



Intercultural cities

Joint action of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission



Turnhout: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Date: 10 August 2011

A comparison between 29 cities

Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. 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 is rich in content and detail. However, it is relatively weak as a tool to monitor and communicate progress. The new intercultural city index has been designed as a new benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the pilot phase of the programme as well as future participants.

As of today 29 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Amadora (*Portugal*), Barcelona (*Spain*), Copenhagen (*Denmark*), Donostia-San Sebastian¹ (*Spain*), Dublin (*Ireland*), Duisburg (*Germany*), Geneva (*Switzerland*), Izhevsk (*Udmurt Republic, Russia*), Limassol (*Cyprus*), Lisbon (*Portugal*), the London borough of Lewisham (*United Kingdom*), Lublin (*Poland*), Melitopol (*Ukraine*), Mexico City (*Mexico*), Montreal (*Canada*), Munich (*Germany*), Neuchâtel (*Switzerland*), Neukölln (*Berlin, Germany*), Oslo (*Norway*), Patras (*Greece*), Pryluky (*Ukraine*), Reggio Emilia (*Italy*), Rijeka (*Croatia*), Sechenivsky (*District of Kyiv, Ukraine*), Subotica (*Serbia*), Tilburg (*The Netherlands*), Turnhout (*Belgium*), Vasteras (*Sweden*) and Zurich (*Switzerland*).

This document presents the results of the Intercultural City Index analysis for the city of Turnhout and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

Intercultural city definition

The intercultural city has people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief. 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. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

Methodology

The Intercultural City Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 66 questions grouped in 14 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 ICC Index).

These indicators comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/competence; welcoming and governance. Some of these indicators - education system; neighbourhoods;

¹ The Spanish city of Donostia-San Sebastian hereinafter referred to as San Sebastian

learning for the future. Here, three councillors oversee the city's intercultural relation policies. Several services including the education, welcome office, police, mediation teams, the department for employment and social integration are involved in a coordinated system which allows for a personalised follow up of newly arrived migrants with specific needs and mainstreams integration and intercultural relations across all of the city services and departments.

The French city of Lyon has put into practice a similar initiative. In Lyon, a task force composed of political officials with different portfolios, institutional representatives and civil society members have revised city policies as of 2010 and propose changes in order to ensure that these policies promote equality of opportunity, non-discrimination and positive recognition of cultural diversity. The task force is supported by a secretariat, which requests studies and takes policy initiatives. It set up an evaluation process and an observer monitors the impact on the ground.

2. Education³ policies through an intercultural lens

School has a powerful influence in society and has the potential to either reinforce or challenge prejudices in a number of ways through the social environment it creates, the guidance it provides and the values it nurtures.

The analysis shows that Turnhout's education policy achievement rate is lower (50%) than the city sample's rate (65%).

In some of the local primary schools do almost all pupils come from the same ethnic background. According to the answers provided in the survey, a policy is under consideration in Turnhout to increase ethnic/cultural mixing in the city's schools. An interesting example of an initiative in this area has been put into practice by the British city of Bradford. Here, the education authority found that in some neighbourhoods schools were increasingly polarised into becoming all white or all non-white. This was allowing little opportunity for children to learn more about each other. A process of linking between over 70 local schools has now lead to much closer cooperation and joint working between staff and pupils. Pupils have on average made 2.6 new cross cultural friendships since the project began.

Turnhout might consider ameliorating its intercultural education approach by ensuring that the ethnic background of teachers mirrors the diverse population in a larger proportion of local schools. The city of Subotica in Serbia may provide a source of learning in this respect. Here, the Roma Education Centre has pressed for the training of Roma teachers and non-teaching assistants and for their employment in local schools and kindergartens.

Turnhout may wish to ameliorate its education policies in the future, for example by further encouraging schools to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life. An interesting case of good practice in this area is to be found in the Swiss canton of Geneva where a Sac d'histoires- "a bag of histories" programme was introduced. Children can bring a collection of books, CDs, DVDs and other media which they share with their parents, who are then given a much greater stake and involvement in their child's progress at school and improve their own language skills.

