



The City of Logroño

Intercultural Profile

1. Background

Logroño is the capital and the economic, social and cultural centre of the Autonomous Community of 'La Rioja'. Located in northern Spain, the city has historically been a crossing point, which has strongly defined its identity. With its population above 150,000 inhabitants, it has half of the total population from la Rioja. Although it is the smallest region in Spain, it is highly ranked according to its GDP per capita thanks to its wealthy agriculture, industry and services.

Logroño, on the Ebro River, managed to become one of the most important urban centres during the Medieval Castilla both in cultural and economic terms.

Two main aspects have largely influenced the history and identity of Logroño: its relationship to wine and its role as a shelter for pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostela.

The building of underground wine cellars under the houses which formed the city, and which today mark the old town's boundaries, was already common practice by the 16th century. But what is known by the "La Rioja culture" can be traced back to its origins in the 19th century. It was the Marquis of Murrieta who started developing the first Riojan wines of the modern era.

For centuries, pilgrims from all over Europe have entered the city seeking a place to recover one's strength before starting out again on the pilgrim's path to Santiago. Logroño, as any other city on the route, benefited from its privileged location leading to an economic boom and an artistic, cultural and social expansion. The Camino became the most important meeting-place for communication between Europe and Spain; and Logroño, the capital of La Rioja, was able to make the most of this, thanks to its privileged location.

Nowadays the cities and towns along the Camino route continue to reap the benefits, mainly through tourism and the hospitality industry. It is of no doubt that Logroño is a city strong in trade from its origins. This gradual transformation started shaping Logroño as a

city strong in trade, a characteristic that still prevails: in 1997 the Spanish Ministry of Economy, designated Logroño the first Trade City in Spain and in 2012 it was the Spanish gastronomic capital. In a European context, it was European City of Sport in 2014.

During the last century the city has experienced a slow but significant demographic growth compared to its closer town. This was firstly due to the migration from other towns in the region and later by migration from other places in Spain and the world. Today, the population is 24% foreign-born.

2. The increase of the socio-cultural diversity of Logroño

In 1981 a 55% of the population were born outside the city, mainly in other towns in La Rioja (53%). The percentage of foreign-born population was of 2,1%. However, between 2000 and 2010, the population grew 18% and the majority of the new 23,000 residents came from foreign countries. Immigrations constitutes an essential fact in order to better understand the identity of Logroño.

According to population data (2014): 47.85% of residents were born in the city; 15.73% were born in other locations in La Rioja; 12.39% in other Spanish regions; and 24.02% were foreign-born (36.512 residents). The exponential growth of foreigners has its breaking point in 2008. From then, it started to decreased mainly due to new migration flows to other European countries and the increase in nationalisations.

The most common countries of origin are from Latin America: Colombia (9.76%); Ecuador (6.67%); Argentina (6.15%); and Bolivia (5.98%). By nationality, in contrast, the most numerous citizens are from Rumania (17.20%), followed by Morocco (8.94%), Pakistan (7.85%) and other countries from sub-Saharan Africa (4.58%). The rest are residents from other EU countries such as France (3.23%) or Bulgaria (1.25%) and the rest of the world as China (1.75%). The city encompasses 115 different nationalities and more tan 75 languages. It also has around 30 places of worship representing eight different religions other tan the Catholicism.

A key aspect to take into account is that La Rioja is the Spanish region with the highest percentage of immigrants at school (14.7%)¹. In addition, almost half of the foreign-born population in Logroño has acquired the Spanish nationality (17,142 out of 36,512) – showing how the majority of the immigration has settled.

¹ This information was founded in the II Plan de Convivencia Intercultural de Logroño

The city is organised in five districts, 19 areas where the municipal services are distributed and 104 census units. It is remarkable that in any of these 104 areas foreign population is above 30% of the total population, thus the native population is the majority in all neighbourhoods.

3. Diversity management policies in Spain

Spain took in most of its immigrants in the period from 2000 to 2010, at a rate far higher than the United Kingdom, Germany or France, where the numbers remained more or less constant over the same period. Other southern European countries, like Italy, also experienced a marked increase in immigration, but not to the same extent as Spain.

