

# ICT for Integration, Social Inclusion and Economic Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities: Case Studies from Spain

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## PREFACE

Launched in 2005 following the revised Lisbon Agenda, the policy framework ‘i2010: A European Information Society for Growth and Employment’ has clearly established digital inclusion as an EU strategic policy goal. Everybody living in Europe, especially disadvantaged people, should have the opportunity to use information and communication technologies (ICT) if they so wish and/or to benefit from ICT use by services providers, intermediaries and other agents addressing their needs. Building on this, the 2006 Riga Declaration on eInclusion<sup>1</sup> defined eInclusion as meaning “both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives” and identified, as one of its six priorities, the promotion of cultural diversity in Europe by “improving the possibilities for economic and social participation and integration, creativity and entrepreneurship of immigrants and minorities by stimulating their participation in the information society.”

In the light of these goals, and given the dearth of empirical evidence on this topic, DG Information Society and Media, Unit H3 (eInclusion) asked the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS)<sup>2</sup> to carry out a study to explore ICT adoption and use by immigrants and ethnic minorities (henceforth IEM) in Europe and the related policy implications.

The study, entitled ‘The potential of ICT for the promotion of cultural diversity in the EU: the case of economic and social participation and integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities’, was designed and overseen by IPTS. It was carried out over twelve months in 2008 by a research consortium made up of IDC Italia Srl (main contractor), MIP Politecnico di Milano, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme – TIC-Migration, Universität Bremen - Institut für Medien Kommunikation und Information, Universidad Sevilla – Laboratorio de Redes Personales y Comunidades, Sheffield Hallam University – Culture, Communication and Computing Research Institute. Cristiano Codagnone of Università Statale di Milano (Dipartimento di Studi Sociali e Politici) acted as scientific coordinator of the consortium.

The study entailed both desk-based research, especially of online services and other resources, and field work. The first step surveyed a wide range of ICT-based initiatives carried out for and/or by IEM in all EU27 Member States. A deeper investigation and analysis then followed of national policies, supply and demand aspects and case studies of specific experiences of ICT and digital service adoption and use by selected IEM groups<sup>3</sup> in four countries: France, Germany, Spain and the UK. A foresight workshop later explored trends, challenges and policy options, leading to the preparation of the final report.

The study's results are available in the following six publications (including this one):

- Overview of digital support initiatives for/by IEM in the EU27
- ICT supply and demand for/by IEM in France, Germany, Spain and the UK
- Case studies<sup>4</sup> on ICT uses for/by IEM (publications<sup>4</sup> on Germany, Spain and France)

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/events/ict\\_riga\\_2006/doc/declaration\\_riga.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict_riga_2006/doc/declaration_riga.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> IPTS is one of the seven research institutes of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre

<sup>3</sup> The groups selected by the research partners are: Argentinians (ES), Bangladeshis (UK), Bulgarians (ES), Ecuadorians (ES), Indians (FR, UK), Moroccans (ES), Poles (DE, UK), Romanians (ES), Russians (FR, DE), Turks (DE).

<sup>4</sup> For editorial reasons, the two ICT usage case studies from the UK have not been published separately, but have rather been included as Annex III of the 'ICT supply and demand' publication.

- The potential of ICT for the promotion of cultural diversity in the EU: final report

This is one of the three case study publications which, together with the one on ICT supply and demand, were produced and should be read as interim contributions to the final report.

All the publications are available at <http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/eInclusion.html>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is one of the outcomes of the study ‘The potential of ICT for the promotion of cultural diversity in the EU: the case of economic and social participation and integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities’ carried out by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) on the request of DG Information Society and Media, Unit H3 (eInclusion) of the European Commission. As part of the study, a broad overview of policies and ICT-related initiatives was initially conducted in all the EU27 Member States, followed by deeper research of ICT usage experiences in four selected countries: France, Germany, Spain and the UK.

This report provides an analysis of ICT usage experiences in Spain. As in the other country reports, three cases were selected – two to explore the role of ICT for the digital and social inclusion and/or the socio-cultural integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, and one to address aspects related to the labour market and economic participation.

### Selected cases and motivations

The three case studies carried out in Spain are the following:

#### 1. The role of Internet shops in local immigrant communities: Ecuadorians in Vera

This case study provides an in-depth description of the telephone-Internet shops (called *locutorios* in Spain) in Vera (Province of Almería) catering for the significant Ecuadorian community living there. The Ecuadorian population has become in recent years the largest group among Latin-American residents in Spain. The choice of Vera also allows us to look at the everyday life of one of many small towns in the Spanish Mediterranean region where significant economic growth took place over the last decade (linked to agriculture and construction), together with a remarkable increase in population, mostly of foreign origin.

#### 2. Online Romanian and Bulgarian Communities

The second case compares three different online resources developed for and by Romanians and Bulgarians living in Spain, which are the two immigrant groups with the highest growth in 2004-2007. *Romania din Spania*, is a website for Romanians that could be classified as a virtual community. *Roman in Lume*, on the other hand, is an ethnic company that has successfully added and incorporated ICT to increase the number and reach of its services which now include an online and traditional radio, an online and print journal, cultural events and editing brochures, and selling advertising space for/through all these media. Finally, IberBG is a bilingual site that promotes the exchange of information and opinions between Bulgarians and Spaniards in several topics regarding the life of Bulgarians living in Spain.

#### 3. Small-scale enterprises, ICT and innovation by immigrants and ethnic minorities in Andalucía

Tarifa is a popular resort at the intersection of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, a few miles in front of Morocco. It depends largely on seasonal tourism: in the busiest months of July and August, the town's population swells from less than 20,000 inhabitants to over 100,000 inhabitants. The town serves as home to a large number of foreign immigrants, from the European Union and beyond, who come to reside on a temporary, seasonal or permanent basis. The case study explores four life stories of immigrants who

are entrepreneurs or self-employed living in Tarifa, illustrating their experience in business innovation and the personal differences in their appropriation of ICT.

## **Main findings: Ecuadorians, ICT and locutorios in Vera**

### **ICT access, skills and learning are all increasing**

For immigrants, mobile phones are crucial for being located for job purposes, and represent the first step in becoming familiar with digital technologies. Use of PCs and the Internet has grown recently: in 2008, it was estimated that about 15% of Ecuadorians in Vera use the Internet in the *locutorios*.

While the availability of PCs and Internet access has increased (in the *locutorios* and elsewhere), actual access, especially by adult users, is constrained by the heavy concentration of demand due to work time shifts (in agriculture and construction) and to time differences with Ecuador for calling back home. Overall, supply does not seem to meet current demand for ICT access, both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Concerning skills, Ecuadorian students at the local high school declared that they have, on average, less computer/internet knowledge than their native friends. However, an increasing interest among Ecuadorians in learning and using computers and the Internet is reported, related to needs such as helping their children with studies, searching for jobs or moving to better ones and improving their quality of life.

Inside the *locutorios* and beyond, social support networks are formed, facilitating the appropriation of ICT at the individual level and contributing to ICT incorporation in the entire community.

### **The business model and the role of locutorios**

In Vera, most *locutorio* owners are Moroccan and Ecuadorian. In the latter case, they are often prominent people in the trust and support networks of this community.

Besides offering a range of commercial functions that create a true service chain (from telephone calls and recharging cards, to ethnic videos and food), *locutorios* are also spaces which enable community re-generation. In these places, people feel comfortable and trusting, because they are among their fellow citizens and they find familiar elements that remind them of their place of origin. They can contact relatives and friends in Ecuador and around the world, thereby extending and reinforcing friendship and community ties.

*Locutorios* offer Ecuadorian youth easier access to the Internet and the opportunity to obtain their preferred content or a way to seek their own cultural references. Through the Internet, *locutorios* allow young people who came to Vera in recent years to join their families to keep in contact with their social networks in Ecuador and maintain a continuous exchange of experiences.

### **Users and changing social and cultural patterns**

ICT use in the Ecuadorian community in Vera is strongly youth-related and gender-biased: 80% of *locutorio* users are between 14-35 and 80% are men. Explanations given for limited female use of *locutorios* are: they have less time than men; they are very often digitally illiterate; and they want more privacy when communicating. *Locutorios* are almost exclusively used by immigrants and the few Spaniards who use these services frequently are mostly gypsies.

Though *locutorios* are marked by the use of symbols and elements that are reminiscent of values and customs from the country of origin, younger customers especially are increasingly adopting forms of communication that correspond to uses of the Spanish society. Ecuadorians who use Internet tend to become more independent and socialize more easily. Most Ecuadorian teenagers use the Internet 1-2 hours per day. Some mothers interpret this as an indication that their adolescent children have assumed the values of Spanish passivity (instead of practicing outdoor sports).

## **Main findings: online Romanian and Bulgarian communities**

### ***Romania din Spania*: a virtual community born and living online**

This is one of the most visited portals by Romanians in Spain, which provides information for each stage of immigration: the decision to leave, the journey and settlement at destination.

Although the site has a multi-language interface (in Spanish, Romanian and English), most of the information on it is in Romanian, an identity feature considered very important.

Chatting is the most popular service and is also used for promotion and e-commerce purposes. A vast number of the website's visits refer to employment and there are many external links addressing this constant demand. Job offers elsewhere in Europe are also published, confirming the great mobility of Romanians and their mostly work-oriented migration project.

### ***Roman in Lume*: supporting and re-creating the Diaspora community**

This website was born to disseminate the newspaper with the same name launched in 2001 in Madrid. It played an important role in clarifying information about the complex and often confused immigration rules and procedures for Romanians after accession to the EU.

*Roman in Lume* bets everything on the identification of the Romanian community itself: use of the national language, symbols like the flag, the rescue of traditions like the Christmas carols and Romanian traditional music. Efforts are also made, however, to promote integration with the host society: besides providing bilingual content in online news and radio, there is also a direct link with some municipalities to publicise their services and initiatives for the Romanian population.

### **IberBG: a pragmatic community of people sharing the same life context and discussing online the problems stemming from it**

IberBG started as a bilingual online forum for Bulgarians living in Spain (where very few online resources exist specifically for them) and Spaniards interested in Bulgaria. Later, it gave birth to a completely parallel forum in Bulgarian only (and using the Cyrillic alphabet).

In both forums, the teaching/learning of a foreign language (Bulgarian or Spanish) is one of the most successful topics, including technical problems with computers when shifting between the two languages (hence having to use different alphabets). Under the same topics, differences emerge in the content discussed. For instance, mixed couples and those already established in Spain often discuss bilingual education and parenting in general; newly arrived migrants raise questions about the registration of children as Spanish or Bulgarian citizens and the economic aid for children provided by the Spanish Government.

## **Main findings: ICT and immigrant entrepreneurs**

Summarising the role played by ICT in the life-stories of immigrants in Tarifa, all four respondents, who either currently profit in economic terms from their use of ICT or who hope to do so in the future, value ICT for its social impact in terms of communication. It acts as a 'link', improving the conditions of human relations and daily living circumstances. While all of them use ICT for innovating in their business, it is interesting to note that the innovation they produce pertains to the socio-cultural sphere whether it be the journalist reaching out to a million people on the air; the quick-witted businessman in the jewellery/mineral industry translating texts to exchange with other traders using Google; the kite-surfer who is set on sharing different 'worlds' with people; or the would-be fashion executive who thrives on keeping updated on trends around the world so she can create new looks.

## **Conclusions**

Both Internet shops and online sites for immigrants can be seen as intermediate communities which play an essential role for newcomers. They provide practical information, job opportunities, and instrumental help. They are also an important source of emotional and social support for adaptation. They offer a context in which immigrants can interact with similar others, to develop a sense of community and ease the ecological transition associated with relocation. Finally, they function as a buffer against acculturation stress.

The cases examined allow us to describe the different roles played by communities in the psychological adaptation of recent immigrants to Spain: a) some of them provide physical or on line places to meet, facilitating networking processes in expatriate communities and maintaining contact with countries of origin (as, for instance, *locutorios* and *Romania din Spania*); b) in other cases, communities may play an instrumental role for entrepreneurship and/or media initiatives, promoting national and diaspora identities and facilitating commercial exchange (as, for instance, *Roman in Lume*); c) there are also bridging communities (such as *IberBG*), which are predominantly based on the contact between immigrants and host individuals, focused on learning the languages and cultural exchanges.

Taking into account their different functions, such communities and their contribution to empowering immigrants should first be fully acknowledged. Then they should be promoted and supported. For instance, *locutorio* owners, informal experts and online ethnic communities are key actors for skill building, civic engagement, community development and relational integration (with IEM groups from the same and other countries of origin and with the host society).

Internet shops and online ethnic communities may also participate in cooperation strategies with the countries of origin. For instance, the diffusion of Internet use among immigrant communities has been found in this, and in other studies, to contribute to the growth of Internet shops and ICT use in the countries of origin. This may be formalised as part of co-development strategies: immigrants can be considered as agents for skill building in the home region; or may also participate through economic and civic initiatives in the life of their former localities.

## INTRODUCTION: CASE STUDY SELECTION AND OVERVIEW

This report examines Internet shops, the websites of two immigrants and ethnic minorities (IEM) groups in Spain and the experience with ICT of small IEM entrepreneurs also living here. Internet shops and online ethnic communities are two different kinds of actors playing a mediator role for international immigrants. They are analysed in the first two cases. Significant individual differences in the process of appropriation of ICT exist and reflect its double social and personal character. The third case is intended to illustrate the dynamics of this process. Accordingly, this report is divided in three sections:

- ☒ The first case provides an in-depth description of the Internet shops supply in Vera, where a significant community of Ecuadorians resides. **The case illustrates the role of articulation of local immigrant communities played by *locutorios*.** They are not only places to communicate with the family and transmit remittances to the sending country, but also a meeting point for the expatriate community and a space for recreating the Ecuadorian identity. Some gender and social control dynamics are described.
- ☒ The second case is an analysis of three different online resources for Romanians and Bulgarians in Spain. **The case illustrates the types of interaction usually observed in online recent immigrant's communities, with the significant presence of nostalgia and practical information on the labour market, and the use of both Spanish and native language as means for communication.** Although in the online sites examined most of the interaction is among members of the same group, one case of interaction between Spaniards and Bulgarian is also documented, showing the viability of mixed Websites designed for migrants and host society members.
- ☒ The case study of Tarifa provides 4 life stories of immigrant entrepreneurs, or just individuals with an experience of business innovation. **The case study illustrates the personal differences in the appropriation of ICT.** A Nigerian journalist relates to ICT as a resource for communication and pro-social activities. A Brazilian trader, which sells jewellery products, makes an instrumental use of ICT both for business and to cope with the adaptation process. A Brazilian surfing trainer looks for a personal international experience and, at the same time, for internationalising Brazil's touristic resources; and ICT facilitates this worldwide view of his business and his life. Finally, a Senegalese is working to develop a fashion business, where ICT may play a role for intercultural contact.

### The role of Internet shops in local immigrant communities: Ecuadorians in Vera (Almería)

Several reasons make the immigration process in Spain unique. It has been mostly composed of new economic migrants from a third country and has gone through a massive growth in the last few years that gave those migrants a large weight among foreign residents. Precisely in this fast-track immigration process, the case of the Ecuadorian population is particularly interesting because of the speedy insertion into the Spanish society and labour market, with the consequent problems of adapting to social situations and working conditions that these immigrants have been gradually overcoming to become the largest group among Latin-American residents in Spain.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Immigration in Spain is mainly composed of immigrants "working" outside, with dominant flows from Latin American countries (especially between 2000-2003); immigrants from Eastern Europe (with significant increases since 2004), and African immigration, with 50,000 immigrants per year between 2003-2004 and 100,000 in 2005, from where seven out of ten are Moroccans. IZQUIERDO (2007) characterized migration

For a little more than a decade, Spain has established itself as a country of immigration, a historical novelty in itself, in a process that differs from other European nations. For most of the twentieth century, Spain was a country of emigration: men and women emigrated to Latin America and Europe for political and economic reasons. Latin America was the main destination for exiles especially after the Civil War. After political emigrants, the 1950s and 1960s were followed by economic emigrants who went to developed countries in Europe (France, Germany, and Switzerland). In the mid 1970s, the migratory flow to other countries was halted and, after its entrance to the then EEC in 1985, Spain began to change its role in the flow of global migration to the point that it has become part of the nations that attract immigration.

Immigrants are socially visible as corroborated by official statistics. The number of foreigners residing in Spain has increased since the decade of the 90's and has definitely risen in the twenty-first century. By 1991, Census data show that 353,347 people living in Spain are foreign, which corresponds to 0.88% of the total population; by 1998, the foreign population has doubled according to the Census: foreign population reaches 637,085 people (1.60% of the total population). Subsequent years will result in a sustained and rapid growth, particularly since 2000.<sup>6</sup> Between 2001 and 2006 the intensity of migration is particularly high, reaching 4.1 million (9.3% of the total Spanish population), with an annual average entry of 500,000 foreigners, a figure that is nearly five times the intensity reached in the previous five years (110,000 foreign immigrants between 1996-2000).<sup>7</sup> In January 2008 Census data indicates that foreign population in Spain reaches 4,519,600 people (9.1% of total population).<sup>8</sup>

On March 31, 2008, the number of foreign registration certificates or residence permits was 4,192,835 people, of whom 54.34% are male and 45.66% female. Taking into account the continent of origin, 39.57% of these foreigners are nationals of a country in the European Union, 30.28% are Latin-American, 20.85% African, 5.96% Asian, 2.85% from other non-EU countries, 0.46% from the United States and 0.04% from Oceania.<sup>9</sup> The Ecuadorian people, according to these official figures, are the third largest nationality behind nationals of Morocco and Romania, with 413,642 people who possess a residence permit. Therefore, to understand in more detail the insertion of the Ecuadorian population in Spain it is important not only because it covers a significant number of people in a process that “today, speaks of an Ecuadorian migration to Spain, generally stabilized and settled”, but also because it brings to light strategies of adaptation from a culture perceived as close to the Spanish society.

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to Spain in the 90s as Moroccan immigration and by extension African, mostly young men engaged in agriculture, and singles that have left the family in their homeland. IZQUIERDO, Antonio (2007). “Terremoto en los cimientos del modelo migratorio”. Papers to V Congress Immigration of Spain: <http://www.adeit.uv.es/inmigracion2007/index.php> (last view 15 may, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> TORRES, Francisco (2005). “La inmigración ecuatoriana en España y su proceso de inserción”. In: Programa Andino de Derechos Humanos y Democracia (ed.). Migración, desplazamiento forzado y refugio. Quito: UASB-PADH-UNION EUROPEA-GRUPO SOCIAL FEPP-PLAN MIGRACION, pp. 272-3.

<sup>7</sup> IZQUIERDO (2007) <http://www.adeit.uv.es/inmigracion2007/index.php> (last view 15 may, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE). Padrón municipal. Población extranjera. On line: <http://www.ine.es/> [30/05/2008]

<sup>9</sup> With the expansion of states that form the European Union since January 1, 2007, for example, people originating from Romania and Bulgaria have remarkable increase in the past 12 months (150.97% and Romania Bulgaria 84.89%). Observatory of Immigration (IPO) (2008). Quarterly Report on March 31, 2008. Foreigners with registration certificate or residence permit in force and foreigners with residence permit for studies into force. Online: [http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/Informe\\_Marzo\\_2008.pdf](http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/Informe_Marzo_2008.pdf) [05/04/2008] Until 1998 the labels to classify foreigners by continent were: Europe, Americas, Africa, Asia, Oceania, Stateless person / N / A.

In this seemingly successful process of integration there are also frequent episodes of disagreements and conflict among Ecuadorians and Spaniards, which cause discomfort and deemed Ecuadorians as strangers in spite of their time of residence in Spain. These kinds of mixed feelings feeds the yearning of Ecuadorians to return to their country at some point although, as noted by Andrés Tornos in a study based on 987 surveys, there are many reasons for staying and also many who encourage them to return but “at the end, most have no clear future.”<sup>10</sup> In that process of integration of Ecuadorians into Spanish society, a fairly recent and inconclusive process, access to ICT may contribute as a resource to support and facilitate integration (especially for children of massive migration).

**Case selection and research question:** Among the reasons to choose the study of Ecuadorians, and in particular of Ecuadorians living in Vera (Almería), the importance of describing the ICT appropriation practices *in a specific community* should be stressed. This case is also useful to understand the low use of ICT among this group compared to other Latin Americans living in Spain.

This research helps to understand the dynamics of the Ecuadorian community, sometimes misinterpreted as a homogeneous group. It also helps to show the trends that have shaped the digital media appropriation practices. It allows one to look closer at the everyday life of small towns, frequently ignored because the Ecuadorian settlement is concentrated in large cities such as Madrid and Barcelona. Vera is an example of the Spanish municipalities with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants and with high foreign population density. This is the case of municipalities in the Spanish Mediterranean region where significant economic growth took place along the last decade, registering at the same time a remarkable increase in population. It is an opportunity to observe the local implementation of public policies (from different levels of Government), and in particular of the strategies developed to cope with digital division in rural immigrant communities.

This study seeks to understand how the ICT appropriation process contributes to a greater participation and social integration of immigrants in the localities where they live. On the other hand, to understand how these participatory processes work, and the consequent use of these resources as tools, may help to improve the integration of immigrants into Spanish society. Furthermore, it is important to understand the potential of ICT to achieve economic participation of Ecuadorian people in Spanish society; particularly, when it has to do with finding better job opportunities, raising productivity and efficiency, and sponsoring entrepreneurs to establish their own businesses. The analysis of this process of economic integration may shed light on the identification processes. Gómez (2007), points out “the little visibility of the labour deployed by Ecuadorian immigrants, who have spent years in our country”, working in domestic services, child and elderly care, construction and agriculture. This situation becomes more evident when compared with the case of Colombian and Argentinean people, who had more chances of promotion and getting better jobs, even if this new position remains subordinated in the labour market.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> TORNOS, Andrés (2007). Ecuadorianos en España: claves de un proceso migratorio en cuatro tiempos. In: J. E. GÓMEZ, A. TORNOS and Colectivo IOE. *Ecuadorianos en España. Una aproximación sociológica*: <http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/EcuadorianosEnEspana.html> (last view 5 may, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> GOMEZ (2007), La inmigración ecuatoriana, p. 93. PUMARES, P., GARCIA, A. y ASENSIO, A. (La movilidad laboral y geográfica de la población extranjera en España. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2006. On line: <http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/movilidad%20laboral.pdf> (last view 25 april, 2007), these authors say that Colombian people "have started a small leap towards office work, although only significant to inferior groups, junior (2.7%) and administrative assistants (8.4%)".



**Brief overview of the report:** The study aims to provide a broad and deep description of the use and appropriation of ICTs by Ecuadorians living in Vera. It is based on ethnographic evidence, surveys and interviews in addition to desk analysis. The case provides some insights on why there is a greater digital divide between Ecuadorians and Spaniards than between other Latin American immigrants and the host population in Spain. Also some mechanisms used by Ecuadorians in Vera to access these kinds of resources are unveiled.

**Figure 1:** *Locutorio 'Sin Fronteras'* (Photo: Pilar Cruz, 2004)



### Online Romanian and Bulgarian communities

The main reason for choosing the investigation into the Romanian and Bulgarian groups in Spain is because the two groups are presenting the greatest growth of its population over the past 5 years. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MTAS in Spanish), the number of foreign registration certificates or residence permits in force has increased by nearly one million people joining all nationalities. The last year the biggest increase corresponded precisely to Romanians 185%, and Bulgarians 111.15%.<sup>12</sup>

Both Romanians and Bulgarians are now in a legal/regular position but with still social instability: after joining the European Union not all the *de facto* rights have been granted to the 25 member countries. Bulgarians and Romanians are suffering limitations in the conditions for movement and free transit. Although in 2007 the Romanians and Bulgarians could move to all European Union countries, a set of complex transitional provisions established some limitations with regard to labor issues. Their free circulation, therefore, is not exercised in full but limited to the ability to transit through the Schengen area as a tourist or with a job already legalized, so that the gain right cannot be applied effectively by them.

