

O1: NATIONAL REPORT

on the specific features of diverse European cultures and sub-cultures

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and Development in Educational Technology
CYPRUS**

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I. Introduction

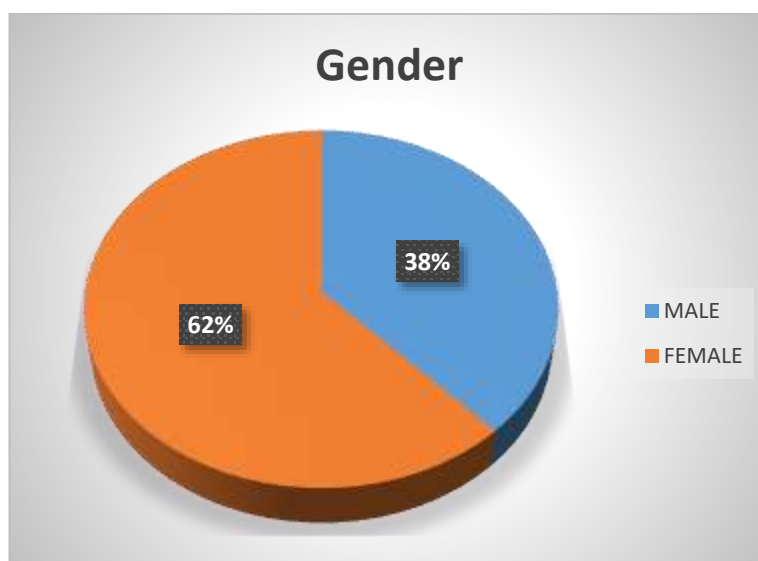
Cultural diversity is a reality in the modern European communities. In this regard, there has been a great deal of talk about multiculturalism in Europe. A lot of research has been done towards this issue and many researchers and scholars ended up stating that it is only when people take a step towards understanding another way of life different than their own that they enrich their experiences and gain knowledge about themselves.

This document aims to present the multicultural situation in Cyprus. The presentation is based on both qualitative and quantitative data that were collected through a focus group and questionnaires. More specifically, the purpose of the data collection was to examine peoples' views about the different cultures living in Cyprus. The ultimate goal is to highlight the relations between people that are living in Cyprus and have different cultural backgrounds.

The focus group was conducted with four people. More specifically, there was one expert in language and identity issues with experience in teaching multicultural groups, a trainer and counsellor of adult migrants in Cyprus in the field of entrepreneurship, an immigrant from Greece which is also a trainer of multicultural groups in the field of sports and a person from Cyprus who had finished his studies and worked in Cyprus.

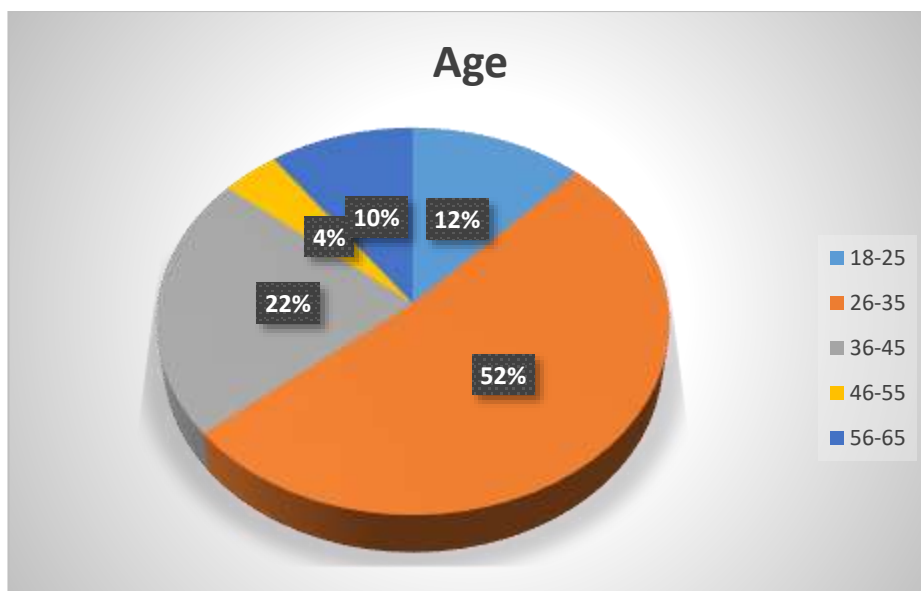
Concerning the questionnaire, it was delivered on both printed and online format. The target group was reached through CARDET's contacts and also through the personal contact of the project manager with people from the target group. More specifically, 50 people filled the questionnaire, 38% were males and 62% were females. Respondents had different educational background and their age varied.

Chart 1: Gender



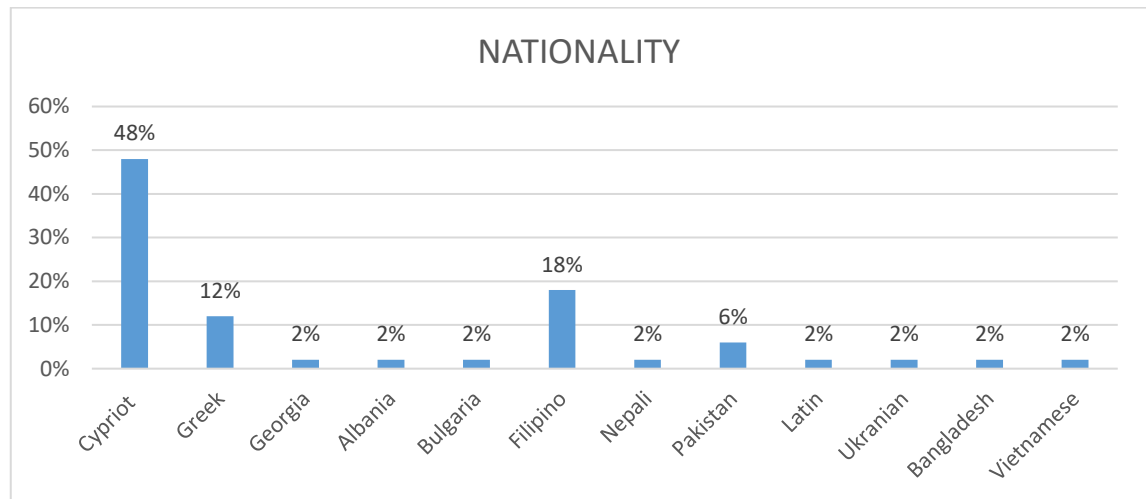
In addition, their age ranged from 24 to 62 year-olds. According to the data analysis, 12% of the respondents belonged to the age group 18-25, 52% belonged to the age group 26-35, 22% belonged to the age group 36-45, 4% belonged to the age group 46-55 and 10% belonged to the age group 56-65.

