



Intercultural Cities Programme

CITY OF LISBON Intercultural Profile

Background¹

Portugal and Lisbon do not easily fit into any of the familiar models of development in regard to migration, diversity and policy development. In a superficial way Portugal resembles the other European former-imperial powers in that its first serious influx of overseas migration derived from colonies and former colonies. However, the fact this coincided with a period in which the 'mother country' itself went through a radical transformation from authoritarianism to democracy, ensured that neither assimilationism, multiculturalism nor the guest-worker model gained a firm foothold. On the contrary Portugal seems more closely to resemble the Mediterranean model of having no particular policy at all up until the 1990s.

Significant numbers of PALOP² migrants settled in Portugal from the 1960s onwards. It is suggested that their shared language, religion and strong cultural overlap with the native Portuguese resulted in an easier integration and fewer of the cultural conflicts experienced with post-colonialism elsewhere. Notwithstanding this, PALOP citizens and their descendants remain disproportionately disadvantaged in regard to education, jobs, housing and income in Portugal³.

In the last 10 to 15 years a new wave of migration has brought people from Brazil (with a shared language) but also Eastern Europe (particularly Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania) as well as China, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Metropolitan Lisbon with about a quarter of the total Portuguese population (2,641,000: 2001) accounts for 55% of all migrants.

Nor can it be said that Lisbon follows a pattern of urban development which is generally familiar in the rest of western Europe. Heavy restrictions on rent rises over many decades, and the handing of tenancies from one generation to the next, has stabilized mobility in the inner city but has limited opportunities for modernization and rationalization seen (for better or worse) in other capital city downtowns. Meanwhile large numbers of migrants from overseas and from the Portuguese countryside were still housed in squalid shanty towns on the edge of the city up until the 1990s. Since then a massive programme of building high- and medium rise apartments has seen metropolitan Lisbon sprawl expansively on both sides of the Tagus estuary, far beyond the bounds of the municipality itself (which has a population of 565,000). Indeed the

¹ This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 2 and 3 March 2011, comprising Irena Guidikova, Oliver Freeman and Phil Wood.

² The Portuguese-speaking African countries are a group of five African countries where the Portuguese language is the official language: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe. They form part of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, otherwise known as "Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa" (PALOP).

³ It should also be noted that with the exception of the United Kingdom, Portugal has the highest level of income inequality in Western Europe (ie the difference between the highest-earning and lowest-earning deciles in the overall population).

peripheral municipality of Sintra has recently exceeded Lisbon city for number of migrants in its population.

Inner Lisbon still retains large areas of traditional neighbourhoods. Some of these have been experiencing gentrification and increasing property values, but this trend has been stifled by the 2008 property crash. In other inner areas (principally Mouraria) the restrictions on ownership and tenancy have led to large-scale dereliction and abandonment leading to the need for major intervention by the municipality with European Structural Funds. Bairro Alto remains the inner city district most associated with PALOP residents, although most now live in the suburbs, whilst Mouraria displays a more eclectic mix of old and new residents.

The main foreign nationalities recorded as living in Lisbon in 2007 were as follows:⁴

Country of origin	No. of foreigners
Cape Verde	40,000
Brazil	24,400
Angola	24,200
Guinea-Bissau	15,700
São Tomé and Príncipe	6,900
Ukraine	6,900
Romania	6,800
China	4,300

Approximately 84% of the population of Portugal is nominally Roman-Catholic whereas 4 to 9% is atheist and agnostic.⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests that religious tolerance is widespread and that religious minorities, mainly Anglican, Protestant, Moslem and Jewish, are generally satisfied with their circumstances⁶. This may be partly explained by the fact that, in contrast to that of Spain, Roman Catholicism in Portugal was traditionally softer and less intense.

Governance and management structures for integration and diversity management

As suggested above, Portugal was comparatively late to acknowledge the need for policy-making in regard to diversity and integration, but when it did it seems to have moved speedily and effectively. Only in 1991 was a governmental body established in recognition of the existence of cultural differences in the population and in 1996 a High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities was established. In 2007 this became the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI) under the direct authority of the Prime Minister.

Portugal is one of the few European countries to have adopted an instrument for global orientation of public policy on the integration of immigrants in the form of the first Plan for Immigrant Integration, effective from 2007 to 2009, and a second Plan for the period 2010-2013, which comprises 90 measures across various policy areas.⁷ It is also one of

⁴ Source: Ponzo, Irene (2010) *Intercultural policies and intergroup relations: Lisbon case study*. CLIP: Dublin : <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2010/3815/en/1/EF103815EN.pdf>. This document is a valuable source of detailed information about the history and current institutional structure of diversity management in Lisbon.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Portugal

⁶ Whilst it is not the aim of ICC to attempt to seek out problems where none exist, it is remarkable that, in contrast to many other parts of Europe, Lisbon does not consider inter-faith issues an actual or potential source of communal tension. The question arises, is this a factor peculiar to Portuguese culture or has Lisbon practiced a deliberate approach which could be transferrable elsewhere?

