



## El Cabildo de Tenerife

### 1. Introduction

Tenerife is one of the islands belonging to the Canary Islands, and along La Palma, La Gomera and El Hierro, forms the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. With an area of 2,034.38 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 898,680 inhabitants (2012) is the largest island of the Canary archipelago.

In recent years Tenerife has experienced significant population growth well above the national average. In 1990 the island had 663,306 inhabitants, a figure that increased to 709,365 inhabitants in 2000. These data reflect an increase in 46,059 people. However, in the period between 2000 and 2007 the population increased range 155.705 people to reach the figure of 865,070 inhabitants.

Like all the Canary Islands, Tenerife has had a special relationship with the Americas. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emigration to the continent, especially Cuba and Venezuela, acquired a considerable size. The peak of migration occurred in World War I and its aftermath, when the high price of sugar in Cuba became a privileged destination in the island for the population of the Canary Islands: a nearly three-quarters of the island youth between 15 and 20 years had migrated to Cuba. In total, between 1898 and 1932, there were about 70,000 people leaving Canary toward Cuba, representing 15.3% of the Canarias population at the time. It was not until the late nineties and early 2000, which has clearly reversed the trend and Tenerife has begun to receive returnees islanders and their descendants, as well as immigrants from other countries.

In June 2013, Canary had 101,784 non-EU foreign residents, 35,163 of whom lived in the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Similarly, in Canary there were 179,586 EU residents, 90,516 of whom lived in the province of Tenerife.

As a constant in history, due to its geographical location, Tenerife and the Islands have maintained certain financial and administrative peculiarities compared with the rest of the country. These differences were reflected in an Act late nineteenth century (1872), in the creation of the Island Councils ("Cabildo"), which would be like the government of the Island (1912) and with the implementation of the law of Special economic and taxing for the Islands in 1991. In 1982, Canary becomes an Autonomous Community,

and within the framework of the European Union, has a different model in the Lisbon Treaty (2004) and the status of outermost region.

Tenerife 's economy, mainly based on agricultural and trade until the 70s of XX century, is now based in the tertiary sector (74.6 %), mainly tourism, which has led to the development of construction and tourism related services. The industry is small and represents around 7 or 8 % of GDP, mainly in food processing sectors, tobacco and refined petroleum products (oil refinery in Santa Cruz de Tenerife).

## **2. The context of immigration and integration policies in Spain**

Spain absorbed the largest number of immigrants over the period 2000-2010, well above the growth rate of the stock of immigrants in the UK and Germany or France, which in this period remained more or less constant. Other southern countries such as Italy also witnessed a significant increase in migratory flows, although not as strong as in the case of Spain.

In Spain, integration issues did not become a matter of interest until a few years after the first migration flows, and first at the local level and then spread to the regional governments and the State. In fact the idea of integration was not present in the writing of the first law of 1985 and had to wait until the 90's.

Some of the plans that emerged were limited to transcribe the entire departmental measures of local or regional governments. Still others went further contextualizing such measures in a broader framework (debates on multiculturalism, interculturalism, coexistence, diversity or civic citizenship) and some incorporate budgetary projections and evaluation mechanisms, which were not always carried out. Yet and thus integration plans will go generalizing although its own dispersion and multiplicity of models contribute to a situation in Spain of a real "patchwork" of integration models, rather than a single model.

### **The instruments of integration policy**

With the 1999 law, the final step for the establishment of a statewide model of integration with other administrations is given. The Fund for the Integration of Immigrants is created and the Integration plans are developed. Then the advent of economic crisis will reduce the allocations of the Fund and also the interest in this issue.

- A model based on equal rights and duties. Limited distinction between regular and irregular immigrants by the exceptionality of the Municipal Register, as registration is compulsory for all residents and provides access to public services (health and education)
- The development of the Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration:
  - First Plan (2007-2010)
  - Second Plan (2011-2014)
- Fund for the Integration of Immigrants and educational support:
  - State Funds distributed by the Regional Governments and destined to municipalities
- On a European comparative ( MIPEX -28) , Spain is halfway of good practices and gets a slightly favourable results.