Chart 2: Age



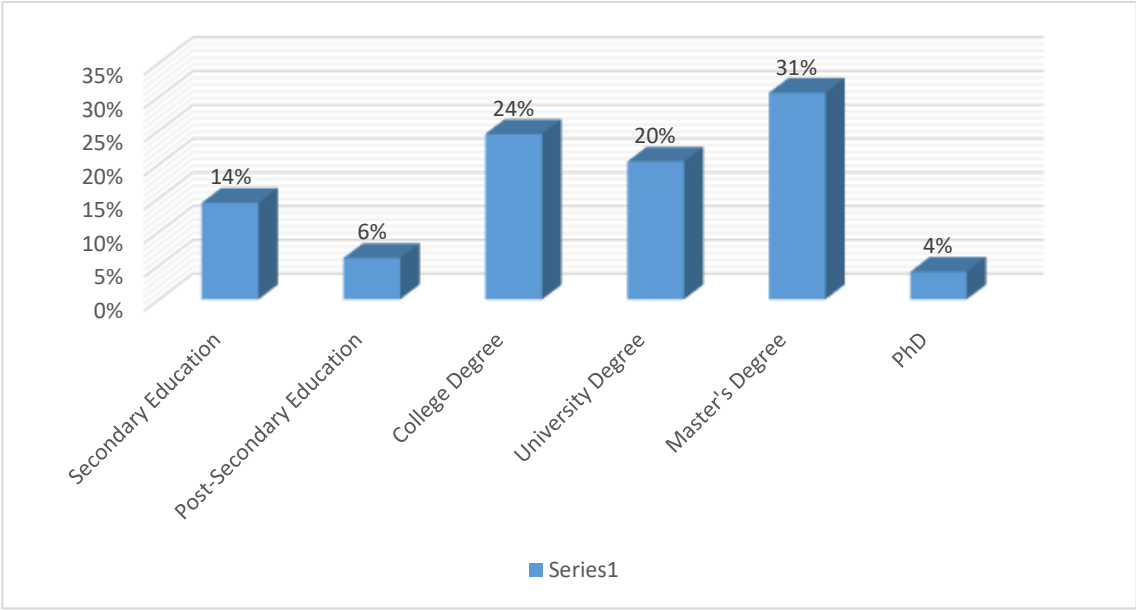
Concerning their nationality, the majority of the respondents were Cypriots (48%). All the others were migrants from Europe and also Third Country Nationals. More specifically, the percentage of the population for each nationality is the following: Greeks (12%), Georgia (2%), Albania (2%), Bulgaria (2%), Filipino (18%), Nepali (2%), Pakistan (6%), Latin (2%), Ukrainian (2%), Bangladeshi (2%) and Vietnamese (2%).

Chart 3: Nationality



Lastly, regarding the level of education, most respondents had a College (24%) or a University Degree (20%) and a Master's Degree (31%). This is contradictory to the fact that people have in mind that migrants who leave their countries are not well-educated. On the contrary, in the current survey many migrants had a college or a University Degree. Only a small percentage of the respondents had finished Secondary (14%) or Post-Secondary Education (6%). A small percentage of the respondents answered that they held a PhD Degree (4%).

Chart 4: Level of Education



II. Situation in the area

The most recent population census was held on 2011 from the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) in the Government controlled area¹. According to the data obtained from this census the foreign nationals that reside in Cyprus were 170.383 or 20.3% of the total population. From those 76.606 or 45.0% were men and 93.777 or 55.0% were women. The main countries of their citizenship are Greece: 29.321 citizens, United Kingdom: 24.046 citizens, Romania: 23.706 citizens, Bulgaria: 18.536 citizens and other countries follow with different percentages for men and women. These countries are: Russia, Syria, Bangladesh, India, Philippines, Vietnam and Sri Lanka².

In the ECRI Report on Cyprus (2011) it is stated that the Government-controlled areas of Cyprus contain around 140,000 people who do not belong to the ethnic Greek Cypriot majority³.

The vast majority of the Cyprus population, as recorded in the census, were Orthodox Christians, followed by Catholic Christians, Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists, Maronites, Armenians and Hindus. A small percentage reported various other religions, while an even smaller percentage of the population declared atheists or without religion. Religion was not stated for 1.1% of the population⁴.

The data are presented in detail below:

- Orthodox Christian 89.1%
- Roman Catholic 2.9%
- Protestant/Anglican 2%
- Muslim 1.8%
- Buddhist 1%

¹ There are two community groups that are residing in the island of Cyprus and are acknowledged from the Constitution of Cyprus: the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. These two Communities are defined according to the following criteria: ethnic origin, language, cultural tradition and religion (European Commission 2007). After the invasion of Turkey in the island since 1974 there was an exchange of the population and Turkish Cypriots moved to the occupied areas whereas the Greek Cypriots moved to the government controlled areas. In this regard, the analysis presented in this paper refers exclusively to the government controlled areas. For the island of Cyprus and by taking into account the occupied places the percentages of religion status are the following: Greek Orthodox 78%, Muslim 18%, other (includes Maronite and Armenian Apostolic) 4% (http://www.indexmundi.com/cyprus/demographics_profile.html, Retrieved at 10/11/2015).

² CYSTAT (2011). *Population Census*. Retrieved from:

http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition_22main_en/populationcondition_22main_en?OpenForm&sub=2&sel=2 (1-12-2015)

³ Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs Council of Europe (2011). *ECRI Report on Cyprus*. Retrieved from: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/cyprus/cyprus_cbc_EN.asp (30-11-2015)

⁴ CYSTAT (2011). *Population Census*. Retrieved from:

http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition_22main_en/populationcondition_22main_en?OpenForm&sub=2&sel=2 (1-12-2015)

- Other (includes Maronite, Armenian Church, Hindu) 1.4%,
- Unknown 1.1%
- None/atheist 0.6%

Concerning the minorities that are residing in Cyprus, these are not officially recognized by the Republic of Cyprus. Other groups that are residing in Cyprus such as Armenians, Maronites and Latins are referred to as "religious groups". According to Simon and Piché (2012) "the concept of "ethno-religious" groups derives from the term Communities which is defined in the Constitution (Article 2(1) and 2(2)) and is based on a mixture of origin, language, religion and culture"⁵. The rest of the population consists of foreign nationals. After the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the exchange of the population that followed from the government controlled areas to the occupied areas, the Latins, the Armenians and the Maronites chose to belong to the Greek-Cypriot Community which resides in the government controlled areas. However, it should be noted that these particular minorities share the same educational opportunities with the Cypriots and are not considered disadvantaged in terms of education⁶.

In relation to the status of employment in Cyprus, it is clear from the "*Statistical Abstract 2014*" issued by the Statistical Service of Cyprus that the employment sectors in Cyprus are the following: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining and Quarrying, Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply, Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities, Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles, Transportation and Storage, Accommodation and Food Service Activities, Information and Communication, Financial and Insurance Activities, Real Estate Activities, Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities, Administrative and Support Service Activities, Public Administration and Defense, Compulsory Social Security, Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Activities of Households and Activities of Extra-territorial Organizations and Bodies. Most people are working in the domains of Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and

⁵ Simon, P., & Piché, V. (2012). Accounting for ethnic and racial diversity: The challenge of enumeration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35, 1357-1365.

