



City of Geneva

Intercultural Profile

Background¹

Geneva is like no other city in the ICC network or indeed like few other cities in the world. It is at one and the same time a globally-significant city with an iconic brand; a transnational urban agglomeration, a regional capital and a relatively small city of neighbourhoods with intensely parochial concerns. This brings an intriguing combination of challenges and opportunities from the perspective of diversity and interculturality.

Geneva is the second-most-populous city in Switzerland (after Zurich) and is the largest in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Whilst the municipality itself (Ville de Genève) has a population of 191,415, the canton of Geneva (République et Canton de Genève, which includes the city) has 463,919 residents. The city is the economic hub of a growing urban agglomeration of 860 000 residents, which includes parts of the neighbouring French departments of Haute-Savoie and Ain, as well as one district of the canton of Vaud.

The majority ethnic group, Swiss, makes up 60,83% of the canton's inhabitants and 39.2% of Geneva's population are non-nationals. The most significant ethnic groups are: Portuguese-7.40%; French-5.5%; Italians-4.85% and Spanish-2.95%. Of non-EU/EFTA migrants, the largest groups are, in this order, from the USA, Russia, Brazil, Kosovo, Turkey, former Yugoslavia, India and Morocco. 44.6% of the canton's working age population are non-nationals and 54% hold at least one foreign passport². At the end of 2010, the unemployment rate was 6% in Geneva, or twice the Swiss level³.

The principal subject of this report is the Geneva municipality but reference will also be made to the canton where issues and responsibilities reach beyond the municipal competence or where the competences of the city and the canton overlap.

National context

Switzerland is a nation with a distinctive history in regard to cultural diversity. It is a federal state founded upon the consociation of four linguistic-ethnic groups (German, French, Italian and Romansch speaking). It is also characterised by a historic resistance to political centralisation, cultural domination, religious intolerance and restriction of free trade which manifested in various of its larger neighbours at various times. Suspicion of the neighbours helped to bind the disparate groups into a loose national identity and a strong polity; whilst suspicion of each other created a strong federal framework which is vertically segmented and horizontally fragmented to ensure the powers of the state are diffused and subsidiary to the cantons. A highly developed system of 'direct

¹ This document is a revised version of the report based upon the visits of the CoE inspection team on 19 & 20 April 2011, comprising Paolo Attanasio, Oliver Freeman, Irena Guidikova and Phil Wood.

² Portrait statistique des étrangers vivant à Genève. Résultats du recensement fédéral de la population et d'autres sources. Genève : Statistique Genève, Etudes et Documents No 37, 2005

³ http://www.geneve.ch/statistique/domaines/01/01_02_1/tableaux.asp#3 [11 novembre 2011]

democracy' ensures that that Swiss people exercises an on-going control on federal, cantonal and local affairs.

Because of its traditions as a place of sanctuary (since the time of the Huguenot refugees from France) and as an open market, Switzerland has long been accustomed to accommodating foreigners. This grew rapidly from the industrialization of the economy in the mid nineteenth century, to the extent that on the eve of World War 1 the foreign-born population numbered 15% of the total. This proportion fluctuated substantially during the twentieth century, according to the labour demands of Swiss business. It is likely that throughout this time few Swiss considered theirs a country of immigration, but rather as an economy with periodic need of temporary foreign labour. Large numbers of workers, particularly from southern Europe, were strongly encouraged during times of plenty, but efficiently ushered out when no longer required, in what was known as the 'rotation model'. Any foreigners who did manage to put down roots at this time were generally expected to assimilate into Swiss ways, and the language of their canton, as quickly as possible.

With the economic recessions of the '70s and '80s large numbers of foreign workers were rendered unemployed and destitute and their welfare fell largely to the cantonal authorities, who responded with varying degrees of charity, with the French-speaking areas being in general the most accommodating. By the '90s it was clear the old model of rotation or assimilation was no longer adequate in the age of globalisation, but the Swiss were unwilling to adopt a British or Dutch-style multicultural approach. The use of multiculturalism as a term was limited strictly to defining the inter-relationship of the four language groups.

