



COMMUNICATION FOR INTEGRATION AND DIVERSITY

How to conduct Communication
and Dialogue Campaigns

Based on the experience of seven European cities

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN UNION



COUNCIL
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DE L'EUROPE

Implemented
by the Council of Europe



SPARDA

SPARDA was launched and implemented by the **Council of Europe** with the support of the **European Commission**. In line with the European Agenda for Integration (2011), SPARDA responds to the “**more action at local level**” priority, and its overall goal is to foster **successful integration of migrants** through local communication strategies. Seven partners were selected as pilot locations for communication campaigns: Coimbra (Portugal), Had-Dingli (Malta), Limassol (Cyprus), Patras (Greece), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Institut des Médias/ISCPA in Lyon (France), and the Consortium of PACTEM Nord in Valencia (Spain). The project began in January 2011 and will terminate in **June 2012**.

AT A GLANCE

The Council of Europe considers intercultural integration a vital part of local governments' modernisation agenda. Intercultural integration is based on the concept of diversity advantage - an understanding of the benefits of a more diverse and integrated workforce and more responsive and flexible service delivery in the combating of social exclusion, building of strong communities and fostering of innovation and sustainable development.

With international migration likely to increase in scale and complexity over the coming decades, local governments are expected to play a more active role in addressing the challenges of diversity and integration: strengthening intercultural dialogue and cultural competence, building inclusive neighbourhoods, fostering participation by migrants in community life, changing public authorities' discourse, attitudes and behaviour so as to make intercultural integration possible at local level. The increased focus on local partnerships and community participation in the integration process highlights the importance of consultation, commitment and responsiveness.



WHY PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS MATTER

Many different factors combine to influence policies on the integration of migrants into their host society. The availability of jobs and services and knowledge of the host country's language(s) and culture have an impact on migrants' ability to fit into and function in the local community. But the public view of diversity and migration is as important, if not more so, in determining integration policies and their outcomes. It is clearly more difficult to integrate into a society that does not accept the presence of, or is hostile towards, foreigners; conversely, integration becomes easier if the receiving society is more tolerant.

1 The public view has an effect on integration

Evidence obtained from the Intercultural Cities network¹ suggests that, beside the positive actions carried out at institutional level, work on public perceptions is one of the most important objectives to ensure the long-lasting effect of integration action. The rollout of integration strategies at local level often meets community resistance, or results in a low level of commitment by different sections of the community when different integration initiatives are implemented. In many cases, a climate of fear or uncertainty surrounds the issues of diversity and migration, and this seems to place considerable barriers in the way of integration.

2 Perceptions are out of line with known realities

Several studies confirm that people in host communities have false ideas about the scale and nature of migration. A survey of perceptions conducted by IPSOS (2011) in 7 European cities found that respondents were inclined to believe that migration had been increasing in recent years, although national statistics showed that it had remained stable or even decreased in some cases. Overestimation of the costs and ignorance of the benefits of migration contribute to the confusion and influence perceptions. People without a proper understanding of the issues of diversity, migration and integration and lacking credible and balanced information raise questions about the role of diversity within society. Those questions, if left unanswered, result in misinformation and false perceptions, and ultimately undermine integration efforts and community cohesion.

3 Public perceptions can change

As demonstrated by the *International Organisation for Migration*², public opinion and perceptions about migration vary between and within countries and over time. Such perceptions and opinions are not static, but sensitive to demographic factors (age, level of education, type of occupation and political leanings) and contextual factors (political turmoil, economic recession). Although such factors' effects in determining whether opinion is likely to be more positive or negative are relatively constant, the findings indicate that opinion can and does change over time, particularly following increased levels of interaction between migrants and host societies and when there is a greater understanding of not only what migrants are, but also what they therefore are not.

¹ A Council of Europe and European Union joint action, launched in 2008, Intercultural Cities (ICC) is a European network of cities promoting a model for intercultural integration.

² Communicating Effectively about Migration, IOM Report, 2011.



PHASE 1

PHASE 1

STEP 1

RECOGNITION OF THE PROBLEM

The first stage in the process of social change is recognition by the larger community or by a smaller subsection of the community that there is a problem that limits their current quality of life, restricts their aspirations for the future, or has the potential to harm the community or members of the community. SPARDA has identified negative perceptions of migrants as a key problem standing in the way of intercultural integration.

STEP 2

IDENTIFICATION OF LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS – WHO HAS POWER TO EFFECT CHANGE?

