



# Sabadell

## Intercultural Profile

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Sabadell is a city in the province of Barcelona (Spain) with a population of 208,318 inhabitants. According to data from the municipal census of January 1, 2012, 12.3% are foreign nationals. By number of inhabitants it is the fifth largest city of Catalonia, an autonomous community of the Spanish state with a strong identity and Catalan as co-official language along with Castilian.

The vast majority of the nearly 26,000 foreign nationals of Sabadell migrated during the first decade of the 21st century from various countries. Besides, the history of Sabadell, like that of other Catalan cities, is marked by its long tradition as a city welcoming people from other parts of Catalonia and especially the rest of Spain.

The objective of this report is to understand how the city is reacting to the significant increase in sociocultural diversity in recent years and to examine its policies of diversity management. Sabadell is part of the RECI (Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities) which is linked to the European network of "Intercultural cities" promoted by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission. The report is based on an analysis of the documentation provided by the city and the content obtained during visits for four days in April 2012 by the Council of Europe expert Daniel de Torres. During these visits, he had the opportunity to meet the Mayor of Sabadell, Manuel Bustos, and other political representatives, as well as a range of municipal policy officers and representatives of various organizations and associations.

This report complements the results of a previous one made by the Council of Europe based on the results of the [Intercultural City Index](#).

The context of this report is set against the background of the severe economic crisis in Spain over the past years which is having a major impact on all levels. Not long ago, Spain used to be a country of emigrants. However, since the end of the twentieth century, resulting from a development experienced in previous decades, the country became one of the leading European countries in receiving immigrants from around the world. The consequences of the economic crisis, which has raised the unemployment rate to 25% of the working population in the whole country (and over 45% among those under 25 years of age), have slowed these flows dramatically. On the contrary, people are currently deciding to look abroad for the opportunities

they can no longer find in Spain.

## 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In order to understand Sabadell's demography, it is necessary to refer to the expansion in its population during the second half of the 19th century with the advent of the industrial revolution. At that time, Sabadell received thousands of people from other parts of Catalonia and the rest of Spain (Alicante, Murcia and Valencia in particular) attracted by the opportunities which were provided by a city that had become a major center of the textile industry and wool fabric production. The population grew from 2,212 inhabitants in 1787 to 18,117 in 1877, the year it received the official title of "city".

Already in the early 20th century Sabadell was home of major financial institutions and consolidated its weight as an industrial center in both textile and metallurgy. However, the migratory flow which undoubtedly most strongly marked the growth of the city throughout the 20th century occurred in the 50s, 60s and early 70s. While in 1950, 59,494 people were living in Sabadell, the population had reached 179,716 in 1972, as a result of the immigration of people from different parts of Spain.

The arrival of 120,000 people during the years of the Franco dictatorship caused a rapid physical growth of the city which led to the construction of entire new neighborhoods. These neighborhoods lacked basic services like water or electricity, let alone schools, health care facilities or quality of public space. An example that serves to understand the degree of insecurity accompanying this growth is the fact that hundreds of people came to settle literally in caves known as "Sant Oleguer".

This process of rapid population growth was followed by the international economic crisis of the 70s that forced the closure of many businesses in the city. The last years of the Franco regime were particularly intensive in Sabadell as one of the most active cities in the struggle for democracy. The lasting search for democratic freedoms is today embodied in various political movements and unions but also in active neighborhood associations and other groups in a city with strong civic, social and cultural dynamics. Consequently, the identity of Sabadell is strongly influenced by its commitment to the values of freedom, equality and the protection of civil and social rights.

With the restoration of democracy in 1979, the city was ruled by a progressive government led for 20 years by mayor Antoni Farrés. During those years, the city experienced a major transformation in which priority was given to the coverage of basic needs such as the improvement of public and social services, the creation of infrastructure, new urban spaces and public facilities of all kinds. Elected in 1999, the current Socialist Mayor Manuel Bustos, has initiated an important second stage of the city's transformation, which has over the years seen an increased weight of the trade and services sectors. The priorities rest on expanding social services, such as the supply with social housing and childcare facilities, or the construction of a

network of public libraries and a range of sports facilities. These policies have been combined with an effort to adapt to the demands of an economy increasingly based on knowledge. This has been done through the promotion of various initiatives to attract technology companies and through the creation of a training and research centre in the field of medicine. However, some of these projects have recently been affected by the economic crisis and cuts in public spending. This leads to a greater pressure on social services for which demand has increased while revenues continue to decline as the unemployment rate is around 18% (amounting to 35% for foreign nationals).

The process of border opening and economic development following the establishment of a democracy is the key to explain the intense migration flow that occurred mainly during the first decade of this century in Spain. Sabadell has not been immune to this process. The arrival of thousands of people from many countries of the world in few years looking for new opportunities has led to a major transformation of the city's human landscape. The slowing down of the arrival of new immigrants in recent years, which is mainly due to the economic crisis, has not reduced the need to continue to address the challenges posed by the increasing cultural diversity. Sabadell has consistently adopted a proactive response to the new social challenges. The focus of urban policy has been on intercultural coexistence based on democratic values and the rights and duties of citizenship, without denying or failing to address the complexities of this new reality as well as its opportunities. In this context, one must not forget that one of the great assets of Sabadell lies in its social and cultural dynamism and its strong identity.

However, the impact of the economic crisis and budget cuts are hindering not only the impulse or consolidation of some of these projects, but are also creating serious difficulties in the provision of basic services.

