



# City of Stavanger

## Intercultural Profile

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### Background<sup>1</sup>

The city of Stavanger is located on the south-west coast of Norway and is the third-largest metropolitan area in the country (population 319,822) and the administrative centre of Rogaland county, whilst the local municipality itself is the fourth most populous in Norway (130,754).

The city was founded in 1125 and still retains a substantial core of 18th- and 19th-century wooden houses that are protected and considered part of the city's cultural heritage. Stavanger's history has been a continuous alternation between economic booms and recessions, often reliant upon the capricious bounty of the herring shoals. For many years Stavanger was one of the main ports of embarkation for Norwegian emigrants to the New World, and it is only far more recently that it has become a city of diversity.

For long periods of time its most important industries have been shipping, shipbuilding, the fish canning industry and associated subcontractors. In 1969, a new boom started as oil was first discovered in the North Sea. After much discussion, Stavanger was chosen to be the on-shore centre for the oil industry on the Norwegian sector of the North Sea, and a long period of growth has followed. Stavanger is today considered as one of Europe's energy capitals and Scandinavia's largest company, Statoil, has its headquarters in Stavanger, as well as several other international oil and gas companies. As a result, of both its past and present occupations, Stavanger's identity is strongly bound up with international connectivity.

Several domestic and international military installations are also located in Stavanger, among these is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's Joint Warfare Center. Other international establishments, and especially local branches of foreign oil and gas companies, contribute further to a significant foreign population in the city. Immigrants make up 21,1% of the population and comprise more than 179 nationalities.

Stavanger has since the early 2000s consistently had an unemployment rate significantly lower than the Norwegian and European average, and in June 2014, it was less than 2%. Stavanger has also been ranked as the world's most expensive city by certain indexes.

### National Migration Context

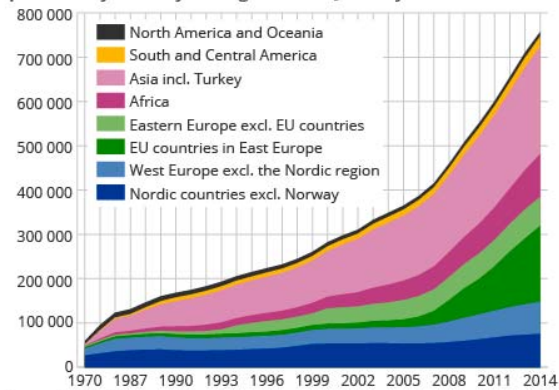
Early immigration to Norway was of an economic nature but as the society transformed itself into one of the most prosperous in the world, it took an increasing interest in international human rights. It became one of the most important recipients of asylum seekers and refugees and, for its size, perhaps the largest. As the table demonstrates, the earliest group of immigrants was refugees from Eastern European countries who settled after World War II. The next influx was of migrant workers from Pakistan, Turkey and India in the 1960s and 70s. During the 1980s and 90s most immigrants

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on 12 & 13 June 2014, comprising Irena Guidikova, Marcel LaRose and Phil Wood.

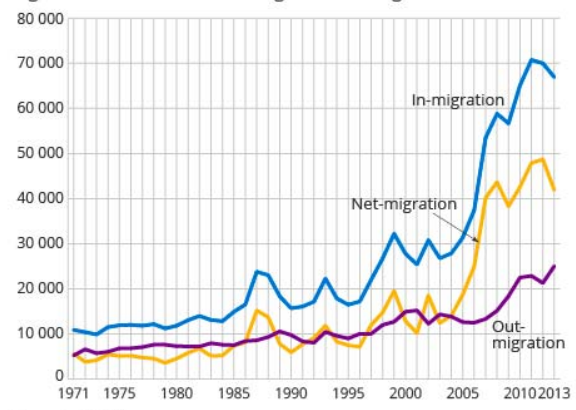
came as refugees and asylum seekers, or to be reunited with their families. However over recent years, the strength of the Norwegian economy has also once again made it a place of attraction for migrant labour. Significant groups of people arrived from Sri Lanka, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Vietnam, North Africa, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. More recently there has been a large rise in numbers from the EU Accession States (particularly Poland and Lithuania) and at the moment there are growing numbers of Swedes and Spaniards arriving to take up a range of skilled and non-skilled work.

Figure 1. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country of origin from 1 January 2014



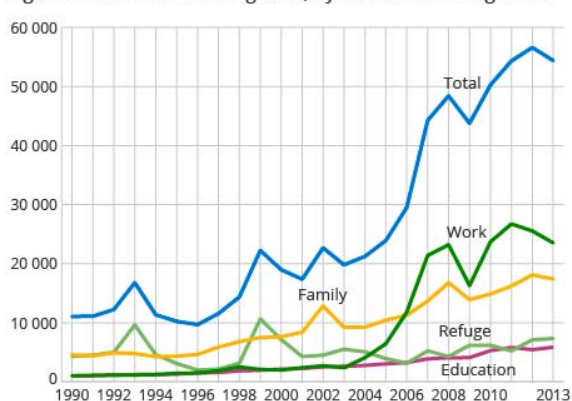
Source: Statistics Norway.