Concern with the growth in non-European migrant numbers pushed national government into forging a new doctrine which came to be known as *Fördern und Fordern* - which approximates in English to 'carrot and stick'. This doctrine derives from the fact that the Swiss considered it as primarily the responsibility of migrants to integrate themselves into the host society. Conservatives interpreted this doctrine to mean that the state would exert mandatory and coercive action to ensure such behaviour, whilst liberals saw a role for the State in assisting those who needed help to integrate – but, one way or the other, integrate they must.

The last few years has been notable particularly for the rise of a populist anti-immigrant agenda, characterised by the emergence of the Swiss Peoples Party (SVP) and its leader Christoph Blocher who was, for a while, Minister of Justice and Police in charge of migration questions. This tendency came to the world's attention in November 2009 when Switzerland held a referendum on making a constitutional amendment banning the construction of new minarets. It was approved by 57.5% with only four of the 26 Swiss cantons: Geneva, Vaud et Neuchâtel in the French-speaking part of the country and the city of Basel in the German-speaking part, opposed to the motion – the strongest of these being Geneva (59.7%).

Although such populist anti-liberal movements have flourished in several European countries in recent years, ironically it may be that the extremely democratic structures of Switzerland allow it to thrive and become more sustainable than elsewhere. Governments elsewhere may present a publicly tough stance on migration, to appease populist opinion, whilst maintaining 'behind closed doors' the protection of migrant and minority rights. But is much harder to do this in Switzerland where important decisions are taken out of the control of the political class and put directly in the hands of the people⁴.

⁴ D'Amato, Gianni (2010) 'Switzerland: a multicultural country without multicultural policies?' In Vertovec, S and Wessendorf, S (eds) *The Multicultural Backlash: European discourses, policies and practices*. (London; Routledge)

Local context

Historically, Geneva is an independent city state of safe haven and sanctuary for the persecuted. It was the city of Calvin, where Protestants and Catholics have continued to live in relative harmony, and where Church and State have been separated by statute with the agreement of both faith communities. It is also the city of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, where he wrote the discourse on the origin and foundation of Inequality among men, and more recently the birthplace of Tariq Ramadan, the leading advocate of a liberal form of European Islam. For these and many other reasons Geneva has a strong self-image and civic pride as a place which follows its own destiny as a cosmopolitan and liberal city, regardless of the changing moods and conditions in the world around it.

It is no accident therefore that it has become the home of many organisations which represent universalism, humanism and international solidarity, such as the European HQ of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Economic Forum (WEF), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This brings the city enormous benefits, but also some complications, as will be noted later.

The Conseil administratif constitutes the executive authority of the City of Geneva. It is composed of 5 members elected every four years and operates as a collegiate authority. Since 2011, the Conseil administratif includes two representatives of the Socialist Party (PS), one representative of the Liberal-radical Party (PLR), one of the Green Party and one of *A gauche toute* (Party of the left). The president of the executive department is elected annually and acts as mayor. Until recently, Sandrine Salerno, herself the child of migrants, occupied this position. The current Mayor, Pierre Mauder, 33 years old, holds a double French-Swiss nationality (PLR). Sami Kanaan (PS), born in Beirut, is also a member of the executive.

The City Parliament (Conseil municipal) on the other hand, holds the legislative power. It is made up of 80 members, with elections also held every four years. The City Parliament decrees regulations and by-laws that are executed by the Conseil administratif and the administration. Unlike the member of the City Council, the members of the City Parliament are not politicians by profession, but are paid a fee based on their attendance. Any Swiss national resident of Geneva allowed to vote can be elected as a member of the City Parliament.

