

# **BENİM ADIM EINAR**

**Professionals Experience Integration In Turkey**

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## Preface

Calling for Intercultural Dialogue implies the existence of problematic differences and divides. The European situation is complex, and must be explored in order to grasp its context, components and mechanism. Such dialogue brings together identities grounded both in a culture and in the multicultural reality. Cultural differences often give rise to attitudes that impede genuine dialogue, prompting the protagonists to turn their backs on one another or reinforcing their mutual suspicion. By means of campaigns the education system is being asked to help establish such dialogue.

“Professionals Experience Integration in Turkey” is like what Francois Duychaert mentioned *“To image something similar to oneself in a person of a different culture and to imagine something dissimilar in a person of the same culture”*.

Nearly nine centuries ago, in 1138, Al Idrissi the Arab geographer and writer arrived at the cosmopolitan Court of Norman King Roger the Second of Sicily in Palermo. Al Idrissi studied in Cordoba, travelled through most of the known world and wrote for the Norman King the most Comprehensive work on world geography of that time that became known as “The book of Roger”.

In this work Al Idrissi brought together Greek wisdom, his own culture and his Observations in the field. His life and work are perfect illustration of the openness, generosity and intellectual curiosity that should shape our minds today.

I invite you all to become Al Idrissi of European Cultural dialogue and to begin redrawing the geography of the human race without being afraid of changes. This project “Professionals Experience Integration in Turkey” Is a good and concrete example to be taken into consideration.

**Noureddine Erradi**



**Einar Skulason,**  
director of the centre, Iceland

**I would have liked to have more material to work with and build my notes around it, instead of making all the notes myself.**

## My experience in Turkey



The experience in Turkey was both interesting, exciting and fun. I did not know much of what to expect, since I was not in the meeting in Turin and got bits and pieces of information by asking Gerdur. So I didn't really know what to expect on arrival to Turkey. The lessons in Turkish were quite interesting. To start with there was no study material. I thought the teacher was quite open and nice and was trying to communicate. I would have liked to have more material to work with and build my notes around it, instead of making all the notes myself. There was a big possibility of misunderstanding with the way that was used. As it turned out, some words were understood differently within the group. I enjoyed the classes, felt they were lively and all the students participated. The teacher really tried to get everyone to say or do something in class. She was very encouraging.

The program on social skills was interesting, the glimpse of the history of Turkey, geographical information and cultural background was very informative. It was also good to have an immigrant explain those aspects, rather than have someone from Turkey to explain. The negative aspects of the classes, were especially the chairs and the tables. I had pain in my back, because the chairs and the tables were too small.

The hotel was very good, but it was rather unconvincing to be in a five star hotel and posing as an immigrant the same time. It didn't feel real, especially while getting a massage in the spa...

The Turkish hospitality is something I had no idea about. The generosity and the politeness is more than I have ever witnessed. So I think I have become a good agent for Turkish people and Turkish culture! In general it was a very pleasant and rewarding experience and it has increased my understanding of the situation of immigrants in general.

**Einar Skulason, Iceland**

**Mats Hägglund,**  
director of refugees centre, Finland

After arriving, a couple of days before the actual meeting took place, the expectations of the programme were rising. As a new member of the team it was also very nice meeting all the other participants.

The first day started with interviews of some of the participants about their expectations, followed by invitation letters given to some others. All this resulted in a lot of discussion among the rest of the team. Questions about what it meant and what to be done in a specific situation, which in many ways are the same issues immigrants are facing coming to a new country.

It's understandable that, because of lack of time, the participants invitation letters didn't result in going on their own to a specific address but I think it would have resulted in some more deep going reflections what it really means to be alone in a foreign environment.

Feelings of alienation and how to deal with that would have been more in focus.

The education in Turkish language started, which was quite an experience. The tempo was very high which resulted in complaints. The teacher and students were trying their best but the time was too short to see actual results of the class. Reflections about the situation are how important it is for the teacher to read the crowd and adjust the teaching method according to the students in the class. It is in the same time very important for the student to be motivated because the key to the society is the language. Many students may feel a pressure to learn a new language but in the same time the motivation is very low because they don't know if they will stay in this country or not.

This project succeeded in making people think about what it actually means to start learning a new language as an immigrant. What are the immigrant students facing and how can you make a class situation that fits all.

## The impressions of the Integration Programme in Antalya 23.04 • 28.04.2006



The school environment was a good experience because it also showed how important it is to be friendly met. The social interaction is of high importance for the human being. The staffs of the school and above all the Turkish children were very happy seeing us, which actually left the best memories of Turkey.

**This project succeeded in  
making people think about  
what it actually means to start  
learning a new language as an  
immigrant.**

Dealing with such a big group as we were taking a hard toll on the planning and delays were to be expected which also added the feeling of being an immigrant. Waiting for different things without information is a big part in an immigrant's life.

Filming the interviews caused a little stress for some participants but on the whole I think people forgot about the camera in that particular situation.

Even if the programme wasn't too tight the time schedule made you constantly dealing with the issues and discussing them with the other participants and as a result a lot of information was given to each other, which is very valuable.

**Mats Hägglund, Oravais Finland**

**Hanne Owren**, teacher of Norwegian language, Norway



**If I have to stand up by the blackboard showing everybody how stupid I am how does that affect my learning?**

I am going to Turkey as an immigrant! I am very excited. I am an 58 year old woman. How can I manage in a new society? I have been teaching Norwegian to a lot of adults with little school background and I have them in my mind the whole time. Have I expected too much from them? Too little?...

The meeting in Turin was good. It made the project clearer and I felt so comfortable with the whole group. A new family arose, a good relationship started. We learned that we could work together, laugh together and care about each other.

The first day in Antalya I had to tell about my expectations for the film. A little hard. I do not know what to expect, but I am eager. Seeing the old part of the town where we filmed was quite impressive. Being on such historical ground, the people in the street, the noise, the smell, the colors, the temperature. I am very aware of everything because I do not know what is coming next.

Coming back to the hotel I got a letter I had to open in front of the camera. I did not understand anything. Some words looked like telephone, address and the letter was from Nourreddine. I thought I should go there on my own and got very worried about getting money, a map and so on. I was also wondering if I could try to communicate in English or German or if that was forbidden. I did not know if I was on my own now or if I could communicate with the rest of the group.

Actually I was a little disappointed when I realized I could join the rest of the group and follow them to the school.....

I like schools. So also this school. The meeting with enthusiastic students and teachers was very good. The noises, the smell of it. Entering a new classroom. New opportunities!

Where do I want to sit? Not in the front...I want to hide in the back...No. For the filming I am not to sit in the back. The seat next to Clara is free. She is one of the newcomers and I really want to get to know her. She is friendly and sitting next to her feels good and comfortable.

The lessons in Turkish was a part of the program I had looked forward to and also think is very important as I believe it is essential to learn the language in the country you live in. The teacher was very clever. I think what she tried to teach us was a good beginner's course. But for most people it was too fast..... I need to repeat and repeat and repeat you want to come back to class the next day? If I have to stand up by the blackboard showing everybody how stupid I am how does that affect my learning? Will I remember what she tried to tell me or will I just remember standing there?

Learning a new language is a hard job. You do not get anything for free when the language is completely different from your own. Sometimes students pick up words from others that should not be used or use words in a wrong way.

Teachers know this and should not make a fuss of it. With no language in common things are hard to explain. The metaphors Nourreddine has shown us give good points.

In the interviews we had in Norway this spring one of the students stressed the importance of a smile. An other student emphasized the importance of learning some questions and answers that you know are 100% correct.

I think they both had very good points. Again.....and I know that the people I teach also need that. If it gets too overwhelming do

I do keep my little notes from my lessons in Turkish in my purse. For me it is a hard job to learn it all. But I know it is possible and I know language is a key to a better life in a new society. My students and colleges do like to hear about my experiences from Turkey and it opens up for interesting discussions. I am very pleased with the group and the work. I think we have created a good network and we are getting a lot out of our project.

**Hanne Owren, Norway**



**Fulya Sen**, Turkish teacher, Turkey

**As I said before, I really don't know whether I would be so patient if I were teaching immigrants all through the year.**

## Turkce

*Türkçeyi, hiç bilmeyen kişilere öğretmeye çalışmak benim için ilginç bir deneyim oldu. İki gün olduğu ve kendimi rolüme kaptırmadığım için öğretirken çok eğlendim, ancak azınlıklara sürekli ders verseydim aynı şekilde sabırlı olur ve eğlenir miydim bilemiyorum. Konuya iki açıdan da bakmaya çalıştım objektif olmak için. Kültürünü, dilini bilmediğim bir ülkede okula gitseydim kendim gibi olanlara sarı can simidi gibi -hele o ülkede bana önyargılı yaklaşıp anlayış ve sabır gösterilmiyorsa, sarılırdım herhalde.*

*Bu proje çalışmasında ders verirken eğlenmem bir an kendimi - her Türk gibi-kültür elçisi, gelenleri de turist gibi algılamam - ki bu da az gelişmiş, dünyanın hor görülen, önyargılı davranılan coğrafyasında yaşıyor olmanın verdiği belki bir aşağılık kompleksi, bir kendini “Ben bildiğiniz gibi değilim”i anlatabilme kaygısından kaynaklanıyor - sonucu ortaya çıktı. Yukarıda da değindiğim gibi gerçekten azınlıklara yıl boyu ders veriyor olsaydım aynı sabrı her gün gösterebilir miydim bilmiyorum. Bu iki günde bile öğrenciler hızlı anlattığımdan şikayet edince sinirlendiğimi hissettim. Ama gerçekte nasıl davranacağımı bilmem için yaşamam gerekli.*

*Proje çalışmasının amacının gerçekleşmesi için pek başarılı bulmadım kendimi, çünkü onlara kendilerini pek azınlık gibi hissettiremedim, ancak Türkçe öğretmeni olarak oldukça iyiydim:)*

*Nilgün, önce sana sonra Nouredin ve diğer proje üyelerine teşekkür ederim...*



## English

It was a really interesting experience for me to teach Turkish to the people who do not know any Turkish. I really had fun while teaching since it was just two days and I didn't feel inside my role very much. However, if I taught Turkish to the immigrants professionally, I'm not sure I would be so patient and I would have fun as it was. In order to be objective I tried to consider the situation in two sides. If I went to school in a country which I don't know anything about its language and culture, I would cling tightly to the people like me as a life vest, if I weren't treated with patience and understanding and if they approached to me with prejudices.