Figure 2. In-, out-, and net-migration, foreign citizens



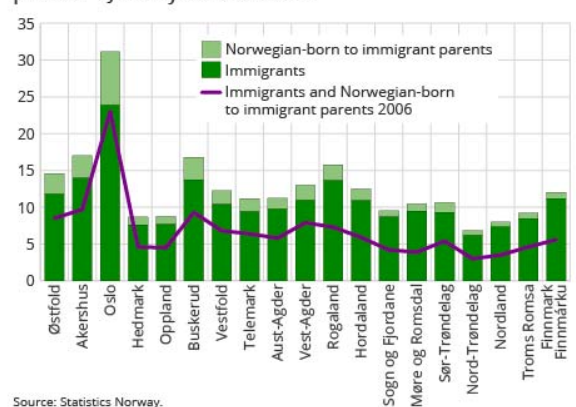
Source: Statistics Norway.

Figure 3. Non-Nordic immigrants, by reason for immigration



Source: Statistics Norway.

Figure 4. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. 1 January 2006 and 2014



Source: Statistics Norway.

Immigrants and those born in Norway to immigrant parents currently constitute 759,200 persons or 14,9 per cent of Norway's population, among which 633,100 are immigrants and 126,100 are born in Norway to immigrant parents.

## Local Migration Context

Stavanger is an international city. The percentage of immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents totals 21,1% of the population whilst the national average is 14,9% (SSB [Statistics Norway] 01.01.14).

The population of Stavanger was 130,754 at the turn of the year, of which 27,531 are immigrants (The six largest immigrant groups are):

Poland 3 063

Great Britain	1 627
Turkey	1 262
Sweden	962
India	937
Somalia	930

[http://statistikk.stavanger.kommune.no/befolkning\\_15s.html](http://statistikk.stavanger.kommune.no/befolkning_15s.html)

This data demonstrates two important factors about Stavanger. Firstly there is no single group of foreign nationals which stands out as much larger than the rest, or which is better established in the city. Secondly, there is a statistic mix between people who come and work in the energy and oil sector, and refugees and immigrants who work within the service and public sector.

Between 2004 and 2013 the population has increased by around 18 000, due to excess of births and immigrants. Despite the growth in foreign migration, of the five largest Norwegian cities Stavanger stands out as having experienced a substantial movement of population - 5 772 during the period 2004-13<sup>2</sup>, moved to other municipalities than moved in from other Norwegian municipalities or abroad. The cost of housing is an issue, with Stavanger residents moving to other municipalities offering cheaper housing within the wider metropolitan area, rather than to a serious loss of popularity of the city itself.

## National Policy Context

The main policy responsibilities for immigrants in Norway are shared between central government and the municipalities. Integration, for example through training, education, health and social work and housing is largely a municipal responsibility. The work is financed through per capita grants from central government.

Since the Introduction Act of 2005, Norwegian national integration and inclusion policy aims have been to enable new arrivals to participate in the labour market and in society as quickly as possible, enjoying equal living standards and opportunities to those of native citizens. In support of this approach, the government has supported three main programmes, implemented at municipality level:

- The Introductory Programme for refugees, aiming to enable refugees to enter the labour market or training as soon as possible. The programme offers language and social studies and preparation for work or further education. Each participant follows an individual development plan and receives an income of around €18,000 per year, conditional on fulltime attendance.
- The Second Chance project (launched in 2005 as a trial programme) is aimed at people with an immigrant background who have no link to the labour market. The target groups include stay-at-home mothers, and young people aged 18-25.
- The right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language and social studies. The great majority of employers demand mastery of the native language, which is also key to wider integration. Foreign nationals (aged 16-55) with residence or work permits must participate in language training.

However, in 2001 the national government has withdrawn the right of migrants to free language

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/flytting/aar/2014-04-28?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=174050>

tuition to migrants of EEA/EFTA origin. This has transferred costs to individuals but, as many are unable to pay, the burden falls upon employers or the municipality.