Another similar initiative has been put into practice by Copenhagen city council. The Rådmandsgade School invites parents to an open school day twice a month. They are given a free dinner and have the opportunity to talk to psychologists, nurses, teachers, as well as local associations.

Turnhout might consider ameliorating its intercultural education approach by further promoting local schools which carry out intercultural projects. An interesting example of such an initiative has been put into practice by the Italian city of Reggio Emilia. Here, intercultural laboratories

³ The term "Education" refers to a formal process of learning in which some people consciously teach while others adopt the social role of learner - (ref. http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

are held in secondary schools to stimulate a positive approach to diversities by young people and explain how stereotypes and prejudices that many lead to discriminatory behaviour are formed. There is also a project to make seven short films with secondary schools to reflect on themes such as intercultural dialogue/non dialogue. Finally, schools in Reggio Emilia have developed an intercultural calendar and each date is celebrated, with parents talking in front of children about their traditions.

3. Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens⁴

An intercultural city does not require a “perfect statistical mix” of people and recognises the value of geographical proximity and bonding between people of the same ethnic background. However, it also recognises that spatial ethnic segregation creates risks of exclusion and can act as a barrier to an inward and outward free flow of people, ideas and opportunities.

Turnhout’s neighbourhood policy indicators are slightly higher (63%) than the city sample’s rate (61%).

In none of the city’s neighbourhoods a vast majority of inhabitants comes from minority ethnic groups⁵. Turnhout encourages residents from one neighbourhood to meet and interact with residents from another from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds.

According to the answers provided in the survey, the city takes occasional measures to promote interaction within neighbourhoods. Turnhout could consider the following neighbourhood initiatives of other cities. Tilburg (The Netherlands) supports ideas for creating more meeting places and therefore lets neighbourhoods apply for making benches, or “social sofas”. The inhabitants state where they want to place them and how they should be designed. In addition, through the “enrich your neighbourhood programme”, Tilburg’s residents can ask for some money to organize special activities in their own neighbourhoods. Lewisham also promotes interaction within neighbourhoods. Here, however, this issue is addressed through practice rather than policy. Local Area Assemblies take specific actions, tailor-made for under-represented communities which can participate if required. One of the outcomes of these assemblies is that residents understand each other better and social cohesion is promoted in the local community.

Turnhout may wish to consider building upon its policy which avoids ethnic concentration. The following example provided by the city of Zurich may be a source of inspiration and learning for the future. Here a large proportion of the city’s inhabitants live in rented accommodation. 25% of the rented flats are provided by the city or through housing associations which have implemented an allocation policy. The city’s allocation scheme includes achieving a “good mix” between different social groups as one of the initiative’s criteria.

4. Public service policies through an intercultural lens

An optimal intercultural approach remains open to new ideas, dialogue and innovation brought by or required by minority groups, rather than imposing a “one size fits all” approach to public services and actions.

The analysis shows that Turnhout’s public services policy achievement rate is slightly higher (45%) than the city sample’s rate (43%).

According to the answers provided in the survey, the ethnic background of public employees does not reflect the composition of the city’s population. However, Turnhout has put into practice a specific recruitment strategy to change this situation. Non-nationals can seek

⁴ By “neighbourhood” we understand a unit within a city which has a certain level of administrative autonomy (or sometimes also certain political governance structures) and is considered as a unit with regard to city planning. In larger cities districts (boroughs) have several neighbourhoods. The statistical definition of “neighbourhood” varies from one country to another. Generally, it includes groups of population between 5,000 and 20,000 people on the average.

⁵ By “minority group” we understand a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group have over theirs. (ref. http://higherred.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

employment in the local public administration. Turnhout provides one out of the five services listed in the Intercultural Cities index which are tailored to the needs of the ethnic/cultural background of its citizens: it offers specific funeral/ burial services in response to culturally-based requests.