⁷ <http://www.acidi.gov.pt/cfn/4d346c9b80687/live/Consulte+a+vers%C3%A3o+da+Plano+2010-2013+em+Ingl%C3%AAs>

the few countries where a single public body, ACIDI, takes responsibility for policies on intercultural dialogue. As such ACIDI oversees the Immigration Observatory and a country-wide network of 80 National Immigration Assistance Centres (CNAI). The latter have pioneered a 'one-stop-shop' approach in Lisbon and Porto to improve the quality of service to migrants and to rationalize resources.

The Lisbon office pulls together six Government agencies from five Ministries (Foreigners and Borders Service, Working Conditions Authority, Social Security, Regional Health Administration, Regional Directorate of Education and the Central Registry Office), together with other innovative support services to meet the practical needs of immigrants, such as support offices for family reunification, legal advice and employment. 86 socio-cultural mediators work at the Lisbon CNAI, employed by non-Governmental Immigrant Associations through protocols with ACIDI. The participation of civil society institutions, as partners in the management of this project, has been a successful innovation⁸.

A visit to the Lisbon CNAI in Rua Álvaro Coutinho, and a meeting with staff, confirmed this to be a streamlined service and one which had not simply been created for bureaucratic convenience but from a genuine spirit of welcome and empathy to those newly arrived in the country.

The most recent edition of the Migration Policy Index (MIPEX), published in February 2011, confirms the effectiveness of Portuguese efforts in migration management, placing the country second overall in a list of 31 leading countries in the quality of its service, and best of all in facilitating Family Reunion, and providing Access to Nationality⁹.

Lisbon was one of the first Portuguese municipalities to formally recognise ethnic minorities when, in 1993, it set up the Municipal Council of Migrant Communities and Ethnic Minorities as a consultative council. However it languished for several years and was only revived, under the new title of Municipal Council for Interculturalism and Citizenship (CMIC) in 2007, following the election of new mayor Antonio Costa, as a representative body for 17 recognised associations. The CMIC has in turn established an internal body, the Municipal Forum of Interculturality (FMINT), which is open to a much wider spread of groups and individuals, designed to elicit a lively discussion about policy.

However, CMIC has already come under criticism for the poor attendance of some of its representatives, and that others are unrepresentative of their so-called communities¹⁰. This has been a common complaint seen at various times in much of Europe against a certain kind of 'multiculturalist' approach to diversity management. Apparently the municipality is also proposing a familiar remedy to this, which is to demand higher levels of training and professionalism from community leaders, and experience elsewhere would suggest this is likely to meet with a mixed response.

It is notable that, despite their institutional prominence, we did not have the opportunity during our visit to make formal contact with CMIC or FMINT. This raises the question of whether these bodies are performing their intended function or whether they are being by-passed by other mechanisms and grouping. Within ICC, it is the responsibility of the city to form a group which will champion the vision, oversee the creation of a strategy and maintain communication between the various stakeholders. Whether such a group will derive from CMIC or FMINT or will emerge independently, remains to be seen.

⁸ More information at: <http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/>

⁹ More information at: <http://www.mipex.eu>

¹⁰ See Ponzi, p. 18.

Neighbourhood Policy

Perhaps, as a way of circumventing a perceived impasse in institutional arrangements, the municipality has been experimenting with other means of building interculturality. Perhaps the best developed of these is what it has come to be described as a 'laboratory for the city' through the combination of improving the Mouraria district with staging the Todos Festival. We have already described Todos in an earlier document.¹¹ In summary, the approach is based upon the identification of a neighbourhood for a concerted and multi-agency approach, combining physical refurbishment, economic renewal, rebuilding social capital, safety and security, and a high profile cultural festival.

The approach came about through an expression of impatience by local residents with apparently intractable physical and social problems, and a need for the municipality to develop a long-term strategy for dealing with complex issues whilst offering some 'quick wins' to keep people satisfied. It has required eight municipal departments and agencies, including the police, to work together. Although each has a different timetable, they must complete their work by 2012 in order to draw down EU funding. They must also gain the co-operation of a wide range of local resident groups and migrant organisations and overcome the resistance of some who shun change, particularly from the criminal fraternity of drugs and prostitution.

