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# Assessing Good Intercultural Practices

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## Abstract

This article analyses the characteristics that social intervention projects should have so as to be considered a good practice in intercultural terms. A Good Intercultural Practice Scale has been designed and used on 139 social intervention projects developed in Andalusia (Spain) by diverse public and private institutional actors in order to measure the impact of considering elements of cultural diversity in the design and implementation of social intervention projects. The results obtained show that considering the elements of cultural diversity in services aimed at culturally heterogeneous populations improves the intercultural performance of such services.

*Keywords:* social services; good intercultural practice; interculturality; social intervention.

## Introduction

The management of culturally heterogeneous social contexts is a main cause of concern for current societies that are increasingly affected by migration inflows. The situation of Spain with respect to migration has changed significantly in the last decades. The migratory outflow of the nineteen-fifties and sixties gradually changed into a significant inflow at the end of the twentieth century due to national and international circumstances. In 2009 (the year when the field research of this study was conducted), there was a total of 5.6 million foreign people in Spain and more than 675 thousand in Andalusia, which makes 12.08% and 8,13% of the population respectively. In Andalusia, 50% of the foreign population were

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of European origin (EU), 20.3% were African, approximately 20% came from different countries in South America and the rest, from other areas (specially Asia and non-Communitarian Europe). In Spain, the main nationalities registered were: Morocco, Romania, United Kingdom, Ecuador, Germany, Colombia, Italy and Bolivia. This data show their significance when we consider that half of the new inhabitants of Andalusia and Spain in 2009 was provided by the migratory phenomenon.

Lately, a growing interest in providing culturally sensitive services that adapt to a multicultural population has become apparent in the implementation of intervention strategies that consider cultural diversity under a positive light, such as the development of intercultural assessment and management practices (Hernández-Plaza, Alonso-Morillejo & Pozo-Muñoz, 2006; Pratt & Apple, 2007; Vázquez-Aguado, 2010).

This interest is reflected for instance, in the design of certain guidelines for the development culturally appropriate professional services (APA, 2003). Likewise, professionals are being trained in developing basic intercultural competences so that they can provide adequate intercultural services (Maya, 2002; Rogers-Sirin, 2008). The objective of this training is that service staff becomes aware of the impact that their own worldview might have on the different dimensions of their professional performance (Sue, 2006). Several studies show empirical evidence that demonstrates the impact of the cultural dimension of social problems on the implementation of social interventions (Martínez, Martínez & Calzado, 2006; Cardemil, 2008). The following elements of diversity are considered to be significant for social intervention: culturally determined gender roles, the structure and function of family units, the presence of bilingual professionals, the management of space, the expression of emotions, the attribution of guilt and the role of religion (Shattell, Hamilton, Starr, Jenkins & Hinderliter, 2008; Grothe & Straub, 2008; Parra, Córdova, Holtrop, Villaruel & Wieling, 2008; Weisman, Duarte, Koneru & Wasserman, 2006).

A holistic conception of interventions in intercultural contexts should also consider the conceptualizations used in the construction of theoretical models, the methods and procedures followed during interventions, the social, political and economic models of the service provided, questions related to cultural stress, the beneficiary's migration phase, the social support that beneficiaries receive or the relation they keep with their culture of origin (Bernal & Sáez-Santiago, 2006). However, intercultural sensibility and competence should not be exclusively restricted to the competences of the professionals involved in the intervention. We agree with Martinez et al. (2006) that the organizations and institutions that offer such services must also be interculturally competent, which involves the development of two basic actions. On the one hand, organizations and institutions must plan and structure their services so that they are sensible to the type of diversity

existing in their areas of intervention. On the other hand, the intercultural dimension of these services must be assessed in order to ascertain their intercultural adequacy.

The following elements are often considered to be very relevant when organizing the intercultural aspect of services/institutions: institutional support, updating of the mission, policies and vision of the institution, the staff's cultural diversity and their knowledge of the cultural heterogeneity of beneficiaries and assessment/improvement of the staff's intercultural skills. Other relevant aspects include procedural and infrastructural adaptation to the cultural diversity of the context, facilitation of oral and written communication and collaboration with the leaders of the diverse communities in the area. Finally and of equal importance, are the institutional assessment of results and a clear statement of objectives/recommendations that might help improve the intercultural practices of organizations (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, 2001; Julve & Palomo, 2005; Whealin & Ruzek, 2008.)

