

Forum

E-Inclusion Policies and Initiatives in Support of Employability of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Europe*

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In Europe, when we speak about ICT and employability, e-Inclusion policies come immediately into play. Besides considerations about social equity and quality of life benefits, which are seen to derive from the use of ICT in our society, the urgency to extend access to ICT and increase usage capacities among weak or non-users also reflects an economic concern. Given the shrinking labor force in Europe, increasing the labor market participation of women and older people, reducing the number of unemployed people—particularly among young generations—and achieving a fuller economic integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities are all crucial goals. To support the growth and innovation aims of Europe, however, these groups must also match the skills required in the labor market, and digital capabilities figure high among such requirements.

Marginalized Groups in Europe

In the European policy discourse at the intersection of social policies and information society policies, the dominant notion when talking about marginalized groups is that of “social exclusion.” There is, in fact, no established definition of social exclusion, but there is a broad understanding that is a multidimensional, dynamic condition that has to do with the lack of material and social resources affecting socioeconomic opportunities, health, wellbeing, and general quality of life. Income poverty is undoubtedly an important risk factor for social exclusion, and, based on this measure, some 16% of the EU population (i.e., 78 million people) suffer from it, with women more likely to be exposed, and around 19 million children among them. Significantly, 31 million workers (out of about 200 million) are earning extremely low wages and another 17 million experience income poverty despite employment (European Commission, 2008c; Zimmer, 2009).

Based on more direct measurements of social exclusion through multiple deprivation indexes, approximately 16–17% of the population in the UK has been found to suffer from high levels of social deprivation (Helsper, 2008). These people are up to eight times more likely to be disengaged with the Internet than those who are socially advantaged; the digitally and socially excluded correspond, depending on the studies, to 9–13% of the UK's population (four to six million adults). In the Netherlands, another study also using multiple deprivation indexes found that about 11% of the total population of adults above 25 years of age would

*The views expressed in this article are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

belong to the socially excluded. Significantly, statistical analysis showed that ICT skills seem to have an effect on social exclusion: the lower these competencies, the more people are excluded, especially in the social participation dimension (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007).

EU Views and Policies on ICT Skills for Marginalized Groups

In March 2000, the EU heads of state and government adopted the Lisbon Agenda, an ambitious policy scheme which set the goal of making the EU, by 2010, “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment.”¹ The building of an “information society for all” was identified as a key driver and as a proof of progress of the Lisbon Agenda and two subsequent policy frameworks were adopted to steer related policies at the European and member states levels.

The action plans eEurope 2002 and 2005 aimed to develop modern public services and a dynamic environment for e-business through widespread availability of secure and cheap broadband access and network services. Investing in human resources and training was the second main objective of these plans, focusing on young people and education (by connecting all schools to broadband networks); on digital literacy and skills for working in the knowledge economy (European Computer Driving Licence Foundation, 2009);² and on participation in the information society through eAccessibility (“design for all” measures, etc.) and access opportunities (with a goal of at least one PIAP [Public Internet Access Point] per 10,000 inhabitants). The subsequent policy framework, launched in 2005 following the revised Lisbon Agenda, is known as “i2010—A European Information Society for Growth and Employment,” and it has three broad aims: to create a single European information space, which promotes an open and competitive internal market for information society and media services; to strengthen in-

vestment and innovation in ICT research; and to support inclusion, better public services, and improved quality of life through the use of ICT (European Commission, 2005). To achieve those aims, there are various actions such as regulation, funding for research and pilot projects, promotion activities, and partnerships with stakeholders.

As part of the i2010 framework, e-Inclusion policies have gained importance, exemplified by the 2006 e-Inclusion Riga Declaration (European Commission, 2006b)³ and the 2007 Communication on e-Inclusion (European Commission, 2007). Today, the importance of digital inclusion support initiatives is widely acknowledged, even though the development of e-Inclusion policies in Europe is uneven and not yet a clear priority in many countries, in addition to the fact that existing initiatives are still fragmented and in need of better coordination.

