



PONTEDERA

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS 2024



Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS



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PONTEDERA
INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Cities is a Council of Europe flagship programme. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.

In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which was rich in content and detail. However, narrative reports alone were relatively weak as tools to monitor and communicate progress. Thus, an “Intercultural Cities Index” has been designed as a benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the programme as well as for future participants.

While this report is being written (July 2024) 164 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 132 (including Pontedera) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found [here](#).

Among these cities, 34 cities (including Pontedera) have less than 100,000 inhabitants and 20 (including Pontedera) have between 15% and 20% of foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Pontedera, Italy, in 2024, and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

INTERCULTURAL CITY DEFINITION

The intercultural city has people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/beliefs. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

METHODOLOGY

The Intercultural Cities Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 86 questions (73 of which are mandatory) grouped in 12 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general Intercultural Cities Index).

These indicators comprise the following (including the two new indicators in bold):

1. Commitment	
2. Intercultural lens	Education
3. Mediation and conflict resolution	Neighbourhoods
4. Language	Public services
5. Media and communication	Business and the labour market
6. International outlook	Cultural and social life
7. Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8. Welcoming newcomers	
9. Leadership and citizenship	
10. Anti-discrimination	

11. Participation

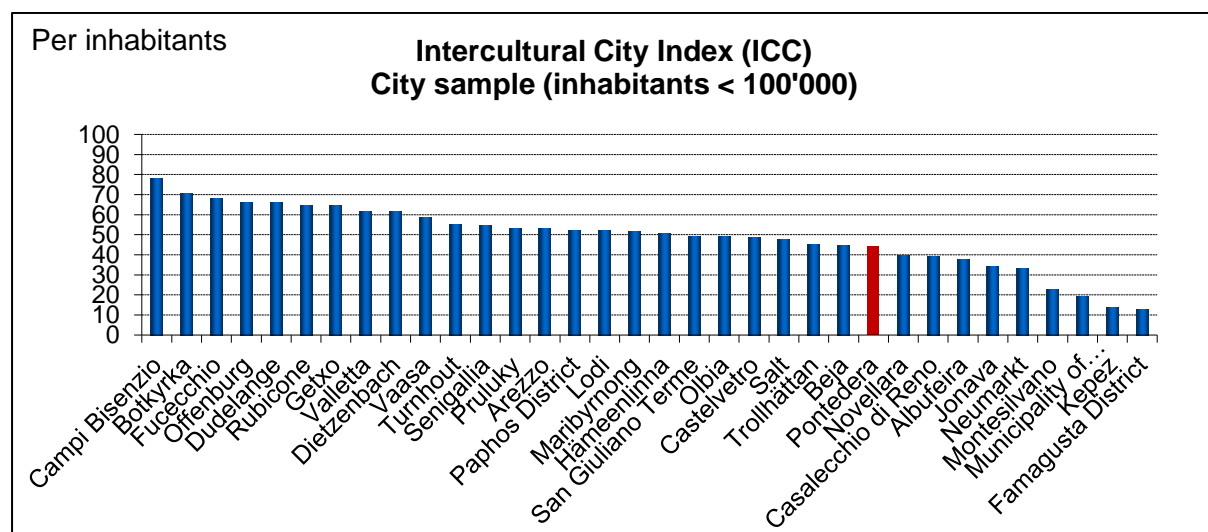
12. Interaction

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development, type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended **only as a tool for benchmarking/benchlearning**, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Taking into account the above-mentioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out insofar: the size (below 100,000 inhabitants; between 100,000 and 200,000; between 200,000 and 500,000; and above 500,000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (lower than 10 per cent; between 10 and 15 per cent; between 15 and 20 per cent; and higher than 20 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

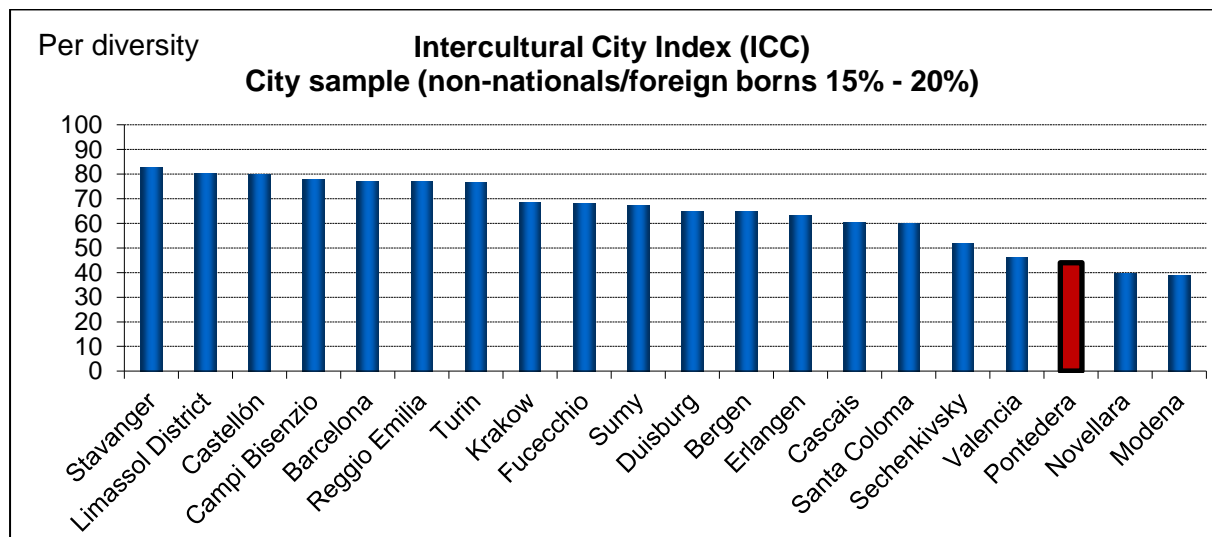
So far, 50 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Pontedera. Thus, the city will be compared to the entire sample for all the indicators, and to the new sample for the new indicators relating to participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, Pontedera has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 44 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.¹

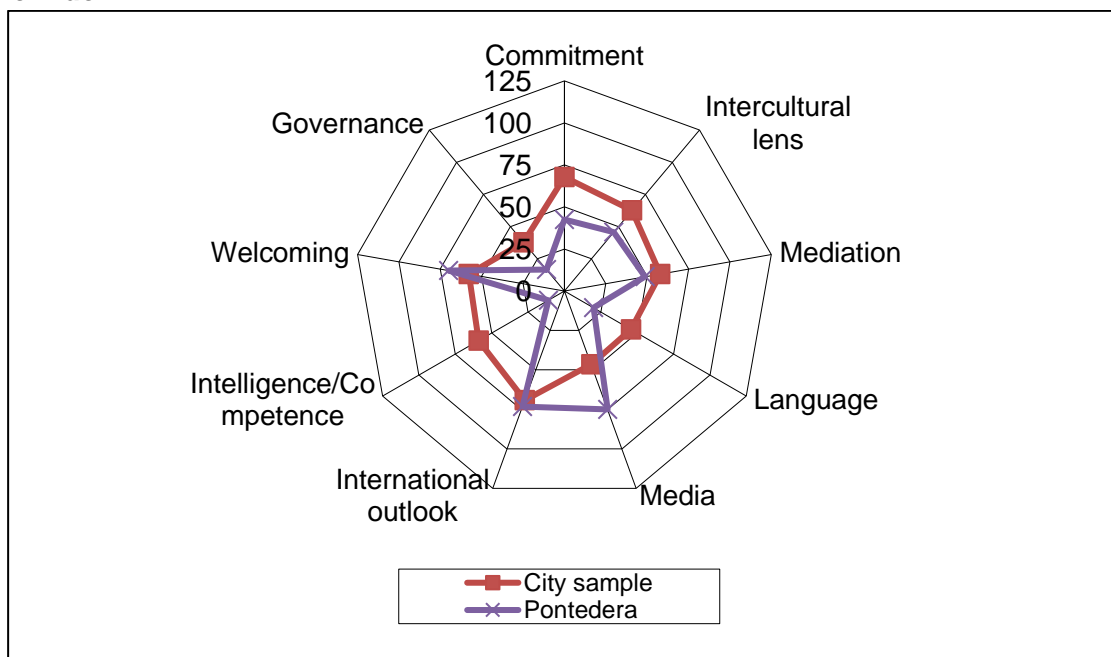


¹ The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended Intercultural Cities Index with 86 questions. As a main rule, the Intercultural Cities Index report applies the scoring from the original Intercultural Cities Index, to ensure the broadest possible comparison group in the global achievement rate.

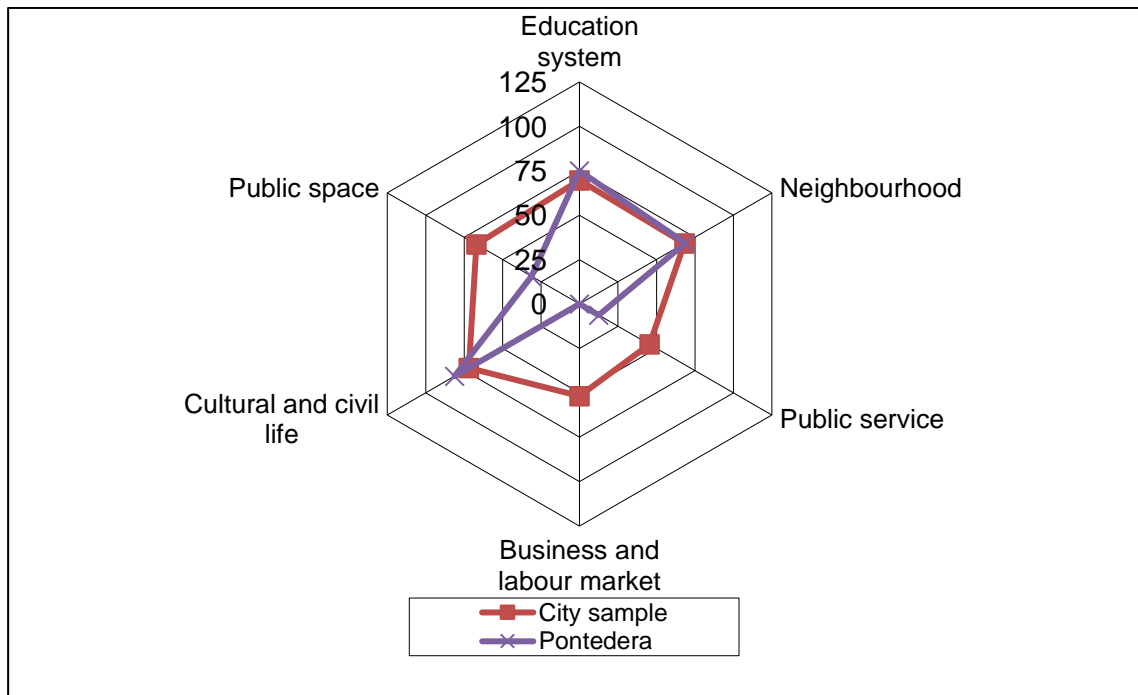
In addition, the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index is provided in an explanatory footnote for all indicators where it is relevant. This scoring encompasses the assessment of the questions of the original Intercultural Cities Index as well as the new questions of the extended Intercultural Cities Index for each specific indicator. The scoring of the original Intercultural Cities Index and extended Intercultural Cities Index for the same indicator may hence differ based on the differing number of questions. Finally, the indicators which are completely new to the extended Intercultural Cities Index only include the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index. This scoring for these indicators hence shows directly in the text and not in a footnote.



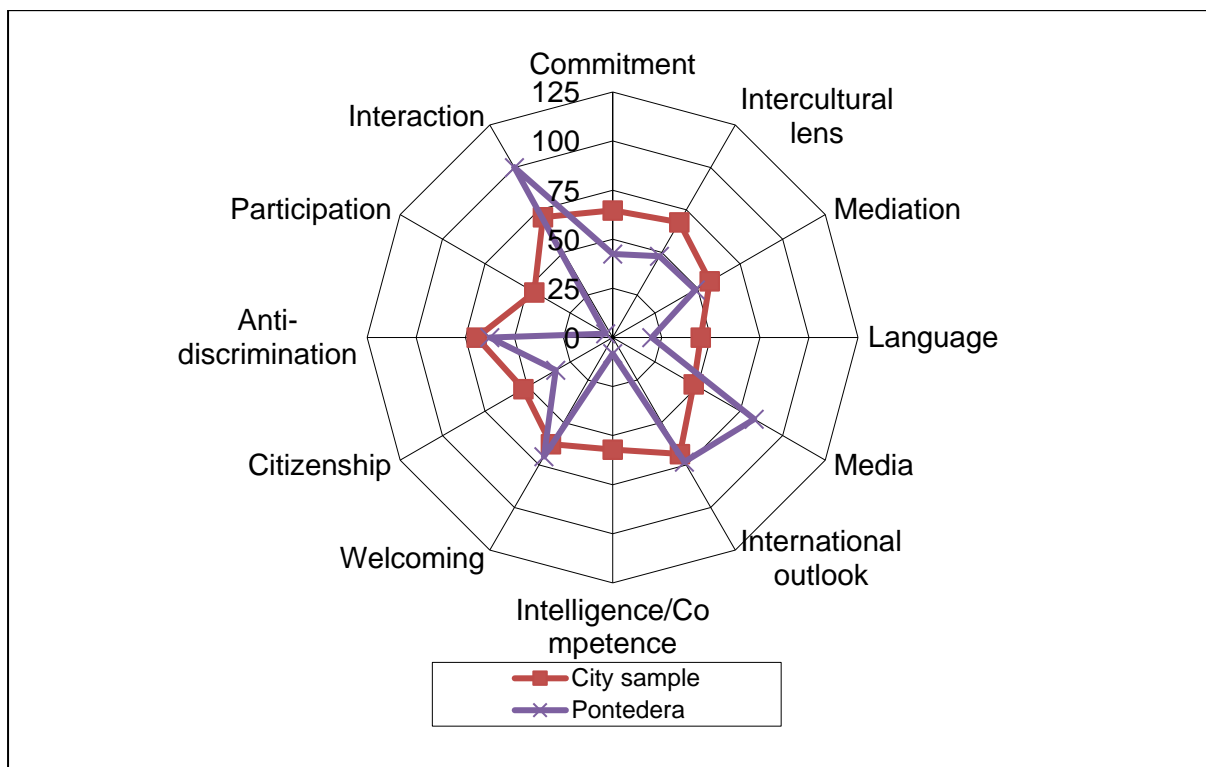
Core index



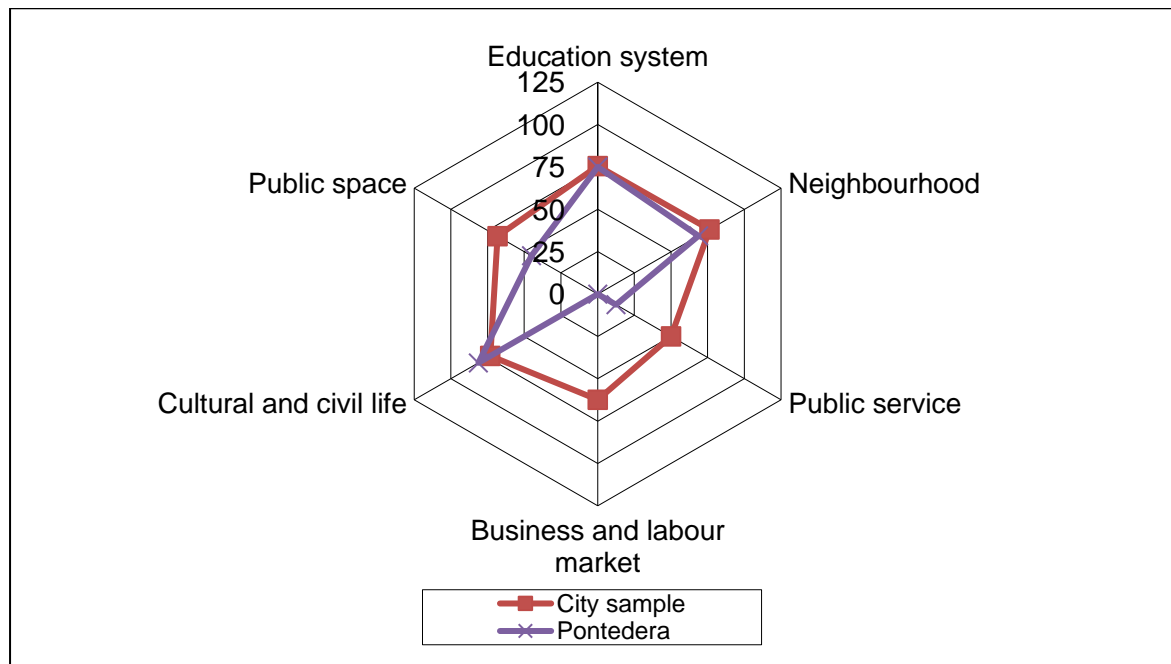
Intercultural lens Index with Core Index



Extended Index



Intercultural lens with Extended Index



PONTEDERA: AN OVERVIEW

Pontedera is a city located in the province of Pisa, in the region of Tuscany. The town is located 20 km from Pisa and 50 km from Florence. It is located in a strategic position in the Arno valley, at the confluence of the river Era and the river Arno. Administratively, the city is divided into eight 'frazioni' or districts: Gello, Il Romito, La Borra, La Rotta, Montecastello, Pardossi, Santa Lucia, Treggiaia.

According to the last census, the workforce employed by industrial activities represented the 43% while the services sector workforce employed the 15% of the total workers. Pontedera represents an international symbol of 'Made in Italy', the Vespa, as it is the birthplace of Piaggio - the brand that produced the Vespa.

At the time of the index questionnaire, Pontedera had a population of 29 670 (ISTAT, 2023). A population growth can be seen starting in the 1960s, coinciding with Piaggio's economic growth, and, conversely, a decline starting in the 1990s, with the downsizing and crisis of the company itself. Since 2001, the population has grown by 19%, from 24 971 inhabitants.

Pontedera is a diverse city, with a population which has changed significantly over the past years. The official figure of non-nationals provided in the questionnaire is taken from the ISTAT 2011. As of 31 December 2023, the foreign resident population was 4 800 or 15.94% of the population. The largest migrant groups as of 1 January 2023 were the Senegalese (1 386 or 29.8% of foreigners), Albanian (688 or 14.8%), Romanian (524 or 11.2%) and Moroccan (459 or 9.9%) (ISTAT, 2023).