To get an overview of the stakeholders involved you can draw a map identifying possible members of your campaign. This map may include (a) leaders, (b) community representatives, including those most affected by the problem (migrants and diversity groups), (c) media and others. You might consider including stakeholders previously involved in the preparation of your local integration strategies.

Example: In Barcelona in 2010/2011, the commitment of local stakeholders to participate in the local communication campaign against what people were saying about migrants was very high, in an effort to ensure that false ideas about different ethno-cultural communities did not create barriers to implementation of the local intercultural integration strategy. The same stakeholders were actively involved in consultations on the development of intercultural integration strategy.

It is crucial to identify the right stakeholders. You may wish to involve grassroots or local activists, young people, children, or the whole community. Mapping intercultural integration/diversity initiatives as a basis for visualising what is happening on the ground is a reliable means of revealing what is happening. Visualising the growing “integration community” can have an impact on several levels: “internally” for the “integration mapping” group in your neighbourhood or city as well as “externally” for other cities which might be inspired to follow suit and take similar positive action, or might consider offering you support in the positive initiative you have organised there.

Example: In Reggio Emilia, special attention is paid to the participation of young people in campaign activities, as well as intergenerational exchange between younger people and senior citizens, it being borne in mind that older people are guardians of values and play an important role in transmitting positive messages to younger generations.

STRONG LEADERSHIP

High ability and strong motivation to act and to engage is required from the chief executives, senior officials or political leaders acting as champions for campaigns. Raising awareness so as to change attitudes is long-term work, but it is perhaps the most effective method in the long run. Giving a voice to political leaders so that they can provide a comprehensive and balanced discourse on diversity is part of a top-down process, creating political momentum for change.

PARTICIPATION BY MIGRANTS

The involvement of migrants and representatives of ethno-cultural groups can make an essential contribution to the campaign. Personal stories of successful integration or specific contributions to community life can provide the campaign with a “human face” and make the project truly participatory.



Example: In Limassol, Reggio Emilia, Patras and Valencia, campaigns have included participation by migrants in large numbers of activities, thus acknowledging the fact that migrants’ empowerment is an important element of successful integration.

MEDIA

It is helpful to research the media access and usage of the people you want to reach. Find out which media your target groups use, and which they use for which purposes. Every group has its own language, media which are accessible through technological means and culture-specific media channels. So you need to take all those aspects into account. **Think access, ease (cost) of use and culture of use.**

Which media could you consider? TV, radio, social media, community media, mobile phones, the Internet, physical gatherings.

In order to choose the right media channels to access and actively engage your target groups, you need a good understanding of **which media are accessible to**, and likely to be used by, your target group, and how these work in terms of usability, cost and legality.

STEP 3

VISION FOR THE FUTURE - WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN?

Once dialogue has been established and stakeholders identified and involved, the community is ready to plan where it wants to be in the future (three years from now, one year from now) and to work out ways of getting there. For example, is there a wish to see neighbourhoods become more inclusive, to see greater participation by migrants in the life of the city, to improve understanding of the diversity advantage, to break down stereotypes and to dispel myths about migrants, etc?

STEP 4

SETTING OF OBJECTIVES

A shared vision should enable the community to list the goals/objectives it wants to achieve. The community, together with its leaders and/or change agent, should evaluate how realistic those goals are, trying to set moderate goals in order to avoid either a sense of failure (if the goals are unrealistic, set too high) or a lack of motivation (if the goals are set too low). Goals that are challenging but feasible should be preferred.

STEP 5

ACTION PLAN

A specific timetable for the completion of each activity will help the community to grasp that there are clear deadlines for effectively moving toward a solution to the problem. Your action plan needs to take into consideration responsibilities, resources, timing and expected results.

BUDGET

- All potential costs should be identified and double checked against your budget.
- Planned activities should be reconsidered if they become too expensive.

PHASE 2

PHASE 2

STEP 1

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific people and groups should take responsibility for carrying out each activity, as defined in the action plan. In order to set up and run a successful campaign you need a strong organising team. This team would ideally include:

A PROJECT MANAGER

This is the person who will keep the team together, have a good overview of all ongoing activities, be the main hub for communication and information and keep careful track of deadlines and finances. He or she can respond to unexpected situations and find solutions.

A MEDIA OFFICER

This is someone familiar with the media landscape of the country/region, ideally a person with good contacts in the media sphere and who is a very good communicator, able to write good snappy texts and scripts that the audience identifies with.

