the participation of the host society and emphasizes its part of responsibility. «Inclusion » impels the society to evaluate its democracy, tolerancy, fairness and its ability to accept the difference.

So the active-research about migrations led by young intends to contribute to **the reflection on the problematics of migrations, with regard to citizenship.**

We would like young from popular quarters of Africa and Europe to know and understand migrations between the two continents, in their country and their town. We would like them to take part in the reflections about local migrations and development; to break the stereotypes related to migration in Africa and Europe by the means of exchanges and common workshops between Barcelona, Montreuil, Salé, Pikine, and Bamako to promote a better knowledge of the societies attending the program; and at last we would like to contribute to the politics about <<free circulation with dignity>>.

How to work on migrations?

There are several stages and different actors involved in a development processus. In our case, concerning migrations, the fondation is the young from five towns. Here are their first remarks:

Young from Pikine, Salé and Bamako

- The new liberal logic more advantages the circulation of capitals and goods than that of men: we are living a <<merchandised>> humanity which has profit as rule.
- The development inequality between North and South is a modern times scandal.
- Because they absolutely want to migrate, young are often victim of visa swindlings and of smugglers.
- The ignorance by migrants of the legal aspects of migration or the lack of public policies involved in migration emphasizes the situation.
- Due to their geographic situation, Senegal and Morocco are at once receivers and transmitters of migration flows.
- Rural migration is the most important form in the cited countries and all over the world: cities "pump" rural exodus migrants.
- Migration toward the North is favoured by stereotypes: you are considered in the society only if you are a "Francenabé" (coming from France in local dialect) or a MRE (Marocain Resident à l'Etranger: a Moroccan Living in a Foreign Country)
- This image is kept up by migrants themselves who, when they come back home for holidays, make big expenses, and show their power by distributing money to their family (large), by their clothes, the house they build for themselves and/or for their parents.
- This image generates the fact that children and young build dreams and don't recede front nothing to go to Europ: they borrow pirogues with a philosophy as "Barca (Barcelone) or Barzack (the death)", climb under the buses which pass in Spain, walk long distances to arrive up to Morocco, last rampart before Europ.
- The living and working conditions of migrants are difficult, mainly because of the look they carry, be it in the host country or in their own country (in Senegal for example migrants are called "bushmen").
- Nevertheless, there are young who fight against the fatality and renounce to emigrate, facing the situation by making a business to provide for their needs.

Young point of views from Barcelona

- There is discrimination in the application of public policies. The opportunities to benefit from migrants rights vary from an age to another.
- The main difference comes from the administrative situation. But the regularisation doesn't only relate to the Spanish government: Europe has imposed punishments after Spain regularised some clandestine migrants.
- Welcome centers and minor migrants' tutors don't systematically help them to find other solutions.

With these first point of views and hypotheses from young, we proposed some research themes in order to know and analyse the reasons of every migration, place them in the globalisation perspective of the new-liberal system, analyse them under the approach of gender relations and in an intergenerational dimension, which through young themselves include or exchange adults (men and women) point of views:

- Migrations and globalisation
- Gender and intergenerational perspectives and migrations.
- Migrants situation in the different countries and from one step to another of their migration
- The public policies of development and of migrations elaborated in each country
- Migration and local development (migrants financial contributions to the development of their ordinary country)
- Migrants contributions to the host country
- The symbolic construction of the countries and their inhabitants: from imaginaries to stereotypes
- Identities and the construction of the other: integrate, include.

To begin the research, young will work on every day stories in the quarters: applying the project methodologies, such as the social cartography and the video, they (girls and boys) will exchange with other young and inhabitants of their quarter, collecting informations permitting them to know, understand and analyse every migration (lived and/or wanted).

Moreover, for internal workshops, the group doing the Active Research will try to place and analyse these testimonies under gender and intergenerational perspective, starting with these questions: How does a man or a woman live in migration? Why do people (young, adults men or women) leave? At what age? For which reasons...to find a job, to study, to escape a situation of life or to improve one's living conditions? Toward which destinations? Etc.

The young will follow migrants' itineraries and their living situation in the different host countries, by discussing on the web (virtual forums) with the other young, the inhabitants and associations from other quarters involved in the project.

The actors of the project:

Five groups of young girls and boys (aged 16 to 25), participating to the project « Quarters of the world: urban stories », living in the involved African and European countries. These young have participated to the International Meetings of Young realized in the first stage of the project, and to the training sittings and local studies realized all through the project. For these actions, they used Active-research and Social Cartography methods, as well as communication supports such as pictures, video, Internet, PowerPoint and theater-forum.