⁶ Office of the Law Commissioner (2009). *Cyprus: Third Periodic Report on the Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEWj9peuz5-rKAhWDuBQKHV4iD1UQFgggMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.olc.gov.cy%2Folc%2Folc.nsf%2FFall%2FF685A7AC901415FAC225758D00366E26%2F%24file%2FTHIRD%2520PERIODIC%2520REPORT%2520FRAMEWORK%2520CONVENTION.pdf%3Fopenelement&usg=AFQjCNEoQLiqwhbtbiehOzt4ni4VplcZh5w&sig2=vx2Er3k2TYqg6rj9q7Scgg> (5-1-2016)

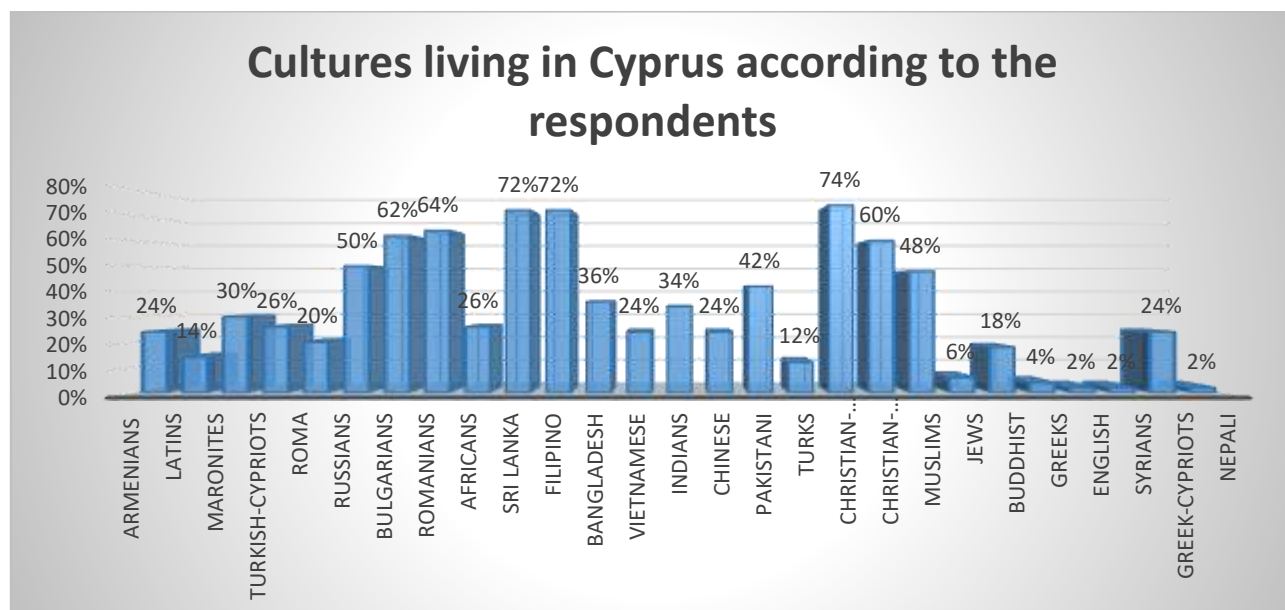
Motorcycles, Construction, Manufacturing, Education and Food and Accommodation services (p. 149). The unemployment rate was 15,6 % in April 2015. The largest percent of unemployed people are Cypriots (83,4%) followed by EU Nationals (12,09%) and others (4,25%)⁷.

According to the focus groups, all participants knew that Cyprus is a multicultural area where people from different cultures and origin are living together. One participant stated that there are five cultural communities that are recognized by the Cypriot Constitution, the basic two communities are the Turkish-Cypriots and the Greek-Cypriots and are considered "*ethnic communities*". The other three communities are considered "*religious communities*" and are the following: Armenians, Maronites and Latins. Apart from these communities all participants stated that there are also people from Russia and UK who traditionally reside in Cyprus and apart from them there are migrants from Greece, Bulgaria, Romania but also from other countries, such as Philippines, Sri Lanka, Pakistan who are economic migrants mostly from Asia. Also, all participants stated that it is difficult to know the percentage of the population in Cyprus, as after the Turkish invasion in 1974 it is difficult to estimate their number as many of them are living in different parts of the island. Before the war, according to participants their percentage was: 80% Greek-Cypriots, 18% Turkish-Cypriots and 2% the other minorities. After the war the percentage of the minorities that reside in the government-controlled area couldn't be estimated by the participants. They just mentioned that they cannot be more than 5%. Also, this was the case from the results obtained from the questionnaire analysis. Almost all participants apart from a small number didn't provide any percentage of the population concerning the people that are residing in Cyprus.

The following graphic shows the different cultures-religions that were selected by the respondents that took part in the questionnaire survey that are living in their area. An interesting fact is that Greek-Cypriots seem to represent 24% of the total population although they live in the part of the island where the survey was conducted. One explanation may be the fact that the questionnaire was filled by Greek-Cypriots. Another fact may be that people that filled the questionnaire, thought that they should not refer to the majority of the population but only to migrants.

⁷ Statistical Service of Cyprus (2015). *Statistical Abstract*. Retrieved from: http://www.cystat.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/other_101main_en/other_101main_en?OpenForm&sub=1&sel=4 (1-12-2015).

Chart 5: Cultures-Religions of people living in Cyprus according to the Respondents



Concerning the data gathered from the focus group it seems that all participants believe that media play an important role in the way they present information. In this regard, it is indicative what a participant said about the stereotypes and the role of media: *“media play a significant role as they can present one fact with 3 different ways, as they like according to their interest...stereotypes for the different cultures are being reinforced through media”*. Another participant said: *“media is an easy way to perpetuate the stereotypes people have in mind about other cultures...”*. All participants agreed that media have the power to form peoples’ perceptions about others.

Regarding the data gathered from the questionnaires about the role of media, it is evident that many participants hold a neutral perspective but they mostly believe that there is evidence of negativism concerning the representation of migrants. More specifically, 36% of the respondents do not take a stand on whether they are satisfied or not about the image that media present about the different cultures living in their area. However, 58% of the respondents stated that they are not satisfied with the statement “Media always give a right image of different cultures living in my area”. Regarding the news that are presented about other cultures 34% of the respondents seem to agree that representation of migrants in the media is mostly related to negative aspects while 35% do not take a stand. Lastly, the vast majority of the respondents (68%) are not satisfied with the statement “Media informs

under equal conditions about any culture in terms of activities, traditions etc.". This means that there is a lack of representation of other cultures in the media. The following charts provide a detailed analysis of the data.