In Spain integration did not become an issue until a few years after the arrival of the first waves of immigrants, first at the local level, and subsequently at the level of the Autonomous Communities and the State. Indeed, the idea of integration did not even appear in the wording of the first Aliens Act of 1985, and it was not until the 1990s and more specifically 1996, that the question arose, drawing as it did so on the greater experience of the local and Autonomous Community authorities in the matter.

Some of the plans that emerged confined themselves to transcribing the various departmental measures of the local and Autonomous Community authorities relating to the immigration present in their territories. Others went a step further, placing such measures on a broader theoretical plane (debates on multiculturalism, interculturalism, living together, diversity, or civic citizenship), even shaping municipal and autonomous authority services and actions to suit this approach; some would incorporate budgetary provisions and evaluation mechanisms, which were not always fully implemented. Be that as it may, the integration plans grew and spread like any other instrument of the organisation of administrative activity, although their very spread and multiplicity helped to create a veritable patchwork of integration models in Spain, rather than one single model.

The tools of integration policy

The Act of 1999 finally paved the way for a State integration model in coordination with the other administrative levels. An Immigrant Integration Fund was set up with substantial resources and State Citizenship and Integration plans were developed. The economic crisis led to cutbacks in funding, however, and a loss of interest in the issue.

- Model based on equal rights and duties. Limited distinction between “regular” and “irregular” through compulsory registration in the municipal register, giving access to local public services
- Development of the Citizenship and Integration Strategy:
 - First Plan (2007-2010)
 - Second Plan (2011-2014)
- Immigrant Integration and educational support Fund:
 - State funds distributed to the municipalities by the Autonomous Communities (with sharp cutbacks in recent years)
- Compared with the rest of Europe (MIPEX-28), Spain ranks somewhere in the middle in terms of best practices, with slightly favourable results.

One salient feature is that in spite of the serious impact of the economic crisis in Spain, just as large numbers of immigrant workers were arriving, it is safe to say that, for the time being, populist anti-immigration propaganda has not received as much support as it has in other European countries. Exactly why this should be the case is unclear, but it is something definitely worth noting and indeed analysing in order to clearly identify the reasons behind it, as this is one of the major challenges facing Europe in this century.

4. Diversity management policies in Logroño: from the I Coexistence and Integration Plan to the II Intercultural Coexistence Plan

The City Council of Logroño was aware that the increase of the sociocultural diversity in the city during the last years as a consequence mainly of the new international immigration demanded new policies to manage the diversity.

The Council launched a variety of actions and strategies linked to the reception and integration of immigrants. In 2009 it defined the **I Coexistence and Integration Plan** (*Plan de Convivencia e Integración*) as an expression of the municipal will to face in a positive way the increase in immigrant population in the city of Logroño and with the intention to defend a model of integration and citizenship that allows a multicultural society with common values and norms, respecting the diversity of everyone and guarantying the full exercise of the immigrant social rights.

It is worth to mention that this Plan was not focused on the reception and integration aspects, but contemplated the coexistence as the main objective, highlighting the

relationships and the importance of interaction. We can conclude that the first Plan already incorporated important aspects of the intercultural approach.

In 2013 the Plan was evaluated (from 2009 to 2012) with the aim of elaborating a second Plan. The assessment was overall positive, stressing the importance of using an approach not limited to immigration but to the coexistence/positive interaction and a bidirectional concept of integration. It was underlined the concept of “the right to the city” that all residents have: “newcomers are recognised as positive and necessary and they contribute to the economic and sociocultural enrichment of our city”.

The Plan allowed the launch of the Coexistence Roundtable (*Mesa de la Convivencia*) where a variety of organisations and local associations were present, making proposals and recommendations during the evaluation process. They defended the need to define a second Plan focus on the concept of Interculturality and including the principle of social cohesion. It was acknowledged that diversity was already an inherent reality to the city and that the second Plan should give an answer to the specific challenges of the diversity management and the intercultural coexistence. Additionally, it was stressed the need to strengthen the cooperation between the city Council and social organisations and neighbours’ associations. Among other recommendations, the evaluation underlined the need to establish a link with the **Intercultural Cities Network** and apply the index from the Intercultural Cities programme lead by the Council of Europe.

Besides the recommendations from the Coexistence Roundtable, other actors contributed, including the advice from Carlos Giménez, Professor of Social Anthropology from the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* and advisor of the Strategic Plan of Citizenship and Integration of the Spanish Government.