Culturally sensitive actions developed by institutions should have a positive social impact, which implies preventing the rupture of the social tissue in the target community and its repair when there are circumstances that cause social imbalance among its members. Although there is a significant number of previous works that analyze the processes of the integration of foreign population in Spain (Solé, 1981; Martínez, García, Rodríguez, & Checa, 1996; Tornos, Labrador & Aparicio, 1999; Aparicio & Tornos 2000; Martínez, García & Maya, 2000; Tornos & Aparicio, 2005; Pérez Yruela & Rincken, 2005; Lucas & Diez, 2006; Lema, 2007, among others), there are still few works that assess the intercultural sensibility of the organizations that provide social services to immigrant population.

The present work intends to shed some light in that direction. It presents the main results of the pilot assessment of a number of projects of social intervention aimed at the management of diversity and provision of social assistance to foreign population. This pilot assessment was made with a new instrument that intends to measure the intercultural competence of social welfare organizations. This instrument, the Good Intercultural Practice Scale (GIPS), has a dimensional structure adapted from previous studies on Intercultural Communicative Practice and Intercultural Sensitivity (IS) conducted by Milton J. Bennet (1986) and Chen & Starosta (2000), and on the Dimensions of Interculturality developed by Liévano (2003). The resulting instrument has the following dimensions: a) Theoretical: Acknowledgement of Diversity; b) Ideological: Defense of Equality; c) Ethical: Promotion of Interaction; d) Sociopolitical: Dynamics of Social Transformation; e) Empathic: Promotion of processes that picture cultural interaction in equal terms.

The theoretical, ethical and ideological aspects make a higher factor that refers to the cognitive dimension of the intercultural attitude. The sociopolitical dimension (what the purpose of organizations is when they design a project)

corresponds with the behavioral component and finally, the emotional level is related to the empathic dimension. Figure 1 shows the basic contributions of each of the theoretical models used in the design of the instrument (GIPS).

Figure 1: Theoretical referents of the Good Intercultural Practice Scale

Level (Bennet, 1986)	Component (Chen & Starosta, 2000)	Dimension (Liévano, 2003)	GIPS
Cognition Group of thoughts and beliefs related to interculturality and which lead actions	Cognitive Knowledge necessary to succeed in international relations	Theoretical Acknowledgement of diversity	Negation or occultation of cultural difference in a context
			Conception of diversity
			Acknowledgement of cultural diversity (elements of diversity)
		Ethical Promotion of interaction	Hyerarhization of cultural difference
			Rejection of cultural difference
			Acceptance (tolerance) of cultural differences in equal terms
Acceptance That elements of diversity do not represent an obstacle for coexistence	Behavioral Group of actions and behaviors that show the adaptation of individuals to a context of diversity	Sociopolitical Dynamics of social transformation that make coexistence possible despite diversity	Plurality of agents involved
			Conflict management
			Promotion of respect for diversity
			No discrimination
			Promotion of participation
Appreciation/Valuing Understanding cultural differences as a reality that produces benefits, which causes positive actions towards diversity.	Affective Considering that interaction with diversity is positive for individuals	Empathic Promotion of educative processes that present cultural interaction in equal conditions	Intercultural Empathy
			Promotion of interculturality as a positive value

Source: Compiled by authors

Finally, with this work we intend to answer the following research questions: which is the basic socio-demographic profile of intercultural projects in Andalusia? Which are the dimensions of the GIPS that show better results in the participating projects? Can the GIPS be considered a valid and reliable instrument to measure the management of diversity in intercultural projects? And, can any

differences be found in the management of diversity among the different fields of project intervention (employment, health, education and social services)?

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

Project assessment was conducted on 139 intercultural projects developed in Andalusia by diverse social agents. The selection criteria of eligible projects were: 1) a minimum of one-year duration, starting 2002-2007; 2) total or partial, public-funding support; 3) activity aimed at immigrant population in Andalusian territory. Nonetheless, given the difficulty of finding a relevant number of projects meeting this requirement, the decision was taken to include projects that began before 2002. The geographical distribution of participants includes 41 projects in Huelva, 12 in Seville, 11 in Jaen, 14 in Granada, 20 in Cordoba, 10 in Cadiz, 12 in Almeria and 15 in Malaga. Also, four projects were included that operate at the regional level (in the eight provinces).

The activity variable — taken into account for identification purposes in later analyses — shows a high percentage for Social Services (43.4% of evaluated projects). Projects with an educative purpose make a 20.3% of the total; which leaves the 11.6% for projects that were aimed at Employment/labour market and a remaining 1.4% for the Health sector. Nevertheless, the second majority sector identified by the instrument was labelled “Others” (23.2%), including projects from diverse areas absent from the options offered, such as the sector of communication, services, legal defense, mediation, etc. The social agent was another project-identification variable in this study. 59% of participating projects were developed by social organisations (associations, foundations, and NGOs); 32.4% were developed by city halls (community Social Services, local offices etc.); and the remaining 8.6% were developed by other Public Administrations.