In order to express his commitment to the local people and to inject a sense of urgency into public officials, Mayor Antonio Costa has taken the radical step of moving his office from the palatial City Hall to the Largo do Intendente, the city's notorious red light district in Mouraria. He also ensured the work will be properly co-ordinated by establishing a special team within the municipality called GLEM (Lisbon at the Crossroads of the World), and giving it executive powers to ensure different agencies co-operate with each other.

The 'Renovate Mouraria' project brings together many strands of activity, including renovation of historic buildings and traditions, repair of housing, creation of public spaces, improvement of highways and pedestrian access, creation of job training and business opportunities as well as social work with individuals and families.

The paradox of this approach is that the public agencies are having to get closer to residents than they normally would, and this is revealing both problems and opportunities which might otherwise have remained hidden. However, the deadline for completion of works and spending of funds means the process has to move quickly. As such the municipality needs to build relationships and capacity in local people so that there will be some long term sustainability. For example one of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood is a natural "intercultural connector". He knows many people locally, and has organized meetings of different institutions dealing with social issues and inhabitants, to let them get to know each other. In one case the director of social services came to present the initiative to develop a social plan for Mouraria and thus the local initiative and the municipal services were connected.

But the city council faces a very tricky task if it is to raise the quality of life in Mouraria whilst retaining its authentic character. Take, for example, the case of private vehicles, which are considered by many residents as a necessity because of the steep nature of the landscape and the advanced age of many. The city wants to restrict vehicular access, to keep the streets traffic free and safer for pedestrians, but some residents complain that this is designed mainly for the convenience of tourists (Mouraria lies in a direct line between the city centre and the popular Castelo de São Jorge, but is currently hardly visited by tourists) and is part of a hidden strategy to force them out of the area and gentrify it.

¹¹ See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Newsletter/newsletter12/todos_en.asp

The GLEM teams knows that if it leaves Mouraria prematurely, without establishing the internal structures to maintain the momentum that has been started, it risks losing the gains that have been made, particularly in terms of co-operation between different groups and public agencies. However, GLEM is also keen to take the 'laboratory' model and introduce it to other parts of the city. There have already been complaints that Mouraria is receiving too much attention, so it seems likely that a new district will be prioritised in 2013. GLEM has proposed to locate the next Todos festival on one of the more affluent suburbs in the west of the city. Here we see different kinds of cosmopolitanism and exclusion with many large private houses of the Portuguese and international elite who protect their privacy and privileges but, nevertheless rely on a large army of foreign domestic servants, gardeners, childcare assistants etc to maintain their lifestyle. The audacious challenge that GLEM will set for Todos is to encourage these exclusive 'citadel' residents to open up to the rest of the city in the same way that the 'ghetto' of Mouraria was asked to open up. Few other cities would contemplate such a strategy and, along with the moving of the Mayor's office, this seems to us one of the signature examples of the distinctive *Lisboeta* way of doing things.

But most Lisboetas live neither in old bairros like Mouraria nor in swanky suburbs. Most live in the vast modern high-rise housing estates. We paid a brief visit to the outer suburbs and the neighbouring communities of Bairro da Cruz Vermelha and Musgueira Norte. Apparently the former is populated mainly by people of PALOP origin whilst the latter is mainly of white Portuguese background. We were told that there were reasonably good relations between the two areas, but the local administration was very old-fashioned and did little to encourage mixing. We noted that whilst the housing and other facilities seemed of a reasonable condition, the public space and other areas of abandoned and derelict land between buildings was of a very poor standard. In other cities in Europe, such an area might be seen as a potentially explosive "banlieue", but we were assured this was not the case in Lisbon. We were told of another place in a nearby district of Bairro Padre Cruz where a Multicultural Resource Center has been established to provides support for the local integration of migrants (as a Local Immigration Assistance Centre as mentioned above) but did not visit.

Culture, Sports and Youth Policy

Aside from Todos, the city council is committed to several other novel ways of achieving its wider aims through cultural and leisure policy. Inspired by the efforts of Barcelona city council, it has identified libraries as institutions of crucial importance in promoting education and neighbourhood cohesion. They have a 13-year plan to create a network of 'third generation' libraries. They already have 12 based on the old logic but they aim to create 25 new libraries which will be much better connected, and more relevant, to their neighbourhoods. After widespread consultation in the neighbourhoods they realised that many people feel cut off from the city centre by poor public transport and need access to better services on their doorstep. The new libraries will be the hub for a range of public services in each district. A good example is the multi-ethnic district of Marvila where a new branch library is now under construction and has been designed in particular response to the youthful age profile of the residents there. Meanwhile, in the Bairro of Casal dos Machados and Quinta das Laranjeiras there is a library where the police have facilities to meet with 'difficult' families on neutral ground.