Just ten years ago, in 2001, the first cantonal law on the integration of foreigners came into force (Loi sur l'intégration des étrangers, 15 Septembre 2001). The Integration Act was essentially the result of the political pressure exerted by non-government organizations to encourage the local government to adopt a comprehensive strategy in the migration issue. Five years later, the Act underwent a thorough evaluation, foreseen in the Act itself with a specific evaluation clause. The evaluation, carried out by an independent commission of experts pointed out a certain "lack of overall vision" by the cantonal institutions, and recommended the adoption of a more proactive policy as well as strengthening the position, the operational framework and the competence of the Integration officer (Délégué cantonal à l'intégration)⁵

⁵ S. Cattacin, M. Chimienti, T. Kesslen, M. Nguyen, I. Renschler (2005), Evaluation de la Loi sur l'intégration des étrangers du Canton de Genève. Genève: Université de Genève, rapport d'experts.

Since 2005, foreigners living in Geneva may vote (but not stand) in local elections if all the following apply:

- They are 18 years and older
- They live legally – and are registered as residing – in the Canton of Geneva
- They have lived legally in Switzerland for a minimum of eight years

Foreign diplomatic representatives are not eligible to vote and foreign civil servants are only eligible on request and with the agreement of their employer.

A key issue which emerged constantly throughout our visit was the interplay between different levels of governance ('niveaux de gouvernance'). The separation of powers between federal, cantonal, municipal and neighbourhood is a cornerstone of the Swiss form of democracy. It generates a continuous debate about the demarcation of responsibility and potential overlap as well as tensions between national policy and local interests⁶. The canton has responsibility for some key public services, such as education, and takes an active role in several aspects of migrant integration. This is a common issue and not unique to Switzerland or Geneva, but it seems to raise more tension than in any other cities members of the Intercultural cities network. .

Another issue raised frequently during the visit, concerns the obstacles to co-operation between different city departments. Different departments fall under the responsibility of elected officials from four political parties who permanently compete to gain visibility and popular support. As often in the case of coalition governments, this situation could lead to reluctance for interdepartmental co-operation, particularly among high-level officials who protect their turf and discourage co-operation through excessive formalism and appeal to hierarchies. This silo-type functioning is typical for all levels of governance in Switzerland but seems more pronounced in Geneva than elsewhere.

Labour Market

Geneva's economy has traditionally been based upon precision engineering particularly watch-making (Rolex, Chopard, Omega). More recently, other sectors such as financial and other high value services (such as private banking and international trade and investment) contribute more to the wealth of the city. This, plus the presence of so many international organisations, has contributed to Geneva being ranked the fifth most expensive city in the world. It also ranks as the third best city in terms of quality of life, and is the only city to be in the top five of both these indices⁷. However, due to its strong international exposure, the Geneva economy is quite sensitive to the fluctuations of the world economy. They have an immediate impact on tax revenue and the local labour market.

In earlier years there has been a concern in Switzerland that migrants have not been fairing as well in the labour market as they might. For example in the earlier part of the last decade the OECD found migrants were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as natives, making it one of the worst performers in the comparative sample of major economies. Coinciding with the arrival of a large number of unqualified migrants through family reunion, this situation has triggered what now appears to be a strong commitment to the structural integration of migrants in the Swiss labour market..

⁶ For instance the recognition of qualifications of foreign workers is managed at federal level and there are concerns that these qualifications may be systematically under-estimated in an attempt to protect national workers.

⁷ <http://www.mercer.com> Quality of Living and Cost of Living Surveys (2010)

There are some paradoxes peculiar to Geneva and Switzerland. Despite its economic success particularly in the tertiary sector, it has the lowest proportion of university graduates of the advanced economies. For many years this has not been seen to be a problem, because the Swiss have a good balance between academic and vocational education with an excellent apprenticeship system, but there are now signs that it may be becoming problematic. French people living just across the border are generally better qualified for specialised jobs, but will accept lower salaries (especially since the latest rise of the Swiss frank), and they are now competing with their Swiss counterparts for jobs within certain sectors of the Geneva economy. This has added to an already burgeoning trend for trans-border workers with lower or medium qualifications, daily commuting from France. The municipality is a net importer of workers, with about 3.7 workers entering for every one leaving with almost 14% of the workforce coming into Geneva from outside Switzerland⁸. As well as the highly-skilled there are various niche sectors that are becoming dominated by French nationals, for example the security staff at the offices of international organisations.