The European e-Inclusion policies look at disadvantaged people in two ways. First, all those who are non-ICT users are considered to be disadvantaged in today's information society. The i2010 Annual Report in 2007 found that 40% of the population at that time in the 27 EU Member States (EU27) had no Internet skills, but higher percentages were found in older age groups, people with a low education level, and those outside the labor force. e-Inclusion measures thus first aim to increase their digital literacy and access opportunities, as well as to minimize new barriers created by the use of ICT in service provision and other areas (e-Accessibility). Disabled and elderly people are the primary targets of such measures.

Second, groups considered disadvantaged from a socioeconomic point of view—and more precisely, those at risk of social exclusion—are the object of growing attention, as they tend to suffer more than others from digital exclusion and because social equity and cohesion priorities make it important to bring to them the benefits of digital technology. Efforts, therefore, are made to identify marginalized groups, to understand their main problems and needs, and to devise ways to promote the use of ICT by these groups and/or by those who assist and deliver services to them (public services, voluntary

1. See *Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, March 23–24, 2000*, available at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

2. *The ECDL (European Computer Driving License) scheme received a major boost in this phase.*

3. *This document was a Ministerial Declaration approved unanimously on June 11, 2006, at Riga, Latvia (European Computer Driving License Foundation, 2009).*

groups, charities, etc.). The most developed case of this approach is currently provided by the UK government's Delivering Digital Inclusion Action Plan (UK Government, 2008).

The Crucial Role of Public Internet Centers and the Third Sector

A recent survey by CEDEFOP (European Commission, 2008b) has confirmed that European society is definitively moving toward a knowledge-based economy, given the higher level of qualifications required for European workers over the next years. There is a direct impact of education in reducing the chances of being unemployed (EUROSTAT, 2007), so low-qualified employable adults who do not meet the minimum requirements to access the formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) system need to improve their competencies by informal education if they want to reduce or not augment their risk of exclusion from the labor market.

Precisely for those at the weak side of the chain, PIAPs present throughout Europe have become a privileged channel for digital literacy and adult education in the last decade (Rissola, 2007). Through adult training and guidance, they contribute to personal fulfilment and development (cultural capital), active citizenship and inclusion (social capital), and employability (human capital).

Telecenters, the more extended model of PIAPs, have developed incipient expertise in training adults by applying different organizational models based on the centric role of facilitators (motivators, trainers, etc.). Despite their limited focus on economic aspects, telecenters have proved important to provide basic key skills for employability to low-qualified adults at risk of exclusion from both the labor market and the formal VET system, offering them free access, openness, proximity, informal networking, and learning opportunities. Notably, the improvement of digital, interpersonal, civic, and learning-to-learn competencies, which are a verified result of the learning experience in telecenters, are useful for beneficiaries to not only get a (new, better) job, but also to acquire entrepreneurial competencies (European Parliament and the Council, 2006) and, potentially, set up their own small business. It is worth mentioning that self-employment is an interesting alternative to alleviate unemployment, and there-

fore, it is supported in many ways by the member states.

Across Europe, PIAPs and telecenters are traditionally run by Third Sector organisations (TSO: educational institutes, organizations of the elderly, migrant organizations, community media, social community centers, organizations of the disabled, etc.) and, only in the last few years, also by public bodies (normally, local municipalities or regional governments).

Joining Efforts Between Policy Makers and Practitioners

The Third Sector is heterogeneous in nature, and despite its important role at ground level, it has still a weak voice in the e-Inclusion dialogue process launched from Brussels with the "e-Inclusion 2010—Be part of it!" campaign (European Commission, 2007). A recent workshop on this topic held at the conclusive event of that campaign—the "European Ministerial e-Inclusion Conference & Expo," organized in Vienna in December 2008—brought interesting conclusions about the present and future of TSO's contribution to e-Inclusion:

- While the public sector has a key role at the funding level, most e-Inclusion projects are executed by, or in close cooperation with, TSO, yet the Third Sector is not a partner in policy making (but should be).
- TSO are important to involve citizens since they know how to address and reach people from a user-oriented perspective, but they know less about how to involve media and technology (which is still seen as inappropriate for human-centered initiatives in many of them) inside those dynamics.
- Monitoring tasks that could lead to proper impact assessment of TSO initiatives on social inclusion are not usually developed.
- E-Inclusion should also consider the participative processes to involve socially excluded groups in the development of technological platforms that they might use or that aim to address their needs.
- TSO need to secure funding to subsist, but there are neither stable public funding lines devoted to telecenters, nor enough private donors. Relevant exceptions are Microsoft's

Unlimited Potential program, which is supporting several TSO running telecenters for the “hard to reach,” and Telecentre-Europe’s network of networks officially launched at Vienna.

- TSO are sometimes afraid of becoming/acting as government services delivery points, but to benefit from public funding, TSO have to be flexible enough and also take some responsibility for ensuring that they can be reliable partners who can keep on delivering beyond short-term project funding.
- Cooperation between TSO and the European Commission (EC) is just starting in this policy area. Very high fragmentation is the main obstacle here, as there are not “obvious” interlocutors (with exceptions regarding the digital inclusion of the elderly or disabled people, where established dialogue platforms do exist), and therefore, there is a need to structure the voices coming from TSO.
- There is also a need to identify the right policy makers to discuss e-Inclusion measures at local, regional, and national levels, as they vary in each territory. TSO should talk to member states’ representatives in EU fora to help them form more constructive policy.
- The ePractice portal⁴ that was promoted by the EC is becoming an important arena of discussion where many actors and information converge, but the questions remain as to how to deal with all this knowledge and feedback, as well as how to use it to improve the participation of all sectors in the design of e-Inclusion policies.

In our view, a stronger dialogue and partnership between policy makers and practitioners is needed to produce more consistent impact in the three spheres of e-Inclusion (social, cultural, and human capital).

Developing Disadvantaged Groups’ ICT Skills for Employability: The Case of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

As a recent workshop⁵ on ICT and immigrants and ethnic minorities (IEM) in Brussels made evident, im-

migrants and ethnic minorities are not at all an homogeneous group, which also holds true from an e-Inclusion perspective. Understanding their specific characteristics and needs regarding employability and the role of ICT is thus important. Second, other potential sources of disadvantage (old age, disability, gender, etc.) are present among IEM as well, multiplying their vulnerability in many cases. For instance, a recent study on immigrant women’s position in the European labor market clearly highlights their doubly disadvantaged condition (Rubin et al., 2008). Third, in recent years, many migrants into Europe came for economic reasons, and their stay is thus closely related to their integration into the labor market. This occurred during the economic expansion of the past few years (although with limitations such as the assimilation of migrant workers in low-skilled tasks that ignored their professional skills, wage gaps compared to natives in similar occupations, etc.), but it is being challenged in the current economic crisis. In any case, IEM are a growing and already significant part of the European society, so social policies and initiatives should attend to their specific needs and favour better conditions for their employability, including efforts that should be undertaken through specific e-Inclusion initiatives.

In fact, immigrants from outside the EU, so-called third-country nationals, are playing an important role in this context. Net migration into Europe has increased significantly in the past two decades: It has been around 1.5 to 2 million people per year from 2002 onward (compared to 200,000 units in the 1980s and around 750,000 units in the 1990s). In 2006, 27.3 million foreigners were registered as living in Europe; 18.5 million of them were third-country nationals, i.e., from non-EU member states. The number of the foreign-born, including therefore immigrants who acquired new citizenship, reached 50 million, or approximately 10% of the EU27 total population.

While the current economic crisis is reducing and, in some countries, reversing immigration flows, immigration into Europe and the growth of second and third generation immigrant populations are expected to continue in the coming decades.