The Spanish government implemented a moratoria of two years for workers from Bulgaria and Romania and the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs announced that “Romanians and Bulgarians citizens will be legal in Spain since 1 January, the regime will be applied to them and, therefore, the only condition that will apply for one year is going to be the labor free

<sup>12</sup> <http://extranjeros.mtas.es/es/general/boletin-num-15-Web.pdf> (last view May 7, 2008)



circulation”.<sup>13</sup> At that time they were talking about one year because the Minister insisted to groups of workers from Eastern Europe and the Romanian authorities that this moratoria could be lifted the next year if ‘alterations’ in the labour market did not occur and if significant variations in the migratory flows were not observed. The migratory wave has not only maintained, but also a considerable increase has been observed. Why choose Spain as a destination? In the early nineties, the preferred destination for Romanians was Germany followed by the United States. Then, they choose Italy. However suspicions that the country would not continue to host more immigrants resulted in viewing Spain as an alternative, due to cultural similarities with Italy. For example the origin of both Spanish and Romanian is the Latin language.<sup>14</sup>

But there are many other factors that affect the decision of Romanians and Bulgarians to go to Spain, which Sandu (2004) organizes into three categories. The first one is related to the country of origin and the variables previously identified: the gap between wages and quality of life between Eastern Europe and Western Europe. The second one is related to factors about the destination country as the need for foreign labor and economic growth, but also calls into targeted areas such as the image of tolerance that Spain projected outside:

*Spain ‘discovered’ its position as a country of destination for international migration recently (the switch from emigration to immigration country is recent and marked the attitude of the state and society regarding migrants). The absence of precise policies and institutional mechanisms in the field marked the development of migration to Spain (not only for the Romanians) creating with the migrants (at least Romanian ones) an image of an easily accessible and very tolerating country<sup>15</sup> (Sandu: 2004:19).*

Finally we must consider some aspects related to the international context, as the establishment of the Schengen area and the easier access to it, with Spain as the starting point. In a context of exponential population growth, Spaniards don’t share a clear perception of differentiation between both groups. Through ICT initiatives frequently communicate on legal status and labor issues, affecting both IEM groups. The case study focuses on three examples which combine native language and Spanish, and show recurrent worries about jobs and the nostalgic sentiments as a social link among the participants.

**Research question:** The three cases examined impulse communication among Romanians and Bulgarians in Spain: Romania din Spania, Roman in Lume and IberBG. Even though in the beginning the formulation was limited to Romanians and Bulgarians in Catalonia, we realized that the rapid growth of this group in the Catalan Autonomous Region does not match the quantity and quality of IEM initiatives. Moreover, the high mobility of this group also means that, except in those geographic areas where the presence of Romanians is longer and shapes a larger group (for example, Coslada, Madrid, and Alicante), most of the ICT applications cover the whole Iberian Peninsula and beyond. However, the description is based in the IEM living in Catalonia through interviews and observing their participation in qualitative and quantitative terms.

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<sup>13</sup> See:

[http://www.elpais.com/articulo/economia/Espana/confirma/moratoria/anos/entrada/trabajadores/rumanos/bulgaros/elpepueco/20061216elpepueco\\_3/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/economia/Espana/confirma/moratoria/anos/entrada/trabajadores/rumanos/bulgaros/elpepueco/20061216elpepueco_3/Tes)

<sup>14</sup> PAJARES, Alonso (2005) Tesis doctoral “Procesos migratorios e integración socio- laboral de los rumanos en Cataluña” Universidad de Barcelona, Barcelona. pp.99

<sup>15</sup> SANDU, Dimitri RADU, Cosmin et. al. “A country Report on Romanian Migration Abroad: Stocks and Flows Afert 1989 in [http://aa.ecn.cz/img\\_upload/f76c21488a048c95bc0a5f12dece153/RomanianMigrationAbroad.pdf](http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/f76c21488a048c95bc0a5f12dece153/RomanianMigrationAbroad.pdf) (last view July 2, 2008)

In the first and second cases we can see initiatives elaborated from Romanians to the Romanian collective. In the third case we realize the existence of an exchange between Spaniards and Bulgarians designed by Bulgarians: as a result we observe the existence of undertaking initiatives and contribution to social participation by both service providers and users.

Each one of the initiatives examined has aspects to improve. Some of them require not only more visible participation, but also to move from being a spectator to take a more active involvement. In some cases ICT tools are only used to provide information. Curiously, in several cases the private sector has managed to use these tools in favour of IEM groups.

The three cases present evidence of integration with host society as a collective destiny. The level of interaction is different in all three cases and represents very different notions of community. While the first one refers to a virtual community, the second emphasizes a community and Diasporas spread across the world united by cultural values inherent to the Romanians. In addition, the third case presents a constant interaction with host individuals where the topics covered refer to the problems of adaptation, legal uncertainties and other topics useful to the Bulgarian group.

The first two cases are related to ICT business initiatives by the Romanian group. Both initiatives have succeeded in maintaining their position through the sponsorship of various private and public advertisers and the community itself (both use the PayPal system to receive donations). The first one, *Romania din Spania*, focuses on mediated computer communication and it gets resources from advertisers as airlines, insurance and real estate companies. On the other hand, *Roman in Lume* is an ethnic company that covers many elements different from ICT. But they have successfully incorporated ICT to increasing the number of services and to reach a greater dissemination. *Roman in Lume* sells advertising space for all their media (online and traditional radio, online and print journal, cultural events and editing brochures) through its website.

In addition to undertaking their own businesses, both initiatives provide tools for the Romanian group referring to the labour aspect such as resolution of questions regarding the legal situation, classified advertisements (in *Roman in Lume*) and job vacancies and advertisements (in the case of *Romania din Spania*).

The third case, *IberBG* only serves this aspect in a tangential way through the forum, where we can also find questions and answers about the employment and legal status and, occasionally, any job offer or related topics.

**Overview:** In this report we examine three Websites for and by Romanians and Bulgarians residing in Spain. *Romania din Spania*, is a Web for Romanians that could be classified as a virtual community. *Roman in Lume*, is an initiative led by Romanians entrepreneurs for their community. *IberBG*, is a bilingual site that promotes the exchange between Bulgarians and Spaniards on several topics regarding the life of Bulgarians living in Spain.

## Exploring the 'imagination gap': individual entrepreneurs in Tarifa

Many authors voice their concerns regarding the issue of globalisation. Hellsten, for example, argues that it is “the worldwide requirement for more direct democracy, good governance and respect for human rights is at the core of the new millennium's development strategies.”<sup>16</sup> Hellsten also recognises that the internet is instrumental to economic globalisation, stating that although “ICT could provide us powerful means for sharing our global prosperity”, “the trends...have not led to either more equal local or global access either to ICT or to the information it transfers. Instead, the Information Age has led to what has come to be called the digital divide between the affluent and the poor, the connected and disconnected, the developed and less developed.”<sup>17</sup>

This notion of a digital divide is defined by Burtseva et al. as “the fact that the world can be divided into people who do and people who don't have access to- and the capability to use-modern ICT”.<sup>18</sup> The term, first coined in the mid-1990s, reflects the concern that 'growing disparities' will become evident between technologically advanced and developing countries.<sup>19</sup> As this problem “is basically social rather than technological, the ways of its overcoming depend on the degree of the democratisation of a society, on the standard of living of a population, on the level of population erudition, and on cultural and ethnic features of the specific community of people.”<sup>20</sup>

In the study 20 participants who had access to ICT were selected. All of them found their access to be useful. In other words, while the migrants in our study were not being left to fall into the digital divide, they were not fully e-Included either: half of the sample size could not access information in their own language and only 60% found culturally relevant information, while 95% reported finding practically useful information. It might be useful to briefly refresh our findings concerning the supply and demand of ICT in this region of Spain. First, bear in mind that our study was located in the town of Tarifa, in the autonomous region of Andalucía, Spain (36°28' N -6°12' W). Situated on the Iberian Peninsula at Europe's southernmost tip, Tarifa is only a stone's throw away from Africa (Morocco lies 14 kilometres across the narrow Strait of Gibraltar) and was the point at which the Moorish invasion of Spain was launched in 711 A.D. While the town continues to rely on its Almadraba fishing industry for tuna catches, nowadays it depends largely on seasonal tourism during the summer months and has seen a boom in property sales, on account of its leisure and hospitality sector.

The town's popularity stems from its location at the meeting point of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, its fast-ferry link to Tangier (35 minutes away), its pristine beaches and suitable conditions for water-sports including kite and wind-surfing, surfing, diving, swimming, sailing, along with the land-based activities of climbing, trekking, horse-riding and cycling tours. For this reason, the busiest months of July and August see the size of the town swell five times from its normal population of less than 20,000 inhabitants to over 100,000 inhabitants. In the light of this reality, the town serves as home to a large number of foreign immigrants, from the European Union and beyond, who come to reside on a

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<sup>16</sup> Hellsten 2007:2. From information society to global village of wisdom? In (E. Rookby & J. Weckert, eds) Information Technology and social justice. Information Science Publishing: London.

<sup>17</sup> 2007:2.

<sup>18</sup> Burtseva, Cojocar, Gaindric, Magariu & Verlan 2007:59. Digital divide: introduction to the problem. In (M. Gascó- Hernández, F. Equiza-López, M. Acevedo-Ruiz, eds). Information communication Technologies and human development: opportunities and challenges. Idea Group: London.

<sup>19</sup> 2007:59.

<sup>20</sup> 2007:58.

temporary, seasonal or permanent basis. Although the section of the Costa de la Luz or coastline of light up to the fishing village of Barbate is popular for illegal crossings over the water from Africa on wooden *pateras* or inflatable dinghies there are very few illegal immigrants to be found in the town.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of the demographics: the group reported using the telephone, 95% use mobiles and 70% landlines, with telephone use for communication and local mobility ranking as the single highest usage. All participants reported accessing the Internet, mostly from home and with Wi-Fi connections. E-mail was the most used feature, followed by the Internet and communication sessions, while the use of the internet for social networking was lower, with its use for job-opportunities coming in final place. The majority of preferred websites were international search engines, which also have e-mail (Google was way above all other sites), followed by recreational sites, news sites and specific information-related sites.

In terms of how our interviewees use ICT: the greatest overall use was to increase economic participation, followed by advancing one's education, then skill-building or assisting one in business- it is hardly used to find work. With respect to communications, the greatest use of ICT was to maintain contact with those in the home country, followed by an awareness of information resources and then for communication within Spain- it is neither really used to find care, nor to understand local society and least of all, to fit better into society. The highest ranked use of the internet in the study was for skill building.

Neither the telephone nor the computer were used much to facilitate community regeneration/development; rather the phone was used extensively for communicative and local mobility but not at all for adaptation, whereas the computer features slightly better in this regard. Both the phone and the internet only have medium significance for relational integration here, whether with fellow compatriots or members of the host society.

Of great significance is that both the telephone and the computer were viewed as highly important for facilitating entrepreneurship- the computer scoring the highest for a single user group in this regard and overall, for both media, coming in at 3rd place. Both the phone and the computer are used to boost economic participation- this function scores 2nd place for both applications. The only difference is that whereas the phone is being used for communication and mobility, the internet is being used to build skills; other than that both media are used for economic participation and entrepreneurship. What stands out is that neither medium is being used for adaptation or integration. In other words, ICT is not being used to further Riga's social goals (Principle 23), but rather its economic goals (see Principle 24) in terms of work, creative innovation and entrepreneurship.

Hence, although we initially wanted to consider newly emerging ICT in relation to innovation in intercultural mediation, social care and the third sector, our survey investigations in the previous report make it clear that ICTs are regarded as central to entrepreneurs running small-scale enterprises in the towns of this region of Spain. This finding, added to the fact that ICT does not appear to be used in any great measure to advance the goals of Riga's cultural diversity in the social domain, means that we have to probe further to understand this situational reality with respect to exemplar cases of personal appropriation of ICT as well as ICT innovation in small-scale businesses and private sector involvement.

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<sup>21</sup> Although it is noticeable the presence of the Guardia Civil and an immigrant detention centre on the *Isla de las Palomas*.

## CASE STUDY 1: THE ROLE OF INTERNET SHOPS IN LOCAL IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

### 1.1 The context: Vera and Ecuadorians

The case study of the *locutorios* in Vera aims to describe this type of social spaces, built as hubs of resources of different kind. Particular attention is paid to their role as spaces for accessing, learning and appropriating ICTs by immigrants, particularly those of Ecuadorian origin. Through a journey going from 2003 to 2008, and whose guiding principle is the use and/or management of ICT (especially of internet access), this study provides a description of the dynamics of socialization as well as the perceptions about them, and the characterization of actors involved in the process. The different dynamics observed evidence distinct patterns on ICT usage among Ecuadorians that depend on factors such as age and gender, but also educational background and time available, and above all the need for communication.

Vera is a municipality located in Almería in the autonomous community of Andalucía. In 2007, 12.256 people were officially registered as residents in the town, including foreigners and Spaniards. During the five years of ethnographic observation the town has constituted a space where people of different nationalities and origin live, a situation similar to that of other neighbouring localities of North-Levant also characterized by very active population dynamics, one of the most notorious and changing across the province of Almería.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, the confluence of different socio-economic factors has made Vera, in recent years a town that attracts people of up to 51 nationalities. Foreigners represent 25% of the population, one of the highest percentages of foreign population in the area.<sup>23</sup>

Among the foreign-born population living in Vera, the largest groups are from Ecuador (27.14% in 2006) and the United Kingdom, but also from Romania and Bolivia, countries that registered a significant increase of immigrants to this area during the past two years (Cruz 2007a). Saraguros, indigenous Ecuadorian people, arrived in Vera since 1998, although they appeared as newly registered in the 1999 municipal census (Cruz 2007a), and represent 22% of all Ecuadorians residing in Vera. Ecuadorians are not a homogeneous group, despite the perception that many locals share. Some of the differences observed are the following:

- ☒ *Differences between indigenous and non-indigenous individuals (ethnicity)*: in Vera close to 25% of people are indigenous, most of them from Saraguro origin (22-23%), though there are also indigenous people from Cañaris, Otavaleños and recently Salasaca (last quarter of 2007).
- ☒ *The city and region of origin*: the vast majority comes from the Sierra region and among them the largest group is composed of those from the Saraguro parish (31%) and the cities of Quito (10%) and Guayaquil (5%). The rest come from medium-sized cities and more remote locations, the most significant being Ambato and Pallatanga (4% each) and Santo Domingo de los Colorados (3%).

<sup>22</sup> CHECA, F. et al. (2007). *Mapa de la inmigración en Almería. Municipios menores de 20.000 habitantes. Necesidades y recursos*. Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses-Diputación de Almería.

<sup>23</sup> CRUZ, Pilar (2007a) Retos para la convivencia en el Levante español: la experiencia de los ecuatorianos en el municipio almeriense de Vera:  
<http://www.psicologiacientifica.com/bv/psicologia-237-1-retos-para-la-convivencia-en-el-levante-espanol-la-experienc.html>

☒ *The educational background:* more than 65% studied at Secondary School; 29% primary school and 3.6% university studies. In Ecuador they mostly worked in secondary and tertiary activities.

Overall, the population of Ecuadorians in Vera is characterized by being active in the labour market, ranging mainly between 17 to 40 years old (85% in 2003), while children from 0 to 16 years old represent 10% of the population.<sup>24</sup> Although there is predominance of the male population, the balance between genders is getting closer: in 2003, 66% were men and 34% female, in 2007, 55% were men and 45% female.

The reasons that prompted Ecuadorians arrivals to Vera are mainly economic (job search as well as the national economic crisis) in addition to family related motivations. These are people who had some sort of economic resources and contacts, and who had already been implicated in processes of internal migration in Ecuador (Cruz 2007b). In Vera, in 2003 more than half of Ecuadorians reported living in the same place since they arrived into Spain. This situation, together with a high concentration of families per house, shows the importance of family and friendship networks in supporting and driving the migratory process to Spain. This concentration is in part a product of the family reunification, but also the overcrowding is due to the lack of rental units in the town, as well as the high cost of real state.

Social support networks of immigrants in Vera are characterized by a strong tendency to expand among co-nationals and co-ethnics, as well as the high presence of close relatives and extended family (cousins, uncles, nephews, brothers-in-law, and etcetera). The role of these family and friendship networks not only drives the decision to migrate but also contributes to recoup the costs of settling in the new country, providing emotional support to the newcomer and balancing other factors such as economic motivation or geographical and cultural proximity.<sup>25</sup>

The percentage of ‘illegal’ immigrants in 2003 reached 59% of Ecuadorians in Vera, a tendency that has been changing in subsequent years because of regularization, thanks to employment contracts that enabled workers to normalize their situation, or the accreditation of having ‘roots’ in the community after living for three years as residents in Vera. Nevertheless, still in 2008, about 8% of Ecuadorian people have not regularized their status and remain as irregular immigrants, with consequent difficulties for employment and social integration. The labour activities of Ecuadorians in Vera are characterized by:

☒ Strong concentration of employment in the agricultural sector until 2003. This trend has been modified after 2004, when most men went to jobs in the construction sector. The change took place due to factors such as increases in the number of Ecuadorians who finally obtained their legal residence and working permits, higher wages in the sector and more stable hiring. This situation occurred when in Vera, and in near communities, the construction sector consolidated its presence and growth with the building of countless housing developments and golf courses.

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<sup>24</sup> CRUZ, Pilar (2007b) *Inmigración de indígenas Saraguros y otros ecuatorianos en Vera (Almería). Diagnóstico de las condiciones socioeconómicas y de residencia*. Sevilla: Centro de Publicaciones de la Dirección General de Coordinación de Políticas Migratorias de la Junta de Andalucía: <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/gobernacion/opencms/portal/PoliticasyMigratorias/Publicaciones/saraguros?entrada=contenidos&contenido=29> (last view 20 may, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> MAYA-JARIEGO, I. (2004). La formación de comunidades de inmigrantes: desplazamiento en cadena y contexto de recepción. *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades*, 6 (12), 83-91. See also, CRUZ (2007b).

- ☒ Among women, most of them work in the services sector (hotels, restaurants and so on), domestic service and caring services for children and the elderly, in addition to agriculture. Since 2004 there is a higher demand for maids and care for children and elderly people. This is in part a consequence of the economic growth in the area (in contrast to major Spanish cities where the incorporation of Spanish women to the labour market generates in consequence also a demand for female migrants' work).<sup>26</sup>
- ☒ Although most of the Ecuadorians in Vera found jobs, 12% have not succeeded for several reasons, mainly related to the lack of legal documentation, but also by poor working conditions and competition with people of other nationalities.
- ☒ In Vera, since the last quarter of 2007, the recession in the construction sector (as in other parts of Spain) began which resulted in higher unemployment and job instability. This situation became critical and desperate around March 2008 for all immigrants, whether linked to the construction sector or not, Ecuadorian or not: now they have great difficulties in finding a job and, when they are employed must wait several months for being paid their salaries.

**Figure 2:** Locutorio 'Saraguro', inside view (Photo: Pilar Cruz, 2004)



## 1.2 Methodology

The data sources for this study come in part from previous research conducted in Vera since 2003,<sup>27</sup> and were supplemented by collecting information between March and July 2008 to give a comprehensive picture of ICT appropriation and use by Ecuadorian residents. From previous research, it is known that *locutorios* have an important role as spaces that provide access to telephone and Internet communication to immigrants residing in Vera. Therefore,

<sup>26</sup> In particular, for Bolivian people, whose arrival in the area is beginning to register in late 2003, becoming massive in subsequent years, with corresponding replacement jobs in many Ecuadorians especially in agriculture, domestic service and children and elderly people care.

<sup>27</sup> CRUZ (2007b), y CRUZ (2004). Informe final de investigación en Vera (Almería). Proyecto de investigación Modelo autóctono de desarrollo/intervención en inmigración. Proyecto Saraguro. Sevilla: Universidad Pablo de Olavide (mimeo).



the inquiries focused towards these spaces as well as contacting persons who could provide information relevant to the case study. The following steps were conducted:

1. Direct observation at all *locutorios* located in Vera to determine which of them were used by Ecuadorians. Particular attention was paid to the *locutorios* with Internet and mobile phones services. From that initial survey, the observation then focused on the three *locutorios* mostly used by Ecuadorians, and ethnographies were built with what was witnessed there. This period of information gathering coincided with the opening of two new *locutorios* owned by Ecuadorians.
2. Interviews with *locutorios*' users, owners and owners' assistants or managers.
3. Survey of teenagers at the High School Alyanub (IES Alyanub, in Spanish) during computer lessons.<sup>28</sup> The survey was conducted amongst all students, which allowed comparing information of ICT use among Ecuadorians, Spaniards, and students from other nationalities.
4. Photographs to complement the information collected, and used to provide graphic testimony of what was found among Ecuadorians in Vera. This material was supplemented with photos taken during previous trips to this locality.

The material collected is organized in 7 parts:

(a) Ethnography and participant observation in three *locutorios*; (b) 15 interviews in Internet shops (10 users, 3 owners; 2 people in charge); (c) 60 surveys among teenagers in IES Alyanub (1st and 4th courses of the Compulsory Secondary Education, ESO in Spanish); (d) Statistical data on concentration of immigrants in IES Alyanub and comparison with IES El Palmeral; (e) Table with websites used by teenagers and adults interviewed; (f) Table of *locutorios* in Vera: 2001-2008; (g) Collection of photographs: 2004-2008.

### 1.3 Research results of the case study

The *locutorios* emerged in urban landscape of towns and cities in Spain at the same time as the immigrants' arrival. The key to *locutorios* is the combination of different products that reinforce each other to create, in many cases, a true service chain. In addition to telephone booths, they also usually offer recharging phone cards, Internet facilities, photocopying, printing of documents, coffee... and also video, crafts, food and clothes, among other products.<sup>29</sup>

*Locutorios* have seen a rapid growth in Spain, surpassing all expectations. In 2003 there were 5,000 companies, 1,500 in Madrid alone. In that year, according to data from Consertel (consultant firm specialized in long-distance calls for public *locutorios*), they generated a turnover of 240 million Euros. The simple requirements for opening a *locutorio* made them available to almost anyone. An investment close to 6,000 Euros will cover the rental of

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<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the collaboration of teachers Mari Carmen Moreno and Ana Cervantes.

<sup>29</sup> *Locutorios* in press reports on Spain: *Aló el mundo! Viaje por los locutorios de Madrid*: [http://www.canalsolidario.org/web/noticias/noticia/?id\\_noticia=7211](http://www.canalsolidario.org/web/noticias/noticia/?id_noticia=7211); *Locutorios, de los locutorios de Almería no tienen licencia de apertura*: [http://www.ideal.es/Almería/prensa/20061204/local\\_Almería/mayoria-locutorios-capital-tienen\\_20061204.html](http://www.ideal.es/Almería/prensa/20061204/local_Almería/mayoria-locutorios-capital-tienen_20061204.html); *Bilbao prohíbe que los locutorios vendan alcohol y comida y que organicen fiestas*: <http://www.minutodigital.com/inmigracion/2008/05/07/bilbao-prohibe-que-los-locutorios-vendan-alcohol-y-comida-y-que-organicen-fiestas/>; (last view 15/07/2008).

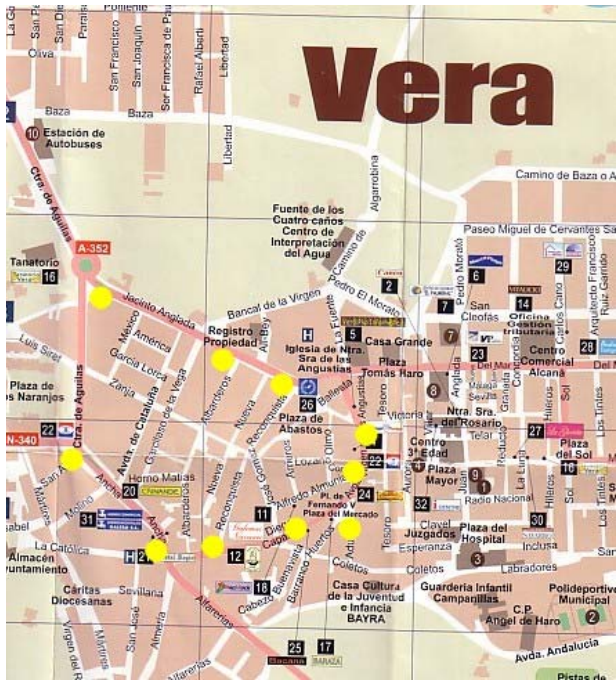


premises and backing of five to ten phone lines from which customers can make calls abroad at a price up to ten times lower than official rates.