There is a growing unease with the scale of trans-border commuting and for some this is turning into resentment, which has spawned a new populist political party, the Geneva Citizens' Movement (Mouvement citoyens genevois). Founded in 2005 it has quickly become the canton's second most powerful political party winning 17 out of 100 seats in the Grand Conseil (Cantonal Parliament) of Geneva in 2009. Paradoxically, the party attacks trans-border workers while many of these workers are Swiss nationals who reside in France because of the excessive property prices and rents in Geneva.

There is also a sense of growing frustration with the attitude of international organisations and businesses in the city. Some believe they regard themselves as being in Geneva but not of it, particularly when it comes to the observation of local statutes and customs. For example they will offer few opportunities for workplace training for young people making it much harder for local people to find employment with them. It seems that the more the local business associations and trade unions complain about this situation the more entrenched the multinationals become, particularly American companies who see it as an unwarranted political intervention in their right to trade freely. It seems there is presently a stand-off with little progress.

Geneva would argue that it has done much to reach out to its international residents. The Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI) was established by the canton in 1996 aimed particularly at integrating the personnel and families of diplomatic missions and international bodies. The Geneva section of the Fédération des Entreprises Romandes organises training sessions for staff of multinational enterprises. For other migrants there are Cantonal activities in the field of welcoming, as well as actions at the level of schools. Costs per person spent on welcoming services and activities vary considerably for these three categories of newcomers.

Turning from the diplomatic and high skill to the 'regular' field of labour migration, Geneva canton has some special features. It is unique in Switzerland for having passed into law the creation of tripartite commissions representing employers, trade unions and the administration to oversee the conditions of migrants in the labour market. For example they have set a rule to grant the right to work after a period of only three months to all asylum seekers even though federal law allows them to forbid it for up to 12 months.

Other special features are that foreigners can be employed in the local authority and they can have equal access to legal rights through employment tribunals.

⁸ About 65,000 people commute daily from France into the Geneva canton as a whole.

Neighbourhoods, housing and social work

Geneva has a policy to prevent ethnic segregation and believes it to be successful, although being one of the world's most expensive cities there will inevitably be a wide variation in the socio-economic conditions of the population and this is reflected in housing and neighbourhoods. The city owns about 5000 units of social housing which it reserves for people in greatest need, particularly migrants and refugees. The offer is insufficient because the waiting list is 70% of capacity. This housing is scattered around the city and in the centre. We visited Les Schtroumpfs in Quartier des Grottes by the station, which appeared well managed and integrated into its surroundings, although it is probably rather untypical as it is an architectural curiosity in a Gaudi style and hence on the tourist itinerary. We were told of other, much less salubrious, accommodation where refugees from war and trauma may find themselves living in crowded conditions alongside local drug dealers and delinquents.

The most recently-built neighbourhoods, such as Pommiers, often prove the most difficult as there is less neighbourliness and public facilities may be inadequate. There are tensions between established and newly-arrived residents, although this is as likely to be because of intergenerational tensions as ethnic ones. There are, however, a growing number of cases of conflict between different ethnic minorities. For example it had been common practice over many years for Portuguese to take the job of concierge in apartment blocks but tension has arisen as more people born in former Yugoslavia⁹ have taken these roles.

There is evidence that private lettings agencies discriminate against people with foreign names, which is leading to the concentration of migrants in lower quality areas, and within these there is exploitation and overcrowding caused by illegal sub-letting. In general migrants pay a greater proportion of their income on housing than the rest of the population.