A notable aspect in the case of Spain is that despite the impact of serious economic crisis in this country at a period marked by the important arrival of immigrants, at least for now we can say that anti-immigration populist speeches have not found the support they found in other European countries. It is difficult to clearly identify the causes of this reality, but it is certainly very important not only to highlight but devote efforts to better analyse the reasons that help explain it, since it is one of the biggest challenges facing Europe nowadays.

### **3. Intercultural policies in Tenerife**

The distribution of responsibilities of integration policies in Spain is mainly focused on the role of the autonomous communities, despite the great effort made by municipalities in recent years. In this sense, the Cabildo of Tenerife does not have legal responsibility to manage integration policies, although it covers the efforts municipalities on the island might do in this area, as well as a shared management of some policies like social services .

The Department of Employment, Economic Development, Trade and External Affairs of the Cabildo of Tenerife, promotes various initiatives related to interculturalism.

The Immigration Observatory of Tenerife (OBITen) depends financially from this area, which is an entity specializing in the understanding of human and

cultural diversity of the island, and in addition is co-responsible of the projects being developed with the aim of promoting intercultural dialogue and social integration.

On our visit to Tenerife we had the opportunity to meet with a councillor of the Cabildo, D. Efraín Medina, who explained us very clearly that interculturalism was a priority policy for the Cabildo. The councillor strongly defended the strengths and opportunities that cultural diversity poses to the island, including in the field of economic development. Importantly, the Minister made the same speech at the meeting we had in his office than in the press conference we had afterwards with many journalists. He clearly defended the intercultural approach and the importance of being part of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities ( RECI ) that the Cabildo joined in May 2012 after the government approved it with a large political consensus.

Precisely because of the incorporation in 2012 of the Cabildo of Tenerife in RECI, it was decided to create a transversal working committee with representatives from various departments of the Cabildo (economy, culture, youth , equality, participation, social care ..) and obviously with officials of OBITen. On our visit we were able to attend a meeting of this working group and we saw a first positive result as the people from tourism department joined the meeting. At first they didn't see a clear link between tourism and intercultural approach but from the meetings some possible collaborations were raised in this area and they were happy to join.

Although the Cabildo did not have competence in the field of education, in the meeting they explained that the areas of youth and equality have collaborated in the process of integration of immigrant students and families in the schools of southern Tenerife, the area with higher presence of foreign-born citizens. They worked there mainly because the teachers were not trained and prepared to meet the new challenges posed by the increase of the schools cultural diversity. An example of action was conducted in schools during the period in which many "cayucos" arrived, was installed to avoid the perception that it was producing an "invasion".

An interesting fact that deserves special attention is that leisure services for youth offered by the Cabildo, the ones to first approach are the youth of Latin American origin, and then end up attracting young nationals .

Regarding cultural policies they said that cultural diversity is a characteristic feature of the island and that is always clear on the activities and cultural programs on the island. A good practice (which stands out in the Manual of intercultural policies published by RECI ) is the "Forum Island ," which is to

enhance the brand of island of Tenerife as cultural diversity, for his close ties with Europe, Latin America and Africa. Activities, exhibitions, conferences and festivals are organized that promote awareness of the cultures of different countries and the mixture between them. The "carnaval" celebration of the island is also a great event in which interculturalism is promoted.

### **The Immigration Observatory of Tenerife (OBITen)**

The OBITen is a joint initiative of the Cabildo of Tenerife and La Laguna University arising in 2001 with the aim of promoting scientific research of migratory movements on the island of Tenerife. It prioritizes the need to apply theoretical knowledge to the planning and management of diversity policies, betting on the link between theory and practice. This goal has guided the definition of its research.

Since its creation in 2001, the OBITen represents a turning point regarding the ability to generate knowledge and to promote discussion and reflection on migration issues. Each year since 2001 have been organizing technical seminars to deepen the main topics related to the management of migration flows, diversity and interculturalism.

Over the years the OBITen has become a key instrument to plan and implement Cabildo's intercultural strategy. In the early years there was an urgency to respond to the needs of the moment. However, from 2009 evidenced the need to bet more on participation and interculturalism on the island. This results in the creation of the project "Together in the Same Direction" which is the Cabildo intercultural strategy.