**Locutorios in Vera:** *Locutorios* are social spaces for local immigrant communities and play an important role in access to and dissemination of ICT among over 50 groups of different nationalities residing in Vera, especially for Ecuadorians who are referred below.

The area of concentration for *Locutorios* is a ‘pentagon’ limited by Diego Caparrós Street, Nuestra Señora de las Angustias Avenue, Jacinto Anglada Street, Aguilas Road and Ancha Street: all *locutorios* in Vera since 2003 are located inside that zone. This is a very central area of town, with predominantly residential housing rather than commercial services with the exception of Diego Caparrós Street and Nuestra Señora de las Angustias Avenue, which are precisely the border with the administrative and commercial centre of town that grows around Plaza Mayor. A map in Figure 1, included below, illustrates this difference: the density and concentration of buildings is noticeable around Plaza Mayor, compared with the pentagon highlighted between yellow points where *locutorios* are located.

**Figure 3:** Map of Vera and localization of Locutorios



The table below describes the main elements in *locutorios* in Vera between 2001 and 2008, note that most owners are Moroccans and Ecuadorians.

**Table 1** *Locutorios in Vera: 2001-2008*

Name of Locutorio/Address	Owner's Nationality	Stage of development	Service description	Equipment	Nationalities of Major Users
MARC Virgen de las Angustias Av.	ECU	2001	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, International calling cards, money sending, fax transmission, food and beverages sales ECU	10 telephone booths	ECU (30%), BOL (20%), MA (15%)
SARAGURO Diego Caparrós St.	ECU	2002	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, International calling cards, money and packages sending, fax transmission, food and beverages sales ECU	10 telephone booths	ECU (40%), BOL (20%), MA (15%), SEN & GHA (10)
SIN FRONTERAS Jacinto Anglada St.	MA (since 2008)	2003	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission, CDs, ice cream & candy sales	12 telephone booths, 15 computers with internet connectivity (since 2007) and web cam	ECU (30%), BOL (15%), MA (15%), RO (10%), ARG (8%), ES (5%) SEN (3%)
BEM Aduana St. (Plaza del Mercado)	ES	2003 and closed in late 2006	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission, International calling cards, CDs, food and beverages sales ECU and BOL	10 telephone booths, 10 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	BOL (30%), ECU (20%), MA (15%), ES (5%)
BOLIVIA José Gómez St.	BOL	2005 and closed in mid-2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission, International calling cards, CDs, food and beverages sales ECU and BOL	8 telephone booths, 4 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	BOL (50%), ECU (20%), MA (5%), ES (5%)
(without name) Reconquista St. and Jacinto Anglada St.	ES	2005 and closed in early 2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission, International calling cards	10 telephone booths, 6 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	BOL (50%), ECU (15%), MA (15%), RO (5%), ES (5%)
(without name yet) Ancha St.	MA	2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, International calling cards, money sending, fax transmission, small supermarket (also clothes)	6 telephone booths, 6 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	MA (40%), ECU (15%), BOL (15%), RO (10%), LT (8%), ES (5%)
AL MANZORA Diego Caparrós St.	MA	2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission	6 telephone booths, 5 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	MA (70%), BOL (10%), RO (8%), ECU (5%)
LIZBET Alfredo Almunia St.	ECU	2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, International calling cards, money sending, fax transmission	10 telephone booths, 8 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	ECU (40%), MA (20%), BOL (10%), RO (5%), LT (5%)
UNIVERSAL Ancha St. and Aguilas Rd.	ES	2007	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission, ethnic products sales ECU and BOL (especially food & beverages)	10 telephone booths, 8 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	ECU (50%), BOL (25%), MA (15%)
MARRAKECH Jacinto Anglada St. and Aguilas Rd. (Plaza Amigos del Pais)	MA	2008	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, International calling cards, money sending, fax transmission, ethnic products sales MA	10 telephone booths, 8 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	MA (80%), BOL (8%), ECU (5%)

(without name yet) Aduana St. (before Locutorio BEM)	ECU	2008	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission	10 telephone booths, 4 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	MA (30%), ECU (10%), BOL (10%), SEN (5%), ES (5%)
(without name yet) Jacinto Anglada St.	ECU	2008	Telephone calls, mobile recharge, Internet, money sending, fax transmission	8 telephone booths, 4 computers with internet connectivity and web cam	ECU (80%), BOL (20%)

Country: ES: Spain, ECU: Ecuador, MA: Morocco, BOL: Bolivia, RO: Romania, LT: Lithuania ARG: Argentina, SEN: Senegal; GHA: Ghana

Analyzing the dynamics observed in the ten *locutorios* currently operating in Vera, and contrasting them with the evidence obtained through interviews and surveys, one can notice the role of *locutorios* as:

- ☒ Places of access to telephone communication, fax and the Internet, in addition to recharging credit for mobile phones. In particular, in what refers to the Internet, owners and/or managers tend to assist and guide people who have difficulties communicating through Internet.
- ☒ Places for sending remittances, especially money. Two locutorios whose owners are Ecuadorians and that do not have Internet access, also provide service for sending packages and documents of various kinds to Ecuador (prices depend on weights of package).
- ☒ ‘Meeting centres’: they are places of incidental social articulation because, while people wait to make telephone calls or use the Internet, especially when there is much demand for these services, often engage in conversations with other compatriots who are also waiting or with owners/managers of establishments. In some cases, the friendship becomes closer and that widens the social support networks in a new environment. It may be considered a place to establish contacts and form new relationships. In a survey conducted in 2003 for example, it was surprising that locutorios were often mentioned as a place of meeting Ecuadorians with their friends and/or relatives. Many cases also referred to the owner of a locutorio as a prominent person in the networks of trust and support of Ecuadorians (Cruz 2007b).
- ☒ Places of social interaction and information for immigrants. Often, the walls of a locutorio are full of ads on rental flats, supply and demand for labour, as well as information on social and cultural activities ranging from workshops or courses offered in town to artistic exhibitions, restaurants, and etcetera.
- ☒ Places of propagating, directly or indirectly, the identity of Ecuadorians in Spain through re-establishment of diverse symbols displayed in highly visible places in locutorios owned by Ecuadorians. These symbols fluctuate from the three colours flags, national shields, country maps and tables with images of varied landscapes and cities, to photos of Christ and the Virgin of local devotion (*Virgen del Cisne* is the most popular). Ecuadorians share intense and widespread nostalgia for their country, a feeling detected in 2003 when 77.3% of Ecuadorians respondents had not yet had the opportunity to visit Ecuador and for whom, in most cases, there was a minimal level of integration into the new town of residence (Cruz 2004: 254). In subsequent years and until now, although this sentiment has partly decreased for varied reasons such as the fact that Ecuadorians have been able to reunite their families, *locutorios* remain places of sharing with compatriots through which feelings of closeness to their country of origin deepen.

☒ Places of access to ethnic products. *Locutorios* owned by Ecuadorians sell diverse food and beverages from Ecuador.<sup>30</sup>

These functions are fairly consistent to specific answers given in a survey of Spanish, Ecuadorian and other nationalities from IES Alyanub when asked about their frequent activities in *locutorios*:

☒ 60.8% use them to connect to Internet (25.5% always, 29.4% sometimes, 5.9% often),

☒ 61.2% use them to be with friends (18.4% always, 24.5% sometimes, 18.4% often),

☒ 18% use them for transferring money (16% sometimes, always 2%),

☒ 43.1% use them to buy products ( 35.3% sometimes, 5.9% often, 2% always),

☒ 54% use them to meet people from other countries (34% sometimes, 14% often, 6% always),

☒ 40% use them for calling by phone (16% often, 14% sometimes, 10% always),

☒ 48.8% use them for other activities (18.6% always, 16.3% sometimes, 14% often). These activities include: 28.6% play, 19% review ads/news; 14.3% recharge phone/buy calling cards; 28.6% other activities but does not indicate which one.

#### 1.4 Accessibility to the Internet: Equipment

The Internet access available in *locutorios* in Vera can be characterized as fairly limited until 2006, while in 2007 and so far in 2008 there is more accessibility because of an expansion in the number of computers and units to connect.

In this regard, the first *locutorio* to offer this service was *Locutorio BEM*, opened in July 2003, that began offering the service of 10 computers with Internet access but only during the first quarter of 2004 (installed Web cam and microphone-headset).<sup>31</sup> It is important also to mention that if we add all computers that have Internet connection and that were available in the *locutorios* between 2003 and 2006, there were only 20 computers distributed in three *locutorios*, a number that is certainly insufficient to meet demand in certain times. Precisely in this period, owners and managers (mostly Moroccans and Ecuadorians), indicate that certain days, particularly weekends, there were a great demand for this service and computers remained permanently occupied between 19:00 - 20:00 and 22:00 - 23:00 hours.

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<sup>30</sup> From 2006 began some Bolivian products marketed in *Locutorio Bolivia* (which was then closed), and two Ecuadorians *locutorio* owners is now possible to find some Bolivian products. Furthermore, it is important to note that in 2007 and 2008 two stores opened in Vera with this specific type of product "ethnic" owned Ecuadorian nationality: there are sold canned foods, frozen and fresh fruits. According to the owners of these premises, there is demand not only between Bolivian and Ecuadorian people, but also among Spanish people and other nationalities, especially from Latin American origin, creating new consumption habits and disseminated knowledge about this kind of food that did not exist before in Spain. In 2005 an almost exclusively Moroccan Halaal store opened in Vera, located in Plaza del Mercado and next to a *locutorio* that just re-opened in June 2008.

<sup>31</sup> According to one Ecuadorian interviewee in 2001 (JSM 14-05-2008), to communicate by e-mail with Ecuador was very difficult because s/he needed "walk across entire Vera", to go to a computer shop located opposite Plaza de Toros, which offered computer courses and also the use of such equipment. By 2003 this shop already had moved to Virgen de las Angustias Av., in the current area of *locutorios*, with three other Ecuadorian women. But as indicated, were very few Ecuadorian immigrants at that time used the internet: in surveys of 2003 only 7 people from among the 220 Ecuadorians who were surveyed used the Internet to communicate with their relatives in Ecuador. CRUZ ZÚÑIGA (2004). Informe final de investigación en Vera, p. 256.

Users interviewed corroborated this assertion by also pointing out that it was so uncomfortable having to go through several *locutorios* in search of an unoccupied computer or having to wait to use it. Both users and managers attributed the concentrated demand at these times to two factors: first, the time difference between Ecuador and Spain (6-7 hours); second, work schedules, because sometimes when working overtime, especially in agricultural places, people leave work at 10 pm or later.

In recent years there was a noticeable increase in the number and equipment available for public access to internet in *locutorios*:

☒ A total of 62 computers with internet connectivity (PC Pentium 4 minimum, with accessories of Web cam and microphones). The minimum price for the session (30 minutes) is \$ 0.50.

There are also other two places where Ecuadorians can connect to the Internet:

☒ There are 13 computers in the Guadalinfo classroom of the Casa de la Cultura in Vera. Access is free but restricted to persons who are enrolled in the courses and schedules in that centre.

☒ Also there are 3 computers in the office of the Ecuadorian Association Huancavilca del Amazonas (HUDEA). Access is free but restricted to the discretion of the association's president. HUDEA is the largest immigrant association in Vera and conducts many relevant activities to support immigrants, not only Ecuadorians, who reside in that location. After many years of effort, HUDEA has managed to increase, since 2007, the number of computers with the aim of using them to better organize its activities, but also to facilitate free access and the social appropriation of this technology by Ecuadorians and other immigrants who come to this office. Currently the association is seeking funding for a project that aims to buy at least 10 laptops to offer courses at immigrant association's subsidiaries of HUDEA in the region so that people can have access to training if they are interested in this technology and have difficulties to attend to regular courses.<sup>32</sup>

From 60 surveys at IES Alyanub, it should be noted that 48.3% of teens reported using *locutorios* to connect to the Internet: Ecuadorians (44.8%), Spanish (34.5%) and other countries (20.7%).<sup>33</sup>

Also, it is important to indicate that after 2006 and especially 2007 some Ecuadorians have purchased computers, predominantly laptops, according to what some interviewees indicated including the Coordinator of the Office of Attention to Immigrants and the president of HUDEA Association. Quantifying the exact number would be difficult, but we know who made these acquisitions thanks to special offers made by banks. For example, two people mentioned they bought their computer on credit and pay fairly low dues every month (one person indicated that the total price of a laptop was 1,000 euros); another person mentioned she knows some acquaintances who bought two laptops to carry them to Ecuador to their children because they are much more expensive there than in Spain. Some of these computers have Internet access, whether through DSL or Mobile Internet cards or USB modem Internet Mobile (Telefonica/Movistar).<sup>34</sup>

For Internet access, the survey of students at IES Alyanub shows that 57% of 60 students

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<sup>32</sup> Interview OIR 15-05-2008.

<sup>33</sup> Recall nationalities in survey are in total: 61% Spaniards, 24% Ecuadorians, 14% other countries (including Morocco, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Romania and Russia).

<sup>34</sup> Interviews: JSM 14-05-2008, OIR 15-05-2008, OLE 12-06-2008, ORD 12-07-2008, NOM 12-06-2007.

interviewed (Spaniards, Ecuadorian and other nationalities) have access at home. The number of Dial-up users are split between Spaniards and Ecuadorians; but most of the ADSL users at home (exactly 82.6%) are Spaniards.

Table 2 summarizes opinions on the service of *locutorios* collected from surveys and interviews in Vera.

It is worth noting among most of the students at IES Alyanub responding to the survey, their view of *locutorios* were:

- ☒ 41.7% ‘good or very good’ indicating different reasons (i.e. “I feel comfortable because they are Latinos”, “very good”, “good for those who do not have Internet”, “I am allowed to do homework” among others),
- ☒ 25% have no opinion because they have not visited the facilities,
- ☒ 6.7% consider them regular; and 5.7% good, but consider the Internet connection was slow,
- ☒ 10% do not like them. The textual responses are: ‘I do not like it’, ‘mediocre and poor facilities’, ‘bad, because there are many low class people’, ‘have bad appearance’, ‘I do not like because there is everything there’. It is worth noting that all of these negative views, six are Spanish students, of whom only two have visited a *locutorio*.

**Table 2 Summary of opinions about Locutorios and Internet services**

Positive	Negative
☒ Very good location, central.	☒ Missing more shops with internet connection.
☒ Relaxed and quiet atmosphere.	☒ To have to wait because computers are busy.
☒ Good attention and service.	☒ Bad care owner /managers.
☒ Confidence relationship.	☒ Internet connection very slow, poor quality of connectivity.
☒ Opportunity to meet acquaintances.	☒ Very small premises: 'lack of space'.
☒ Cheap prices for telephone calls and Internet connection.	☒ 'Lack of more chairs' and 'a chair for those who accompany me to the computer'.
☒ Good Internet connection.	☒ Women: lack of privacy, 'one is at sight of everybody' and 'they can look at the pages one views'.
☒ Compliance with hours of operation.	☒ Mothers of teenagers: concerns of sending their daughters alone in the presence of many men.
☒ Well organized, adequate maintenance of infrastructure.	
☒ Allow connection to the internet to persons who do not have this service in their home.	
☒ Comfort because they "are Latinos".	

### 1.5 Accessibility to the Internet: Level of training

From contrasting testimonies collected through direct observation in *locutorios*, interviews with some users, owners and managers of these services, in addition to data supplied from a survey among teenagers in Vera, it can be said that different levels in training and use of Internet at *locutorios* exist:

- ☒ Persons who know how to use the internet and/or computer for quite some time, namely more than five years. Among Ecuadorian adults in Vera very few cases would exist in this category but there are only fragmentary data to quantify this statement. For example, (a) in 2003 only 7 of 220 people surveyed indicated they used Internet to communicate with their relatives in Ecuador; (b) among those interviewed between March and July 2008, 50% of them indicated that they learned to use computers and Internet from the High School or courses taken at university, even 12 years ago; (c) among students at IES Alyanub, 68.3% indicated that they learned to use the internet more than five years ago, and most of them (45.6%) said that they learned it at high school or in various courses, but Ecuadorian students represent the lowest percentage among those who know how to use the internet since less than 4 years ago.
- ☒ Persons who learned 1-4 years ago. It would be difficult to quantify, but there would be more people that mostly learned how to use computers and the internet one and two years ago either by themselves or through attending courses in their town. Such courses are given by: Office of Attention to Immigrants-Key Mare Foundation (2007);<sup>35</sup> Secondary

<sup>35</sup> The coordinator of the Office of Attention to Immigrant noted that women especially are more concerned about receiving same course and also most attended courses were organized in 2007. Three women who were interviewed between May and July 2008 and indicated the need for more computer courses in locality,

Schools (Alyanub and El Palmeral); Guadalinfo program, Office of Women (for unemployed women). Among the respondents at IES Alyanub, the proportion of Ecuadorians who had learned to use the computer and/or Internet over the past 1-2 years was significantly higher than that of Spaniards, and most of them have learned in High School or for themselves (some of them in locutorios).

- ☒ People who recently learned (less than 1 year). There would be more people learning how to use the internet by themselves, although still not reaching large numbers and the level of internet use among Ecuadorians is still low. As the president of HUDEA Association declared, in recent years there is increasing interest among Ecuadorians for learning and using computers and/or internet, as this is perceived as an increasingly growing need to support children in their studies, to gain access to other jobs, to use **it as a tool in finding work and for adapting to the new country**.

It is worth noting that among students responding to a survey at IES Alyanub, 55 per cent declare medium computer/Internet knowledge (versus 23.3% basic and 16.7% high). Most of the Ecuadorians students identify themselves as basic users, and none state having a high level. Curiously, some were unable to determine at what level to define their knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

## 1.6 User profiles

Broadly speaking, users of *locutorios* are mostly immigrants from Ecuador, Bolivia, Morocco, Romania, and also Brazil, Argentina, Senegal, Ghana, Mali, Colombia, Nicaragua, to indicate the most significant countries. Ecuadorians are the largest community of foreigners: there are more than 700 people according to a municipal census.

Recent years have observed an incipient use by Spanish people of *locutorios* to make phone calls because they have cheaper prices than those of landline telephone companies as well as young people who are going to recharge credit for their mobile phone or use the Internet.

It is difficult to give a specific number of Ecuadorians using the internet in Vera, even taking into account the increase detected since 2003 when there were very few users. It can be considered that, at the present time, the approximate use is about 15% of Ecuadorians in Vera. As for ages, most of the Ecuadorian users would be between 14-35 years (80%) between 31-45 years (15%) and young people between 10-13 years old (4%). There is also a small group of senior people (> 45 years) that barely reaches 1%.

According to gender, as seen in *locutorios* as well as in interviews with users and owners/managers, 80% of Ecuadorian Internet users are men. The reasons for this disproportion are threefold:

- ☒ Women have less time than men: (a) because of the work they perform (in agriculture, domestic service and children and elderly care), (b) because they must care for their young children; and (c) because they must do activities at home.
- ☒ Mothers would have a tendency to allow teenage girls to go only when they have to consult for homework, there is more traditional care of young women and preponderance of many men in *locutorios* may be a concern, while with male children there is less control. Many women do not like to go to *locutorios* because there are many men and want more privacy:

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mainly practical, or expressed a desire to continue doing more courses to get more knowledge of current. Interview: JSM 14-05-2008, ANI 11-07-2008, AER 10-07-2008.

<sup>36</sup> See answer to question 3 of questionnaire: ESOVERA summary.doc



as a solution, some women preferred to go to the office of the Association of Ecuadorian HUDEA.<sup>37</sup>

☒ Women in a greater proportion than men not know how to use the internet and/or computer.

One young woman pointed out that she is not concerned by the fact that there are so many men using the Internet in *locutorios* because “each person is concentrated on their things and is not looking at anyone”. Furthermore, if anyone would misconduct, she could complain to those responsible of the *locutorio*. However this aspect was disturbing to her mother and therefore preferred to send her daughter, whenever possible, accompanied by her younger brother. This young woman also indicated that her concern was the fact that computers were in sight of everyone, and therefore she usually seeks to go to a *locutorio* where computers are in the basement (*Locutorio without Borders*) or in *locutorio Lizbeth* asks for a computer opposing the side of chairs where people sit to wait.<sup>38</sup>

Related to this aspect, another woman noted that she felt embarrassed the first time she contacted her parents by Webcam given that, because of the touching moment, she and her parents began to cry, and she did not like that everyone in the *locutorio* watched her. Then, after that unpleasant and sad experience, she does not connect herself anymore by Webcam and prefers to use e-mail only. In her view, emotions shared with loved ones are very intense and personal and therefore not for the eyes of everyone in a *locutorio*. In addition, it also makes her anxious not knowing when it may be possible that she and her parents meet again in Ecuador.<sup>39</sup>

## 1.7 Discussion: Riga’s goals

**Skill building:** *Locutorios* offer computers and Internet access as a cheap and practical alternative for immigrants: (a) most households do not have any computers or internet, (b) children and adolescents need to do research and to do homework through the Internet.

*Locutorios* provide access to technology that otherwise would not be available to Ecuadorians or that they have not been able yet to acquire, especially because: (a) families have other priorities before spending money to buy a computer; (b) relatives or friends in Ecuador have limited access to the internet; or (c) they do not have much time or it is pretty difficult to agree on time schedules.

Development and acquisition of new skills and ways of learning are now increasing thanks to Internet use: e.g. learning to find and identify relevant content, search for truthful information, management and use of images and sounds, handling and using of different software and programs.

We observed the need to acquire new capacity for online administration and operation by owners and/or managers in *locutorios*. In some cases in an accelerated way and without previous knowledge, new methods and organizational skills for managers were needed to be acquired because of different services offered that require special software and Internet

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<sup>37</sup> In this regard, the president of Association HUDEA noted that women were more, even with their children, who approached the local association to use the Internet. Also he commented that some women, apart from communicating with their relatives in Ecuador, were doing theoretical course on-line of driving instruction for obtaining the driving licence.

<sup>38</sup> Interview AER 10-07-2008.

<sup>39</sup> Interview JSM 14-05-2008.

connection in order to conduct monetary transactions, parcel shipping, mobile recharge, as well as contact with service providers in many cases working in a network.

Developing new abilities to use computers and the internet with greater precision and speed is required by Internet shop users, in both cases to read and quickly interpret information because even with accessible prices at the *locutorios*, Ecuadorian teenagers still can not keep using a computer all afternoon if other people are waiting to use it.

**Community re-generation:** In several respects, *locutorios* are spaces for enabling community re-generation. As places where they meet co-ethnics, people feel comfortable and trustful, because they are among their fellow citizens with whom they can talk without having to justify or use different dialects; these are places where immigrants feel understood and can discuss experiences; and also places that have some elements that immigrants recognize as familiar and that remind them of their country and place of origin (from symbols to landscapes that decorate the walls or even food or beverages that can be bought in *locutorios*).

They provide access to contacting their relatives and friends in Ecuador and around the world, thereby extending and reinforcing ties of friendship and community belonging. *Locutorios* also favour formal and informal channels of contact, and opportunities to get online news, and to watch sports competitions (particularly soccer matches), among other events from Ecuador. This type of information is reinforced by the gossip and comment networks of the community.

*Locutorios* offer to Ecuadorian youth easier access to internet and the opportunity to obtain their preferred content or a way to seek their own cultural references. Music is one of them, because some songs cannot be listened to in Spanish radio stations. Ecuadorian young people and their friends listen to or watch videos through the Internet, with predominance of Latino commercial styles, their favourite singer's ballads, and dance styles influenced by Caribbean rhythm such as salsa, *merengue*, *reggaeton*, hip-hop and rap. On other hand, Ecuadorians that are older than thirty prefer *cumbia*, *tecnocumbia*, *rocola*, *bachata*, *vallenato*.