The canton holds the primary competence for social work and the city has no statutory responsibilities. It uses this freedom to experiment with innovative ideas, particularly in the care of vulnerable or undocumented migrants and Roma people. Much of the work is directly on the streets through multilingual mediators and many of the staff are themselves of migrant background. There is no attempt to force people off the street but rather to help people identify opportunities for themselves to regularise their lives. For example some people can acquire accommodation by doing voluntary work in the hostel.

FASe (Fondation genevoise pour l'animation socioculturelle) is one of the organisations which seek to mitigate these deficits and tensions through participative action.

The police service is in the process of moving from a policy of coercion to one of proximity policing with a higher profile in neighbourhoods and a more approachable and preventative stance. Permanent resident status is required to work in the police but there are many people of migrant background working in the force. There has been diversity training, on a voluntary basis for the last 5-6 years they work through co-operation with the Integration Bureau.

Public space

To counter these trends, the city places a high value on conviviality and is not prepared to leave this to chance, so intervenes in a number of ways. For example the initiative 'La ville est à vous' (the city is yours)⁹. Running since 2003 in 9 city districts this is an invitation to Genevois to reclaim their

⁹ <http://www.ville-ge.ch/culture/vav/>

streets and engage with their neighbours. At weekends between May and September, each district stages festivities which invite local people are the main players. A major feature are the car boot sales based on the idea of free trade and barter between neighbours as an alternative to the mainstream commercial market. Its motivations are to:

- offer everyone the opportunity for citizen participation in a public demonstration against the dominant lifestyle of passive consumerism;
- reclaim public space from transport and commercialism and restore its primary role as a meeting place;
- contribute to public health by breaking down isolation and exclusion;
- promote the integration of foreign communities in a way that overcomes language barriers and bureaucracy;
- promote the values of Agenda 21 and participatory democracy.

Neighbourhood committees representing a range of local interests were set up to take charge of preparations. These have now become the anchor point for community engagement in each district, as well as the connection and interchange between districts.

There is also an annual Festival of Neighbours each May across the whole city, which encourages street parties and awards prizes for the most novel activities.¹⁰ There is much exchanging of food and recipes and also many organised district walks to break down fear of the unknown.

Libraries play an important part in neighbourhood life and each district branch is encouraged to stock materials relevant to the ethnic mix and to organise outreach activities. The branch library in quartier Junction is particularly active and a Charter has been drawn up with local citizens committing the service to equality and tolerance.

The provision of funeral and cemetery facilities is an area of mounting interest which the city is monitoring closely. There is growing demand for separate facilities and services. The city believes it cannot cater for every need and must make a judgement on where to draw the line. For example, Jews and Muslims have been provided with separate confessional areas in cemeteries but it is not possible to provide interment before sunset of the day succeeding death. The city would prefer for all citizens to rest in peace together but it expects growing demands for separate places of burial. This is an area where an open debate within the community must be held in order to prevent tensions and misunderstandings from building up and allow agreed solutions to emerge.

Education, youth work and childcare

Schooling is seen as central to the creation of a harmonious city. Educational policy and curricular matters are a cantonal responsibility whilst the city is responsible for school buildings. A major reorganisation of primary schools is underway with the aim of better integrating them into their localities. A 'whole family' approach is being adopted whereby teachers are required to build closer links with families to understand the external factors that might influence a child's ability to learn. In the case of foreigners this means attempting to welcome them in their mother tongue. There is a one year transitional class for new arrivals with little or no French language, to fast-track into the mainstream and prevent them becoming alienated.

¹⁰ <http://www.ville-ge.ch/immeublesenfete/>

A good example of the approach is the Sac d'histoires (bag of stories) programme¹¹. Children are given a collection of bilingual books, CDs, DVDs and other media which they share with their parents, who are then given a much greater stake and involvement in their child's progress at school and improve their own language skills.

The learning of mother tongues is encouraged - from 2013 the mother tongues will be included in the general education and the school certificate. The project "Ecoles ouvertes aux langues" involves teachers in mother tongue in co-animating classes with French teachers.