Also, most of these projects were rather recent. At the moment they were evaluated (2007) these projects had been working at least for one year and 69.8% of the 43 projects that provided this information were the most recent in time (2002-2007); 20.9% began between 1996 and 2001; and the remaining 9.3% began between 1990 and 1995. As for the number of users, the results obtained showed that most of these projects were aimed either to a very general target population or to very specific and restricted target users. The largest percentage corresponds to projects with 200 users or less (33.3%), whereas the percentage corresponding to those projects with more than 1000 users was 23.8%. The total budget of the project makes the last project-identification variable. The highest percentage (33.7%) goes to projects with a budget inferior to 10.000 €, which might be explained by the fact that most of them are funded by subventions that

are aimed at specific actions. This very reason would explain the fact that the number of projects shows a declining tendency as their budget increases. 15.1% of them reach a twenty-thousand-euro budget, 12.8% reach thirty-thousand, and 12.8% more than eighty thousand.

### ***Instrument***

The GIPS is structured in two separate parts; the first of them was addressed to action and intervention projects, whereas the second was addressed at the person who was responsible for the project. Initially, a 50-item, *Likert* graded scale was built, where 1 corresponds to “completely disagree” and 5, to “completely agree.” It was pretested and validated until it reached its final form of 32 items (Vázquez, Fernández, Fernández & Vaz, 2009) as shown in Table 7. This process consisted of an initial assessment of the instrument by a group of experts who used the item-objective congruence method and a subsequent pilot pretest on 50 participating projects. Item univariate descriptive statistics were analyzed within their respective dimensions. Most dimensions presented rather high means and typical deviations, which reflected basic aspects on which all subjects completely agreed. In order to analyze the metric properties of the instrument designed, item correlations were analyzed by dimensions, and in relation with the global measurement of each dimension. After the study of correlations, Exploratory Factorial and liability analyses were conducted to check evidences of construct validation and instrument structure.

The first part of the instrument included a series of project-identification questions (used to describe assessed projects) such as: project/activity denomination, name of organisation, year beginning activity, number of users/beneficiaries in the last year, main funding source, approximate total budget, city and main working sector. Also included in this first part was the thirty-two-item GIPS described above. The second part of the questionnaire (addressed individually to the person responsible for the project) was composed of identification questions and Chen’s Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (2000). Personal identification data included years working for/collaborating with the organisation/entity that develops the project, city and province of residence, age, gender, nationality, education, labour category (employee/volunteer), function and position within the entity/organisation, stay in a foreign country (indicating duration) and political inclination. The reduced version of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale is a twenty-four-item, five-point agreement/disagreement *Likert* scale where 1 corresponds to “completely disagree” and 5, to “completely agree.” Items are grouped into five dimensions, namely; implication in interaction, respect for cultural differences, confidence in interaction, enjoyment of interaction and attention to interaction.

### ***Validation Evidence***

Construct validation was conducted through the analysis of the internal structure of the scale using Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) with oblimin rotation. The AFE were used in each of the dimensions of the global scale, including Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling (KMO) and Barlett's test. Three factors were included within the theoretical dimension; contextual, conception of diversity and elements of diversity. The *contextual* aspect explains 61.3% of variance as a single factor; the aspect of *conception of diversity* explains 59.32% of variance, which reached 71.49% when an item was erased due to its low saturation and correlation ('*The cultural differences of the agents, actors and beneficiaries involved in the project/activity are taken into account*'). The last component, *elements of diversity*, initially presented two factors (that explained the 55.36% and the 14.12% of variance respectively). Two items were erased ('*The spoken/written languages of the agents involved in the project/activity are taken into account*' and '*The physical appearance of the agents involved in the project/activity are taken into account*'). These two items presented the worst correlations and saturated in another factor, increasing the variance explained by a single factor to 66.1%. The initial *ideological* and *ethical* dimensions became a single one (Tables 1 and 2).

After the EFA and the progressive erasure of eight items that presented saturation in more than one factor and according to their theoretical content (avoiding thematic doubling and incongruence) a unifactorial solution was reached after the ninth EFA that explains 53.9% of variance (Table 3). The socio-political dimension showed three factors that explained 44.51%, 16.04% and 13.30 % of variance respectively. Taking into account the correlations, the value of *alpha* when any element is erased and high saturation in another factor, one more item was erased ('*The project/activity only provides information to cultural minority groups in the language of the host community*'). With that, two factors were obtained, the second of which was formed by a single item ('*The project/activity provides information to beneficiaries in their native language only*'). This item was erased because of its factorial location, semantic context and low correlations. The final solution of this dimension, after the final erasure of these two items, renders a single factor that explains 57.53% of variance (Table 4).