Chart 6: Media give the right Image of Different Cultures

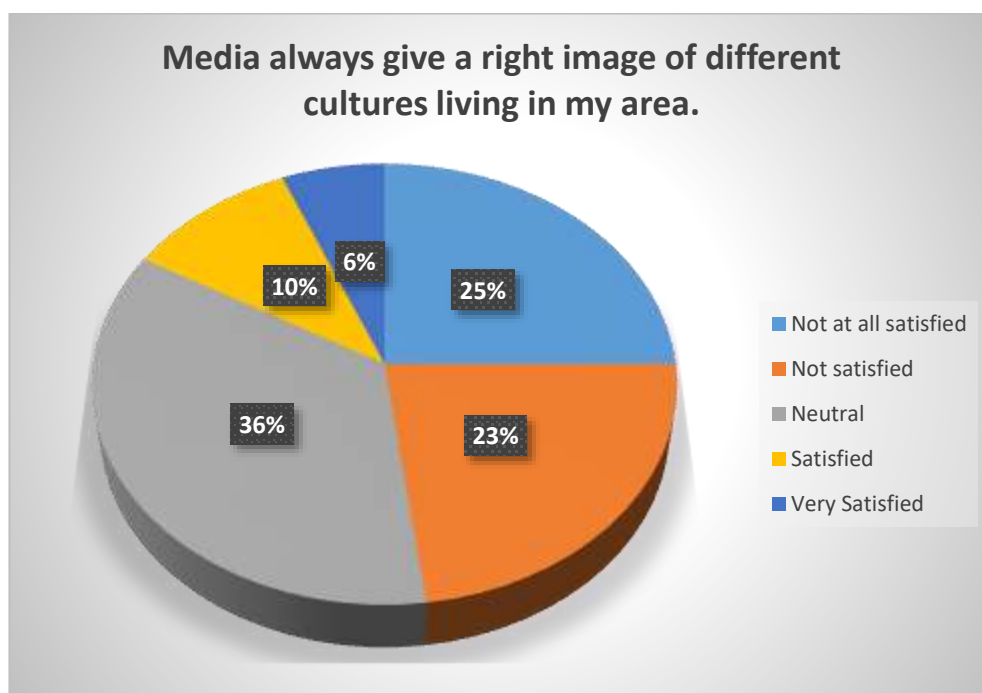


Chart 7: Media and News about other Cultures

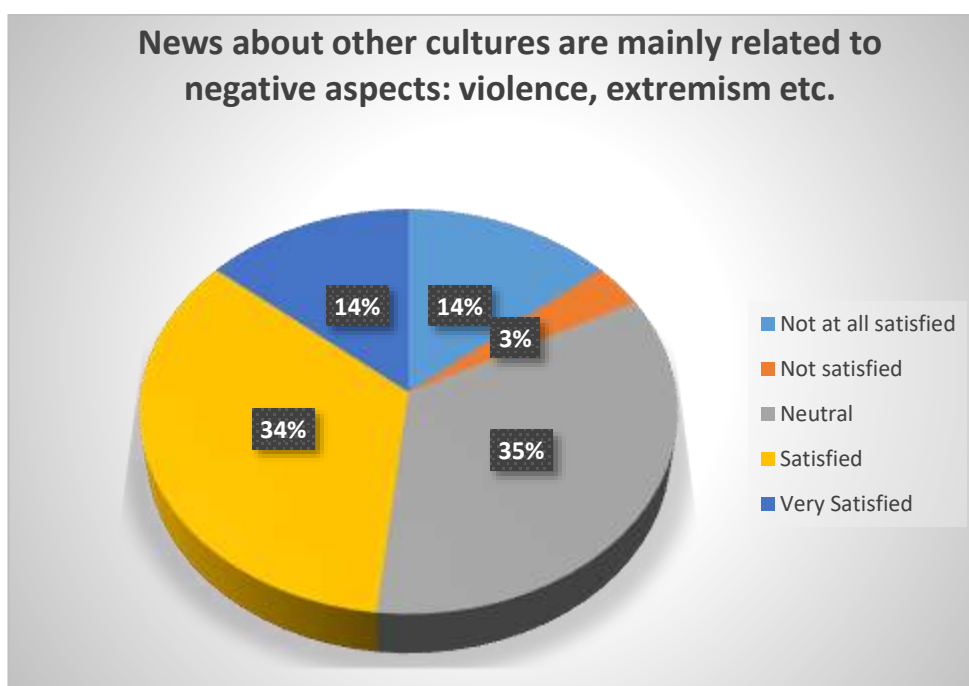
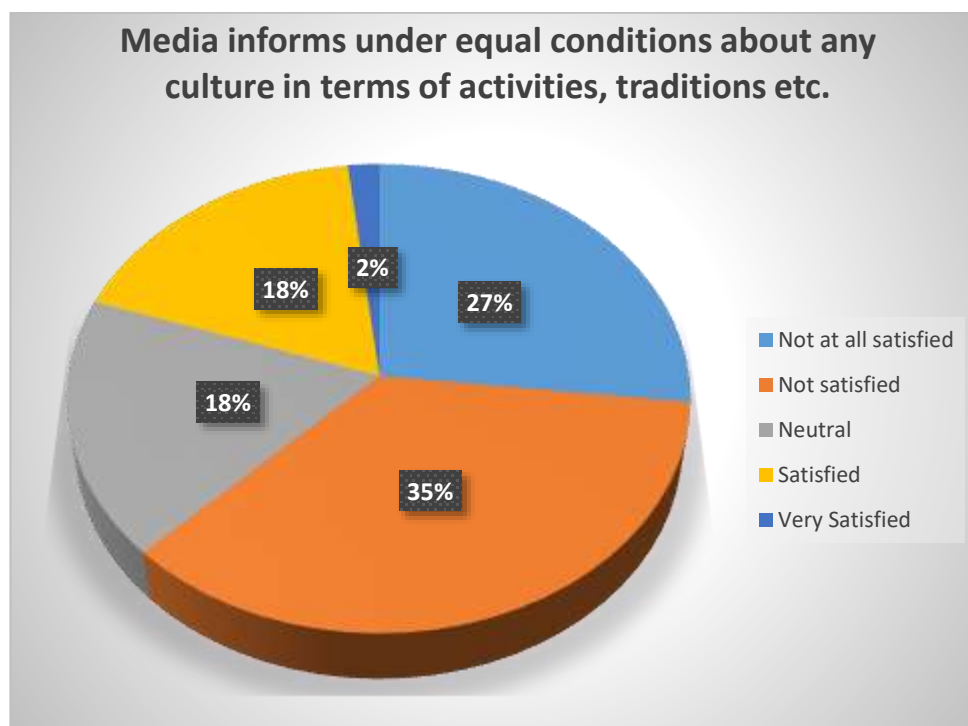


Chart 8: Media Information about other Cultures



In Cyprus, according to the participants there are educational programs where migrant students learn the Greek language at both Primary and Secondary Education. There are also, only in the case of minorities that are recognized from the Constitution, school curricular activities for children related to their tradition and culture, e.g. language, history etc. However, one participant stated that: *"intercultural education in the Cypriot educational system is translated and practiced only with the learning of the Greek language which is not sufficient"*. Other initiatives that were mentioned were parent and school informal organizations that operate within schools and develop activities to raise awareness for cultural issues. In a broader context, what was evident from the focus group was that participants weren't aware of the policies and initiatives that exist in Cyprus concerning both minorities and migrants and they also believe that not many people know about these initiatives or policies. One example was that none of the participants knew the "Home for Cooperation" a very important NGO that develops initiatives to establish an intercultural dialogue between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots.

Concerning the data gathered from the questionnaire and specifically from the question *"Do you participate in any kind of initiatives/movements for the integration of different cultures in your area?"* the vast majority of the respondents answered that they don't participate in any activities related to migrants or minorities. Only two out of fifty answered yes. The first one said that she participates to *"Bicommunal projects GC/TC"* and the other one said that she participates *"in NGO to highlight the problems of migrants"*.



III. Main features of cultures in your area

Culture/Religion 1: Russians	
Principles and Values	Usually they embrace the western value system.
Practices	Prefer to interact within their own community, join their own clubs and buy from shops with Russian owners.
Ideas	They support their tradition and their language. They have a strong faith in their religion.
Patterns in human behavior	Prefer to interact within their own community, join their own clubs and buy from shops with Russian owners.
Thoughts and feelings	They are friendly and happy people.
Human activities	They like to go out with people from their culture as well. They also support their religion, as they go to church.
Social standards	There are two groups. The ones that are wealthy and the other ones that are poor. The wealthy ones are following a rich lifestyle, are educated and have high social standards. The poor are mostly low educated people that work as domestic workers or at the construction.