Through Internet, *locutorios* allow contact to young people, who came to Vera in the past two years because of processes of family reunification, with all their social networks in Ecuador and with whom they have a permanent exchange of experiences.

**Communicative and local mobility:** There are low levels of communicational and local mobility for several reasons. The relationship between immigrant and Spanish populations of Vera across *locutorios* is complex and constrained by the prevailing and hegemonic patterns of sociability. Thus, social relations in this small town, despite efforts and changes that are noticeable, are still determined by interaction between people of the same nationality. For example, there is a high tendency through which the support and friendship networks of Spaniards are only formed by Spaniards. In the case of Ecuadorians adults these social networks are shaped by friends and relatives of their own nationality, and in a few cases there are people trusted who are Spaniards or from another nationality.

Social spaces are still very segregated. For instance, *locutorios* are almost for the exclusive use of immigrants. There are very few Spaniards that use these services frequently, and among the few most of them are Gypsies. Moreover, in most cases, Spaniards who use *locutorios* do not converse with other people, and when they converse it is frequent to observe an attitude of superiority and paternalism. Both, Spaniards and Ecuadorians adopt reserved

and comfortable positions.

Ecuadorians prefer to use Websites and Internet resources to communicate with their own family and the country of origin, rather than to obtaining information on the host country. Note, however, that we are referring mostly to recent immigrants.

Also youth and adolescent Ecuadorians tend to look primarily at Latino Webs. The social distance with the host society is shown also in Internet use.

**Acculturation:** Though *locutorios* are marked by the use of symbols and elements that are reminiscent of values and customs from the country of origin, they are increasingly adopting forms of communication that correspond to uses of the Spanish society.

Some changes in social and cultural patterns are observed. Ecuadorians who use Internet tend to become more independent and also may socialize more easily. Among teenagers the traditional model of education, that reinforces a reserved mode of communication, is breaking down. Going usually to *locutorios*, youth men seems to be less shy, and to have more dispositions to communicate with strangers (as is the case with those known in chat or discussion forums on line).

It seems that teenagers adopt more easily to new forms of communication. For instance, they use a more direct language and also incorporate Spanish colloquial expressions, which in many cases are considered as rude or not very polite by their parents (using as reference the Ecuadorian cultural patterns). The influence of the United States youth Internet fashion and attitudes is striking, which reflects the important influence of this country in Ecuador (compared to Spain). To chat is a hobby widespread among young Ecuadorians, as it is to other young people around the world. In this case it is mostly a communication among peers (other adolescents). They also use *locutorios* to do some homework and to play and view photo Websites. On some networking sites, the exchange of photos is popular: <<http://www.metroflog.com>>, <<http://www.hi5.com>>, <<http://www.fotolog.com>>. Among men it is also common to navigate through pornographic pages.

Most Ecuadorian teenagers surveyed at the secondary school informed us that they use Internet between 1 to 2 hours per day. Some mothers interpret this pattern as assuming the values of Spanish passivity among adolescents (instead of outdoor sports): “they prefer to go to the *locutorio* to use video games for hours, as Spanish adolescents... because no one else in households control, because their parents are working”.

**Relational integration:** *Locutorios* are social spaces that support relational integration. Ecuadorians establish contact among themselves. People from different Ecuadorian cities and regions interact while expecting to use the telephone booth or the Internet.

In a same vein, eventually spontaneous and informal contacts between Ecuadorians and people from other countries are also observed. From this intercultural contact, some friendships are emerging with people from Bolivia, Ghana, Argentina, Senegal, Romania, Morocco and Brazil, just to inform of the concrete examples documented during the fieldwork.

The use of Internet allows for a more intense and frequent contact with the relatives and friends residing in Ecuador as well as Ecuadorian immigrants in other parts of the world, after

a ‘stampede migration’<sup>40</sup> in 1999-2000. Finally, we have anecdotal evidence of friendships and couples established through chats and forums.

**Economic participation:** The owners of these establishments have real possibilities for economic participation as entrepreneurs. It is possible for them to install their own businesses with a high market demand, taking into account the important presence of Ecuadorian immigrants in Vera. It also enables economic participation of Ecuadorians users as consumers of different types of services.

## 1.8 ICT and social capital among Ecuadorians

The results of the case study pointed out that *locutorios* are a good example of the interaction between ICT and social capital. The fieldwork in *locutorios* reveals the presence of spontaneous social support networks for information exchange and training regarding ICT. The active role played by Internet shop’s users and owners generates social capital, which contributes to the dissemination of ICT and the appropriation of them by the Ecuadorian group that generally departs with a low level of training. *Locutorios* show a dynamic life, contributing to the circulation of goods, information and services. These networks foster social inclusion and social cohesion, articulating the immigrant community, although at the same time some segregation processes from the host society have been documented.

Therefore, in the interior of *locutorios* communication networks are being formed, facilitating and supporting the process of appropriation of ICT at the individual level. Some forms of solidarity and exchange of knowledge and experiences are observed, contributing to ICT incorporation to the entire community. A remarkable example is the experience of an Ecuadorian computer technician (trained in Ecuador) that gives support to the owners of a *locutorio* to install computers and instructed on how to operate with the equipment. He also relates to other Ecuadorians, helping to install software and computers, as is the case of the president of the association HUDEA. In all the cases this is a voluntary and free of charge activity. In any case, it is noticeable the increase of self-management and self-learning skills in this area. Ecuadorian immigrants are very concerned with acquiring ICT competences, and informal contacts and social support networks of friends are playing an essential role, as well as the personal experience and interaction with computers.

People very often access the Internet to look for jobs. They feel that they are opening up new avenues and personal itineraries to find alternative employment. Self-efficacy and self-confidence seem to be key factors in this process. The cases of successfully finding a job are shared with others, expanding the experience through the network. This is the way through which personal empowerment experiences end being a resource also for the entire community.

## 1.9 Conclusions

*Locutorios* in Vera have been configured as social (though commercial) spaces that enable access to the Internet. Ecuadorian immigrants constitute a group subjected to a specific economic logic, with short-term goals and that focuses on obtaining a job and enhancing their material living conditions. Internet is still in a process of dissemination among Ecuadorians. The contact with the families in Ecuador is essential for their ICT needs. As stated by one of

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<sup>40</sup> The phrase is taken from: Franklin RAMIREZ GALLEGOS and Jacques-Paul RAMIREZ (2005). *La estampida migratoria ecuatoriana. Crisis, redes transnacionales y repertorios de acción migratoria*. Quito: Abya Yala.

the respondents: “now it is much easier and cheaper to call the family in Ecuador, from the mobile phone or from *locutorios*”.

Mobile phones are now widespread across all the population. It is very common to buy a mobile phone just upon arrival (60.8% had mobile phones by 2003, according to Cruz, 2007a). It is essential to be located for a job. This is usually the first step of Ecuadorians to familiarise themselves with digital technologies. Most of the Ecuadorians that use a computer or access Internet for the first time have previously used mobile phones.

Rural localities, as we have documented for the case of Vera, had particular difficulties and barriers that need to be taken into account for promoting ICT use and impact in terms of eInclusion. It seems that the integration into the local communities where they reside is an important step towards eInclusion, as far as ICT use is conditioned by inter-group relationships, segregation and discrimination processes, resources available, and so on so forth. The uses of ICT for building bridges with the host society seem to be a main concern in this area. Training and skill building initiatives may be more adapted to local and cultural particularities. For instance, we have documented the key role of *locutorio*'s owners, informal ICT experts and Ecuadorian associations (as HUDEA), which could be essential in the implementation of these types of initiatives.



## CASE STUDY 2: ONLINE ROMANIAN AND BULGARIAN COMMUNITIES

In this case study, three online sites for South-Eastern Europeans are examined.

### 2.1 Romania din Spania

**Brief description:** *Romania din Spania* <[www.romaniadinspania.com](http://www.romaniadinspania.com)> is one of the most visited Websites by Romanians. It has demonstrated its effectiveness in terms of community participation and benefits obtained offline: chat and discussion forums have a good level of participation and the Website works as a resource for job searching, providing information and applets for administrative procedures. Participants have usually a sense of belonging and involvement with *Romania din Spania*. It works as a virtual community, contributing to the development of personal networks. It provides useful information for the three stages of immigration: the decision in origin, the journey, and the arrival at destination. Some Web 2.0 tools allow the interaction among registered and invited users. People of different origins and locations join together in the Website, both because of the dispersion of the Romanian collective in Spain and around the world.

**Research methodology:** The following analysis is an overall assessment based on data collected from March-June of 2008 through the following techniques:

- ☒ Participant observation: Incursions into the chat. It consisted of the registration of approximately 20 hours, negotiating the role of outside observer/researcher, and consequently formulating questions within the context of the natural Chat conversation.
- ☒ Non-participant observation: A review and assessment of statistics, free-counters, traffic feed and participation in forums was made.
- ☒ On line interviews: contact with two users via IM, and application of a questionnaire to the site administrator.

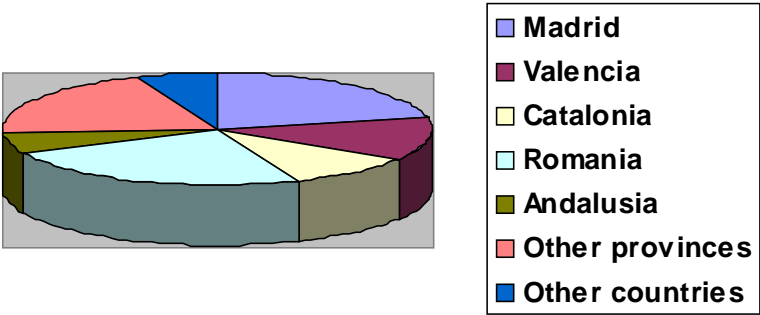
**Research results of the case study:** The portal *Romania din Spania* recorded an average of 700 visits per day,<sup>41</sup> which are distributed in different areas of the site. Taking a sample of 50 visits (eliminating those who had come by chance by another type of searches) we can see that under the hosting system of the website it measures visits according to the location of the server, the search engine and the usefulness of the site, place of origin from which the consultations were distributed are shown in Figure 1.

In this small sample, those who come from Romania are mainly from Bucharest and Alba Iulia, but also there are searches recorded from Teleorman, Iasi and Maramures. Principally, we find views from all over the Romanian territory. With respect to the Spanish provinces, we found visits from Barcelona, Zaragoza, Murcia, Castilla-León and Castilla-La Mancha.

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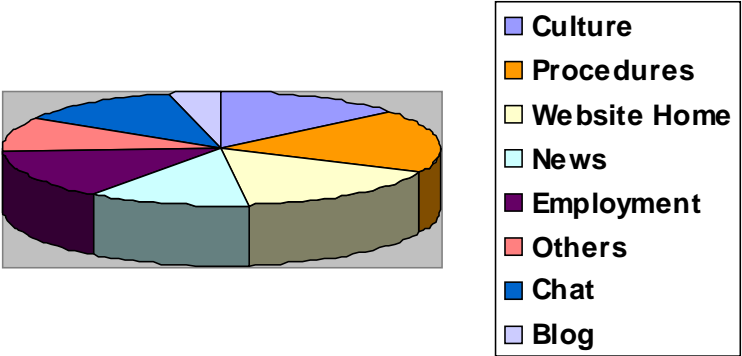
<sup>41</sup> According to the bookkeeper of visits “traffic ranking” installed in the own portal and available for visitors, during first half of 2008.

**Figure 4:** Location of visits to Romania din Spania (Compiled based on FEDDJIT<sup>42</sup>)



Continuing with the sample of visits, we found that users access to the site looking for items that are illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 5:** Contents of Romanian din Spania (Compiled based on FEDDJIT)



Most of the contents related to culture were searches regarding traditional music, popular music and films. Second, the information on procedures focuses on resident cards and marriage. Employment searches are very often generic topic as ‘*oferte de lucru*’ (job offer), and the requests comes in equal amounts from Spain and Romania. There are also a significant number of direct visits (not through search engines), showing a specific interest on the contents of the site.

The previous sample of 50 visits is not representative. However, it serves to illustrate the contents preferred by visitors, as well as the most common places where the visits came from. Coinciding with the profile of recent immigrants, employment and administrative procedures are two basic topics, which frequently are requested together.

The active participation in the site and the use of tools such as forums, blogs and chat deserves special attention. Despite the large number of queries received in the site, participation in forums is very low and, for instance, in the last week of direct observation (16 to 22 June) only movement on an issue was recorded. Blogs show a persistent participation,

<sup>42</sup> FEDDJIT is a free program viewer of the origin of the visits in real time.



between two and six comments per week; on the other hand, chat shows a significant number of direct entries and it works as a compact group.

The chat has a very simple interface; it not allows private conversations and has just a few of very simple emoticons. There are around 25 regular participants and many more who participate for making specific questions. Most of the participants are Romanians living in Spain, and another small group of them lived some time in Spain. The conversation is relaxed and more organized than in chat rooms. Topics are not addressed in depth, and the most recurrent topics are the following: Spanish perceptions of the Romanian group; Romanian perceptions of Spaniards; Typical food; Music; Employment; Travel and remittances to Romania; Destination and origin places.

Two members (T and F) were interviewed, detecting the talks in the chat two issues concerning employment.

<T> (*Female, 54 years, Bucharest*)

She asked for people who lived in Barcelona. Taking advantage of the situation the researched subscribed to her messenger. The story, in short, is as follows. T participates in a system of pyramid sales of beauty products and recruit people in the chat, and then invites you to an online conference where products are presented. Then, by e-mail she asks “what do you think?” And she says that they are very good products. It is not very direct with the theme, but it is curious how she draws with capital letters within words of the speech as BOSS, BE YOUR OWN BOSS, TRAVEL THE WORLD, and etcetera. She wants to come to Barcelona because she said she had Romanian friends who are here in the company because of her. It works as a way to harness the existence of a Romanian group in another country and using ICT to add to the sales system.

<F> (*Male, 31 years, Girona*)

He has been in Spain for a year. He enters to the web site for first time looking for employment, but not for himself but for his wife. His wife told him that she comes to Spain only if he found a job for her. He looked the Web site, found chat and since then he connects for a moment each day. He keeps looking for a job and several people had helped him, but he says, “I think my wife is just looking for excuses not to come.” He works as a carpenter with his brother.

If we put attention into the employment theme, we can see the vast amount of visits referring to this issue but also the great number of links available to meet this constant demand. Among the most widely advertised jobs in Spain are those related to computing (Web developers, networks’ technicians, ABAP programmers) and care giving (nurses for elderly people). In the same section, there are also some job offers for European countries. It confirms the great mobility of the Romanian group as well as the job qualification and the orientation to temporality and mobility.

Some of these offers coincide with the context in Spain: ICT developer, nurses, caregivers, and etcetera. But others require a higher instruction than average (post-graduates in innovation, professors in philosophy and so on), which coincides with Lucian Boia’s<sup>43</sup> opinion, declaring that the level of training and education of Romanian society is superior to the material live conditions.

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<sup>43</sup> Cited by Viruela, Rafael (2006) “Inmigrantes rumanos en España: Aspectos territoriales y procesos de sustitución laboral” in *Scripta Nova* Vol. XX num. 222 UB, Barcelona pp. 3

There are other sections of the site where we once again find the employment issue (showing that there is an obvious lack of information in this area). One is at the forum: Most of the consults are on the passport, special permits, moratoria, the real possibilities of finding a job and questions about the technicalities used by the Spanish Ministry of Employment in official reports (Employed, self-employment, etcetera). Some cases of confusion were also observed in chat conversations. Second, there is also information on Employment in the classified ads (10 on demand for jobs and 8 on offer), all of them referring to domestic services, drivers and caregivers.

There also signs of informal trade and jobs. In the chat is common to read people offering several items for sale (as mobile phones, cars, foodstuff and etcetera); also the classified ads section mostly offers items for sale (as last generation cell phones, cable TV systems and real state in Romania).

**Discussion: Riga's goals:** Some of the following discussion areas present definitional ambiguities because they are presented as exclusive or inaccurately in what happens with the group in question. Therefore, under this heading, will be studying aspects that affect this IEM when it comes to their integration as a group and how to integrate with society destination.

*Relational integration:* The integration as a group focuses primarily on membership in the place of origin. There are related several factors, language is essential. Although the site has an interface in three languages (Spanish, Romanian and English), most of the information in different areas, is in Romanian. Although most speak more or less acceptable Spanish, writing in Romanian is an identity characteristic that they consider very important. This is reflected in the chat, which is written in Romanian. As explained earlier, the topics covered in the chat are very general but largely relate to nostalgic elements as food, the parental home, origin place or childhood. Some users are chatting in Romania and lived one season in Spain or they are thinking about returning. The exchange on what happens in origin and destination also strengthens the sense of cohesion.

Uncertainty about the legal situation that arises from the moratoria on the Romanians' residence in addition to the fact that this group presents a large number of illegal immigrants, produce messages giving practical answers (go to X office, fill in form X), they also show feelings of solidarity and belonging, which have an impact on the integration of the group.

We can consider that we are talking about a virtual community in the sense that there is an effective exchange of communication, an intention for identity and a common set of interests. In the case of this IEM, it is also an emotional support. Such is the case of <F> which shares the family home with his brother and that outside this core, said to have no more friends, however. He is not concerned because Arad not had many relationships <F> he connects to chat every day and considers that he is part of this community and he has come to make friends with several members. In this sense, fully agrees with the approach of Wellman:

It is probable that people not only made more relationships in pre-Internet times, but that they also are in more frequent contact with community members. And the longer they have been on the Internet, the more they use it to communicate.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Wellman, Berry (2004) *The Glocal Village: Internet and Community* Toronto pp. 18 – 19 Available in <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman/publications/index.html>

Vis-à-vis integration with the destination society, the implication is much smaller in terms of information on blogs as a response to such issues. We cannot talk about a lack of integration with origin because in interviews and in the participant observation in the chat the acculturation in terms of language and customs is notable, and we can see enough satisfaction; however, this space is focused on being Romanian in Spain. Being a portal of a private nature, the references to social integration are not as frequent as in the Third Sector initiatives.

*Economic participation:* Although economic participation is not the main purpose of this site, there are several mechanisms that users employ as the tools offered by this site.

The case is illustrative of how <T> uses the idea of virtual community to expand her network distribution and revenue and the idea of multinationals to expand her market. During the talks by chatting, we also found several transactions or attempts at them, as the distribution of foodstuffs (*Herbalife*), which had also been observed in the investigation done in the ASOCROM (Romanians Association in Catalonia); mobile sales or car sales. Although it is difficult to agree on such transactions along this way, it shows us that there is a latent business and the distribution channel refers directly to the compatriots.

The most products sold among the various immigrant groups' classifieds, shows two features that have been observed. The first one responds to the use of ICT through the sale of mobile and installing antennas to receive Romanian television signal. The second one is related to the housing purchase in origin; one of the most recurrent desires among immigrants because it guarantees the investment of their savings and has other connotations as the status and membership.

Besides the user's economic implications, it is also important to consider the self-employment and the generation of ICT tools as a source of income. The website is maintained by advertising companies like Internet providers, insurers and automobiles. Also, it has on the Google bar ads and voluntary contributions from users (community reinforce) through the payment system PayPal. In this case, unlike other sites with larger sections corresponding to each group IEM, the initiative comes from a member's of the own group.

In this case, we realize the use of alternative strategies for the distribution of goods and services without it being the fundamental objective of the website. It is important to discuss the possibilities for economic participation in terms of ICT as unregulated.

**Discussion on ICT and social capital:** Including the premise that social capital may be defined operationally as the resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions,<sup>45</sup> we can see how social capital in the network takes hold and increases based on interaction and participation within the website.

Regarding the three approaches to social capital and the Internet (the Internet transforms social capital, the Internet diminishes social capital and the Internet supplements social capital) which identify Quan-Haase and Wellman,<sup>46</sup> we note that the Internet is an effective support to groups with common interests. In this case, we can see what happens in a transformation of social capital. This is because there is a connection between people with

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<sup>45</sup> LIN, Nan (2001) *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>46</sup> QUAN-HAASE and WELLMAN, B "How does the Internet affect Social Capital?" in *Social Capital and Information Technology*, edited by Marleen Huysman and Volker Wulf. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

similar interests, given the dispersion in origin and destination of the Romanian group, would have been difficult to bring together in a group, in terms of traditional community suggested by Putnam.<sup>47</sup>

The social capital transformation also involves interactive aspects. The virtual community not only refers to synchronous transactions in the chat, but also diachronic communication through forums and blogs. Many participants in the chat do not make use of other applications of the site, and vice versa. Even though the concept of virtual community we refer to a direct chat, interactive diversity of the Web 2.0 allows access to capital from several axes.

When we asked in the chat if some users<sup>48</sup> consider that they are participating in a virtual community, the answer was yes in both cases, the answer (yes), was obvious. Two others responded that they had not thought so before, but yes, that was a chat community. Another one did not respond. The idea of belonging is an important step in establishing ties with other participants and hence the increase in the capital.

In the case of <T>, we see that he is fully aware that the increase in social capital will result in an economic benefit. Although <T> so far has not wanted to talk a lot about the effectiveness of its method, the venture that done through the use of ICT, is a reason related to the creation of individual networks. In terms of Portes<sup>49</sup> is through this social capital that the players can obtain direct access to economic resources. Perhaps the method <T> may not be fully effective; however it manages to make its denser social network complementing the existing offline. On the other hand, in the case of <F> the participation in the website has been useful to locate certain jobs for his wife in Spain.

Social capital and self-employment have an unspoken relationship on the website. It is very probable that whoever offers a service or an item does not limit its effort to offer it through this route, but we can say that ICT opens a way that complements the total actions that will make those who wish to, earn an income.

Finally, interpersonal ties that are created generate a sense of belonging and important support. For <F> this is an important part of his social capital along with the family in Romania, from which he receives material help. He is one of the most active members and chats constantly and as he says of almost all users of chat, he has Messenger, so that his personal network extends beyond the website.e.

## 2.2 Roman in Lume

**Brief description:** *Roman in Lume* <[www.romaninlume.com](http://www.romaninlume.com)> is the online version of a newspaper with the same name. The Website is a tool for disseminating the journal, and includes other media as radio and TV. Unlike other publications, whose presence on the Internet is limited to the reproduction of the written version, *Roman in Lume* managed to take advantage of the Web 2.0. The website has the following sections: Forum, online Radio, photo gallery, library, free legal services, and finally an advertising channel in *Youtube* <<http://es.youtube.com/user/romaninlume>> where videos are related to events organized by

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<sup>47</sup> Maya Jariego, I. (2002). *En busca del mundo perdido (¿el declive de la comunidad o el auge de comunidades personales?)*. *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades*, 7, 188-192.

<sup>48</sup> At that time (June 25, 2008) were 5 users connected.

<sup>49</sup> Portes, Alejandro (1999). "Capital Social: Sus orígenes y aplicaciones en la sociología moderna" en J.Carpio e I. Novacovsky (compiladores) *De Igual a Igual. El desafío del Estado ante los nuevos problemas sociales,* Fondo de Cultura Económica,

the newspaper and interviews conducted with members working in the journal. It is a good example of IEM venture as it is shown by its acceptance and its expansion within the Romanian group in Spain and Portugal, with six years of circulation and wide distribution.

The journal is published in Romanian each two weeks. On the Website it is possible to choose the Spanish version, and it is the most read publication among Romanians in Spain according to a study conducted by Metro Media Transylvania.<sup>50</sup>

**Research methodology:**

☒ Non-participant observation: quantification of data, exploration of services, revision of the forums, listening to radio online, visits to Youtube channel, access to material published by Roman in Lume for advertisers, and etcetera.

☒ Interviews: Telephone interview to Cristina Lincu, project director; and questionnaires by e-mail to the Webmaster.