The city may wish to build upon its services which are tailored to the needs of the ethnic/cultural background of its citizens. We invite the city of Turnhout to consider the following initiative launched by Tilburg (The Netherlands) in this area. This practice was introduced due to the city's growing concern that migrants were unable to get care adapted to their culture when they became elderly. Now the housing corporations in Tilburg build old people's homes for specific groups, like elderly from Suriname and from Turkey. The policy is general when possible, specific when needed.

Another interesting example of such a practice has been jointly introduced by Neukölln's City Council Department for Social Affairs and Housing working together with the migration service of Caritas (a social welfare institution of the Catholic Church in Germany). This was introduced after a campaign for cultural-sensitive care for senior citizens. In this particular case, the staff of the service for senior citizens was familiarized with culture sensitive services for senior citizens in the framework of information and sensitisation events. An important issue was to attract migrants for voluntary participation in the social committees.

Finally, Turnhout's local government may wish to ameliorate its diversity and equality policies in the future by encouraging intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market. We invite the city of Turnhout to consider the following initiative launched by the London borough of Lewisham in this area. The Council's procurement policies and contracts include an Equalities Statement according that bidding companies need to show they meet as part of their application.

5. Business and labour market policies through an intercultural lens

Turnhout's business and labour market policy indicators are slightly lower than the city sample's: 40% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample's rate for business and labour market policy is 43%.

Turnhout has signed a charter which outlaws discrimination in employment. An umbrella organisation has also been set up to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace.

Turnhout may wish to build upon its business and labour market initiatives, for instance, by prioritising companies which implement a diversity strategy when procuring their goods and services. The city of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) may provide a source of learning and inspiration in this area⁶. Here, "Social Return on Investment", which is designed to include social obligations in public contracts, started as a pilot project in 2007 in Amsterdam's South East District. In particular, contractors are asked to use the money generated by the contract to offer employment opportunities to people who are excluded from the labour market, including migrants.

A similar initiative has been launched by the London borough of Lewisham (United Kingdom). Here, if a company does not implement a diversity strategy, Lewisham supports it through the Business Advisory Service to implement one.

We invite Turnhout to consider encouraging "business districts/incubators" to facilitate inhabitants from different cultures to mix more easily. An interesting example of such an initiative has been put into practice by the Ukrainian city of Melitopol. Here an "Intercultural business centre" has been selected as one of the city's three flagship projects. It will be located in the former Palace of Culture and there is high demand from its prospective tenants already.

⁶ This particular example comes from: Integrating cities DIVE: "Cities accommodating Diversity; Find Recommendations from the peer review project "Diversity and Equality in European Cities"

A similar initiative has been launched by the Portuguese city of Amadora. Here, the programme "Amadora Empreende" provides information and raises awareness of the challenges and opportunities faced in education, training and employment. This project reunites the city's schools and businesses. For three days companies promote their services, projects and best practices as well as announcing job opportunities, accepting curriculum vitae's and spontaneous applications by interested candidates.

Turnhout's business and labour market policies may also benefit from encouraging ethnic/cultural minorities businesses to move beyond localized economies to enter into the main stream and higher-value added sectors.

6. Cultural and civil life policies through an intercultural lens

The time which people allocate to their leisure may often be the best opportunity for them to encounter and engage with inhabitants from a different culture. The city can influence this through its own activities and through the way it distributes resources to other organisations.

Turnhout's cultural and civil life policy goal achievement rate is lower (56%) than the city sample's rate (78%).

The city does organise events in the field of arts, culture and sport to encourage cultural mixing between inhabitants.

We invite Turnhout to consider building upon its cultural and civil life practices for example by organising public debates and campaigns around the topics of diversity and living together more frequently. An interesting example of such an initiative has been put into practice by the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel. The canton in 2006 launched the project "Neuchatoi" being a contraction of 'Neuchâtel à toi' ('your Neuchâtel'), a play on the city's name. The Working Party Integration of Foreigners (Communauté de travail pour l'intégration des étrangers, CTIE), which organised the project, was trying to promote better mutual understanding among Swiss citizens and foreigners. It involved a series of canton-wide debates on various aspects of Neuchâtel identity, theatre performances, film screenings, gastronomic events, radio and television broadcasts amongst many other events. 250,000 people attended these various events. The project's different dates, places and form of activity were on offer to attract the broadest possible audience.

