

*THE COURSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OBSERVATORIO  
PERMANENTE DE LA INMIGRACIÓN EN SEVILLA  
(ONGOING IMMIGRATION RESEARCH PROJECT IN SEVILLE)*

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**Summary:** This document aims to give an overview of the progress of the Ongoing Immigration Research Project for Seville instigated by A.C.C.E.M.

**Keywords:** partnership, collaboration, participation



The *Observatorio* in Seville started in February 2006 with the aim of creating a partnership between the various organizations that deal with the different aspects of immigration from the social insertion of immigrants, to the creation of social policies.

Likewise, through the use of observation and shared assessments the project aims to provide different organizations with the scientific tools to better understand the realities of immigration. It also aims to analyse and propose intervention strategies that correspond with the needs and social problems faced by the majority of immigrants.

A.C.C.E.M. felt it was necessary to convey the results of this project because it is advisable that any decisions in the area of social or economy policies should be made on the basis of a thorough and active knowledge of the current situation of the immigrant population. This knowledge will allow us to ascertain the effectiveness of the different approaches and initiatives suggested (social intervention plans, programs and projects) as well as their suitability for the community they are aimed at.

When it started the Research Project involved forty two organizations. This number has now grown to eighty eight and includes representatives from three sectors: public, private and a third sector made up of NGOs and trade-unions. More concretely we can distinguish regional and municipal government offices, social services, health and education services, businessmen, immigrant circles or pro-immigrant groups, trade-unions and neighbourhood associations.

The area covered by the project has also increased. When it started the project was concentrated in two areas of Seville, La Macarena and Macarena Norte, where the number of immigrants is considerably higher than in the rest of the city. In 2007 it was decided that the area of research would be extended to cover the whole city in order to provide a wider vision of the situation as the results gained from research based in these two zones could not be applied to the whole of Seville. In order to place this information in context we remind you that Seville is located in the south-west of the Iberian peninsula and within Spain's political layout it is the capital city for the autonomous region of Andalucía. Seville has a population of 706,289 inhabitants of which 8.6% are not Spanish.

<b>Unión Europea</b>	20.959
<b>Europa no Comunitaria</b>	3.441
<b>Magreb</b>	7.518
<b>Resto de África</b>	2.401
<b>América Central</b>	2.415
<b>América del Norte</b>	886
<b>América del Sur</b>	20.632
<b>Asia</b>	3.020
<b>Oceanía</b>	48
<b>Apátridas</b>	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.339</b>

The essential features which this research project are based on are: citizens' participation, overall evaluation of the area, collaboration between different local organizations, use of new technology, access to good quality information.

After contextualizing the area and presenting the objectives, components and essential features of this partnership, we will go on to address the resulting actions of this project.

Bearing in mind that before the creation of this project no network existed to unify the different sectors that deal with the realities of immigration in Seville, it is understandable that the first concern of the participants was to establish a stable partnership (To be fair, it must be said that prior to the *Observatorio* some initiatives with similar goals had emerged but they were unsuccessful). Due to the desire to maximise the opportunities provided by this network the organizations involved in the project asked for several programs to be created in the areas of

employment, education, health and social awareness. These workshops are active to the present day and a housing program has recently been created as well.

We will now explain the objectives of each program and the actions which have been carried out.

-The employment workshop was made up of 35 organizations who aimed to work together in order to respond to different needs in the area of employment and immigration.

- Establishment of a wage table for the Domestic Service Sector which will be used by all organizations with an employment bureau. This agreement has had an impact on other Andalusian provinces. For example, in Córdoba an agreement was signed between all organizations with an employment bureau for immigrants in which they agreed to use these wage tables.
- Access to training courses provided by the Servicio Público de Empleo (Public Employment Agency) for all asylum seekers awaiting the resolution of their demand. This was possible thanks to a request signed by the employment workshop and presented to the Andalusian Public Employment Agency.
- After obtaining the official list of the jobs with an insufficient number of workers, a study has been performed about the different employment agreements in order to create a table stipulating the minimum conditions of wage.
- Creation of a system in which job offers are passed between different employment bureaux with the aim of keeping them all active.

