Intercultural cities
Building the future on diversity
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THE INTERCULTURAL CITY INDEX AND BENCHMARKING TOOL

NORMATIVE BASIS

I. How have the city authorities demonstrated their commitment to being an intercultural city?

A city may contain many examples of interculturality but these may remain isolated or hidden from the general awareness of the general population or the outside world. An optimum Intercultural City would be one which has taken a self-conscious decision to seek out, identify and acknowledge such cases, as well as to establish a policy objective of consolidating and building upon them; as well as a developmental strategy which has appropriate resources to support it. The city authorities would also have made a formal statement sending an unambiguous public message of its commitment to intercultural principles and would be actively engaged in persuading other key stakeholders in the city to do likewise.

Planning and Engaging with Intercultural Communities, by Phil Wood

Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage by Phil Wood and Charles Landry. London, 2008

White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Council of Europe, 2008

Council of the European Union conclusions on the strengthening of integration policies in the EU by promoting unity in diversity, June 2007

Resolution 280 (2009) - Intercultural cities

Recommendation 261 (2009) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – Intercultural Cities

Recommendation R (92) 12 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on community relations

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II. The city through an intercultural lens

At the heart of the Intercultural City thesis is the notion of taking the important – but often mundane – functions of the city and re-conceiving and re-configuring them in an intercultural way in order to make sure that they provide adequate service to citizens regardless of their cultural background. The city should ask itself the question 'if optimising the potential for cross-cultural co-operation is a high priority for the city, how might we do things differently?"

Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on interaction between migrants and receiving societies

Building Migrants' Belonging through Positive Interactions: A Guide for Policy-Makers and Practitioners (appendix 4 to document CM(2010)172)

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a) How intercultural is the education system?

Attitudes about culture and race can be formed at an early age. School has a powerful influence here and has the potential to either reinforce or challenge prejudices in a number of ways: through the social environment that it creates, the guidance it provides and the values and knowledge it instils.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background

The role of schools in the intercultural city, by Maurice Coles and Bob Vincent

b) How intercultural are residential neighbourhoods[1]?
There is a great variation across European cities in the extent to which patterns of residential settlement are connected to culture and ethnicity and there are also varying opinions on whether the state should intervene to encourage greater socio-cultural mixing and encourage community dynamics in the neighbourhoods or if the market and personal choice should be the prime determinants. An optimum Intercultural City does not require a 'perfect' statistical mix of people and recognises the value of ethnic enclaves, so long as they do not act as barriers to the free flow of people, ideas and opportunities both inward and outward.

Resolution 183 (1987) of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on foreigners in regional and local communities

Resolution 270 (2008) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on improving the integration of migrants through local housing policies

Recommendation 252 (2008) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on improving the integration of migrants through local housing policies

c) How intercultural are the public services?
An optimum intercultural city would see an equal reflection of the population in the ethnic/cultural background of public employees – at all levels of seniority. More than this however, it would recognise that as the population changes, the very nature of the public service must be reviewed and possibly revised. It must be open to the possibility of new ideas and innovation brought by minority groups rather than imposing a 'one size fits all' approach to public services and actions.

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[1] By neighborhood we understand a unit within the city which has a certain level of administrative autonomy (or sometimes also certain political governance structures) and is considered as a unit with regard to city planning. In larger cities districts (boroughs) have several neighborhoods. The statistical definition of a 'neighbourhood' varies from one country to another. Generally, it   includes groups of population between 5,000 and 20,000 people.

Recommendation (2006)18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on health services in a multicultural society

Recommendation 194 (2006) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on effective access to social rights for immigrants

Resolution 281 (2009) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision

Recommendation 262 (2009) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision

Recommendation Rec(2004)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the access of non-nationals to employment in the public sector

European Social Charter

The European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (1992)

Resolution 181 (2004) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on "A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions"

Recommendation 153 (2004) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on a Resolution 181 (2004) on "A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions"

d) How intercultural is business and the labour market?
Large parts of the economy and the labour market may be beyond the remit and control of the city authority, but they may still fall within its sphere of influence. Because of nationally-imposed restrictions on access to the public sector labour market, the private sector may provide an easier route for minorities to engage in economic activity. In turn, such activity (e. g. shops, clubs, restaurants but also high-skill industry and research) may provide a valuable interface between different cultures of the city. While barriers for entry usually concern migrant/minority groups, in some cases it could be the other way round. Research has proved, however, that it is the cultural mix that fosters creativity and innovation, not homogeneity.

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Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on validating migrants' skills

Ethnic diversity and entrepreneurship in Oslo and Drammen
(Two related city case studies of the application of intercultural approaches in the Norwegian context)

The Contribution of Outsiders to Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Cities: The UK Case by Lia Ghilardi

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving access of migrants and persons of immigrant background to employment

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e) How intercultural is cultural and civil life?
The time which people allocate to their leisure may often be the best opportunity for them to encounter and engage with people of another culture. Equally however, if patterns of leisure are structured along ethnic lines (e. g. a football league of teams from only one culture) it may be a powerful reinforcer of separation. The city can influence this through its own direct activities and through the way it distributes resources to other organisations.