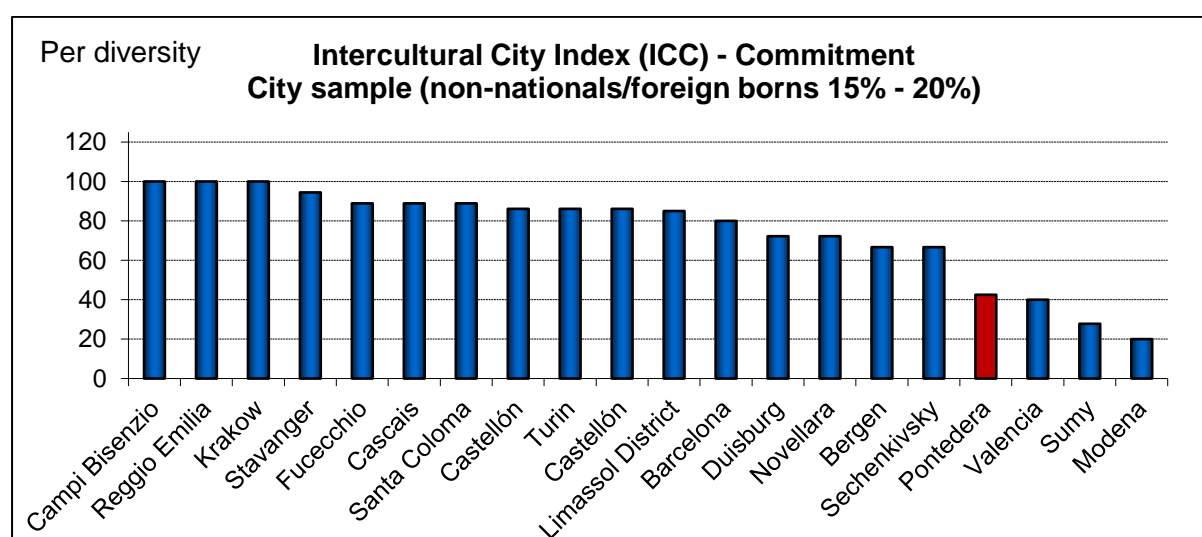
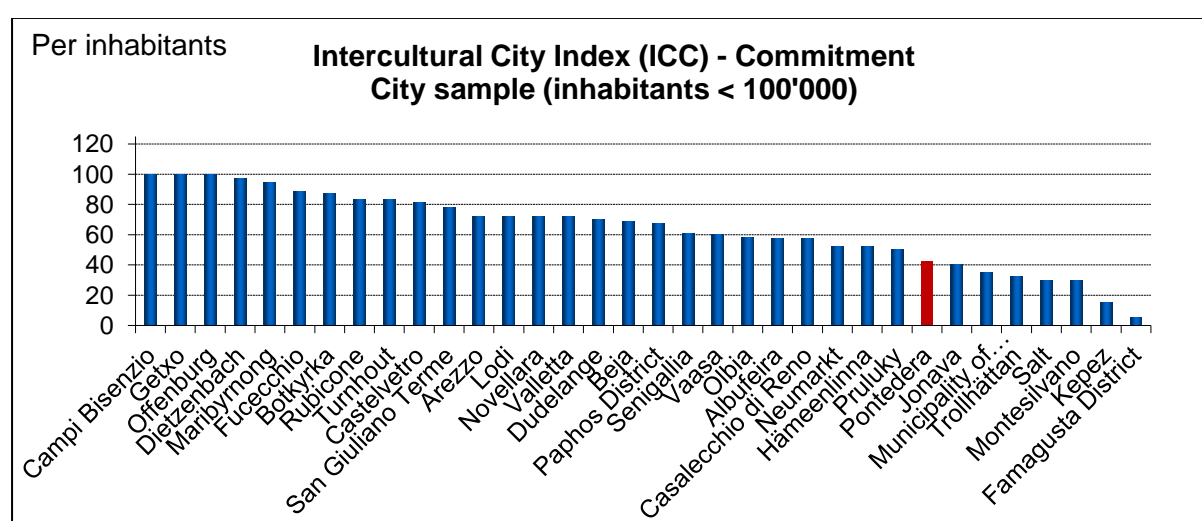
According to data from [Eurostat](#), Italy has the oldest population in the European Union, with an average median age of above 48 and almost one in four residents is older than 65. Pontedera is in the same trend as the rest of the country, with figures that show an average age of its population at 45.6.

The town has recently been rediscovered as a home for contemporary art artists, with numerous exhibition galleries and open-air venues set up for creations.

COMMITMENT

For intercultural inclusion to occur, city authorities need to send out a clear and well-publicised message emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality, interaction and participation. Ideally, a majority of elected officials and senior policy officers will have a clear understanding of these core principles and their implications for policy making. City authorities also need to initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions. Most importantly, an intercultural city actively seeks to include residents of all nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups in the policy-making process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 43, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68. The score stems for the lack of an intercultural narrative and a strategy that sets up priorities around public policies with an intercultural perspective. However, the city is currently developing an Intercultural Strategy.



The City Council is currently working on the design of an intercultural strategy. Consequently, the city has not developed an action plan, allocated a specific budget or conducted an evaluation for it. Pontedera is considering setting up a specific structure responsible for implementing the future intercultural strategy.

Although the city affirms that it systematically involves people with diverse backgrounds in policy formulation, it would seem that these consultation processes are linked to the implementation of EU projects and have therefore not been formalised.

In the field of narratives and communication, references to the intercultural commitment are rarely made. And in any case, the city does not have an official webpage that communicates it. When it comes to recognition of residents or organisations developing initiatives that encourage interculturalism, the city only offers logistical or financial support to civil society organisations.

Recommendations

Political commitment to the intercultural perspective can be addressed and improved in two main areas: governance and narratives.

The Intercultural Strategy under construction will facilitate the application of the intercultural lens in the city and will make significant progress with regard to consolidating a strategic framework and promoting specific intercultural policies and initiatives. Inspiration can be found on the [ICC dedicated webpage to Intercultural Strategies](#).

When designing the Strategy, Pontedera should not forget the operational dimension. To promote policies with an intercultural perspective, it is key to have appropriate governance tools to ensure that they are implemented, coordinated and monitored and that their impact is properly evaluated. This means establishing coordination mechanisms with all the municipal areas to ensure that mainstreaming reaches more areas.

It also means that the Strategy must be backed up by human and material resources required to implement it. Moreover, the functions of the professionals working in the Intercultural Department will have to be tailored to the needs established in connection with the implementation of the plan.

Different Spanish cities have included a 'Governance' axis or Governance tools within their Intercultural Strategies. It is the case of [Barcelona](#), [Bilbao](#), [Castelló](#), [Logroño](#), [Manlleu](#), [Sabadell](#). Moreover, a working group in RECI is currently working on defining the key elements and main criteria to include in an Intercultural Strategy. This work will be published both at the RECI and ICC websites in the upcoming months.

The case of Barcelona City Council is particularly interesting, as its [Intercultural Plan \(2021-2030\)](#) has been approved by the Council in tandem with the Government Measure "[Move towards interculturality. Governance instruments and mechanisms](#)". The intention of this government measure was to boost the institutional commitment with interculturality and the integration of this perspective in every action the municipal government takes by improving the governance instruments. As an example, it created an [Interdepartmental Intercultural Committee](#) to promote interculturality in a cross-cutting manner within the municipal organisation, ensure governance with an intercultural perspective in the city, and facilitate the implementation of the Plan.

Some insights of the Interdepartmental Intercultural Committee:

- Goal of the Committee: to drive interculturality throughout the municipal organisation, ensure intercultural perspective governance in the city, and facilitate the implementation and development of the new Barcelona Interculturality Plan.
- Constitution of the Committee: by means of a decree, identifying a secretary and a list of members, a meeting calendar, political chair, etc.
- Bodies of the Committee:
 - Chair: Deputy Mayor of Culture, Education, Science and Community.

- Members of the Committee: chief executives and directors of the municipal districts, along with representatives of the consortiums (such as the CEB – Barcelona Education Consortium) and the independent bodies (Barcelona Activa), plus the heads of programmes where interculturality is a key aspect. This Interdepartmental Committee will hold two ordinary meetings a year and will be the highest body for monitoring the development of the Interculturality Plan, as well as the body responsible for cross-cutting monitoring of the different areas.
- Tasks:
 - Agree commitments with the districts.
 - Establish indicators in each gap and monitoring area.
 - Decide technical interlocutors. Draw up internal action plans for each area.
 - Follow up commitments.
 - Propose actions and establish priorities.
 - Assess annual monitoring reports.
 - Draw up a plan for diversifying municipal human resources.

An intercultural strategy is ideally designed in consultation with city departments, civil society organisations and consultative bodies of foreign residents. Pontedera could use the work started by the Intercultural Assemblies (under the framework of the Divercities project) to feed in the Strategy content.

In [Dublin](#), all departments and units of the City of Dublin were involved in the design of the Integration Strategy. The work started in December 2020, when the City Council instructed its officer in charge for integration to collect proposals and comments in order to allow a review of the previous city integration strategy by the staff of the different municipal departments and by the main stakeholders of the Municipality (organizations and external groups working with the Municipality on the issue of social inclusion, including groups representing migrants and foreign communities).

The Dublin City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) developed a [reference framework for the development of the intercultural and integration strategy 2021-2025](#). The Lord Mayor hosted an online external stakeholder engagement and two internal stakeholder conferences, and also took an active role in advancing the progress of a Framework for the new strategy.

The next step planned was submitting the draft of the intercultural and integration strategy to a process of public consultation with the aim of maximizing the contribution of the entire population of the City of Dublin and to better identify the actions that will really make a difference in people's lives. A call for collaboration was supposed to be forwarded to all stakeholders, both large organisations and small informal groups, and disseminated through the Dublin Public Participation Network. However, this participatory process (and the design of the Strategy itself) was paused as national guidelines were expected to be launched.

A lesson can be drawn from this experience: there is a need to continuously review and analyse national policies and goals to understand their implications for the local reality and identify areas of alignment or potential conflict. Local plans should be informed by broader national guidelines in order to guarantee more coherence and impact. Timing has shown to be key in political matters (i.e. national or local elections, political climate at national level, etc.). Having said that, it is strategic to design local plans with flexibility to adapt to changing policies (both at local or national level).

The lack of an intercultural narrative at city level could lead to a normalisation and consolidation of the frame of reference defined by anti-migrant and anti-diversity narratives. Intercultural policies must be supported by narratives, and vice-versa, so it is consistent and coherent. If there is political commitment to these policies, the narrative should be aligned to have a greater impact.

In the case of narratives based on the intercultural approach, they should be based on a clear commitment to policies that pursue equal rights, duties and social opportunities, and the recognition of diversity, emphasising on what is common and shared, and on generating opportunities and spaces for positive interaction.

There are different ways of grounding and communicating an intercultural narrative: by publicly presenting diversity as an advantage for the city (including public statements) or using a slogan or motto.

Liverpool, UK offers an interesting example which can serve as an inspiration with its narrative development work. It was focused, from the outset, on asylum seeker reception and refugee integration. But Liverpool was interested in broadening out its scope and turning it into a more general branding for the city. Liverpool first consulted with Inclusive Cities in Autumn 2016, and from there developed the 'Our Liverpool' narrative, based around its history as a global port.²

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore be re-conceived and re-configured in order to ensure they provide adequate service to all residents regardless of their nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientation and age group. This is most notably the case for policies concerning education, neighbourhoods, public services, business and the labour market, cultural and social life, and public space.

The overall rate of achievement of the urban policies of Pontedera, assessed as a whole through an "intercultural lens" is lower to that of the model city: 46% of these objectives were achieved while the rate of achievement of the model city reaches 63%.

EDUCATION

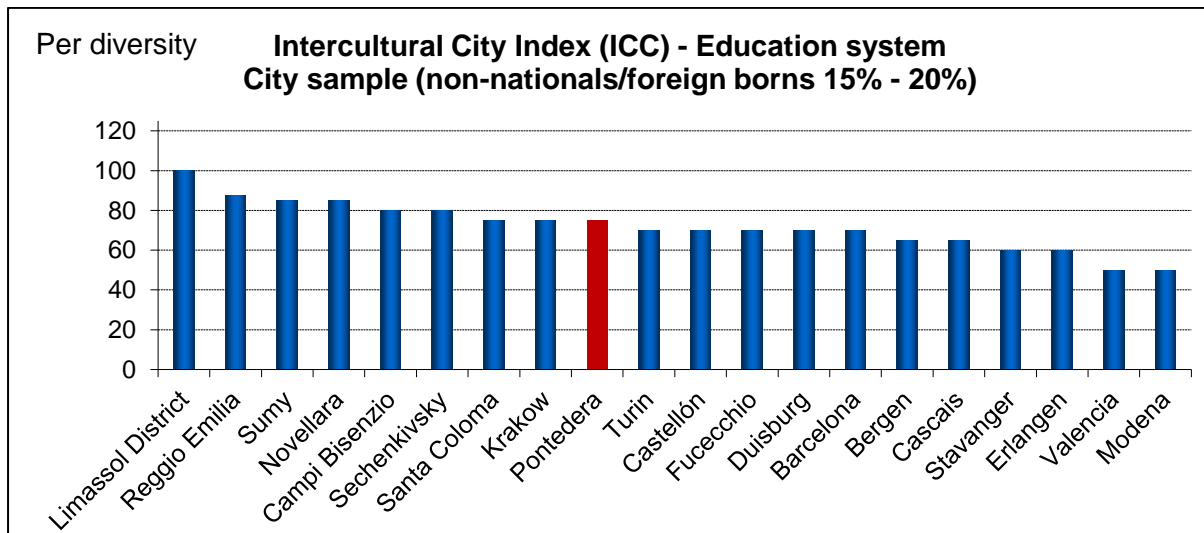
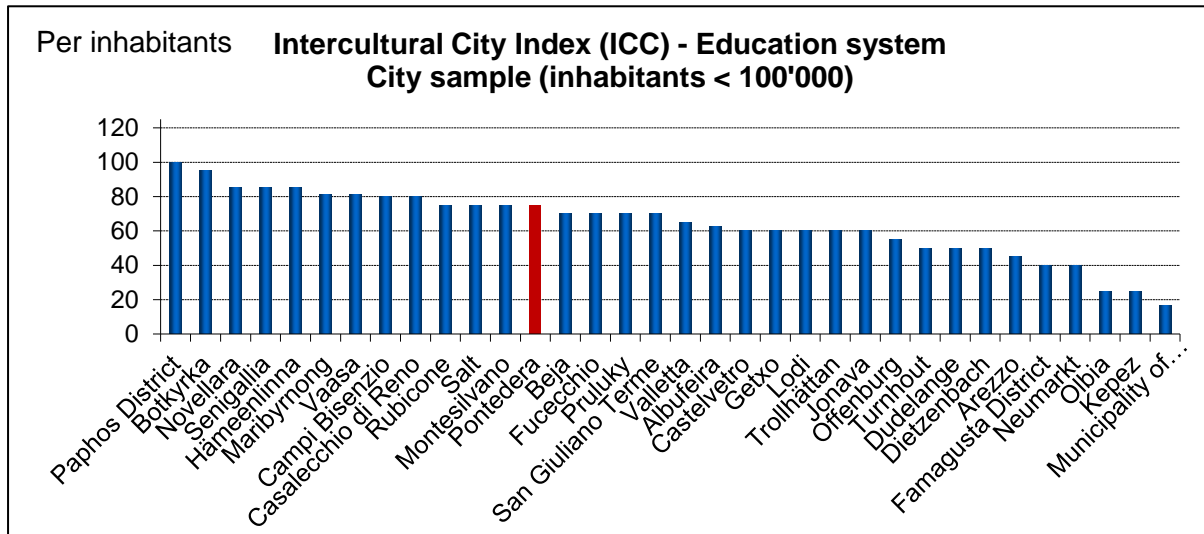
Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Schools therefore have a strong potential to reinforce or, on the contrary, challenge prejudices and negative stereotyping. Although school programmes are defined primarily at the national or regional level, local schools can look at alternative and innovative ways of providing opportunities for children of different cultures to build trust and mutual respect, and create thereby favourable learning conditions for all pupils, irrespective of their nationalities, origins, languages, sexual orientation or gender identity, religions/beliefs. From the intercultural perspective, cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools also consider parents of pupils with migrant/minority backgrounds on an equal basis as other parents. They take steps to ensure that all parents overcome any reluctance they may have in engaging with the school and give them in this way the possibility of playing the educational role usually expected from parents.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 75, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 70. The result is based on a range of school projects relating to intercultural topics, and twinning between schools, related to different sectors and between schools of different levels:

- <https://www.comune.pontedera.pi.it/novita/26-anni-di-gemellaggio-tra-pontedera-e-serrara-fontana-progettualita-in-ambito-culturale-e-scolastico-incontro-a-napoli-nel-segno-della-musica/>

² Field, O. (2021). Migration and integration. Which alternative narratives work and why. Policy Brief. Intercultural Cities Programme. Council of Europe.

- <https://www.lanazione.it/pontedera/cronaca/gemellaggio-italia-francia-alla-curtatone-e-montanara-725815b7>



The city highlights that schools gather (and mix) children from different ethnic/cultural background. Whilst the city council does not have the authority to appoint teaching staff within education settings, information is missing regarding their background and whether it reflects the composition of the city's population.

The schools organise numerous intercultural projects. The questionnaire highlights the language courses (Italian), which are organised with language mediators with the aim of inclusion, knowledge of other cultures and education in diversity. These projects are implemented in collaboration with the 'Peace Table' and [Centre for Educational and Didactic Resources](#) - CRED Valdera, which have been working for years on the integration and reception of people with migration backgrounds. However, only few schools are making an effort to involve parents with migrant/minority backgrounds in school life.

Last, the city does not have a policy to fight segregation in schools.

Suggestions

Pontedera displays intercultural projects within schools to engage with students. The city may wish to further work to increase participation and engagement with parents.