The first EFA of the *intercultural empathy* dimension rendered a solution with two factors (which explained 59.82% and 20.70% of variance) with only one item saturating in a factor different from the rest ('*The project includes among its objectives the publication of bilingual or multilingual informative material*'). Once this item was erased, the variance explained by a single factor increased to 74.21% (Table 5). The results are shown in Tables 1 to 5. The following aspects were considered in the erasure of items: non-significant correlations, bad saturation (in factor value and location), semantic content and the value of *alpha* after



the erasure of each item. This process altered the final variance explained in each dimension, as showed in Table 6. Although the final number of items might be low in some dimensions, the quantitative and semantic analyses made make it advisable to erase some of them.

Table 1. Contextual Factor and conception of diversity of the theoretical dimension

Contextual EFA 1	Component	Conception of diversity EFA 1	Component	Concepción diversidad EFA 2	Component
Theoretical D.1	.799	Theoretical D.8	.885	Theoretical D. 8	.901
Theoretical D.5	.792	Theoretical D.7	.870	Theoretical D.7	.860
Theoretical D.17	.759	Theoretical D.4	.836	Theoretical D.4	.847
Ethico-id D. 13	.706	Theoretical D.6	.758	Theoretical D.6	.768
Theoretical D.3	.680	Theoretical D.2	.390		

Table 2. Elements of Diversity Factor of the theoretical dimension

AFE 1	Component		AFE 3	Component
	1	2		
Theoretical D.12	.890		Theoretical D.9	.876
Theoretical D.10	.849		Theoretical D.12	.873
Theoretical D.9	.849		Theoretical D.10	.866
Theoretical D.11	.767		Theoretical D.11	.795
Theoretical D.14	.747		Theoretical D.14	.742
Theoretical D.16	.713		Theoretical D.16	.710
Theoretical D.13		-.514		
Theoretical D.15		.730		

Table 3. Ethico-Ideological Dimension

EFA 1	Component				EFA 9	Component
	1	2	3	4		
Ethico-id D. 7	.800	.410			Ethico-id D. 10	.871
Ethico-id D. 10	.784				Ethico-id D. 7	.854
Ethico-id D. 5	.739		-.508		Ethico-id D. 3	.812
Ethico-id D. 3	.670				Ethico-id D. 5	.769
Ethico-id D. 2	-.667				Ethico-id D. 9	.562
Ethico-id D. 9	.653			-.495	Ethico-id D. 11	.425
Ethico-id D. 13	.648					
Ethico-id D. 8	.612		.595			
Ethico-id D. 11	.549					
Ethico-id D. 4	.522	-.509				
Ethico-id D. 6	.497	.491	-.496			
Ethico-id D. 1		.695				
Ethico-id D. 12	.426	-.497		.531		

Table 4. Sociopolitical Dimension

EFA 1	Component			EFA 3	Component
	1	2	3		
Sociopol D.2	.922			Sociopol D.2	.903
Sociopol D.7	.809			Sociopol D.7	.790
Sociopol D.1	.804			Sociopol D.5	.767
Sociopol D.6	.640			Sociopol D.1	.766
Sociopol D.5	.635	.506		Sociopol D.8	.663
Sociopol D.3		.910		Sociopol D.6	.631
Sociopol D.8	.527				
Sociopol D.4			.972		

Table 5. Intercultural Empathy Dimension

EFA 1	Component		EFA 2	Component
	1	2		1
Inter.Empathy D.2	.916		Inter.Empathy D.2	.928
Inter.Empathy D.5	.864		Inter.Empathy D.5	.876
Inter.Empathy D.1	.831		Inter.Empathy D.4	.828
Inter.Empathy D.4	.821		Inter.Empathy D.1	.809
Inter.Empathy D.3		.978		

Table 6. Variance explained by each final dimension

Dimension	N° items Inicial	N° factors	Variance explained	N° items Final	Variance explained	Items Final Questionnaire
Theoretical Contextual F.	4	1	61.3%	5	61.3%	1-5
Theoretical Conception of Diversity F.	5	1	59.32%	5	71.49%	6-10
Theoretical Elements of Diversity F.	8	2	55.36 y 14.12%	6	66.1%	11-16
Ethico-ideolo	1	4		5	53.9%	17-21
Sociopolitical	8	3	44.51%. 16.04% y 13.30%	7	57.53%	22-28
Intercultural Empathy	5	2	59.82 y 20.70%	4	74.21%	29-32