The offer in terms of cultural activities appears to be rather large and demand-driven; the major issue is how to convince the citizens to make use of it, through an appropriate communication strategy. Although there are many cultural initiatives, thanks in particular to a generous funding system system, it has been pointed out that setting up a comprehensive and coherent cultural policy and that the support for cultural activities of migrant groups sometimes reinforces community segregation and does not encourage intercultural exchanges.

After school classes are an important aspect of education, indeed it is an obligation placed on schools in Swiss federal law to make their facilities available to the community. This is an important space for mother tongue teaching and over 6000 children regularly attend under the ELCO (enseignement de langue et de culture d'origine) programme. The canton must also ensure there is adequate provision and training of language teachers to meet local demand. However, the programmes seem to have differential effectiveness according to ethnicity. For example whilst children of Italian and Spanish origin generally seems to have settled well and left school with better qualifications and career prospects than their parents, Portuguese children tend to give a lower regard to education and follow the low skill employment paths of their parents. There are estimated to be up to 1500 children in local schools without residence permits. A directive of the canton was signed recently to allow children without residence status to participate in apprenticeships if they have followed 5-6 years of schooling and if they are eligible for residence status.

Schools are seen as a valuable way in which adult migrants can gain a foothold on the employment ladder. Teacher's assistant, library assistant, cleaning, cooking, and traffic patrols are all now taken as serious professions and extra funding is provided for training to enable these people to integrate in the labour market, particularly those with high skill but unrecognised qualifications.

Some schools have entered an experimental system of participatory budgeting to which 230,000 francs have so far been allocated. Schools are encouraged to propose new and innovative ideas and many of those so far supported have been intercultural in intent. The challenge is to design a system for sharing good practice and mutual learning between schools.

The city has no competence for youth work but (as in the case of social services) it has chosen to establish a non-statutory service with a particular focus on outreach in neighbourhoods and on the streets. The aim of the youth workers is to take a neutral and intermediary role and build trust between generations and within the population as a whole. They work with young people with little or no parental support, or who may have migrated to the city alone as well as with youth gangs which trouble certain areas, although they tend to be territorial in identity rather than ethnic.. The

¹¹ http://www.geneve.ch/enseignement_primaire/sacdhistoires/

department has experimented with more formal processes in the past such as a youth parliament, but with little enthusiasm or success. They now believe that youth work is most effective when it targets young people experiencing difficulties with social integration.

There are 5400 children receiving childcare in 70 institutions and 37% are foreign born. The city kindergartens operate a project called 'Families from here, families from elsewhere' which builds intercultural understanding by encouraging families to share their life stories.

Expatriate and trans-border issues

Geneva has been hosting large numbers of foreign diplomatic personnel since the founding of the League of Nations in 1919. These have been joined by employees of multinational businesses, producing an expatriate 'community' of over 8000 people of 177 nationalities. On the positive side they bring prestige and wealth to the city and (despite rumours to the contrary) most of them pay local tax. On the negative side they exist in a separate world from most Genevois, rarely interacting or even attempting to speak French. Many are transient but many also spend their whole career in the city and some settle permanently. For example, our respondent who acts as an intermediary between the two communities is a diplomatic official and the son of a diplomat.

There is no scientific evidence on the attitude of each community to the other but there is anecdotal opinion that the average Genevois would prefer it if the expatriates made a more explicit effort to meet them and show some interest in the local culture. A minority, but possibly growing, feel resentment and this has political implications for the city.

The UN and other agencies do occasionally organise an 'open house' but these events are overwhelmed by security concerns so generally remain stilted and artificial.

Not all the expatriates are living elite lifestyles. There is an almost invisible group of assistants, cooks, cleaners and chauffeurs, generally brought from the expatriate's home country, who live a life of mute servitude – and in some cases of human trafficking and brutal slavery. One local NGO has experience of helping women who have escaped from such conditions but live a life of fear and uncertainty in the Geneva underclass.