In order to adapt the new strategy to the present context, two decisions are made: to change the name of the plan and to put an emphasis on the intercultural coexistence aiming to transform Logroño into an intercultural city.

Eventually, the 4th of December 2014 the municipal plenary session approved by unanimity the **II Plan of Intercultural Coexistence** based on five principles defining the strategic lines, objectives and actions:

- Development and quality of life
- Coexistence
- Citizenship

- Interculturality
- Social cohesion

A variety of sources are used in the conceptual justification of the Plan, highlighting the following:

- White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – Council of Europe
- The theoretical framework of the intercultural cities programme (and its definition of intercultural city)
- The Practical Guide step by step on how to build an intercultural city
- The work from RECI (The Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities).

The main methodological premises to develop the plan were the following:

- participation
- the process
- transversality

The objectives of the Plan:

General objectives:

- Developing local public policies promoting intercultural coexistence as a result of an efficient and effective diversity management in the city.
- Promoting the creation of institutional, technical and citizenship initiatives developing practical proposals and positive public attitudes about diversity, being able to make the diversity a factor for development and social cohesion in the city.

Main challenges and specific objectives:

1. The intercultural city

- Adaptation of policies, services and actions to incorporate the intercultural perspective.

2. The intermediary city

- Promoting the development of the intercultural and community mediation.

3. The educative city

- Strengthening the intercultural education and training.

4. The tolerant city

- Guarantying that any resident lives under the same conditions, while fighting against discrimination.

5. The coexistence city

- Incorporating and expanding the intercultural coexistence approach.

In order to guarantee the multi-dimension and the incorporation of the intercultural approach within the group of policies, the Plan foresees the creation of a Intercultural Municipal Technical Roundtable. It will establish the coordination, monitoring and overview criteria that will be defined in the execution process of the Plan. At the same time, the Intercultural Coexistence Roundtable remains as the body allowing citizenship participation in the development of the Plan, in a consultative manner. The Plan also includes an on-going evaluation system to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the actions.

Last but not least, the development of the Plan is based on the 'step-by-step Guide' of the Intercultural Cities (hereinafter ICC) and the Intercultural Policies Manual of RECI.

5. The political commitment

Logroño ranks high at the ICC index regarding the city council commitment to progress towards an intercultural city. As an example, an intercultural coexistence declaration was approved in plenary session. In our meeting with the Mayor, she highlighted the importance of social innovation and the evaluation systems of public policies. Regarding the City Council support to Interculturality, it is worth to mention the effort they are doing for the transversality and cooperation, which is translated-among other actions- into the incorporation of the regional government to the Technical Transversal Roundtable. In her statements to the press, the Mayor stresses the importance of the II Intercultural Coexistence Plan with its 50 concrete actions to work towards a positive interaction and she defends a positive speech about diversity.

It is worth to highlight that the new Plan was approved by unanimity in a municipal plenary from the previous mandate and that currently, even though the government has not changed, there is a new political scenario with new parties and new people and consequently it is important to keep working to renew the political consensus.

As it has been portrayed, the commitment of Logroño is evident, not only because of the evolution of its policies and the approval of the new Plan in the plenary, but also because of its interest in being part of RECI and participating in intercultural projects such as the Intercultural Community Intervention one (hereinafter ICI), led by *Fundación La Caixa*.

6. A transversal approach

In our visit we had the opportunity to meet a wide technical and political representation from different municipal departments, as well as some representatives from opposition parties. In particular, we did debate with representatives from the following areas: Family and social area; urban planning; architecture and housing; childhood and youth; social and health services; local police; participation; culture, sport and tourism; volunteering; and festivities.

Education, childhood and youth

Schools in Logroño do not have a high concentration of foreign-born students. However, and as in almost every city, there are differences, depending on public school or semi-public school: 80% of foreign-born students are in public schools while 20% study in semi-public schools. Having said that, some semi-public schools have 35% of foreign-born students while others have a 5%. The main reason is that schools reflect the diversity in their neighbourhoods. Other factor is the stigmatization of specific schools. Nonetheless Logroño does not have a relevant problem related to the segregation of schools.

The topic of diversity is usually addressed from the recognition of the cultures of origin and the value of the diversity, even without a global or shared strategy. The involvement of the families has proved complicated – not only with migrant families. It is restricted to specific celebrations such as the Carnival and the end of the academic year. The feeling is that more proactive work with the families could be done.