The final instrument is structured into 32 items organized into four dimensions (see Table 7). The first, theoretical dimension includes three factors; the context of intervention, the conception of diversity and the appreciation of the elements of diversity. The ethical-ideological dimension involves the defense of the equality of subjects notwithstanding their cultural background whereas the sociopolitical dimension is concerned with social transformation. Finally, the intercultural empathy dimension considers the encouragement of communicative and relational processes of intercultural interaction in terms of equality. The Cronbach Alpha for each of these dimensions oscillates from 0.79 and 0.89, showing a global reliability of 0.88 for the scale.

Table 7. Good Intercultural Practice Scale

<p>Theoretical Dimension: Contextual Factor</p> <p>The Project/activity is developed in a multicultural context.                  The Project/activity considers the position of involved agents within the social structure.                  The Project/activity includes among its objectives promoting the <u>recognition</u> of cultural diversity in the intervention context.                  Making a <u>previous study</u> of the cultural diversity of the collectives in contact is considered important.                  The project/activity includes among its objectives promoting the <u>mutual understanding</u> among cultures coexisting in the intervention context.</p>
<p>Theoretical Dimension: Factor Conception of Diversity</p> <p>The project/activity considers the possible existence of <u>discriminatory practices</u> based on cultural differences.                  Possible <u>conflicting points</u> among the diverse cultural collectives in the intervention context are foreseen.                  The project/activity identifies the existence and nature of prejudices based on cultural differences.                  The project/activity identifies the existence and nature of discriminatory practices based on cultural differences .                  The project/activity explicitly condemns racist stereotypes and messages.</p>
<p>Theoretical Dimension: Factor Elements of Diversity</p> <p>Education/Training of the agents of the project/activity is considered.                  Education/Training of the beneficiaries of the project/activity is considered.                  Possible differences between the literacy levels/education-training areas of agents and beneficiaries of the project/activity are considered.                  The religious confession of all the agents involved in the design and execution of the project/activity is considered                  The eating habits of the agents involved in the project/activity are considered.                  The health habits of the agents involved in the project/activity are considered.</p>
<p>Ethico-ideological Dimension</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives teaching cultural minorities the language of the host community.                  The project/activity includes among its objectives providing cultural minorities with training in the ethical values of the host culture.                  The project/activity includes among its objectives providing cultural minorities with training in the civic values of the host culture.                  The project/activity includes among its objectives providing cultural minorities with academia/professional training according to the methodological model of the host culture                  The project/activity includes among its objectives promoting tolerance for the diverse cultures coexisting in the intervention context.</p>

<b>Sociopolitical Dimension</b>
<p>The project/activity includes among its objectives preventing possible conflicts among individuals with different reference cultural patterns who coexist in the intervention context.</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives promoting respect for the diverse cultures coexisting in the intervention context.</p> <p>The project/activity promotes actions against mutual prejudices and discriminatory attitudes developed and sustained by the diverse cultures coexisting in the intervention context.</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives the non-discrimination for cultural reasons among the agents involved in it.</p> <p>The project/activity includes the participation of individuals from cultures different from its own.</p> <p>The project/activity includes a protocol for the solution of possible intercultural conflicts.</p> <p>28. The project/activity promotes cultural pluralism among the agents involved in it.</p>
<b>Empathic Dimension: interculturality as a positive value</b>
<p>The project/activity includes among its objectives promoting relations among the diverse cultural identities coexisting in the intervention context.</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives the celebration of cultural events involving at least more than one reference culture.</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives spreading cultural identity marks of groups of individuals with diverse reference cultures (history, art, traditions, values, popular beliefs, etc).</p> <p>The project/activity includes among its objectives the celebration of intercultural encounters among groups of individuals with diverse reference cultures.</p>

### **Procedure**

Once the GIPS was validated, we proceeded with the field study. A total of 773 projects of social intervention with immigrants were found in Andalusia and contacted via e-mail and ordinary mail twice. The mailing process took two months, including sending, follow-up and reception of questionnaires. The total of questionnaires received reached 139 (18.2% of the total of identified projects). The data gathered were encoded and statistic analysis conducted on them using SPSS, version 14.0.

### **Results**

The three factors that make the theoretical dimension show normal distributions for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S). The mean of each factor oscillates between 3.52 for the factor *elements of diversity* and 4.25 of the *contextual* factor, with a global mean of 3.86 and a typical deviation of 0.67. The correlations obtained among the factors of the theoretical dimension are shown in Table 8, which also includes the correlations of the global theoretical dimension with each of them. All correlations are positive and significant, with a special relevance of the values obtained from the global dimension with the factor *elements of diversity*.