### **3. DEMOGRAPHIC REALITY OF "NEW" Qingdao**

In order to understand the rapidly increasing diversity in Sabadell one only needs to compare the 12.3% of residents with foreign nationality living in the city as of January 1, 2012, with the 1% who lived there in 2000. Regarding their origin, 47.5% are from Latin America, 18.1% from Maghreb, 14.2% from the European Union, 10.4% from sub-Saharan Africa, 5.4 % from Asia and 3% from other European countries. The most represented countries are Morocco (4,640 people), followed by Bolivia (3493), Ecuador (2411), Romania (1751) and China (1103). Fewer migrants are from Paraguay, Gambia, Colombia, Peru, Dominican Republic and Argentina. In total, the inhabitants of Sabadell represent some 130 different nationalities.

Since 2008, the foreign population has frozen at around 12%, leading to a new migration cycle marked by stability. This is the result of the departure of some migrants (mostly from Latin America) and the arrival of others, mostly from Morocco, China and Pakistan. Moreover, during the period between 2000 and 2012, in which the foreign population increased by about 26,000 people, the number of "indigenous" residents remained almost steady at around 181,000. In recent times, there have been some returns of people who came from other parts of Spain during the internal migration waves of the 50s and 60s and who have now

chosen to retire back to their hometowns.

Despite the aging of the population as a result of increased life expectancy and low birth rates, the city is home to about 35,000 young people aged between 15 and 29 years. Adding the 32,000 citizens in the age between 0 and 15, 33% of the population is under 30 years old. The thousands of people who have arrived in the last 15 years are predominantly young adults which have caused a rise in the birth rate. The percentage of women is slightly higher than men (22% of women between 15 and 29 are foreign and so are 20% of the men). The presence of women in secondary and higher education has increased in recent years. 58% of all high school students are girls- among the foreign students the number is 63%.

#### 4. The physical city

Sabadell is divided administratively into seven geographical districts that are subdivided into 19 sectors each with their respective neighborhoods. As in every city, there are differences between urban areas in terms of demography and profile of its inhabitants as well as the type of urbanism and housing providing services or economic and cultural activities. In Sabadell, these differences are due to the growth of the city in the 50s and 60s as a result of the arrival of thousands of people from other parts of Spain.

The city's downtown area has higher housing prices and the highest number of economic, social and cultural rights of all kinds. The percentage of foreign residents as of January 1, 2012 was 6.39%, one of the lowest in the city. Some sectors of downtown are more middle class while others such as Oleguer have attracted a greater number of foreign-born residents, who constitute just over 10 % of all residents, due to the low prices of housing.

In other districts there are also significant differences between the sectors, combining the poorest neighborhoods with more affordable housing prices with other urban areas with higher quality and renovated single-family homes.

Of all the sectors with a higher percentage of foreign residents, Puiggener is the most significant one with 31.53%. It is a typically "working class" urban area that grew due to internal migration from the second half of the last century. However, most sectors are moving between 8 and 20%, showing the quite remarkable territorial distribution of diversity, even if there are some sectors with considerably higher percentages.

The creation of new districts during the immigration waves in the 50s and 60s is mainly the result of the construction of homes by the workers themselves. Most of these suburbs that were originally removed from the historic city experienced a great improvement. In the third district, for example, the Ca n'Oriac sector has become an attractive and dynamic area and hosts 14% of the foreign population.

Importantly, Sabadell is one of the cities that have opted for the construction of public housing. It is currently concentrating almost 9% of these homes in Catalonia. In addition, the supply of rented housing has been prioritised over the years and criteria have been introduced to ensure social and territorial diversity while trying to avoid socio-cultural segregation.

## 5. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sabadell's City Council is one of the municipalities in Catalonia and Spain that are most active and advanced in their policies for managing diversity.

Already in the early years of the arrival of new immigrants, many programs and welcoming services were launched to ensure the coexistence and the social cohesion in an environment that was changing rapidly. Beyond that, the city took a major step forward in its policies in 2007.

New Office of Citizenship and the "new citizenship Transverse Plan" (2007-2011)

In 2007, the city created the City Office of New Citizenship in order to coordinate and lead policies related to the management of the growing socio-cultural diversity. This office began to develop along with other departments and external experts, the new citizenship transverse plan (2007-2011) with the name "Sabadell, democracy and diversity The exercise of the rights and duties in a diverse city".

The plan was approved by the city council meeting on 28 July 2008. It was the result of firstly, a process of analysis and review of a range of programs and projects and secondly, a joint reflection among technical and political city officials and a large number of agents and social institutions.

The plan specifies 476 quantitative and qualitative indicators used for establishing, each semester, a monitoring and evaluation report to the New Citizenship Information Commission and the Bureau of Immigrant Organizations.

The principles of the plan are:

- ♣ democracy and equality
- ♣ diversity and enriching cultural interaction and dynamics
- ♣ social inclusion and combating xenophobic attitudes
- ♣ the involvement and responsibility of civil society

The main objectives are:

- ♣ manage a dynamic demographic environment and respect for social cohesion
- ♣ respond to the basic needs of the initial welcoming and installation
- ♣ deepen integration and interaction between newcomers and native inhabitants

- ♣ stimulate living spaces on the basis of a common Catalan culture
- ♣ work to raise public awareness regarding diversity

The Plan covers four areas:

1. Welcoming and hosting
2. Services and equity
3. Inclusion and participation
4. Intercultural awareness

In May 2011, there was a positive final assessment of the plan's implementation based on five evaluation and monitoring reports during the period 2007-2011. The conclusions demonstrated the need to initiate a new stage in the city's citizenship policies: "the slowing down of the arrival of new citizens, the consolidation of the Office of Citizenship and the significant diversity of Sabadell require new policies to maintain harmony and cohesion to consolidate a common project: the city "

### **A new stage in citizenship policies and diversity management**

The philosophy of this new phase can be summarised by the slogan "the new citizenship policies towards full citizenship." Two phenomena mark the beginning of this process: Firstly, the "Pact for the values of coexistence in Sabadell" and secondly, the creation of the new Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship, bringing together a set of policies which share a transversal vision and strategy under one political responsibility.