Meanwhile, in Bairro Alto, a district where graffiti was a problem, the municipality decided to clean the walls and at the same time make a programme to approach the graffiti artists to co-operate in making an urban art gallery. Then the programme was enlarged so that the whole city will become an urban art gallery and now they are looking for partners to ensure its long term continuation. They invite graffiti artists from the neighbourhoods to make use of designated walls – thereby giving them visibility, recognition, and ownership of the area. Consequently they feel more inclined to protect it in the future. Now they are planning to encourage graffiti on the garbage containers

and garbage collection vans, ensuring it is always by artists from the local neighbourhood. The municipality hopes that once it has been able to build a relationship with young people on this issue, it will be easier to maintain the dialogue around other issues too,

The deputy mayor for culture, Catarina Vaz Pinto (who was also once the national Secretary of State for Culture) talks of how she underwent a personal transformation when exposed to the arts and wants this experience to be shared by as many other Lisboetas as possible. It is her vision to drive through the reorganisation of the library service and to extend participation in the arts to all levels of the city through projects like Todos. She is pleased how other departments and the police have bought into this vision and are sharing in its sense of achievement. She also sees a great role for the arts in bringing different cultural groups together. For example, the Bangladeshi group of Mouraria has just held its first language group meeting in the local recreation club, despite it being known as a bastion of fado culture. Catarina believes Lisbon is a very encouraging city for people to develop their creative talents. Because the cost of living is low it is possible for people to live as artists, but it is less good for people who wish to develop a sustainable career. In particular it feels cut off from the European mainstream and people do not travel and interact enough internationally. She welcomes the opportunity ICC might bring for Lisboetas to exchange with other cities in the network.

The deputy mayor for education, youth and sport, Manuel Brito, is also enthusiastic about the prospect of building cohesive communities through leisure and cultural activity. He is not aware of any particular problems regarding ethnic integration in the city. Problems tend to arise from the failure of certain groups and families to access the labour market. He believes sport is a great way to bring people together but it needs careful management. However he is strongly against the idea of competitive sport being based upon ethnicity. He would not support his countrymen going abroad attempting to form Portuguese sports clubs and he does not support other groups trying to do that in Lisbon.

He believes the arts are one of the best ways of teaching citizenship values and a sense of belonging to young people. He quotes with approval the project "Symphonic Youthful Orchestras" (Generation Orchestra) which was inspired by "El Sistema", the national system of youth orchestras in Venezuela, which has been successfully transferred to the Lisbon Metropolitan Area schools.

He has invested in a fleet of school buses which are able to transport kids around the city to attend a wide range of arts and sports activities. He has also issued a School Passport which encourages pupils to attend the city's cultural institutions. He is determined that kids from low income families will not be excluded from the city's cultural riches.

In regards to kids from migrant families, he has stipulated that those who exhibit good attendance and academic records will ensure that their whole families receive a more beneficial consideration when their case for leave to stay in the country is considered. He does not collect ethnic statistics for school achievement, and is opposed in principle to the idea of collecting such data.

There is evidently a great enthusiasm and strong policy push from within the city council to influence the lives of citizens through culture. This is particularly notable in the current climate of economic austerity, and one questions the capacity of the public sector to sustain this commitment if the economy continues to contract. Certainly it will require the city to achieve its aims in partnership with many other actors. Given that the public sector occupies such a central role in Portuguese life it may prove to be a difficult and painful transition from one in which government initiates and leads to one in which it facilitates. One story which emerged from a visit to an independent cultural organisation

in the city illustrated this dilemma. The Centro Intercultural Cidade (CIC)¹² rents several properties in the Santa Catarina district to provide facilities for language education, arts and cultural exchange and a restaurant. It is considered to be a hub for artists of migrant and Portuguese backgrounds. It was set up in 2004 with funding from the EU EQUAL programme but so far has struggled to establish a partnership with public agencies in Portugal. It quotes the example of a novel idea which it developed for a project with children of diverse backgrounds in city schools. Apparently the government department of education said it was very interested in operationalizing the idea but rejected the idea of CIC being involved because they are not civil servants. We do not know whether this is a common or an isolated case, but we certainly would like to see more examples of the NGO sector being brought in as equal partners in the future.

Policing and community safety

We were pleased to note the presence of senior police officers at several events we attended, including Andre Gomes, the Commandant of the Municipal Police force. Few other cities in the ICC network have demonstrated this degree of concern with the role of policing in an intercultural city, or the high level of inter-agency collaboration that clearly exists in Lisbon.