Given the aging of the EU population, immigration will be the unique factor in demographic

4. See <http://www.epractice.eu>

5. See <http://www.epractice.eu/en/workshops/einclusionresults> for further descriptions and documentation of the workshop.

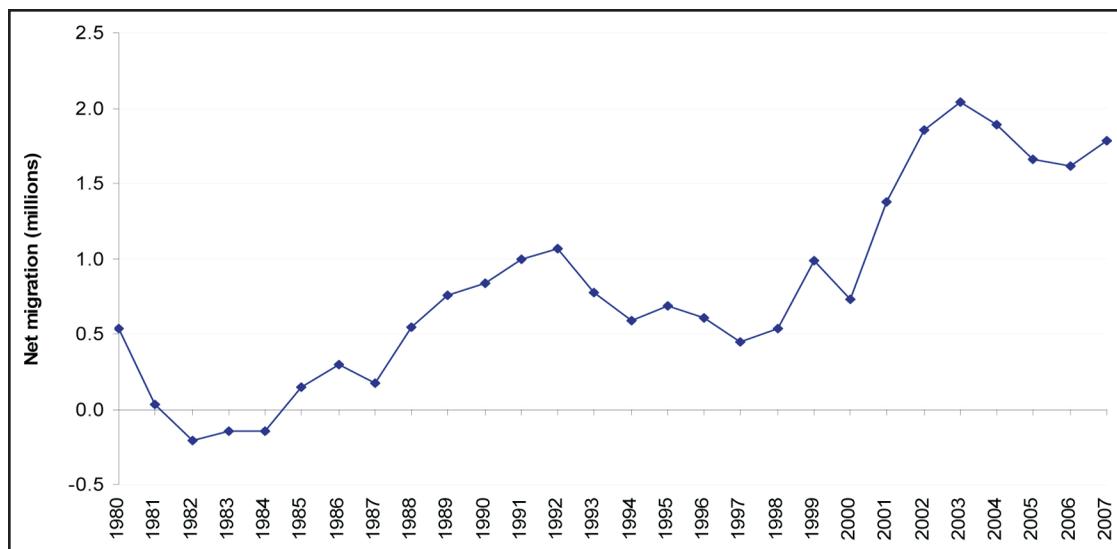


Figure 1. Net migration to the EU25, 1980 to 2007 (in millions).

Source: Eurostat, demographic statistics.

growth in the overall EU27.⁶ Increasing participation rates of women and older workers in the labor market (one of the goals of the Lisbon Agenda) will manage to compensate until 2020 for the retirement of the “baby boom” cohorts; after that date, a continuous decline of the total EU labor supply is expected. The size of the working-age population (15–64 years) is expected to decrease by 48 million by 2050 (European Commission, 2006a). As immigrants and their children will be called to play a crucial role in compensating (albeit only partly) for this decline, it is also important that their skill profiles match those needed in the labor market.

Recent analyses (European Commission, 2008b) clearly show that the next decade will see a general upward trend in skills demand in Europe, with an increasing demand for a high-qualified and adaptable workforce, as well as for more skills-dependent jobs. Also, in the service sector, where most employment opportunities are expected to be created and where immigrants (especially women) are often employed, there is a clear tendency toward the broadening of the required skills portfolio at all occupational levels. Customer orientation skills and digital literacy are much in demand, along with transversal key competencies, such as problem-solving and analytical skills, self-management and communication skills, linguis-

tic skills, and more generally, “non-routine skills.” This seems to be true also for service sector “low-skilled” jobs, even though it is acknowledged that “there is still little financial recognition of the new competencies and skills necessary for these jobs . . . with an impact on gender inequality, since women, especially migrant women, disproportionately hold service sector jobs” (p. 8).

A clear picture of the current skills profile of immigrants in the EU does not exist and would likely change in the future with new inflows and the educational achievement of immigrants’ children currently at school. Table 1 shows that a few years ago, the educational profile (just a proxy of skills) of the foreign workers population (not simply third country nationals) varied significantly across EU countries. On average, there was a greater prevalence of lower education levels compared to the national population, but also, in a number of countries, tertiary level education was more common among foreigners than nationals.