#### The Pact for the values of coexistence

The City Council decided to promote coexistence values among citizens through a pact which was the result of an intense process of discussion and participation of many individuals and social agents. The Pact outlines a set of values that "are intended to impregnate the public and private activity, constituting a reference and a guide for action agreed in the city '.

The values finally adopted in early 2011 as benchmarks for coexistence in the city are:

- Respect
- Justice, equity
- Freedom
- Effort
- Confidence
- Love
- Hospitality
- Austerity
- Responsibility
- Optimism

The aim of this “pact of values” is to constitute the backbone of a narrative of a shared city in which all citizens are aware of the need to contribute to managing diversity in an inclusive way in order to make it an asset for all. This narrative applies to both municipal policies and civil society agents. To ensure adhesion, the city is developing a Compact Signatory Network which includes both private individuals and the actors of the social, economic and cultural life. The crucial work begins after the approval of this Pact of values, with the definition of the actions to be implemented in order to strengthen and consolidate these values.

The core of this narrative is the development of a city committed to common values - a diverse city of citizens who share rights and duties, which have integrity and are able to cooperate, which welcome new arrivals with deep hospitality, which are actively involved in pursuing equality between men and women and fight against any violence, who work in favor of personal autonomy and freedom, who foster the emancipation of young people and believe that diversity and interaction are the basis of coexistence. Diversity is defined in a broad manner to include “emotional, ethnic, spiritual, age, sex, gender and lifestyle diversity” which should not be a source of conflict but should be viewed as the expression of a plurality which is sometimes disturbing but makes us at the same time free.

#### The Master Plan for the new Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship "Sabadell for citizenship"

During the political mandate that began in 2011 the municipality was restructured, merging various policy areas under the new Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship. Teams that once acted more independently are now working in one sector encompassing equality, youth, cooperation and solidarity and New Citizenship and Coexistence.

The council aims to strengthen and improve public policies in a difficult period of economic downturn and budget austerity without jeopardizing the civil and social rights acquired over many years. These aims are embedded in the Master Plan for Civil Rights and Citizenship for 2011-2015.

Both politicians and civil servants we met in preparation for this report assessed the creation of this new Master Plan positively, because it provides many opportunities for mainstreaming and interdepartmental co-operation.

Objectives of the Master Plan 2011-2015 Civil Rights and Citizenship:

1. To ensure knowledge-based policies through active knowledge collection on the situation of citizens' civil rights in Sabadell
2. Develop initiatives that promote proactive and transversal policies promoting civil rights and the inclusion of all citizens

3. Promote the Pact of values as a reference and guide for action, and its implementation with citizen participation
4. Manage diversity of beliefs in an inclusive way with equality and respect as core values in the exercise of religious freedom
5. Eradicate gender violence, ensuring social, psychological, and legal support and coordinated special care
6. Welcome new arrivals and provide for their basic needs using the resources of the city in compliance with the Catalan Law on Reception
7. Cooperate internationally with other local authorities, work together with local associations, local government and civil society in the countries of the south.
8. Ensure the emancipation of young people through education and training that enables them to avoid being excluded and ensure access to these services without distinction as to race, age, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, faith, or physical and mental ability
9. Ensure the rights and duties of citizenship which are proper and existing defense mechanisms, also ensure social care and legal assistance to victims of violent racism, xenophobia and homophobia
10. Improve education in the field of civil rights by giving priority to being proactive to existing realities and needs
11. Promote active youth associations, women and newcomers by coordinating a network of partners that work in the field of inclusion, diversity, civil rights and citizenship and strengthening civil society
12. Promote linkages through intercultural projects, interasociativos and intergenerational spaces to facilitate mutual understanding and respect, including instruments to address prejudice and rejection of other persons
13. Raise awareness to combat prejudice and promote critical thinking by providing instruments to address prejudice and rejection of others in a proactive manner
14. Agree on political lines, criteria and the projects developed for managing diversity, preserving equal opportunities and ensuring coexistence
15. Network with neighborhood administrations in order to deepen and broaden the mutual cooperation in all aspects

More than 150 actions are foreseen to achieve these objectives.

## 6. SPECIFIC POLICIES AND INITIATIVES FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

In our visits to Sabadell we had the opportunity to see firsthand some of the programs and projects promoted by the city and some of the many associations that are active in the field of diversity and coexistence. Below are some examples of these initiatives along with some more qualitative comments and evaluations.

### A) WELCOME AND MEDIATION

Sabadell has developed a comprehensive welcoming approach promoted by the council in collaboration with other institutions and many organizations (more than 50 entities in total). The approach is based on itineraries and specific programs tailored to the profile and needs of people during the first stage of their arrival in the city. However, over the years it has become clear that reception services are relevant not only for newcomers but also to migrants who have been living for many years in the city. The economic crisis has made many people which previously did not use these programs to turn to them in order to improve their ability to find work, improve their qualifications, learn the local language or get a better understanding of the municipal welfare services.

These services are classified into five areas:

#### 1. Welcome, introduction to the city and of the municipal service offer

In this area, welcome sessions are organised in collaboration with organizations such as the SCAI (Citizen Service Receiving Immigrants) and other citizens' organizations and trade unions, as well as workshops about the city, labor market and language learning. In Sabadell, these sessions have a solemn dimension as the Mayor personally delivers the diplomas to the new neighbors when they complete their itinerary.