The Lisbon municipal police is a community force working closely with residents to respond to their concerns. They participate in community focus groups dealing with security, listening to the problems of people, and deciding together with them upon courses of action.

We were taken to the Alta de Lisboa district where the police work closely with local partners and youth workers to manage tensions. This is a former shanty town near the airport which was rebuilt and took in diverse groups of residents from around the city. There are multiple social problems arising from poverty, joblessness, racism and drug trade-related gang violence. Whilst in some other municipalities of metropolitan Lisbon (eg Bela Vista in Setubal) there have been violent disturbances and riots, the Lisbon municipal police are proud of their record of maintaining good relations.

The police have also been enthusiastic participants in Todos. They are keen to free the area of the drugs and prostitution trades but wish to do it in ways which involve the local residents. Todos has helped the police to work both with politicians and local people to phase out antisocial activity in a subtle way. For example they employ sociologists to study attitudes and relationships, and design the most suitable intervention methods to improve urban security.

Only Portuguese nationals can work in the municipal police at present. The police do not recruit directly, but staff come from the national police corps. This limits their ability to recruit from people of migrant background. Out of a staff of 441 only a few dozen are visible minorities. The municipal police are training recruits from Latin American countries in the context of the Union of City Capitals of Ibero-american Countries.

Conclusion

During the period of writing this report, the Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates announced his resignation following his failure to gain the support of parliament for a package of austerity measure, plunging the country into political and economic uncertainty. Some commentators have said that whilst the international financial crisis has affected Portuguese institutions, the broad mass of the population has so far been cushioned from its effects. If Portugal is now to experience a period of rising prices, reducing wages, public service cuts and unemployment one has to ask how this might

¹² <http://interculturacidade.wordpress.com/>

impact upon intercultural relations in Lisbon. Of course the Portuguese economy has not been in good shape for about a decade now and, as such, many temporary labour migrants have already left the country. But many others seem intent on remaining, perhaps calculating that in spite of poor economic prospects, the social, religious and cultural acceptance they experience in Lisbon is preferable to the frostier reception being offered elsewhere in Europe. It remains to be seen whether diminishing resources will bring competition and possibly enmity between hard-pressed citizens and whether this might take on a sectarian character.

Recommendations

1. Lisbon may consider introducing a welcoming scheme for new people arriving in the city, in particular for those coming from abroad. Whereas the Lisbon National Immigration Assistance Centres provides mainly administrative assistance, a local welcoming scheme could focus on the social and cultural dimensions of life in the city. Such schemes exist in cities like Tilburg and Neuchâtel¹³ and are very successful and appreciated.
2. It would be important to reconsider the role of Municipal Council for Interculturalism and Citizenship in the process of developing and implementation of Lisbon's intercultural strategy and its place in a wider champion group for the strategy which should comprise relevant government departments, NGOs and professional organisations.
3. NGOs should be empowered as a key partner to the authorities in conceiving and delivering policies and actions included in the intercultural strategy.
4. The community-based approach to neighbourhood development in Mouraria should be extended to other neighbourhoods, possibly using the renewed libraries as civic centres, with strong civil society participation.
5. The cultural policy of the city should be reviewed from the point of view of access, participation, empowerment and symbolic recognition of migrant cultures as a key element of the cultural landscape of the city. Events and festivals carried out in the context of social, educational or other policies should be evaluated with regard to their impact on the perceptions of diversity and intercultural community cohesion, also in the light of lessons from TODOS.

¹³ In **Tilburg** each month there is a special ceremony in the town hall for the people who passed the exams of the integration programme. Each month the alderman can congratulate about 30 people. During a festive ceremony they are welcomed to be an official resident of Tilburg. Once a year a great party is organised by the municipality for all the new residents. In some neighbourhoods and in some block of flats special 'welcome'-guides welcome the newcomer in the neighbourhood. They teach the new resident how people in Tilburg used to live, and give information about the important issues (doctor, hospital, police, town hall, public transport, etc.). After the ceremony a city tour by bus is offered. Then the newcomers are informed about the historical places of Tilburg, about its textile history, about the museums, etc. During the integration programme for newcomers, the system of buddies can be used. A civil servant is coupled to a newcomer with the same nationality, so the newcomer can speak his or her own language. It is extremely hard to visit a doctor when you don't speak the Dutch language at all. **Neuchâtel** has set up an agency to welcome newcomers and published a comprehensive package of information to aid newly arrived residents. The canton has launched services and agencies which provide support tailored specifically for students, family members, refugees and migrant workers and organises bi-annual events to welcome newcomers in the presence of the canton 's officials, with speeches in newcomers' languages, artistic performances, a reception and a meeting with local associations.