Concerning children and young people with migrant backgrounds, while their school achievement also varies significantly across countries and across ethnic groups, there is a general concern, as “there are significant and often persistent gaps in their ed-

6. Eurostat’s conservative projection is that around 40 million people will emigrate to the EU between 2006 and 2050. See Giannakouris (2008) for projections to 2060.

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Table 1. Distribution of foreign and national population (aged 25 to 64 years) by level of education (2002–2003).

	Less than upper secondary		Upper secondary		Tertiary level	
	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals
BE	52.3	37.8	25.7	33.5	22	28.7
DK	30.7	27.6	41.7	46.7	27.5	25.7
DE	47.1	13.6	38.2	62.4	14.7	24
EL	42.1	46.8	40.9	35.3	17	17.9
ES	43.3	58.3	28.5	17.2	28.2	24.6
FR	63.9	33.5	20.6	42.5	15.5	23.9
IRL	21.3	40.1	28.6	35.4	50.1	24.5
LU	43.8	27.5	38	56.7	18.2	15.8
NL	43.7	31.9	31.5	43.3	24.8	24.9
AT	42.9	19.3	43.4	63.7	13.7	17
PT	55.4	79.1	28.1	11.1	16.6	9.8
FI	29.1	24.8	46	42.4	24.9	32.8
SE	23.7	18	45.4	55.5	30.9	26.5
UK	30.9	17.4	25.5	53.1	43.6	26.2
CZ	25.9	11.7	52.5	76.6	21.5	11.7
HU	20.2	27.4	52.6	58	27.2	14.5
SK	13.2	13.8	67.8	75	19	11.2

Source: OECD/Sopemi (2005)

Note: For DK and NL 2002 data. 7.4%, 13%, 6% and 43.4% of the foreign population did not respond to the question on education attainment in Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the UK, respectively.

educational attainment vis-à-vis their peers” (European Commission, 2008a).

The digital capabilities of the IEM population are unknown. High uptake and use of ICT, especially for communication purposes, highlight an overall high level of digital inclusion. However, the limited available statistics also clearly show the existence of important access digital divides across and within IEM groups (mostly reflecting age, gender, and education differences).⁷ Fighting such divides and increasingly second-level use/knowledge gaps is therefore still important.

Research by IPTS has analysed more than 150 initiatives in the EU27 member states, where ICT are

used for/by migrants and ethnic minorities in a wide range of activities and contexts, from e-government (although there are not many services devoted to or adapted for this customer group) to education and cultural initiatives, from social and political activism to measures providing ICT access and learning opportunities. While neither exhaustive nor statistically representative of the whole field,⁸ the overview provides a good picture of the initiatives carried out on the ground around Europe in recent years.

From the survey, we identified several initiatives which address the link between ICT skills promotion and employability from different perspectives. Following, we provide a short summary of them.⁹

7. See Simon (2007) for data on Germany and Ofcom (2008) for the UK.

8. The survey that identified these initiatives aimed to map the variety of experiences by providing all kinds of “examples,” rather than by achieving an extensive coverage. However, based on cross-checks with other surveys, project databases, etc., it can be stated that the vast majority of such initiatives supported by public funding schemes has been captured. On the other hand, there are many more initiatives around that have been initiated and carried out by migrant individuals and collectives on their own means, than the few ones reported in the overview.

9. A one-page description of all the cases mentioned below can be found in recent work by Kluzer, Hache, & Codagnone (2008).

Promoting e-Inclusion in a “Digital Citizenship” Perspective

Over 30% of all cases from the survey include the provision of access opportunities to PC and Internet connectivity, usually associated with some form of basic digital literacy training, such as an introduction to operating systems and office applications and to some Internet activities like using email and conducting Web searches. Many of these initiatives do not target IEM specifically, as they are part of broader e-Inclusion measures for digitally excluded people, disadvantaged groups, and deprived areas. However, as migrants often fall within these categories, they are also reached by these measures.