The Interculturality is also valued in play centres, although difficulties appear with the families as well, mainly due to language issues. In addition, youth centres, where the majority are immigrants, face difficulties. However, these are related mainly to the complexity of adolescence rather than the origin of the young people. These youth centres work with young people who have left their studies so they can recover their motivation. The strategy they follow is through creativity. An interesting example is the creative literature festival “El artefacto”. They decided to use the Little Red Riding Hood tale. However, as the majority of the students were foreign-born, the organisers realised that they did not know the tale, which caused a change in the Project understanding.

Local police

We managed to debate with the Superintendent of Logroño local police, who had previously worked for 30 years at the national police. According to him, they have been implementing all topics considered in the intercultural approach for many years, because in their job “they treat everybody equally”. Many local police officers have embraced their responsibility to establish links with the community through proximity. The Superintendent provides an example: In the Conflict Prevention Commission at San José neighbourhood, the police takes part in order to improve the knowledge and to strengthen the relationships with the community models or reference point (i.e. mosque). He highlights as well that there is not either a discrimination or racism problem within the Spanish Police. But some people do not want to change their culture nor adapt themselves, thus demanding the host society to adapt.

An interesting example happened right after Charlie Hebdo murder: Muslims organised a demonstration, shouting out slogans in favour of peace and against terrorists. However, as they did not use Spanish, many native citizens could not understand them and became startled.

The feeling is that, despite the lack of serious coexistence problems, the local police could strengthen its role in relation to diversity management, as it has happened in other cities (i.e. Fuenlabrada).

Social services and health

People in charge of the health area work quite a lot with topics related to promoting a healthy life and addictions prevention (i.e. the Project “classes and families without smoke”). They mention how difficult is to attract foreign-born families, mainly due to the language barrier. At the same time, they claim to have difficulties as well to attract gypsy families from Logroño.

Under the framework of the ICI Project they are developing an activity about healthy eating, and in order to involve immigrant mothers they are starting to use their languages. However, in the Project “healthy Leisure” addressed to young immigrants, they follow a

different strategy: they try to involve native young people to favour interaction and participation and to avoid that the service is associated only to immigrants.

Workers from the social inclusion area have adapted to the new users' profiles and they have learnt from the ICI Project. Logroño launched some years ago a programme to support family reunification, starting before the process and continuing it during and after the reunification occurred. However, these programmes have been reduced due to both the decrease of newcomers and the economic crisis. As it happens in other cities, we can see how Logroño face the challenge of a lack of resources to learn the native language during the summer months. In this way, it could be interesting to analyse the programme implemented in Barcelona named "In summer the city welcomes you" to provide a solution to this shortage.

Urban planning, architecture, housing

From the urban planning and architecture departments they recognise that, until now, they have never thought about their link with intercultural topics, but they show a great interest in exploring this relationship.

There is currently an opportunity for them, as they have a very important tool as it is the assessment of the General Plan, open since 2009. At the beginning, the approach followed was very "developmental", but it has been changing "towards inside the city", thus taking into consideration the social dimension of their actions. During the revision process of the Plan suggestions are taken into account from a variety of local stakeholders. Two roundtables were established where economic, technical actors and neighbours' associations were present. Yet, there were room for new actors that are not present.

The Mayor highlighted the importance of the Sustainable Urban Development Plan, which has to be approved by the European Commission in order to receive funds. She said that social objectives must have at least the same relevance than the economic ones.

The City Council has been buying old buildings and has refurbished them diversifying their functions. In this way, it has contributed to recover certain spaces and to encourage new activities. However, they stress the fact that Logroño is "an already made city", meaning it is complicated to intervene in what is already done, mainly in the private sector.

It is important to remember that Logroño has 104 census units (they cannot be considered neighbourhoods, they are smaller units) and in any of them the majority of residents are

foreigners. Higher percentages are between 20 and 30% so gatherings are not excessive. However, there are differences in relation to the diversity in the neighbours. Unlike many European cities, there are not marginalised, segregated or dangerous neighbourhoods.

In this regard, the City Council has been implementing the ICI Project for five years, funded by la Fundación “la Caixa”, precisely in the more diverse neighbourhoods (“San José” and “Madre de Dios”).