During project activities while teaching I had fun, at the same time I couldn't help but felt like an ambassador of culture and I considered the guests as tourists, which may be a natural result of living in a geography, the people of which are generally treated with prejudices, and humiliated. This may also result from the anxiety of telling that 'I am not as you think you know'. As I said before, I really don't know whether I would be so patient if I were teaching immigrants all through the year. I felt a bit frustrated when my 'students' complained about my fast pace. But, I think, in order to see how I am going to be in class I have to live/experience it in real life.

I didn't think I was successful when we consider the aims of the project to be fulfilled, because I couldn't make my students feel as immigrants, but I suppose I was quite good as a Turkish teacher. I really thank Nilgun, Nouredin and all the other participants.

**Fulya Sen, Turkey**



**Nilgun Ereglu Ustun,**  
educator and trainer, Turkey

**...After her presentation questions were asked. I expected them to ask some more questions about housing, health insurance, education etc., which are more related to how to survive in Turkey. However, to my disappointment, people asked about political issues in Turkey.**

It was the first time I had been involved in an immigration Project. I was really thrilled to organise the Project activities in Antalya. It was not easy to create an environment to make all the participants feel like immigrants. I knew that in Turkey most people are very kind to European visitors. However, thanks to Nouredine and his help and neat organisation, I warned everybody who was involved in the project about this point so that they would not be so helpful to the visitors and would not speak in any language other than Turkish.

Since I'm used to organising such meetings, it was not very difficult to find a hotel to accommodate our participants, to find places to eat or organising about the school and giving directions etc. In addition to this, luckily, in Turkey it is still relatively easy to find volunteers to do the work to be done and to find suitable places where the meetings to be held.

When the participants of the project arrived in Antalya, I was really nervous about whether I would be successful or not to answer all the problems. I was so lucky because Hulya and Fusun from ANTCEV helped me whenever I needed them. They were my strategic partners ;))

I was happy that the staff in the school (Cahit Unver İlkogretim Okulu) were also really helpful. They tried to do their best, although they were very busy with the school work and furthermore there were school inspectors who were doing their regular inspection whether everything was right or not at school. It means all the people school administration were absolutely nervous. So I thank all of them for all they did for us and for our project.

During the project activities such as Turkish lessons, social skills, interviews, evening meetings etc., I believe all the participants were eager to do everything right. They were generally prompt; they tried not to miss anything although, I am sure, most of them would like to be outside, at the beach. So they were doing great.

On the very first day, I learned that I had to act out as a person who works at immigration office whose responsibility is to interview new comers in Turkish with an interpreter in case they need one. I acted a very serious (cruel ???!) person, who insisted on speaking in Turkish. When the participants who went into this interview told everybody that they were frustrated or they found me very scary, I

was really embarrassed. I did not want anybody to be frustrated or scared, but it was the first moment they started to feel as immigrants. (But I might be proud of myself because I acted very well as I was told.)

There was only one problem, which disturbed me most about during the implementation of the project in Antalya: On the first day there was social skills session. I was responsible to give information about how to survive in Turkey. I had prepared a presentation which would be presented during that lesson. It was in Turkish. When it was my turn, I started speaking in Turkish, but honestly it was stupid to speak in Turkish to a group of people who, you know, don't understand any of it or at most just a few words. Therefore I couldn't help speaking very fast, because I felt silly. Some of the participants needed to warn me about it, I am really sorry for this part of the activities, although my speech was not the most important part of it.

But then Amanda started to translate what I told into English. In my opinion she did it wonderfully despite her fast pace of English. Some people found very hard to follow her English, much more difficult to follow my Turkish ;))

After her presentation questions were asked. I expected them to ask some more questions about housing, health insurance, education etc., which are more related to how to survive in Turkey. However, to my disappointment, people asked about political issues in Turkey, relationship of Turkey with EU etc. So, they treated Amanda as the ambassador of Turkey, then she did so. Although I haven't worked with immigrants, I believe that no immigrants (especially those coming from Eastern countries to European countries) would dare to ask such questions. Instead, Amanda was criticised for acting as the ambassador. I think some people accepted her to some negative things about Turkey, and they were also disappointed. It was not the typical behaviour of immigrants. We could have discussed everything about Turkey at dinner, or at the special 'friendly' moments. We were trying to create a suitable atmosphere for immigrants like in many European countries. But we are not the ambassadors, and I believe the Turkish people who were involved in this project were really honest and sincere. Unfortunately till the end of the project, till the last evaluation meeting, nobody criticised themselves about that behaviour. I hope this experience will help everybody who are

dealing with the immigrants, to understand them.

I think Fulya, Turkish teacher, was also good at her profession, although she felt the pressure to load a lot of knowledge in just one and a half days. It was a problem but I think it also helped project participants to understand the immigrants they are dealing with, better.

Except this little problem, I did not have any other negative impression. I am thankful Nouredine, Semra and all the other participants, who were really eager to help me. Luckily the weather was not very bad, so our visitors have some chances to swim or go sightseeing.

I had a lot of energy after doing the project activities in Antalya, which is really good. We are planning to hold a conference on immigration in Turkey and particularly in Antalya. I had several contacts with UNHCR Turkey Office and some other experts from Amnesty International. I hope we are going to do it well and I believe it will be great experience to convey to Stockholm, which I look forward to.

Thanks everybody for everything and for their friendship. I really would like to keep in touch and be involved in different projects again.

### **Nilgun Ereglu Ustun, Turkey**



**Ada Martinsen**, teacher of Norwegian language, Norway

The teacher was very friendly and enthusiastic, but the speed in her instruction was too quick for me.

## My experiences in Turkey



When I now think about that week in April I feel grateful for having participated in such a nice and enthusiastic group. Most of you I had seen already in Italy, and as the atmosphere there was friendly and relaxed I knew that the stay in Turkey probably would be pleasant too.

I also expected it would be a lot of work, and was a bit anxious because I had been sick some of the time between Turin and Antalya, and was still on part sick leave. But since I was going to be an observer, I did not think this would be a big problem.

I was prepared to take my role as an observer very seriously, and was a bit disappointed that my tasks were not drawn up more clearly. Of course we could share the experiences in the evening meetings, but I would have preferred to have something more specific to look for in the classes. Because I did not know exactly what were the intentions of my role I did not feel at liberty to plan this myself... Now as I reflect on it, I can see that I got too dependent on instructions, and did not grasp the opportunities in the situation.

It was a fine experience being at the school for children. Surrounded by the sympathetic and lively young people the motivation for learning Turkish increased. They were so eager to communicate with us, and so clever in using their English that it felt utmost meaningful to show the interest in getting to know a bit of their language. It seemed very important to open up the mind and heart to be able to understand each other. In this way the Turkish lessons got great importance. I think that being able to say even some few sentences in the native language signalize that you are interested in the people and their culture. If I am going back to Turkey as a tourist one day, I will repeat my Turkish words and try to learn some more.

As an observer in the back of the classroom, it was easy to drop out of the training. The teacher was very friendly and enthusiastic, but the speed in her instruction was too quick for me and as I did not feel well the first day, and it was very warm, it was difficult staying concentrated.

I felt sorry for the participants who were exposed to the cameras all the time. But I think they did a very good job and really did their very best to learn as much as possible. It seemed to me they were positive and eager, nobody protested against the rapid progression, and I was impressed by their capacity, especially those who were not in their first youth. In my work at home I often test people to find out what kind of class will be the best for them when they are going to start learning Norwegian, and always have to take into consideration that it takes longer to learn a new language for the well grown ups.

In conclusion I feel that the project deals with, and illustrates, important aspects of our profession and the group has potential to develop into an inspiring and useful international network.

**Ada Martinsen, Norway**



**Rianne de Graaf**, employee city council  
(head newcomers DPT), The Netherlands

**...The teacher shows pictures and says words. There is a picture of an elephant with a trunk. What is the word I have to learn? Is the teacher referring to the 'elephant' or to the 'trunk'?**

## Evaluation program

### The program



With professionals from seven countries in a nice hotel in Turkey...in order to experience how it feels to be an immigrant. What consequence has such an experience for me? Does it effect my working practice? I was very curious!

#### **The letter**

I receive a letter with a message in Turkish. What does the message mean? What is expected of me? There's an address in the letter. Shall I go there and ask to explain the letter to me? I don't know what else to do. What happens if I don't react at all at this letter? Will there go something wrong then? To make quite sure I will bring my passport with me.

#### **Discussion afterwards about the letter**

It turns out that the letter contained an invitation to attend language skills. It feels insecure not understanding the letter. Would real immigrants feel the same? We discuss about what could be done to improve the approach.

#### **The Turkish language lessons**

I'm sitting in the classroom and I'm not allowed to speak a different language than Turkish. I don't know the language and the speed of the lesson is high. They show pictures and say words. There is a picture of an elephant with a trunk. What is the word I have to learn? Are they referring to the 'elephant' or to the 'trunk'? But then there is already a new picture. I am motivated and passionate. I try to concentrate. I don't want to miss anything. I want and I'm going to learn this language!