#### 2. Access to basic services and rights

The purpose of these actions is to facilitate access to basic services such as the residence registration (the administrative record that all residents of a municipality need regardless of their official residence status, i.e. whether or not they have "papers"), obtaining a health care card to access the public health system and access to basic welfare services and schooling.

#### 3. Procedures related to immigration law

Until recently, the municipalities in Spain had certain powers in certain areas of the Aliens Act, such as the preparation of reports to determine the degree of social integration of foreign residents or reports on the state of housing for those seeking family reunification. However, more recently these powers have been transferred to the regions - although, in Catalonia, municipalities continue to have a role in the preparation of these reports.

#### 4. Advice on labor and education

In this area, in collaboration with other organisations such as Caritas, training courses are offered to facilitate access to the labor market, as well as to learn the Catalan language. The city also has a Resource Room (the Feinateca) to facilitate active job search which has more and more foreign users.

#### 5. Accompanying the new arrivals

This area includes a number of programs ranging from personalised advice and intercultural mediation, support for people seeking family reunion, fostering the links between the immigrant and native youth, developing social skills, reinforcing the autonomy of women and immigrants with little education and at risk of social exclusion.

#### SCAI: Immigrant Reception Service

SCAI consists of 6 entities financed by the Sabadell City Council and other government grants and foundations.

The general objectives of SCAI are:

- Comprehensive welcoming of immigrants in coordination with local entities and institutions
- Supporting the social integration of immigrants
- Support for the migrants in preserving their distinct identity
- Social awareness of the population regarding migration, intercultural solidarity and participation in the host society

The SCAI team is located in the city center and has a board with representatives of various institutions, seven employees and over 40 volunteers working on the various activities. The service's annual budget is about €150,000.

In 2011 they received over 15,000 visits.

Although the number of migrants is currently not increasing, there are still many people who need these services. Especially the demand on legal advice and social care, due to the effects of the economic crisis, is increasing.

#### Program training and integration of people in the process of the Caritas regularization

During our visit to Caritas we got the opportunity to talk with the head of the program which aims to enable migrants in Sabadell to gain access to resources of training and job placement. This program involves the support and cooperation of the City and is especially addressed to women who are in the process of regularization and at risk of social exclusion. The program focuses primarily on the orientation, training and support for job search through training modules and a job board. They also offer a workshop for learning the Catalan language.

Currently, 90% of its users are persons of foreign origin who are suffering from severe effects of the economic crisis. Services have been adapted to the needs of users. There is, for example, a room for mothers with children under three years in which the mother-child relationship is dealt with and in which a course for female literacy in their native language is organized.

Women are mostly of Saharan origin, Maghreb and Latin America, although the latter group has declined considerably in recent times. The main countries of origin are Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Paraguay and Honduras.

Caritas's work relies primarily on volunteers (the organizations has 8 employees and 120 volunteers) on basis of the network of parishes in the districts. This volunteer work has been used to address the awareness and acceptance of new residents as it allows a high degree of interaction. However, with rising unemployment, one encounters situations where indigenous volunteers themselves are unemployed and have an increasingly negative attitude towards immigrants themselves. As a reaction, Caritas is using the Barcelona antirumores strategy in order to stop the prejudices and stereotypes among the volunteers.

#### Municipal and dynamic intercultural mediation

The intercultural mediation service of Sabadell consists of two mediators (one of them is from North Africa) and is a "bridge resource to improve communication and promote constructive change in relations between culturally diverse people, preventing potential conflicts may arise." The mediation service works in various areas of the municipality, supporting areas such as reception, social services, health promotion and programs for women and youth. It also works in schools and colleges, hospitals and health centers as well as organizations like the SCAI, Caritas and the Red Cross. In 2011, it conducted more than 1500 interventions.

The mediator told us that most new immigrants hardly used social services before the crisis. However, in recent years, the demand increased significantly. One of the most problematic cases is the loss of housing for people who can no longer afford their accommodation. This stressed the difficulties immigrants face with their apartments as some of them opted for the purchase of an apartment by taking up mortgages that they now cannot afford anymore and are therefore forced to leave their homes. As a reaction, the City Council, as in many other cities as well, decided to launch an advisory service in order to support these people mitigating the plight in which they find themselves. However, due to budget cuts, it increasingly becomes harder to find solutions for a reality that affects not only immigrants but also some locals. The problems are leading to an increased overcrowding and coexistence problems as many families have to share a flat together.

It became obvious that many Maghrebi immigrants had been working for years in construction, often with entrepreneurs who were of the same nationality, so they did not need to learn the Spanish language. Now that many of them are unemployed they are unable to attend vocational training courses in order to access other work because they do not have the minimum language proficiency despite having lived eight or nine years in Sabadell. There were also some situations of workers reported which were laid off and forced to sign a letter waiving the compensation to which they were entitled as they were told not to read the signed - without realizing what they

were doing.

The main problem today is to fulfill people's basic needs such as housing or even food. Although many families get welfare aid they begin to detect health problems related to poor nutrition and an increase in mental disorders.

However, many families rather endure these precarious situations and not return to their countries of origin because they prioritize their children to continue their education here and prefer to hold out until the crisis passes.

## B) SERVICES AND EQUITY

Sabadell has also prioritized the adaptation of universal services for all citizens (labor market access, educational, social, cultural, health and so on.) to the new sociocultural reality of the city in order to ensure equal access to these services and training programs to facilitate access to the labor market.

To facilitate access to the labor market to people who face additional difficulties due to their profile and the circumstances, is one of the major challenges shared by many cities. This becomes even more evident in the current crisis and although the unemployment rate of foreigners is twice that of the natives, one should not forget that there are many unemployed natives as well.

The access to the labor market is planned to be facilitated by

- Training workshops on the labor market and actively seeking work
- Job placement programs
- Information and advice on creating and building businesses for entrepreneurs

Note that in these programs the percentage of foreign users corresponds to the demographic representation of this group in the city.