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Intercultural Sport, by Charles Landry

Resolution 92 (2000) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreign residents in local public life

Recommendation 76 (2000) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreign residents in local public life

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f) How intercultural is public space?
Public spaces and facilities are important for several reasons. They are places which most citizens are obliged to use from time to time therefore raising the possibility for chance meetings between strangers. They may also reinforce cross-cultural solidarity. For example in cases of aroused public interest around the proposed development or closure of a facility. Well managed and animated spaces can become beacons of the city's intercultural intentions. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the stranger.

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Knowing Lewisham
(A city case study of a London Borough exploring new approaches to urban planning and development through the a better understanding and application of cultural literacy)

Intercultural Consultation for a Global City District
(A city case study in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, recommending new approaches to community engagement, particularly around neighbourhood planning issues)

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III. Mediation and conflict resolution
It is a basic tenet of the Intercultural Cities programme that where groups of different cultural background and of social and economic status are present in close proximity, there is always the potential for conflict over values, behaviour or resources. This is natural – what is unnatural would be for city authorities to seek to deny or ignore it. The process of anticipating, identifying, addressing and resolving conflicts is a fundamental process of living together in a dynamic and

communicative community. Indeed the optimum Intercultural City sees the opportunity for innovation and greater cohesion emerging from the very process of conflict mediation and resolution.

Recommendation 304 (2011) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level

IV. Language

The learning of the language of the host country by migrants is key issue for integration. However there are other considerations in an intercultural approach to language. For example in cities where there are one or more national minorities (or indeed where there is indeed no clear majority group) there is significance in the extent to which there is mutual learning across language divides. Even in cities where recent migrations or trade connections have brought entirely new languages into the city, there is significance in the extent to which the majority are prepared to adopt these languages.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Concept Paper: The linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds

Context and policy: Adult migrant integration policies: Principles and implementation

V. Relations with the local media

The media has a powerful influence on the attitudes to cultural relations and upon the reputations of particular minority and majority groups. Much of this media is nationally or internationally generated and therefore beyond the influence of city authorities. Nevertheless there is still much the city authorities can do to influence and partner with local media agencies to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe R (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe CM/Rec(2007)2 on media pluralism and diversity of media content

Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue

VI. An open and international outlook

An optimal intercultural city would be a place which actively sought to make connections with other places for trade, exchange of knowledge, tourism etc. It would be a place which the stranger (whether business person, tourist or new migrant) found legible, friendly and accessible, with opportunities for entering into business, professional and social networks.

VII/VIII. Intercultural intelligence and competence

A city cannot be intercultural if it is ignorant of its citizens, their diversity and lifestyles and how they interact with each other. An intercultural observatory takes existing data and interrogates it from an intercultural perspective. It also identifies gaps in the city's knowledge base and where necessary devises new kinds of data and analysis to add depth and clarity to the 'intercultural picture'.

Very few people can be expected to be experts in more than a few of the languages and cultures of the many groups who live in a city. This is understandable. However, the competent public official in an optimal intercultural city should be able to detect, and respond to, the presence of cultural difference, and modulate their approach accordingly; rather than to seek to impose one mode of behaviour upon all situations. Such sensitivity and self-confidence in unfamiliar situations is not commonly-seen but it is a skill which can be acquired through expert training, and must become as important to the officials as their specific profession and technical skills.

IX. Welcoming new arrivals[2]

People arriving in the city for an extended stay (whatever their circumstance) are likely find themselves disorientated and in need of multiple forms of support. The degree to which these various support measures can be co-ordinated and delivered effectively will have a major impact upon how the person settles and integrates. What is often overlooked, but which has a powerful impact on intercultural relations, is whether those from the host community have been given any

prior preparations or, on the contrary, might they feel surprised or alarmed by the new arrival.

X. Governance, leadership and citizenship

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[2] All categories of people who intend to establish themselves in the city are covered by the term new arrivals: spouses, workers, refugees…. This section does not include specific welcoming activities of universities, companies etc. but only programmes offered by the city itself to welcome people in their capacity as residents and citizens.

Perhaps the most powerful and far-reaching actions which a city can take in making a city more intercultural are the processes of democratic representation and decision-making. Clearly some of these may be determined nationally, but there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources.

Council of Europe "Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level"

Resolution 141 (2002) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreign residents in local public life: consultative bodies

Recommendation 115 (2002) of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreign residents in local public life: consultative

Final Declaration of the Conference on the participation by foreign residents in public life at local level (Strasbourg, France, 5-6 November 1999)

Final Declaration of the International Conference "Integrating foreign residents into local public life: challenges and prospects" (Strasbourg, France, 15 October 2010)

Final Declaration of the Stuttgart Conference on "Foreigners' integration and participation in European cities" (Stuttgart, Germany, 15-16 September 2003)

Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on interaction between migrants and receiving societies

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