#### **Discussion afterwards about the Turkish language lessons**

It turns out the word meant 'trunk'. Everyone is convinced that the lessons went too fast and that the teacher didn't show any consideration with the language skills level of the students. But why did no one protest? Would real immigrants feel the same? Would they also feel so insecure?

#### **The interview with a Turkish official**

I'm sitting in a small office facing a public servant. She asks many

questions in Turkish. I don't understand her. Next to me sits an interpreter. He only translates the questions and answers at my request. This interview is crucial, because it determines whether I can stay in Turkey or have to leave. I feel very powerless and insecure. I feel strongly dependent and desperate because I'm unable to make clear what I want. Are those people against me? Will they understand me enough?

#### **Discussion afterwards about the interview with a Turkish official**

What is the reason that the interview felt unpleasant? After all, we are high educated people? We realise how dependent we are of the interpreter. Who knows the interpreter translates well? Would real immigrants feel the same? What could we do about those feelings?

#### **The exam**

We take the exam in the school building. Some parts of the exam I don't understand. Has this all been taught? I want to succeed, so I try to make the best of it. But I feel stressed and I'm fed up with not knowing all that is questioned. I realise myself that I am not enough prepared to take this exam.

#### **Discussion afterwards about the exam**

What effect does an integration-exam have on an immigrant? There is so much that depends of the success of that exam! How does this feel for a real immigrant? Look how upset we already are in a fake situation!

#### **Discussion afterwards about the program**

We discuss about immigrants respectfully. We share our feelings. We exchange new opportunities we have obtained for our own work practice. We make new plans. The purpose of this program in Turkey was to experience this small part of what an immigrant experiences in reality. I never thought these couple of days would pay that much insight!

#### **Rianne de Graaf, The Netherlands**



**Marita Johansson,**  
Teacher of Swedish language, Sweden

**I also read the letter; all I could understand was the address, nothing else! It was impossible even to guess what more was written!**

## **Newcomers in Turkey**

I looked forward to take part of the project. I have been working as a social worker for more than ten years with reception and introduction of refugees who has got their permission to stay. This was a chance to experience a bit how it can feel to be in new situation, in a culture which I don't have any knowledge about. I went to Turkey with hope to learn something that could be useful in the meeting with newcomers.

### **The letter**

I didn't get a letter but I saw how the others became confused. What was expected of them? What did the letter say?

I also read the letter; all I could understand was the address, nothing else! It was impossible even to guess what more was written!

In Sweden different authorities have different responsibilities against the refugees which mean that the person over the time gets a lot of letter all with different kind of messages, more or less important, and all are written in Swedish. I just can imagine how that can be! Now I do realize that it is important to write down just the most important message and wait to tell the other when I see the person.

I wish we all had got a letter and were expected to do what it says in it. For an example it could be to go to an address (not with taxi) and from there ask for a store were we in the end should by water. Everyone should get a different task. That should be a really experience to see how each of us find out our own way to solve the task. I guess it should describe a lot of different ways to do it.

### **The Turkish lesson**

It was like doing a ride with a roller coaster;

The ride starts, the train goes uphill and I am still able to notice and enjoying the beautiful surrounding - the lesson starts and I am aware of the other participant and at the same time even of the teacher. It is exciting, so suddenly the train goes downhill, very quickly. Will I survive? – is the teacher speeding up, or?? Write quick, listen, pay attention, this is important, don't think just learn - the train is turning to the right - what? Did the teacher change subject? Ok, hang in – I wish I can put the brake on - how do I ask her to slow down? In Swedish or in English? No it won't work. Isn't anybody else confused? Stop thinking, hang in - why don't the ride come to an end – how much does she think we are able to learn - why am I doing this - is this fun? What use do I have of the word "fill" – I choose the wrong attraction - I'm in the wrong class! Talk about going up and down!

After the ride I'm a bit shaky and happy that I made it – the lesson is over, I passed the test. Some question I recognized, some I've never heard about. Did she really teach us this?

The next step was to practice the language among the inhabitant. For sure I was proud of my self when I was able to tell the price in Turkish. I also realized that it was much easier to get contact with people when I tried to speak Turkish.

I have thought about the lessons afterwards. I took part of the lesson, my situation is pretty good I have no big problems: I knew about this is for a while and I will go back to my country and my family and so on. But how is it to take part of a lesson when you don't know where your wife and children are? When you don't have a permanent housing and when the culture is new for you and you have so much more to learn apart the language and so on. I did really realize that to learn a language you have to concentrate. I also realized that you need a good teacher who has patience to

repeat and see everyone and that the teacher is friendly and nice because you really have to feel the support to be able to go on. I liked the teacher we had in Turkey. She smiled a lot and I could feel that she was doing her very best to teach us her language. I wished that she should have slowed down and that she should choose other subjects more related to what is useful for newcomers as for an example learn more about how to fill in an application.

### **Reflection**

So what have I learnt from my experience in this project? A lot of things of course but what I have had in my mind afterwards is to listen more carefully to the person, what does she/he know, what kind of information does she/he need, slow down, repeat if necessary, use different ways to explain and so on.

And at last, the group is just fantastic. I really have had a good time. I have also learned a lot of just listening to everyone and I realized how much knowledge we all have together. The basic condition could not be better for a successful film.

Thank you to everybody and I look forward to see you in Stockholm!

### **Marita Johansson, Sweden**



**Berlinda Overmeer**, teacher of Dutch language, The Netherlands

...I also felt  
*insecure* and  
doubted  
whether I was  
the only one  
feeling this way.

## Experience in Antalya



### The letter:

I *felt sorry* not getting a letter, because it must be such a strange experience to get a letter and not knowing what is in it. I would have liked to experience this powerless feeling.

### In the class:

#### Day 1:

##### Morning:

I was very *excited* to go to the Turkish lesson. I really wanted to learn it well and try my very best.

After 1 hour where the lesson went far too quick for me, I started *feeling disappointed*. I felt that my way of learning is not only by listening and speaking, but also by reading and writing and having time to practice with another student. So I started to feel *uncomfortable and also angry*, because this way I couldn't learn as much as I hoped.

I also felt *insecure* and doubted whether I was the only one feeling this way.

I was thinking of telling the teacher to slow down a little, but since I hadn't enough words to use I didn't dare.

I also first wanted to know if everybody felt like I did.

It would have also helped me if we were allowed to speak a little in our own country to verify if I understood well.

#### Afternoon:

The M.O. lesson in Turkish only made me laugh, because it went very quick and I really didn't understand a word of it. So I laughed and lost my attention. I *didn't take it seriously* anymore.

The M.O lesson in English however *got my attention* and I felt I wanted to know far more than what she told us that afternoon. So I was looking forward to the next lesson. I felt that way because I could understand her and I was able to communicate.

#### Day 2:

##### Morning:

Since I knew now, I wasn't the only one not understanding the lesson, I *felt stronger* and wanted to do something about it. So with the little words I knew and with gestures I tried to slow the teacher down a little. Although she smiled at me and said something I didn't understand, she went on and didn't slow down. So then I felt ashamed (I failed to get understood and get a connection) at the same time I also *felt getting angry*. If she wasn't taking me seriously than I wouldn't take her lessons seriously either.

So I was still paying attention but getting *less interested*.

##### The test:

I tried to do well at the test and remembered more than I thought I would. But I *felt angry* when I saw there were also questions which she didn't teach us at all. So I really had to guess some answers as well.

## Berlinda Overmeer, The Netherlands



**Gerdur Gestsdóttir,**  
director educational dpt, Iceland

**I did expect it to be difficult,  
but this was beyond my  
capacity.**

## **Reflections on experience in Antalya**

Before and on arriving in Antalya I was very optimistic and eager to start the project. I knew it would be difficult but I was happy to take on these difficulties because I believed that it would lead to something positive for me and I would come out stronger and with more experience.

Then when I started the Turkish course I was shocked by how difficult it was. I did expect it to be difficult, but this was beyond my capacity. Very quickly I stopped being so positive and focused on just surviving and not making a fool of myself. My self-esteem was seriously battered, and not only did I doubt my capacity to learn Turkish, but also my ability to take on other difficult tasks that await me in the future.

During the week I kept trying to relate my experience both to my former experience as an immigrant and to that of the immigrants I work with and for in Iceland. I discovered many new things that will help me to be more effective in my work, especially after I went home and had time to reflect on this experience. It was tough but it was worth it.

**Gerdur Gestsdóttir, Iceland**




**Mickael Kulstrum,**  
teacher and instructor, Finland

**...I felt that I hadn't time to get everything on paper what Fulya was writing on the blackboard so I give up after a while.**

I was one of those who got a letter to the first interview at the hotel on Monday morning. The letter I got was written in Turkish and the aim of this interview and the filming was about our reactions when we opened the letter. When I think about it now later I feel that it was the time before which felt difficult, and then I don't mean the time between receiving the letter and the interview. The feelings of difficulties were stronger in the beginning of the project when I didn't know what to expect. When we start a journey which could last for a long time and we don't know when it ends, we feel worried and anxious. We don't know what is going to happen, perhaps they send you back at once!

The language lessons. I think like the others that the course was going forward to fast for me. I felt that I hadn't time to get everything on paper what Fulya was writing on the blackboard so I give up after a while. Is there any point to go a language course if you don't have a chance to learn something only because of the speed? I think the important thing is that the participant learn something and hopefully have some use of it later. That is a tip to the language teachers. Take it easy, among the students there are also slow learners. When I work with construction and renovating I have groups up to 6 people to guide. Then I have to be really careful with my instructions so everyone knows what they have to do, I try not to have a timeschedule because if I have we start to be careless and we don't do a good work. So what I think we have to remember when we work with people with no common language and maybe a different culture is that we shouldn't hurry things and make sure that we understand each other. Then I think our future together is easier.