Table 8. Factor Correlation of the Theoretical Dimension

		Factor CONTEXTUAL	Factor CONCEPTION	Factor ELEMENTS	Dimension THEORETICAL
Factor CONTEXTUAL	Pearson Correlation	1			
Factor CONCEPTIÓN	Pearson Correlation	.436(**)	1		
Factor ELEMENTS	Pearson Correlation	.403(**)	.342(**)	1	
Dimension THEORETICAL	Pearson Correlation	.700(**)	.725(**)	.856(**)	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

The ethical-ideological dimension follows a normal distribution (K-S=1114, p = 0.167); the mean score is 3.48 with a typical deviation of 0.99 (with N=137). The mean score of the sociopolitical dimension is rather high, with a value of 4.24, with a typical deviation of 0.63. These data might reveal the importance of this dimension in all projects, which underlines the higher relevance of the behavioral component in relation with the cognitive one (theoretical dimension). Finally, the intercultural empathy dimension follows a normal distribution (K-S=2311 0=0.000) and the mean score is 4.14 with a typical deviation of 0.99. This mean is considerably high, which also happens in the socio-political dimension. These means reveal that most projects have a positive approach to intercultural empathy and that there is an affective component of involvement in the intercultural development of the project that adds to the behavioral aspect. An analysis of correlations (Table 9) among the different dimensions of the GIPS shows that all correlations are significant (level of reliability of 95%) although the correlations with higher values are those established between the sociopolitical dimension and the intercultural empathy and theoretical dimensions respectively.

Table 9. Correlacions among scale dimensions

		ETHICAL DIMENSION	SOCIOPOLÍTICAL DIMENSION	INTERCULT. EMPATHY DIMENSION	THEORETICAL DIMENSION
ETHICAL DIMENSION	Pearson Correlation	1			
SOCIOPOLITICAL DIMENSION	Pearson Correlation	.328(**)	1		
INTERCULTURAL EMPATHY DIMENSION	Pearson Correlation	.251(**)	.593(**)	1	
THEORETICAL DIMENSION	Pearson Correlation	.345(**)	.580(**)	.345(**)	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

Given the relevance of a possible association between the sector of intervention and the different dimensions of the GIPS, we made an ANOVA of each dimension (Tables 10 and 11), where we assumed the required principle of normalcy and checking the principle of homoscedasticity.

Table 10. ANOVA Sociopolitical Dimension -Sectors

(I) SECTOR	Means	(J) SECTOR	Difference Means	Typical Error	Sig.	Interval of Reliability at 95%	of
SOCIAL S.	4.157	EDUCATION	-.289	.138	.384	-.683	.106
		HEALTH	.299	.432	1.00	-.935	1.535
		EMPLOYMENT	.347	.169	.424	-.137	.832
		OTHER	-.307	.133	.230	-.688	.074
EDUCATION	4.445	SOCIAL S	.289	.138	.384		
		HEALTH	.588	.440	1.00	-.106	.683
		EMPLOYMENT	.636(*)	.188	.010	-.668	1.845
		OTHER	-.018	.157	1.00	.098	1.174
HEALTH	3.857	SOCIAL S	-.299	.432	1.00	-.466	.429
		EDUCATION	-.588	.440	1.00		
		EMPLOYMENT	.048	.451	1.00	-1.535	.935
		OTHER	-.607	.439	1.00	-1.845	.668
EMPLOYMENT	3.809	SOCIAL S	-.347	.169	.424	-1.240	1.336
		EDUCATION	-.636(*)	.188	.010	-1.860	.646
		HEALTH	-.048	.451	1.00		
		OTHER	-.654(*)	.185	.006	-.832	.137
OTHER	4.463	SOCIAL S	.307	.133	.230	-1.174	-.098
		EDUCATION	.018	.157	1.00	-1.336	1.240
		HEALTH	.607	.439	1.00	-1.183	-.126
		EMPLOYMENT	.654(*)	.185	.006		

The theoretical dimension assumes equal variances for the Levene test. The ANOVA shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the groups established by work sectors ( $F(4,133)=1.08, p=0.37$ ). The ethical-ideological dimension does not assume the principle of homoscedasticity among the sector groups and there are not statistically significant differences ( $F(4,68)=2.39, p=0.59$ ). It is possible to assume equal variances in the sociopolitical dimension, with statistically significant differences ( $F(4,131)=4.43, p=0.02$ ). Such differences are found between the projects in the employment sector and those belonging to the educative and those identified as *other intervention sectors*. In this dimension, the mean in the employment sector is significantly inferior to the mean in the other two sectors. Finally, the intercultural empathy dimension also shows equal variances and statistically significant differences that are due to sectors ( $F(4,132)=5.10, p=0.01$ ). Again, the employment sector shows statistically significant differences in relation with other sectors, except for the health sector.

