



RECI activities in 2016

The Network structure

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Constitution of the association

According to what was agreed in previous RECI meeting, the RECI association has been constituted in view to better articulate its functioning and be more efficient in its management and search for resources.

New cities at the Network

RECI is a network of cities from different areas of Spain, which are committed to drive diversity management policies based on interculturality. These cities share methodologies, tools and good practice and participate in projects aimed at fostering the diversity culture.

At the beginning of 2016 17 cities were members of the network. The interest in becoming a member has been increasing among the cities and, so far, four new cities have been added to RECI: Getafe, Logroño Malaga and Tortosa. We are currently assessing the application of other cities wishing to become a member of the network.

Communication and dissemination

Social networks

Within the framework of the communications activities, RECI set up a new **Facebook page** in April this year. The page, with 35 followers, has been publishing news related to the work of the network, such as meetings and workshops. In addition, the page has been used to disseminate the campaign of the Council of Europe round the Refugees Day as well as the newsletters of the Intercultural Cities Programme. In this line, RECI set up its own **twitter account** too (@RECI_ICC). The account, with 41 followers, is built around the posting of short 140 character messages and allows us to follow people and organisations with expertise on the topic of interculturality. Similar to Facebook, we have been posting videos, photos and news around the activities of RECI, the cities and the Intercultural Cities Programme.

Presentation of the network in an international event:

Dani de Torres went to Bosnia in June this year to present a report named "Key aspects to consider before creating a network of cities" under the framework of the **Local Government for Shared Societies in South East Asia event** (19th-20th June). Hosted by the Major of Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina), it gathered majors from Belgrade (Serbia), Podgorica (Montenegro), Tirana (Albania) and eight other Bosnian cities to join forces and overcome social divisions, intergroup tension and hostility and to building inclusive Shared Societies in the region.



The report aimed at bringing some ideas and examples that could be useful to the debate around the possibility to create a network of cities in Bosnia. When providing some examples, Dani presented the experience in creating the RECI. Francesca Lionetti, representative of the ICC programme of the Council of Europe, presented the methodology as a Network of cities working in inclusion and advocating for diversity.

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Participation of RECI cities in the ICC celebration of the World Refugee Day

ICCs are working hard on ensuring inclusive integration and equal rights and opportunities for the people that chose Europe as host continent, after being uprooted because of conflicts and instability in their own countries. On 20th June 2016, the ICC network celebrated the World Refugee Day through a dedicated campaign under the slogan “Share our cities – Share the future”. The campaign aimed to promote migrants as a resource for local economic, social and cultural development, rather than threat or a burden for the host society.

Around 20 cities, including cities of RECI, have adopted the ICC slogan and visual to mark their own celebratory events for the World Refugee Day.

Projects

The Diversity advantage challenge

This idea was developed already under the framework of the ICC Programme. The challenge will provide a better understanding of the conditions under which diversity generates innovation and the dos and don'ts of the process.

The competition aims at finding the best real-life initiatives or experiences showing that diversity has brought an advantage to reach a positive result, which will not have been reached without that diversity (or without a particular way to manage the diversity). It is not about minimising complexities, but to focus on the benefits and how a good management of diversity leads to a better scenario.

On May this year the call was launched to all cities member of the network. The contest is not exclusive to cities, as it is open to all kinds of organisations, both public and private: NGOs, social services, enterprises, local or regional public administrations, civil societies platforms, etc. The deadline to identify good practices and submit the projects is October 30th. The evaluation of the Project will be done during the months of November and December and the award ceremony will be held in February 2017. The winner project will have a feasibility study for its replicability in other ICC territories.

Local Action project and Refugees

This Project aims at linking the local intercultural policies with the reception of refugees. The idea is to lay out how to apply the intercultural perspective in this field, sharing experiences between cities from RECI and ICC. The project has three lines of action:

- The institutional – political dimension: focusing on the importance of the cities in the reception of refugees, in line with the declarations of the CoE and the European Commission.



- The intervention dimension: reception tools and policies (education, health, housing, professional skills, etc.) that aim to define how it is understood the intercultural perspective in this field.
- Awareness raising dimension: taking advantage of the public debate about the situation of the refugees, in order to talk about human rights, conflicts, international law, etc.

The Project will compile the actions implemented by the cities and facilitate the exchange of experiences between member cities that could be useful for the others.