**Mickael Kulstrum, Finland**



**Thore Botilsrud**, teacher of Norwegian language, Norway

**It was also interesting to notice that a little misunderstanding can be quite important.**

## **Newcomers in Turkey**

### **Reflections and thoughts on the integration project in Antalya, Turkey, April 24-27 2006**

#### **Expectations**

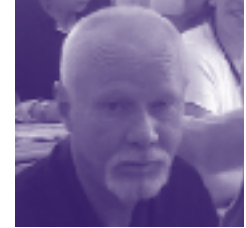
I was familiar with Nouredine's *Newcomers in Morocco*-project and therefore I was quite enthusiastic when I was given the opportunity to take part in the new project. As I did not go to the first meeting of the group in Turin, I was thoroughly briefed by Hanne and Ada on what happened there, as well as getting all of the written information they had. I therefore felt I was well informed and prepared to take part.

Unfortunately I was misunderstood at the final evaluation meeting in Antalya, when I said that there should have been an initial introductory process at the first meeting we had in Antalya. What I meant was that it would have been useful for the new participants to be introduced to the "old-timers" of the project as well as being able to present myself to the group. Fortunately Hanne and Ada had a lot of photos taken in Turin which they showed me on the way to Turkey and told me what they knew about the participants, so nevertheless I felt that I knew most of the group members already when we met. And I was also "forced" to take an initiative to contact those I did not know well to know them better. I also know that a thorough introduction of 25 people would have taken quite a lot of time.

Being part of an international group of different backgrounds also met with my expectations.

#### **The project days**

Thinking about the *Newcomers in Morocco*, I was expecting a more "primitive" setting for the project in Antalya. Before going we interviewed some of our present and previous students in Norway, and were warned that what we were going to experience would



probably not be realistic. We did not have to leave our country because we were unsafe or threatened. Our families were safe and we would go safely back to our country after a few days.

But, nevertheless, we felt insecure and tense when Nouredine mysteriously told us that a few of us were going to receive a letter and going for an interview. Those of us who didn't, felt quite comfortable and relaxed when it turned out that there was no letter for us.

Choosing another kind of accommodation for the group would have been more realistic if our life in Turkey should have been comparable to that of an immigrant. We were given living conditions very few have in the Turkish society. Immigrants are also most often offered living conditions that differ from that of the people of their new country, but of course on the other end of the scale.

For the purpose of the important evaluation meetings, it was also very important to have suitable facilities, which would have been difficult if we for instance had had private lodgings.

### **The language course**

The setting for the language course was realistically located at a Turkish primary school. I found the teacher very enthusiastic and energetic. Undoubtedly she had decided on beforehand that the course should comprise a certain number of topics. This meant that the speed needed was escalating all the time, and resulted in frustrations on our behalf. Such frustrations I now think are quite common among immigrants. They are often placed in groups that are not homogeneous concerning background, abilities, age, nationality etc. I felt it a bit tough when someone understood what I

didn't. Being a philologist I expected that I would be able to master learning a new language quite easily! Alas – how wrong I was!

It was also interesting to notice that a little misunderstanding can be quite important: All of us students had understood one meaning of a word that the teacher thought we understood differently, but correctly. Such misunderstandings are common for immigrants settling in a new country.

### **The evaluation meetings**

These meetings were very important as everyone had the opportunity to express their views. Gerdur and Elisa's summaries comprise excellently what was discussed.

### **Thore Botilsrud, Norway**



**Eva-Maria Löfqvist**, teacher and instructor, Finland

**I believe that all of us got a little more understanding how it can be for a foreigner coming to a new country meeting lots of new things, situations, language and so on.**

## My thoughts and reflections about the integration experience in Antalya, Turkey.

On the first day I had an interview about my expectations about the programme. The first thought after the interview was: "I know better English than that". I felt my answers on the question were poor. I could not express my self in proper English. My expectations were to experience and feel something that the refugees are feeling when they come to a foreign country. They have lots of different interviews, lots of information occasions and they start to learn a new language. All this new things must be stressful. We must also consider that coming as a refugee you do not know if you will get permission to stay or if you have to leave the country. We must also keep in mind the reasons for coming as a refugee vary from person to person. It can be very difficult and hard reasons and it can be plain economical reasons. All this influences on a person's ability to cope with all new things in the new situation.

I had the role of the observer in the classroom. When the teaching started everyone were very keen to learn and tried to cope with the fast speed, writing the new words, learning to pronounce them and looking at the pictures to see if it was the word that they thought it was. By the lesson proceeding people got a little frustrated when they noticed that they could not catch up with the teaching. Some of the learners tried to discuss with each other but the teacher did not allow that. On the second day I noticed more frustration and some of the learners had in one way given up. They realised that the speed was too high, no time for repeating and no feedback from the teacher because they did not have a common language. I myself felt this frustration because even if I had the role of the observer I tried to learn the language and take part in the lesson.

The evaluation occasions in the evenings were good. Hearing the others experiences of the day made you a part of the happening, of that persons experience and thoughts, even if you did not do, for

example the intake interview, you could understand it and "feel" it. The participants also could tell their version from the classroom. For example there were someone who said that the speed of the teaching was OK and that they had no problem with the learning. Being in a real school was good and it was nice to meet all the children. Some of them dared to come and speak little English with us.

In all I think that the program in Antalya was good. I believe that all of us got a little more understanding how it can be for a foreigner coming to a new country meeting lots of new things, situations, language and so on. I also think that we as a group, as a family, were strengthened. We know each other better after the time in Antalya and I am really looking forward to continuing with this project. I think it is really important that the booklet will be as good as possible and I think we must put a lot of work on it. One thing to put the stress on is to "list" some stereotypes that we maybe not consider as stereotypes, and "break" them. It is a pity that it is only a two-year project.

**Eva-Maria Löfqvist**  
**Oravais Reception Centre, Finland**



**Ulla-Britt Ingman**, teacher and instructor, Finland

**...I tried to pick up some words from the dictionary and tried to tell the teacher that this current subject was too hard for me. She answered a lot in Turkish that I couldn't understand and then she went on with her duty.**

# Report from the project “newcomers in Turkey”

April 2006



## 1 Introduction

My personal thoughts when I heard about this project and watched the DVD over Morocco were “this is something interesting, new and a little bit scary”. What could this mean to me and my work with immigrants and how would I manage to go through with it? I had not the possibility to participate in the meeting in Turin so that’s why I didn’t know so much about it. I didn’t either take the initiative to read possible notes and eventual reports from the meeting, because I thought that it would be better to start in Turkey from scratch without any specific expectations and to let the process go on. The project though started many different processes of my way of thinking. I hope that together these processes will create a new way of looking at my work. I have a long work experience since 15 years with asylum seekers in Finland. That is why I am very happy to have got the chance to take part in this project and to meet colleagues from seven different countries to share the experience with.

## 2 Personal Reflections On Certain Occasions

### 2.1 State of uncertainty and imagination?

The first time when we had the possibility to get to know each other was at the dinner on Sunday evening. The leader of the project informed 4-5 persons that he wanted them to be interviewed the following morning about their expectations and thoughts about the project. When we discussed with him he was a little bit mysterious and talked in a way that made me jump to conclusions about what to happen the next day. It was me myself that made up the thoughts I had. I was thinking that maybe we get a really difficult task to do and was really worried about this, I have to admit.

My reflection here goes directly to my clients. How often my clients have had this reaction when they get a letter from me and I want to meet them. What kind of worries and conclusions do they jump to? How do they understand our way of giving information? If they are illiterate their possibilities to understand our it-society - that is built upon a lot of written information and basic knowledge that you get

in school as a little kid – is even worse. The state of uncertainty can also be devastating for an immigrant. The feeling of not understanding, not knowing what will happen and not having any control of the situation is bad to anyone.

### 2.2 My interview as a immigrant

On Monday when we visited the school where our education in the Turkish language would take place I together with four other participants were chosen to be interviewed by an immigrant officer. I thought that it would be interesting because I myself as a social worker often interview people and see how things are in order to get information so that we can work together meanwhile they are at our reception centre.

I went there without worries and expected a normal situation. But I was wrong. There behind a huge desk with a big picture of Atatürk sat a strict female immigrant officer. She gave me a specific feeling of that I was not wanted in this country. There was also a translator who was not a professional one. She explained to me in English what would happen. I answered by asking in Swedish if she understands Swedish. I repeated my question in Swedish but then she started to argue with the officer. The translator asked me to co-operate and start speaking English if I wanted to stay in Turkey. That was not nice. I really could feel how my heart was beating and how my voice got weaker. So I decided to co-operate and answer her questions.

Here my reflection is that if this was the reality does it mean that only those people who can co-operate by speaking a language that the translator or the officer know have a chance to stay in the country? Why I did ask about a translator in my own modern tongue was because my clients always get the possibility to speak through a translator.

The feeling that the officer gave me was that I was not worth so much and that I have to do as she wish. For an adult person with a certain kind of education who is used to a democratic way of thinking it was not a nice experience. Maybe an asylum seeker for example come to the border and meets an immigrant officer >>>



that may also make a physical examination. Maybe the person has just recently has managed to escape from prison where he or she has been treated badly because of political reasons and think that he has managed to escape to freedom and then meet this sort of treatment.

Afterwards it was nice to have the chance to really explain how I felt in the following interview. The problem is just that a real immigrant doesn't have that chance.

About the translator I can say that afterwards I heard that she had told me that I could use her if I didn't understand Turkish and wanted a translation. But I was apparently nervous because I didn't hear or remember that. So I was very irritated because of her, when she didn't act like an ordinary translator should have done and I had to look at her or show that I wanted her translation. But also the fact that I didn't notice what she heard because of the strange situation I came into.