## Local Policy Context

The City Council has adopted a Strategy for Equality and Diversity, 2013-2020 and this represents the basis of its work on immigration, integration and interculturalism. It sets out:

*“To achieve a comprehensive perspective on the challenges and strategies related to equality and diversity, the following areas of discrimination are included:*

- *Ethnicity*
- *Gender*
- *Disability*
- *Faith and Conviction*
- *Age*
- *Sexual Orientation*

It adds that:

*“Fundamental for the strategy are the vision **Working Together for a living city** and the values **being in place, leading the way, creating a future.**”*

In specific reference to Ethnicity, the Strategy states that its main challenges are:

*In the course of a decade, the number of immigrants has doubled, which has contributed to economic and cultural development. Labour immigration is an important condition for continued economic growth in the Stavanger region.*

*Most of the population projections for the region indicate continued high immigration rates. The municipality must therefore adapt to a more versatile community, in continuous change.*

*Various studies show that immigrants to a lesser extent participate along with the majority population in voluntary organisations and clubs, leisure activities, political organisations, and at elections. Voter participation varies substantially according to the voters’ national background. The municipality will implement measures to increase participation in the community, and the election turnout.*

The Strategy also asserts that: *“GENUINE DIVERSITY means that citizens feel confident they are not being discriminated against.”*

The Strategy was formulated by the Diversity Resource Network, an inter-departmental working group of the City Council which was formed in 2011. It also coordinates delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan. This is a strategy specifically for the local authority, rather than for the city as a whole, and there was no consultation with external organisations or citizens in the course of its formulation, adoption or execution.

The City Council’s overarching Municipal Plan and its Employer Strategy also describe its aspiration to create equality and diversity through its role as a provider of services and employment. The Rogaland County Council (also based in Stavanger) has also adopted an action Plan for Equality and Diversity.

## Local Economy

In the early 1900s, Stavanger's industry was mainly related to fisheries and shipping. In the first half of the century it was known for canning, and in the 1950s there were over 50 canneries in town. The town was even called Norway "canned capital". The last of these factories were closed down in 2002.

Employment by type of industry in 2013 was 0.2% in the primary sector, 27.9% in secondary and 71.9% in tertiary industries. 25% of total employment was in the public sector and 75% in the private sector and public enterprises.

Engineering is now the main industry with 59 percent of manufacturing employment. This is mostly related to the offshore petroleum industry, and production of oil platforms alone account for 40 percent. Other important industries are publishing and food and beverage, which includes the processing of local agricultural products from the region.

Industry has in recent years become highly decentralized. The most important of the newer industrial areas are Forus in the south, on the border of Sandnes and Sola, and Dusavik (mainly petroleum-related activities) in the north, on the border of Randaberg. Significant older industrial areas are Hillevåg, Buøy, the eastern districts, and in some places elsewhere along the coast. Shipbuilding and shipping has also traditionally been of great importance to the city's economic growth, and Rosenberg Shipyard, established in 1896, is located on Hundvåg. Today Stavanger is also among the country's most important maritime cities, coming in fourth for registered fleets after the cities of Oslo, Bergen and Ålesund. Stavanger is regularly ranked as the best business region in Norway.

Stavanger is a popular tourist destination, especially in summer. The hotels in the city have good occupancy year-round due to the many commuters who travel to work and meetings in Stavanger. In recent years, Stavanger has also become one of the most popular ports of call for cruise ships, with the number of cruise ships increasing steadily, making Stavanger one of Europe's fastest growing ports of call for cruise ships north of the Mediterranean. In 2013, 196 ships and 340,000 passengers passed through the city.

The city is aware, however, that oil revenues can diminish quickly depending on the market conditions, and that it is important to continue and enhance policies for the management of an increasingly diverse population in order to avoid what Sven Åke Bjørke, writing for the magazine of the United Nations University calls *"a second-rate foreign working class in a process similar to what we can observe in the small oil-exporting countries in the Middle East, like Kuwait and Qatar"*.<sup>3</sup>

## Education and training

Stavanger has a highly developed and varied educational provision. Whilst most children attend schools provided by the municipality, there are also three private fee-paying schools (catering particularly for the expatriate families); the International School of Stavanger, The British International School of Stavanger and Stavanger French School.

The higher education sector is also extensive. The University of Stavanger was the fifth university established in Norway, in 2004, and has today about 10,100 students and 1,300 employees and is organized into three faculties. The Norwegian Missionary Society established the MHS School of

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Mission and Theology in 1843 and it was accredited in 2008 as a research university. It has about 300 students from approximately 20 countries. Prominent amongst the School's achievements has been the establishment of the Centre for Intercultural Communication (SIK)<sup>4</sup>. Although originally most associated with supporting Norway's international mission, SIK is now increasingly producing research connected to cultural diversity at home. For example a recent study entitled "Labour migrants as a resource in the regional development".

There is a high level of equality with the public school sector in Stavanger. There are no cases of schools in which the number of children of foreign origin is considered to be an issue. It is however important to keep an eye in the diversity situation at schools and follow the demographic evolution, and discuss with the housing department ways of preventing the concentration of minority pupils in some areas which may arise in the future.

As elsewhere in Norway, there is an issue about the low proportion of teachers and trainee teachers from minority ethnic background. This is partly attributable to the relatively low pay and status of the profession which makes it less attractive to highly educated minorities. This is exacerbated in Stavanger where there is an even larger discrepancy between public and private sector salaries. This also makes it difficult for public sector workers to find affordable accommodation in the region. So serious is this that the Education department has purchased apartments which it lets at affordable rents as an incentive to new teachers. Meanwhile, lower skilled minorities are more likely to turn towards the care sector, rather than teaching, for employment.