**Research results of the case study:** *Roman in Lume* (Romanians in the world) began seven years ago as a free distribution newspaper for Romanians in Madrid. Their slogan is ‘The voice of Romanians in Spain.’ Over time they were expanded and today they have a nationwide distribution. Subsequently they incorporated a radio program and then a Website. Today, all three media are related and are part of a unique project. According to the material provided by *Roman in Lume* they are defined as: ‘A group of integrated media’ covered by the print journal, the radio and the Internet.

The radio program is currently transmitted by FM in Romanian and Spanish. It is a program of three hours per week. You can tune over the Internet through the website. In addition to this radio program, the page has a 24-hour station that can be heard through the WinAmp music application which transmits English, Spanish and Romanian programs and soon will also have live programs.

According to the designers of the site, the program promotes communication between the Romanian group because of the direct connection with listeners, the family connection with the country of origin (greetings, congratulations), contests, and live discussions (interactive). It also serves to link the Romanian communities in other countries where media for this minority are scarce. In this case, we can see a similar pattern to that adopted by the community radios, through collective dialogue on common interests that reinforce the idea of community but taking advantage of ICT resources. Unlike the scope of local community radio, transmission via the Internet has the origin in transnational communities.

Unlike other sites, the statistics are provided by an internal tool, which only can be accessed from the administration's own page. However, according to Cristina Lincu,<sup>51</sup> executive director of *Roman in Lume*:

*“We have our own system which measures the traffic and I can tell you we have over ten thousand unique visitors per month... Taking into account that this is a Website written in another language in Spain is quite important for us... and also we have people who visit us from other countries, not only from Spain”*

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.prensagratis.org/frontend/aepg/Roman-In-Lume-Es-El-Preferido-De-Los-Rumanos-En-Espana-yn2983-vst223>

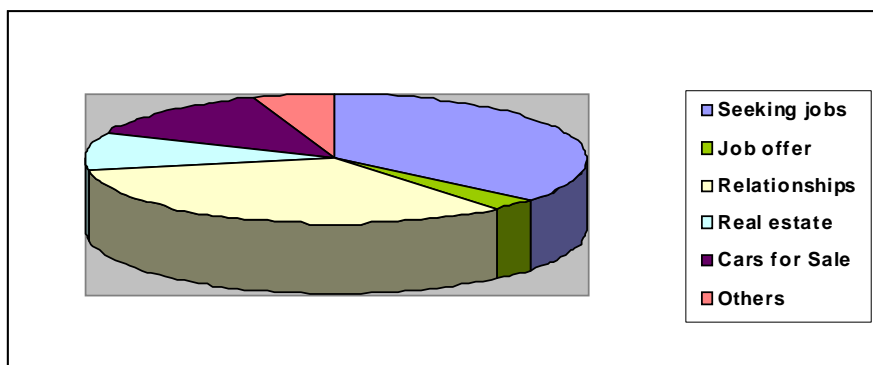
<sup>51</sup> Telephone interview on June 26, 2008

In addition, Cristina supplied us a link to the bookkeeper of visits<sup>52</sup> in which we see that in June the number of unique visitors were 13.813. A great number of visits come from other countries, heading the list is the United States of America.

The page has an outstanding design and is divided in several sections (radio, library, legal consultation, classifieds, and forum; the journal in pdf version, services and advertising). Only in the forums section you can leave comments to be answered by other users. However, forums are not an area that was widely used: visits are rare and there is little feedback among participants.

Two sections allow users to make comments that are published in the printed journal or on the Website: one is legal consultancy service and the other the classified advertisements. In both cases the user fill in a form through the Website, and the service is free. In the last publication of April 2008, the ads themes are distributed as follows:

**Figure 6:** Content of the advertisements in *Roman in Lume*



There is a remarkable difference between those who provide and those who seek employment. Employers only use classifieds for a particular type of jobs, while there is a visible concern among this group to find a job. Demand is oriented to jobs as drivers, masons, cleaners, personal care for children and the elderly, catering, tourism, workers and security agents. On the other hand, we also observe interest in finding friends or marriage (*prietenii și matrimoniale*) within the Romanian community.

As regards to requests for free legal advice, they are designed primarily for family reunification, matrimonial matters (divorce/marriage) and especially for labor issues. Cristina Lincu, says:

*“It is assumed that in 2009 this moratoria will end but then it turns out that in autumn there will be meetings and discussions with unions and all of us who want to know if they decide to extend it or not... are a bit while waiting and people are baffled, also we try to explain a little to people what this means because there are people who thinks they can work with contract... or ... I don't know... they think*

<sup>52</sup> See: <http://romaninlume.com/awstats/awstats.pl?config=www.romaninlume.com&output=main&framename=index&lang=es>

*another ideas that are so far from reality, so we try to explain what the moratoria is and which their rights are at this moment”*

In these cases it is helpful to analyze the flows of communication between digital and print media. It is frequent that newspapers use online sites to generate debate on previous contents of the printed version of the journals. *Roman in Lume* collects information from the Website to disseminate it in the print version, which remains clearly the strongest part, with a circulation of 30.000 copies fortnightly.

The Website includes videos from Youtube <<http://es.youtube.com/user/romaninlume>>, which are related to events organized by *Roman in Lume* and sponsored by Western Union, the company for remittances to the sending countries. The events are mostly performed in musicals and dates around Christmas and the days of Romanian commemorations such as December 1. These acts reinforce the sense of community and belonging.

The idea of ‘being Romanian’ is omnipresent. It is common to find phrases as “in the long journey into the unknown is ideal to have someone to support, listen and understand you”, “*Nu uita ca estimated roman*” (“do not forget we’re Romanian”) or “Romania in your heart.”

#### **Discussion: Riga’s goals:**

*Relational integration:* the Website emphasizes the integration in the Romanian community. The use of native language and symbols (as the flag), the rescue of traditions (Christmas carols and Romanian traditional music) are a constant on the Website. Other mechanisms to strength community are fiction and poetry competitions and events as Miss Diaspora where they seek, as in the traditional beauty pageants, the most beautiful representative of the Romanian group.

*Roman in Lume* makes continuous references to the Diaspora. They consider the current immigrants as inheritors of the *Romanian Diaspora* that has marked life in their country. An estimated five million Romanians live outside their country; this is a quarter of the total population of Romania. In our case study we can see that what started as a transnational community expanding between Spain and Romania is beginning to take a global nature with the significant use of ICT tools.

Among the reasons that this project gives to its potential advertisers, is what they defined as: “Emotional Value: Creating cohesion and integration of values associated with the brand”.

Although almost all the information presented in *Roman in Lume* is a vindication of Romanian roots, it also plays a role in terms of integration with the host society. They generate bilingual contents in news and online radio. There is also a direct link with the municipalities of Coslada and Arganda del Rey, who are sponsoring special editions of the newspaper (to publicize the services of the Romanian population of these towns as well as the actions of the consistory in this regard).

The identification with Romanian values is based on the territory reference and in generic ideals. On the other hand, the integration in the host society is perceived in terms of being an organized group in a multicultural context.

*Economic participation:* This case is a clear example of ethnic entrepreneurship. The initiative is not a consequence of ICT tools’ availability, but ICT tools have contributed to complement news’ supply and to expand its market. *Roman in Lume* has 30 staff members, and now they are looking for a Web designer and organizers of events.



As a result of ICT involvement, it has also diversified its services, including the design of Websites, Web hosting, and advertisements on line. The objectives of the company are clearly defined, as well as the market for which is targeted. They have developed an area called Ethnic Advertising Services Agency, and they argue for the use of native language for a more effective commercial communication with potential consumers.

This case demonstrates how new technologies are integrated with traditional methods of communication, embracing new markets and reaching more Romanian people. Internet has allowed a transnational orientation of the business, widening the market to Romanians in the world. The idea of Diaspora has survived among Romanians from generations, facilitating this process.

There are other ways of economic participation associated with this project. For instance, there is a significant commercial market, with advertisers ranging from Western Union or real state in Romania to small companies as ethnic bakeries and restaurants and Romanian minimarkets. The business of remittances is very significant, with an intrinsic transnational character. On the other hand, small businesses ads are more modest in size and design, and emphasize the community's peculiarities and values.

Classified ads are another way to promote economic participation. These ads are simple, and are based on a traditional formula that has shown to be effective for years. They are useful for trading goods and services, for the transfer of a business, for selling a car or for detecting new markets as care giving, and so on so forth.

Tangentially, we could also mention legal advice as a form of impact in terms of economic participation.

Through the elements listed above, we have a vision of the Romanian market. On the one hand, the expansion of this project is due to the incorporation of new technology but mainly to the accelerated growth of the Romanian population in Spain. Through this observation, we conclude that the case examined is a sustainable business: remittances and major advertisers support the journal; and we also documented the existence of a transnational and local ethnic trade among Romanians.

**Discussion on ICT and social capital:** Information and sense of belonging are two resources related to social capital that are observed in this project. The success of this company is partly based on the promotion of a collective identity, and is based in dense social networks that are catalyzed through ICT contributing to mutual benefits for providers and participants.

Recent migrants tend to look for places to meet: whether in public physical places or in online sites, intermediate communities serve to find useful information or to share common experiences, and in consequence enable an environment where to develop support networks based on a common identification. The Website supports a network of organizations, companies and institutions. The entrepreneurial character of *Roman in Lume* is expressed in its orientation to promote empowerment and the involvement of social actors in the editorial line of the journal.

### 2.3 IberBG

**Brief description:** There are very few specific resources for Bulgarians in Spain. Perhaps with the exception of the multicultural Websites seeking to cover all IEM collectives under a



purely commercial perspective, there is a low supply of services. We choose this forum because, unlike others who depend on associations, it registered a much larger number of visits and messages that allow the interaction among its members. It also allows us to observe the interaction between origin and destination, Bulgaria and Spain. Bulgarians are frequently more limited for contacts with host individuals, because the language is not easily accessible mainly for the use of Cyrillic alphabet. As it is a bilingual site, it facilitates observation and understanding the interaction among users.

IberBG <<http://www.IberBG.com>> is a Website that has multiple applications. It was temporarily deactivated since April 2008, but the forum continues receiving a substantial influx. It started with a forum for exchanging among Bulgarians in Spain and Spaniards interested in Bulgaria and then they created a completely parallel forum in Bulgarian that has exceeded the number of exchanges of the first forum and also shows a much more active dynamic. It is an initiative of a private nature with a simple interface, used in almost every free forum of these characteristics (PHP). It does not have any commercial sponsorship or advertisement in sight. It has an administrator within the forum (identified with nickname but without e-mail) and moderators for different subjects.

**Research methodology:** The subsequent analysis is an overall assessment based on data collected in the two *IberBG* forums. Questions related to language, testimonies and messages form part of the Spanish forum, although it tries to give a general idea about both forums.

☒ Non-participant observation: Recording data, observing the dynamics of the forums, monitoring participants, and comparing both forums.

**Research results of the case study:** This study focuses on the use of one of the most common Web resources: forums. The forums allow an overall view of debates sorted by topics and sub-forums and it is very easy to handle. Usually this is a form of non-synchronic interaction that allows a broader explanation of the topics covered. It also allows uploading images and to include hyperlinks. Communities may use forums and forums may become communities. The second one is the case of *IberBG*, originally designed for Bulgarians living in Spain and for Spaniards interested in Bulgaria.

*IberBG* divides its contents into two major forums: One in Spanish and the other in Bulgarian. Although the original idea was to open the forum in Spanish, the users' demand forced them to open a second forum with contents exclusively in Bulgarian language. Therefore, although the Spanish forum has existed for more time (almost a year by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008) it only reached 4.511 visits in this time, compared to the 5.200 visits of the Bulgarian forum.

There is no formal presentation of *IberBG*, except the title: Forums Spain-Bulgaria. Although this was previously part of a more comprehensive website, now it only shows activity in both forums, with the participation of an administrator and moderators in general and by subject. In the Bulgarian forum there are several messages in allusion to the loss of services (such as chats and setting of the page), suggesting the existence of a group of former active users of the site. At the Spanish forum there are messages left on the schedule to chat and 'find each other'.

On the Spanish forum there is greater participation of Spaniards, Bulgarians who came from the older migration waves or Bulgarians married to Spaniards. In this section there are a higher number of users who normally post messages. In the Bulgarian forum we find more participation but it is more dispersed. So, in the first forum there are less frequent users with more participation per head while in the second, more users are sporadic with fewer

interventions per participant. In spite of the lower number of users in the Spanish forum, the expression of identification and sense of community are more common. Some messages suggest that in addition to participating in the forum, some are known or intend to do it:

*“Hellooooooooooooo! I also live in Barcelona city and I have an idea. Let me set the date, time and meeting place, so we can cite everybody in the forum and know us better. I meet Bulgarians, but they live in the suburbs, here I hang out with Spaniards. I want to see you and go out sometimes; it is going to be wonderful! So, if you like the idea I will be waiting for your offers”.*

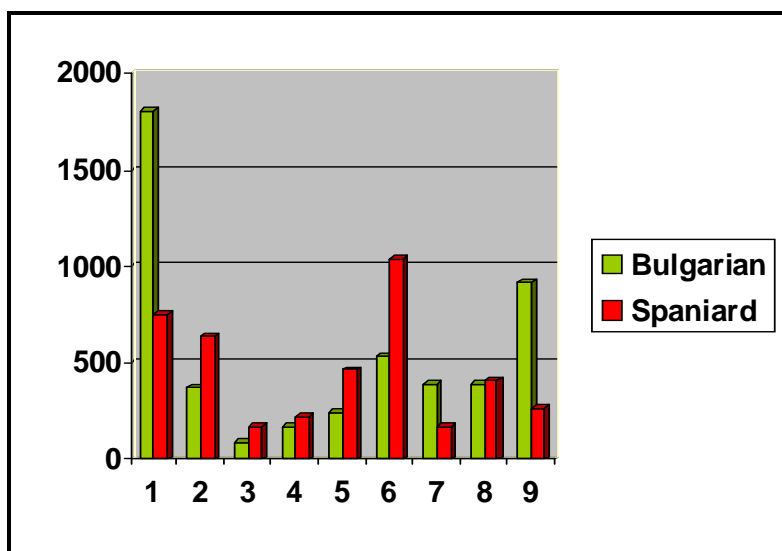
Declarations supporting inclusion and integration are fairly frequent in both forums:

*“This forum is bilingual, Spanish and Bulgarian. Each user must speak the language they want. It is also permissible to use other languages such as English or French, but in exceptional cases. Nobody can discriminate against someone else because he/she uses his/her preferred language for posting”.*

The two forums share the same topics, but as we shall see, the frequency of these issues is different in each case. The themes are distributed as follows:

**Figure 7: Activities and contents in IberBG.**

The numbering of the graph coincides with the following items: 1. News and general topics. 2. Travel, places to go. 3. Parenting and upbringing. 4. Politics. 5. History. 6. Language. 7. Recipes, food. 8. Encounters, search people. 9. Formalities



The Bulgarian forum has more users, more topics and more dispersion in the contents. In the Spanish forum the participation of Spaniards who want to travel to Bulgaria for tourism, studies or business is frequent. On the Bulgarian forum the questions related to travel are more focused on mobility (and limitations for mobility) as well as on interesting places to visit in Spain.

Parenting and fatherhood are in this case analyzed in relation to mobility. Mixed couples or couples established in Spain for some time debate on bilingual education at home and issues related to parenting in general. Recent migrants that are experiencing parenting and migration process challenges are worried about the registration of children as Spanish citizens, or the different customs with names (in Bulgaria the first name is derived from the proper name of

the father, the second is the surname that is transmitted from generation to generation) and the 2.500 Euro aid provided by the Spanish Government for each child.

One of the most successful topics in both forums is related to learning Bulgarian or Spanish. Even the participation in some cases may be motivated to learn the new language. The forum is focused in this case on learning the language, under the coordination of one of the volunteer moderators of the page. The Website allows the use of the keyboard in Spanish (ES), the Bulgarian Phonetic (BP, which matches the sounds with the letters of the Latin alphabet) and the keyboard in Bulgarian (BG). The distance between both languages represents a problem for integration. Also some participants from Second Generation express doubts about their mother language, or details that they have forgotten. The tone is informal and focuses in solving grammar problems.

The Bulgarian group presents a particularity with regard to the use of ICT. At the forum on learning Bulgarian-Spanish they pose questions and doubts about the technical problems presented by the use of ICT tools, due to the change of language. The participants inform of problems and uses of translators, decoders, mail servers as Gmail that allow the coexistence of two languages, the conversion to standard and phonetic code, and the technical problems encountered with the installation of some tools (reconfiguration, changes in the keyboard, and etcetera). The following message shows these problems:

*“Here I sent a file that allows you to install the Bulgarian phonetic keyboard, if you press a key on the Spanish keyboard will show the equivalent in Bulgarian (for example, pressing the 's' is written 'c', pressing the 'd' is written 'ð', etcetera). The problem is that Windows is a distribution of Bulgarian keyboard that does not conform to anything in the Spanish keyboard” (in the original message a file to download the application is attached).*

The category ‘formalities’ shows the largest asymmetry between both forums. The Spanish subjects are related mainly with the homologation of studies, tips for buying properties in Bulgaria and various other formalities; in the Bulgarian forum the issues covered are related to problems arising from the moratoria, changes in immigration status and the opportunities of finding a job. In both forums participants publish jobs’ offers and demands (construction, care services, translators, and etcetera).

The existence of both forums allows comparisons about different migratory stages and different realities. In the Romanian group, misinformation about joining the European Union and the consequent working conditions influence their searching activities. Participants are not necessarily well informed and sometimes the information provided doesn’t conform to reality. It is common to find some cases that explain the manner in which they ‘should’ do, but also it describes the shortcuts or ways in which they ‘can’ do. However, there are also alternative sources of information. In addition to solving this kind of problem, the forums are also a good choice to share experiences on good or bad situations that Bulgarians in Spain face every day.

**Discussion:** We comment briefly some of the implications, according to Riga’s goals:

*Acculturation:* The coexistence of the two forums is a good example of a process of acculturation.<sup>53</sup> Learning the Spanish language is important as a tool for working and for

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<sup>53</sup> In the sense defined in: SAN ROMAN, Teresa (1984) “Antropología aplicada y relaciones interétnicas” in REIS, 1984. (online: [http://www.reis.cis.es/REISWeb/PDF/REIS\\_027\\_09.PDF](http://www.reis.cis.es/REISWeb/PDF/REIS_027_09.PDF)). Last view: June, 2008.

interaction with the host society. The issue of acculturation is also manifested in the second generation and the dilemma of how to educate a child in the context of a transnational family. Recommendations are diverse, but some believe that both languages should be use:

*“I know a Bulgarian couple, friends of mine, who have a child who came to Spain speaking Bulgarian (I do not remember how many years but he had no more than 5). Well in his house they only speak Bulgarian and when his family speaks in Bulgarian he responds in Catalan. This seems good. If he answer in Catalan he is supposed to understand Bulgarian. So when he grows up maybe he will speak Bulgarian. At least he understands it. I advise, because I have talked with of a lot of educators and teachers on this topic, and the best is to speak at home the most difficult language for children to learn. In the kindergarten they were responsible to teach the other language. Since children learn very fast”*

The largest wave of Bulgarian migration occurred during the past five years. Previous waves show signs of adaptation and adjustments. At the Spanish forum there is little disagreement and debate (although there is evidence that the subjects which are too controversial or arising in insults and assaults are deleted) with respect to both groups. However in the Bulgarian forum they speak about the need to show a favorable image in the host society. According to the perception of the participants, the Eastern European countries generally do not have a good reputation.

*Relational integration:* ICT allows us to observe integration in both directions: among immigrants and with the host society. Community integration focuses in the place of origin, even more than in ethnic affiliation. As we mentioned with Romanians, Bulgarians feel the need to distance themselves from the gypsies. They blamed the bad reputation that they awarded to Romanians and Bulgarians. In a forum which opened with the question: how many Bulgarians are there in Spain? One of the answers, joking, was “we are one hundred” with the following comment:

*“101 and a half!!!!!! :) I swear it! I just see a gypsy on Sunday just leaving a Bulgarian bus!!.... "The guy" was Bulgarian according to the passport... but the aspect he had!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Instead he seems Moroccan, and I can't say anything about his behavior. So my assessment is 1/2 Bulgarian and just imagine :D”*

The need to mark the collective and differentiate it from others (Gypsies, Turks and other Muslim minorities) is an example of negative integration through an identify mechanism that rejects others for self-assertion. As consequence, it produces cohesion. The thread of messages in that tone lasted until several users expressed their disagreement with the views expressed. Obviously, there are also positive signs of integration among themselves. In addition to the identification elements such as food and traditions, there are some associations in the forum as the creation of a Bulgarian community in the Basque Country and detected signs of solidarity and belonging in terms of guidance for the completion of formalities and general adaptation.

Referring to the integration with the host society, the most obvious is language exchange. Often people come to this site looking to learn Bulgarian. At the Spanish forum exchanges between Spaniards and Bulgarians is very common, in fact one could say that nearly half of the participants are Spaniards.

**Discussion of ICT and social capital:** In *IberBG* the participation of a limited and small group allows the establishment of ties among participants and, hence, the generation of Social

Capital. It is an illustrative case of social contact: interpersonal communication patterns, including visits, encounters, phone calls, and social events.<sup>54</sup> In this regard, we note interactions within the forum that refer to offline activities, as a meeting among some participants of the forum or a phone call between two mothers to lend some help. Although there are those who come to the forum only to participate in the areas of discussion without being involved in the community aspect of this tool; finally, their presence also is essential to generate debates and to support the group because they are part of the social situation to allow interaction.

**Figure 8:** IberBG forum



## 2.4 Conclusions

The three cases examined are examples of computer mediated communication where social dynamics and the interaction between participants are more informative of its empowering character than the number of visitors registered in each case. The implementation of Web 2.0 tools and the matching of users with the contents built communities of interests; facilitate interaction and develop a sense of community among participants.

The three cases are private initiatives. The two Romanian sites consist of building a community but are designed for profit aims. The Bulgarian case is communitarian in nature, and is only aimed at opening a space for debating among Bulgarians, and among Bulgarians and Spaniards.

<sup>54</sup> QUAN-HAASE and WELLMAN, B "How does the Internet affect Social Capital?" in *Social Capital and Information Technology*, edited by Marleen Huysman and Volker Wulf. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

The three of them show positive aspects but use the resources in isolation without betting on a notion of comprehensive community:

- ☒ In the first example, *Romania din Spania*, which is the most complete, we found a greater interactive capacity although they are not clearly deploying a sense of community. However, although the idea of community is not explicit, the diversity of channels allows the portal to diversify ties and information.
- ☒ The second case, *Roman in Lume*, is based in a clear idea about the objectives pursued as ethnic entrepreneurs. There is no idea of community able to manage itself, but the site promotes social dynamics for instrumental purposes.
- ☒ Third, *IberBG* is a smaller group but we noticed a sense of belonging and greater linkage among its members. But communitarian dynamics may be vulnerable, as is shown in the gradual decline in the number of messages: the forum is the only option available and previous tools and resources were closed because of problems in maintaining their management and activity. Although some participants miss the tools that were working before, the community is still working and it has a bridging potential with the host society because of its original design and composition.

In the three cases the ICT impact in the formation of networks is well documented. Frequently, ICT impact on migration is associated with maintaining the links with the sending country. However, these sites are also important for exchanging emotional and informational support in the early phases of resettlement in the new country. The search for emotional support from people experiencing similar experiences contributes to broadening the social network. The community is more than the sum of its ties: "Its composition and structure affects how it supplies companionship, supportiveness, information and a sense of identity".<sup>55</sup> In all three cases we see how these factors allow the creation of more or less strong ties (contributing to psychological adaptation), depending among other factors on the resources used and the degree of users' involvement.

The networking component of these sites allows detecting and analysing what affects them as a collective. For instance, Romanians and Bulgarians experience disorientation because of EU accession, and confusion to understand the new policies addressing their needs and special conditions. The exchange of experiences and the flow of information strengthen these ties: even if the information is not completely accurate, the intention to communicate and share the same situation is really appreciated.