#### **4. The strategy "together in the same direction "**

In 2009 started the "Together in the same direction", which marked a before and after in the commitment and action of the Cabildo regarding intercultural policies.

"Together" is a strategy for managing diversity developed by the Administrative External Action Service of the Cabildo and OBITen.

As part of this initiative has woven a broad network that includes the vast majority of immigrant associations that exist in Tenerife as well as institutions and social organizations with the common goal of promoting intercultural dialogue and strengthen integration processes and social cohesion. Currently more than 100 entities between immigrant associations,

social partners, public agencies and institutions participate on the Together strategy.

The development of the strategy and the involvement of members of the network are organized into five thematic working groups:

- Social Services
- Gender Violence
- Co-development
- Social Participation
- Communication

Each group discussed and approved by consensus a Work Plan that should define clear objectives, specific actions to achieve those objectives, expected results and indicators of evaluation. This strategic planning work is very important and brings rigor and clarity to the actions developed.

#### Key Objectives:

1. Promote intercultural dialogue and integration processes in an increasingly multicultural society.
2. To promote the values of tolerance , coexistence in diversity , equal opportunities and social cohesion.
3. To promote community action for social, economic and cultural development in the areas linked by migration.
4. To strengthen the network performance of organizations and human resources that serves the social and cultural diversity.

#### Main lines of action:

1. Promoting the level of representation of associations in relation to national and / or regional groups.
2. Promotion of communication, coordination and cooperation between public institutions, private entities and NGOs, in relation to the integration processes for social cohesion in the Canaries.
3. Promoting knowledge and scientific research of the population, relationships and associative structures formed from immigration.

4. Fostering networking in contexts of diversity in the areas of gender violence, co-development , social services , communication , social participation , youth and interculturalism.
5. Strengthening training for qualified attention to social and cultural diversity in the territory and public and private organizations.
6. Adequacy of communication strategies to the characteristics of an increasingly multicultural society.
7. Contribution to the consolidation of organizations and actions of their leading teams.
8. Development of communication channels for the dissemination of work done in a collaborative network, with special emphasis on best practices.

The strategy has financial resources for its implementation that provides the Cabildo and the Canary Islands Government through its calls for grants.

A part of the evaluation of the strategy is carried out in the Immigrant Associations and Social Agents of Tenerife Committees and a technical team, is currently working with the entities participating in the Together network to establish an instrument of participatory consultation, monitoring and supervision.

Although the working groups are themed and they can engage people across the island, the strategy has been spreading through the "Tenerife for all" initiative to specific areas of the island geography. So far this has been driven territorial application in the neighbourhoods of El Fraile and Taco, but is expected to extend to other districts soon.

The visibility of the strategy is increasing in the island context right now considering a specific project to share its philosophy, objectives and methodology of work with the other Canary Islands by the Island Cabildos with support from the Canarias Government.

Together in the same direction has a Web site (<http://www.enlamismadireccion.com>) YouTube Channel and Facebook profile, among other communication resources.

## **Meeting with the Permanent Commission of the "Together" Network**

On our visit we had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the entities that are part of the Permanent Commission of Together that has been created recently (representatives of groups Hispano-Moroccan, Sahrawi, Uruguay, Nigeria, Peru, Bolivia, and associations for the employment of women etc.)

These people talked about their experience and what it meant for them to participate in the Together Network. They noted that the network gave them many forces to work together and they considered it as a great big family. The network allowed them to learn, collaborate, meet other experiences that could be applied in their associations and also foster positive values of solidarity and coexistence and generate more excitement and hope.

It was very interesting to listen to the major challenges currently facing many immigrants living on the island, highlighting the economic problems and high unemployment, those related to increasing irregularity because of job loss and the problems this posed for access the healthcare system. They also noted the issues of discrimination and difficulties in access to jobs equivalent with their qualifications. Other aspects relate to restrictions on the right to vote and the negative effects they were having by budget cuts in integration policies, supporting associations and especially scholarship cuts in the educational system and to study at the university.