Achieving parental involvement in their child's education can be a challenge. Representation of minority parents in the school boards and attendance at meeting is low, but the Education department is employing four mediators to liaise with minority parents and help them to play a more active role at the key stages in their children's school life.

The municipality also provides the Johannes Learning Centre<sup>5</sup> which caters for newly arrived children and adults. It has 160 employees of whom 40% are of minority background. When new children arrive they go to Johannes for 2 years before joining a mainstream school. This method has achieved much success but there is now a debate that this may be too long a period for most children to be segregated from their peers. There are members of staff with special skills for working with refugees from difficult or traumatised backgrounds and many staff have multiple language skills. There is also now a trend to encourage students to spend less of their time in the classroom and more in workplace training.

## **Employment and business**

In general there is a stark difference in employment opportunities for migrants between the private sector, which is rather open, and administrative positions in the public sector which is more difficult to penetrate, in particular with regard to the requirement to have a good command of Norwegian.

In Stavanger as a municipality has a higher proportion of ethnic minorities in public sector jobs than the national average, although the city has adopted an action plan to increase the proportion of minorities in management and advisory positions. For instance, the Municipality has introduced an obligation to invite at least one applicant of minority background to job interviews. The action plan of the city comes with a monitoring tool – reporting based on the online applications through which

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sik.no/en/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.velkommentiljohannes.no/>

all management positions are advertised and which allows to observe how many applicants from different backgrounds have applied.

The city has the ambition to go further. For example, the personality and communication skills of candidates have been found to be very important for the final decision, and may still be a hindrance in equal access of migrants to jobs. The city could consider a small-scale research into the recruitment process to explore the more personal and emotional aspects of recruitment decisions, and possibly raise awareness of managers about them.

Hiring people in trainee positions or internships would be one way to help people be tested on a job, build skills, create networks and to learn Norwegian.

There are many examples of good practice such as the Bilfinger Industrier company which has taken the practical approach of organizing its business processes almost complete bilingually into Norwegian and Polish. Some businesses in the private sector see themselves as springboard companies who hire people with migration background to give them a chance to enhance their CV and presentations skills. Although they are hiring them in jobs for which they are overqualified and know that they will not stay for a long time, they consider it an important contribution to the general health of the local economy.

Networks are very important in Norway and it is vital that migrants gain the skills necessary to enter them. People should be helped to develop their networks. The city has a business start-up incubator which recruits from the university and 50% per year of 20 students are of foreign-origin. The Global Future project (co-ordinated by the Norwegian Confederation of Enterprise) is active in enabling talented minority graduates to find employment in established Norwegian companies.

One good example brought to our attention is that, guided by the Confederation of Norwegian enterprises organises expatriate leadership training in which about 20 CEOs of leading enterprises in the Stavanger area participate as coaches. This project appears to be successful: two thirds of the participants change career and achieve promotion after participating. This cross-cultural training appears to contribute positively towards the attitude of both the trainees and the coaches.

A respondent from the Pakistani community felt strongly that there was a need to open up the doors of public administration to minorities with good language and technical skills. Otherwise the continuing perception of discrimination would start to undermine the hope and aspirations of second generation youngsters. It is unclear whether this opinion is shared by many Stavanger residents – the city could consider carrying out (regular) opinion polls and or focus groups around diversity and equal opportunities in general and in employment in particular, in order to enhance the understanding of citizens' concerns and as an evidence basis for future policies.

We received a comment from one woman who had arrived as a refugee 30 years ago and who had subsequently been in regularly employment as well as active in local democracy and trade unions. She said that despite all of this, rarely did a day go by when she was not reminded that she was a foreigner with a strange name. The wider question this episode raises is to what extent a municipality can manage perceptions and relations between host community and new comers. Stavanger authorities have solemnly declared their will to forge a "we culture" which is pluralistic and inclusive. This would require taking up initiatives which invite people to mingle and exchange in more informal settings, in the context of neighborhood or artistic events and through grassroots projects which involve a shared purpose. The city could also hold fora or events to help develop a common vision by citizens for the future of their city. Such initiatives would complement the trust-building role of the Minority Council which has its limitations as its members sometimes perceive



their role as one representing their specific community. The impact of the Minority Council on the feeling of belonging to the city could be evaluated by research and the Board's mandate and composition re-considered if necessary.

Other interesting examples to follow in relation to countering wrong perceptions and stereotypes is the Barcelona "anti-rumour strategy".

Due to the strong presence of the oil business with its hunger for skilled workers and its international orientation, it should be expected that the flow of migrants will continue for some time into the future. Therefore - as the municipality rightly points out – priority must be given to harmonious inclusion. This is especially important because a large proportion of expatriates can be expected to remain permanently in Stavanger, even if there is an economic downturn, and signs of this are already apparent. When Stavanger felt the slight effects of the international economic crisis in the 1980s, unemployed expats did not leave but remained in the region to look for new economic opportunities. The lack of new opportunities however, could be the Achilles heel of the Norwegian economy.