-The education workshop is made up of 26 organizations and their aim is to reflect on the needs identified in the area of education and immigration. The members of this sector have focused on the analysis of the welcome plans of the different schools in the areas of Seville with the highest percentage of immigrants. They have also organised open days in schools with the aim of involving parents in the education of their children and to give them a better understanding of how the school works, and allow them to meet the people who work there.

-The Health workshop involves 10 organizations and its main aim is to co-ordinate the different health organizations (those from the public sector as well as ONGs) who deal with immigrants in order to develop relevant schemes in this area. A reference guide has been created listing all the services provided by these organizations to facilitate their use by immigrants and to also improve the service provided.

-The Social Awareness workshop is made up of 26 organizations. The main objective of this group is to organize activities that promote good relations between immigrants and the local community through raising awareness of the immigrants' cultures, values and traditions. Accordingly, different events were organised which culminated in 2006 and 2007 with the celebration of Immigration Day. Thanks to this network each organization is able to celebrate together with the other organizations involved, while in the beginning each entity organized their own celebration.

-The Housing workshop is the most recently established program. It aims to create a guide to available housing resources and to provide home owners with all the information required if they are thinking of renting their property. In order to first improve awareness of the problems encountered both by those who wish to rent an apartment and those who wish to rent their apartment, it was agreed that a study would be carried out in an area of the city where the immigrant population has begun to establish itself.

As we said earlier these five programs are a product of the partnership structure. Equally this partnership has allowed for a greater understanding and improved confidence between the organizations. As a result it has been possible work together to create programs and to ask for funding from various public institutions.

However, this year our efforts have been concentrated on the collecting and processing of information in view of reaching a diagnosis and evaluation of the needs of the immigrants who visit the 19 different organizations involved in the research project. Above all we need to bring to your attention the training courses undergone by all the professionals in charge of the research project as they have been crucial for their professional development. These courses were run by a team of professionals from the University of Besançon who taught them about quantitative and qualitative analysis and automatic cartography through the use of various computer programs.



During the first few months of this year there were no suitable resources at A.C.C.E.M. Sevilla to allow for the collection of data on a large scale. Fortunately this has changed and the collection of data is increasing progressively. One aim, as of yet unachieved, is to give the other organizations a more active role in the collection of data. It is possible that over the past year the emphasis placed on mutual understanding and the strengthening of ties between the different organizations distracted our attention from the main task of collecting data. The continuation of this stance is a problem that we are currently dealing with and it is anticipated that there will soon be a change for the better. In the plenary meetings, the technical personnel in charge of the research project is emphasising the need to collect the largest amount of data possible: The appropriation of the information is an indispensable step “in order to plan, define, animate and evaluate the policies and actions of sustainable territorial development”.

As well as enforcing this point with the managers of different organizations, visits have been carried out in order to teach the technical and administrative staff how to use the forms. In some organizations the computer program Pragma, for the collection of data, was also installed. In addition, the collection of data by the various organizations involved in the project is closely monitored, and changes are made if required. In the case that an organization does not have the necessary human resources to complete this new task, or sees it as an insurmountable burden, then other organizations from the project will lend them workers on specified days. However, even in spite of this, the information collected up to today by other organizations remains low, and most of it is in paper form. As we have said before, we can hope that this situation improves. When it does we will of course be able to take the important step of producing a schedule (timetable) for the collection of completed surveys.

In September 2008 more than 300 surveys had been completed and we hope to have 500 by the end of the year. Two quality controls have been completed, and the first one made all of us aware of the importance of extremely rigorous data collection. .

In addition, a design of a map of Seville divided into zones and districts is being drawn up on with the territorial data that are provided by specialized statistic institutions using the programs of automatic cartography (Philcarto and Phildigit). These maps will be used during the reporting about the results of current diagnosis that will take place in the beginning of 2009. This contextualisation will allow us to compare the data resulting from the investigation with that already available, and to eventually prove or refute the hypotheses suggested by the diagnosis. In short, it will allow all of us to enter a learning process about the territory of our study.