### Education and training

A crucial factor in this area is to learn Catalan and Spanish. Unfortunately, the current offer does not cover the demand for seminar places, a situation which is widespread across Catalonia. An interesting project in the realm of education is "Posa't-hi", which offers guidance for young people who have school qualifications. It involves 12 schools in the city. Also worth noting are 11 reception classes that exist in various schools to promote the inclusion of foreign students in the school yard on their arrival in the city.

### Playing sports

One of the biggest efforts of the city of Sabadell has undoubtedly been the practice of using sport as a space for integration. Many shopping and sports facilities in the city provide revitalization programs of sport taking place especially in those neighborhoods with high

numbers of new immigrants. Hundreds of young people, many of them from countries like Paraguay or Ecuador, participate weekly in these actions focusing on sports as an integration tool.

Access to culture

Sabadell pushed ambitiously for a better network of public libraries. Today there are nine facilities with more than 290,000 users which fairly represent the diversity of backgrounds of the population. These centers, offering activities and collections on cultural diversity, play an important role for cohesion, interaction and cultural proximity.

There are many other programs and services dedicated to promote health, women's health and access to housing which are adapted to the new realities. However, this process is not easy, especially in the current context of budget cuts and the significant drop in revenues.

### C) INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

This section highlights programs to promote coexistence, dialogue and interaction between the citizens. It focuses as well on the participation of new neighbors in the social and cultural life of the city.

The Commission for Coexistence

In 2004, there were attacks by a neo-Nazi group in Sabadell directed not only against immigrants but also against young alternatives. As a consequence, it was decided to establish the Commission for Coexistence which currently has 28 members representing political parties, unions, ombudsmen, social organizations, immigrant neighborhood, security forces, the College of lawyers etc. The chairmanship of the Commission is held by the council area of civil rights and citizenship and its members meet once a month.

Racist attacks and problems are dealt with according to their type by activating protocols for victim assistance in legal matters. Currently, this tension has decreased. However, there have been other incidents of violent actions of some members of youth gangs related to the exercise of religious freedom, the coexistence of citizens impaired by excessive noise or by an increased number of homeless people which are at great risk of social exclusion.

The Commission for Coexistence has become a very useful way to address those issues affecting coexistence in the city as it is one of the spaces for discussion on "Covenant Values Coexistence".

On the other hand, it is important to note that about 4 years ago there was a study on the level of coexistence in the city concluding that 80% of citizens of Sabadell valued it as very good. Although there are no recent surveys the economic crisis has most likely worsened this perception in comparison to four years ago.

Programs for inclusion and the participation of women

Addressing challenges of the integration of immigrant women in the social, labor and cultural sphere has become a very important commitment in Sabadell. A good example is the "Espai

Dona" (Space Woman) whose objectives are:

- Detect newly arrived women and their specific needs
- Bring women to training and workforce
- Work for the empowerment and visibility of immigrant women
- Encourage group cohesion both informal and organized
- Encourage the creation of a network of immigrant and native women
- Encourage the participation of groups and associations in the activities of the city

The women who participate in the activities promoted by the council have many nationalities but are mainly of sub-Saharan and North African origin. Besides, they are usually not well educated. Most of them have come to Spain on the basis of family reunification. Therefore, they have no previous work experience.

The work of the "Dona Espai" focuses on building spaces of language learning, training in information technology and communication, access to labor and participation and awareness.

Besides, attention is paid to more specific situations as for example polygamy, genital mutilation (two cases are detected each year through a cooperation agreement with the government of Catalunya and the police) or forced marriages (four cases are detected each year although the perception is that there are some more).

All departments and projects for women deserve special attention. In the "touch and Participate" workshops were organized to address the "duel immigration" and emotional aspects. The program was later joined by the "arteratia technique" involving women who had no knowledge of the language as well as some indigenous women. These workshops use theater performances and the creation of textile art pieces as tools to favor communication and socialization. The work of these women is subsequently exposed to all neighbors to raise awareness and draw attention to those positive intercultural relations.

From conversations with intercultural mediators some facts emerged which are important to better understand the reality of some of these women.

Many of them come from rural southern areas of the Maghreb and are generally highly convivial. However, their poor level of literacy is a major barrier to learn the language. This fosters prejudices among other women of the city.

As a consequence of the economic crisis many women who previously did not work have to find a job now. They are doing so especially in the domestic sector and in aged care. This is causing some tensions because now the woman is contributing money and thus obtaining a higher level of personal autonomy. This translates to a development of more critical attitudes within their families, for example in the realm of gender violence and genital mutilation.

These programs pointed to the challenges that lie ahead, as for example to enhance interaction with other women of the city, increase the number of men working with gender issues, adapt city services to the profiles of these women, the lack of generational replacement in women's associations and the difficulty of networking between the different associations of the city.

## Programs for inclusion and participation of young people

Youth policy is another major policy priority of Sabadell. There are several programs to promote the socialization of young people through sport and culture. Among the specific programs that have been implemented to facilitate the inclusion of young immigrants and encourage interaction with the younger population of the city, there are two programs which stand out: the "Joves Guide" (Young Guide) and especially the "JOVE: That, Vens? "(Young: What, are you from?). These programs combine several goals in order to promote greater inclusion and participation.

The objectives of the program "Joves Guide" are:

- Promote the participation of young people in secondary schools and the reception of new students
- Provide tools to improve social skills and promote a better coexistence among young people
- Facilitate access to mainstream resources offered by the city

The outcome of the project is positive as 108 young citizens from seven institutes of the city have participated. The program raised the youth's awareness of the reality of the new students and promoted the value of stewardship.