### Working Group " codesarrollarte " - Together in the same direction

We had a meeting with some members of one of the Together working groups, called " codesarrollarte ". This group, although was formalized in June 2011 under the name Co-development Working Group renamed after CodesarrollarTE Group and has evolved to focus on Education for Development, while still addressing the areas of International Cooperation for Development and co-development.

Once the working group plan is approved, every person and entity decides what want to work and with what intensity. Since 2013 the Group's objective is to promote interest in the values of Educational Development in Tenerife.

Currently 9 organizations are part of CodesarrollarTE Group and also there are two people who are part of the group without belonging to any entity.

In our conversation with group members told us some of the actions they are conducting, as a project that is having much welcome that involves



working the millennium goals in schools. They also work to raise awareness through film forums, photo competitions and exhibitions .

## **5. El Fraile Neighbourhood**

El Fraile is a small town in the municipality of Arona in South Tenerife with a population of just over 7000 inhabitants. The neighbourhood is known for its multicultural character through settlement for decades of people from very diverse backgrounds. In 2011 half of its population was foreign-born, most Latin American and African origin. The great sociocultural diversity of the neighbourhood has been associated with a highly stigmatized image of conflict. Before the visit we were warned that the image did not conform to reality, but after walking a few hours around the neighbourhood and talk to neighbours and representatives of local organizations, we found that few times the distance between perception and the reality of a neighbourhood was so marked. That distorted picture has somehow hindered the development of the area, which on the other hand has many facilities that constitute it as one of the best equipped neighbourhoods in the island.

As part of the Together strategy and specifically through the working group of social participation, El Fraile was chosen as the first neighbourhood where to promote specific projects to foster participation, intercultural relations and ultimately its development.

The "Fraile for All" is known as the process has been launched in the district from the decision of all entities and individuals. The process has the support of the municipality of Arona and OBITE collaboration and the results are clearly positive .

On our visit we were able to talk with a large representation of the entities and residents in various areas such as the Muslim cultural centre, the association of elderly or the church. In those meetings we were able to see first hand the high level of involvement of residents and entities in the project and the significant progress that had occurred through participatory work. By promoting opportunities for dialogue and mutual understanding were going removing prejudices and typical stereotypes are always present in environments with high cultural diversity.

The working methodology is an adaptation of the Together project methodology with the creation of several working groups from the priorities and needs identified by consensus among the participants.

The visit revealed the existence of a strong sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and especially a high degree of connection between neighbouring generations and different cultural backgrounds.

The topics chosen by the neighbours to work them in the working groups are related to the environment and awareness of the issues of cleanliness, with the promotion of intercultural and inter - religious relations, promote collaboration between the different associations, conduct mediation actions and focus on language translation of information on basic services such as education and healthcare.

One area that deserves special attention is related to the media. The media are key when it comes to stigmatize a particular territory as has traditionally happened to El Fraile. The commitment of neighbours to work to reverse this situation, has shown positive results regarding the image media are currently putting on El Fraile, although there is still much work to do.

In short, a visit to El Fraile surely meant the best way to check on the ground the positive results of the work being done under the Together project. Rarely the title of a program has been adjusted so well to the social reality of a neighbourhood that has all the ingredients to be considered a great neighbourhood. Many cities not only in Spain but in Europe should come to know first hand what is happening in El Fraile. It is not about avoiding conflicts and problems, but address them directly through dialogue and commitment to work collectively to improve the neighbourhood and the lives of their residents. In El Fraile you can breathe real interculturalism.

## **6. Visit to Charrúa Association (Uruguay)**

In 2011 Uruguayan-born citizens founded this association that aims to work for social cohesion and disseminate, promote and integrate Uruguayan culture in Tenerife.

The association is clearly committed to promoting interculturalism, and this proves that among its 225 members include people from 5 different nationalities. It is open to all residents and whose leaders are committed to the global challenges that affect the entire population of Tenerife.

The main activities carried out:

- Personalized advice on immigration, health, etc. .
- Legal advice.
- Advising Associations
- Solidary Wardrobe.
- Library .
- Courses and workshops : Yoga, Karate , Computers, Murga , Kids Recreation .
- Group " Infant Charrua " .
- Food and celebrations.