In [Leeds](#), United Kingdom, several schools are making a strong effort to involve parents with migrant/minority backgrounds in school life. They do that by, for example, providing information in an accessible and friendly format; organising convivial meetings to help educators understand the different concepts of the family, gender roles, the place of education and the relative weight of cultural and socio-economic factors in the life of migrant families; organising festive occasions during which parents with migrant backgrounds can highlight their culinary or artistic traditions; launching cooperative projects for parents in schools, such as, for instance, an intercultural garden. In addition, Leeds also deliver English language sessions alongside migrant/minority languages including informal and fun activities for parents and children. An example of this includes a weekly session using 'Story Sacks' as a tool to encourage the use of both home language and English when reading to children. Story Sack is a family learning scheme of work to introduce parents to the idea of story sacks as a way of making reading skills fun and interactive by designing 'bags' and artefacts to promote learning.

Despite the fact that the city council does not have the competence on teachers' recruitment process, Pontedera may explore offering intercultural competences targeting teachers and schools workers as well as fighting against segregation in schools.

An inspiring project, [European cities against school segregation](#), highlights that, regardless of the particular attribution of responsibilities to each administration level, it is important that education policies prioritise equity and inclusion, allowing at the same time the necessary flexibility to meet the diverse needs of learners, both within and outside of mainstream education. Policymaking needs to involve all relevant stakeholders to achieve this objective and create shared ownership and accountability.

The project has designed training materials focused on policies and strategies to prevent, limit or manage the effects of school segregation (i.e. compensatory policies, free activity school in specific districts, recruiting and retaining skilled leaders and teachers in vulnerable areas).

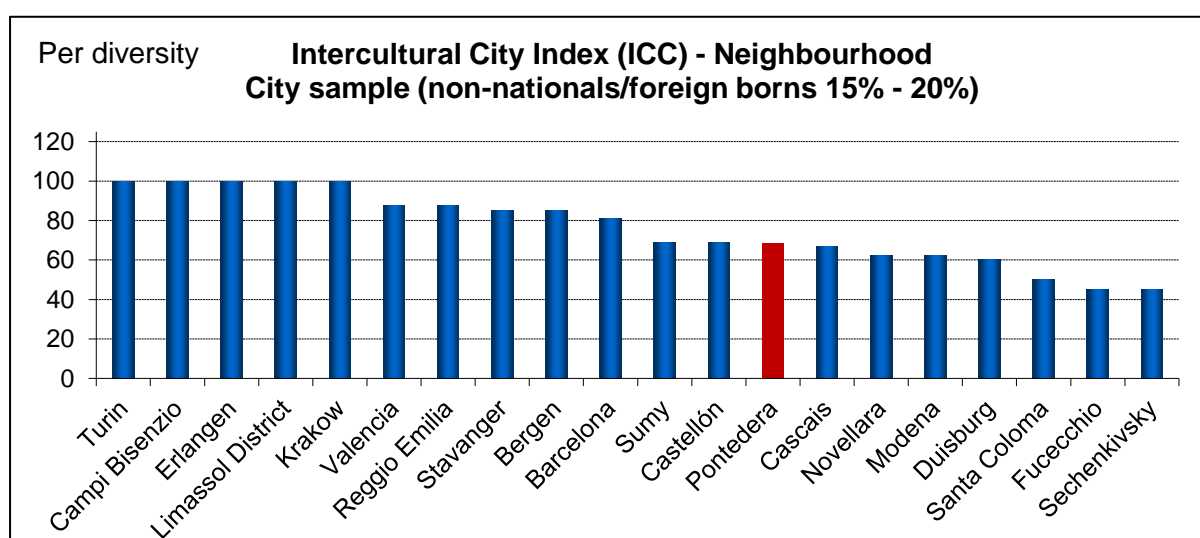
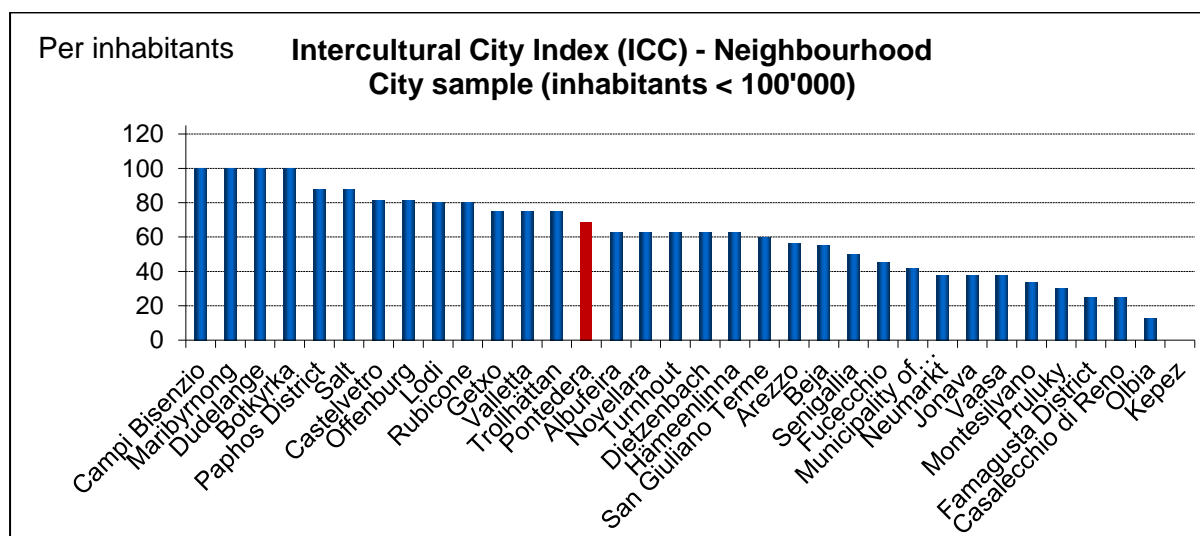
One of the cities participating in the project, Milan, has introduced in its policy design the use of a set of indicators to understand which are the vulnerable schools and also those potentially eligible for de-segregation or compensatory policies. The main indicators are the index of segregation and the index of attractiveness (built by the administration). These indexes represent a valuable guide to target schools with compensatory measures and de-segregation policies.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within a city, districts, neighbourhoods, or other territorial sub-units, can be more or less culturally/ethnically diverse. People are indeed free to move and settle in the neighbourhood of their choice. To be intercultural, a city does not require a 'perfect' statistical mix of people in all neighbourhoods. It will however make sure that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood does not convert into socio-cultural segregation, and does not act as a barrier to the inward and outward flow of people, ideas and opportunities. In particular, the intercultural city ensures the same quality of public service delivery in all the neighbourhoods and plans public space, infrastructures, social, cultural and sport activities to encourage intercultural and socio-economic mixing and interaction.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 69, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 68³. Pontedera has a range of initiatives in place to promote interaction in neighbourhoods, including collaborative projects with civil society organisations

³ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 69, while the city sample achievement rate is 76%.



At present, the city does not promote policies dedicated to increase the diversity of residents in its neighbourhoods, but occasional measures are set in place. For instance, urban planning instruments are designed aimed at promoting the socio-economic integration of people who arrive with a specific migrant background.

Given the small territorial size of Pontedera, the city reports that the various cultural initiatives and events are aimed at the whole population and are organised in different parts of the city to ensure that the range of local services on offer is uniform.

Pontedera counts on proactive associations that encourage actions where residents of one neighbourhood meet and interact with residents from different migrant/minority backgrounds from other neighbourhoods, including festivals (concerts, exhibitions, gastronomy events), entertainment activities (open-air cinema or aimed at children) and urban regeneration projects.

Suggestions

As a first step, it may be interesting to explore data-driven policy making that could help with evidence-based decision making and make informed choices. This means knowing the migrant and ethnic composition in the different neighbourhoods to identify whether concentration / segregation occurs.

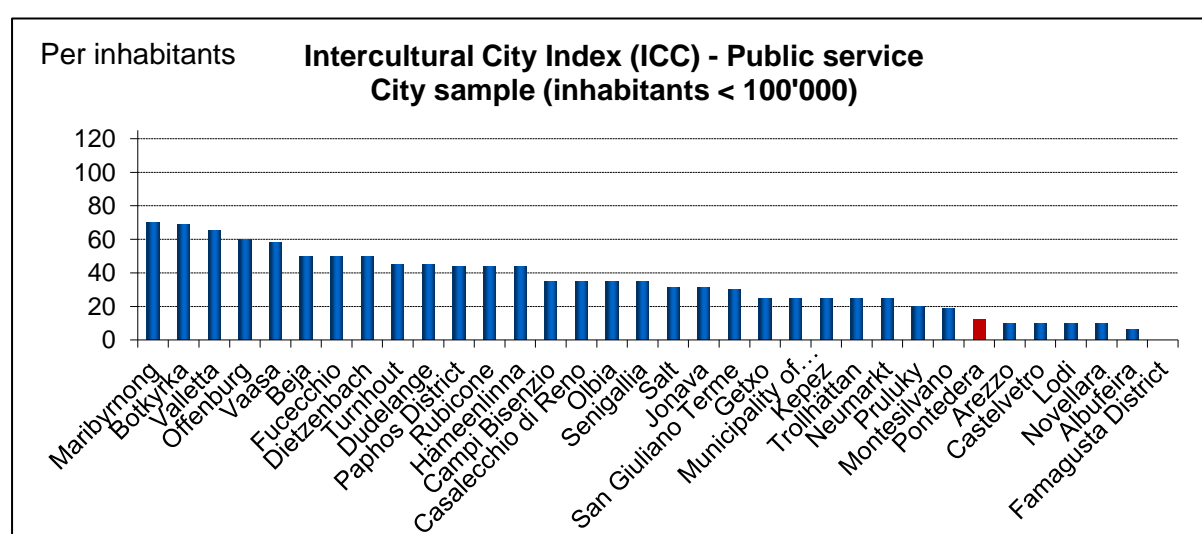
Many member cities of the ICC networks work to increase the mix of their citizens and could provide some ideas to further inspire Pontedera's efforts. For example, the [Zambujal](#) Melhora Programme in Amadora, Portugal, works at a smaller scale to organise meetings of individuals who work together at district level. The programme established the "facilitators neighbourhood" idea which is the joining of two people with different ethnic backgrounds who receive training at the same time in a specific neighbourhood. They then go on to work together in their own neighbourhood or others.

Still in Portugal, the '(Re)Writing our neighbourhood' project in [Braga](#) encompassed a comprehensive work around the promotion of interaction, participation and a sense of belonging in three different neighbourhoods. Among its actions, the project aimed at recognising realities and ways of life of the neighbourhoods, giving migrants/minorities a first chance to learn some skills such as photography. The project raised awareness among the residents about their space and social and cultural values, and the project included the organisation of an archive, an international workshop, an exhibition and the publication of a book containing a collection of photographic evidence and documents.

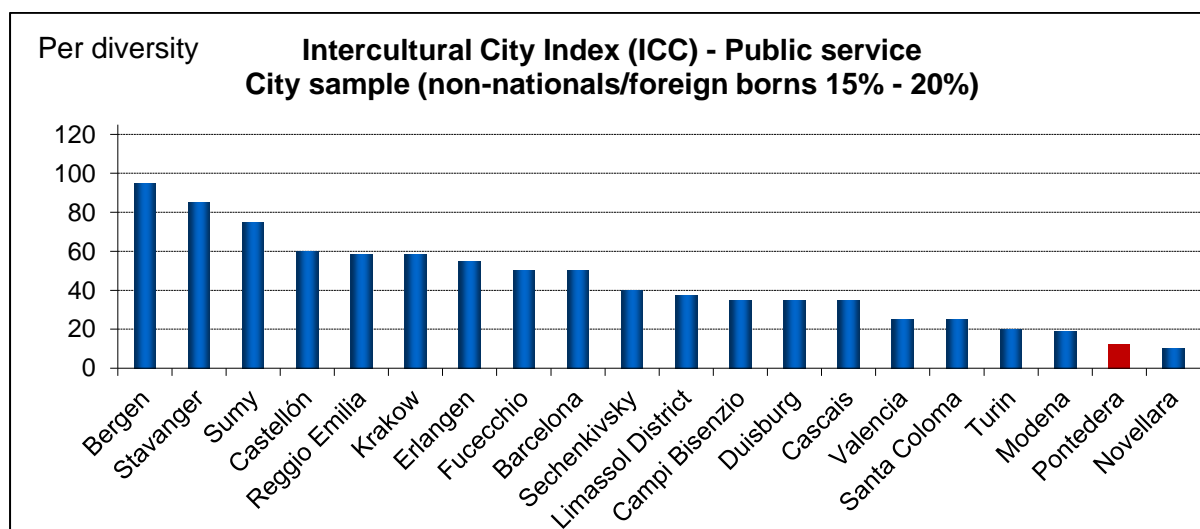
PUBLIC SERVICES

As their very name implies, public services work for the benefit of the public as a whole. If the population is diverse, public services will be more efficient in delivering adequate benefits and information if city officers, at all levels of seniority, are as diverse as the population in general. This requires much more than simply ensuring equal opportunities to access public service employment. When taking action to encourage a diverse municipal workforce, an intercultural city acknowledges that a 'one size fits all' approach to public services and actions does not guarantee equal access to public benefits. The city also recognises that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds should never be treated as passive consumers of public benefits but can contribute actively by suggesting new ideas and innovative solutions to public problems.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 13, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 45⁴. Pontedera does not have a recruitment plan to ensure diversity in the workforce and does not take action to encourage diverse workforce in the private sector. However, the city ensures diversity is respected in several public services offered.



⁴ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 13, while the city sample achievement rate is 50%.



Pontedera reports that the migrant or minority background of public employees does not reflect the composition of the city's population. Yet, the city does not have a recruitment plan to ensure diversity in the workforce.

In addition, Pontedera also reports not to take action to encourage a diverse workforce, intercultural mixing and competence in private sector enterprises.

Pontedera takes into consideration the migrant or minority backgrounds of all residents when providing school meals - international menus are available - and women-only sections or times in sport facilities.

Recommendations

Intercultural cities, for the sake of the public service's efficiency and good outreach to the local population, should guarantee that city officers, at all levels, are as diverse as the population.

While promoting a diverse workforce might have limited legal possibilities still some actions can be taken in this regard within the competences of the city and certain inspiration can be drawn from other ICC Cities. It is the case of [Bergen](#), Norway, and its Future Workplace action plan and [Barcelona](#), Spain, where knowing the most widely spoken languages in the city is a considered favourably when applying to join the Local Police. In addition, the City Council has approved an instruction for special conditions in the clauses detailing public contracts, so that companies submitting bids use staff with more varied cultural and linguistic knowledge. The idea is for staff employed through public contracts for municipal services to reflect the city diversity.

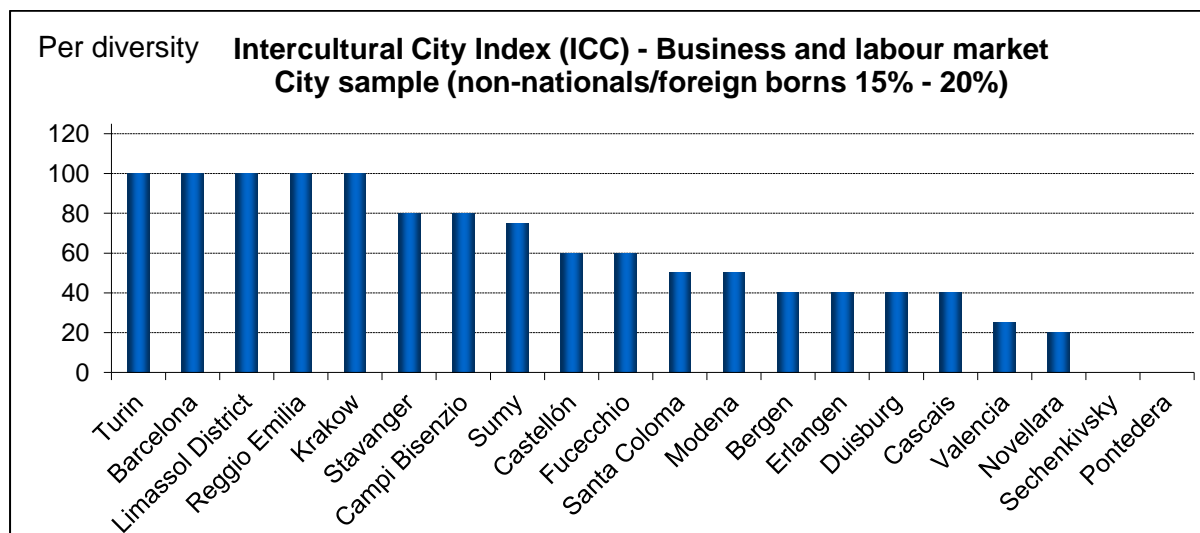
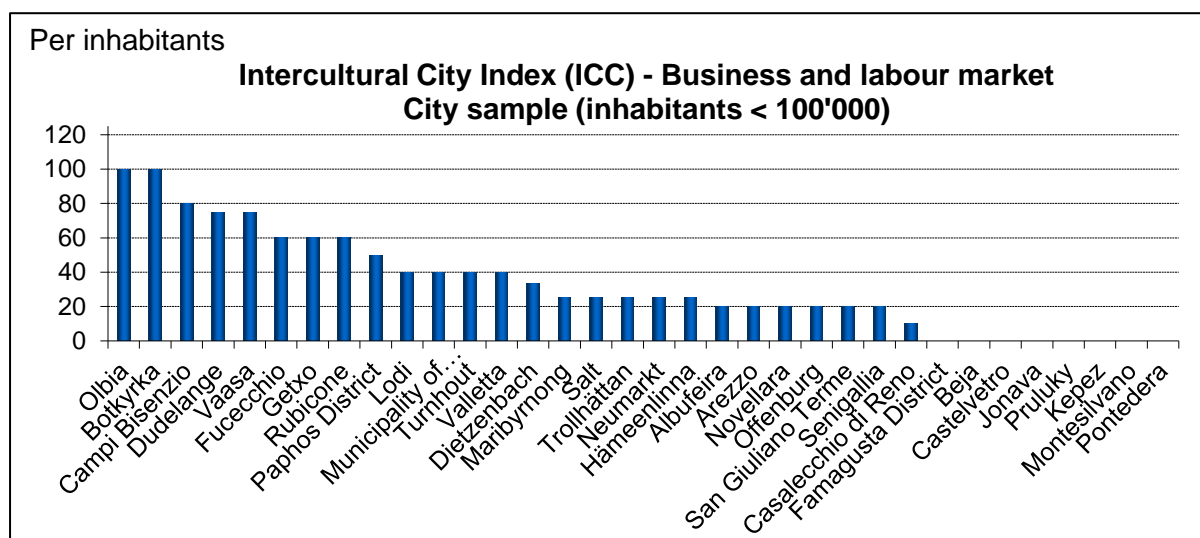
An interesting Italian initiative "[Diversity Management approaches in the public-private partnership industry](#)" collected experiences and best practices at European level and analysed an approach of Diversity Management. The project, awarded an ICC intercity-grant, was implemented by Novellara, Reggio Emilia, and the union of municipalities "Rubicone e Mare". The project [report](#) gathers the elements that could enable transferring to other public institutions the knowledge acquired and the methodological approach to a real inclusive diversity management in the workplace.