The impact in terms of social capital is more evident in the first and third case than in *Roman in Lume*. The amount of information and the organizational capacity of *Roman in Lume* contribute to creating traditional-like community participation, concentrated in those areas more densely populated by the IEM group and more *localized* in its focus and activities. In the other two cases participants are more geographically spread. Although this may be a disadvantage in terms of opportunities for immediate face to face relations, it provides new scope for networking, opening social opportunities for a space focused on mobility and therefore an unambiguous relational community.

Through Web 2.0, users can participate in the generation of contents and turn them into collective creations. *Romania din Spania* and *IberBG* are more oriented to the interaction and

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<sup>55</sup> WELLMAN, Barry and GULIA, Milena (1999) "Net Surfers Don't Ride Alone: Virtual Community as Community" Pp. 331-67 in [Networks in the Global Village](#), edited by Barry Wellman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, USA.

contents generated by the participants. On the other hand, *Roman in Lume* is a project with publisher-defined areas and limited online spaces: in this case the feedback and the potential for interaction are smaller but at the same time they count with the higher capacity to respond to the requests and contributions of the participants.

*Roman in Lume* develops relationships and shared actions with municipalities, authorities and federations in outreach activities such as the Week of Theatre in Madrid. This collaboration is in part facilitated by its business-like organization. Other initiatives are more focused on the virtual aspect and perhaps have less social visibility.

Romanian and Bulgarian languages are a distinctive characteristic, with an impact in the social construction of the boundaries of the group, although in the three cases examined Spanish is also used. In *Romania din Spania* each member of the community can have its own blog, and the contributions are plural and diverse. *Roman in Lume* has a stronger line which focuses on Romanian values and the idea of continuity and expansion of the Diaspora. On the Bulgarian site, particularly in the Spanish speaking forum, there are debates reflecting an educationally advanced level but with a remarkable ideological polarization. Debates are more open and controversial. There is no line marked by the administrators of the forum and high flexibility regarding freedom of expression and diversity of contents.

Economic participation is very important on both Romanian sites, as part of initiatives that use ICT as a tool for the community. The wide acceptance of both portals results in a significant number of advertisers. Both started from the need to create spaces specially addressed to the Romanian community in Spain. Although they started as modest initiatives, growing migration and the growth of the business itself has resulted in great acceptance in the immigrant community.

Internet is one of the first places to look for a job, and both Romanian sites implement resources oriented to employment. The ties generated among participants, through information and contacts with others, are important to compete with natives for employment opportunities. *Romania din Spania* is more useful for this aim. Employment opportunities are more sporadic in *IberBG*.



**Table 3 Three Websites for South-Eastern European immigrants**

Areas	Romania din Spania	Roman in Lume	IberBG
Skill building	Discovery of the ICT potential. Wide participation, skills development	Discovery of the ICT potential for development in a community	ICT bilingual insertion. Construction of tools aimed at the technical difficulties of language
Community re-generation	Opting for virtual community	The collective dispersion goes around the project	Focuses on a segment of the second generation in Spain
Communicative and local mobility	Some signs in Spain and mobility in the EU	Little information	Inadequate treatment of the topic
Acculturation	Trilingual website, events in origin and destination	Links to host society, sharing arrangements, bilingualism	Relationship in the same forum with community of origin and destination
Relational integration	High within the IEM community, but more scarce with host individuals	Strengthening the Diaspora and sense of belonging	High both with host and sending communities
Civic engagement	Low on organization aimed at an objective	High participation with government entities in origin and destination	Emerging local partnerships
Economic participation	Ethnic entrepreneurship and labor exchange	Ethnic entrepreneurship and labor exchange	Scarce and dispersed offers of employment

**Considerations on policy implications**

*Help use/ Access ICT:* usability and simplicity enhance the use of the web resources and facilitate e-inclusion. The access is usually guaranteed and there do not seem to be differences in terms of accessibility between Southern Europeans immigrants and host individuals.

Linguistic barriers, in particular in the case of Bulgarians, may difficult accessibility and consequently e-learning and the deployment of advanced skills. Bilingual websites contribute to integration, acting as bridging communities, and ensuring understanding of the contents.

Most Romanians and Bulgarians use their own resources (IM, VoIP telephone and etcetera), and these pages are a good opportunity to activate computing social skills and acquire new social and technological competencies. Even when the technology used in these sites is very basic, the opportunities for interaction may contribute to generate social capital.

*Use ICT to help:* Third Sector organizations would benefit from skill training. One of the sites is based on the participation of journalists, but on the others participants have no special training for their on line contribution. It would be useful to offer training for service providers on managing on line communities, with orientations on how to cope with Riga's Goals. However, community empowering and ICT policies would have less impact if only focused on IEM sites.

Some disparity between supply and demand and difficulties for accessing to quality information was documented. Although there are still things to be done in entrepreneurship, e-commerce and on line job searching, the two Romanian examples show interesting previous experiences.



## CASE STUDY 3: SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES, ICT AND INNOVATION BY IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN ANDALUCÍA

### 3.1 Introduction and literature review

The content and purpose of this current report (WP5&6) links directly on from the previously submitted report ‘The Supply and Demand of ICT/Digital Media in Andalucía, Spain’ (WP3&4). Now we channel the focus of our study much more specifically into the case of innovation as viewed from various angles of interest. But before doing so, it is necessary to review the relevant literature and recapitulate on some of the major points of interest from our former report.

The European Union’s Lisbon strategic agenda states, amongst others, that “The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.<sup>56</sup> In this context, there has been an important debate on the predominance of economic aims and activities in the European Union’s political agenda.

For instance, Kuhn et al recognise that to achieve this goal it is important to consider Europe as a knowledge-based society (KBS).<sup>57</sup> They do however point out the irony of having a KBS when knowledge of such a society has been lacking and instead they regard the KBS as an ideological title for global economic competitiveness governed by capital.<sup>58</sup> To their minds, the underlying ideology is that “the EU wants to become the winner of global competition... [and] plans to dictate the conditions of global capitalism, namely the conditions of what economist (*sic*) call innovation based growth”.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, the primary emphasis of the EU does appear to be placed on economic growth and development. The first principle of the Riga ministerial declaration states that “Information and communication technologies (ICT) are a powerful driver of growth and employment. A quarter of EU GDP growth and around 50% of productivity growth are due to ICT. ICT services, skills, media and content, and their use in other industry sectors, are a growing part of the economy and society. ICT is thus strongly instrumental to achieving the Lisbon strategy goals.”<sup>60</sup> It is only in the subsequent principle that the value of ICT for psychosocial well-being is recognized, namely that “ICT contributes to improving the quality of everyday life and social participation of Europeans”.<sup>61</sup> The current project is a case in point that there is an attempt to know what comprises a KBS, at least from the perspective of migrant residents, putting emphasis in pro-social aims.

Thus for our purposes, the catchword relating to growth and development, broadly defined, is innovation, which we can define as follows: learning to do something in a completely

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<sup>56</sup> European Union, Lisbon, Portugal, March, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> M. Kuhn. 2006:1. European educational research- contributions to the discourse about the EU as a ‘Knowledge Based Society’. In (M. Kuhn, M. Tomassini, P. Robert-Jan Simons, eds) Towards a knowledge based economy? Knowledge and learning in European educational research. Peter Lang: New York.

<sup>58</sup> 2006:5.

<sup>59</sup> 2006:5-6.

<sup>60</sup> European Union, Riga, Latvia, June 2006.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

different way by developing new practices which are both personal and social- in that they relate our own practice with the practices of others. It is often associated with new technologies which provide tools that make it possible to do things differently.<sup>62</sup>

Innovation disturbs the status quo and as Somekh comments, it requires “vision, sensitivity, playfulness and energy at grass roots level and changes to structures and regulatory frameworks at the organisational level.”<sup>63</sup> In this regard Somekh proposes that within a broader socio-cultural framework of interpersonal activity, ICT can be used as a mediating tool for the expansion of human capabilities.<sup>64</sup> She points out, crucially, that we must recognise that “the inter-relationships between multiple levels of human activity co-construct change” and moreover, that the researcher is actively involved in the process of intervention. Innovation occurs in social settings and hence, to a large degree depends on social processes within larger cultural systems, which adapt over time. Hence, it is proposed that we used a socio-cultural-historical theory of human activity to understand ICT,<sup>65</sup> upon which we shall expand in our discussion.

Suffice it for now to note that we appear to find such a social concern- even if it is given secondary status- explicitly stated by the European Union within the Riga document. Avgerou, likewise, is concerned about the social dimensions of ICT innovation and organisational change and notes that “innovation is first adopted and diffused partly for its technical merits and partly under the influence of social actors. Subsequently, through socio-cultural processes an innovation becomes accepted as a social fact”.<sup>66</sup>

As Mueller-Falcke (2002) argues, however, innovation and entrepreneurship in particular can be hampered by information issues (as evidenced, for example, in the Maitland Report's identification of the deficiency of telecommunications infrastructure in the developing world). Hence, on the flipside, he proposes that “The major tools to acquire, store, process and disseminate information and to generate knowledge from information are modern Information and Communication Technologies.”<sup>67</sup> Lal, for example, refers to ample evidence which indicates “substantive returns on IT systems, equipment and labour investments” and to the fact that ICTs “cut across types of activities”.<sup>68</sup>

Building upon such observations, Avgerou notes that “information systems research has relied heavily on the assumption that ICT and organisations are created, shaped and transformed by purposeful action in response to competitive market forces.”<sup>69</sup> Since environmental conditions are constantly changing and the context within which ICT is employed dynamic, Somekh regards ICT as an innovation in progress, especially since it constantly needs to morph in order to serve adaptively. Similarly, Kuhn et al. (2006) suggest that ICT is coming to play an

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<sup>62</sup> B. Somekh. 2007:1. *Pedagogy and learning with ICT: researching the art of innovation*. Routledge: New York.

<sup>63</sup> 2007:2.

<sup>64</sup> 2007:3.

<sup>65</sup> 2007:5.

<sup>66</sup> C. Avgerou 2002:24. *Information systems and global diversity*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

<sup>67</sup> Dietrich Mueller-Falcke, 2002:1. *Use and impact of Information and Communication Technologies in developing countries' small businesses: evidence from Indian small-scale industry*. Peter Lang: Frankfurt.

<sup>68</sup> K. Lal, 2007:1-2. *Information and communication technologies in the context of globalisation: evidence from developing countries*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

<sup>69</sup> 2002:1.

ever-increasing role in innovative learning and call for the recognition of “work-based knowing as a socio-cultural activity”.<sup>70</sup>

Hence it is within this broader socio-cultural-historical context that we now explore the ‘imagination gap’ (as Somekh calls the space between current uses and new developments in ICT)<sup>71</sup> by considering innovative uses of ICT by individual immigrants who have come to Spain from outside of the European Union. Having recognised the importance of the above context to individual innovation, we now refresh, briefly, the main points of interest and themes emerging from our former report.

### 3.2 The second-round respondents

Cognisant of this context and based on their specialised, idiosyncratic uses of ICT, we selected a handful of participants from the previous work-package to participate in a second round of interviews. Our selected second-round participants include the following:

- ☒ A 44-year-old female journalist from Nigeria who has lived in Spain for close on 25 years and who uses ICT extensively in her professional activities on several radio stations. She also uses this technology to advance the social care provided by the women's association of which she is president;
- ☒ A 27-year-old male jewellery-store owner from Brazil, who has been in the country for almost 4 years, and who uses ICT exclusively and instrumentally for innovation in his shop and for related trading/economic activities;
- ☒ A 24-year-old male kite-surfing instructor from Brazil, who only recently arrived and who uses ICT to market his newly emerging small-scale business/kite-surfing school here in Spain, whilst residing here temporarily during the summer months;
- ☒ A 38-year-old female fashion-related entrepreneur, who has lived here for 16 years and who will use ICT in her new business activity, which is awaiting grant approval from the Junta Andalucia's programme to support economic innovation amongst immigrant women.

Our interviews were divided into different sections providing information on personal life histories, paths followed up to the present time in Spain, current activities and future directions involving ICT and innovation and psycho-social integration and concluding comments. We now analyse the content of each interview before engaging in a comparison and extrapolation of our findings.

### 3.3 Extracts of interest from interviews and content analysis<sup>72</sup>

**Life histories 1: Nigerian journalist.** Our first respondent (Nigerian female, 44) has lived in Spain for more than half her life (since 1986) and is the longest-residing member of our sample. She reports having had a 'nice childhood' and the privilege of attending the best schools in her area. Her social status was high: her father was wealthy and one of her brothers studied at Cambridge, later becoming Secretary of State. She voices the clear objection to the chauvinism in her own African society, since men always were provided with better professional study opportunities than women. She wanted to become an actress but was prevented from studying this by her family, who regarded it as unacceptable. So she went to stay with her sister, working in customs in Lagos, which was where she met her future

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<sup>70</sup> 2006:11,13.

<sup>71</sup> 2007:28.

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix for full interviews.

husband. He came to work in Spain and asked her to marry him- her parents declined initially since he was not from an established family. She threatened to elope so they conceded finally. She also secured the assurance from her husband that she could study drama here in Spain.

Once she arrived in Spain to live with him, however, he reneged on his promise, saying “no, you’re not here to study but to bring birth and music (to give him children and take care of him). So I couldn’t become an actress.” During this time she started to study courses through NGOs and gave birth to two children. Through her studies and NGO contact she came to know “many people from other countries” and especially, “I discovered that many women were in the same situation as me. So one day, after 10 years I decided to leave home.” With this she started a ‘new life’, living in shared accommodation with other single mothers and their children. She states, “I love communication, in the morning taking care of all the women and children and in the evening I studied. During this same period we formed a women’s immigration association. After 2 years I started collaborating in 2 radio/TV stations. A year later, I was employed until today.” Our respondent’s current profession is as a freelance journalist/presenter for two radio stations and she also directs and presents her own show, in which she explores “the diversity of cultures, music, food; inter-culture, conscientisation.”

In her profession as a journalist, she relies strongly on creative uses of different type of technology, which “helps me to work faster and obtain all the necessary information and innovation makes it accessible to everybody.” She refers to the ease with which innovation and technology can help one to know the ‘other’: “today if you want to know Ethiopia or Nigeria or South America you don’t need to wait for a TV documentary, you can go in 24 hours a day to know countries, cultures, customs, everything.” In her voluntary work as the President of a women’s association/NGO and in terms of social care, she refers to the fact that ICT helps her organisation to store information, to facilitate contact with the women concerned if someone is interested in employing them. It can help social care workers who “work with problem people- to find information about the condition on the internet and treatment- because they are not qualified.” Moreover, it can help the elderly; many of whom “who live alone have an emergency phone, in case they are sick or in danger, connected to town council who will send someone.” As she suggests, “mobile accessibility improves your chances of reaching family or doctor.”

In terms of technology and psycho-social integration, she suggests that its primary importance lies in being aware of activities, followed by mutual information between friends about joining in these activities and the enabling of making meetings; also for contact regarding the well-being of her children. She notes that professionally that, “my work is basically with internet, phone, recorder, microphone; all the technologies- it makes me feel good that through all this technology more than 1,000,000 voices are listening to me. I can get in touch with 1-2 million people per week.” She remarks that ICT “is central, not only for my work but also for my family in Nigeria and in Spain, because through this I can communicate easily with my people.”

When the respondent was asked to consider future directions, she responds that she would like to see ICT speed up work and research in the area of illness in general, and that it be used for development in Africa. As she observes, “One of the biggest problems there is the lack of technology resources, the development is so slow.”

**Analysis:** Note that although this participant did not end up fulfilling her youth ambition to become an actress, she works in an allied discipline, namely, in radio and TV media and has

written and directed her own short films. Note too how it was through NGOs that she was able to start to learn and engage in self-improvement and how, through this process of empowerment, she has reached her current position and is now able to put something back into the community by heading up an NGO herself. Likewise, it was through the exposure of the NGOs that she was able to encounter people from different cultures and especially, to relate to other women and mothers experiencing similar life challenges. It is interesting to note how, once she had started her 'new life' she was able to fulfil her vocation, her "love of communication", which she now does through journalism and her need to provide social care by "taking care of mothers and children", which she now does through the NGO. In her professional job, her show explores "the diversity of cultures, music, food; inter-culture, conscientisation"; hence we find in her one person the use of ICT innovation for her income-earning profession, through which she promotes intercultural mediation and also in her outreach, in which she provides social care. Despite the fact that she came from a good home in Nigeria, the pressure on her of her life circumstances in Spain, where she had to provide for herself and her sons as a immigrant single woman, has undoubtedly played a role in her exceptional use of innovation. In this regard, we note how the speed of ICT facilitates her work, making it possible to have information about 'the other' immediately accessible. This awareness and the fact the several ICT media make it possible for her to share with others, to be in touch and to share social interaction and contact make an enormous difference to her life. Finally, she voices the concern that ICT be used for social care and development.

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**Life histories 2: Brazilian trader.** Our second respondent (Brazilian male, 27) has resided here for almost 4 years, has a wife and a child here and is moving from medium term to long term residence. He came from a poor family, without affection from his parents and without financial resources, meaning that he could not complete his schooling and instead had to work when he was young, as a car guard, packing bags in the supermarket, street vending for 9 years. He was involved with drugs and at times pilfered to stay alive but a theme that from now on recurs in his interview: 'always working'. When he was younger he and his brother worked to support his mother. Interestingly, his father used to make necklaces. In Brazil he worked in the street as an informal trader, having to avoid the authorities but afterwards he and his brother went to Uruguay to sell mineral stones. They had a licence to sell from a portable stall and during that time, got to know a millionaire who patronised their business, enabling them to open a shop and have a better quality of life "but we were very young, going out, drugs, this, that. Within 4 years we had so much money and then we lost everything- the old man died and so we lost out."

After this experience he went to the north of Brazil to get to know his relatives and during this time he discovered a zone that was rich in quartz mines. He started to extract the stones and within a few weeks started to take these (hundreds of kilograms) to the capital of the province where he sold his whole load to a single customer. Another client from the local government council commissioned him to deliver big orders of quartz on a regular basis, which meant that he could employ a team of three workers. He made a lot of money doing this and was content until his brother arrived with an Uruguayan, who swindled them out of their stones on the pretext that he was going to trade them in the US and later in Austria. He had to barter with someone who had necklaces and was lent money by his cousin to return to Uruguay, where he worked on the beach selling necklaces and earning 200\$ a day. With 4800\$ from the summer, he bought more rocks and went back to the capital in northern Brazil before being invited to come to Spain by a Spanish man whom he met in Uruguay and who had a shop in Tarifa.

He didn't have anything left and paid for the trip with his credit card. Once in Tarifa, he worked in a shop that the Spanish partners had rented and he lived besides the shop as he had nowhere to stay. After working a summer season he got to know an Argentinean and an Italian and they travelled around selling things for a year, without papers. One day they were denounced while in their car, arrested by the police and given 48 hours to organise papers or leave, but he did nothing. He continued selling on the street and in Salamanca, a fight broke out over locations- they were arrested for 32 hours but then the judge dismissed the case and gave them a chance to organise their papers. "I asked the female partner of my Spanish colleague to marry me to get the papers, and my (real) wife was the bridesmaid. A crazy story! And today I have a child with the bridesmaid. And my friend is the godfather of my child."

He says, "since I have lived various stories, now I am living my own, in the way that I would like." Two years ago he was working in Granada when his wife fell pregnant, so he came back to Tarifa and applied for a permit to sell in the Alameda. He did well in the summer, went to Brazil and bought a ton of necklaces and imported these. But then the town council cancelled the vending locations, so he saw his current shop and rented it with a man of 64 years who had the money to rent, with the deal that when the goods arrived he would pay him. The business was divided into necklaces and stones on his side and silver on the side of his partner. The other man moved away to Madrid, was never around and took advantage of our respondent, who finally told him to take his things and go. The other man locked him out of the shop and took everything before being reported to the authorities. "I was left with 5 kgs of silver, a loan from the bank to buy goods for the summer and now I'm more or less in balance."

As we commence our section on ICT and innovation, he is typing away on Google translator. He says, "I only use it run my business and to communicate with my friends. It's something that's part of the system in which we live. I use it in my shop to communicate with friends and people who are more or less doing the same thing as me, photos, things that we use to do business." The respondent was asked to elaborate on his use of Google translator: "I'm using it now to communicate with India. I use it to communicate with people in other places. I use different translators, not only Google. On this page I write in Spanish and I can translate into English, Chinese or whatever is necessary for the language of the recipient and they also send back to me in English or Spanish. So he sends me photos, which I can have a look at, I then ask for better quality images and a catalogue with prices."

In other words, the amazing innovation at hand here is that this respondent and his trading partners could not otherwise communicate with each other, but due to ICT they can both write and rely on online translators to establish and maintain their business links. The respondent was asked if this is a reliable and trustworthy means to conduct trade and apologise for my questions, because he is doing business as we speak. He replies, "Relax- I can do three things at the same time...there are people whom I know and whom I don't. Here in Spain, you can order on the internet and when the stock arrives at the post office you pay. In India they send me a catalogue, I order 20 of this, 30 of that and establish how much I have to send- pay the seller and then it arrives with UPS. I have never had a problem- I've always paid and the goods have always arrived. I always use Google to search."

When asked if the internet is instrumental for him, he replies, "Yes, it's necessary for me. For my work it's central- and nothing more..." and then, using the online the translator he types in Spanish and says in English, "it's ideal for my work!" Confirming this, he states "I use it

during work hours and afterwards I'm totally disconnected." The meaning of ICT for him is that it makes it much easier to run his system of business and facilitates more things, meaning that he can better arrange himself, "I've learnt better how to organise my working life." His final comment regarding ICT and innovation is "To use this technology globally and especially more in the developing world to assist with humanitarian aid, to benefit people who need food, care, and medicine; for social issues. In the future I don't want to be channelled into technology and constrained by it, I want to be more harmonised with natural life."

**Analysis:** This respondent hailed from difficult life circumstances and has constantly engaged in innovation to see himself through life, "always working" ranging from needs to help his mother to currently providing for his family. His use of ICT is instrumental for economic innovation. It is interesting to note that he is engaged in the same profession as his father and that through family contacts he was able to pursue his career path in minerals and jewellery. From the time at which he and his brother lost their small fortune in Uruguay he proved to be innovative, heading into the mountains to mine for quartz and then selling this; after that source dried up he returned to vending necklaces on the beach and selling on the street. This capacity to be practically adaptive is very evident in his daily business interactions, as observed during the process of these interviews and especially in his on-the-spot improvisation (as for example when he used Google translator to convey a sentence to me in English). Initially, the pressure of being in the country without papers undoubtedly added stress and the necessity to improvise, but after his time of struggle his residency has now normalised. Having moved through cycles where he has gained and then lost everything, he now has the possibility of determining and maintaining his own success given that he has a permanent shop and legal tenure. In terms of his ICT use, he shows a remarkable innovation insofar as he uses online translators to communicate and do business with other traders from diverse and remote parts of the world- to make contact with them, to scan their good and then to trade with them- including agreements of stock consignments and payments. Interesting, these global SME trading partners could not otherwise communicate with each other in the absence of translator tools. It is impressive to note how he exclusively uses ICT for his trade life and once he leaves work, he is "totally disconnected". Equally noteworthy, given his exclusively instrumental use of ICT for business-to-business innovation is his resistance to being constrained by technology (he prefers to be in harmony with nature) and most interestingly, his hope that in the future, ICT will be used increasingly to provide social care.

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**Life histories 3: Brazilian kite surfing trainer.** Our third respondent (Brazilian male, 24) has only recently arrived in Spain and will stay only temporarily, for the summer season. He reports having always had a very independent life and whereas, "to live well in the city you need much money", the "quality of life on the beach is a life more simple". He sees many more opportunities there, because the people who arrive there for holidays have more free time to discover new cultures. After working as a computer trainer he opted for a different lifestyle, "I like to live with very different cultures to learn different languages. I have a very different lifestyle, and it's very hard for me to describe it to you, the only way to appreciate it is to come and experience it."