A DESIGNER, WEBSITE CREATOR, RADIO PROGRAMME MAKER, PHOTOGRAPHER

You will need people with the skills to create material for the media you have chosen, such as a graphic designer if you need a website, poster or logo designing, and someone who can create interactive websites. You may need people who can make radio programmes, or possibly a photographer.

A PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

A person with strong relationship-building skills, a communicator and a link – the mediator between the team and your target groups (participants). Depending on your decision about tools, the public relations officer should also have the skills - or acquire the appropriate training - to give direct support to people who might face technical or others kinds of constraints.

STEP 2

MOBILISATION OF ORGANISATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Depending on the size and nature of the challenge, existing organisations within and outside the community may be called upon to join the community action effort. The extent to which different groups within the community participate should also have an influence on the feeling of programme ownership and on social cohesion.

STEP 3

EXECUTION

This step entails actual execution of the action plan and the monitoring thereof. Preparations should be made for back-up activities, so that the whole action plan is not truncated if some activities do not go as originally planned.



HOW TO BE AS INCLUSIVE AS POSSIBLE

You might consider offering encouragement via your on-line campaign platforms:

Example: In Lyon (France), a communication campaign on diversity provided an on-line platform for voluntary participation by city residents, who were invited to create "the biggest Internet page in the world to say 'Yes' to Diversity". The input requested from the community entailed uploading onto the web page individual photos of the people who wished to speak up for diversity and express their rejection of ethnic and religious discrimination. The same "Say 'Yes' to Diversity" message appeared during a poster campaign in the Lyon city metro.

- However, there is more than one way to create a platform. Platforms can take all kind of forms offering people space to come together, express themselves and exchange ideas, experiences, etc. Given this definition, a platform can also be created in the form of a neighbourhood gathering or a phone-in show on community radio.
- Another option for bridging the aforementioned gap might be to initiate additional "off-line" or "on air" platforms, add to them your campaign identity (e.g. Diversity Radio, Diversity Forum) and - most importantly - link them with one another!



CREATE YOUR OWN MESSAGE

You should establish a clear aim and a strong message for your campaign. This message needs to be short and credible and should refer to the issues that are important to the community. Here are a few tips:

- Devise a consistent way to present your campaign, its name and its goals. Always keep the target group uppermost in your mind.
- Develop all your visual materials on the same basis, so that people can recognise the campaign in all the materials used and in any other way in which it is promoted.

Example: If you decide to start a Diversity Advantage campaign, use the same name for all your communication efforts via all media channels. If you decide to create a further platform, such as a radio platform, e.g. to reach out to rural communities, give it a name such as Diversity Radio or call it the Diversity Advantage Radio Show.

HOW CAN PEOPLE BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE?

There are as many strategies as there are people; you can empower migrants to tell their own stories through video or directly to the public, encourage musicians to incorporate your message, combine a radio show with an educational package for schools, put stickers on coins, etc.

Example: In Limassol (Cyprus) the campaign included a “Living Library” - where migrants told their life stories over a cup of coffee, allowing participants, “books” and “readers” alike, to realise and appreciate the diversity advantage, and enabling an intercultural awareness approach to be developed.

Quota: “When people have prejudices or believe in stereotypes, speaking to a ‘book’ is so straight to the point, it can really break down barriers.”



ACTIVATE YOUR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

After you have selected the right media, start to activate your communication channels and apply for any licences you may need, etc.

- Choose those communication channels that your target group uses and can access.
- Contact the media operators you have chosen to work with to request their support for your initiative (some of them may be willing to support you free of charge). Depending on your budget, you can choose to aim for a partnership with certain media operators or to ask for potential support in the form of a donation.

ACTIVATE YOUR NETWORK

Before you start actively promoting your campaign, make sure that stakeholders are briefed sufficiently and ensure that everyone is clear about what their role and responsibilities are and how you will collaborate with them throughout the process.

NOTE: Regular communication is vital.

STEP 4

EVALUATION OF THE CAMPAIGN

Once the campaign phase has reached its end, you may want to evaluate your choices in order to draw conclusions. It is crucial to evaluate the process, progress and effectiveness of campaigns and of what you have done so far. The outcomes achieved may or may not be what the community originally planned when the goals were set. Comparison of outcomes with the original objectives is an important self-evaluation process. For purposes of group motivation and reward, it is important for most members of the community (especially the groups affected) to participate in the evaluation process, so that the lessons learned about what worked and why may be shared by the community as a whole.