## Housing and neighbourhoods

The municipality is praised by the area's major employers and businesses for its efforts to provide appropriate housing and neighbourhoods for its workers. However the options available to local government are actually rather limited. For instance, the small size and high density of the Stavanger district prevent large-scale expansion of residential areas. This brings dependency upon neighbouring municipalities and requires administrative benevolence. Stavanger has deliberately pursued a housing policy of mixing so as to have no repetition of Oslo's east/west segregation. So far it appears to be successful.

There was little opportunity during the visit to see or compare Stavanger's different neighbourhoods. It should be the focus of a future visit.

## Governance and civil society

As noted above, both the city and the county councils have made strong statements in favour of equality and against discrimination, and have adopted strategies and action plans for the encouragement of diversity. Stavanger also has a strong self-image as a city which is open to the world and is international in its outlook. There is a consensus across the political spectrum which will ensure that this direction of travel is unlikely to be challenged, and a strong policy framework which ensures that political intentions are translated into law and policy. All these factors explain why Stavanger has scored strongly in the Intercultural cities Index, which finds such phenomena easy to measure and thus privileges them. The purpose of this Intercultural Profile is to probe beyond the things which can easily be seen, to those aspects of Interculturality which are less tangible but no less influential.

The first point to note is that whilst it is vitally important for the local authority to make a commitment to its own equality and diversity, as it has done (refer to the index) and the city should put in place rigorous tools to monitor developments (eg. to the CBRA method)<sup>6</sup>, the local authority is not the same thing as a city – which is a much more complex entity. Currently there is not a strategy for diversity or interculturality for the city as a whole, so this must be the priority for the future.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Publication/Handbook-designing.pdf>



The relationship between civil society and the State (local and national) emerged as a prominent issue throughout our visit. Norwegians hold government in high regard and there is an impressive level of both democratic participation and trust in politicians and institutions, by comparison with most countries. In general, Norwegians are traditionally content for the State to deal with the most important aspects of local governance and service, and expect the voluntary sector to play a secondary role of filling any gaps that emerge. This is not to say that they do not value voluntary effort, and many of them are active in a wide range of welfare, social and cultural activities. However, the overall feeling until now seems to have been that if the role of civil society grows then it must be because the State is failing in its duty. In other parts of Europe, if such attitudes ever existed at all, they have been disappearing rapidly, partly as they are no longer financially sustainable, but also because the prevailing mood now is that people expect to take more responsibility for their own affairs, whether as citizens or consumers.

Norway is not troubled by economic recession and austerity and can still afford to finance a large and active role for the local state in governance and services. As such Norway has not been noted as an innovator in new forms of decentralised and bottom-up initiatives that have been thriving elsewhere. Stavanger is no exception to this, with local government receiving substantial taxes from its local economy. The voluntary sector in Stavanger is characterised by large and traditional institutions which continue to receive healthy revenues from charitable giving and rely upon the donation of time and expertise of local residents. The sector is particularly active in the field of refugee and immigrant support. Typical, in this regard, is the Red Cross which has nearly 3000 local members and over 500 active volunteers, providing activities such as a visiting service for those living alone and for people in detention, witness support, a reception centre, Refugee Children's Red Cross, language Instructors, and a network for atonement. However, it seemed to us that the Red Cross worked largely in isolation from other providers, such as the Christian Intercultural Association (KIA). Nor did either of these organisations seem to have any knowledge of or interaction with the various ethnic community groups or with the Minority Council. In general it seemed the provision of services for minorities and newcomers in Stavanger was extensive but it was extremely dispersed and incoherent and, as such, less efficient and effective than it might be. It has transpired from discussions that the International House, now closed, has served to reinforce the identity of different communities, along multicultural lines, more than building bridges, so new action would be required to strengthen the intercultural connections and relations within the city.

It was acknowledged that communications within civil society had been allowed to languish for too long, and that the expectations placed upon the city council were too great. It was also felt that the local authority had been too directive in the past and needed to take a step back and have confidence in civil society to manage its own affairs. As such there was now an initiative to create a new post of Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator, and everyone was looking forward to improvements arising from this.

We were also rather puzzled as to the role of the Minority Council itself. Although several members of it attended our public meeting, no-one introduced themselves as such and seemed happier to discuss the role of the single ethnicity group they represented rather than the supposed co-ordinating body. We were told that it has recently appointed a new leader and that it is expected to become a more dynamic presence in future.