Last, concerning the provision of public services, Pontedera may be interested in exploring the funeral and burial services offered. In Botkyrka, Sweden, there are different sections in the local cemetery for all religions in the municipality, including for Muslims and Syrian Orthodox. This is a part of the work done within the interreligious network in Botkyrka and is coordinated nationally by the Swedish (protestant) Church.

BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to the public sector labour markets is often restricted by national or regional legislation. When this is the case, the private sector may provide an easier route for people with migrant or diverse backgrounds to engage in economic activity. As a result, private companies and activities tend to offer much more diverse working environments than the public sector. Research has also proved that it is cultural diversity in private companies, and not homogeneity, which fosters creativity and innovation. By constantly highlighting the diversity advantage in business, and partnering with their chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, cities can influence how diversity is perceived in the private sector in such diverse sectors as shops, clubs, restaurants, industry, technical services and science.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 0, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 52.⁵ This shows low achievement in the municipality across business and labour market strategies and initiatives.



Pontedera does not count on a local, business umbrella organisation that promotes diversity and non-discrimination in the labour market.

⁵ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 0, while the city sample achievement rate is 62%.

The city does not take action to encourage businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond the “ethnic economy” and enter the mainstream economy and higher value-added sectors.

The city does not take action to encourage ‘business districts/incubators’ to involve entrepreneurs with migrant/minority backgrounds and does not offer activities which encourage them and mainstream entrepreneurs to engage and develop new products/services together. This question is out of the competence of the municipality, and it is regulated by national laws.

Last, in decisions relating to the procurement of goods and services, the municipal council does not favour companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy, as regional/national regulations do not foresee it.

Recommendations

Pontedera may wish to consider implementing additional measures to collaborate more with the private sector which creates opportunities for people with migrant or ethnic backgrounds to engage in economic activity.

Simple but effective initiatives could be related to the support of migrant/ethnic minority background business and the creation of networking spaces. The [Diversity = Inclusion group](#) in Kirklees, United Kingdom, involves public and private sector employers and large companies and SMEs. It provides space for employers to network, gathers and analyses data on diversity in the local labour market, shares and promotes good practice, and supports business leaders in championing diversity. Oslo, Norway, provides a good example as well through its [OXLO Business Charter](#), a forum and network for collaboration between the city and the business community. It works to promote migrants as a resource for business and economic growth with actions to support diversity recruitment, business leadership for diversity, and workplace diversity and inclusion.

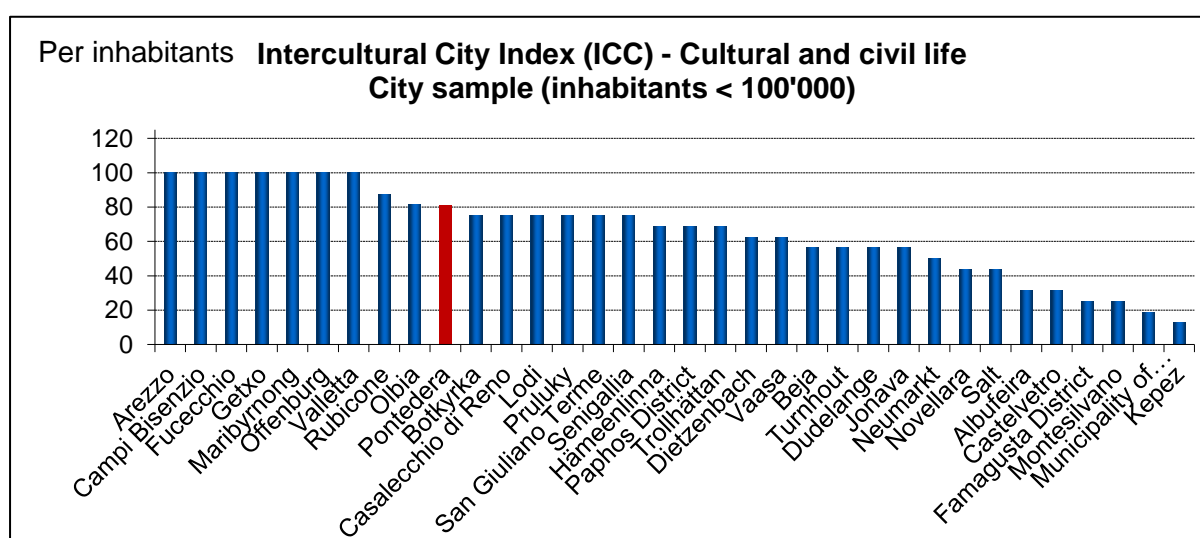
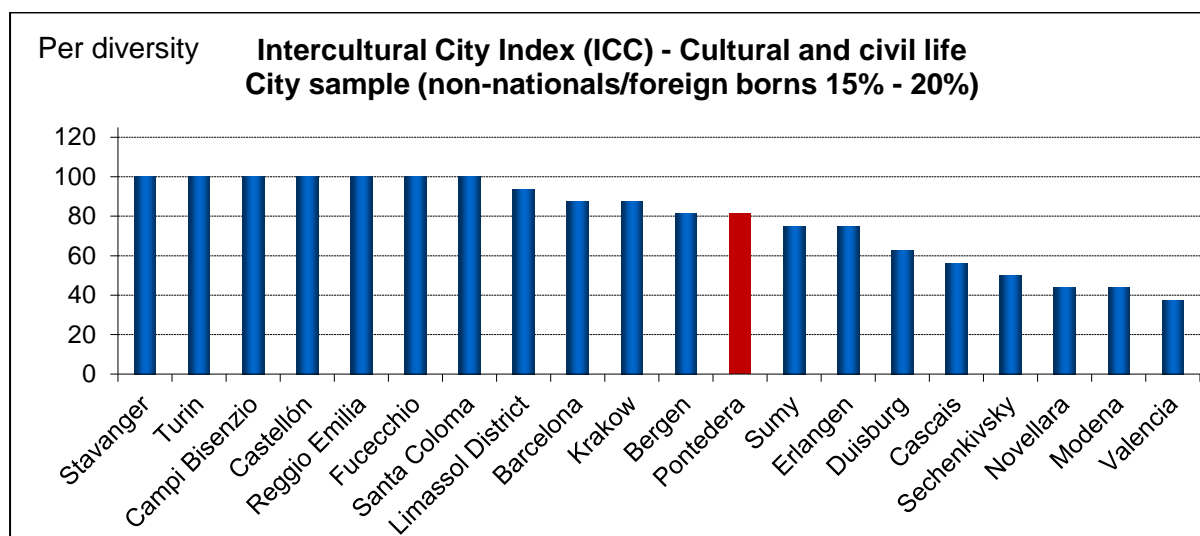
In relation to the procurement of goods and services, Leeds, United Kingdom, favours companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy: it is a requirement that contractors and their employees be inclusive and abide by a non-discriminatory code. Commissioners are required to evaluate Social Value commitments on all tenders with a 10% weighting in the evaluation process to award contracts to support the inclusive growth. Social value includes those elements over and above the specification requirements that the contractor commits to providing at no extra cost on employment and skills, the environment, education, and as “social entrepreneurs”.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Whereas people living in a city may have different migrant/minority or other backgrounds, they very often share the same interests and satisfaction when engaging in leisure activities, especially in the fields of arts, culture and sports. Such activities are sometimes structured along ethnic lines. That is quite understandable when they aim to preserve folklore traditions or the language and history of countries of origin. What is problematic is when cross-cultural leisure activities are organised along ethnic lines, for example when a football team only accepts players from one ethnic group. The intercultural city can encourage cultural openness through its own activities and by introducing intercultural criteria when allocating resources to artistic, cultural and sports organisations.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 81, which is slightly higher than the city sample’s achievement rate of 72.⁶ Pontedera has a number of examples to promote culture in cooperation with civil society organisations.

⁶ Pontedera’s achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 81, while the city sample achievement rate is 73%.



Although there is not enough information to conclude that the City Council use interculturalism as a criterion when allocating funds to associations and initiatives, the city supports the organisation of activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport that aim to encourage people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds to interact. As an example, the city has an agreement with the Sete Sois Sete Luas cultural centre, which has carried out a number of projects and activities.

Pontedera has implemented an inclusive music project through the Accademia degli Assetati and the Theatre of the Oppressed. It has also organised a Youth Festival for 'second-generation' young people, with the support of an ICC grant. Another example in the field of sports includes the collaboration with the Bellaria sports association, which raise awareness around the slogan 'a t-shirt for everyone', to affirm that it guarantees the practice of sport to everyone.

Regarding debates and campaigns, Pontedera occasionally organises such initiatives around intercultural matters. [The New Generations on the Wave Festival](#) (2022) included round table discussions on diversity, welcoming people and the different ways of living together while being different. The initiative focused on new generations (understood as young people belonging to families with migrant background but grown or born in Italy) the project created public spaces for debate to attract and involve a part of population that usually has no voice.

Recommendations

Pontedera could draw inspiration from for example Botkyrka, Sweden, where grants are given on the condition that associations - including ethnic and religious associations - are open to everyone, work against discrimination, and abide by democratic principles. Associations can also receive grants to organise summer vacation activities that create meeting places and promote interaction among children from different backgrounds. Special grants are announced, when necessary, for example, in connection with events organised by the municipality. These special grants have a focus on creating activities that will reach different groups in the local community.

[Neuchâtel](#), Switzerland, promotes cultural participation thanks to a partnership between the Multicultural Cohesion Department and cultural institutions. To this end, cultural institutions offer bilingual guided tours of museums and exhibitions (in Arab, Persian and Tigrinya), to enable non-French speakers who have recently settled in the canton of Neuchâtel to become aware of their cultural environment and make it their own and to develop their own identity, while contributing to the enrichment of society's cultural diversity.

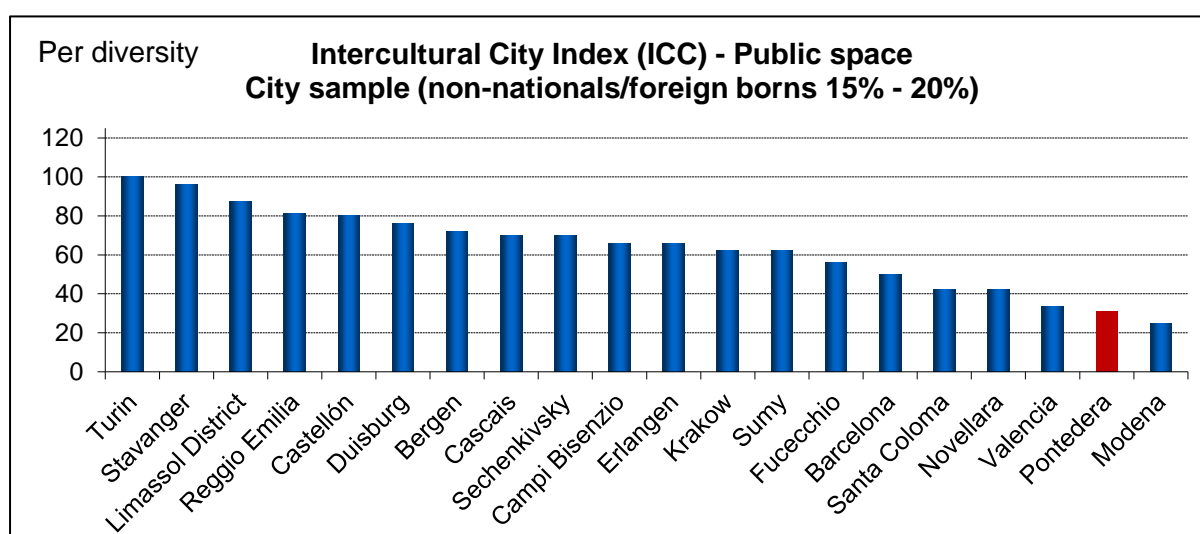
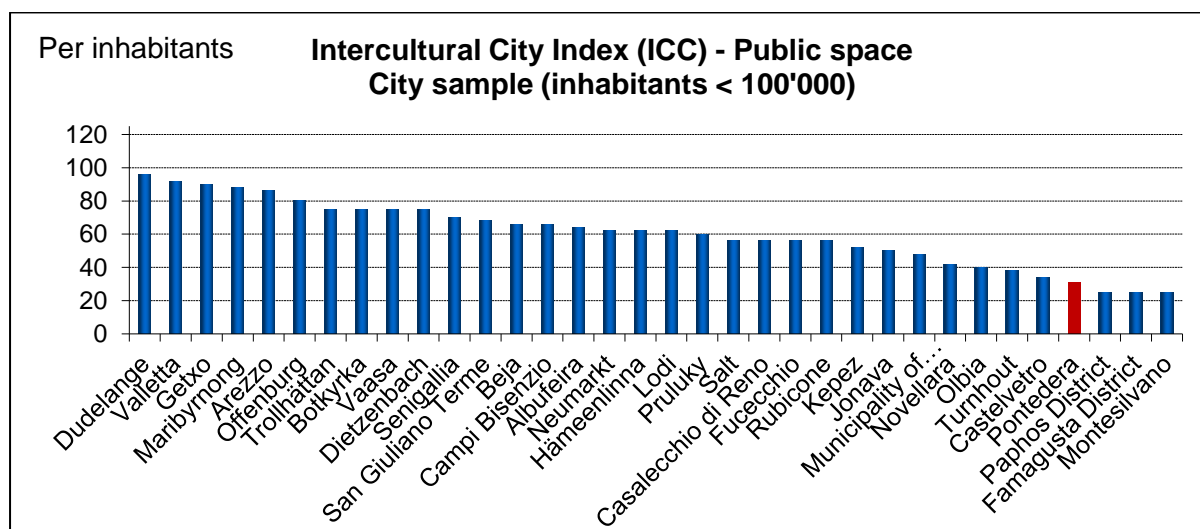
Another good example comes from Montréal, Canada. The [Cultural Development Policy](#) encompasses an ambitious range of actions in the field of cultural and social life. It includes commitment to programmes to encourage cultural organisations to engage with diversity and intercultural relations in their approaches and activities, action to promote recognition and inclusion of all artists and art forms, support for works addressing diversity and intercultural relations and intercultural art forms, and initiatives to foster participation by all residents in all neighbourhoods.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) and facilities (public buildings, day centres, schools, health centres, etc.) are places which most citizens are obliged to use. They offer the possibility of meeting people of different nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups. For encounters between diverse people to actually occur, such spaces and facilities should be designed and animated in a way that all residents feel comfortable when using them. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the "other". When this is the case, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions largely support by them.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 31, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 67.⁷ This is mainly due to the fact that the city does not use participatory methods nor takes into account the diversity when designing, renovating and managing new public buildings or spaces in a systematic manner. The city however has a range of actions to encourage interaction and has set up some Neighbourhood Consultations.

⁷ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 45, while the city sample achievement rate is 68%.



Pontedera reports to take action to encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public space, mainly in parks, squares and public libraries. For example, all the city's parks are well equipped to bring different cultures together, through shared play areas for children, relaxation areas or picnics. In addition, publicly owned sports facilities guarantee the availability of football pitches, basketball courts and other sporting disciplines for the entire population, while promoting open group courses or sports at pre-established prices for families in economic difficulty. In the case of libraries, books can be borrowed in different languages, including those languages of origin of the most common nationalities present in the territory. An interesting project is being developed in public libraries: 'Mother-tongue', where parents of foreign children organise readings in their native language and translate them into Italian, under the slogan "One history, many languages". ("Mamma Lingua: <https://www.unione.valdera.pi.it/comunicati-stampa/a809cmamma-linguaa809d-due-appuntamenti-con-letture-in-lingua-madre-alla-biblioteca-di-pontedera-e-a-quella-di-ponsacco/4172>).

It is also reported there are one or two spaces or areas in the city which are dominated by one ethnic group (majority or minority) and where other people feel unwelcome or unsafe. An example is the area next to the train and bus station, which concentrates people with a migrant background, mainly of African origin (Senegal, Nigeria). The large presence of migrants and the cohabitation of different cultures within a defined area that is a natural place for exchanges and mobility of people determines a very rapid change of population and overcrowding.

The city reports they have a multi-sectoral policy combining policing, social work and communication and defined after consultation of the population of the area to deal with areas which may be unsafe for some. The city highlights the set-up of [Neighbourhood Consultations](#). These are organisations whose main task is to interact with local residents by, for example, promoting meetings and public assemblies on any topic of interest. In this sense, the Council frequently organises events to listen to residents' views, from which neighbourhood actions and initiatives are born.

For example, in the abovementioned area next to the train station, an urban renewal programme has been launched, involving the recovery of derelict areas to create a new bus station, the installation of various community facilities, the creation of a space for co-working and the redevelopment of public buildings through the activities of the Sete Sois Sete Luas association to recover facades with murals created by foreign artists.

In the working-class areas of the Oltreia district, where most of the public housing is located, thanks to the work of the Consultation, the Council has set up a listening desk. Here the workers, who include expert mediators, receive reports, resolve problems between residents, and help new residents to manage practices relating to the rental contract.

[Recommendations](#)

Pontedera [Neighbourhood Consultations](#) have the potential to ensure the involvement of people with different migrant/minority backgrounds in different types of participatory processes, including those related to public space. In this line, synergies should be sought with the Divercities project, where the development of the Intercultural Assemblies provided an opportunity to strengthen ties with local associations and forge new connections with other migrant associations.

Pontedera could draw inspiration from the [Community Connector project](#), from Leeds, United Kingdom. In 2019, Leeds started the 15-month project which aimed to support new migrants to connect with local services and existing community networks through building bridges that encourage participation and independence. The project also added value to wider programs of work by providing a better understanding of culture of place and community cohesion.

