

SOS Détresse

Integration: a two-way process

Integration can be considered the result of efforts and reciprocal compromises. If migration is a form of uprooting, rootedness requires fertile soil for its development, as with any tree replanted in a different place...

Succeeding in feeling at home does not only rest on the will of the person migrating. The attitude of the host society towards cultural diversity and the way in which it welcomes migrants plays an important role. On one hand, the migrant must accept the laws and base values of the new society. On the other hand, the host society must allow integration with respect and dignity, by offering the necessary conditions at the judicial, social, educational, and healthcare level...

Nostalgia on both sides...

Rapid changes in society, such as population growth and the strong cultural diversity of Luxembourg and our globalised world mean that, not only the people arriving, but also those who are already there, can feel a loss of markers in their country. This can lead to the feeling of no longer feeling at home. As a native, we can sometimes feel overtaken by the changes and have the feeling of no longer knowing or mastering our surroundings. It is especially the case that we no longer really know what defined our country before, and what we were attached to. This can make us regret the past where we had the feeling of belonging to a community which defined us.

You speak ... what language?

Communication between citizens is possible via a shared language for all. In many cases, by settling in a different country, the migrant persons must learn a new language. This contributes to better dealing with everyday life and feeling more satisfied in the host country.

The feeling of strangeness and incapacity that we can feel when trying to express ourselves in the language we're trying to learn is not always easy to live with. We no longer have the ease of before in social relationships, and we can lose self-confidence. All throughout the migration we are faced with such situations which can make us feel incompetent.

Learning a new language can be a very long process. It is normal that we cannot always make ourselves understood or communicate spontaneously, especially on more

complex topics. For a certain time, we don't manage to express ourselves in shorthand, to be humorous or to talk about our feelings like we could in our mother tongue. It takes years to adapt ourselves to a completely new way of communication, with its logic, forms of politeness, gestures and different mimics.

Living together

We all need to group together, or to be close to persons who share common and similar points with us, such as origin, or language spoken. By settling in a new country, the group of compatriots is very important for us. They provide a sense of security and familiarity that we have lost.

These positive feelings help us to overcome difficult moments of adaptation, but they can also be a barrier when the social contacts limit themselves uniquely to staying with their compatriots. By interacting with the whole of the diverse society, we also gain experiences that enrich us and make migration an asset.

Cohabitation of persons with different cultural origins, languages and ways of life, traditions and values can have a destabilising effect on all concerned. In fact, for all of us, for migrants and those hosting, the changes of our globalised world represent a challenge to which we must adapt. It is necessary on both sides to show flexibility and tolerance in order to allow transition multicultural societies to emerge, in which migrant persons and natives accept their new identities, a mixed bag of all sorts. A spirit of openness and respect faced with other ways of life, of doing things and thinking is much more important in a society on its way to becoming multicultural allowing recognition of the strengths and values provided.