Several people spoke about the former International House of Stavanger. It was founded in 2000 with revenues of €2.4 million. At its peak it was a meeting-place for 72 organizations, with over 70,000 visitors per annum and over 500 events, achieving a national reputation. It offered an interpreting service, a home for Amnesty International, the Rogaland Immigrants' Council and the

European Movement, and included a theatre and concert hall with seating for 275. It is claimed that in its heyday the minority societies thrived and helped each other. The House was said to be an innovator, having invented Norway's first international 17 May National Day, and also supported the Ramadan festival, and the international children's celebration. However its revenues could not keep pace with its growing number of activities and users, and it closed in 2010, with some of its activities being relocated to the city's Central Library. In the opinion of some this was a great loss to Stavanger but others saw it as a facility which had once served a useful function but, by concentrating all minority issues in one building, was risking isolation and missing the opportunities for greater intercultural exchange.

There were several calls for the creation of a new city centre facility for civil society, and that the private sector should take responsibility for some or all of it. Others felt that local business was tired of constantly being approached for funding and that civil society should be more imaginative in the way it raises funds and manages its affairs. It would seem there is an important role for the municipality to manage these relationships.

## Media

The city's largest daily newspaper, Stavanger Aftenblad came out with its first issue in 1893. Competitor Rogalands Avis was first published in 1899 and is published daily. Stavanger has one principle television station, TV Western, that covers local news and reports.

We would have liked to have seen the media represented in the group discussions during our visit, and they were invited. However, we were impressed that the media attended our final briefing with the Mayor, which suggested there was an open and relaxed relationship between the two institutions. The press coverage of the visit and Stavanger's Intercultural cities index result was extensive and positive. Moreover, the Municipality has intervened in a course for journalism students, introducing the diversity challenges of the city and inviting them to write about new and emerging issues in their course work.

We have a general concern that the Norwegian media tends to highlight negative stories of diversity<sup>7</sup> and it may be necessary for communities in Stavanger to work more closely with editors and journalists to alert them to stories of diversity advantage. Alternatively, the city in partnership with civil society might consider launching an independent publication that will do this.

## Welcoming

Rogaland, and within it Stavanger, is a region whose current and future prosperity is based upon its ability to host international skills and companies. It should therefore come as no surprise that the region has a clear sense of the importance of being welcoming and hospitable to newcomers, and has an effective means of putting this into practice. The Stavanger Chamber of Commerce has published a comprehensive 98-page document entitled "New in the STAVANGER and HAUGESUND region" in which all the aspects of moving, arrival, registration, work, education and childcare, health, transport and recreation are covered. We can say it as good an example of a welcoming manual as we have seen anywhere.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example see the report by the Norwegian Government's Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) *Immigrants in the Norwegian Media*.

The Migrant Council has organised a leisure and recreation market place to connect both minorities and new arrivals with the many voluntary groups in the city and a large number of groups have attended. Another positive innovation brought to our attention was a special event organised by the Mayor in which a guest from every ethnic group living in the city was invited to a reception and banquet.

It was said to us that there is an urgent need to shift Stavanger from the mentality that people moving in have to do all the changing. The city should create a 'we culture' of common strengths and positive assets.. The city council and major companies have shown leadership by setting the tone and language with which the discourse of diversity is conducted. How creating the "we culture" work in practice needs to be explored further.

Recognition of qualifications remains an issue, with a lot of people in jobs well below their abilities. Obviously, this is a matter which should be addressed at the national level and the Norwegian intercultural cities network can be instrumental in raising it with the relevant institutions

There is surely a need for a fast track for people with qualifications from recognised universities around the world.

## Language

Norwegian language is seen by most people as an essential pre-requisite both for achieving professional advancement and for entering into social networks. However, others disagree suggesting that English was becoming the *lingua franca* in the city.

Johannes Learning Centre is the city's main vehicle for building language competence. Although the staff used to be all Norwegians, 40% are now of minority background. Then the school has made the move to bilingualism with mixed staff. To achieve this they started hiring former students and appointed people with bilingual skills, wherever there was a need. As a consequence, the school achieved better results. It seems like the leadership had the courage to go beyond that which the law required of them. For Johannes the winning formula seems to be: hire them and teach them; make them part of your functional network. It is said that nobody quits working from Johannes because it is such a good place to work.

## Mixing

Sociability within Norwegian culture has traditionally been built around the family or close local networks and opportunities for mixing between strangers have been limited. Friendships are built slowly but are lasting, but casual conviviality is not something one can force on people. Although these cultural norms are softening as people become more urban and sophisticated there is still the need for social mixing to be given a helping hand.

One example of this is the way in which *Syttende Mai* Norwegian National Day has been developed in Stavanger. Elsewhere it is devoted solely to the celebration of an invented 19<sup>th</sup> century ideal of Norwegian culture (such as the *bunad* regional folk costumes), but the city of Stavanger has taken the bold step of making it a celebration of all cultures. This has been embraced by the citizens and has also been copied by other cities.