When it comes to include the intercultural perspective in participatory processes for the (re)design of public buildings or spaces, further inspiration could be drawn from Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain, where an old tobacco factory ([Tabakalera](#)) was turned into a cultural centre in which young migrants are involved in arts projects. Or from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where a multi-ethnic market ([Afrikaanderplein](#)) helped refresh an anonymous or insecure area.

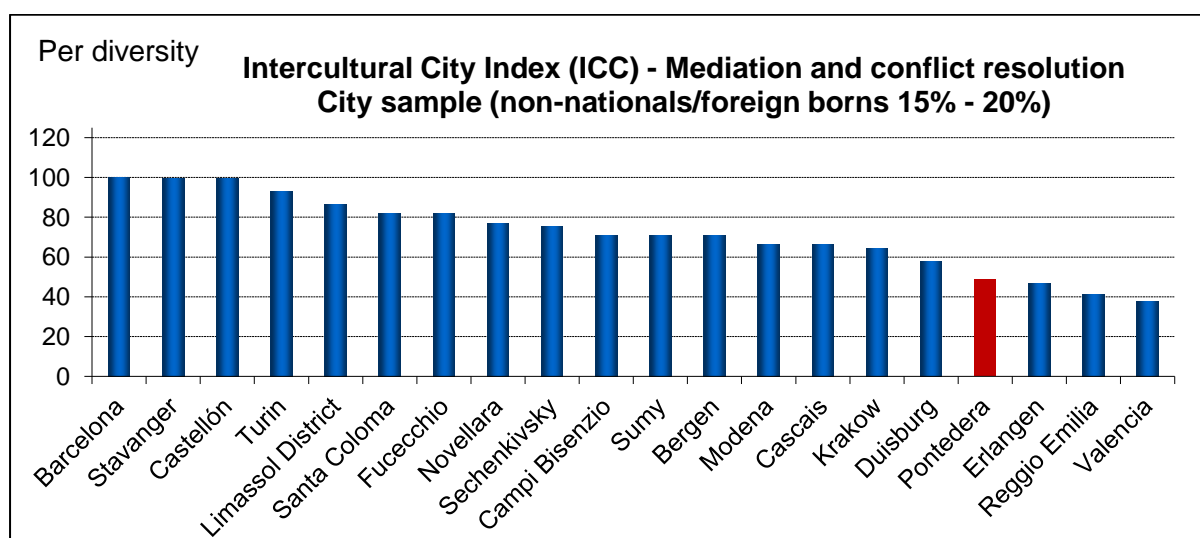
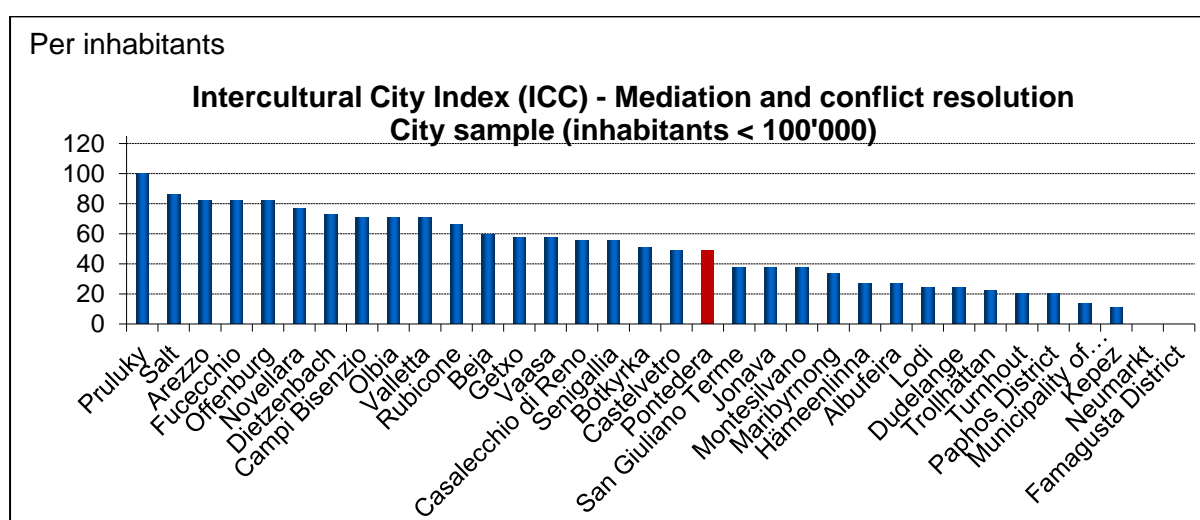
Last, it is important to highlight the potential of public libraries not only in encouraging interaction but in valuing diversity and guaranteeing equal rights when it comes to access cultural rights. In this sense, Barcelona has good examples in guaranteeing the provision and quality of municipal facilities, meeting the demands for care, leisure, culture and education in a fair and equal manner in all the city's districts, guaranteeing that these facilities are available locally and have an intercultural approach.

The [Biblioteca Gabriel García Márquez](#) is located in the district of Sant Martí. In 2023, it was awarded the best public library in the world mainly because how it interacts with its surroundings and local culture, the flexibility of its spaces and services and the commitment to learning and social connection. The library specialises in Latin American literature and it also strives to collect and disseminate a large part of the memory of the old town of Sant Martí and its neighbourhoods, with projects like ['We remember that: memory of local residents of Sant Martí de Provençals, la Verneda and la Pau'](#).

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In diverse societies there is always the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over values, behaviour or resources. In cities, where people with different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses live together in close proximity, such tensions are natural and indeed part of everyday life. Instead of denying, ignoring, or repressing conflict, the intercultural city seeks to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction of all protagonists without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The intercultural city views conflict as a normal feature of free, dynamic and communicative communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 49, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 58.⁸ Pontedera offers a variety of mediation services, mainly through collaboration with civic society organisations. However, an inter-religious service is still missing.



⁸ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 49, while the city sample achievement rate is 57%.

An intercultural mediation service run by a civil society organisation called Arci Association provides a professional service for mediation of intercultural communication and conflict in Pontedera. Mediation is provided in municipal services (mainly the civil and demographic services) to explain forms and the various procedural requirements. In addition, Arci Association manages the migrant reception desk, providing assistance and mediation when needed. Mediation is provided as well in different districts, especially in those densely populated and/ or with a diverse migratory background. The Council has created assistance and support desks, with the constant presence of mediation staff.

Recommendations

[Sabadell](#) (Spain) has some good examples of how to increase understanding of different religions and to work together to promote tolerance. The Department of Civil Rights and Citizenship promotes a series of participation panels with the aim of reflecting together with Sabadell's civil society. In this context, the Belief Diversity Committee was set up. This is a space for debate, reflection and consensus in all areas of management of religious diversity in the city. The Committee participates in the map of the diversity of beliefs, which showcases the spiritual, religious or non-religious and humanistic traditions present in the city (with information around places of worship, when they meet, how to contact them, etc.). It also takes part in the organisation of the annual open day for places of worship, dedicated to promote knowledge of religious diversity with guided tours and visits to various worship centres.

As the intercultural city should seek to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction and wellbeing of all residents, Pontedera could strengthen mediation services with an intercultural perspective in diverse areas such as education, health, housing, commerce, etc. ICC programme good practice on mediation are available [here](#).

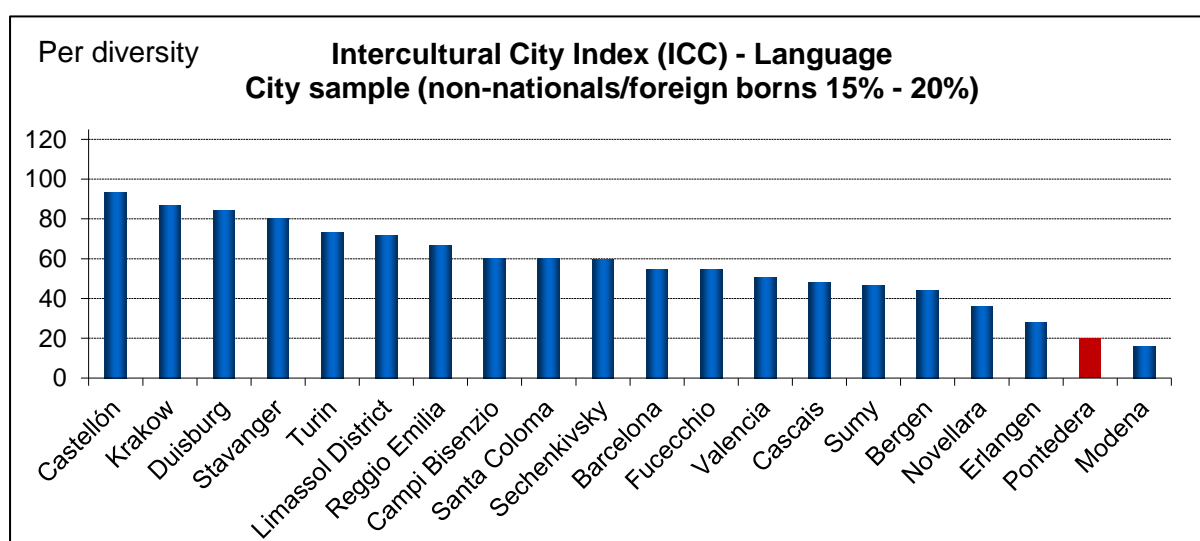
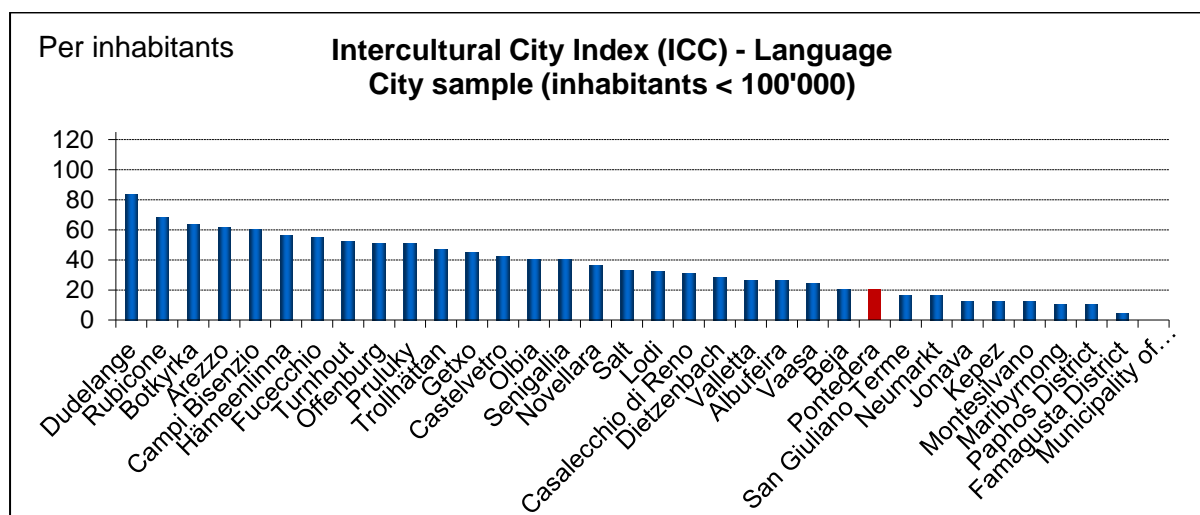
An example which might be interesting to explore comes from Botkyrka, Sweden. The municipality implements initiatives to prevent youth violence following the [Tåget and Mentors in Violence Prevention](#) methods, targeting schools with pupils aged 9 to 15. Those initiatives are the result of cooperation between social services, the safety and security unit of the municipality, the police, a housing company and civil society. They focus on empowering children/youth to report situations of violence and raise awareness among peers on ways to prevent violence. With these methods, teenagers also can become mentors for younger pupils.

LANGUAGE

The provision of courses and other facilities for people with migrant backgrounds to learn the receiving country's language(s) is important to ensure social and economic integration. It does however need to be supplemented with activities which highlight the value of other languages, and enable people with migrant origins not only to preserve and transmit their languages to their children and other members of the community, but also to take pride in them as a heritage enriching the local community. An intercultural city promotes multilingualism as a resource for education, business, tourism, cultural life, etc. It underlines the value of all languages present in the city, for instance by giving opportunities to diverse language speakers to express themselves in their mother tongue in public and at cultural events and by promoting all events that offer opportunities for linguistic exchanges and mixing.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 20, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 46.⁹ The result reflects the lack of language courses for residents with migrant backgrounds.

⁹ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 20, while the city sample achievement rate is 45%.



As before mentioned, Pontedera support projects that seek to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages. It is the case of "Mamma Lingua"/ 'Mother tongue', a project in cooperation with the public library where mothers of children enrolled in the nursery read stories in their mother tongue and sing songs. ([https://www.unione.valdera.pi.it/uploads/Una_storia_tante_lingue_Locandina_letture_lingua_originale_\(1\).jpg](https://www.unione.valdera.pi.it/uploads/Una_storia_tante_lingue_Locandina_letture_lingua_originale_(1).jpg)).

Recommendations

As an intercultural city, Pontedera needs to provide services to acquire or improve language competences. Many different cities within the ICC programme offer specific language training in the official language(s) for hard-to-reach groups, as it helps to reduce the factors that contribute to, and encourage, segregation processes. Good practice that can serve as an inspiration comes from [Novellara](#), Italy, promotes the participation of migrant women into the Italian language courses organised in the city, and [Sabadell](#), Spain, which offers language support for young people who come to the city through family reunification.

To promote a quality education system that is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities for all students it is key to increase language support as cross-cutting programmes linked to multilingualism, for which all teachers are responsible. The intercultural curriculum in schools and other educational institutions is desirable as well. This

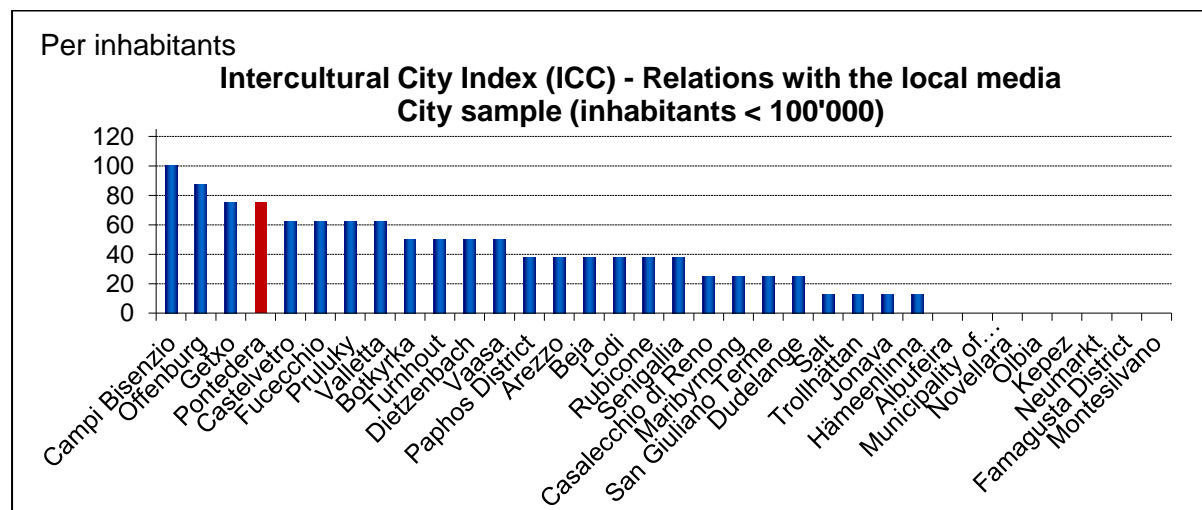
could be done by facilitating knowledge and learning of mother tongues and languages of origin in the school environment. [Barcelona](#), Spain, is constantly striving to encourage the learning of languages that make up the linguistic diversity of its districts. A learning programme for family members' languages - recognising and promoting the linguistic diversity in Barcelona's neighbourhoods - has been launched. Implemented in different districts, the project aims at encouraging children to learn their mother tongues outside school hours. The programme was made possible thanks to the collaboration between schools, Family Associations and associations from the neighbourhoods working with children as well as different departments within the Council.

Pontedera may wish to consider organising events and activities to celebrate, recognise and raise awareness about the languages spoken by all those in the municipality. For example, the celebration of the International Mother Language Day (21 February) or a Language Week.

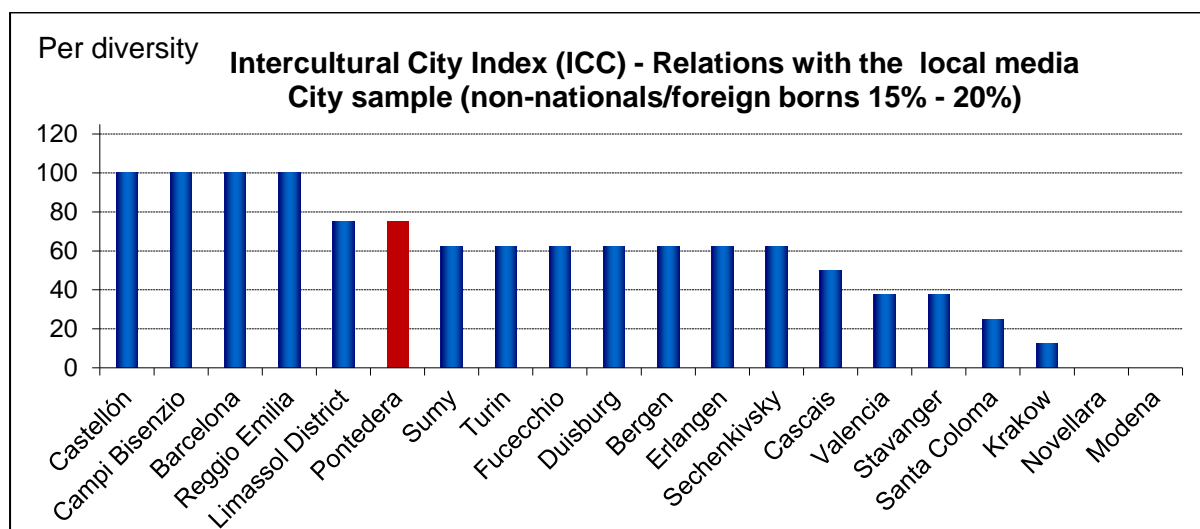
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Traditional and social media have a very powerful influence on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities. Much of the information people access is generated by international newsgroups, national media, or by private persons in the case of social media. Nevertheless, there is still much the city authorities can do to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an intercultural city constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. More importantly, the city partners with local media agencies so that they purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 75, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 47.¹⁰ Pontedera shows a number of initiatives to build positive narratives around migration and diversity and attaches great importance to communication.