Culture/Religion 2: Bulgarians	
Principles and Values	They are Orthodox Christians. Their behaviour is driven by their religious beliefs. They have strong family bonds.
Practices	They are going to church and they celebrate religious events. They don't stay somewhere permanently.
Ideas	They believe in family and they want to be integrated to the Cypriot society.
Patterns in human behavior	They are hardworking, friendly people. They share the same characteristics with the Balkans. They eat traditional Bulgarian food and they drink a lot. They are ordinary people.
Thoughts and feelings	They are "cold" people. They do not express their feelings easily.
Human activities	Sometimes they cause trouble. They do mostly practical jobs, e.g. they work in

	construction. They like to hang out with their friends often.
Social standards	They are not well educated. They are mostly poor people and they work in low-salary jobs.

Culture/Religion 3: Filipino	
Principles and Values	They are religious people, they have a strong faith in God. They have strong bonds with their families and they support them financially and ethically. They believe in friendship. They respect the nature.
Practices	They prefer to cook and eat the traditional food of their country (such as pancit) and mostly vegetables. They follow the religious events of Catholicism (Christmas celebration, Easter etc.)
Ideas	They believe in the value of family and friendship.
Patterns in human behavior	They like to go out and have fun. They hang out with other Filipinos but they are open to people from other cultures.
Thoughts and feelings	They show respect to people they don't know and they are polite.
Human activities	They like to dance and have fun. Every Sunday they go to church.
Social standards	They work as domestic workers to support their families. Their level of education is College. They are mostly poor people that work hard for many hours.

IV. Native people and other cultures / religions / ethnicities / civilisations

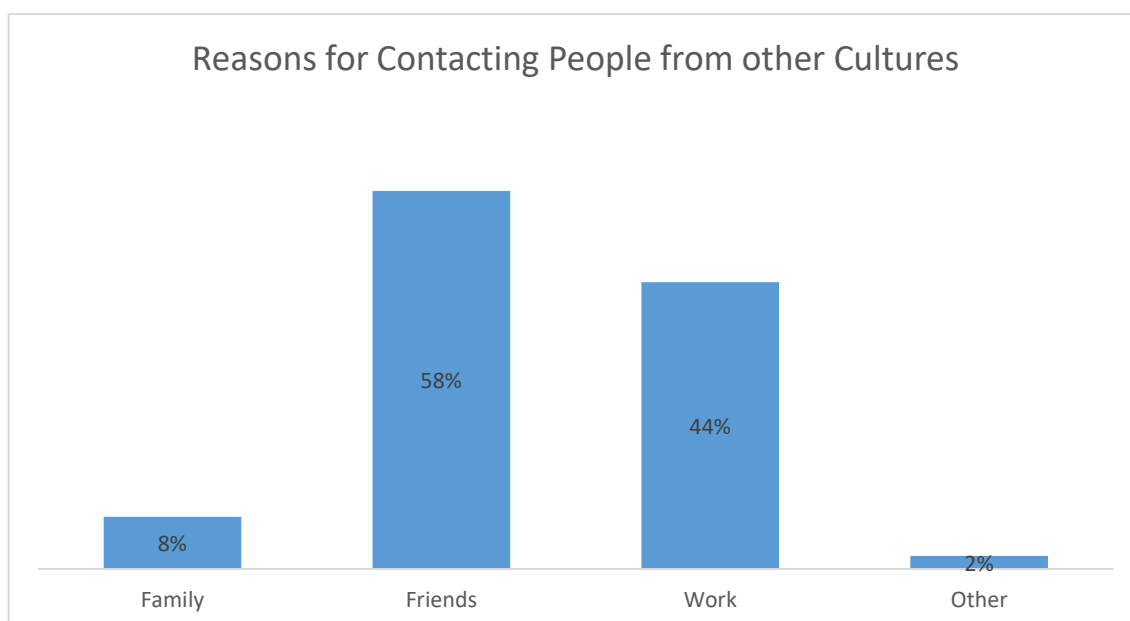
According to the answers provided from the questionnaire, the vast majority (33%) of the respondents said that they sometimes have contacts with people from other cultures. It is evident from the analysis that only a small percentage of the respondents answered that they rarely have contacts with people from other cultures (19%).

Chart 9: Contacts with People from other Cultures



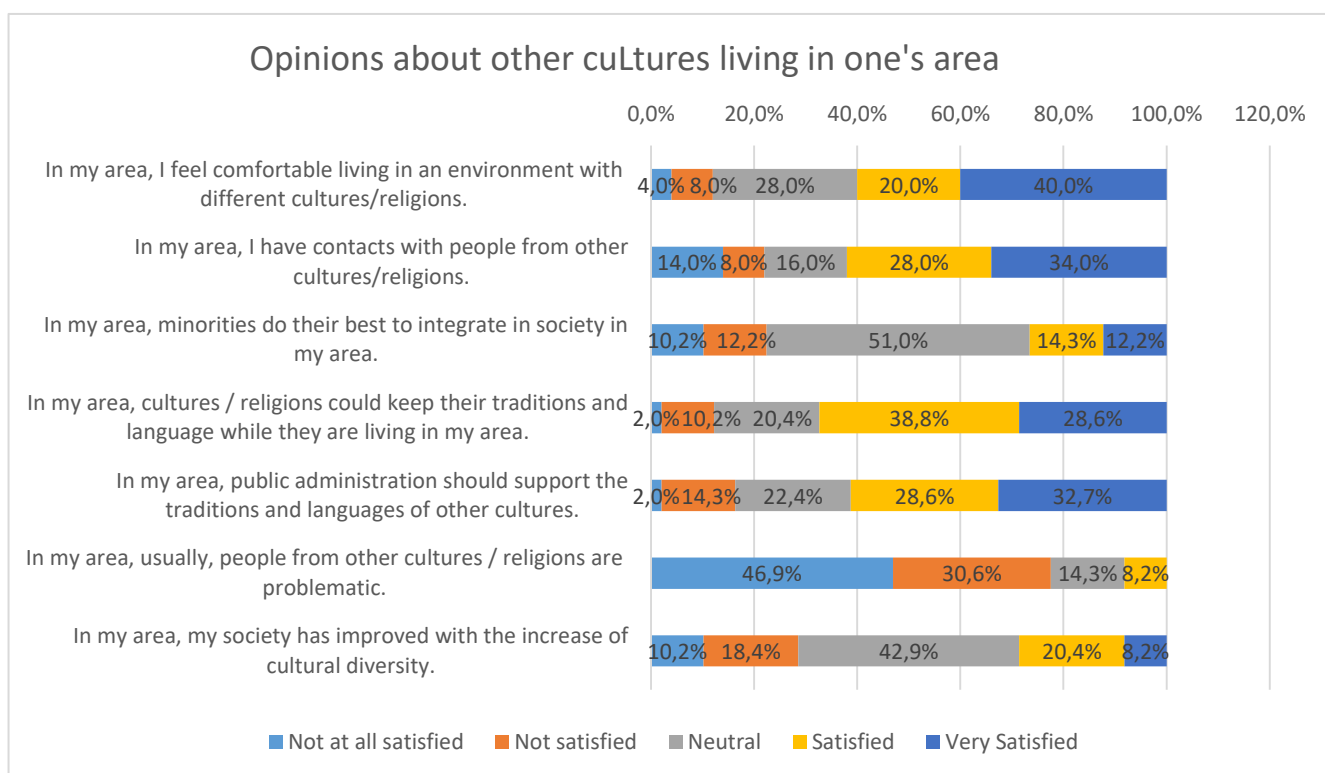
Concerning the reasons from contacting people from other cultures the majority of the respondents answered that these people were their friends (58%) or they were having a work relationship (44%). Only 8% stated that they are contacting people from different cultures because they are their family.