At present neither the city nor the UN have policies to build closer relationships, beyond, protocol, and address these issues.

Conclusions

When we asked respondents how they felt it could be of value to Geneva to join the network of Intercultural cities, several respondents said they hoped it would help the city to take a more relaxed approach to relationships between different cultural communities. Switzerland and Geneva are as advanced as anywhere in the world in the comprehensiveness and readiness of the legal framework to address the needs of migrants and a diverse society. But laws alone cannot create freedom or interculturality. They rely equally up the cultural attitudes of groups and individuals, such as a preparedness to take risks, to experiment and to move outside personal comfort zones. The Swiss find this a much more daunting prospect than the passing of laws and the designing of administrative solutions. A new law, or an official agency could represent a risk of reducing spaces left for people to express themselves, debate their differences and bring about their own solutions.

Between them, the cantonal and municipal authorities need to clearly define the extent of their responsibilities and activities to ensure there are neither lacunae of neglect nor areas of overlap and duplication. However, between them they should also consider whether there are areas from which

both might discretely withdraw in order to encourage more organic development of citizen-led initiatives.

Another respondent said that so effective was the city's efforts to accommodate migrants that the only group that was not fully integrated into the multi-ethnic society of Geneva was the Swiss. This is a complex message, because most of the Swiss are descendants of earlier migrants but point remains that comfortable, mainstream Genevois sit rather aloof from the dynamic world of new migrants and may only sample its more exotic or sanitized manifestations.

Much passion is expressed in Geneva around the issue of expatriate residents and trans-border workers and there is much concern that local Genevois have limited opportunity to know them better and engage them in city life. On balance of the pros and cons, however, it seems to us that Geneva is well in credit in terms of their impact. Many other cities would surely envy the status and the prosperity which they bring, and Geneva hardly feels overwhelmed or overcrowded by their presence, and there is no evidence of resentment turning to conflict. Much less concern seemed to be expressed about the relationship of native Genevois to their fellow residents of migrant and refugee background, and yet this is where we would suggest the bulk of attention should be addressed, particularly for the municipality which has little influence over the expatriate and trans-border issues. Concerns were expressed to us that there is a persistent and growing underclass in the city and, whilst it may be largely invisible to most, it is no less pernicious for this.

Of all cities members of the Intercultural cities network, Geneva has, by far, the highest proportion of migrants. This does not, however, seem to present a serious problem, even in the absence of a clearly formulated integration policy. On the one hand, migrant population is very diverse in cultural and in socio-economic terms. Both well-off and poorer neighborhoods have diverse population and tensions which inevitably arise from the large income disparities are not perceived in identity terms. On the other hand, generous city funding for a large number of events organised by migrant groups protects the authorities from communitarian claims but contributes only marginally to the improvement of intercultural relations. International civil servants and the employees of multinational companies seem to live on the margin of the local society and the various ethnic communities live side by side without engaging in a genuine dialogue.

If the absence of a clearly formulated policy and tools to encourage intercultural dialogue allows to act in a pragmatic way, it carries also certain risks, especially in an economic downturn. It is in this context that recent populist movements have emerged in the canton of Geneva, defending an isolationist position. In the 1980s, *Vigilance*, an openly xenophobic party with the slogan « Let's remain king in our city » gained 19 seats out of 100 in the cantonal parliament. Today the *Mouvement Citoyen Genevois* (Geneva citizen movement) with its slogan « *Genève et les Genevois d'abord* » (*Geneva and Genevois first*) with its 17 seats challenges the canton's reputation for openness. A discourse on the advantage of the population diversity is still to be developed. In this respect, the city of Geneva, with its committeemen to formulate and implement intercultural policies can inspire the rest of the canton.