He came to Spain to learn to speak Spanish properly and to gain experience for his professional career as a kite-surfing instructor, "for my CV, that's very important- one season here in Tarifa- because the conditions of the wind and of the beach are very difficult. If you can teach kite-surfing here, you can teach anywhere." Last, but not least, he came over for the development of his business, "to bring back to Brazil new contacts and new equipment." He

states that, “My business purpose is to get people from around the world to better know the best spots to ride in Brazil, because a lot of people don’t have any idea about Brazil- they think it’s just samba and carnival. Because I would like to show rich people that you don’t need to have much money to live well. We will get to know all the places of the ocean and appreciate that you can have a good style of life if you play a sport; sport will help you develop a better lifestyle.”

When asked about how he foresees marketing his business he replies, “By word of mouth, so that people can check my website and book their trip.” And when asked about its contents, he replies “Information on the climate, the wind, the hotels, the tour, the location.” His future purpose is, “to start to travel more to develop my business in Brazil and in 5 or 6 years develop my hostel and kite school together.”

He sums up the significance of ICT for him very precisely: “It helps me to put my business around the world. With internet and with mobile you can stay in touch with contacts from everywhere. I believe the technological innovations keep me closer to the people and future clients. The advantage is that we have a shop in all the sites of the world. So to market the business it’s very good. ICT is integral for me, very important. I believe that for my shop it would be impossible to do it, without this.”

With respect to final comments, he remarks: “I’m very happy to participate with my ideas in this project...what happens in Brazil is that there are many good ideas but they only stay on the computer and they are never realised and here I would like to see ideas become real to help people.”

**Analysis:** Having had to be independent since an early age while aiming for a simple, yet good quality life that does not rely on much money, this respondent expresses a similar tendency to engage in economic innovation using ICT. In this case, it is used to promote business-to-client interactions. His background in computing undoubtedly plays a role in his willingness to use ICT to the end of his business promotion. Interestingly, his desire is not simply to instrumentalise ICT but rather he wishes to mediate both technically (in terms of teaching a skill, in this case, kite-surfing) and culturally (by coming to learn Spanish and experience life in Europe and then, to encourage others to experience his own home language and culture). By spreading the ‘word’ about his innovative business and by providing information on his own website, he hopes to initiate and sustain contact with new and continuing clients through email and mobile phone technology. To this end ICT is crucial for him, as he admits; his business would not be possible without it. This is because it provides him with an immediate and global presence, keeping him closer to the people “providing him with a shop in all sites of the world”. As if to reinforce the need for a project such as the current one, he concludes by stating his contentment at participating, since this endeavour makes real the possibility of new ideas becoming reality to help people, unlike in his own country where these stagnate as empty rhetoric.

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**Life histories 4: Senegalese fashion entrepreneur.** Our final respondent (Senegalese female, 38) has lived here for sixteen years. She was born in the Ivory Coast and “I had a great childhood because I was in a nice school- I found a website of old pupils from my school in Ivory Coast. The director was a Swiss woman...at 5 years old I went to Switzerland with her to have Easter”. At age 8 she moved to Senegal and refers to her schooling there, “I went to a great school, a catholic school. Let me tell you I’m not catholic but my parents thought it was



great for education. And afterwards we had a political problem in Senegal: they called it a 'white year' for the children. There was a strike with everybody so the school was closed." She completed her schooling in the Ivory Coast and studied accountancy there afterwards, "I didn't know what to do so I chose something- but I think it was not what I would have liked to do." When asked about what she would have liked to study she replies, "I think fashion, yes, because I like it. And after that I met my husband, the year I finished. And he's French and he was living in Spain, so I came to live in Spain."

Here she has always enjoyed a good quality of life, "living like a privileged person because my husband had good status. I was living in Madrid, with a nice house and a swimming pool and a person to help- she was like a grandmother to my daughter." Furthermore, language was not an issue for her, because she learnt Spanish as her second foreign language in Senegal, "So when I arrived it was easy to learn the language and be part of society." ("English is the obligatory foreign language and in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of college you can choose any other language- my sisters chose German, Portuguese, Arabic.")

When asked about local African languages the respondent replies, "We use it every day in the street/market but not in school, because they said you could not go anywhere with the local language nor know people around the world. If you want to perform local languages you can learn them in university." As she says, "So I had the language and I had the possibilities- to go where I want, to have a nice life. It was a privilege. After 10 years in Madrid we moved here. It was different because it's a little place- but with the time I appreciate the fact of living in a small town." Frustrated with staying at home, she met the Director of the African Film Festival of Tarifa and started to work 4 years ago, first as a volunteer then as the coordinator of logistics.

Her current project is about fashion, to create a new line, a mixed way to wear African and European clothes and is getting off the ground now. She was about to have her first meeting after our interview and has applied for a grant from the Junta Andaluca. Her idea is "to bring together a mixed style of African style and European style using stuff from both sides, in the future maybe Asian too...I think that we can take many cultural artefacts from many parts of the world- because they are very nice. Yesterday I watched the TV and saw that from Thailand they have a very nice material. It was very interesting, yes, why not!"

She refers to her team as being 'open people', a French woman with an English mum, a Spanish man who has styled for Mango in Dusseldorf and in terms of having open ideas about fashion, she says, for example "I would like to look for some Zulu necklaces and belts from South Africa, because I think we can mix it with European or Asian style and can create something very nice." When asked about ICT and innovation, she responds "I think about the computer, about the internet. We have to use the internet to look for new stuff and to run the businesses between us and the sellers of these materials. So, to look for new stuff for ideas and in the future, maybe to sell the things, to have a Webpage. And mobiles, of course, it's very important to communicate, to call the buyers, to call the sellers."

When asked about the role that such technology plays, she remarks, "A link, for sure, a link with other parts of the world. For what we have to do it will be very important." With respect to integrating this in her life, she states that "It will be part of my work. I think for all of us. Practically, in the future I would like to have a proper office with our sewing machine, to develop our ideas, to have telephone and internet, to communicate. It's important, yes, yes, yes."

In summing up, our respondent suggests that “I think that we need internet, all these technologies. Right now, in this world you cannot say that you cannot use them because you cannot develop anything. You have to be in contact everywhere to have some new ideas, to share our ideas and to open our mind for new creation and to know what is happening newly in the world, in fashion.” She mentions the example for the South African designer, Stoned Cherry, “You can go on the internet when you have time, I was amazed by the designs, the colours, everything. She’s one of my favourite African designers. I think she’s living in Cape Town. Her husband is very important, a TV producer and before she said that she was living in Soweto.”

Finally, she remarks that we cannot ignore these technologies, “We need them because we have to be in contact with other parts of the world. It’s a way to communicate with our family, with our friends, to communicate in business, so it is part of our life...I think if we permit people to know about the culture of other people, to have an interest, to understand some problems, or to understand our differences.”

**Analysis:** This respondent has enjoyed inter-cultural contact from an extremely early age-being born in one African country, having moved across to another and having travelled to Europe at a young age. Her self-acknowledged position of privileged schooling and high social status means that she was not faced with a direct pressure to behave innovatively in the sense of an ‘adapt or die’ logic. She studied something for its utility rather than because it was her vocational choice- and it is interesting how she is returning to the topic that she initially wished to explore, namely fashion. She suggests how, in coming to Spain to be with her husband, her position of privilege was maintained, and how being able to speak the language and having social possibilities facilitated her integration here. Her driving force to enter the labour market, unlike the other respondents, was not out of dire economic circumstances but rather because she was frustrated with being isolated in her home. In this regard, it is interesting to observe how her accountancy/business skills were used to help her in her role as logistics coordinator of the local film festival. As far as the embodiment of inter-cultural exchange is concerned, it is fascinating to note how her newly envisaged fashion project mediates, insofar as it aims to integrate African and European modes of fashion ‘a mixed way’ of wearing these clothes. Here too it is interesting to note how she uses different technologies (e.g. television, internet) to look for new fashion possibilities. Her attitude is one of openness as she herself reports and with respect to ICT she demonstrates her intention to use it for typical e-business purposes. She conceives of ICT as a link with other parts of the world which serves a practical importance for all of us. As she notes, one cannot develop anything in the contemporary world with the use of some or other technology to flesh out ideas. Here she states the example of the South African designer whose work she consults on the internet. Finally, she highlights the role of ICT for communication across the board, and to explore interests, similarities and differences in relation to ‘the other’.

### **3.4 Discussion**

The demographics of this second-round study are interesting: we have two females and two males, the females originating from African countries and upper middle to upper class backgrounds and the males from Latin America, from working class to lower middle class backgrounds. The duration for which our respondents have stayed varies from the young kite-surfing instructor, who is here only for the summer (his first season), through the jewellery entrepreneur, here for 4 years, to the prospective fashion company owner and the journalist who have lived here for 16 and 22 years respectively. Thus we have the range of stay from short-term, through medium-term to long-term residency. In terms of age, our participants

range from their early/mid 20s to their early/mid 40s, which might be expected as representative of the normative ages of working immigrants coming to Spain. Whereas the female respondents enjoyed good schooling and high status in their home countries and while both came to Spain to be with their husbands, one of the ladies' life circumstances placed her in a quite different position to her fellow immigrant. So while the life of privilege was maintained for one of our subjects, the other found herself having to hold down multiple jobs and study just to stay alive and support her family.

By means of contrast, neither of the male respondents appear to have had an easy time of growing up, both were forced to be independent from an early age and at least one of them had to sell goods illegally during his youth, in order to survive. It seems that the initial pressure in their cases to be economically innovative from an early age was greater than for their female counterparts, although we see how this changed rapidly for the journalist. In some sense, all of our respondents are now living a professional life somehow connected with their early life experiences or with what they wanted to do- the jewellery-maker following in his father's footsteps; the kite-surf instructor who was enamoured by life on the beach; the journalist presenter who once wanted to study drama and the fashion entrepreneur who longed to study this subject in her teenage years.

All of our participants, who either currently gain in economic terms from their use of ICT or who hope to do so in the future, point to the value of ICT for its social impact in terms of communication, acting as a 'link', improving the conditions of human relations and daily living circumstances. Notable is the fact that the two respondents who appear to be using the internet most instrumentally, the Brazilians, also call for its social applications to 'help people' most loudly, while the Nigerian calls for more rapid development and the Senegalese for encountering the other. In making sense of this mixed meaning of ICT for our respondents, we now return to relate these to the available literature.

**Economic considerations, social concerns:** Burtseva et al. argue that the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries have been characterised by the rapid growth of ICT, resulting in an avalanche growth of digital information.<sup>73</sup> From our study, it is apparent that different people deal with this access to digital information and perhaps equally importantly- digital communication- in various ways, some commonplace and others innovative. The two basic lines of interest that emerge here are the economic and the social domains and the interaction that emerges between these with respect to ICT innovation. In this regard, Avgerou argues that ICT can be viewed as “an institution in its own right, taking shape in relation to other institutions of modern society”.<sup>74</sup> She regards ICT as central to the discourse on socio-economic change and states that, “At an organisational level, ICT innovation is a combination of technical tasks and social negotiations”.<sup>75</sup> For this reason, she does not think that ICT innovation can be explained sufficiently by merely investigating “the technical potential of technologies, the methodical activities of the information systems professionals, and the declared strategies of management”, for as she notes, “the tasks performed by the actors involved in ICT innovation are institutionally shaped.”<sup>76</sup>

If we consider ICT usage primarily as a human activity, characterised by human actors who need to avail themselves of such knowledge, we cannot avoid the fact that, “because of its

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<sup>73</sup> 2007:58.

<sup>74</sup> 2002:30.

<sup>75</sup> 2002:33.

<sup>76</sup> 2002:45.

influence and usefulness for us, knowledge is also often equated with social power.”<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, as Hellsten recognises, “markets alone cannot bring the technology to those who would most benefit from it and technology alone cannot bring about positive changes”, the utility of ICT depends rather on our “personal values and goals, and our cultural beliefs and norms”.<sup>78</sup>

Hence, we can establish that the internet, for example, is not merely an 'evolving technology' that is constantly changing, it is also a 'social technology'- and as such any simple technological determinism fails.<sup>79</sup> As Quan-Haase & Wellman conclude, “what makes the communication possibilities of the internet unique is its capability to support many-to-many information exchanges among geographically dispersed people” and that its “effects on society will be significant, but evolutionary”.<sup>80</sup>

**Globalisation versus glocalisation:** Once we start to speak of interactions between people in geographically diverse locations, however, we seem unavoidably to enter the territory of globalisation. No discussion of ICT innovation would be complete without mentioning this theme. Avgerou (after Harvey, 1989) speaks of 'time-space compression'<sup>81</sup> which plays a fundamental role in globalisation. Likewise, Lal attributes globalisation to two factors: a) scale and speed and the way that technology in particular ICTs is changing the world for all of us and b) the most current economic process that is widely accepted as changing the international environment and turning the entire world into a global village.<sup>82</sup>

As a phenomenon, globalisation involves intersection of multiple economic and social processes, although Avgerou notes that most theories of globalisation have been concerned with “the social processes through which ICT and other technologies...acquire significance and within which they are mobilised for economic or other social purposes.”<sup>83</sup> She subsequently questions the extent to which, “(policy) changes are the result of political forces serving particular economic interests rather than the free market ideal which is assumed to provide opportunities for all.”<sup>84</sup> In support of this, Kuhn et al (2006) argue similarly that “the introduction of a KBS has never been a subject for any bottom up decision process in which the citizens were involved. Rather the opposite is the case.”<sup>85</sup> Moreover, they suggest that although EU policies in this regard are presented as a response to globalisation, they are rather geared towards steering globalisation in the EU's favour.<sup>86</sup>

Note however that whatever the strategy involved, there are issues at hand. The free market reasoning advocated by Avgerou for example follows its own political ideology and although there are opportunities for all, supposedly, these are by no means equitable or just in their distribution. Likewise, the EU appears to have its own political mandate to steer its own affairs in a competitive global milieu. Ultimately, however, any democratic concern for the common good with respect to the spread globalisation and technological innovation has to

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<sup>77</sup> Hellsten 2007:9.

<sup>78</sup> 2002:22.

<sup>79</sup> Quan-Haase & Wellman, 2004:124. How does the internet affect social capital? In (M. Huysman & V. Wulf, eds) Social capital and information technology. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

<sup>80</sup> 2004:126.

<sup>81</sup> 2002:99.

<sup>82</sup> 2007:155.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> 2002:105.

<sup>85</sup> 2006:6.

<sup>86</sup> 2006:6-8.

acknowledge, as Hellsten suggests, that “at least as many people are at the same time losing their connections to the sources of essential information, local knowledge and basic participation and power to influence their own fate.”<sup>87</sup>

On the flipside of this, note that the internet can serve to enhance connectivity, sustaining existing social relations and enabling the possibility of new social relations, leading to the 'global village'. A key question is how the emergent global economy affects cultural differences among social groups.

In this regard, Avgerou uses the term ‘glocalisation’ to refer to cultural hybridization and the fact that “local cultures do not give way to a uniform set of global values, symbols and behaviours, but interact with each other and create a multicultural world.”<sup>88</sup> Hence, while she sees the national context as important for innovation, the immediacy of the local context is equally so, leading her to call for a "contextual situated socio-technical analysis" with respect to innovation, in which actors and actor-networks are important for understanding institutional contexts and interactions.<sup>89</sup> Quan-Haase & Wellman, likewise speak of becoming 'glocalised', that is “involved in both local and long-distance relationships”,<sup>90</sup> although they point out that not all internet activity is social- the computer can be immersive, removing one from public spaces of interaction and socialising and leading to the risk of a decline in face-to-face contacts.<sup>91</sup>

The key insight here is made by Somekh that “how knowledge is constructed, stored, reported, accessed and used changes radically through using it (ICT) as a mediating tool in social practice.”<sup>92</sup> In the light of this, she suggests that government needs to be proactive in enabling change with respect to adapting learning processes and facilitating educational experiences- something that would check Kuhn et al's concerns. She thus follows Ridgway and McCusker (2003) by proposing that in a society that is experiencing radical change as a result of ICT, there is a need to “map a new cognitive agenda, since cognitive abilities valued by one culture may be rendered redundant by a new technology”; this allows for an amplification of cognitive powers using ICT or an ‘effect with ICT’.<sup>93</sup> We now need to understand more precisely what cognitive mapping is occurring on the part of our respondents.

Referring back to our initial theme of interest, on intercultural mediation, social care and private sector innovation we see that a variety of uses occurs amongst our respondents: the journalist embodies these three uses in herself (intercultural mediation in her professional work, social care through her NGO), the jewellery store-owner to advance his business, the kite-surfing instructor to develop his business through promoting both technical skill (kite-surfing) and cultural mediation and finally, the fashion entrepreneur whose primary activity is to bring different cultures together. All of them are currently using ICT innovating in their businesses, dedicated careers or planned business ventures; hence we need to make some comment about the economics involved.

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<sup>87</sup> 2007:23.

<sup>88</sup> 2002:114.

<sup>89</sup> 2002:115-117.

<sup>90</sup> 2004:120.

<sup>91</sup> 2004:121.

<sup>92</sup> Somekh, 2007:22.

<sup>93</sup> 2007:35.

**SMEs and E-business:** Success in the current 'learning economy' is characterised by rapid learning and forgetting<sup>94</sup> and in this context ICT is of crucial importance for knowledge transfer. In a similar vein, Lal argues that “Industry is the engine of growth and one of the necessary conditions required to perform this role successfully include technological progress.”<sup>95</sup>

Accordingly, competitive advantage in enterprise flows from the effective use of explicit knowledge and exploitation of opportunities through new ICTs and related infrastructures and from tacit knowledge, through the facilitation of organisational learning processes and rebuilding of individual skills and corporate technological competencies.<sup>96</sup> Mueller-Falcke notes that the potential of ICTs to improve emerging business is key, since they are integral to globalisation, reducing time and space barriers and act as major determinants of global competitiveness.<sup>97</sup>

Leaving to one side the case our first respondent, who uses ICT within the more conventional context of corporate radio stations (albeit innovatively within her professional and voluntary role), consider that in the remaining cases we have the use of ICT in small-scale innovative business. But how might we define a SME (small or medium enterprise)? Lal follows the UK's Bolton Committee in defining a SME: a) in economic terms, a small firm is one that has a relatively small market share b) it is managed by its owner in a personalised way and not through the medium of formalised management structure c) it is independent from outside control and interference in taking principal decisions.<sup>98</sup> As Mueller-Falcke notes, small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) can benefit tremendously from ICT since they can reduce their information costs, widen their markets and reduce the role of middlemen.<sup>99</sup>

In our study, the jewellery business, the kite-surfing school and the fashion enterprise are all clear examples of SMEs. And indeed, Lal suggests that SMEs are “the lifeblood of the economy in both developed and developing countries”, for several reasons: by contributing to the national economy by higher labour per capita investment, increased investment (usually through owner's funds), by generating entrepreneurship, by providing training for skill development and by providing back-up service for large industry.<sup>100</sup> He notes moreover that “Support to SMEs in the era of globalisation has become imperative due to entry of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) in developing countries.”<sup>101</sup>

As we have seen in all of our examples, ICT plays a significant role in encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Mueller-Falcke, speaking of the importance of entrepreneurs for small-scale business, recognises that “the most important constraint for the development of small-scale enterprises is a deficient institutional infrastructure, usually with respect to governance and institutional weakness.”<sup>102</sup> To counteract this, ICTs positively speaking can serve to 'enhance flexibility', which Mueller-Falcke regards as a core characteristic of small-

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<sup>94</sup> Kuhn et al., 2006:9

<sup>95</sup> Lal 2007:1.

<sup>96</sup> Kuhn 2006:10.

<sup>97</sup> Mueller-Falcke 2002:1-2.

<sup>98</sup> 2007:39.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> 2007:2-3.

<sup>101</sup> 2007:5.

<sup>102</sup> 2002:22.

scale enterprises and also potentially “to enhance market activities and business development by stimulating economic activity”.<sup>103</sup>

If we focus more specifically, we see that E-business essentially concerns business innovation and the service of new and changing markets, remoulding businesses approach to markets and customers purchases, as well as acting as a highly useful tool for 'forward-looking enterprises'. As Lal recognises, “E-business transforms the exchange of goods, services, information and knowledge through the use of ICTs.”<sup>104</sup>

There are several models of E-business, which include: a) business to business or B2B; b) business to consumer or B2C; c) consumer to consumer or C2C; d) business to government or B2G and e) government to business or G2B. There are also 3 modes of e-business transactions: offline, online and finally, most effectively, e-business that uses shared or individual portals. According to the IDC, e-business is the fastest growing technology in recent times, with phenomenal growth in B2B followed by B2C.<sup>105</sup> Note that in our study, the jewellery business uses ICT mainly for B2B purposes, whereas the kite-surfing operation uses it for B2C and the fashion firm will use it both for B2B and B2C purposes.

**ICT and competitive advantage:** For Kuhn et al. competitive advantage in enterprise flows from the effective use of explicit knowledge and exploitation of opportunities through new ICTs and related infrastructures and from tacit knowledge, through the facilitation of organisational learning processes and rebuilding of individual skills and corporate technological competencies.<sup>106</sup>

Certainly, while ICTs appear to offer a large potential competitive advantage to SMEs, as Mueller-Falcke notes, these still need to be recognised, since they “enhance the quality and quantity of information that can be transferred, stored and processed”,<sup>107</sup> bearing in mind that the location of markets is the predominant factor of ICT use compared with other market-related variables. Note again that in our examples, the trading partners of our respondents are located in diverse locations scattered around the globe, increasing the need to use ICT for trade purposes. This usage, “allows a reduction in co-ordination costs and leads to efficient electronic markets”.<sup>108</sup>

Lal et al argue that while the concept of competitiveness is dynamic in relation to various aspects of the economy, for firms it refers to their ability to attract or increase market share. Thus global competitiveness can be defined as the capability of a company to generate more wealth than its competitors in world markets.<sup>109</sup> Strategically, ICT allows for cost minimization, differentiation of products and services, innovation, growth promotion and development of alliances.<sup>110</sup> In terms of policy implications for government, therefore, they note that there ought to be “deliberate entrepreneur skills improvement programmes for SMEs”.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, Kuhn et al. in concluding that ICT plays an ever-escalating role in

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<sup>103</sup> 2002:169.

<sup>104</sup> 2007:8.

<sup>105</sup> Lal. 2007:8.

<sup>106</sup> Kuhn et al. 2006:10.

<sup>107</sup> 2002:20.

<sup>108</sup> 2007:16.

<sup>109</sup> 2007:156.

<sup>110</sup> 2007:159.

<sup>111</sup> 2007:205.

innovative learning suggest that we understand “work-based knowing as a socio-cultural activity”.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.5 Conclusions

As we come to the conclusion of our paper, we note that the ICT innovation that we have researched typifies socio-cultural activity; whether it is our journalist reaching out to a million people on the air, our quick-minded businessman in the jewellery/mineral industry translating texts to exchange with other traders using Google, our kite-surfer who is set on sharing different 'worlds' with people, or our prospective fashion executive who thrives on keeping updated on trends around the world so she can create new looks. In this sense we live in what Hellsten terms a 'knowledge society', in which, rather than prioritising a 'neo-liberal market economy', we might better promote human flourishing according to the capability approach of Sen and Nussbaum.

As Hellsten suggests, “Using a capability approach as a normative ethical framework for distribution and implementation of ICT means that we need to reconsider the role of ICT in relation to what people can do with the new technology or what the technology can do for them in different cultural, political and economic settings, and geographic or environmental conditions, rather than assume that technological development has some intrinsic value.”<sup>113</sup> Clearly, if we focus our attention on the human actors involved in ICT, on maximising their capabilities and political and moral agency, we realise that we are not dealing with isolated individuals but relational people who live, work and socialise in profoundly social networks.