¹⁰ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 83, while the city sample achievement rate is 48%.



The city reports to have a communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media. The city's communication department is indeed instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage regularly and in various types of communication. The municipality works closely with the local bodies that manage migration and promotes and publicises events related to the topic, acting as an information point.

Pontedera also engages directly with the local media when they portray people with migrant/minority backgrounds through negative stereotypes. The city reports that direct contact, mediation, correct information and dialogue are the best tools for guaranteeing quality journalism.

Suggestions

Although Pontedera reports to monitor itself how people with migrant/minority backgrounds is portrayed in media and social media, interesting initiatives the city could get inspired come from Donostia - San Sebastian, Spain, where the NGO SOS Racismo has developed an observatory for media treatment on migration and diversity issues ([Mugak](#)) with the support of the municipality. The Barcelona City Council also supports the initiative called [Mèdia.cat](#), a media observatory from Journalists Group 'Ramon Barnils'.

Partnering with local media and journalists is key to have a greater impact around positive climate on diversity and migration. To strengthen the links with journalists and support a positive narrative of diversity the city could consider not only to monitor their work, but to build strategies targeted to journalists. As an example, [Malta's Anti-Rumours Action Plan](#) envisages actions such as creating spaces and channels for meeting with the Media to share relevant information; generating content of interest for the Media that conveys a more rigorous and positive image of diversity (focus on reports, identification of new referents, etc.); and offering training on the intercultural perspective to Media and other communication professionals.

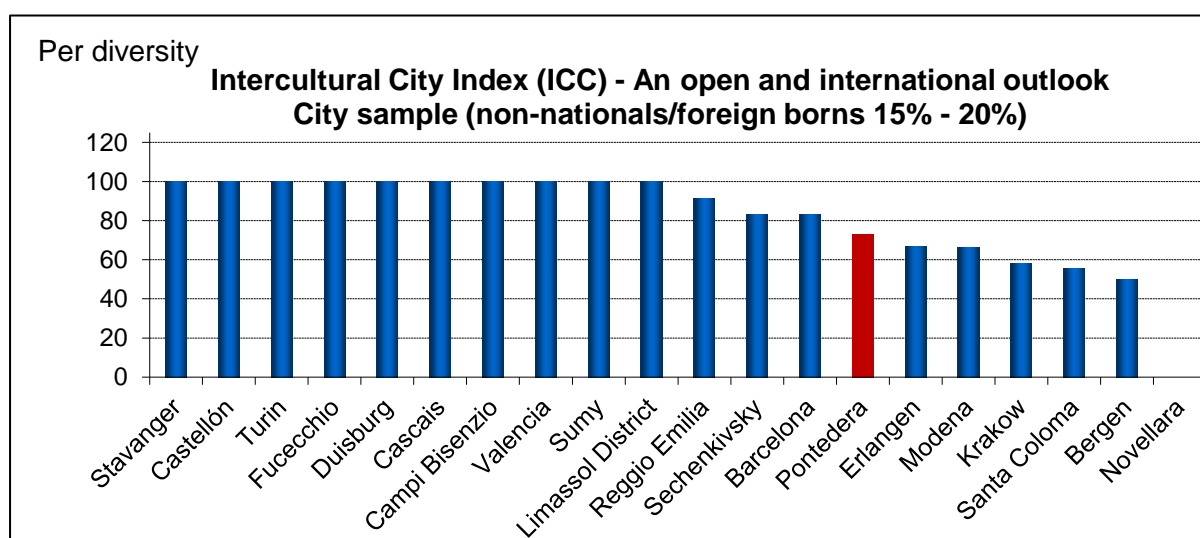
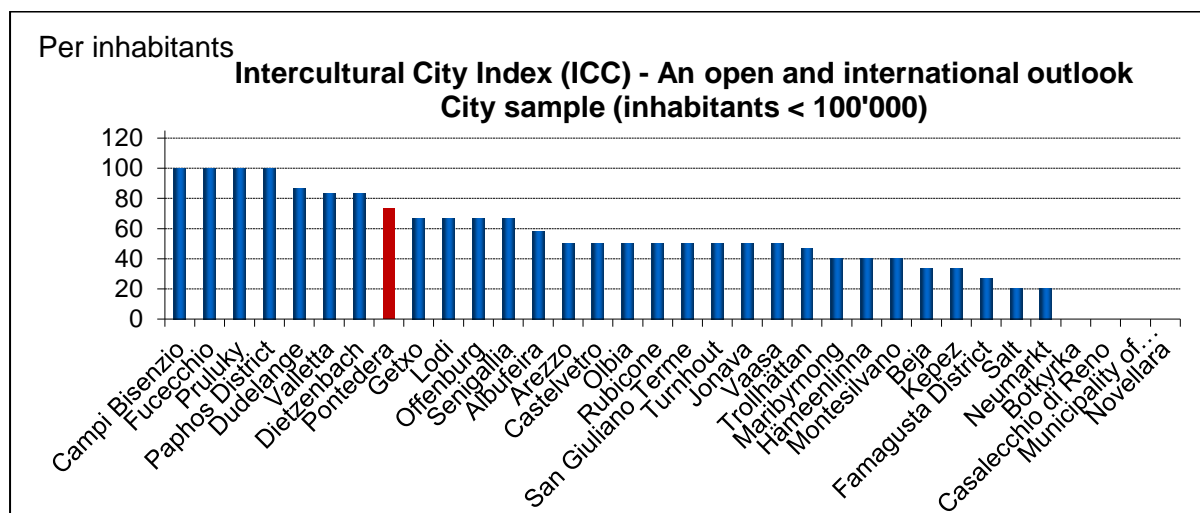
Finally, to support a positive narrative of diversity the city could consider several material produced by ICC, such as the [Guide on how to design a communication strategy](#) or the Policy Brief '[Inclusive communication](#)', which could help the reflection on the way Pontedera is building its communication and to improve the use of communication to promote peace, positive interaction, and intercultural awareness.

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Although cities have little or no competence in foreign policy, they can actively seek to make connections in other

countries to develop business relations, exchange knowledge and know-how, encourage tourism, or simply acknowledge the ties the city may have elsewhere. An intercultural city actively encourages interactions with the outside world and in particular with the cities, regions or countries of origin of its inhabitants.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 73, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 69¹¹. Pontedera has several projects through twin cities and supports project that enhance international cooperation and exchange among young people.



Pontedera reports to have an explicit and sustainable policy with a specific financial provision to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural and other areas. This international cooperation takes the form primarily of twinning arrangements based on socio-cultural cooperation. In addition, the City Council supports civil society initiatives linked to a co-development approach, with the involvement of migrant communities. (f. l. <https://www.quinewsvaldera.it/firenze-un-progetto-di-pontedera-per-il-centrum-di-brava.htm>; <https://www.comune.pontedera.pi.it/novita/ricvuti-in-comune-i-musicisti-di-capo-verde/>; <https://www.pisatoday.it/cronaca/inaugurato-murale-i-giapponesi-di-pontedera.html>).

The city also reports to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups by involving diaspora and mainstream entrepreneurs in international visits and meetings and by supporting organisations

¹¹ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 73, while the city sample achievement rate is 68%.

seeking to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups. As an example, the city has activated and carried out the visit to the Senegalese authorities with the Senegalese diaspora group.

Finally, the city reaches out to youth groups arriving through exchange programmes, such as Erasmus +. The municipality collaborates with the Language High School Montale on an Erasmus project. During the school year, many exchanges are organized and foreign people arriving to spend time at the local Linguistic High School are welcomed by the Municipality and different activities are organized together. (f.i. <https://liceomontale.edu.it/liceo-montale-pontedera-progetto-visitmath-alla-conquista-delleuropa-con-la-matematica/>; <https://liceomontale.edu.it/innovazioni-per-linsegnamento-della-matematica/>).

Suggestions

Additional good practice to be inspired around contact with diaspora come from Reggio Emilia, Italy. The city has signed [an agreement with the Moroccan Ministry](#) in charge of relations with the diaspora. The agreement, signed through the Intercultural centre Mondinsieme, seeks to “promote socio-cultural mixing and openness towards the other”. Among the activities covered by the agreement are annual cultural visits to Morocco for young Italians of different origins, the participation of students in the Summer university organised in Morocco, the promotion of Moroccan culture and the teaching of Arabic to young people and the participation of young people of Moroccan origin living in Reggio Emilia in cultural and sports activities.

Also in [Reggio Emilia](#), an agreement between the association of people from Burkina Faso of Reggio Emilia and Emilia-Romagna (Abreer), the Government of Burkina Faso and Emilian companies has been signed. Through capacity building, a project is envisaged to create autonomous small companies in the villages of Burkina Faso, active in agriculture, livestock farming, and energy production, in order to assure food and energy security, better conditions in health and education.

In 2000, Reggio Emilia set up an Agency to sustain the management & improvement of all the city's international contacts and projects: [Reggio Nel Mondo](#). It acts as a crosscutting tool supporting all municipal departments in developing a continuous international exchange and dialogue.

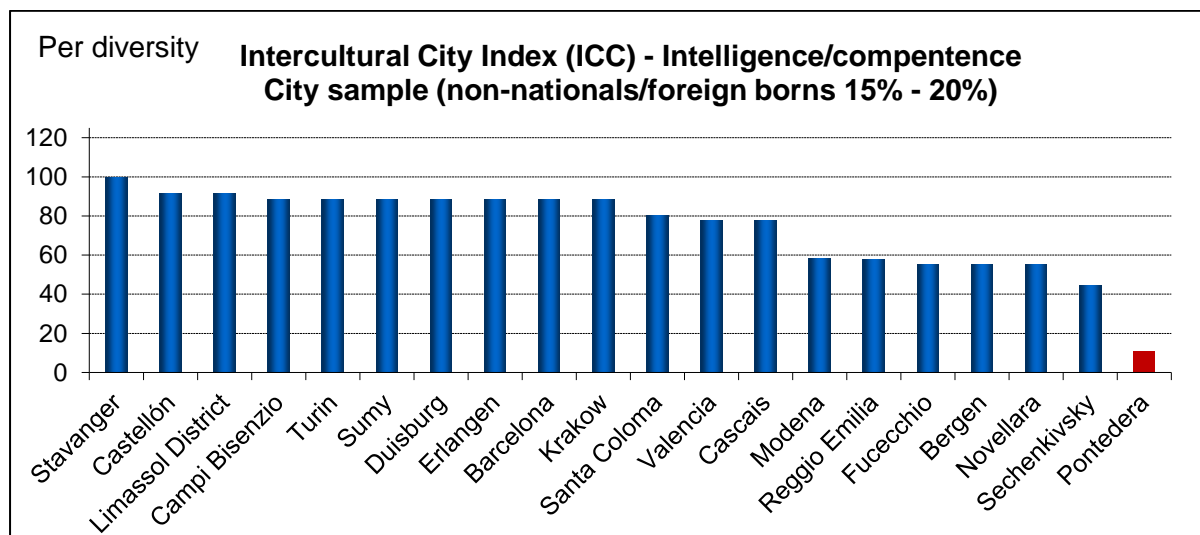
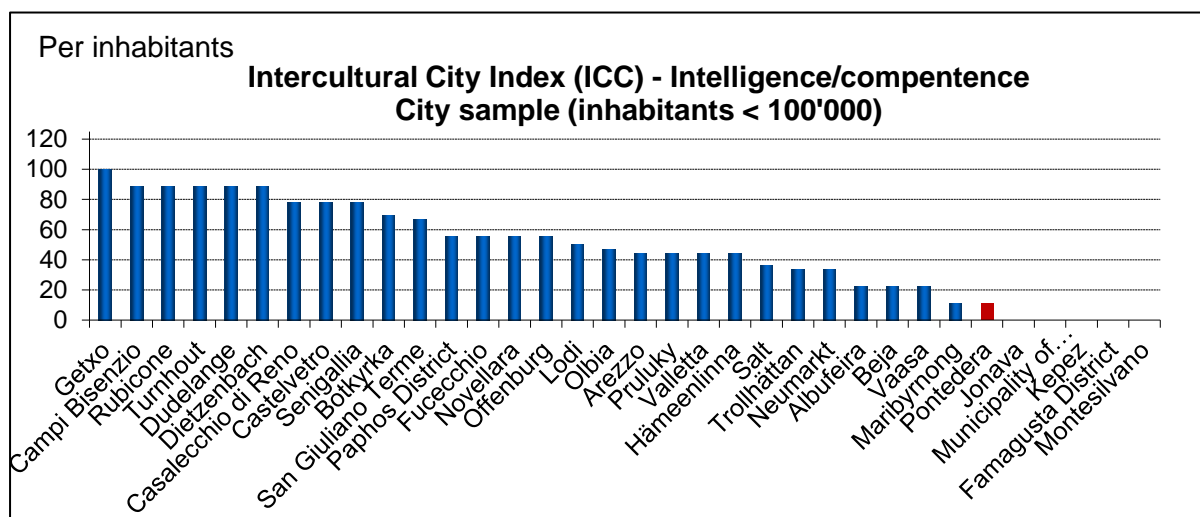
The city of Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal shows another interesting practice. The municipality has launched an online platform, [BizFeira](#), which links local business owners of all backgrounds with the Portuguese diaspora and with the countries of origin of local immigrants.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Nobody can be an expert in all the languages and cultures that coexist in contemporary cities. Yet, in an intercultural city, officials have an intercultural “mind-set” which enables them to detect cultural differences and modulate their responses accordingly. Intercultural intelligence and competence require a specific know-how when dealing with unfamiliar situations and not an in-depth and often elusive knowledge of all cultures. Such sensitivity and self-confidence is not commonly-seen. It is a technical skill which can be acquired through training and practice. In an intercultural city, the authorities view such skills as equally important and essential to the good functioning of the city as the other professional and technical skills usually expected from public employees.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 11, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 59.¹² This result is based on the lack of statistical and qualitative information about diversity to inform policy making.

¹² Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 8, while the city sample achievement rate is 57%.



Pontedera lacks a shared knowledge generation and transfer system for designing policies and programmes. This includes statistical information about diversity and migration, surveys about the public perception of migrants/minorities.

Regarding the intercultural mind-set of the municipal staff, Pontedera promotes the intercultural competence through training courses. Under the framework of the NET-IDEA project, the city organised a four-session course targeted to municipal officials working in different areas but with direct contact with people from different cultures. The training was based on intercultural training, working on prejudices and stereotypes, and how to confront and overcome them.

Recommendations

Having information on the city's diversity, people's perceptions of this diversity and the use made of certain public services is key to addressing, acting and taking effective and appropriate action in a plural and diverse society. Pontedera could put more effort into acquiring relevant intercultural intelligence. Several ICC examples can be found in relation to mainstreaming statistical and qualitative information about diversity.

For example, the [Multicultural and Migration Observatory](#) is a joint initiative between the Municipality of Krakow, Poland, and the Krakow University of Economics. Established in 2019, its core work is to produce four reports per year focusing on issues as agreed with the city authority. Besides this data-based picture of migration developments, the Observatory produces analysis of challenges faced by migrants, the host community and policy makers, makes relevant recommendations and creates a space (via workshops and conferences) for dialogue, sharing and problem solving.

Another good example is the [Leeds Migration Map](#), a toolkit developed to provide intelligence and insight into migration trends and the spread of new and existing communities in the city. The map can be used alongside other layers including housing, health, crime and economy. The tool also maps many different places of worship and faith communities from the main religions or beliefs practised in Leeds.

[Bilbao](#), Spain, takes a step forward in measuring perceptions and attitudes of the population towards immigration through a Barometer. It is carried out periodically in collaboration with Ikuspegi - Basque Immigration Observatory. It collects the attitudes, beliefs, opinions and values of Bilbao society towards immigration, and their evolution over time. It also analyses the level of tolerance of the Bilbao population towards immigration, i.e. the capacity for empathy towards different immigrant groups, their resistance to negative stereotypes, their trust in 'others' and their flexibility in defining 'us'.