Although from the urban planning perspective there are not many difficulties related to the consolidation of the segregation processes, opportunities have been identified in order to incorporate the intercultural lens. Work still needs to be done in order to favour the interaction and social cohesion through the incorporation of the intercultural perspective in urban planning, refurbishment or public space design policies. The meeting was, without any doubt, useful to capture the interest of people in charge of these departments and motivate them to participate and cooperate with the technical responsible of the Intercultural Coexistence Plan.

Regarding the housing, it is worth to mention that the majority of the eviction families (around 80%) were foreign-born. After an eviction, these families receive a rental subsidy of 80% to avoid marginalisation and social exclusion. The department confirm that many natives are ashamed to resort to social benefits.

Employment and economic development

As it happened with the urban planning team, the responsible of the Employment Department recognised that until now, he had never considered the potential link between this area of work and the diversity and Intercultural issues. Before the meeting he was gathering some data and recognised that he was surprised with the findings. The department has an expenses item to support entrepreneurship and job creation, and a considerable proportion of foreign-born residents (14% in 2014 and 17% in 2015) were participating in boosting entrepreneurial projects.

This represents a clear example on how important is to work together and share knowledge and cross-cutting strategies to take advantage of opportunities. In first place, the meeting was useful to identify a reality (the entrepreneurial character of immigrants) and to compensate the stereotype of immigrants needing assistance/help: they need support, resources and services to integrate, but they are not considered a resource to the economic and sociocultural development of the city.

Logroño ranks low in the ICC index in terms of economic development and job creation policies from an intercultural perspective. After the meeting, the conclusion was that the department could and should start to work. The feeling was that the meeting was extremely positive in this sense and it was useful in terms of “convincing” or at least motivating the people in charge of these departments. They realised how important is their participation in a strategy towards a more intercultural city.

Finally, we could check the relevance of the perceptions issues in the city, mainly in relation to social benefits. The economic crisis has caused an increase in the demand of social benefits by the native and this has increased the negative perceptions about the immigrants. The speech stigmatising and blaming the immigrants has been reinforced. However, the resources allocated to the benefits have been adapted and increased and it is considered important to tackle the problems of the citizens’ perceptions. In this sense the City Council has already agreed on launching an antirumors strategy based on the experience of Barcelona, other cities from the RECI network as well as the C4i Project lead by the Council of Europe.

7. San José and Madre de Dios neighbourhoods and the ICI project

The San José and Madre de Dios neighbourhoods show the highest diversity index in the city. And that is why they were chosen five years ago to implement the ICI Project. This Project counts on the support of the Bank foundation “La Caixa”, the City Council and the organisation Rioja Acoge, together with the involvement of citizens and technical officers from these neighbourhoods.

The ICI Project started first with 17 cities and it was enlarged lately to 40 cities. Its objective is to favour the social cohesion through Interculturality, generating a cooperation culture among the neighbourhood stakeholders. The idea is to involve different actors that work independently in order to jointly identify shared objectives and challenges. From there, the cooperation and networks are encouraged so the community is the main actor in its own development.

There are three main actors in the project: public administrations, citizens and the third sector. Each of them has its own participation spaced and the “community meeting” is where the three actors converge.

The process has three phases:

1. Setting up the relationships with the main actors and know the resources and actors operating in the territory.
2. Community monograph and diagnosis to collect the neighbours' opinions on their needs, deficiencies, etc. After the diagnosis, a mediation work is needed because these necessities have to be prioritised to start working.
3. Community programming to define how to organise and work to provide an answer to the agreed needs.

Before meeting the different representatives from organisations, professionals and neighbours participating in the Project, we walked around and visited some centres and organisations. We went to the Islamic Centre Al Firdaws, the School of Urban Trends, The Pakistan Association of La Rioja and the association Arabella. During these visits we talked about the integration and interaction reality and challenges in Logroño.

Although the overall perception is quite positive, some challenges arouse in relation to the need to progress in the knowledge of the language by the migrant women, mainly Pakistanis as well as challenges related to the perceptions about young immigrants. We did also debate about these topics during a meeting at the Library of the Neighbours' Association "San José", where we could know first-hand the evolution of the ICI Project and talk with many people involved on it from the beginning.

They first did the monographic and diagnosis of the neighbourhoods using interviews and gathering data and information. Then they identified the main challenges and opportunities. They started with a list of more than a hundred topics and finished by setting three areas: health, youth and meeting places. Both the citizens and professionals and politicians were involved, reaching agreements on the objectives.