In this regard the notion of social capital is regarded as important, with current research suggesting that ICT adds onto social contact, rather than transforming or diminishing it.<sup>114</sup> Social capital here can be defined as, “network ties of goodwill, mutual support, shared language, shared norms, social trust, and a sense of mutual obligation that people can derive value from. It is understood as the glue that holds together social aggregates such as networks of personal relationships, communities, regions, or even whole nations. Social capital is about the value derived from being a member of a community.”<sup>115</sup>

While we realise that this report has not been able to report on innovative ICTS for social care, specifically with respect to social care workers,<sup>116</sup> at a meta-level we hope to have shown the practical concern that ICT be used innovatively for social care by all our respondents, surprisingly and somewhat emphatically even by those who use it solely for their own economic gain. Likewise, the importance of ICT for inter-cultural mediation has become, in different contexts, ranging from making knowledge of the 'other' immediately available, to experiential sharing with the other (e.g. learning to kite-surf in Brazil), through to linking with the other or even integrating the self and other with respect to something as tangible as the clothes we wear. Moreover, since all of our participants work in the private sector, we have seen how indispensable this technology is to their professional lives, as well as to their private lives- both in terms of information and communication.

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<sup>112</sup> Kuhn et al 2006:11,13.

<sup>113</sup> 2007:4

<sup>114</sup> Quan-Haase & Wellman, 2004:123.

<sup>115</sup> Huysman & Wulf, 2004:1. Social capital and information technology: current debates and research. In (M. Huysman & v. Wulf, eds). Social capital and Information technology. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

<sup>116</sup> See for example, Immigrants, personal care jobs and ICTs: a preliminary study on the Italian case. May, 2008. Istituto per la ricerca sociale.



Our findings serve to highlight the importance of the social domain of human existence, which is interpersonal in nature and dialogical in its content. Due to the parameters of the current report we are not able to advance our discussion of ICT as a mediating tool for socio-cultural activity at this point. It is important to relate immigrant ICT use and innovation to human capabilities, social capital and socially-mediated learning theory. In this endeavour we could follow the Vygotskian notion of the zone of proximal development to explore the ways in which emerging technologies can afford or enable human flourishing within the psychosocial context of migration and living in an ethnic minority. Suffice it for us now to conclude by recognising the manifold and interesting ways in which our migrant respondents are interacting creatively with ICT innovation in filling the imagination gap very successfully according to their own unique life stories, perceived needs and shared social concerns.



## CONCLUSIONS

### Two forms of intermediate communities: places to meet and sites to relate

Both Internet shops and online sites for immigrants are intermediate communities with an essential role for newcomers. They provide practical information, job opportunities, and instrumental help. They are also an important source of social support for adaptation. On the other hand, they are a context to interact with similar others, to develop a sense of community and ease the ecological transition associated with relocation. Finally, they function as a buffer against acculturation stress.

We have mentioned several policies and strategies that may contribute to empowering immigrant communities. For instance, *locutorio* owners, informal experts and online ethnic communities are key actors for skill building, civic engagement, relational integration and community development. They contribute to the articulation of the community, through Internet shops and online sites.

However, online sites and telecomm shops of this kind may act as bridges between receiving and sending communities, shaping a network of clusters connecting different countries (See Maya-Jariego and Armitage, 2007).<sup>117</sup>

Although with different levels, both are covering relational and identification functions inside their boundaries. However, the bridging potential is still less covered and highlights new areas for intervention.

1. Internet shops and online ethnic communities may participate in bridging strategies with the sending country. For instance, we have observed that the dissemination of the usage of the Internet among immigrant communities contributes to the dissemination of Internet shops and ICT in the sending countries. This may be formalised as part of co-development strategies: immigrants can be considered as agents for skill building in the home region; or may also participate through economic and civic initiatives in the life of their former cities.
2. On the other hand, Internet shops and online communities may be part of the insertion into the local society. Although few, some Spanish teenagers are using *locutorios*, as a way of participating without the direct supervision of their parents: this is an opportunity to promote the interaction between immigrants and host individuals. Foreigners' SMEs may play a relevant role in terms of relationships with local communities.
3. Finally, some areas as transnational families and networks may be also object of interest and intervention. In this case the intervention would be addressed to networks dispersed around different countries and regions. Although, in this respect, some online communities are providing some opportunities for contact and relational integration.

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<sup>117</sup> Maya Jariego, I. & Armitage, N. (2007). Multiple Senses of Community in Migration and Commuting: The Interplay between Time, Space and Relations. *International Sociology*, 22 (6), 743-766.

With independence of the intermediate communities, there are relevant individual differences to take into account. We have documented the diversity of forms of appropriation of ICT by IEM.

The cases examined allow describing the different roles of communities in the psychological adaptation of recent immigrants in Spain: (a) some of them provide physical or on line places to meet, facilitating networking processes in relational expatriated communities and maintaining the contact with sending countries (as, for instance, *locutorios* and *Romania din Spania*); (b) in other cases, communities may play an instrumental role for entrepreneurship and/or media initiatives, promoting national and diasporas' identities and facilitating commercial exchange (as, for instance, *Roman in Lume*); and (c) third, there are predominantly bridging communities (as *IberBG*), focused in the contact between immigrants and host individuals, focused in learning the languages and in cultural exchanges.

## APPENDIX I: TARIFA'S CASE LIFE STORIES

☒ Female Nigerian journalist and President of Women's NGO Association (27/6/2008)

### *Personal Background*

I was born in a family of more than 18 brothers and sisters and I'm the second youngest. I had a nice childhood because I was daddy's pet. I attended one of the best primary and secondary schools, my primary school was military school, and then my secondary school was catholic, where we had European reverend fathers, sisters and ordinary teachers. At the church both poor and rich were there. I can remember when I was young I had 15 pairs of shoes. The issue was school, because there were rich kids there. My father was rich, he owned an oil factory, two transport ships (between Cameroon, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea) and a rubber plantation. My brother went to Cambridge and then went back to Nigeria- he later became Secretary of State, while other brothers worked with oil, one of them was a managing director in Mobil. My brothers were all workers except one who was a teacher. Some of my sisters are teachers. That's one thing I don't like about the African system, because when the men studied they always studied better professions than the women. Now things must have changed, because I have a niece who is studying biochemistry. I was a very good girl, at that time I was a second Sunday school-teacher, so I was giving children classes before the beginning of the service. After my secondary school, I wanted to become an actress, but my parents refused- my mother and brothers said no- a good woman cannot become an actress, because they believed if you did that you would be a bad person. I stayed for some years; I didn't know what to study because I never wanted to be a teacher and a staff member- to teach about the hospital, children, to do work etc. so for years I did not study. I didn't know what to learn- there was nothing new to learn at that time, so I knew, I went to my sister who works in customs in Lagos. After some years I knew a boy so we became friends, then he came to Spain and during his stay in Spain we were still keeping in touch- he asked me to marry him- which my family opposed because he wasn't from a family with a good background- he wasn't suited to be my husband. So since I was so stubborn I told my family that I could escape from home if they didn't allow me to marry him. Then I also asked him to promise me that he would allow me to study, to learn drama if I came to Spain. Yes, he accepted, my family wasn't in agreement during the beginning but then they gave us the green light.

### *Path to Present Time in Spain*

So when I came to Spain I was very anxious to become an actress- my husband said "no, you're not here to study but to bring birth and music (to give him children and take care of him)." So I couldn't become an actress. (That was 1987-88). I started collaborating with NGOs and compound areas, through the NGO's I studied courses with them for several months at a time. And then, in the same period I had two children. After studying through the university and NGO I knew many people from other countries. Then I discovered that many women were in the same situation as me. So one day, after 10 years I decided to leave home. So with that I started a new life, I shared an apartment with other single mothers. I love communication, in the morning taking care of all the women and children and in the evening I studied. During this same period we formed a women's immigration association. After 2 years I started collaborating in 2 radio/TV stations. A year later, I was employed until today. I'm a freelance journalist/presenter in Canal Sur, Cadena Ser and work as the director and presenter of Onda local de Andalucia, where I explore the diversity of cultures, music, food; inter-culture, conscientization.

### *Technology and innovation*

The relationship between technology and innovation: for me it's important because the technology helps me to work faster and obtain all the necessary information and innovation makes it accessible to everybody. Because today with innovation and technology people can discover other countries, today if you want to know Ethiopia or Nigeria or South America you don't need to wait for a TV documentary, you can go in 24 hours a day to know countries, cultures, customs, everything. In terms of social care, most NGOs have lists of users, so whenever they attend to you they will write it down. Assuming someone is looking for a woman to take care of her, then they call the Association who will call the woman who left her CV in case of work to get in touch with her. Very few associations have listings where they list jobs. Technology can help people who work with problem people- find information about the condition on the internet and treatment- because they are not qualified. Many old people who live alone have an emergency phone, in case they are sick or in danger, connected to town council who will send someone. Mobile accessibility improves your chances of reaching family or doctor.

### *Technology and psycho-social integration*

How important is technology for you to integrate psychologically in your life. First to be aware of activities, second to inform other friends and other friends also inform me through phone and internet about activities. Then it also allows me to have a date (meeting). Another thing, I remember when my children were small, once in a month they would go on an excursion out of Seville. Depending on allocation, a teacher would call a mother to inform her that all was well. She would in turn call another mother and so it would go. And for my work as well- my work is basically with internet, phone, recorder, microphone, all the technologies- it makes me feel good that through all this technology more than 1,000,000 voices are listening to me. That I can get in touch with 1-2 million people per week. It is central, not only for my work but also for my family in Nigeria and in Spain, because through this I can communicate easily with my people. Future ways in which you can see technologies: to be improved, to be able to clean my house! In the future, I would like it to work much faster to work/research in the area of illness in general, and later, for Africa, for development. One of the biggest problems there is the lack of technology resources, the development is so slow.

### **☒ Male Brazilian jewellery-store owner (30/6/2008)**

#### *Personal background*

I came from a poor family, without financial resources for their children. When I was young I had to work to support my family. I looked after cars, then I worked in a supermarket packing bags, afterwards I sold chicklets, t-shirts etc in the street for 9 years and afterwards I was involved with drugs, with moments when I took things from shops to survive, you understand? And afterwards, always working in the street to help my mother, to maintain her house, with my brother too. My father used to make necklaces. We never received affection from our parents, their style was very much apart from us, many problems. Always working. With 18 years I earned money, I spent it, I learnt a lot and travelled a lot, and learnt from my experiences; since I have lived various stories, now I am living my own, in the way that I would like.

I worked in cubicles in the street, I sold from my hands, often having to avoid the police or running away. And afterwards, my brother and I went to Uruguay and we worked with minerals/stones- we had a licence to sell from a collapsible stall of 3 metres that we assembled and disassembled. We got to know a millionaire who put in orders for huge amounts of stones. We rented a location and opened a shop of stones. From there we started to

have a better quality of life (an older Brazilian man passes by and they start conversing in Portuguese) but we were very young, going out, drugs, this, that. Within 4 years we had so much money and then we lost everything- the old man died and so we lost out. After this I went to the north of Brazil with the little money I had, to get to know my family: my grandparents, uncles and aunts, whom I had never met. I discovered a zone called Shapada Diamantina in the city of Catolés. When I arrived there my money ran out. There were mountains with lots of quartz, so I started to work in a mine to extract the stones. From there, I stayed 2 weeks and went to the capital with 200kgs of stones and entered a cheap hotel, spoke to the taxi-driver and left him a sample of rock as his mother worked in the town council. I sold all the rocks in the commercial centre to one man who wanted more. I had to decide: shall I go back to Uruguay or to the mountains- I chose the mountains; I took people to work with me in the mines. At the end of the week the taxi driver called me “my mother would like to meet with you in the capital to buy rocks”, so I took 300kgs of rocks to the capital 600kms away. He came to look at the stones; 800kgs of quartz per month and more to the other seller. From there, I earned a lot of money, I had 3 persons working for me. From there, my brother came with a guy from Uruguay to export 2700kgs of quartz in two months. The idea was to export to Tucson- minerals and fossils, but lots of bureaucracy- so afterwards we decided on Vienna. I lost everything again (the Uruguayan swindled them). From there, I bartered with someone who had necklaces. My cousin lent me money to go to Uruguay. I returned to work in the same place as before. I went to *Punta del Este*, started to work on the beach, selling necklaces, 200\$ a day. 4800\$ in summer, bought more rocks and went back to the capital. Then a colleague invited me to come to Spain because he had a shop in Tarifa. He’s Spanish, I got to know him in Uruguay.

#### *Path to Present Time in Spain*

I didn’t have anything left- I paid for the trip over on my credit card. We met in Cadiz and afterwards we came to Tarifa to work in a shop that he and another Spaniard had rented. I didn’t have a place to stay- so I lived beside the shop- I was on the border of going back to Brazil (the partners were infighting) so I was offered work for the summer. There was one space for clothes and another for stones. Afterwards I got to know an Argentinean and an Italian and we travelled around selling things for a year, more or less. I didn’t have papers, neither did he. One day, in Cadiz I had a rented garage where I had my things- we were in our car and a woman denounced us; we were arrested by the police. I had 48 hours to organise papers or leave, so I did nothing. I was still selling on the street. We went to Salamanca, where there was a fight over locations- we were arrested for 32 hours but then the judge dismissed the case and gave us a chance to organise our papers. I asked the female partner of my Spanish colleague to marry me to get the papers, and my (real) wife was the bridesmaid. A crazy story! And today I have a child with the bridesmaid. And my friend is the godfather of my child.

#### *Current activity*

I was in Granada, my wife was pregnant. I left everything and came back to Tarifa. I got the papers and continued selling in the street. Afterwards I applied for a place in the Alameda and got it- two years ago. I worked well in summer with 35,000 euros and started to live with my wife’s mother and found a place to work in Algeciras for Christmas and New Year. Then I went to Brazil and bought a ton of necklaces and imported these. I didn’t know what to do, because the town council cancelled all the locations, and I had the patio (for storage) but was stressed. Then this shop appeared and I rented it with the man of 64 years who had the money to rent, with the deal that when my goods arrives I would pay him. We divided the business into necklaces and stones on my side and on his side, silver. In summer I gained 40,000 euro.

All was well and then he went to Madrid, he was never around. We went to India and Thailand and I discovered a place in India for silver. It was all meant to be down the middle. Then there were disagreements about getting my daughter to the doctor and me selling all the goods. He paid for the liquid and bags for the silver and that's all. I never said anything to him because I thought it would come from him. I sold during Christmas and New Year. We had another discussion, because he still had not paid my airfare, and I told him to take his things and go. He locked me out of the shop and took everything in January. I reported him to the authorities. I was left with 5 kgs of silver, a loan from the bank to buy goods for the summer and now I'm more or less in balance.

*Technology and innovation* (He is typing on Google translator as we start)

I only use it run my business and to communicate with my friends. It's something that's part of the system in which we live. I use it in my shop to communicate with friends and people who are more or less doing the same thing as me, photos, things that we use to do business. You told me last time about google translator: yes, I'm using it now to communicate with India. I use it to communicate with people in other places. I use different translators, not only google. On this page I write in Spanish and I can translate into English, Chinese or whatever is necessary for the language of the recipient and they also send back to me in English or Spanish. So he sends me photos, which I can have a look at, I then ask for better quality images and a catalogue with prices. "Sorry" (I say, because he is doing business as we speak). He replies, "Relax- I can do three things at the same time." There are people whom I know and whom I don't. Here in Spain, you can order on the internet and when the stock arrives at the post office you pay. In India they send me a catalogue, I order 20 of this, 30 of that and establish how much I have to send- pay the seller and then it arrives with UPS. I have never had a problem- I've always paid and the goods have always arrived. I always use google to search. Is the internet instrumental for you? Yes, it's necessary for me. For my work it's central- and nothing more...with the translator "it's ideal for my work!"

*Technology and psycho-social integration*

In terms of integration, I use it during work hours and afterwards I'm totally disconnected. What meaning in your life- makes it much easier, to run your system of business- my history is in this business- at this level of business I have to use it to arrange myself in business- to facilitate more things. What meaning or transformation for you- I've learnt better how to organise my working life. Your final comments on technology and innovation? To use this technology globally and especially more in the developing world to assist with humanitarian aid, to benefit people who need food, care, medicine; for social issues. Day by day, to be creative, to be innovative for my family and loved ones. In the future I don't want to be channelled into technology and constrained by it, I want to be more harmonised with natural life.

☒ **Male Brazilian Kite-surfing Instructor (30/6/2008)**

*Personal information*

I've always had a very independent life and I discovered that to live well in the city you need much money. But the quality of life on the beach is a life more simple and I think that there are many more opportunities there, because the people who arrive there for holidays have more free time to discover new cultures. My first job was as a computer trainer and afterwards I went to live a different lifestyle and I like to live with very different cultures to learn different languages. I have a very different lifestyle, and it's very hard for me to describe it to you, the only way to appreciate it is to come and experience it.



### *Path to Present Time in Spain*

I came to Spain so I could learn to speak Spanish properly, for my CV, that's very important- one season here in Tarifa- because the conditions of the wind and of the beach are very difficult. If you can teach kite-surfing here, you can teach anywhere. And I came for the development of my business, to bring back to Brazil new contacts and new equipment.

### *Current activity*

My business purpose is to get people from around the world to better know the best spots to ride in Brazil because a lot of people don't have any idea about Brazil- they think it's just samba and carnival. Because I would like to show rich people that you don't need to have much money to live well. We will get to know all the places of the ocean and appreciate that you can have a good style of life if you play a sport; sport will help you develop a better lifestyle. So I want to achieve the good development of my business and buy some kites and learn Spanish well. So how would you market your business? By word of mouth, so that people can check my website and book their trip. What is on your website? Information on the climate, the wind, the hotels, the tour, the location. I would like to start to travel more to develop my business in Brazil and in 5 or 6 years develop my hostel and kite school together.

### *Technology and innovation*

It helps me to put my business around the world. With internet and with mobile you can stay with contacts from everywhere. I believe the technological innovations keep me closer to the people and future clients. The advantage is that we have a shop in all the sites of the world. So to market the business it's very good. ICT is integral for me, very important. I believe that for my shop it would be impossible to do it, without this.

### *Technology and psycho-social integration*

The e-mail is the most important for me to have exchanges with my clients. I'm very happy to participate with my ideas in this project and what happens in Brazil is that there are many good ideas but they only stay on the computer and they are never realised and here I would like to see ideas become real to help people.

### **☒ Female Senegalese Fashion Entrepreneur (3/7/2008)**

#### *Personal background*

I was born in the Ivory Coast and went to Senegal when I was 8. I had a great childhood because I was in a nice school- I found a website of old pupils from my school in Ivory Coast. The director was a Swiss woman- she died 20 years ago. At 5 years old I went to Switzerland with her to have Easter- I don't remember, I only have the photos. All that I remember is the sweet called Sugus. After we went to Senegal I went to a great school, a catholic school. Let me tell you I'm not catholic but my parents thought it was great for education. And afterwards we had a political problem in Senegal: they called it a 'white year' for the children. There was a strike with everybody so the school was closed. I was 18, so I went to Ivory Coast to finish one year for the baccalaureate. And I studied accountancy in Ivory Coast after school. I didn't know what to do so I chose something- but I think it was not what I would have liked to do. What would you have liked to do if you look back now. I think fashion, yes, because I like it. And after that I met my husband, the year I finished. And he's French and he was living in Spain, so I came to live in Spain. How did you meet him? He came to the Ivory Coast as he was the Director of Unipapel, so he came to help set up a company Safika that was owned by the sister of my grandmother. I remember that during the holidays I was helping in the company where I met my husband.

### *Path to Present Time in Spain*

In Spain I was living like a privileged person because my husband had good status. I was living in Madrid, with a nice house and a swimming pool and a person to help- she was like a grandmother to my daughter. And the language was easy for me because I learnt Spanish as my second foreign language at school in Senegal. English is the obligatory foreign language and in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of college you can choose any other language (my sisters chose German, Portuguese, Arabic). So when I arrived it was easy to learn the language and be part of society. What about local African languages? We use it every day in the street/market but not in school, because they said you could not go anywhere with the local language nor know people around the world. If you want to perform local languages you can learn them in university. So I had the language and I had the possibilities- to go where I want, to have a nice life. It was a privilege. After 10 years in Madrid we moved here. It was different because it's a little place- but with the time I appreciate the fact of living in a small town. So here, I was fed up with staying at home. A friend of mine presented me to the Director of the African Film Festival of Tarifa, so I started to work in the festival, 4 years ago. I started as a volunteer in the first year and the second I started to coordinate the logistics. Since then, I've been involved with the logistics side.

### *Current Activity*

The current project is about fashion, it's to create a new line, a mixed way to wear African and European clothes. Can you tell me more? Not much, because we're about to have our first meeting. I will propose these people to work together for the next spring. We asked some financial support/money from the Junta Andaluca and we are waiting. So your idea is? To bring together a mixed style of African style and European style using stuff from both sides, in the future maybe Asian too. And Latin American? Yes, because I think that we can take many cultural artefacts from many parts of the world- because they are very nice. Yesterday I watched the TV and saw that from Thailand they have a very nice material. It was very interesting, yes, why not! About the team: one person is a French woman, her mum is English and she's a well-educated girl and I think we have the same idea about fashion, about wearing style, that we are open people and I think it's the same with the man involved, he's very open with the colours, with the style- he's a stylist and he worked from Mango in Dusseldorf. He was the one who created the dressage of the manikins. For example, I would like to look for some Zulu necklaces and belts from South Africa, because I think we can mix it with European or Asian style and can create something very nice.

### *Technology and innovation*

How can ICT help you? I think about the computer, about the internet. We have to use the internet to look for new stuff and to run the businesses between us and the sellers of these materials. So, to look for new stuff, for ideas and in the future, maybe to sell the things, to have a webpage. For mobiles, of course, it's very important to communicate, to call the buyers, to call the sellers or whatever. What type of role would it play for you? A link, for sure, a link with other parts of the world. For what we have to do it will be very important.

### *Technology and psycho-social integration*

How do you see yourself integrating this in your life? How will you include it? It will be part of my work. I think for all of us. Practically, in the future I would like to have a proper office with our sewing machine, to develop our ideas, to have telephone and internet, to communicate. It's important, yes, yes, yes. Finally? I think that we need internet, all these technologies. Right now, in this world you cannot say that you cannot use them because you cannot develop anything. You have to be in contact everywhere to have some new ideas, to

share our ideas (and the creativity?) and to open our mind for the new creation and to know what is happening newly in the world, in fashion. You know, I know that in South Africa there is a nice designer, Stoned Cherry. You can go on the internet when you have time, I was amazed by the designs, the colours, everything. She's one of my favourite African designers. I think she's living in Cape Town. Her husband is very important, a TV producer and before she said that she was living in Soweto. I think that we cannot ignore these technologies. We need them because we have to be in contact with other parts of the world. It's a way to communicate with our family, with our friends, to communicate in business, so it is part of our life, it is part. Any thoughts about technology and celebrating cultural diversity? Yes, I think if we permit other people to know about the culture of other people, to have an interest, to understand some problems, or to understand our differences.



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Title: ICT for Integration, Social Inclusion and Economic Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities: Case Studies from Spain

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Technical Note

**Abstract**

Following the Riga Ministerial Declaration on eInclusion (June 2006), the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) carried out on the request of DG Information Society and Media, Unit H3 (eInclusion) of the European Commission a study on “The potential of ICT for the promotion of cultural diversity in the EU: the case of economic and social participation and integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities”. A broad overview of policies and ICT-related initiatives was initially conducted in all the EU27 Member States, followed by a deeper research of ICT usage in four selected countries: France, Germany, Spain and the UK.

This report is one of the outcomes of the study and provides the in-depth analysis of three ICT usage experiences in Spain. The first two cases explore the role of ICT for the digital and social inclusion and/or the socio-cultural integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, while the last case addresses aspects related to their economic participation.

The first case concerns the role of the telephone-Internet shops (called *locutorios* in Spain) in the small town of Vera (Province of Almería) catering for the significant Ecuadorian community living there.

The second case compares three different online resources - *Romania din Spania*, *Roman in Lume* and *IberBG* - developed for and by Romanians and Bulgarians living in Spain, which are the two immigrant groups with the highest growth in 2004-2007.

The third case explores four life stories of immigrants who are entrepreneurs or self-employed living in the small town of Tarifa in Andalucía, illustrating their experience in business innovation and the personal differences in their appropriation of ICT.

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