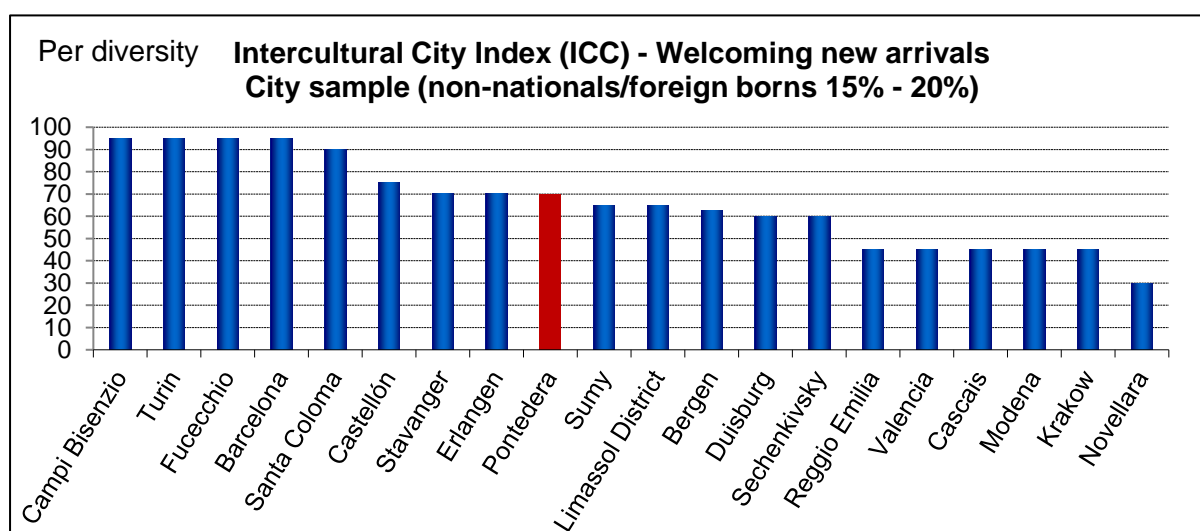
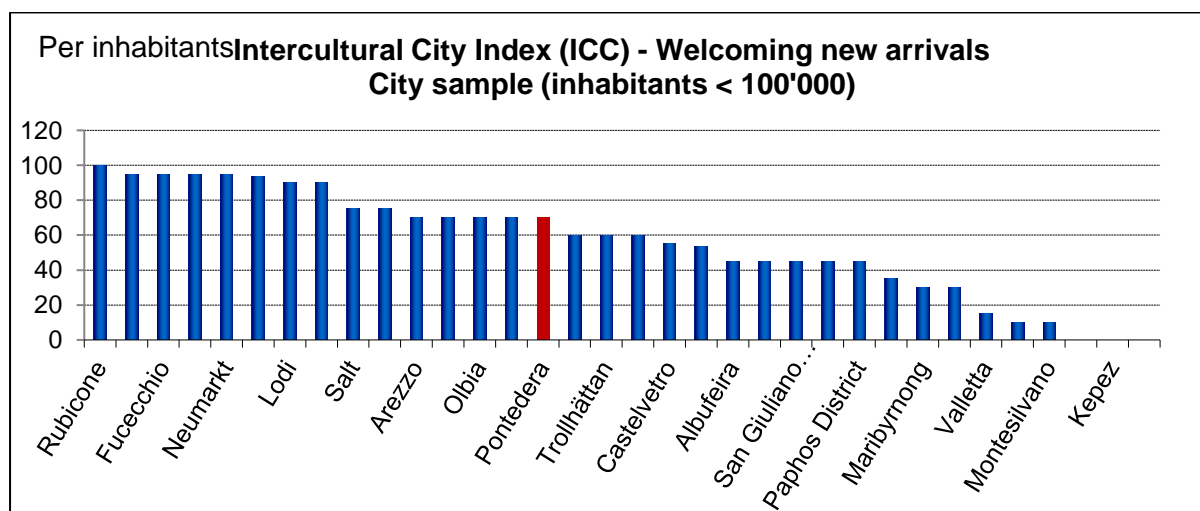
Finally, in relation to capacity building on intercultural competences, Pontedera should take advantage of the NET-IDEA project momentum and content created and urge the design of a comprehensive intercultural skills and training programme, which is offered on an annual basis. For this action to take place and have an impact, the involvement of the Human Resources department might be needed.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expats, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions their capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined to a cultural "ghetto". This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city's population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat. Again, it is the message the authorities convey on diversity, in communication or through concrete actions, that determines to a certain degree attitudes towards newcomers.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 70, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 58.¹³ Pontedera shows a number of initiatives to welcome migrants and refugees.

¹³ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 70, while the city sample achievement rate is 63%.



Pontedera has a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure to welcome newcomers (<https://www.sportellostranierivaldera.it/>; <https://www.arcivaldera.it/2024/01/24/sportello-migranti/>). Within the city-specific package of information and support for newcomers, guaranteed by local arcì Association, the Council counts on a language mediator for newcomers. Welcoming services provide support for particular groups, such as family members, students, unaccompanied minors and refugees and asylum-seekers. Regarding unaccompanied minors, the Council has set up an inter-municipal Welcoming Committee to raise awareness and provide information to associations and institutions in the area. Additionally, the municipality has monitored the reception of citizens from Ukraine, coordinating the migrant counters, social assistance services and family centres.

Suggestions

Welcoming policies need to be thought and conceived from an intercultural perspective. A dedicated service for newcomers is a widespread good practice in Spain. Most cities have a specialised agency or service to welcome newcomers with a dedicated strategy and a complete set of information tools available. An interesting example is the Catalan Welcoming Law, which aimed at creating and regulating the first reception service in view to promote the autonomy and equal opportunities of immigrants and returnees to Catalonia, as well as to remove the obstacles that prevent them from doing so, mainly due to a lack of knowledge of the language and ignorance of the host society and its legislation. The aim is to make the principle of equality effective and thus achieve greater social cohesion. RECI cities that have applied this Law are: [Barcelona](#), Manlleu, [Sabadell](#), Salt, Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Tortosa.

Municipalities need to update and adapt their methodologies and tools. An inspiring example is the [Welcome App](#) launched in Erlangen, Germany, which helps refugees organise their everyday lives, to overcome the language barrier and find information regarding asylum law.

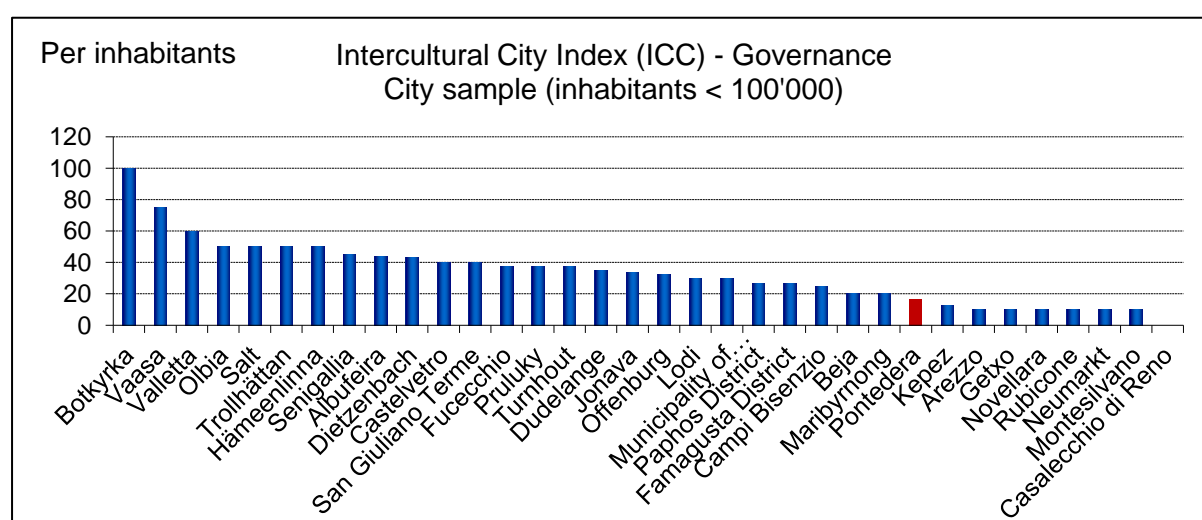
Most cities within the ICC network have undertaken urgent measures to rapidly welcome people fleeing war in Ukraine. Riga, Latvia, established a [one-stop agency for Ukrainian refugees](#) on March 2022 where all the main state and local government services are concentrated. This includes services responsible for the registration in Riga, temporary residence permits, social assistance, services offered by non-governmental organisations, humanitarian aid packages, psychological support, housing and public transportation.

Further inspiration can be drawn from the ICC webpage dedicated to [Refugees](#).

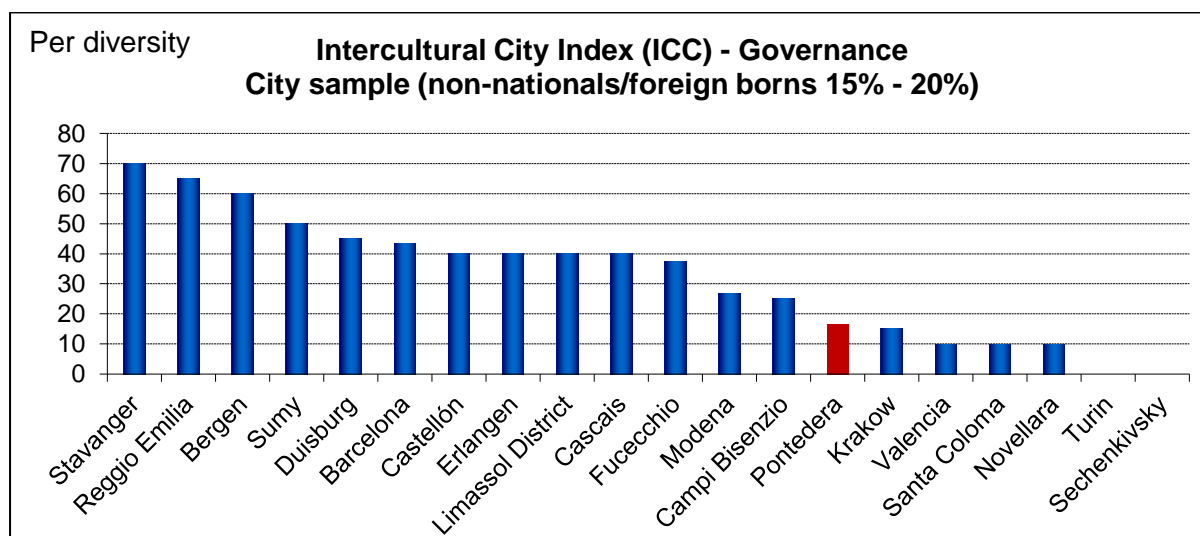
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The most powerful and far-reaching action a city can take to be more intercultural is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents of the city irrespective of their origin, nationality or residence status. Formal political rights at the local level are determined nationally or at the regional level in some federal states. Nonetheless, there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. An intercultural city strives to include all residents in the policy-making process and ensures thereby that public services are provided according to their diverse needs and not according to their cultural or political proximity to public decision-makers.

Pontedera achieved a rate of 17, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 38.¹⁴ Pontedera shows limited number of initiatives to engage minorities and migrants in the public life.



¹⁴ Pontedera's achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 33, while the city sample achievement rate is 53%.



To be able to stand as a candidate or vote at a local government election in Italy you must be an Italian citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, hence not all citizens can stand as candidate or vote. There are however elected members of the city's municipal council who are foreign-born or dual nationals.

Another way to enable newcomers to the city to express their concerns could be by having an independent advisory body through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can express their concerns and provide input to the city council around diversity issues. At present, Pontedera does not have such a formal body, and the municipality reports they can express their concerns in other ways, mainly through diaspora organisations.

Pontedera does not have a standard for the representation with people with migrant/minority backgrounds in mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services.

Finally, Pontedera reports to take some initiatives to encourage people with migrant/minority backgrounds to engage in political life. Pontedera has developed an Intercultural Assembly system by inviting people of all migrant/minority background in the territory to take part, to discuss, to let know their voice. The Intercultural office is creating a net of migrant association representatives especially around a table regarding: culture, events, religions. (<https://www.comune.pontedera.pi.it/pontedera-delle-culture/cultura-e-animazione-sociale/pontedera-delle-cultur/>).

Recommendations

Regarding the right to vote and to stand in local elections, the municipality may wish to raise awareness among people who are entitled to these rights as a way to promote democratic participation and a sense of belonging within migrant communities. This could be done through awareness raising campaigns, such as 'My city, my vote', conducted in Barcelona, Spain. Due to the low level of participation of foreigners in the 2015 elections, the initiative sought to raise awareness around the electoral process and engage Barcelona's largest voting-eligible communities. The program drove registration efforts through a multi-faceted, multilingual approach with four components:

- Barcelona created a user-friendly website page, [Can I Register on the Electoral Roll](#). Those who could were directed to another page explaining the online registration process.
- Eligible residents received letters from the city in their native languages encouraging them to vote, with information on the process and required materials for registration.
- The city collaborated with community associations, consulates, spiritual organisations, and other relevant groups.

The city does not have a charter or another binding document proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation in the municipal administration and services. Legislation prohibiting discrimination against persons on certain grounds is in the competence of the national government, mostly related to the transposition of the EU non-discrimination directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC.

Pontedera is seriously considering carrying out a systematic review of municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. In the meantime, a dedicated service that advises and supports victims of discrimination is operated by civil society organisations, with the financial support of the Council (<https://www.arcivaldera.it/2024/01/16/voce-dai-voce-ai-tuoi-diritti/>, <https://www.eunice.it/wp/>), that has his headquarter in different offices received in a no-fees way by the Council. The association can stay there not paying and receiving people needing help. The Council took part to “Diversamente and *Divercities projects too.

Pontedera raises awareness on discrimination in different ways. An example is the project [DiversaMente – Youth against discrimination](#), aimed at promoting the role of young people and the educating community from Milan, Montesilvano, Pontedera, Turin and Reggio Emilia, as leaders of positive change to contribute to the prevention and fight against discrimination in the construction of inclusive and intercultural cities. Young people are involved in the co-planning of city anti-rumours actions, building youth spaces “free from prejudice” and organising events that give them a voice and visibility. Under the framework of the project, a national network of “Young Anti-Rumours” has been created.

Another example is the European project [NET-IDEA](#), where a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign targeted to young people revolved around the concepts of identity and sense of belonging. Through the photovoice method and theatre (Teatro dell’Incompiuto), the young people discussed these concepts in a path of individual and collective self-reflection. A final exhibition was realised in collaboration with different Council departments at the Municipal Palace with the support of [Inside Out Platform](#) of Artist JR and will be disseminated worldwide.

The city is member of Rete Città del Dialogo, the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities, which works to promote the intercultural approach and hence the issue of discrimination.

Recommendations

Designing an Anti-Rumours Strategy could be a way to further the work done within DiversaMente project. Using the experience of working with young people, the Council might be interested in exploring the design of a Strategy, understood as a public policy, and mainstreaming the approach to all municipal areas and fields. Plenty of good practice that can serve as inspiration could be found in Spanish cities. It is the case of [Barcelona](#), [Bilbao](#), [Santa Coloma de Gramenet](#), and [Tenerife](#).

ICC programme resources on anti-rumours are available [here](#).

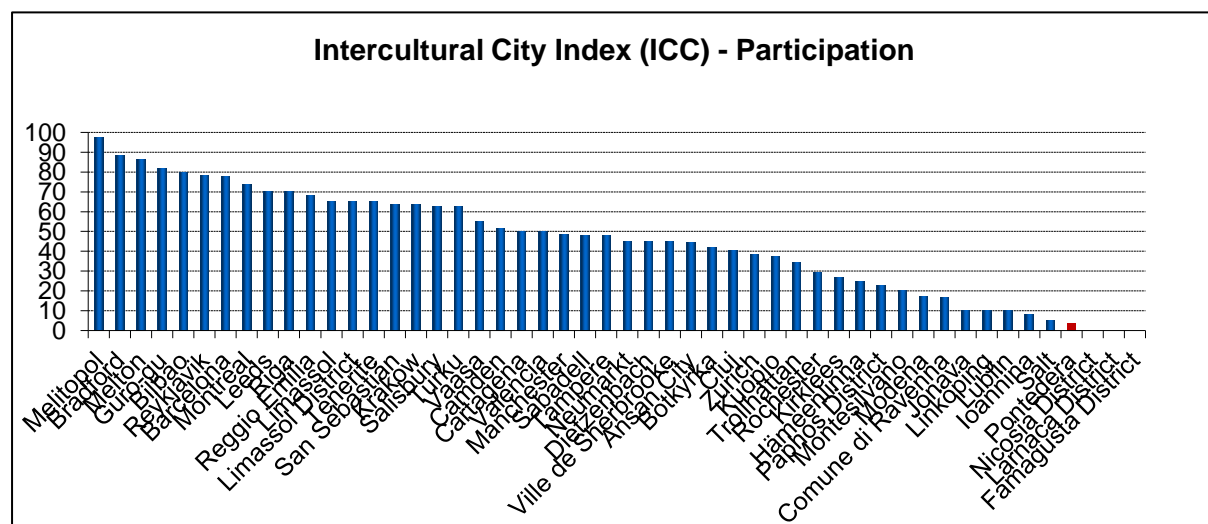
Further inspiration could be used to work around discrimination, especially nowadays, where the far right is marching steadily into the mainstream, also in Italy. A good example is the [Think Project](#), an educational programme aimed at individuals with a higher risk of far-right extremism, implemented in Swansea (United Kingdom). In the framework of three-day course, participants were encouraged to discuss and reflect on diversity issues and their own attitudes and views, engaging in open dialogue as well as experiential learning. The Think Project employed a non-criminalising approach, listening to their concerns and exploring the experience and information underlying their negative attitudes. After the course, participants were encouraged to engage in

intercultural interaction. The project has proven to be able to transform young peoples' worldviews and thinking about diversity and societal change.

PARTICIPATION

Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policy-making. A range of studies have demonstrated that inclusive integration policies produce better outcomes in terms of social cohesion, trust in the administration, safety, quality of services, welfare, good governance and economic growth. People with different backgrounds and experiences can bring innovative solutions to common challenges, as well as anticipate problems that might arise. Conversely, when people encounter barriers to participation, or otherwise choose intentionally not to participate, they may, passively, withdraw from social and public life or choose, actively, to live outside prevailing social customs and law. An intercultural city actively seeks the participation of all residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support, and thereby the sustainability of local policies, while at the same significantly reducing the economic costs of social exclusion and instability.

Indicators on participation have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 50 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Pontedera's rate of achievement in the field of participation is 4%. This stems for the lack of engagement and participation of migrants in policy making.



Pontedera is seriously considering introducing and systematising participatory mechanisms to enable all city residents, irrespective of their migrant/minority backgrounds, to participate equally in the decision-making process. This will be done through the lessons learned and the experience gathered in the project [Divercities](#), mainly through civic society organisations.

Pontedera does not monitor the participation of city residents with migrant/minority backgrounds in decision-making processes.

The city does not take action to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions and organisations, nor to guarantee that gender equality is respected in organisations that participate in the decision-making process.

Recommendations

Cities are encouraged to apply participatory methods when creating strategies and policies and to measure the level of participation in the city. As Pontedera is planning to design an Intercultural Strategy, it should include a consultation and a diagnosis. This could include focus groups with migrant communities, migrant third sector organisations and other stakeholders to understand the available offer in support, for instance, through the mechanisms established thanks to the Divercities project.

[Bradford](#), United Kingdom, developed its Intercultural Strategy (Together for Stronger Communities 2018-2023) and the corresponding action plan after extensive consultation with citizens. The consultation was both quantitative and qualitative. Barcelona, Spain, conducted a broad participatory process through which the reflections, ideas and proposals of many local agents and citizens were collected to design the [Intercultural Plan 2021-2030](#). Different online participation spaces and channels were created, due to the pandemic. A total of fifteen online discussion sessions were carried out and smaller discussion groups were created to evaluate the diagnosis and identify the main challenges and priorities. The next step was to conduct online interviews with experts and professionals in various areas. Last, an online survey was carried out on the “decidim.barcelona” platform and 126 responses were received.