However, a major problem which many cities are facing is situation of young people in the sensitive age group of 16 to 21 years who are not working. Consequently, this is the special focus of the "Jove: What, Vens? I Creació Espai communication" project which is funded by the European Integration Fund.

This project aims to improve the social skills of young people by strengthening their autonomy, responsibility and social networks. The project consists of several stages:

1. Detection of these young people and an analysis of their profiles and needs.
2. Individual intervention in order to increase the youth's interest in educational and occupational resources and language learning.
3. Socio-level group intervention through various workshops:
  - a. Social Skills Workshop
  - b. Audiovisual production Workshop
  - c. Social Theatre Workshop
4. Awareness-raising
  - a. Presentation of the videos made by young people in different places and on different events
  - b. Forum Young Interactive Theater

More than 150 young people have participated in the program with positive results over the last three years. Many of these young people were referred to Catalan courses and training courses to learn a trade. Some were linked to sports facilities and 4 of them are currently working in the facilities of the FC Barcelona. Others have taken courses to monitor leisure activities for young

people and entities linked to the city.

Those responsible for the program highlight some future challenges, such as the importance of breaking stereotypes on these young people by education professionals themselves. They also point out the need to increase the number of involved girls and to encourage more interaction between immigrant and indigenous youth.

#### Associations and intercultural coexistence

Sabadell is a city with a long tradition of neighborhood association movements. Moreover, the city has a large number of organizations and associations of all kinds that have been increased by new partnerships created by new immigrants. The City has long been betting on supporting partnerships to encourage participation, multiculturalism and coexistence. We had the chance to talk to some leaders of these entities and learned of their opinions on the role of these associations and the complex challenge of coexistence in diversity.

#### Neighborhood associations

In our conversation with representatives of neighborhood associations we could get some impressions of the reality of integration processes from the perspective of these associations. One of them said that "as a first step neighborhood associations wanted to incorporate new immigrants, but found some problems that hindered much of this objective, such as new immigrants who did not understand the democratic functioning of these associations as they were very informal." On the other hand, he also recognized that there were some people in the neighborhood associations who did not welcome the new neighbors kindly. This demonstrated "the need to work on more dialogue and interaction to better understand and remember the own past as an immigrant who arrived in Sabadell from other parts of Spain." Another aspect hindering good relationships was the instability of many immigrant associations. Many changes of leadership prevented the consolidation of partners and more stable relationships. It also became evident by the comments that the economic crisis is having a negative impact on the perceptions and conditions that should facilitate better understanding. Indigenous people struggle increasingly to meet basic needs and many of them believe that most aid is going to immigrants. Although this is not the case, many native people may not meet the criteria to receive aid. The council should listen and pay heed to them. Many people who have never needed or asked for anything now find themselves in a difficult situation because they understand that immigrants are left without the aid that they now make use of. It was also stressed that due to the crisis, the share of immigrants in civic festivals in the city has dropped significantly as they currently have more urgent problems to deal with. This does not improve socialization. Consequently, the degree of interaction between people of different origins is decreasing. This leads to a greater separation and more negative views on immigration. Thus, there is the need for more work spaces of interaction with information on local customs in order to break prejudices and avoid further alienation. Finally, our conversations revealed a clear difference between the degrees of acceptance by the natives of different groups of foreign origin, a difference that was repeated in several of our

meetings. In general, indigenous peoples' opinions on new residents from sub-Saharan countries are much more positive than of other groups such as Latin America and the Maghreb. The reasons that explain these differences appear to reflect a widely held view that the first "create less problems of coexistence, especially noise, and do not drink, have a more orderly life, are more formal and workers and show a greater willingness to such integration ... learn before the American Catalan".

It is interesting to note that this perception is not only common in Sabadell but can also be found in other Catalan towns. It contradicts the perception of many people who believe that the Latin American group is integrating best for historical, cultural and religious reasons. One should not forget that most African immigrants exercise the Muslim religion, which for some representatives of neighborhood associations is "conducted more formal and less boisterous and noisy"

### Immigrant associations

In Sabadell, there are currently more than 50 associations and immigrant groups. During our city tour we had the opportunity to speak with several representatives of the groups of Nigerian, American and Maghreb immigrants. The City Council has followed a policy of support for these entities to facilitate the participation of these groups in the social and cultural life of the city in order to enable them to organize their own activities raising awareness of diversity and towards multiculturalism.

Although there are differences in the specific situations of each group, many similarities among the immigrants could be distracted from the conversations.

- ♣ In general, the impact of the crisis has forced many immigrants, except the Maghrebian, to seek new opportunities in other European countries such as France or Germany or to return to their countries of origin. This reduced the number of residents in the communities
- ♣ The impact of the crisis has also led to less participation of people in public activities, especially regarding leisure activities as well as participation in festivals and cultural events.
- ♣ The crisis has also led to instability of structure and resources of associations as fewer volunteers are willing to work. The decrease in subsidies has forced them to greatly reduce the level of activity.
- ♣ They highlight the strong relationship with the council and acknowledge the support they have received to organize their activities and to participate in collaborative actions and events in the city.
- ♣ The perception of the standard of living in Sabadell, which some believe is much higher than in other nearby towns, is positive and highlights the lack of serious problems.
- ♣ Some citizens point to the lack of understanding and tolerance of some neighbors and the lack of a more positive view on diversity. This could be due to many prejudices among different groups.
- ♣ They agree on the importance of working spaces for interaction with the locals in order to promote dialogue and mutual understanding while recognizing that the context of crisis is hampering many these processes.
- ♣ In some cases, it was highlighted that there has been little racist discourse of a particular political party which has a better reception in other cities - although it was recognized that

negative views on immigration are increasing and it was not ruled out that the party would get more votes in the future. One representative of an association, for example, criticized that some local television media had given much prominence to the leader of this party and in this way helped him to greatly increase his publicity and popularity.