Throughout these more than five years of project, a lot of different actions took place in the neighbourhoods, fostering participation, interaction, mutual knowledge and the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. At the meeting it was clear that the most relevant topics were the awareness and interaction between residents from different origins. Some Pakistani women commented that before the project neighbours did not know their names and now they do.

Some of the actions developed under the framework of the project are related to the combination of art and shops in order to promote their knowledge and sense of belonging. An example is the organisation of outdoor events such as the “lively streets”, where a street is closed and all kind of art, ludic or gastronomic activities take place, favouring the interaction between neighbours and breaking stereotypes and prejudices. One of the topics the event dealt with was the respect to religious diversity, particularly to Muslims.

There are plenty of examples of organised activities and it seems that the overall perception is that the project is being very positive. However, it is stressed the difficulty of evaluating and using indicators. For instance, the media have disseminated positive news about these neighbourhoods thanks to these activities. Moreover, the methodology of the project is influencing other areas of municipal politics. During the “open doors” week the different work commissions show and share the work done with the citizens.

A concrete example of an indirect impact is a director of a school saying that thanks to the project he has discovered a lot of resources and spaces in the neighbourhood they could use at the school.

A reflection arose: the ICI should stop being a project to become in a methodology and structural resource of the City Council to work on the community and neighbourhood development. It is then needed a more direct and efficient relationship with the institutional officials, although the meeting spaces and the established links with many technicians are positively valued.

From a technical and citizen perspective, is it well acknowledged and recognised that the relationships in the neighbourhoods have changed. And that thanks to them, it is easier nowadays to find a job in the neighbourhood and collaborative actions are more frequent between different actors.

The feeling is that in Logroño the ICI project has served to lay out and addressed topics that five years ago were not on the agenda and to start the way towards the construction of a more intercultural city. The key question is the future of the project, its sustainability and to assess the concrete results in each area to know its impact.

8. Visit to the school “Caballero de la Rosa”

We had the opportunity to visit the school “Caballero de la Rosa” (students from 3 to 12 years old). The school did receive many foreign-born students and decided to implement the methodology “learning communities”. The objective was to re-organise the available resources at the school and the community to support the academic success of every student and to improve the coexistence. In this way, parents, students and representatives of the community started to be involved in the educational process of the school.

The class is divided in four groups and each one has a volunteer coordinator (a University student, a relative, etc.) supporting the students group in their learning process. In total, they do have 70 volunteers going to the school once a week. The school is divided in commissions (environment, lecture...) and in each one teachers and parents develop the educational project.

Some years ago and before adopting the “learning communities” method, this public school was stigmatised by the high number of immigrant students (the majority from Pakistan, the Maghreb and Rumania) and had difficulties to fill the minimum number of vacancies.

Nowadays, and as a consequence of the good results obtained in the Project, is one of the most demanded schools and it is considered the best public school in the neighbourhood.

The paradox now is the following: since the students get better results than the average, the number of immigrant students has decreased due to the increase in the demand of natives.

The main challenges the school has been facing lately are:

- At the beginning the students who needed support with the language, attended reinforcement lessons. Since the “learning communities” method these students are not separated from their class and attend the reinforcement lessons in the afternoons.
- Regarding the language and the participation of foreign-born mothers, they offer Spanish lessons, mainly to Pakistani mothers, and they organised a variety of activities to better know the city and some basic services (they go to the market, learn how the judicial system Works, they go to the theatre, etc.). however, it has proven difficult to the Pakistani women to learn Spanish so they decided to focus on young girls. In order to facilitate the participation of women, the school director talked to the Mosque Imam to tell the husbands how important was that women learn the language and participate.
- At the beginning they face some difficulties to attract immigrant families to the school. The most successful strategy was to focus on gastronomic topics, and they improved

the participation. However, there are few immigrant families participating in the school commissions.

9. UNESCO Chairs and the collaboration with the University and the City Council

Eventually, we had a very interesting meeting at the university with the people in charge of the UNESCO Chair “Democratic citizenship and cultural freedom” – assigned to the University of La Rioja since 2007. It aims to promote teaching, research, cooperative and informational actions about Human Rights.