A similar initiative has been put into practice by the Italian city of Reggio Emilia. Here, the Mondinpiazza festival is an intercultural weekend that unfolds in the city's streets. It is organized in collaboration with associations of foreigners, municipal services, as well as foreign and local artists. Theatre, cinema, performances, music tales during the weekend, preceded by several public debates and conventions held the days prior to the weekend.

Turnhout could also consider using interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations. Finally, the city may wish to further promote cultural organizations which deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.

In the Dutch city of Tilburg there are volunteer neighbourhood mediators. Here, the project started in "impulse neighbourhoods", but now these mediators are active in every one of the city's neighbourhoods. Eighty percent of the mediation volunteers are of migrant origin : this prevents and solves problems in the Tilburg's neighbourhoods.

Finally, we invite Turnhout to build upon its existing mediation and conflict resolution initiatives by setting up an organization which deals specifically with inter-religious relations.

9. Language⁷

Turnhout's language policy achievement rate is slightly higher (52%) than the city sample's rate (50%).

The city provides specific language training in the official languages for hard-to-reach groups⁸. It also supports private/civil sector institutions which offer language training in migrant/minority languages. All the city's citizens are eligible to receive training in immigrant/minority languages. Finally, Turnhout encourages projects which give a positive image to minority/migrant languages.

Turnhout may wish to ameliorate its language policies in the future, for instance by offering financial support to minority newspapers/journals and minority radio programmes, as well as supporting TV programmes that are broadcasted in other languages than the majority ethnic language. Turnhout may wish to consider an initiative put into practice by Zurich (Switzerland). Even though national laws do not allow the city to support media structures, the city can support concrete projects. In recent years, Zurich's Local Integration Credit has helped a local non-for-profit radio station. This broadcasts in several languages and the work is mostly done by volunteers.

We invite Turnhout to consider the following language initiative as implemented by the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel. In 2009, 32 language courses allowed 360 foreign residents to learn French. Since 2007 foreign citizens who take beginner and intermediary French language training can sit a recognized exam. These courses are designed to facilitate foreign citizens' integration into the local community and promote social cohesion.

The Swiss canton of Geneva has also introduced a similar initiative. Here, French language courses are open to all, without discrimination and are tailored to meet the needs of specific members of the local community, for instance migrant women. They are offered by various public and private organizations which operate in the canton. For instance, in 2009 the canton's Office for the Integration of Foreigners provided financial support to 32 French language projects. They were operated by 19 local associations. The global objective is to ensure that newly arrived foreign citizens are able to reach the level of language fluency that is required in daily situations. This includes, for instance, to be able to ask for directions, engage in conversations, as well as seek employment and work in French. Language training constitutes one of the most important tools in order to integrate newly arrived migrant communities in Geneva's daily life.

10. Media policies

The media has a powerful influence on the attitudes to cultural relations and upon the reputations of particular minority and majority groups. Local municipalities can influence and partner with local media agencies to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

50% of Turnhout's media policy goals were achieved while the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is 51%.

⁷ By language we understand an abstract system of word meanings and symbols for all aspects of culture. The term also includes gestures and other nonverbal communication. (ref- http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html)

⁸ The term makes specific reference to non-working mothers, the unemployed, as well as retired people

Turnhout promotes a positive image of migrants and minorities in the media through targeted press meetings and dedicated newspaper columns. The city also monitors the way in which minorities are portrayed in the local media.

Turnhout may wish to further explore possible media policies, for instance, by providing advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds. An interesting example of such an initiative has been implemented by Oslo city council. Among journalists, editors and media researchers operating in Oslo, there is now a growing awareness about the role of the media in promoting cohesion and presenting news in a responsible and intercultural way. This has resulted in a stronger focus on the recruitment of journalists with ethnic minority background.