Initiatives in this category reflect the idea that all citizens should be put in the conditions to be able to use ICT if they so wish, characterizing such conditions as a new citizenship right for those living in the information society, rather than as any specific utilitarian goal. The notion that some level of digital capability is a necessary (albeit not sufficient) condition for gaining employment or improving one’s professional prospects in our society is undoubtedly behind that idea. The provision of generic digital access and literacy opportunities, without a clear link to the concrete needs and expectations of the intended beneficiaries, goes often wasted, however.

Developing ICT Skills for Employability

We refer here to training initiatives which promote more or less advanced digital skills and other transversal competencies (such as problem-solving, communication skills, linguistic skills, and others) with the explicit aim to enhance the learners’ overall employability, or possibly, their work chances in specific jobs or sectors. The IT industry itself is a main potential destination, and in fact, it is also an initiator and/or supporter of such initiatives.¹⁰ When migrants and ethnic minorities are addressed, women, young people, and the Roma population are often the selected targets. For instance, the InterCulturExpress (ICE) development partnership in Austria (supported by the European Social Fund’s Equal Initiative) included ICT training as one of the

measures to empower migrant women who often enter employment relationships which are far below their qualification in order to secure their extended residence in the country. The DO IT! Initiative in Belgium has been launched (with funding from Microsoft) by Interface3 in collaboration with 11 other NGOs to provide IT and language training to non-European resident women, a group which is suffering from a much higher unemployment rate than their European counterparts. Under this scheme, 4,500 people were provided with IT skills training in 2007. The MAKS project in Kuregem (also in Belgium) provided desktop publisher qualification to interested local residents, 80% of whom have an immigrant background. The “eIntegration” project, launched in 2008 by the Bulgarian State Agency for ICT, provided a nine-month course for a group of 80 Roma men and women between the ages of 16 and 30. The four-phase course used the iCentres network being developed in Bulgaria (also with support from Microsoft), and its last stage for expert-level skills (100 hours) envisaged meeting prospective employers and embarking on a three-month internship program in the IT area.

New Digital and Social Media Projects

A variation on the previous category concerns initiatives where the focus is on the use of new digital media and audiovisual content production. Such initiatives are multiplying as a consequence of the success of social networking and other Web 2.0 services, which are making it much easier to produce and share digital content online. Three types of projects have been identified under this category, two of which also address employability aspects. The first type is represented by vocational training initiatives aimed primarily at promoting work opportunities for IEM in the traditional and new media industry. For instance, Mediashakers in the Netherlands and Mundo in Finland have this goal. The second type includes initiatives which develop (critical) multimedia technical and social skills to promote creative expression and employability among young people at risk of exclusion. Roots&Routes TV, based in Germany, and XénoCLiPse and Bordergames in

10. The Irish initiative, *Fast Track to IT* (see <http://www.fit.ie>), providing IT training and job matching services for marginalized youth, is a well-known case: Between 1999 and 2008, it trained 6,500 young people, 3,500 of whom found a job requiring the skills provided by the courses.

Spain, are all projects of this kind, with a pan-European perspective (although Bordergames was actually implemented also in Morocco and in the favelas of São Paulo in Brazil). The third type includes projects which enable digital content production by IEM people, without employability concerns, but rather to explore their cultural heritage, enhance communication capacity, and support active citizenship (Voces Gitanas in Spain, Wikim in France, iRespect in the UK, and WMAs in the Hague). All these initiatives tend to have a strong community focus and sometimes also involve elderly people (i.e., Senioren Migranten in Germany and Migrations a Besançon in France).

ICT-based Tools for Evaluating Skills, Assessing Training Needs, and Matching Job Supply and Demand

The development of such tools was an explicit goal of the Equal initiative supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) over the period 2000–2006. Several projects were thus funded by it, some of them specifically addressing IEM. Pontest, for instance, helps identify skilled workers in Poland requested by SMEs in the Trentino Alto-Adige region in Northern Italy. DP NOBI in Germany and Work in the Czech Republic also combine online support and match-making services for job seekers and potential employers. The Ethnic Jobsite (ETJOB) in the UK is another match-making service. It has been helping over 300 organizations find the right employees and comply with the Race Equality Duty established for the public sector in 2000.