Apart from its strong activity at international level, we were interested in knowing the link between the Chair and the local sphere. We verified the good relationship with the City Council. In fact, they were negotiating a new collaboration agreement on how to incorporate the Human Rights perspective in the local public policies.

This is, indeed, a very interesting dimension for the programme “Intercultural Cities”, which defends this type of agreements between universities and City Councils. They told us that they participate in the commissions of the ICI Project and that some organisations from the neighbourhood “Madre de Dios” have offered to collaborate in a Project. This Project, led by an architect, consists on re-design the public space to make it more inclusive from a childhood perspective.

Another potential way of collaborating with the City Council is to make an agreement to evaluate the policies or the link established through the interns – by making them to focus on local public policies. However, it seems that this opportunity does not settle. As a matter of fact, the II Intercultural Coexistence Plan refers to the need of reaching an agreement to collaborate with the University.

As an example of the work that still needs to be done in terms of greater collaboration is that the City Council did not know about the Guide on religious diversity, done by the Chair. The Chair prioritised this particular topic, and in terms of awareness they lobby the State to fulfil the agreements signed in 1992 with the majority religions.

The objective of these agreements was to fix quotas to guarantee the equal Access to education from all religious communities. The un-fulfilment of these agreements was seen as a barrier to equality and a standardised treatment of the different religions.

Even if the University is quite young, some foreign-born students are now finishing their degrees. However, they continue to be a minority. It is worth to mention that this academic year a Pakistani girl finished the Law Degree. It is important that they have mentors or models of academic success to attract and motivate other young people. To sum up, it is clear that there is a very good opportunity in Logroño to strengthen the collaboration between the University and the City Council, benefiting both parties.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

About commitment

The city of Logroño has been demonstrating a real and sustained commitment in favour of intercultural policies of diversity management. This can be confirmed through: the evaluation of the first Plan and the approval of the second Plan; the more than five years developing the ICI Project; the approval of the Institutional Statement in favour of an intercultural city and its participation in RECI; and the public speech of the Mayor and the councillor in charge of these topics.

After the last elections a new phase has started in the municipal plenary session. Even if the same political party (PP) is governing, it is a minority government and new political parties are present. That means that the dialogue and consensus work about these policies has to be renewed. It is very important that Logroño “takes care” and strengthen this important asset as it is the political consensus.

Despite the obvious commitment, it would be interesting to set out a restructuration in the municipal organisational chart better visualise the Intercultural managers, identifying the political and technical responsibility in a more specific way.

About transversality

Logroño counts on the leadership and commitment of the Mayor, and has a good roadmap as it is the Intercultural Coexistence Plan. However, there is a lot of work that needs to be done in relation of the transversal perspective.

It is advisable to strengthen the relationship between the different departments and to create new spaces for capacity building, exchange and joint work in order to progress in the incorporation of the intercultural lens to the municipal policies.

Some working areas (urban planning, economic development or the local police) have incorporated neither the discourse, nor the dynamics of taking into account the intercultural perspective in the design and implementation of their policies. There are a variety of Spanish and European cities that could help to inspire in this work and they can be better known through RECI.

The link between diversity and economy is analysed in the Project C4i lead by the Council of Europe, where cities from RECI did participate. Practical information could be shared with Logroño. The case of the local police from Fuenlabrada is very interesting; it is seen as one of the best practices in Europe regarding how to address the challenge of managing the diversity.

About participation

There are many organisations working together with the City Council in a variety of projects in favour of an Intercultural Coexistence. Both the ICI Project and the Coexistence Roundtable are good examples. However, the Roundtable plays a concrete role and it has become established as an institutional space, where immigrant associations could express their opinions, demands, etc. It is seen as a necessary space with a key function, but other spaces are needed: more dynamic and informal and including other actors. There is room to generate different spaces tackling topics of interest where other actors are included (i.e. media, private sector, etc.). An option could be to work from an international Network working for the intercultural coexistence but with a local perspective, creating diverse participatory spaces (in format and content). It would be interesting for Logroño to explore new innovative ways to encourage participation, using the important capital the city already has.

A good opportunity comes from the antirumors strategy of the city, implemented this year. The cities of ICC and RECI are linked to this strategy as well and have already implemented their programmes. These are mainly based in the definition of an innovative and stimulating participatory space to facilitate the involvement of citizens and diverse social actors.