Turnhout may wish to build upon its media initiatives, for instance by instructing its information services to promote harmonious intercultural relations. Copenhagen (Denmark) has put into practice a pilot project "Equality in Communication". Its aims are to ensure that the city's communications reach all of its inhabitants on an equal footing. The best practices from this pilot programme will be rolled out in the city's communication policies.

11. International outlook policies

An optimal intercultural city would be a place which actively sought to make new connections with other places for trade, exchange of knowledge, as well as tourism.

Turnhout's international outlook policy indicators are lower (50%) than the city sample's (77%).

Turnhout has put into practice some policies to encourage international co-operation. A specific financial provision has been introduced to achieve this objective. The city has also set up an agency to monitor and develop Turnhout's openness to international connections.

The city may wish to further explore possible international outlook policies, for instance by ensuring that the city develops projects and policies for economic relations with its migrant populations' countries of origin. In doing so, it could refer to what is happening in Lewisham. Even though the London borough of Lewisham has not introduced specific policies or projects, it does provide particular business advice and links to the UK Chamber of Commerce are established to encourage co-development with Lewisham's migrant groups' countries of origin.

Turnhout may wish to consider providing support to local universities in order to attract foreign students. The Italian city of Turin may provide a useful source of learning in this respect. Turin⁹ is operating a nationwide initiative entitled "Invest Your Talent in Italy" targeting talented post-graduate students from around the world. In particular, the Politecnico of Turin is strengthening its specialism in industrial engineering and management, given its close relationship with local industry. Special Politecnico programmes aim to attract students from South America. Since 2006, a joint university has been operational with Shanghai. Finally, Torino Wireless has set up a special programme called "Education and Enterprise", to attract international students and encourage them to start up enterprises in the metropolitan area.

Finally, the city could consider ensuring that foreign student populations take an active part in the city life. Copenhagen (Denmark) has launched an interesting initiative in this field. The city's website comprises practical information, including on cultural events, to encourage newcomers including students to take an active part in the city life. Copenhagen also cooperates with several expat networks, for instance Work in Denmark and Expat in Denmark. Finally, the city is developing information boxes in public spaces which will include information on public transport, citizens' services, cultural and sporting events as well as conferences. These aim to allow newly arrived students, tourists etc to engage in and make the most of the city's offering.

⁹ This particular example comes from British Council: "Leadership and Governance of OPENCITIES".

provide support tailored specifically for students, family members, refugees and migrant workers. Finally, Turnhout greets newcomers in the presence of the city's officials. On these occasions newcomers are taken either on a bus or walking tour of the city.

14. Governance policies

Perhaps the most powerful and far-reaching actions which a city can take in making it more intercultural are the processes of democratic representation and decision making.

38% of Turnhout's governance policy goals were achieved while the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is 34%.

In Turnhout, newcomers are eligible to vote in local election "after a certain period of residence in the city". An independent political body has been created to represent all ethnic minorities living in Turnhout.

Turnhout may wish to further explore possible governance policies by actions to improve the representation of migrants in the city administration. An interesting example of such an initiative has been introduced by the UK-based operation Black Vote which has set up a scheme in Liverpool. It allows young migrants to shadow established local politicians, so they better understand what the job involves and it encourages them to engage in politics.

Turnhout may wish to further explore possible governance policies by establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies which supervise schools and public bodies.

15. Conclusions

In some intercultural strategy areas, Turnhout does much better than most other cities in the sample. Its leading practices can provide useful insights and examples to other cities in the field of: commitment, intelligence competence, welcoming and governance practices.

16. Recommendations

Turnhout needs to make progress in relation to its education, neighbourhood, public services, business and labour market, cultural and civil life, public spaces, mediation and conflict resolution, language, media and international outlook practices. The city may wish to look into some of the examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided in the Intercultural Cities database¹⁰.

¹⁰ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/guidance_en.asp