ICT-based tools can also be used to assess skills and give visibility to capabilities and past experiences of IEM workers in order to compensate for the frequent lack of recognition of educational and professional accreditations issued in origin countries. Besides Pontest, another initiative focusing on this comes from Sweden (it is not included in the overview report). The City of Malmö carried out the ESF project “Making newcomers’ competencies visible in Skåne,” whereby recently arrived immigrants created their qualification portfolio during the introduction program when they learn Swedish. Besides positive learning and empowerment effects on the

“clients,” one third of the employment officers found that the program made it easier to match job seekers with employment offers. ePortfolio Skåne, with contribution from the European Refugee’s Fund, will extend this experience to 30 of Skåne’s 33 municipalities.

ICT-based Services to Support Self-employment and Small Enterprises

Finally, a few cases have been found, especially in the UK, of initiatives which provide online standard business services or services to promote the use of ICT for eCommerce and other business-related purposes, targeted specifically to individual or small entrepreneurs with an immigrant background. KCBMEB, EMBS, ICTCULT, and MEEM are all British ICT-related projects addressing so-called Black and Minority Ethnic businesses. This is a particularly important area, as all around Europe immigrants are very active in starting new businesses. For instance, according to the OECD, foreign-born persons accounted in 2005 for some 12% of the self-employed in the UK; 13% in Belgium, France, and Germany; and over 14% in Sweden—figures which are generally higher than the share of immigrants in the labor force. This is seen to reflect, in some cases, an improved position for immigrants in the host country’s society, but also the fact that some categories of immigrant workers are using self-employment as a fallback solution to cope with the growing difficulty of labor market entry (insufficient social capital, language difficulties, problems with the recognition of qualifications, etc.) (OECD/Sopemi, 2007).

Challenges and Recommendations for the Future

1. We need to enhance our understanding of the specific role of e-skills both in increasing the possibilities of specific target groups (e.g., immigrant women) to improve their labor market position (get job, get a better position, develop self-employment or a micro-enterprise, etc.), and in the role of NGOs providing digital training and social services in helping those people to develop their e-skills and find adequate paths to enter/progress in the labor market.¹¹ A bottom-up approach would

11. There is an ongoing research study co-led by Maria Garrido (University of Washington, USA) and Gabriel Rissola (Dynamic Organization Thinking, Spain) specifically addressing this topic.

secure a positive integration of those people into the labor market by better matching their competencies with the kind of labor tasks deployed, thus democratising the “better employment” Lisbon goal.

2. Policy makers and funding bodies should help the Third Sector to consolidate its role as an e-Inclusion delivery channel. The process is just starting, but all those involved should play an active role to promote a wide social partnership working toward massive e-Inclusion of people on the suffering end of the digital divide.

3. Measuring the actual employability/employment impact of initiatives in this area is crucial. The lack of sound evidence of results and impact is a problem common to all e-Inclusion initiatives (and in other policy domains as well). For instance, in the course of the European Commission’s study, “The Economic and Social Impact of e-Inclusion,”¹² almost 1,000 cases of e-Inclusion initiatives were screened, but despite the sheer size of this sample, only about 50 were found that reported reliable and good-quality information on their tangible economic benefits. Such evidence is, however, crucial to understand both the real contribution that e-Inclusion measures can make, as well as whether they can manage to overcome other structural barriers (e.g., job recruitment discrimination) that hamper the successful labor market integration of many disadvantaged groups. ■

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12. The “Vienna Study” was prepared as an input to the Ministerial Debate on e-Inclusion that took place on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference on e-Inclusion held in Vienna, November 30–December 2, 2008. See Codagnone (2009).

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