Table 11. ANOVA Intercultural Empathy Dimension -Sectors

(I) SECTOR	Means	(J) SECTOR	Difference Means	Typical Error	Sig.	Interval of Reliability at 95%	
SOCIAL S	4.259	EDUCATION	-.0480	.217	1.000	-.663	.572
		HEALTH	1.383	.681	.441	-.559	3.327
		EMPLOYMENT	1.008(*)	.267	.002	.247	1.770
		OTHER	-.038	.208	1.000	-.632	.555
EDUCATION	4.307	SOCIAL S	.048	.217	1.000	-.572	.668
		HEALTH	1.432	.693	.408	-.547	3.409
		EMPLOYMENT	1.057(*)	.297	.005	.209	1.904
		OTHER	.009	.245	1.000	-.689	.709
HEALTH	2.875	SOCIAL S	-1.383	.681	.441	-3.327	.559
		EDUCATION	-1.432	.693	.408	-3.409	.547
		EMPLOYMENT	-.375	.710	1.000	-2.402	1.652
		OTHER	-1.422	.689	.413	-3.392	.548
EMPLOYMENT	3.25	SOCIAL S	-1.008(*)	.267	.002	-1.770	-.247
		EDUCATION	-1.057(*)	.297	.005	-1.904	-.209
		HEALTH	.375	.710	1.000	-1.652	2.402
		OTHER	-1.047(*)	.289	.004	-1.874	-.219
OTHER	4.297	SOCIAL S	.0384	.208	1.000	-.555	.632
		EDUCATION	-.009	.245	1.000	-.709	.689
		HEALTH	1.422	.689	.413	-.548	3.392
		EMPLOYMENT	1.047(*)	.289	.004	.219	1.874

The variance analysis of dimensions in relation with project number of users shows no statistically significant differences between none of the groups established for any of the dimensions of the scale. Neither are there differences between dimensions in relation with the year beginning projects. Lastly, several GIPS analyses were conducted to determine whether there were associations among the highest and lowest punctuations of the different dimensions (extreme); that is, whether a higher punctuation in a dimension leads to similarly high punctuations in the rest of scale dimensions following a pattern that could be seen as linear. The analyses were conducted considering that high punctuations for the dimension of intercultural empathy should correspond with high punctuations in previous dimensions. Thus, extreme punctuations were determined for each dimension (according to percentiles 25 and 75) and the possible existence of statistical association was calculated.

Analyses have related the fourth dimension with the three previous dimensions, the third dimension with the two previous ones and the second dimension with the first. According to these analyses, there is a statistically significant association between the emphatic dimension and the socio-political aspects ( $\chi^2(1, N=54)=26,9, p=0,00$ ) and the theoretical dimension ( $\chi^2(1, N=40)=14,6, p=0,00$ ), but not with the ethical-ideological ( $\chi^2(1, N=48)=1,9, p=1,61$ ). The socio-political dimension shows significant association with the ethical-ideological ( $\chi^2(1, N=44)=11,3, p=0,001$ ) and with the theoretical ones ( $\chi^2(1, N=36)=28,6, p=0,000$ ).



Finally, there is a significant association between the ethical-ideological and the theoretical dimensions ( $\chi^2(1, N=41)=5,5, p=0,019$ ). The punctuations obtained allow establishing significant relationships in the groups with the highest and lowest punctuations. The analyses support the idea of the linear tendency in the punctuations of dimensions; that is, projects with high punctuations in the empathic dimension also get high punctuations in previous or initial dimensions.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

The results of the psychometric analysis of the GIPS support the reliability of the scale and prove that it shows evidence of construct validity for the assessment of projects as good intercultural practices. This scale is a groundbreaking instrument in this field, since there is no other that permits to assess such characteristics at the level of intervention. It can be used for the improvement of the implementation of projects designed for foreign population. The proposed scale can be considered to be valid and reliable to measure the aspects of diversity that must be taken into account when designing and implementing intercultural projects.

The results obtained by the scale might lead to further research in different geographical locations. Its analysis would show the relations among dimensions with multiple variables and processes, which would help to check metrical aspects, other evidences of the scale's validity and practical application to intervention projects. In this sense, it is advisable to make further research on the scale that would include confirmatory factorial analyses and analyses of structural models in order to consolidate its evidences of validity, its structure and its content.