As more people interact in public space there is always the potential for conflict as well as positive outcomes. For example the growth of a city centre culture of excessive drinking amongst some Norwegian youth can be alarming or even intimidating for people of other cultures. This matter, as

well as potential conflicts among immigrant youth groups could be discussed with youth organisations in the city. The Christian Intercultural Association has even organised patrols of volunteers around the nightclub district to provide mediation of potential conflicts.

A new national research report showed that migrants and women are withdrawing from online public forums/debates because they are trolled and harassed on the basis of their gender or ethnicity, the city has encouraged the setting up a panel, the Library and the International network, exploring the effects (18% of the Norwegians are withdrawing from the debate, and 36 among minorities) and suggest remedial action. The City are planning to invite the politicians, media and police to discuss measures.

Another aspect of Norwegian culture which some foreigners find difficult to come to terms with is the strength of commitment to equal treatment. Whilst in general this can be seen to be a positive factor, it also means that society is reluctant to make allowances for people who may have special needs or who may require exceptional treatment, and this includes new migrants. This can mean that local people do not go out of their way, or take the first step, to open a social engagement with a stranger. It also remains quite rare for minorities to receive an invitation to the home of a local person, unless they have got to know Norwegians through working together. Foreign students also comment that they are very happy with the education they receive but find it difficult to connect socially with fellow students who live locally.

The Central Library is seen and trusted by most people as the place in the city where anyone can come and meet others. Every week the Library has a "Living Orientation Day", providing guidance and advice on how to build and maintain a Norwegian social network. Besides this all, the Library does not shy away from taking highly controversial topics on the discussion agenda. The impression is that with this, they have acquired more authority as an independent platform for discussion and formation of opinion, than would have happened in a so-called "neutral" position. Almost all workers in the Library are currently white Norwegians, and the management would like to see some positive action here.

An interesting example of ordinary people taking the initiative in Stavanger is EatinCommon which helps people who would like to host dinner parties for strangers.

Sport is a potential meeting place too. For example the football club Brodd has cultivated a very international profile, and also accepts people who cannot pay the membership fees. The university's sports department is also said to be doing more and more for cross cultural mixing. However there are far fewer arenas for home-based women to meet and it will be necessary for policymakers to ensure that people are not over-looked simply because they are unseen. They should also recognise that many migrants work in extremely tiring jobs with long or unsociable hours, which makes it even harder for them to socialise with strangers. Thus there is all the more reason for ethnic Norwegians to overcome their natural reserve and/or hyper-egalitarianism in order to seek out and form new relationships. Local clubs and associations and clubs could be encouraged, for instance to make a stronger effort to reach out to minority residents, by also possibly modifying their schedules or the types of activities they offer.

## **Security and conflict management**

Conventional wisdom suggests that Norwegian society is not comfortable with the prospect of open conflict and will go to great lengths to avoid it. However, Stavanger has been active in dealing with issues.

This may be something of a cliché but there are, nevertheless cases in Stavanger of how confronting and managing difficult situation is preferable to avoidance. For example, a while back there was a sequence of six rapes in the city. All were found to have been perpetrated by the same man – an ethnic minority taxi driver. Initially the story was ‘swept under the carpet’ by the authorities and the media, for fear of arousing ethnic tension. However, a local newspaper editor finally decided to go public with the story, and covered in such a way as to encourage a calm and reasonable discussion in the city. Many ethnic group representatives said they preferred this approach to enforced silence or political correctness, partly because they did not wish to be seen to be receiving special privileges or having the law bent on their behalf, but also because their communities were often able to offer complimentary methods of policing bad behaviour amongst their members. After this incident, the city has developed know how and mechanisms to deal with such issues. Following rape cases involving asylum seekers a few years ago, the city took resolute action. Officials and civil society groups visited asylum seekers to raise awareness of the law and values of gender equality and women’s rights, the taxi drivers developed alert protocols, the police also took prevention measures. Such incidents have almost never occurred since.

Stavanger has set up various mediation services for instance teaching supervisors/mentors dedicated to kindergartens, schools and municipal services. An intercultural mediation service is run by a civil society organisation (“Self-help For Immigrants and Refugees”), a national not-for-profit independent organisation established for informing and referring users to the right body to address and assisting with sorting out problems in a wide range of areas.

Furthermore mediation is provided in specialised institutions such as hospitals, police, youth clubs, mediation centres, and retirement homes; within the city administration; in the neighbourhoods, on the streets, actively seeking to meet residents and discuss problems.

The inter-religious group set up by religious leaders in the city acts as a conflict management mechanism. There is also a civil protection alert group which has members from different professional backgrounds – Stavanger was the first municipality in Norway to reach out to inhabitants with a Pilipino background after the 2013 tsunami.

## **Review of the Intercultural Cities Index**

Stavanger has been ranked particularly highly in the Intercultural Cities Index, and has shown a determination to improve its score in the future, and for this it is to be applauded and encouraged.