- ♣ There are also differences in valuation of the different indigenous groups, reinforcing the idea that the collectively most accepted group is the Saharan one as it does not cause problems of coexistence and has a more likely to integrate into the host society .

- ♣ For both, the Latin American and the Maghreb group, the lack of information on some of the customs and norms are the reason for existing problems. Many new residents, for example, come from rural environments where they lived in detached houses. Therefore, they are not used to live in blocks of flats in which you must observe certain rules of behavior. In this regard, the importance of informing people about the rules that exist in the host society was stressed in order to avoid stigmatization and stereotyping.

#### D) Intercultural awareness

This area comprises actions which are intended to disseminate information and to teach the values of coexistence in diversity in order to convey a positive image of multiculturalism, to combat prejudice and to prevent hostile attitudes in the whole population.

This includes training of council staff (more than 3000 employees) on issues of municipal policies and diversity management. . Another relevant program which was initiated a few years ago is to inform and sensitize companies to facilitate paperwork for hiring foreign-born immigrants. Other actions include the dissemination of information via the website of the Office of New Citizenship to the general population on the city's diversity and municipal policies as well as the organization of various conferences, seminars and exhibitions.

Particularly one project caught our attention during the visits: the project "public building" by the City Council links different generations of immigrants from the city and gives them a sense of belonging to it.

#### Project "public building"

This is undoubtedly one of the most exciting and innovative projects of Sabadell. Summarizing, residents of a neighborhood in the city that arrived during the 60ies from other parts of Spain talk to new residents of foreign origin about the city's history and their personal experiences with it. I had the opportunity to attend one of these sessions in which the older residents talked about the difficulties of arriving in Sabadell, their work experience of more than 50 years in the factories, the harsh living conditions of the time, problems with housing, the poor urban environment as well as the lack of facilities, public transportation and basic services. They also elaborated on some events that marked the history of the city, as for example, the flood of 1962 when whole families drowned in the flooded river or the intensity of the snow at Christmas of the same year, when many people were cut off without being able to leave their home for several

days.

The issue of housing is an important part of these talks. The older generation explains how houses were built by the state but entrepreneurs requested the floor for their workers. Thus, it was the entrepreneur who decided whom to give the floor. This gave him great power which sometimes resulted in threats and blackmail.

Therefore, some workers had to live in caves in the mountains for the first time of their arrival because there was no affordable housing available in the city. Only when they finally got work and were able to pay for the apartment, they were able to leave the caves.

Another important part of the talks is the origin of the neighborhood associations. At the time of the Franco dictatorship, it was forbidden that more than 20 people meet publicly. In case those gatherings were detected by the police, the people were brought to the police station and often beaten up. In this context, the neighborhood associations were the only spaces in which people could meet, talk and learn. Over time they were uniting to demand all sorts of basic improvements in neighborhoods such as paved streets or the building of plazas.

Telling these stories is a chance to ask new neighbors to integrate in these associations in order to work together and give them the feeling that they are welcome.

After the meeting, the local technical coordinator of the project creates an overview of the objectives and topics which were addressed:

- Identify parallels between different migration processes
- Share integration problems, such as the feeling of being second-class citizens or the importance of being able to speak Catalan
- Know the history of the city and appreciate the improvements that have occurred in many respects
- The importance of an attitude of collective commitment to continue to improve things and to look into the future as residents of Sabadell

During the session, the explanations were accompanied by photographs of the particular periods on which you can see the construction of the neighborhood where the immigrants live now, as well as the process of urbanization and images of historic moments. In the end, the project coordinator explains that they will visit the neighborhood in the next session remembering old images in order to, subsequently, create a presentation of the visit.

The numerous people attending the meeting represent a wide variety of backgrounds, ages and a good mix of men and women. They are asking specific questions on topics that have caught their eyes. Thus, there is an interesting and moving dialogue and a contrast of views which is not without a good dose of humor. Those sessions facilitated mutual understanding and strengthened the sense of belonging to the neighborhood and the city.

This is undoubtedly a valuable project. Therefore, it would be desirable to consolidate it and add new elements to enrich it further. For example, these sessions could be held not just for young people but for all newcomers as many young indigenous sure know about many of the issues discussed. It would also be possible that new immigrants explain their personal stories to further strengthen the mutual understanding which is necessary to break stereotypes and prejudices. It is projects like this that require a low budget but still have great value and are closely linked to community life in neighborhoods.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Sabadell quickly understood the challenge posed to the city by the arrival of thousands of people from around the world during the early years of this century. It quickly adapted policies and services to facilitate integration and ensure social harmony and cohesion. The City Council chose to be proactive, convinced that the best answer was acting and not pretending to act as it was the case in other places that reacted slower. One of the great merits of Sabadell was to address the complexities from the beginning, putting policies of diversity management forward while giving a competent team full autonomy and the necessary support. Against the backdrop of a profound demographic shift in which some began to use immigration as a tool to manage fears and uncertainties of voters, Sabadell opted for a constructive and positive approach to deal with the more complex aspects of the new reality. From 2007, Sabadell is one of the first Spanish cities with an overall strategic plan and policies of diversity management. The creation of an Office of New Citizenship has been the key to consolidate and visualize these policies. The emphasis was since the beginning on spreading the vision of and commitment to intercultural principles as part of the defense of democratic values. This makes Sabadell to one of the leaders in this regard both in Catalonia and throughout the state. This attitude is reflected in the constant review and adaption of policies. Currently, Sabadell is at the beginning of a new era marked by the economic crisis. This new stage is the result of a reflection shared by the whole council and by a large number of other entities and social actors which the council has always been committed to support and to help via networking. The remarkable influx of new immigrants, the need to focus on deepening the integration processes of the sons and daughters of those who arrived a few years ago and of most vulnerable groups such as women, have forced Sabadell to put the focus on deeper aspects of coexistence and social cohesion. The approach intends to incorporate more variables than solely the specific origin, as for example age, gender or religious diversity, in a much more plural society.. These variables intersect with issues triggered by the economic crisis such as unemployment, which is the main concern of people, along with housing and the obvious economic difficulties being experienced by many families. This is putting pressure on authorities to see how budgets are reduced and increases the risks of social exclusion and competition for scarce resources. Throughout our discussions with representatives of organizations and neighborhood associations as well as immigrants in the city, we experienced how, in this context of crisis, spaces for interaction and socialization are shrinking and negative views in diversity are increasing. Clichés, prejudices and stereotypes are reinforced, constituting a new barrier to understanding and coexistence. The need to cut social activities that facilitate the meeting of neighbors and the increased fragility of the associations also hinder socialization at a time when it is needed more than ever. The urgent need of many families for basic goods and services leads them to reduce their participation in the social and cultural life of the city, although the need for many immigrant women to go out to work is having the positive effect of a better visualization of this group. Despite these problems, Sabadell endures these difficult years without having serious problems of coexistence. It maintains good levels of social cohesion partly thanks to the policies that have