### 2.3 The Turkish language education

Our duty was to learn the Turkish language in order to be able to communicate. Our teacher did only speak Turkish. She had a different pedagogic way of acting; she was very fast and demanded of us very much. Here there is a certain age perspective also and a fact that all of us had not language teaching as a profession... It was not easy to concentrate for a long time though we had only two lessons a day. But still I found myself frustrated because of the lack of knowledge and understanding. It was nice to be able to discuss the different subjects we were taught with a friend whom I could communicate with. I tried to pick up some words from the dictionary and tried to tell the teacher that this current subject was too hard for me. She answered a lot in Turkish that I couldn't understand and then she went on with her duty. I felt that as she paid no attention to me. But afterwards I heard that she had explained in Turkish that she was sorry but she had to continue and she understood that it was hard for us. But she didn't repeat or do anything to improve my knowledge...

My reflection here is how important it is to be able to communicate properly in order to avoid a lot of misunderstandings and bad

feelings. Again I think of my clients that may be given a certain kind of information that often is misunderstood. What can we do about this? How can we improve the way we communicate? A lot of anxiety and nervousness can be avoided if you as a representative for the authorities managed to remember that we all only are human beings with a certain need of being accepted and wanted.

### 3. Summary And Eventual Tips

- Treating people well – that means that you shake hands, smile and try to make the situation comfortable
- A translator is always important to use and a professional one. Not to agree to using children as translators for the parents so that the natural dynamic in the family will be disturbed
- Improve the amount and the way of giving information to immigrants, but also to those who are working with them
- Allow co-operation in the language class between the pupils in order to make them learn easier

These tips above seem to me when I read them as natural. But it isn't for sure that they are that. When you are a tired and exhausted social worker or teacher there is easy to forget facts. This project has meant a great deal to me as a professional social worker. I am still as tired and exhausted as before but I have already noticed that I listen more carefully than before. Patience is not my strongest trait of character, but through this project I have improved it a lot.

### Ulla-Britt Ingman, Finland

## My reflections about the reintegration experience in Antalya

When we started the program with, for some participants an invitation for an interview, I felt relieved that I didn't get that invitation. After the discussion I felt pity on that. I think it should have been the revealing experience of the whole week. With only 15 minutes you would experienced the world of feelings, frustrations and so on, of the immigrant. Nothing more to be said.

Twenty years ago I took Turkish lessons, and during the lessons many words I recognized. It was funny and easy for me. But, as I had the foreknowledge of the language, I had the role as the observer.

First of all I want to remark that it should have been better that the observers had a clear description of the points which had to be observed.

What I noticed in the first lesson, was that all participants were very eager to learn the language. They listened with concentration, made notes, tried to reveal drawings, tried to pronounce the words in a correct way and tried to cope with the fast speed.

But the further the lesson went on, the more frustrations showed up. Some students tried to ask to slow down but the teacher didn't react in the way they expected she should do.

Next morning, almost immediately after the lesson was started, students asked again the teacher to slow down. Some of them were reacting very angry. The teacher answered them in Turkish that she understood the question but that she had to go on in that speed because she had to treat the program for the examination. I saw some students loosed heart en dropped out. On the other hand, I saw also some students who enjoyed the speed and the problems they were confronted with.

Observing the group it was obvious that every body has his own way of learning and as a teacher you have to deal with that fact and adapt the lessons on it.

Also the possibility to talk in your own language, just to be sure that you understood what the teacher explained is very important. I knew this, but the observing confirmed it.

The evaluations in the evening were good, although I think it's better to divide the group into smaller group. Than everybody feels

**Miriam Beunk**, teacher of Dutch language, The Netherlands

more free to express his feeling and opinion.

For me, the program of Antalya was good. I enjoyed staying with the group and I learned my things. I think it's good to propagate this program for people who are working with immigrants.

Already in Antalya we, the participants from Arnhem, were so enthusiastic about the program and it's results, that we decided to organize an "Ervaringsgerichte Dag" (Experience Day) for social workers, teachers and policymakers of the city of Arnhem.

At this moment we are preparing that day which will take place in October of this year. Just before the meeting in Stockholm.

**Miriam Beunk, The Netherlands**



**Also the possibility to talk in your own language, just to be sure that you understood what the teacher explained is very important. I knew this, but the fact of observing has confirmed it.**



**Lourdes Santamaria**, teacher of Spanish language, Spain

**Now I know that it is not only the attitude, but also methodology, that has to be changed.**

## Newcomers in Turkey

**“I can’t change the world, but I can change a world in me”  
(Paul Hewson).**

Before start talking about my experience in Antalya, I would like to provide the setting of my own previous experience.

The first meeting I attended to in this project, was the one in Turin. I was not very sure about what the scope of this project was going to be. After Turin, I realized soon that I had a lot of things to learn to improve my teaching attitude towards my students. And now, after Antalya, I feel grateful and happy for having experienced myself which are the wrong things I am using with my students.

Now I know that it is not only the attitude, but also methodology, that has to be changed.

I think that I, as a teacher, was in a better position in Antalya to realize that there were some aspects the teacher was developing that were wrong, and that I myself was doing during my lessons, so I sometimes saw myself reflected in what Fulya was doing in the class.

Therefore, for the first time, I really empathize with my students.

The rhythm was so fast, that I was not able to process so much information, and while I could not do so, I was not able to protest or to ask (beg?) for another explanation, so I felt extremely frustrated

and powerless (I sometimes can see it now in my students’ faces, that is the first step), and as a consequence of that, I gave up. And I think that this is the point; once you realize that they are frustrated, you have to change topics, intention, and pressure. Because you can not lose them and they can not lose you.

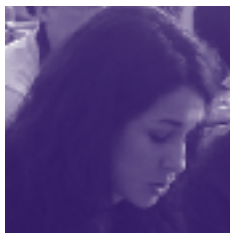
So right now, what am I going to do so that these students do not give up?

I need to be aware of the suitability of the groupings, timing, methods, rhythm, closeness, and mainly, topics.

I have just realized that teaching is not just a mere transmission of knowledge; it is something else, something else that has to do with empathy, emotions and feelings.

So in my name, and mainly, I guess, in my students’ one, thank you very much for this experience, for all this knowledge, and for all the joy.

**Lourdes Santamaría, Spain**





**Clara Eugenia Fatela Cascos**, teacher of Spanish language, Spain

**You need to feel the distress of not being able to do nothing, not knowing what to do, what to say. To feel the compassion of the native people or their laughs.**

## Newcomers in Turkey



My expectations when arriving in Turkey were many: to know a new country means to learn many things: the language, the people, the culture, the customs, the geography, the history... On the other hand, I was not a tourist; my role was the one of an immigrant who is forced to leave his country to look for a better life far from his habitual surroundings; far from his family, his friends... Could I get to feel what an immigrant feels when he/she arrives at his/her country of destination? Could I feel his/her solitude, fear, anguish facing the unknown, the new situation? Could I get integrated in a society so different from mine? Many were the questions that came to my mind.

### First day:

Some of the participants take a walk around the city accompanied by the camera men to start shooting of the film and answer to some questions about their expectations. Other participants receive a letter in Turkish, language that they do not know; they feel insecure. What is that letter? What does the letter say? What must they do (or must not do) about it...? In the evening they will have an interview in Turkish with an English translator.

The reactions seemed to me quite similar. All agreed in the difficulty to explain themselves in English; they could not say in English everything that they had said in their mother tongue. One of the participants said that she felt abandoned, lonely; she did not understand what they asked her.

All of us felt what an immigrant can feel when somebody asks important questions to him and he cannot respond: it is that sensation of helplessness impossible to describe, you have to feel it. You need to feel the distress of not being able to do nothing, not knowing what to do, what to say. To feel the compassion of the native people or their laughs...

The other participants had a walk around the school where the next day we were going to receive the classes of Turkish language. It is a clean and neat place. The students seemed delighted with the visit of so many foreign teachers. I was surprised by their interest, their

friendliness, their curiosity about knowing where we were from, their wonder...

During the last meeting of the day Nouredine said to us that on the following day the classes would begin at 9:00am and that there were no buses to go there.

Everyone had to arrive at the school by their own means (for that reason they had shown us the way in the evening). That was the moment to begin feeling like an immigrant: starting by going to the school to learn the language. There is no help, each one on its own, or with a colleague who knows as much or as little as you do.

### Second day:

Raquel and I decided that, as the school was far away, we would go by bus; we took a bus and... we took the wrong one. The bus went in another direction. I think that at some moment of our adventure with the bus I felt lost. I needed the help of those people whose language I did not know, and I saw the necessity of immigrants to know that new language. Finally we could take the correct bus and we arrived at the school on time.

And at nine our relationship with the Turkish language began. I think that it was a very interesting class; with some of the phrases and words necessary to make the first contact with the Turks. I was seated next to Hanne and between us an empathy connection started; I felt the necessity to communicate with her, and although I do not speak much English we were able to communicate.

During the following interview I explained my feelings; I felt well, comfortable, and eager to learn everything that the teacher wanted to explain.

In the afternoon it was very different. Nilgun's turn speaking in Turkish seemed to me very fast; I had preferred that she explained more things about Antalya and Turkey. Amanda's part seemed to me awful. At the beginning I did not understand a thing. I really felt lost. Later on I could understand her speech. Anyway, it seemed to me a hasty speech. Did she want to give us too much information? I do not know, but I did not like it. If the idea was that we >>>



felt like immigrants who do not get all the information because of o language command, I believe they succeeded, at least with me.