This Project constitutes a good opportunity to address one of the challenges identified during the different meetings: the importance of perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes in the process of working towards an intercultural coexistence. In this sense, the important community work done under the framework of the ICI Project will be, without any doubt, a great asset for the boost of the antirumors strategy of Logroño.

About education

There are not big complexities in the educational field, but some Works needs to be done to incorporate the intercultural lens to the whole system. Even if it does not depend only on the City Council, the fact that the capital of an Autonomous Community is that relevant, it gives it the capacity to influence and collaborate with the regional government – an advantage compared to the majority of Spanish cities.

Additionally, it is important to define clear objectives and concrete indicators on the students' evolution. At the same time, it is key to invest in schools with a higher proportion of immigrant students or to innovate in the pedagogical models, as it has been the good practice of the school "Caballero de la Rosa".

As in happens in the majority of cities, it is usually difficult to plan strategies at a city level about intercultural education. However, Logroño, due to its size, background and reality, has the circumstances to influence in education and the development of projects at city level involving a higher number of schools. Some areas to work: teachers training, success Project to involve the families, the diversity approach in class, etc. Above all, it is important to share the success stories such as the school "Caballero de la Rosa". Sometimes, cities looking for good practice in Europe, forget about the good practice in their own cities. A useful exercise could be mapping the best practice in Logroño related to education. Other potential actions to implement:

- Actions allowing to improve the knowledge and the Exchange of experiences between students from different schools and involve them in city projects
- Share the best practice in encouraging immigrant mothers to learn the language
- Use good mentors to stimulate the continuity in the students' education and the Access to the university (i.e. highlighting the case of the first Pakistani girl finishing Law this year).

Regarding the lack of resources during the summer months, it is worth to highlight the good practice from Barcelona –its Project "In summer, Barcelona welcomes you". The Project, based on the collaboration with the public libraries and the Education Department, aims to facilitate young people to use the summer months to learn the language and better know the city and establish friendship relationships with other young people.

About community development

Logroño is one of the cities encouraging the ICI Project from the very beginning and it is given as an example when talking about good results. It is important to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Project and to use this knowledge to work in other neighbourhoods of the city. Logroño could be one of the main labs to analyse the evolution and sustainability of the ICI project. It should take advantage of the attention given to commission a good Project evaluation so it could be shared and used as a reference for the ICI cities.

It is surprising the disappearance of the mediator in the City Council. Although there is a great variety of approaches on the mediation topic (its utility, capacities, profile, etc.), the role of the mediator is quite important in the framework of a process towards a more intercultural city.

We all know that daily conflicts are an implicit and “necessary” reality of the coexistence. Having professional mediators (called intercultural or not) is considered very important. Experiences such as in Santa Coloma de Gramenet showed how a good team of mediators coordinated with social services, the local police or the third sector could do a great job in favour of coexistence and the management of daily conflicts.

About the links with the University

The existence of the UNESCO Chair appointed to the University of la Rioja in Logroño is a great opportunity for the city and to achieve a more intercultural city. There is good will from both parties to specify a more stable collaboration framework. It is the, important, that the City Council supports this relationship, sometimes it is not about budgets but intentions and commitments. Work could be done in different areas: introducing the Human Rights approach, training people, involving interns, contributing to the evaluation processes of policies, etc. This is a clear opportunity that needs to be restarted and materialized.

In this sense, the boost of the antirumors strategy in Logroño could be a good framework to collaborate with the University (as it is the case of Getxo, Parla or Tenerife, or European cities such as Nuremberg or Botkyrka). The experience of the C4i Project provides good knowledge. Finally, the ICC programme of the Council of Europe encourages the cooperation between universities of the ICC cities working on intercultural topics. It would

be interesting that the UNESCO Chair gets involved in this process; they already showed their interest and this could bring know-how to the City Council.

Lastly, it is important to stress the commitment of the city in favour of the intercultural approach and the good work that has been done in many different areas. And as it is the case in other cities, there is room for improvement in some fields, indicated in this report and the one with the results of the ICC index.

A key aspect of the intercultural approach is to interiorize at a general level, both within the Council and in the civil society the fact that the diversity is a resource, an asset for the local development. It is important to incorporate this vision in the definition of policies, otherwise we risk at focusing exclusively in giving answers to difficulties. To sum up, we need to understand and interpret the diversity as an opportunity and be able to share and translate into concrete actions with specific results.