Chart 10: Reasons for Contacting People from other Cultures



Concerning the opinions that people have about the cultures that live in their area, it is evident from the results of the analysis that the majority of people (60%) feel comfortable living in an environment with different cultures. What is more 62% percent of the respondents answered that they have contacts with people from other cultures in their area. Regarding the statement *"In my area, minorities do their best to integrate in society in my area"* it is evident that 51% percent didn't take a stand. This means that they are not sure if the minorities want to be integrated in the local society. When they asked to answer if they believe that in their area, cultures / religions could keep their traditions and language again the vast majority (67,5%) answered that they agree. A large majority (61,3%) also agree that public administration should support the traditions and languages of other cultures. In addition, many respondents (77,5%) disagree with the statement *"usually, people from other cultures / religions are problematic"*. Lastly, they majority of the respondents (42,9%) didn't take a stand when answering if the society has improved with the increase of cultural diversity and 28,6% believe that this is true while another 28,6% believe that this is not true.

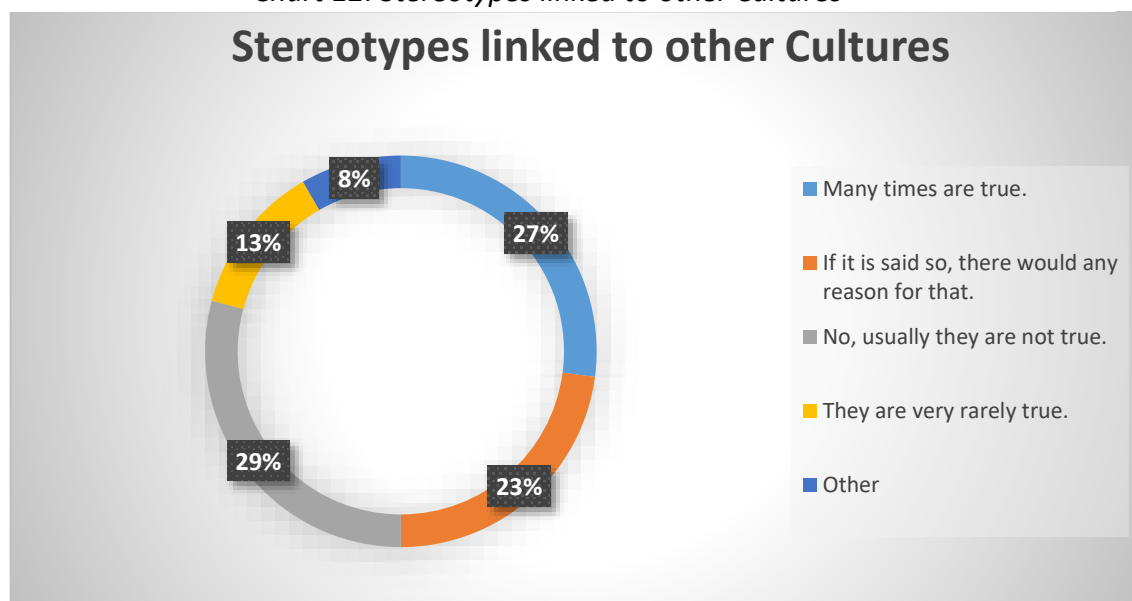
Chart 11: Opinions about the Cultures living in one's area



Concerning the stereotypes linked to other cultures, it is evident that the majority of the respondents answered that they believe that usually they are not true. However, 27%

answered that they believe that many times are true, while 23% answered that if it said so there must be a reason for that.

Chart 12: Stereotypes linked to other Cultures



Regarding to the question if the respondents participate in any initiatives or movements for the integration of other cultures the vast majority (96%) answered that they didn't.

Chart 13: Participation in Initiatives - Movements

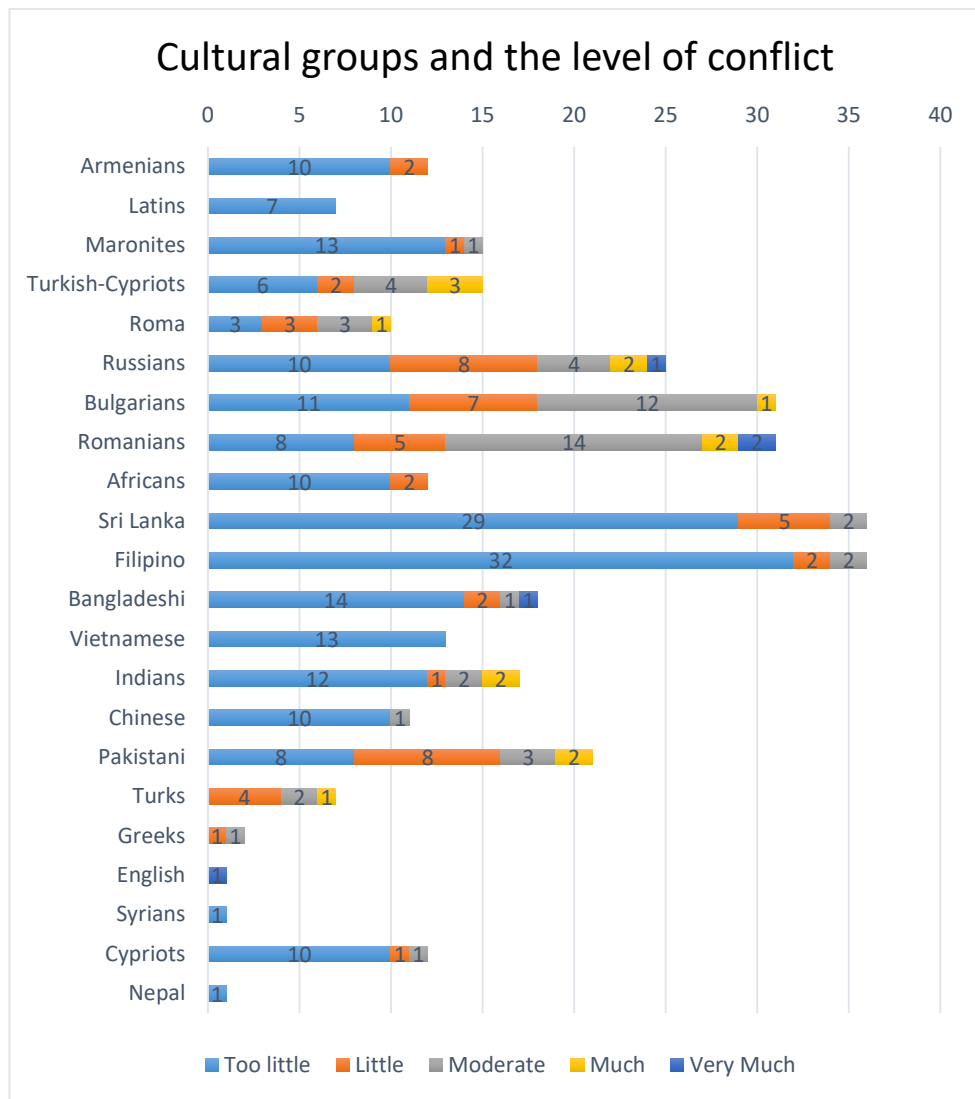


V. Conflicts/tensions between cultures

People that participated in the focus group stated that people from different cultures are involved in conflicting situations because of their differences. They stated that these differences may also be the case of different *religious beliefs* that cause misunderstandings. One participant stated that *education* is also a parameter about how people perceive each other in a society. More specifically she stated that *"education (meaning in Cyprus) is a closed system..it doesn't create space for others if you are not part of the country, if you are not Greek, Greek-Cypriot, Christian..this is why different cultures are experiencing conflicts.."*.