**Third day:**

This day something changed. I had studied the lesson of the previous day, we all had studied and we hoped to pass the exam; but the teacher wanted to give too much information to us in a very short time and without the pause necessary to process and learn the information. I believe that her intention was very good, but the results were not. The participants began to feel frustrated; they tried to complain but the teacher ignored them and she continued giving information. The distress among the participants increased because we all thought that it was impossible to use all that information in the exam. We could not retain and reproduce it. I think it is not good to give so much information at once. It is necessary to repeat the same concept in different situations; if we, teachers, do not do it that way, the students do not learn and they feel frustrated and leave the courses of foreign language. Did they want to show us what a teacher is not supposed to do?

I think that every student must have the time necessary (time that varies for each person) to make the translation to his mother tongue of what he hears, of what he writes. The adult person needs to make that translation in order to learn and acquire that new knowledge; He needs a reference and that reference is his mother langue.

And later on we took the exam. Everyone did their best...I believe that the first part was related to the lessons of the first day of class and we could solve it good enough; but the second part, with knowledge recently acquired was quite disastrous.

**Fourth day:**

As a final assessment I must say that this experience has been wonderful because I have learned what I never have to do and also I have learned those things on which I must insist: that I must be even more patient and repeat many times the subjects that the

immigrants must acquire. I would also had liked that the experience were longer (I know that it is not possible, but it had been good) to receive more classes of Turkish and to have more contact with the Turks. I had never experienced nothing similar in my life; I have liked it much and I would repeat it willingly if possible.

Thank you very much to all those who have worked to make this experience successful.

**Clara Eugenia Fatela Cascos, Spain**



**Elisa Meloni**, social worker, Italy

**It was really a way of discovering again the world and myself in it, my attitudes towards learning, my self-esteem and my motivation.**

## Thoughts and reflections about the integration experience in Turkey

One of the most interesting thing of the project was that every participant has been, in the meanwhile, AN IMMIGRANT and a SOCIAL WORKER: for a week we've lived something significant and we have also had the time to think about it, to talk about the activated processes. We've passed through different experiences, living them on our skin (with the freedom of expressing ourselves) but, at the same time, we have had the time of meeting each others and making reflections on it.

Indeed, in every meeting **different points of view and competencies were put together** to find solutions, tips and advises on integration matters and **all the group worked together towards the same aim**: it was really positive that in Turin we had had the time of discussion about the project to find a common definition of our objectives and programme. This situation is even more important because **the group is not at all homogenous: different professionals, different cultures and languages, different ages and different way of thinking** about integration policies were part of our group.

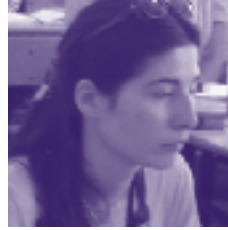
This difference has been a kind of richness for the project, allowing us to think on the topic with more of mental openness, and to put ourselves in discussion.

As a social worker, one of the most interesting part of the project has been **the opportunity of knowing educational system in Antalya from the inside** (because we passed three days in a local primary school and we were introduced by teachers and operators who answered to all our questions): it was also more interesting to get the information and to compare them with other social workers and teachers coming form different cultures and countries. For example, we talked about the age of retiring: for northern partner it sounded strange and unbelievable the difference of retiring age between women and men: for them it was a kind of discrimination. According to my opinion it was normal, because in Italy women retire five years before men. For the first time in my life I thought about that: **the dialogue with different points of views helped me to put in discussion something always taken for granted.** >>>

The programme allows me to know more about Turkish society getting the information from different sources: *meeting local people* (professional and not professional), *visiting the region and the town* out of working time (to get in touch with local culture, landscape and history), *talking with someone who has lived an integration experience* of life there (Amanda).

Between all the activities of the project, I think that **Turkish lessons** have been the part more interesting and significant to me:

1. first of all, it was really surprising to see that **is possible to communicate and to learn from a teacher without a language en common**, using different kinds of techniques and approaches;
2. moreover, **the differences in people's reactions to the class lesson** were really important: *the same situation, the same events, have been seen in different way*. At the end of the lesson someone felt good, self- confident, with the idea that he/she could learn Turkish and with the willingness of communicate with local people, while someone else felt frustrated, stupid and unable to learn more. It's interesting to thing that this it could happen the same in a class with immigrant and native students: each one looks at the situation in a subjective way and nothing could be taken for granted.
3. even **the teacher's approach has been differently perceived and evaluate by the group**: someone felt a good relationship and contact with Fulya and appreciate her methods and way of teaching, while someone else was frustrated by her way of giving us information: too fast, too much and without a necessary attention to our needs as learners. Even for immigrant students the same teacher could be differently perceived: it's important not to take for granted the communication and the kind of relationship that a teacher start with each student in the group.
4. so, as a learner I felt **that learning is really an individual and very personal process**: everybody reacts in a different way, has different points of force and of weakness: as a teacher it's important to be very attentive to individual processes.
5. As a teacher it's important **to take in consideration the native language of each immigrant**: put in valour his culture and give him the feeling that he's existing; it's the base of knowledge and cognitive structures on whom you can build up the new language.
6. my feelings and emotions: for me it was really **"exciting" to be again a learner**; exciting both *in a positive way* (I felt good, self- reliant, and I was glad of learning something new that make me feel alive and active) and *in a negative way* (at the end, I was really tired and the night I couldn't sleep because my head went on thinking about Turkish words and information).
7. **I felt as a child who is learning from the bases a new language** and who tries to communicate with others, trying to learn the name of things around him: it was really **a way of discovering again the world and myself in it**, my attitudes towards learning, my self- esteem and my motivation.
8. After the lessons of Turkish all the group tried to remember the vocabulary and the expressions learned at school **to use them in social context** (*it was useful to ask for the bus number and for starting relationships with Turkish people*). So we had the opportunity of transferring the new knowledge on ordinary life being aware of difficulties but also of potentialities of our learning process.
9. For the very first time in my life I could live on my skin **the difficulty of learning something that I've always taken for granted and that it had always seemed easy to me**: the alphabet, the numbers, how to catch a bus, how to greet a person.



During the experience I felt frustrated in communication with people because I started a communication with someone but my Turkish vocabulary was so poor and primitive that I couldn't express myself and I couldn't understand others' speeches: together with this frustration I also felt the motivation to learn more and more, to put myself in new relationships and to face social situations.

In different social situations (of ordinary life) I felt that my knowledge and my strengthened scripts didn't work: I didn't know *how to behave on a bus* (how to pay the driver, how to catch it, how to behave with others passengers), neither I knew how to enter in a Mosque or at which distance I can talk with native people (how to greet people, when and how to accept and refuse their invitations..): every moment of ordinary life become a moment of learning something, but also a possibility of misunderstanding. Indeed, meeting Amanda and making my own experience I've understood that **an immigrant is 24 hours a day a "learner"**: to integrate himself in the new society he has to be motivated and willing to learn everything again from local people "as a children"; but if you are full of troubles and worries your head can't think and there's not enough space to reflect and learn.

It was really interesting to see professionals who are high cultivated and powerful in ordinary life put in difficulties in this experience: difficulties connected to learning processes, to interviews and to social situations.

It's really interesting to see how our personal image and self-esteem change according to external situation; even for an immigrant it happens something similar: **in the new country he has to build up again his personal image** and lots of difficulties could make him build up a weak and negative image of himself.

Professionals felt really frustrated and unable to behave in lots of different situations and this make them changing: something happens in their mind and **mental processes have started**. I think that this was the bigger result of our experience that we have to bring back home.

But I'm aware that this is **just the starting point**: if we want to think about new approaches to integration matter it's important not to stop here. Now our mind is more open and we have learned to put in discussion our traditional way of seeing reality, but it's interesting to go on and use this kind of approach in our day-by-day work: it's interesting **to go on thinking of ourselves as learner who can learn a lot observing and starting relationships with our immigrants and clients**.

**Elisa Meloni, Italy**

A portrait of Dan Jensen, a man with short hair, wearing a dark polo shirt and a name tag. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

**Dan Jensen**, social worker, Sweden

**We were lucky that in our little group of “migrants” we could communicate freely in several shared languages.**

## **Newcomers In Turkey**

I became part of the project by chance. Marita had already been chosen and a male participant was needed from Sweden so we had a little lottery and I got to go. The project seemed interesting although the details weren't clear to me until later. I have worked in the social services for eight years. This is in a suburb of Stockholm where almost half the population is migrants or their children. My job is to meet and assist people who need economic aid until they find jobs or get into studies and such. I had by the time the project came along almost no ethnic Swedish or European clients so I thought it would benefit both me and my clients to be a part of this and for me to learn more about the situations my clients face in everyday life.

When I got to Turkey I was very excited to be part of the project, but also curious and very nervous about what would happen. The threat of being filmed didn't exactly help my nerves.

The first day I was chosen to be one of the few that got a letter with unknown content. I remember going to the hotel foyer and ask for the letter. When I got it I held it like it was a bomb. When I finally got a chance to open it I understood nothing, not a word. I remember being almost blocked, I could not think. I think I said something about trying to find someone to help me translate it, but afterwards I just went out of the room and sat down somewhere. I looked at the letter again and tried to decipher this mystery. The only word I was sure of was “address”, address, but because it was spelled wrong I didn't get it the first time. The whole episode made me feel stupid, incompetent and embarrassed. I think it took a day or two before the letter was translated to me in its entirety. It was a friendly and very informative letter and it was completely lost on me until translated.

I thought about all the times I have sent a letter to someone in “easy” Swedish or English and how confused some of the recipients must have felt.

I think all of us should have gotten a letter. It would have been most educational, especially as it was the first “test”. Just having to read

the letter and the effect it had on me taught me a lot about not being able to communicate my inability to understand all that was going on around me.