However, our message to Stavanger – and to other cities – is that the Index only tells part of the story of what an Intercultural City is. It identifies and measures those things which can easily be identified and measured, and tends to privilege cities which have an effective top-down policy-making machinery. However, it is less able to recognise the more subtle and subjective factors which can determine whether a city feels open and warm or closed and cold. As such we have emphasised to the Stavanger authorities that rather than devoting all their time to improving their Index score, they should be asking themselves the difficult questions about what are the hidden impediments to greater cultural mixing and cooperation. And the authorities should not simply ask what they should be doing more of, but how they can encourage and empower all sectors of Stavanger’s society to play a more active role. The city council has clearly realised that it does not have to do everything itself, but can be more effective in facilitating others.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Stavanger does an impressive job of hosting large numbers of expatriate professionals and companies; it offers decent jobs and homes to many more migrant workers; and also provides a generous welcome to people who arrive in search of sanctuary (eg persecuted writers – Stavanger is a member of the Sanctuary cities network).. However, it seems that these different sectors are partitioned off from each other, and from the ethnic Norwegians themselves. Stavanger has not yet found a way of reconciling them all and building a coherent whole from them. It may like to portray itself as the international city and the versatile city but to be an intercultural city it still has much work to do. Policy will take it some of the way, but it is in winning hearts and minds of local people where the greatest challenge will be. It must create a desire to move beyond passive tolerance of difference to active engagement, mutual allowance and pursuit of the diversity advantage.

Stavanger must also learn from its own history that nothing lasts forever, particular wealth. It must regular ask itself how good its society would be if the wealth were no longer there. In particular has it used its wealth wisely to invest in long term social bonds and relationships that will make the city resilient to deal with conflict? Migrants at present ask for little beyond a job and home but in future minorities will justifiably become more demanding, and poorer migrants might turn out to be more loyal to the city than many people would expect.

There is a need to mobilise people power and show people how many are subscribing to the intercultural ethos. It would be worth Stavanger looking at the city of Dublin's statement on interculturalism<sup>8</sup> and adopting a similar one which local companies and voluntary groups could sign up to it.

Stavanger has no spatial segregation of minorities, but the municipality fully realizes that waiting to see how things may develop is not an option. Second and third generation migrants will undoubtedly emerge within the next ten to twenty years and it's hard to predict how their sense of belonging to the community will unfold within the Norwegian context.

Stavanger can certainly benefit fully from exchange of experiences with other Intercultural Cities in the network that have greater experience with the development of migrant minority groups. We note already the city's keenness to participate in ICC network events.

Given the high emphasis on mastering the Norwegian language, Stavanger needs more volunteer practice opportunities for people to train in the language. The public sector in particular should make more space for trainees.

The municipality should pay more attention to entrepreneurial skills among migrants. In the short term, this can provide the migrants with an independent economic base, and in the longer term, this gives impetus to the much-needed diversification of the regional economy.

The city council needs to have the courage to step back and allow space for creativity and risk and relax into a more enabling form of governance. A first step in this will be finding a way to enlarge the Diversity Resource Network beyond its current, exclusively city council, membership to take in new talents and perspectives, so it can become the vehicle for formulating and delivering an intercultural city strategy for Stavanger.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-community/intercultural-dublin>

## STAVANGER PROGRAMME

### Thursday 12.06

**Welcome to the TOU scene, Lervigsveien 22, 4014 Stavanger**

8:30 to 9:00	Registration / Coffee and welcome
9:00 a.m. to 9:10	Mayor welcomes
9:10 to 9:20	Irena Guidikova (Chairman ICC)
9:20 to 10:00	Phil Wood, Introduction to the Intercultural city concept and practice
10:00 to 10:10	Break
10:10 to 11:30	Discussion in groups
11:30 to 12:20	Lunch
12.20-13.15	Discussion in groups continues
13.15-13.25	Break
13.25 to 13.50	Summary of plenary
13.50 to 14.00	End with Deputy Mayor

14.15- 15.45 interview with small groups

#### Group 1

Business sector

Randi Mannsåker INN

May Endresen Greater Stavanger

Marcela Molina the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, LO

Suzanne Kok De Selstad Global future

#### Group 2

Volunteer sector

Svein Andersen Red cross

Øystein Jacobsen Brodd sports club

Jeanette Oseberg volunteer bureau

#### Group 3

International cultural network

Tina Nådland

Randi Pettersen

Rishi Khandelwal

16.00 Walk to Sølvsberget cultural centre  
On our way we will stop by Johannes learning centre to watch their vegetable garden on the rooftop of the building

16.45- 17.45 Field visit at Sølvsberget cultural centre

### Friday 13.06

09.00- 10.45 Meeting with the municipal network for diversity and integration

11.00-11.30, or

11.30-12.00 Closing meeting with the Mayor Christine Sagen Helgø, the Chief administrative officer Inger Østensjø and Senior advisor Ingrid Hauge Rasmussen