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Capacity building and research

Debate on religious plurality in the cities member of RECI

Following the interest showed by the cities in opening spaces for debate within the RECI meetings, we will organise a debate around religious plurality. On 27th-28th of October an ICC Seminar will take place in San Sebastian. The event will focus on exploring ways of combating discrimination and prejudices against religious minorities (i.e. Islamophobia) from the local administration following an intercultural approach. Taking advantage of the celebration of this workshop about religious diversity, we will open the debate to the RECI cities and discuss the challenges from a local management perspective.

The event will be attended by representatives of the local administration, experts and members of religious minorities as well as people working on this field.

Papers RECI

The papers aim at gathering the knowledge and experiences of the RECI cities to disseminate them among the cities. The objective is to draw up useful working documents that include practical experiences in order to be shared among the cities member of the network.

In 2016 two papers will be published; one about diversity advantage and the other one about local responses to the refugees “crisis”.

Article – Proxi Project

In this line of generating knowledge, Gemma Pinyol and Dani de Torres wrote an [article](#) for the Project Proxi, funded by the EEA grants and coordinated by the Catalan Human Rights Institute together with United Explanations Association. The project aimed at preventing the appearance, development and spread of xenophobic and intolerant attitudes among the population in Spain. This project will work towards building an alternative discourse that can be used to counter arguments that feed hate speech on-line.

Training on antirumours

La Caixa Foundation supports the expansion of the Antirumours Project. Under the framework of this commitment, the RECI will design and implement some training modules along the cities that are currently implementing its antirumours strategies.



Module of Intercultural policies

Gemma and Dani will be teaching a module about intercultural policies at the Master in Immigration Management of the University Pompeu Fabra in October - November, with the support of the Intercultural Cities Programme. The module will consist of six sessions covering the following topics:

- The intercultural approach: Why Interculturalism?, main concepts and principles, debate on the challenges of the intercultural approach.
- The design of an intercultural city strategy: analysis of crucial aspects of the process to design and implement a city strategy and a comparative analysis of three city strategies (Barcelona, Copenhagen & Reggio Emilia) including the political leadership, the need for a global and transversal approach and participation of civil society;
- The ICC project of the CoE: Study of a pan-European initiative such as Intercultural Cities, as an example of networking and commitment with the intercultural approach. Examples of initiatives and tools will be included in the session (the role of the CoE and the interculturalism discussion and ICC as a networking at local level).
- Analysing intercultural best practices: analysis Of two best practices: the antirumours approach and Fuenlabrada's local Police approach. We will discuss about the challenges of designing and implementing intercultural best practices.
- Evaluation and comparative indicators: The ICC index and how to evaluate the impact of a best practice.
- Practical exercise to design an intercultural "project": Students must choose a concrete intercultural challenge and design a specific policy/practice to deal with that challenge from an intercultural perspective.

Master UAB

Gemma gave a lecture about the integration of migrants in Catalonia within the Interuniversity Master degree on Contemporary Migrations. The session took place on April 26th within the model "Innovative management of immigration".

With occasion of the publication of the report about integration of migrants in Catalonia (2015), the class offered a review on the integration indicators used at European level (European Commission and the ICC Index of the CoE) and its use as evaluation tools. In addition, the class offered a reflection on the institutional structure and the competences of integration policies in Spain.

Support in the creation of the ICC Network in Morocco

In today's world learning to live together in diversity is a global and shared challenge. The intercultural perspective finds its place in the North of Africa as well. Thanks to the CoE –EU South Programme II, an intercultural network of cities has been created in Morocco.

All the officials that were approached argued the necessity and urgency for the adoption of urban policies that fit in the promotion and development of integration as a necessary corollary



of interculturalism. Also the need was expressed, given the scale and novelty of the problems encountered, to move beyond the primary experimental phase and to develop actual structures and appropriate working methods, as well as to build solid knowledge in the field.

As a possible answer to these challenges, a first ICC coordination meeting was held in Tanger on March 3, involving 11 Moroccan cities (Tanger, Agadir, Meknes, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Chefchaouen, Tetouan, Kenitra, Martil, and Larache) as well as the experts of the CoE Phil Wood, architect of the ICC methodology, and Daniel de Torres, expert and coordinator of RECI. In this sense, Dani de Torres explained the experiences in developing a network of intercultural cities.

All the participants showed real willingness to move into previously unexplored areas of policy and to seek new and innovative solutions and the group voted and unanimously approved the formation of a Moroccan Intercultural Cities Network to be hosted and coordinated by the city of Tanger. In the next months all the cities joining the Network will fill the ICC Index.