Civil society organisation in Geneva are numerous and dynamic, benefiting from generous financial support but somewhat cut off from the policy-making processes of the city. A stronger partnership between the institutions, the administration and the NGOs developing the intercultural policies of the city would allow for the identification of a common vision, discourse and concerted action between all actors concerned and for more sustainable and versatile approaches to emerge¹².

¹² FASe (Fondation genevoise pour l'animation socioculturelle) represents a good model with its new instrument, the "convention tripartite" which is a process of formulation of common objectives between the city, the associations and the professionals.

Recommendations

Public declaration – Geneva authorities refer often to the openness of the city to the world. Apart from a few general declarations, they say few specific things about the contribution of migrants residing in Geneva. Local authorities could undertake to identify the advantages that diversity brings to the city and make a political declaration on this basis similarly to what is being done in Oslo, Tilburg, Stuttgart or Barcelona.

Transversal co-operation – The intercultural strategy of a city is by definition transversal and involves all departments of the local administration. If coordination is missing or is ineffective, initiatives taken by one department to encourage intercultural dialogue could be undermined by the policies of other departments. The city should consider introducing instruments and forums to ensure efficient horizontal and vertical co-operation both between the departments and with external actors who contribute to strengthening the cohesion of the multicultural Geneva society. The setting of up an observatory to assess the intercultural impact of local projects and policies could be foreseen.

Expatriates and international civil servants – Geneva welcomes four types of people who seem to live side by side without really knowing each other: the Swiss, the foreign residents, the staff of international organisations and the employees of multinational companies. The city could consider ways of introducing innovative measures to encourage exchanges and communication between these groups. For instance it could support events or activities which encourage direct contacts and interaction or utilise the intercultural competence of international civil servants in the context of intercultural and integration programmes.

Neighborhood contracts – Geneva has introduced an important participation scheme – the neighborhood contracts – in order to take into account the requests of local residents and respond to them through formal commitments. The experience of other cities shows that requests are made by people already active in local life and that a substantial proportion of people do not participate in debates. The city should ensure that migrant communities also express their views on the ways to improve local conditions. To this end, they could design targeted communication towards these groups, taking into account that communication within migrant communities is often informal.

Participation – Civil society organisations in Geneva are numerous and dynamic. They enjoy a generous financial support but are often detached from the process of local policy development. A closer partnership between the administration and NGOs, in particular migrant associations, in the process of development of the intercultural policy of Geneva would enable to develop a shared vision and discourse and to launch concrete actions involving all stakeholders. The inclusion of migrant communities in this process would ensure a more coherent, sustainable and consensual approach to intercultural relations in the city¹³.

Funding – Many associations receive municipal funding for the organisation of cultural events. Some of these activities take place with the participation of a single community and contribute only marginally to intercultural dialogue. It would be desirable to formulate a coherent and comprehensive local cultural policy. Such a policy could foresee a mechanisms for sharing knowledge and learning between associations and projects on a thematic basis (in particular in the field of integration and intercultural relations). Such a policy should pay closer attention to the cultural contexts of different migrant communities in Geneva and give priority to projects which encourage intercultural dialogue.

¹³ La FASE (Fondation genevoise pour l'animation socioculturelle) is a good model with its new instrument « tri-party agreement » (la « convention tripartite »), which is used for the formulation of common objectives by the city, the associations and professionals.

Welcoming policies – An integrated welcoming service for all newcomers in the city could help reduce segregation or self-segregation between internationals and local residents. Professional organisations, trade unions and international organisations based in Geneva should be involved in the design of such a service. It would be desirable to coordinate efforts in relation to welcoming with the cantonal Integration bureau and give priority to neighborhood activities which bring together newcomers with those who have been long established in the city.

Staff training – The city should step up its efforts to provide diversity training to its employees. This training should be strongly recommended for services whose staff is in regular and direct contact with users. Undergoing such training could be included among the criteria for the promotion of staff whose professional duties require intercultural competence. Training could be managed jointly with the canton, as in Lausanne.

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¹⁴ URL from 11 November 2011