The psychometric analyses performed show that all dimensions follow a normal distribution that permits to carry out later analyses that should require this condition. There are significant correlations among the four dimensions of the scale. Correlations with a higher value are the ones established between the sociopolitical dimension and the intercultural empathy and theoretical dimensions respectively. These significant correlations become logical once it is understood that when the basic conceptual frame of intervention (theoretical dimension) is established, interventions (sociopolitical dimension) need have close relationship with such previously established principles. . Similarly, such interventions must be founded on basic ideological principles on diversity (ethical-ideological dimension). Apart from interventions, theoretical and practical principles must be consolidated and based on the intercultural empathy of the institutions and professionals that design and carry out such interventions; that is, on the affective level of the appreciation of diversity and interculturality, which goes beyond the mere performance of interventions.

The results obtained imply a step forward in the assessment of good intercultural practices in relation with the metrical aspects of the scale, the evidence that shows its validity (e.g. confirmatory factorial analysis and analysis of structural models), its content and its structure. Also, the use of the scale in further research might contribute to the development of adequate guidelines for the management of cultural diversity in the design of intercultural-intervention projects.

The project data rendered by the use of the scale show that most participating projects belong to the sector of Social Services and are relatively recent (began in 2002 or later). More than half of them are carried out by entities and organizations of the Third Sector, which followed in importance by city halls. In relation with the number of users, two extremes can be found. On the one hand, there are projects with more than a thousand users, and on the other hand, there are projects with less than 200 users. These basic characteristics allow making a basic descriptive approach to projects that will be needed in future explanations of data analysis.

The information resulting from the process of construction and validation of the scale, and from the analysis of participating projects shows the relevance of including the cultural perspective in the analysis and intervention on social problems. The ascertainment of the intercultural reality assumed by a project must be used to reinforce those aspects that might be considered a good practice in this sense and to improve weaker aspects.

Deficiencies must be approached by considering the specific conditions of each project and its context of intervention at all levels (social, demographic, cultural, political, economic, etc). The intercultural approach to pluralism and multiculturalism is a step forward in the coexistence of culturally diverse communities that avoid assimilationist positions.

Social Work must emphasize the importance of this approach and the subsequent need to make an appropriate social diagnosis that allows for the planning and design of actions that meet the real (both objective and perceived) needs of native and foreign population. Such diagnosis of reality should consider different dimensions such as the ones that have been incorporated to the GIPS. It is crucial to consider questions related to the sociopolitical, ideological and ethical spheres, but this must be done on a solid theoretical basis that guarantees professional rigor in actions. Similarly, it is necessary to incorporate guidelines for the development of empathy with people who might be living situations of multisectorial complexity that hinder an adequate development of their lives.

It involves appropriating a methodology closet o the *emic* perspective, which consists of initial gathering information for a later understanding of a problem within a specific cultural context. Professionals of Social Work must overcome

possible cultural barriers, facilitate intercultural coexistence, and decode the new cultural context so as to make it comprehensible for the development of actions that consider intercultural factors. Intercultural sensibility and the richness of diversity must be present in the design and implementation of projects related to cultural differences. The intercultural perspective must be taken into account; it must overcome plurality, multiculturalism and mere difference, allowing for growth in the theoretical, affective, sociopolitical and even ideological aspects of intervention.

Considering the average punctuations of all the dimensions of the scale, it could be argued that the sociopolitical dimension is the most relevant one because it shows the highest mean associated to aspects of social intervention and transformation. The second dimension in importance is that of intercultural empathy, which gives special relevance to the work of people who approach their work from a humanitarian perspective.

The results obtained show that the different sectors of project intervention (Employment, Health, Education, and Social Services) present statistically significant differences in their approaches to the management of diversity. Such differences are found in the sociopolitical and empathic dimensions, where Employment shows the lowest mean. It is possible that sector of Employment is less dynamic in the sociopolitical dimension because it is more related to dynamic aspects of social transformation. This would explain the differences between this sector and other sectors such as Education and Others, which would involve aspects closer to action than to planning and designing.

As for the intercultural empathy dimension, the sector of Employment might be different from the rest of sectors (except for Health) because Education and Social Services seem to require a certain degree of empathy with the beneficiaries of interventions. Finally, it must be mentioned that this scale allows identifying the most positive aspects in intercultural projects so that they can be taken into account for projects in process or for the design of new projects and actions that provide an answer for the different needs and realities of cultural diversity.

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