When we got to school I actually felt kind of comfortable. At the start it was basic language, letters and numbers, and I felt I managed to keep up with the teacher. I remembered much of what she said earlier at the end of the lessons of the first day. I had more trouble with understanding the complete sentences we were supposed to learn (my name is...) and I felt it went a bit too fast sometimes. While discussing a certain phrase with a classmate I didn't hear what the teacher said and had to continue the lesson wondering what vital part of Turkish I missed. At the end of the day my head spun with new knowledge and also with misunderstandings as it turned out. It is interesting how we as students in the same class had very different ideas about what a picture meant (mouth, smile, lips?) and how confusing it all made me feel. I started to doubt what I thought I knew. Did I really understand correctly what I earlier learned?

This made me think of how easily misunderstandings in the beginning of learning a language can cascade and make you have assumptions that are wrong. This can be difficult to correct and delay fluency in a language and also understanding of contexts. I believe that to be able to learn a language it is important to have someone to discuss both simple words and complex issues with. We were lucky that in our little group of "migrants" we could communicate freely in several shared languages.

There wasn't that much I learned during the lessons that I dared to use among the local population of Turks. I didn't find a situation where I could use the complete alphabet and counting 212 oranges aloud to impress didn't seem quite right either. I did however find joy in learning Turkish. I enjoyed understanding a word here and there out in the streets and in the hotel, even if it only where numbers, and it made me want to learn more. The teacher helped a lot; she was really nice and very enthusiastic and devoted to her task.

On a personal note: Unfortunately I had a distressing experience while I was in Turkey. Due to a death in the family I felt my participation in the project came to an abrupt halt. I was in a foreign country and could do nothing about the situation except waiting for Friday morning and the trip back to Sweden. I did go to the lessons of the second day of school but arrived late. I tried to take the test but failed, I had forgotten most of what I had learned the day before. I walked in a daze. However, being part of the group was still important; it made me think of other things than what had happened at home.

When I finally got home I had to face reality in another way with relatives and funeral and everything. But I also got the chance to think about the impact of grief and chaos in the learning process. I do not pretend to have experienced what a refugee from some distant war is experiencing; my experience is totally personal and only applies to me. However, what I realized is the importance of feeling safe and secure and even happy in the learning process. Disasters, alienation and/or depression slowly erase ones previous personality and the will to participate in education and even life itself. I have a lot of clients who are deeply. It is not that I never understood how they felt, but the grief I have felt in my secure little world made me realize the impact it must have on someone in a foreign land, maybe not of free will, alone and not able to communicate with the people around them, far away from the people who are closest to their hearts. But where there is life there is hope and everything can change into something else if you work on it.

I still had a fantastic time in Turkey. The way these "lessons in newcomer" were executed by the team leaders really opened my eyes in many ways and gave food for thought.

**Dan Jensen**  
**Stockholm, Sweden**



**Raquel Prieto**, head of communication dpt, Spain

**This integration programme has helped me to change some of my stereotypes as much in teaching as in learning.**

## My personal experience in Antalya



I had an interview on the first day about my expectations about the programme and I can tell that my expectations about the integration programme in Antalya were quite ambitious. I thought it could help me to improve the relationship between them and I, to understand better the difficulties they have to face everyday, and I hoped to find solutions and practical clues to help immigrants not only in the language but also in every way of life.

After the experiment I can tell my expectations have been fulfilled. This integration programme has helped me to change some of my stereotypes as much in teaching as in learning. I have felt how pleasant is when people who do not know you help you without knowing your language, just gesticulating. It is very important to welcome people, to accept them, to make them feel comfortable, this way they will integrate faster.

I had a second interview for hypothetical admission in the country and I think I did not really grasp the importance of it. I was not in the role, or at least I did not think as an immigrant in the beginning, however, I started to be scared as the person opposite me kept on asking me questions I did not understand and I had constantly to turn to the translator. If I had been a real immigrant, all my future life depending on that person, I would have wanted to die. I felt completely frustrated when I finished the interview, perhaps because I did not know beforehand what questions I was going to be asked.

I do not actually know if immigrants are informed about the questions by the interpreter, but it could be a tip. Would I have reacted better if I had known previously what kind of questions I was going to be asked?

In relation to the Turkish as a second language course I was an observer, and as an observer, I have learned that I have to teach them more practical things such as how to fill an application form, answer questions about themselves, ask for a bus or ask for some bread in a shop. I have learned that I have to use clear and simple materials and I have learned that I have to adapt my methods to their different ways of learning trying to take in the most learners. Concerning the participant learners, the first day I observed them very attentive, noting down everything the teacher explained, but when they were asked questions they looked helpless and lost. When they spoke about their own reaction during the evaluation most of them said they had felt frustrated, however, one of them said he had felt self-confident and competent so that, perhaps I am not a good observer.

The second day I observed them less interested, as if they had given up.

As a group we have worked well together. I felt easy all the time. I believe we have started a profitable piece of work and I hope a fruitful relationship too.

As a tip we should give more attention to the individual and there should be more collaboration between teachers, social workers and policy makers.

### **Raquel Prieto, Spain**



**Elena Mocco**, social worker, project leader, Italy

**...When I closed the door of that office I was very angry with myself: I should have reacted, but why didn't I do it? The reason is simple: I was confused...**

# My reflections about the integration experience in Antalya

## Introduction

Before leaving Italy, the information that I collected from the persons who I interviewed, given me an idea of what it could happen in Antalya. This already has been an optimal point of departure because it allowed to put myself mainly at listen of immigrants that I meet every day in my job. I have to take care of a single aspect of they life (the job), I never stop myself to listen the life's stories of these persons; which could be their difficulties, their attitudes and, above all, why they behave in strange way when they come in my office (only difficult of understanding or different ways to perceive an office and the other person?).

Therefore, I took with me in my suitcase: the ability to listen the persons, my ability to socialize, the typical Italian's gestures (that it means the way to express myself), and all those useful instruments that the interviewed suggested to me.

After my return in Italy, I really comprised what Abdikhadar, one of interviewed, said to me before leaving: if you want to understand one situation, the problems that are involved by this situation and its possible solution, you must make a personal and single experience. Only after that you can really look at the problem in a right way.

And this it happened: although I felt myself ready for this experience, I understood many things only after tried them, and, after that, I have been able to change many points of view in my job with immigrants.

Regarding this experience the reflections that I will do, regards two points of view:

- the first, that regards the considerations of the group, the interactions, the way to exchange and the points emerged in the group discussion
- the second, relative to the personal dimension that regards

what this experience has meant for me, from the analysis of the events, to the reflections that it has generated in me.

## First point

The first reflection start from a fact that it has been one week ago: a group of immigrants made a trip in Liguria and the educators told me that this adolescents (that during the scholastic year they created some sector groups between us because they came from different nation) have been easy cooperate together during this experience. The fact of living an "adventure" through the discovery of new places and new culture created a positive climate of exchange. I think it was the same for our group: this experience allowed us to share the hard work moments and relax, our fears and our expectations, placing to us in a condition to listen and support the others, to here linguistic difficulties and the habits of everyone. The group, its composition, the possibility to listen and cooperate with the other can be one essential condition for an immigrant; also, a social operator could use the group like a good situation that could facilitate the insertion of one person in a new context.

## Second point

The meaningful step of my reflections:

### 1. *The interview*

The second day I was chosen for one interview. At first, I didn't have an idea of what it could be happened. They don't said anything to me but only that I would have had to make an interview. Entering in an office, the person behind the writing desk made me a lot of questions in Turkish language and an interpreter seated next to me translated in English the questions which I had to answer. Only after a first time I understood that this office was an office for >>>

immigrants and the questions were made to collect information to have my permit of stay in Turkey. My interviewer and my interpreter weren't much friendly with me. I was afraid to answer in a wrong way. I continued to think that in an office in Italy I wouldn't behaved myself therefore: I would asked for a presentation of the people in the office, what kind of office was, why they looked at me in a bad way... When I closed the door of that office I was very angry with myself: I would have had to react, but why I didn't it? The reason is simple: I was confused, I didn't understand immediately what kind of office was and before understanding it, I found myself outside from the door.

I think it wasn't only a linguistic problem. The language is important, but if those two people had been behaved with me in a different way, I could communicate alike my thoughts, also because I had an interpreter who could understand what I wanted to say. I didn't feel good, I wasn't myself.

### **Reflections**

Everyone has different images of the context in which he lives: those are different social representations. But, sure, these representations are set by the context of which we are part. An immigrant who doesn't know the context in which he finds himself will make reference that the nearer representations of his experience.

Therefore, it's expectable that the idea of an office for immigrants of an inhabitant of Turkey is different from that one of an inhabitant of Italy and, consequently, it will be task of the social operator, to help an immigrant to construct a correct image of the place in which he finds and what they expect from him. How to make? The experience that I have made suggests me one answer: every social operator must receive immigrant in his office trying to put him in a comfortable situation, giving all the necessary information

regarding his task, his role in the office, which type of aid the operator will be able to give him, and explaining what will be happen during the interview.

### *2. The lessons in Turkish*

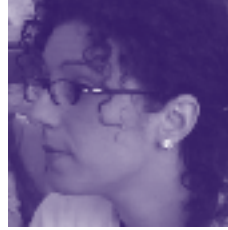
The idea to learn Turkish has been one of the exciting points of this project, for me. In fact I attended with attention the lessons of Fulya, the teacher of Turkish. It was positive that the teacher didn't speak other languages as well as Turk. I hadn't worry not to understand, I think that one person can above all understand what another person want to say when she is at ease.

That was happen for me. I appreciated a lot the way that Fulya used to teach the new language: images, words already learn linked to other new ones (for example: before we have learn the numbers and then the hours of the day). Rethinking at those moments, I was surprise of how much Fulya was important for me. I lived again a little that type of relationship that exists between a child and a teacher, although Fulya had my age. It was her role that has played on me a feeling of dependency. I paid attention at her behaviour in the classroom: from her agreement when we pronounced words in a correct way to her eyebrow arching when we made errors.