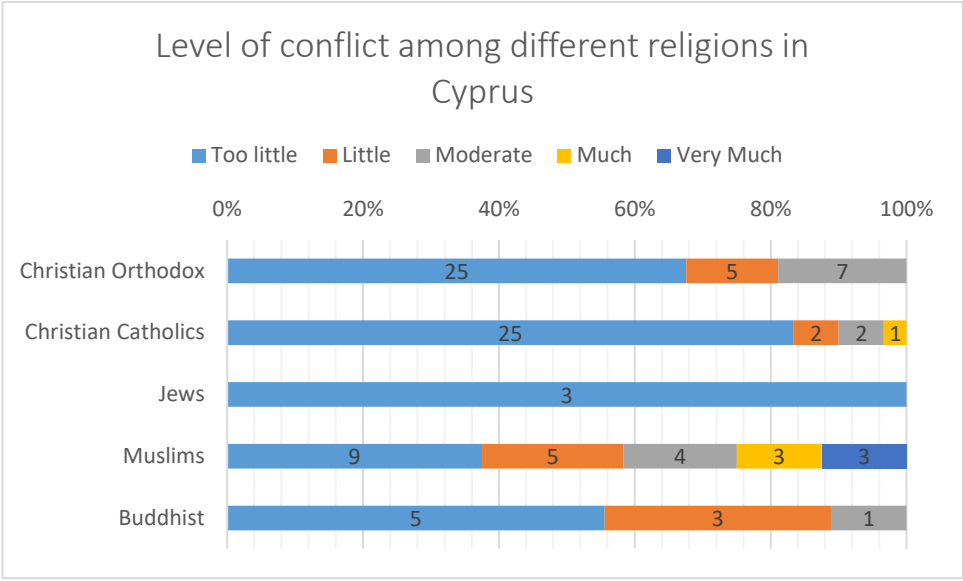
Regarding the situation in Cyprus, according to the vast majority of the respondents people from different cultures are not experiencing conflicts. The cultures that people answered that they experience conflicts are *Romanians, Russians, Turkish-Cypriots, Bulgarians, Roma, Turks, Bangladesh, Indians and Pakistani*. On the other hand, cultures that are not experiencing conflicts are the religious minorities that are recognized by the Constitution of Cyprus: Armenians, Latins, Maronites and also Filipinos and Sri Lankas.

Chart 14: Cultural Groups and the Level of Conflict



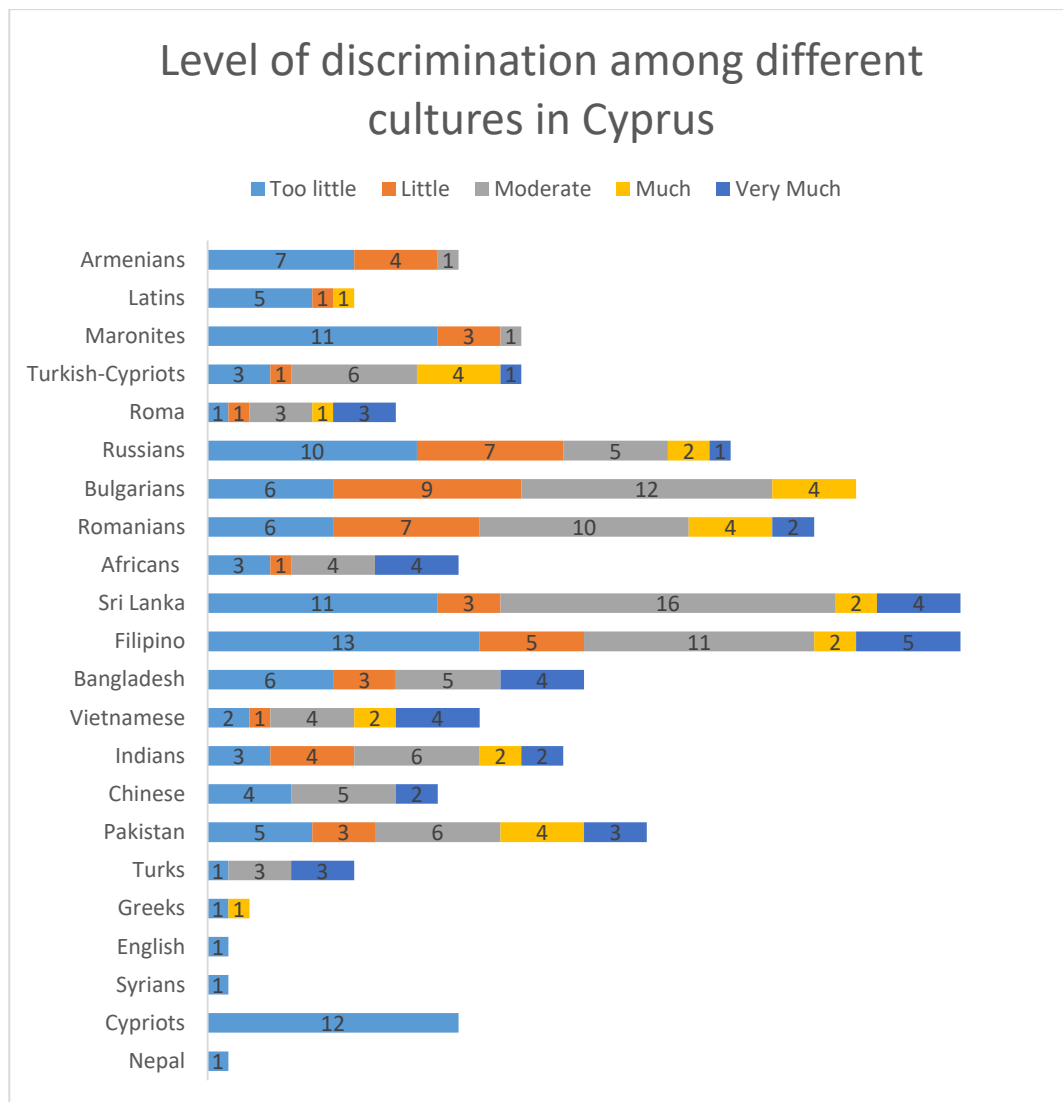
Concerning the religious groups and the level of conflict it is evident that Muslims are more likely to be involved in conflicting situations. On the other hand, Jews are not involved according to the respondents to any conflict.