Intercultural cities’ experience show that active participation and representation can take on many forms. When it follows the establishment of a structured group/council, so as to give a voice to foreign residents, representatives and the foreign community itself should feel that their participation will have an impact in improving their everyday life, and making them contribute more actively to the socio-economic life of the city. Pontedera could draw further inspiration from the intercultural /migration councils set up in several cities in view to achieve a more comprehensive and meaningful participation. These examples include [Camden](#), United Kingdom, [Dublin](#), Ireland, [Salisbury](#), Australia, [Berlin](#), Germany, [Bilbao](#), Spain, and [Montréal](#), Canada.

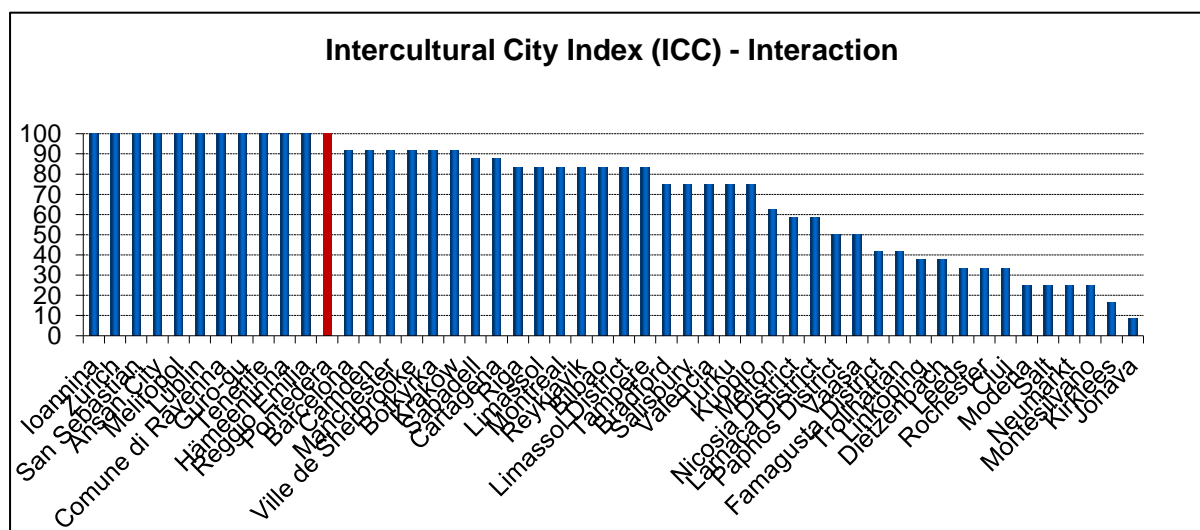
An interesting case is the [Local Assemblies](#) in Lewisham, United Kingdom, a programme to encourage interaction with the city, which indeed could be linked to the Divercities project. There is a forum during which the Council talks to the residents, community organisations, police and businesses in order to create a sense of ownership and improve areas and neighbourhoods. The local planning groups organise the meetings, time and venue. This service has given good results, the community is more active in the integration process and in offering assistance to newcomers. Community leaders and activists aim to engage people of underrepresented backgrounds in the social life and in the decision-making process. Each assembly has a budget of 15000£ to spend on projects which benefit the area. The assemblies are chaired by a councillor and they come up with a set of issues such as facilities for older people, programmes for younger people etc. and anyone can apply for the money as long as their initiative meets objectives and priorities. There are different approaches to the budget: from small initiatives to strategic commissioning. It is the Community’s job to include events in the area with biggest spending. It has been observed that this is the best way of bringing the community together and celebrating diversity and shared values.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available [here](#).

INTERACTION

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. Identity is not ‘given’ in a passive sense, but something which is ‘enacted’ and defined through interaction. In spite of protective laws, prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people. There is ample evidence to prove that, under certain conditions, the more contact people with different backgrounds and lifestyles have with each other, the less likely they are to think and behave in prejudicial ways. Therefore, an intercultural city develops, in partnership with other organisations, a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups.

Indicators on interaction have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 50 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Pontedera's rate of achievement in the field of interaction is 100%. Pontedera has different areas of good practice in the field of interaction and intercultural education.



Pontedera has a list of all civil society organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion. The list is available from the Social Services Office and on the Municipality website (https://www.comune.pontedera.pi.it/documento_pubblico/albo-comunale-associazioni/). In addition, there are frequent meetings with associations and information is exchanged between the Council and these organisations through the Welcome Desk, which is part of a network of services and associations.

Teachers in elementary/primary schools receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy through the [Centre for Educational and Didactic Resources](#) (CRED) institution, created in 2002 by the Municipality of Pontedera and subsequently the Municipalities of the Valdera area. The Centre aims at favouring educational and training planning, integrating the needs of children's services and schools with the resources present in the area, in agreement with the Local Authorities.

Suggestions

Many cities put in place interesting solutions and spaces which facilitate meaningful interaction between residents of all backgrounds and origins. Pontedera might wish to look into the practices from other ICC cities for additional ideas and inspiration.

[Fargespill](#) (Kaleidoscope) is an initiative where interaction between diverse groups is made through making music together in Bergen, Norway. It focuses on what happens when differences meet through traditional music and dance. The result is an intimate, musical meeting with young peoples' stories about who they are and where they come from, told through music and dance from their respective cultures. The experience is elevated by professional musicians, choreographers, instructors, sound- and light designers and set designers.










A good example that focuses on a particular target group comes from Sabadell, Spain. The "Espacio Mujeres" ([Women's Space](#)) programme aims to empower women from all origins and socio-cultural backgrounds by creating relational spaces where women meet and learn and supporting them in the acquisition of skills. The programme offers relational learning spaces located in different neighbourhoods of the city, organising different activities related to the physical and mental health of the participants (knowledge of the environment, female health, personal growth, women's rights, gender violence, etc.).






OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The overall score for Pontedera is 44 (out of 100 possible points). Below you will find a summary of the report, including the strengths (what Pontedera does) and the weaknesses (what Pontedera does not yet do).

COMMITMENT	✓	Pontedera is in the process of adopting an intercultural strategy and it is currently working on new procedures and methodologies of policy consultation and/or co-design including people of all ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Some city's official communications make clear reference to the intercultural commitment.
	✗	The city has not formally adopted a public statement that it is an Intercultural City. The city does not have an evaluation and updating process for the intercultural strategy/action plan or specifically allocated budget, nor a dedicated body or a cross-departmental co-ordination structure responsible for implementing the intercultural strategy. The city does not have an official webpage that communicates its intercultural statement, strategy, and/or action plan. Pontedera does not honour local residents/organisations that have done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community.
EDUCATION	✓	Pontedera is a diverse city which has demonstrated its commitment to promote the benefits of intercultural projects with its schools and education settings. Intercultural projects are already often taking place in schools in the city.
	✗	Only few schools make efforts to involve parents with migrant or minority backgrounds in school life. The city does not have a policy to increase mixing in schools.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✓	Some neighbourhoods of Pontedera are culturally and ethnically diverse. The city encourages actions where residents of one neighbourhood meet and interact with residents from the same neighbourhood and from other neighbourhoods.
	✗	Pontedera has only occasional measures to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods and avoid ethnic concentration.
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓	Pontedera provides a wide range of services including sports and school services that cater to those from a minority or migrant background.
	✗	The minority/migrant background of public employees does not reflect the composition of the city's population and no policies are in place to ensure diversity within the organisation. Pontedera does not encourage a diverse workforce in the private sector.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✗	Pontedera does not have an umbrella organisation to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the labour market. The city has not taken action to encourage businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond the ethnic economy and enter the mainstream economy nor to encourage 'business districts/incubators' to involve entrepreneurs with migrant/minority backgrounds.

		In decisions relating to the procurement of goods and services, the municipal council does not favour companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	When allocating funds to associations and initiatives, the municipal council uses interculturalism as a criterion. From time to time, the city organises events and activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact. The city encourages cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.
	✗	The city only occasionally organises public debates and campaigns on the subject of cultural diversity and living together.
PUBLIC SPACE	✓	The city of Pontedera takes action to encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public space, such as public libraries, parks and squares. The city has a multi-sectoral policy combining policing, social work and communication and defined after consultation of the population of the area.
	✗	The city does not take into account the diversity of the population in the design, renovation and management of new public buildings or spaces. When the city decides to reconstruct an area, it does not ensure the meaningful involvement of people with different migrant/minority backgrounds. A few areas in the city are dominated by ethnic groups and people feel unsafe, and hence there is no need for policies which would deal with such situation.
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓	An intercultural mediation service run by a civil society organisation provides a professional service for mediation of intercultural communication and/or conflict in Pontedera. Intercultural mediation is provided within the city administration and neighbourhoods.
	✗	Pontedera does not have a municipal service devoted to inter-religious relations only.
LANGUAGE	✓	Pontedera supports projects that seek to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages.
	✗	The city does not provide teaching languages. The city does not raise awareness on migrant/minority languages nor provide support (logistical or financial) to local minority newspaper/journals, radio programmes or TV programmes in migrant/minority languages.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✓	Pontedera has a specific communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media and the communication department is instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage regularly and in various types of communication. The city monitors the way in which traditional local and/or national media and social media portray people with migrant/minority backgrounds. And it engages with the local media when they portray people with migrant/minority backgrounds through negative stereotypes.

		The city does not provide support for media training for journalists with migrant/minority backgrounds.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK		Pontedera has an explicit and sustainable policy to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, or other areas, the city takes actions to develop international connections and has budget allocated for this. The city reaches out to foreign students or other youth groups arriving through exchange programmes. Pontedera seeks to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups by involving diaspora and mainstream entrepreneurs in international visits and meetings and by supporting organisations seeking to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups.
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	 	<p>Pontedera promotes the intercultural competence of its officials and staff, in administration and public services through training courses.</p> <p>Pontedera does not have statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations mainstreamed to inform the local/municipal council's process of policy formulation. The city does not conduct surveys on public perception of migrants/minorities nor on the feeling of security/safety with respect to people with migrant/minority backgrounds.</p>
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	 	<p>The city has a designated method to welcome newcomers. It also has a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers. Different city services and organisations provide welcome support for particular groups of newcomers, such as refugees, asylum-seekers and non-accompanied minors.</p> <p>The city does not organise a public ceremony to greet all people arriving to live in the city, regardless of origin or nationality.</p>
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	 	<p>Pontedera has elected members who are foreign-born or dual nationals. The city sometimes takes initiatives to encourage people with migrant/minority backgrounds to engage in political life.</p> <p>The city does not have a consultative body involving migrants/minorities, other citizens, as well as relevant public institutions, organisations and experts. However, other mechanisms are in place to listen to all citizens.</p> <p>The city does not count on a standard for the representation with people with migrant/minority backgrounds in mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services.</p> <p>Only nationals from certain foreign countries can stand as candidates or vote in local elections.</p>
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION		<p>Pontedera provides financial support to organisations advising victims of discrimination. The city runs anti-discrimination campaigns and participates in organisations to address the issue of anti-discrimination (such as the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities).</p> <p>Pontedera has started working on an Anti-rumours Strategy.</p>

		<p>Pontedera has not carried out a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms which may discriminate against residents, but it is thinking about doing so.</p> <p>The city does not have an anti-discrimination policy nor a dedicated service that advises victims of discrimination. Nevertheless, it provides financial support to organisations advising victims of discrimination.</p> <p>The city does not monitor the character of discrimination in the city.</p>
PARTICIPATION	 	<p>Pontedera has introduced some participatory mechanisms and consultation processes through the Divercities project.</p> <p>Pontedera does not directly monitor the participation of city residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. The city does not take action to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented. In addition, mechanisms to guarantee gender equality in organisations that participate in the decision-making process on matters related to inclusion are not in place.</p>
INTERACTION	 	<p>Pontedera has access to a list/database of and collaborates with civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion.</p> <p>Teachers in elementary/primary schools receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy.</p> <p>N/A</p>

In view of the above, we wish to commend Pontedera for the efforts taken on their intercultural journey, and we are confident that if the city follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices the results will rapidly be visible and tangible. Pontedera scores very highly in a number of policy areas (interaction, international outlook, media and communication, welcoming), while the most evident gap was the need for a strategy on business and the labour market, public service, intercultural competence, participation and language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When it comes to the intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, Pontedera could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

Commitment: Pontedera may wish to look into creating a specific intercultural policy and action plan. Inspiration can be drawn from Barcelona and its [Intercultural Plan \(2021-2030\)](#), approved in Plenary in tandem with the Government Measure "[Move towards interculturality. Governance instruments and mechanisms](#)". The city may wish to reference its intercultural commitments in official communications more frequently and show this commitment in a more visible way on the city's website and by formally adopting a public statement that it is an Intercultural City.

Education: Pontedera displays intercultural projects within schools to engage with students. The city may wish to further work to increase participation and engagement with parents. A good example comes from [Leeds](#), several schools are making a strong effort to involve parents with migrant/minority backgrounds in school life. Pontedera may explore offering intercultural competences targeting teachers and schools workers as well as fighting against segregation in schools. An inspiring project, [European cities against school segregation](#), highlights that, regardless of the particular attribution of responsibilities to each administration level, it is important that education policies

prioritize equity and inclusion, allowing at the same time the necessary flexibility to meet the diverse needs of learners, both within and outside of mainstream education.

Neighbourhoods: Pontedera may wish to look into a policy to increase the diversity of residents in different neighbourhoods. The city of Amadora offers an example of working at a smaller scale meetings of individuals with different ethnic backgrounds who work together at district level. And the '(Re)Writing our neighbourhood' project in [Braga](#) encompassed a comprehensive work around the promotion of interaction, participation and a sense of belonging in three different neighbourhoods through artistic methodologies.

Public services: Pontedera may wish to promote a diverse workforce for the sake of the public service's efficiency and good outreach to the local population. Inspiration could be drawn from [Bergen](#) and its Future Workplace action plan and [Barcelona](#), where knowing the most widely spoken languages in the city is a merit to be able to be part of the local police.

Business and the labour market: Pontedera may wish to consider implementing measures to collaborate more with the private sector as well as encouraging businesses run by persons identifying as ethnic minorities to enter the mainstream economy. The city may wish to draw inspiration from the its [OXLO Business Charter](#) in Oslo a forum and network between the city and the business community.

Cultural and social life: Pontedera may wish to consider organising public debates or campaigns on the subject of cultural diversity and living together and increase the frequency of activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact. Pontedera could draw inspiration from [Neuchâtel](#), which promotes cultural participation thanks to a partnership between the Multicultural Cohesion Department and cultural institutions. Another good example comes from the [Cultural Development Policy](#) in Montréal, which encompasses an ambitious range of actions in the field of cultural and social life.

Public space: Pontedera [Neighbourhood Consultations](#) have the potential to ensure the involvement of people with different migrant/minority backgrounds in different types of participatory processes, including those related to public space. In this line, synergies should be sought with the Divercities project. Pontedera could draw inspiration from the [Community Connector project](#) (Leeds) aimed to support new migrants to connect with local services and existing community networks.

Mediation and conflict resolution: To expand further on the actions the city already has in place, Pontedera is encouraged to have a municipal mediation service focused on inter-faith relations. [Sabadell](#) has some good examples of how to increase understanding of different religions and to work together to promote tolerance. The city may wish to consider providing mediation in various contexts in specialised institutions (hospitals, police, youth clubs, mediation centres, retirement homes, etc.).

Language: Pontedera may wish to look at policies to provide services to acquire or improve language competences. Training options should be available to all groups. [Novellara](#) promotes the participation of migrant women into the Italian language courses and [Sabadell](#) offers language support for young people who come to the city through family reunification.

Pontedera should increase language support as cross-cutting programmes linked to multilingualism, and to promote an intercultural curriculum in schools by facilitating knowledge and learning of languages of origin. Some inspiration could be drawn from [Barcelona](#).

Media and communication: This is an area of strength for Pontedera. In the spirit of learning, the city may wish to consult good practices of other cities to seek new ideas for partnering with local media and journalists. Regarding

the monitoring of how people with migrant/minority backgrounds is portrayed in media, Spain shows some Observatories for media treatment on migration and diversity: [Mugak](#) (Donostia - San Sebastian) and [Mèdia.cat](#) (Barcelona).

International outlook: Pontedera could benefit from strengthening its contact with diaspora, exploring new agreements, such as the [agreement with the Moroccan Ministry](#) and with [Burkina Faso](#) in Reggio Emilia. The city could also draw inspiration from [Reggio Nel Mondo](#), a municipal agency to manage and improve the city's international contacts.

Intercultural intelligence and competence: Pontedera may wish to ensure that data about diversity and intercultural relations is mainstreamed to inform the city's policy design. The city might want to look into the practices of other ICC cities on how to collect data and carry out perceptions surveys. Good examples include the [Multicultural and Migration Observatory](#) Krakow, the [Leeds Migration Map](#), and the [Barometer](#) carried out in Bilbao.

Welcoming newcomers: Pontedera may want to look into other cities reception systems, with a dedicated strategy and a complete set of information tools available. [Barcelona](#) and [Sabadell](#) are good examples.

Leadership and citizenship: Pontedera could further develop initiatives to encourage people with migrant and minority background to engage in political life. An example to draw inspiration from is the [Young Mayor](#) programme in Lewisham, London. The initiative is an attempt to put real power and responsibility in the hands of young people. Regarding the right to vote and to stand in local elections, the Municipality may wish to raise awareness among people who are entitled to these rights, such as '[My city, my vote](#)', conducted in Barcelona.

Anti-discrimination: The city should conduct a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with /migrant/minority backgrounds. Pontedera may wish to design an Anti-rumours strategy to further the work done within DiversaMente and NET-IDEA projects working with young people. Plenty of good practice that can serve as inspiration could be found in Spanish cities, such as [Barcelona](#), [Bilbao](#), [Santa Coloma de Gramenet](#), and [Tenerife](#).

Participation: As Pontedera is currently designing its Intercultural Strategy, it may consider including a consultation and a diagnosis, for instance, through the mechanisms established within the Divercities project. Inspiration could be drawn from the participatory processes that lead to the Intercultural Strategies of [Bradford](#), and [Barcelona](#).

Interaction: Pontedera already puts in place interesting initiatives facilitating interaction between residents of all backgrounds and origins. The city may want to look into programmes working on specific target groups, such as the Women's Space in Sabadell or initiatives that use art to encourage that interaction, as the Fargespill (Kaleidoscope) in Bergen.

Pontedera may wish to consider further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided above for each sector as well as in the Intercultural cities [database](#).

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. Almost two decades after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