### **Reflections**

Social operator becomes for an immigrant a point of reference. It's important that the operator gives to immigrant all the necessary instruments so that the person can orient itself independently in order to manage gradually the insertion in the new community in more and more independent way.

However, the aspect of relation with social operator it's one of the main point because at first he becomes for immigrant the key of access for the income in the society. For this reason, I think it's



important that social operator make a good relation with immigrant, counting the values and the culture of reference of the person and helping him to take part of the new context of life.

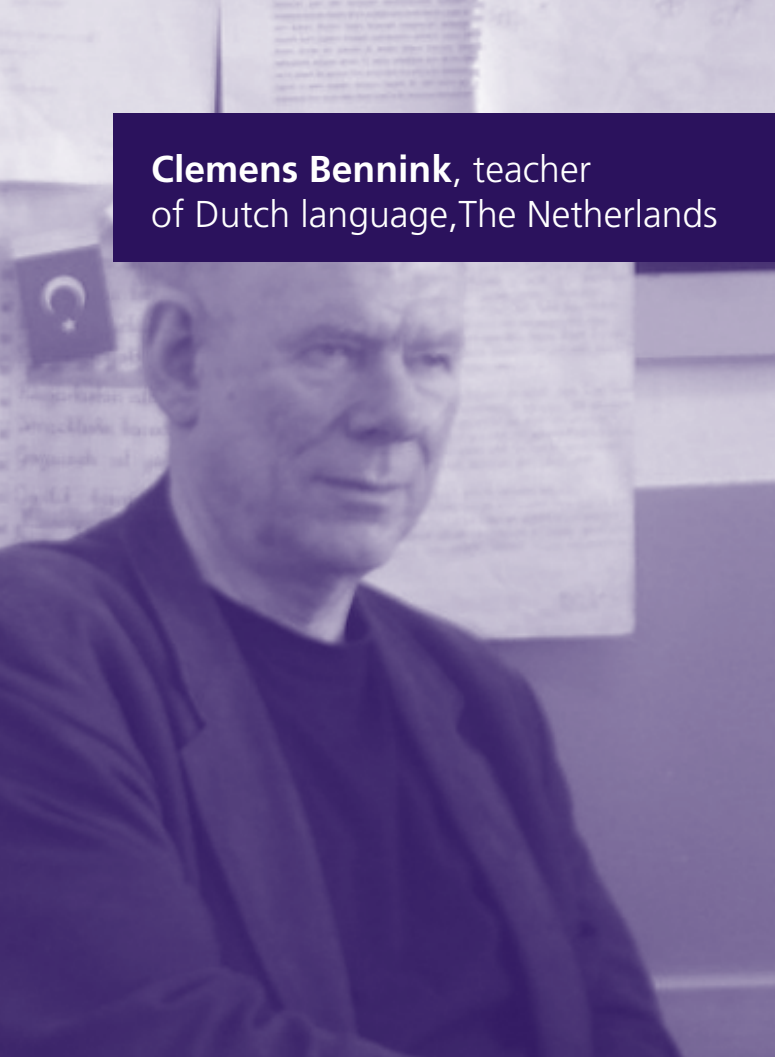
### **Conclusions**

I consider this experience really meaningful for my job with immigrants. If I could compare my job to that one of a photographer I could say to have photographed the situation from various points of view, and I haven't one static position.

I think that this is a good way to observe and to appreciate better some details of reality that could not be picked leaving always from a single point of view.

What is changed? Rethinking the children to which we mixed ourselves in the hours of school I had the confirmation that if you want to learn it's necessary to listen and to observe the others outside the frames that usually you look the reality. I think it could be happen for everyone, that has different roles in the society.

**Elena Mocco, Italy**

A portrait of Clemens Bennink, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark jacket over a black shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a blurred office setting with papers and a Turkish flag.

**Clemens Bennink**, teacher  
of Dutch language, The Netherlands

**It feels very frustrating and unpleasant to be unable to deal with ordinary situations like taking a bus, going to a shop, asking something, etc. You are completely lost.**

## **Reflections on an integration experiment in Antalya, Turkey**

### **1. Introduction**

Since our first meeting in Turin, I was a little sceptical about the integration experiment in Turkey. The reason for this was that, in my opinion, our situation would differ too much from that of true immigrants. On the other hand, I also was looking forward to the experience of being an 'immigrant' who had to go through all kinds of bureaucracy and obligations, such as a language course, etc.

I arrived in Antalya on Sunday, April 23 and our integration program started the next day. All the participants were assigned to perform different roles in the experiment. For the language class sessions, some of us were students while others were observers. The latter were supposed to observe the behaviour of individual students and the behaviour of the group as whole. How do people deal with the difficulties of learning a foreign language (Turkish) in a rather peculiar situation?

Peculiar because, as an adult, you find yourself suddenly in a strange country, surrounded by people you don't know very well, struggling with a language that completely differs from languages with which you are familiar.

The second aspect of the experiment was to see how we as 'immigrants' coped with the bureaucracy imposed on us. I cannot add too much to this report regarding this second aspect, since I was not directly involved in it.

However, I heard from some of the participants who endured the interviews by the immigration officials that they felt rather unpleasant afterwards. But again, I cannot speak from personal experience.

Therefore, this evaluation focuses on the language course (2.) and the experiment as a whole (3.) followed by the report of the opinions of some of my NT2-students with respect to the Turkish experiment (4.)

## 2. The language course

Before I left for Antalya, I felt that the language course was one of the most appealing parts of the project. I was really looking forward to being in this course; however, I was not assigned a student role, but rather an observer role. This assignment meant that I was supposed to not actively participate in the course, but to observe how the others (who were luckier) acted and reacted.

However, before I give my impressions of the language course, I will spend a few words on the environment in which the language lessons took place. First, it was very interesting for me, as a teacher, to spend a few days in a real local primary school in Antalya. I believe that schools in general tell a lot about the society in which they are embedded. For example, the omnipresence of Atatürk. His portrait dominates every classroom and instruction seems only possible under the control of his supervising eye.

Exposure of such symbols is hard to find in Dutch schools. Even Catholic, Protestant or neutral schools are very reluctant with respect to the overt showing of respectively religious or ideological symbols. For example, the Dutch flag is hard to be found in Dutch schools.

The language course itself was interesting. As I said before, I did not participate as a student but as an observer. Thus, I could not actively take part in the learning process. My role was to observe the interaction between the teacher and the learners.

First, I will address the set up of the course. The learners did not receive a course book, so the whole teaching and learning process was based on oral 'communication' and examples written on the blackboard. This classroom situation was rather different from the manner in which language courses in the Netherlands are typically conducted. Due to this difference, the situation in Turkey is hard to compare with the Netherlands. I believe that, in general, many European countries like Spain, Italy, and Germany are more advanced in this field. A key concept in modern education is e-learning. This means that, with respect to language training, advanced computer programs, sophisticated course books, language laboratories, etc. play a crucial role.

Given the circumstances, it was inspiring to see how the teacher (Fulya) managed to teach us some useful Turkish words and sentences. Some of us were very proud that, after two days, we could order a beer in comprehensible Turkish. Or say things like 'good morning', 'thank you', 'how are you', etc. I believe that most of the participants had the feeling that they were perfectly able to learn the language after a year or so of intensive training. Yet, we would have been happier if the furnishings of the classroom were more suitable for adults. Spending hours in a class room on children's chairs is not really comfortable. Observing the students, I noticed that this inconvenience caused loss of concentration and attention, especially during the second day. But again, due to the effort and creativeness of both teacher and participants, the atmosphere in the language class was very pleasant and relaxed. Except perhaps during the final test....? >>>

### 3. My experience

The main goal of the project is that, the participants are 'immigrants' and professionals (working with immigrants) at the same time. So they had to follow the same procedures real immigrants have to follow. The program was set up in such a way that the participants had to deal with the customary interviews, language courses, etc. just like newcomers. Integration in a new, different country means that one has to learn everything all over again from the beginning.

I was not chosen for the interview, so I have no idea how I would have felt after such an experiment. But for some of us it seemed to have been a rather frustrating experience: entering an office with an official behind a desk, not familiar with the language. One can imagine feeling uneasy in such a situation. I was told that both the interviewer and the interpreter were not really friendly and those interviewed felt very uncomfortable. After the interview, some people were angry and confused. They had the feeling of being taken by surprise.

I suppose that this neatly describes the customary routine when dealing with local or government authorities. It is the same all over the world.

Part of the program was the brief introduction into Turkish society. We were offered information about how it is to be an immigrant in Turkey. This part of the course was presented by an Irish born woman (Amanda) who came to live in Antalya some twenty years ago. My opinion on this part of the program was that the lady, being a middle class woman, rather than an average immigrant, was not the most suitable person to get information from. Her 'success story' lacked most of the ordinary daily life troubles and problems that 'our' immigrants constantly encounter. So, with respect this aspect of the program, it would be better to meet with the type of immigrants we normally deal with. That is, asylum seekers, working class people looking for jobs, war victims, political refugees, etc.

Nevertheless, it was nice talking to someone who really took the step to integrate in a different culture, though she was not representative of the people we normally find in our language classes.

In summary, it was an interesting experience to see how privileged professionals like us struggled through all sorts of inconvenient situations which would be no problem at all, if faced in our own reliable world. It feels very frustrating and unpleasant to be unable to deal with ordinary situations like taking a bus, going to a shop, asking something, etc. You are completely lost.

The eventual result of this experience is that it might create a better understanding of the world of immigrants. However, this experiment will never lead to real knowledge and understanding of the immigrant experience. In order to reach this effect they should not have accommodated us in a five star beach hotel and moreover, they should have taken away our passports and return tickets.

**Clemens Bennink,  
The Netherlands**