Every local team is made of twenty young (the right number to undergo an Active-research) and of two facilitators (professionals trained in social sciences), who collaborate with other actors from the quarter and the town.

The results of these researches and studies from the young will be enriched with the results of the exchanges with migrants' associations and/or associations which work with migrants. The young will have to know and understand the political rules of migration in their countries and exchange with other teams about the existing political rules of those countries.

At this stage of the research, it's very important for us to create collaborations with institutions like IOM or UNESCO, which could help the young in their search for informations and their comprehension of migratory movements all over the world, in their country and their area, with statistics, political and juridic analysis.

These collaborations could also help us to reach the authorities in charge of migration matters in the involved cities and countries, so that we can know the migration rules adopted by the different governments. This relation will also enable us to be known by these authorities as a group of investigation in the concerned domain.

This active-research would not pretend to have the least influence and/or bring on any reflection without the confrontation of the results of the different processes led by young with the authorities in charge of the application of migration policies in the concerned cities, and with the different actors having contributed to it (inhabitants, migrants' associations, etc.).

All through an Active-Research...

During the first stage of our project, we discovered that time necessary for reflection and analysis was our main obstacle, because the young had a lot of pression so, were less available: they had to study and/or work, look for a job, or look after their families... and therefore, had less time for the Active-Research. Nevertheless, they were motivated for the proposition.

The Barcelona team, which was the pioneer to lead the Active-Research about migratory processes concerning young, pointed out the importance of working with, getting used to, adapting to, and sharing experiences with young Spanish, Catalans and Europeans, or of any other origin:

*But it's impossible to realise long lasting processes with them and to consider results, because they give up the training as soon as they get a job. So, we lose sight of most of them when they begin a training period for a job; that means when they are 16.
... Nonetheless, some come back because they want to participate to the activities besides a heavy schedule.*

The endeavour to reconstruct and improve their migratory process brought out a positive change in the behaviour of these young, who included **dialog and negociation** into their relations with their school and quarter.

With some Dominican boys, we worked on social cartography here and there (Dominican Republic), past and present. The enthusiasm was for the origins of « salsa » and « meringue », passing by Africa, African-americans and African-latino

*Americans. With the collected informations, we proposed to realise a small **exposition on the Dominican Republic** for the quarter.*

This way, those young (excluded from the lycee because of their low school level and their lack of discipline) not only worked on a theme concerning their identity, organised by themselves, but also transmitted the acquired knowledge to the quarter, inciting the acknowledgement of the Dominican culture and history.

Conclusion

Besides the anchorage of the network « Quartiers du monde » in the North and the South, the complexity of the theme migration will be viewed through different migratory periods and moves, and different actors: young Moroccans, Dominicans and from elsewhere, newcomer in Barcelona, young from rural to urban area, from Western Africa to Europe with a transit in Morocco, from Morocco to European countries, young French from migration.

Through their public policies, we could observe the political attitude of Europe toward young migrants, and that of the African governments toward the young from popular quarters. We could also observe the relations between North and South, which at times include agreements. At last, migrants of here and there could analyse and testify of their life route and insertion in a new society, with regard to hopes, imaginaries, and a real wish for a better life.

We are a synthesis of history. Our hands can reproduce this story, but our hands can also remake history by redefining new directions, inducing a change of phase which will permit us to exist with dignity, as active history and society makers. Choosing to change phase, considering the non-conformity as an opportunity to strengthen proposals and to assume ourselves anywhere we are, as the expression of a collective accomplishment. This is a pressing need.

Social cartography... directions to be followed, Catalina García Barón – Capitalisation « Quartiers du Monde: Histoire urbaines », 2006

Annexe

Partners in charge of the realisation of the project

- The city of Montreuil, by the means of it's Citizenship, Social and Urban Development and Youth services, in the quarter of Bel Air-Grands Pêcheurs
- The association "INCITA" (Acciones e Iniciativas Sociales y Culturales) in Barcelona
- "Enda Mali", in collaboration with two other quarter associations: "CAMS" and "DANAYA", in Bamako
- "Enda Maghreb" in partnership with the associations "Bras unis", "Nahdat El Hay" and "Assalam" in Salé
- The association "GRAINES" (a group of active-research on the "Social and Educational Incitatives") in Pikine
- The association "Quartiers du Monde" based in Paris, in charge of the coordination in the project.