Chart 15: Religious Groups and the Level of Conflict



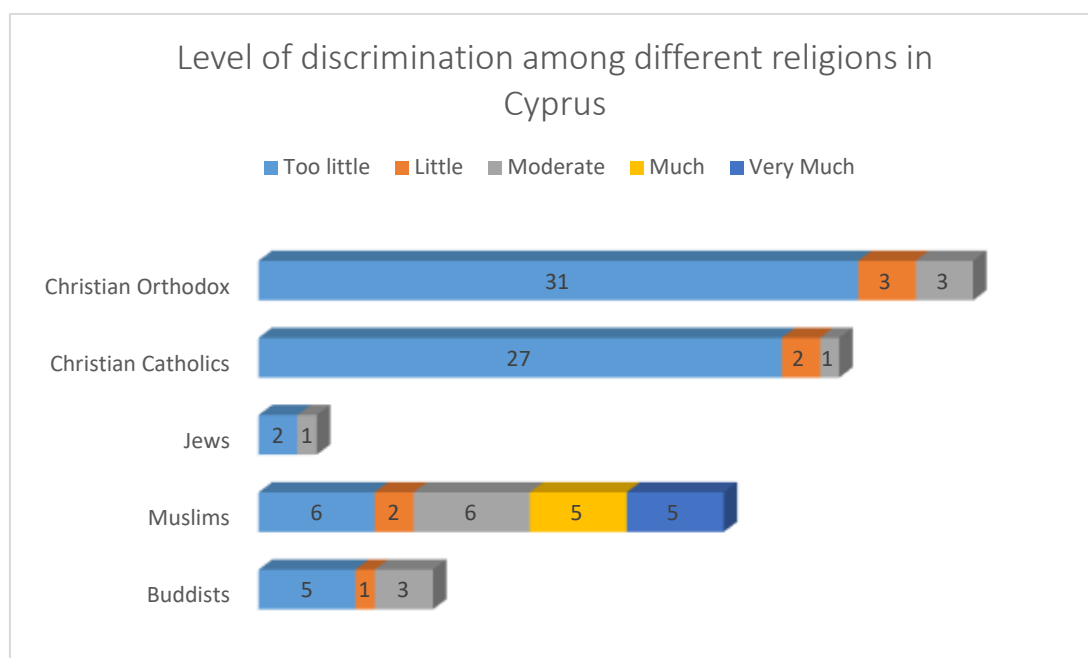
Concerning the level of discrimination that people from different cultural groups suffer in the area, it is evident from the analysis of the data that Romanians, Sri Lankas, Filipino, Vietnamese and Pakistani are most likely to experience discriminatory behaviors. On the other hand, Armenians, Maronites and Latins that appear to be the religious minorities that reside in Cyprus for centuries are most unlikely to be discriminated against.

Chart 16: Cultural Groups and the Level of Discrimination



Concerning the religious groups and the level of discrimination they suffer, it is evident that Muslims are most likely to be discriminated against that the other religious groups.

Chart 17: Religious Groups and the Level of Discrimination



VI. Training needs for adults educators on intercultural issues

All participants agreed that adult educators should be trained in issues of culture and communication. During the focus group participants stated that educators should be trained to manage conflicts between cultures. The basic subjects that can serve this purpose as proposed by the participants were: **Humor, Traditional Food, Customs, Sports, Religions** and **Language**. According to the answers provided through the questionnaires, a large number of respondents stated that one way to solve cultural conflicts is through joint activities where people from different cultures will participate. Other stated that education plays an important role and that educational programs related to intercultural communication should be developed. Other answers include the following: projects for integration, workshops that people from different cultures can talk about their activities (introduction), events where people from different cultures can attend and represent their culture, develop games that will raise awareness about the other, train the employers in intercultural issues, organize sport events where people from different cultures will participate.

VII. Conclusions

According to the data gathered from both the focus group and the questionnaires, and also by taking into account the data collected from the desk research we can conclude that Cyprus is a multicultural island that attracts people from all over the world. Many migrants choose to work in Cyprus so to support their families that are residing in other countries, such as Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Romania etc. Others come to Cyprus to study, such as Greeks, Pakistani, Bangladeshi etc. There are also minorities in Cyprus that are recognized by the Constitution of Cyprus, such as Turkish-Cypriots (ethnic minority) and Latins, Maronites and Armenians (religious minorities). Although, from the data collected it is evident from the respondents that religious minorities have been integrated in the Cypriot society and are following the Cypriot way of living and share the same social standards, this is not the case for the Turkish-Cypriots. This maybe as a result of the division of the island after the Turkish invasion. Relating to the level of education, many of the migrants that are coming in Cyprus to work are educated at least at a College level while a smaller percentage has finished only Secondary Education. This means that not all migrant people are low-educated, however they still work to jobs that are more practical and that demand lower qualifications than the ones they already have.

In the matter of cultures' representation to the media, all participants agreed that media have the power to form peoples' perceptions about others and that they play an important role in the way they present information. They also stated that there is a lack of representation of other cultures in the media while the news when referring to migrants are related mostly to negative events.

Regarding the initiatives and policies taken from institutions or organizations to promote migrants' integration in the society, it was evident that participants weren't aware of their existence in Cyprus and they also stated that even if they exist not many people know about these initiatives or policies. What is interesting to note is that only two out of fifty participants stated that they participate in such kinds of initiatives and movements. The only initiatives participants knew were at the context of education. More specifically they stated that only in the case of minorities that are recognized from the Constitution, there were school curricular activities for children related to their tradition and culture, e.g. language, history etc. and that for migrant children there were also some educational programs where

they can learn the Greek language at both Primary and Secondary Education. Other initiatives that were mentioned were parent and school informal organizations that operate within schools and develop activities to raise awareness for cultural issues.

All participants stated that they have contacts with people from other cultures, most of them frequently. Concerning the reasons from contacting people from other cultures the majority of the respondents answered that these people were their friends or they were having a work relationship with them. The majority of people felt comfortable living in an environment with different cultures, they do not believe that these people cause problems and they also said that different cultures-religions can keep their traditions while living in the area. A large majority also agrees that public administration should support the traditions and languages of other cultures. However, many people cannot take a stand of whether minorities want to be integrated in the local society or if the society has improved with the increase of cultural diversity.

Concerning the stereotypes linked to other cultures, it is evident that the majority of the respondents answered that they believe that usually they are not true. However, a large number of respondents answered they believe that many times are true.

Regarding the level of conflict people from other cultures experience in the area respondents answered that the ones that experience conflicts are *Romanians, Russians, Turkish-Cypriots, Bulgarians, Roma, Turks, Bangladesh, Indians and Pakistani*. On the other hand, cultures that are not experiencing conflicts are the religious minorities that are recognized by the Constitution of Cyprus: Armenians, Latins, Maronites and also Filipinos and Sri Lankas. Concerning the religious groups and the level of conflict it is evident that Muslims are more likely to be involved in conflicting situations.

Regarding to the level of discrimination that people from different countries suffer in Cyprus, it is interesting to note that the minorities that are living in Cyprus and are recognized from the Cyprus constitution they are not likely to face discrimination as they are considered as part of the Cypriot society which is not the case for Third Country Nationals or migrants with origin from small and poor European countries, such as Romania or Bulgaria. These people are more likely to face discrimination in Cyprus. Concerning the religious groups and the level of discrimination they suffer, it is evident that Muslims are most likely to be discriminated against that the other religious groups.

All participants agreed that adult trainers should be trained in issues related to culture and religion (intercultural communication, raising of awareness, integration). The basic subjects that were proposed are: **Humor, Traditional Food, Customs, Sports, Religions and Language**. Another important suggestion that was proposed from a large number of participants was that one way to solve cultural conflicts is through joint activities where people from different cultures will participate.

Cypriot society has a long way to go concerning the issues related to migration and intercultural communication. As Cyprus is a multicultural country, people need to learn how to live together in a peaceful and respectful way. In this regard, training adult educators to manage multicultural groups of people can be one way to cope with the challenges of migration.