been implemented but also because the entire population has a long tradition of defending civic values of coexistence. This is demonstrated by the recent Covenant values of coexistence in Sabadell which have been the result of intense civic debate. While other municipalities have seen increasingly stigmatized discourses on immigration including a confrontation between "us" and "them", Sabadell has chosen a responsible and constructive discourse, appealing to "requirement, responsibility and cooperation" in the words of its mayor. The best example for this is that while there has been an increase of support for a political party with clearly racist content in several cities, this party has not managed to establish itself in Sabadell. It is difficult to explain the reason for this lack of support and it would be a bit naive to appeal only to the policies that have been implemented. But it is certainly very positive that a city like Sabadell shows that it can address complex social challenges with a constructive and proactive approach in favor of coexistence in diversity. That said, there are many issues in Sabadell which work against the complex balance that keeps it simple, as we have demonstrated in our visits to the city. The growing sense that intercultural links are being broken by the consequences of the crisis should serve as a warning to remain vigilant and protect neighborhood projects in order to strengthen the intercultural ties. The new phase in the town hall which is marked by the creation of a new council of civil rights and citizenship, facilitating better collaboration and cross-action among many departments, is the key right now. In this regard, it is important not only to deepen collaboration between these areas, but also improve collaboration with other departments such as culture, economic development, education and sports. Budget cuts force many to focus on the provision of basic services, but one should make an effort not to exclude the projects that allow greater interaction and understanding at a time of growing mistrust and negative perceptions of diversity. The example of the "public building" in which people who immigrated to Sabadell in the 50ies and 60ies explain the history of the city from the perspective of their personal experiences to the new neighbors, should serve as a symbol of this ongoing work. Projects like this are critical to weave the bonds of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual understanding and the collective sense of belonging to a neighborhood and the city. Finally, there is a remarkable story that we were told by Mayor Manuel Bustos in our interview and that somehow serves to illustrate some aspects of the social reality of this city. When a reporter asked not long ago if Sabadell had many immigrants (with the aim of obtaining some controversial statements about the "excess" of foreign immigrants) the Mayor, to the surprise of one reporter said yes, they had many – and added "just like myself, some 47 years ago." Manuel Bustos was born on 1961 in the Valencian town of Pedralba and had reached the age of eight when he came to Sabadell - like so many others.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
Strong leadership and consolidated management policies of diversity, with a competent and experienced team	The proactive and continuous review of policies can provide the necessary process of adaptation and prioritization of some of its policies in

<p>A city of great social and cultural dynamism with a historic commitment to defend democratic values and social and civil rights</p> <p>A rich network of associations with a culture of collaborative work and a council in favor of intercultural coexistence and social cohesion and against racism and exclusion</p> <p>Holistic and transversal policies in favor of interaction and based on the principles of citizenship and multiculturalism, to address conflicts and to seize opportunities offered by diversity</p>	<p>favor of interaction</p> <p>The Pact for the values of coexistence can serve as a framework to strengthen collective municipal and citizen engagement in favor of coexistence – the greater the number of stakeholders involved, the more concrete and visible is the implementation</p> <p>The willingness to move forward in mainstreaming can translate into better collaboration among various departments to improve performance of certain policies while offsetting budget cuts</p> <p>The collaboration with the association, in a context of fewer resources, is an attempt to condense common commitment</p>
<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p>Adapt the set of services and programs to the social changes the city has undergone</p> <p>An important part of the technical staff of the management programs of the diversity of the city officials and not rely on outsourcing</p> <p>Collaborate with the media to better visualize the city as a leader in the management policies of diversity</p> <p>The precarious reality of some distant suburbs and the urban area with higher concentrations of new immigrants that hinder their greater socialization</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>Budget cuts by the economic crisis are threatening the sustainability of some programs and thwart the expectations created by the new stage symbolized the ambitious master plan for the Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship</p> <p>Rising unemployment and housing problems can cause more social exclusion and increasing problems of coexistence</p> <p>The increased demand for social services in the context of budget cuts can increase feelings of competition for resources and reinforce negative views about immigrants</p> <p>The weak associations, the decreased activities for interaction and intercultural harmony and the need for families to prioritize basic needs, can</p>

	reduce the fragile bonds that were built while fostering segregation processes
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