The association is also heavily involved in all the initiatives that are promoted as part of the Together strategy involved in numerous working groups ( gender violence, communication, El Fraile etc . ) and on projects of all kinds , as the " anti-rumor " .

Despite the many activities taking place in the association, the main concern of those responsible is related to the difficult times that are living in Tenerife and in the whole of Spain as a result of the economic crisis. Job losses and the difficulties arising from this situation by particularly vulnerable groups is having a very negative impact on many families who see their life projects are crumbling.

This association is a good example of how an entity linked to a particular group is actively involved in working to enhance social cohesion and welfare of the whole society. Again, the theoretical principles of interculturalism intensely applied in the everyday life of neighbourhoods.

## **7. Conclusions and recommendations**

The Cabildo of Tenerife , despite not having specific competences in integration and in other key areas such as education, has chosen to promote an intercultural strategy that is also achieving some positive results.

But of the Cabildo for collaborating with the University through the creation of a body such as the OBITen, which prioritizes the application of knowledge to practice policies and intervention projects, is shown as a success.

Administrations tend to have structures and management processes quite bureaucratic that often hampering the development of strategies that require a lot of flexibility, creativity and certain "informality".

The "Together in the same direction" strategy seeks to promote interculturalism from the base, push through ambitious and rigorous participatory process in which citizens and social organizations are the true protagonists.

Government cannot and shouldn't pretend to do everything, and must learn to adapt so each actor do their part to achieve the best result.

Importantly, without political leadership this would not be possible , and the Cabildo of Tenerife seems that this political commitment exists. Some evidence for this is the political discourse itself in favor of interculturalism , betting to maintain and even increase the budget in an unfavorable context

promoting a project as the " anti-rumor ", joining initiatives like RECI and seek maximum political consensus in favour of interculturalism.

But governments and administrations must increasingly assume they are major actors in a complex context but there are many other actors also important. Only from the collaboration and cooperation can be achieved certain goals.

One of the results that have been confirmed in Tenerife is that the emergence of new players such as RECI and European program promoted by the Council of Europe to create collaborative networks can provide very positive aspects to support and strengthen intercultural strategies locally.

The various visits that have been made to Tenerife by the RECI team and experts from the Council of Europe, have led to value, visualize and support the efforts of municipal officials and OBITen. Local associations also feel that their work is recognized and this generates energies that end up having a positive impact on the overall strategy. Thanks to belonging to RECI, Tenerife is promoting the " anti-rumor " project that has also served to provide new energies to the Together Network, adding a new working group and encouraging more people to get involved in the strategy.

On the other hand, one of the main challenges facing today's governments and public administrations is closer to citizens and involve them in the processes of social transformation. If an administration can not really add the energy, commitment and willingness of citizens in participatory processes, it has much more difficult to respond effectively to the many challenges that exist in our neighbourhoods.

The participatory dimension must also be intergenerational and intercultural and in this sense, the Together strategy is definitely a great reference .

Another key aspect of participatory development to be stimulating and involve a lot of different people is the subject of communication. Even more in the case of young people, who are absolutely essential to adding them to these processes. Together strategy is also paying close attention to communication using various channels such as audio-visual and social networks and focusing on creativity.

Anyway Together strategy should evolve and deepen various aspects to increase their impact on the set of intercultural policies and throughout the country, and continuing to work on impact indicators to better measure its impact.

## Recommendations

Clear commitment to extend the Together project a larger number of districts and territories of the island and reach agreements with other governments to extend it to all the islands.

Deepening the transversal approach of the strategy to strengthen the committee where various council departments are present. There is a long way to go in this direction which should allow greater collaboration between the fields of culture or economic promotion and employment among others like urban planning.

Incorporate private sector actors and especially companies in the strategy would open new avenues for collaboration and work that must be explored. In this sense, there are interesting experiences in European cities (in Lewisham, Copenhagen etc . ) Unleashing DELI project by the Council of Europe can provide know-how to other cities of the network that should be tapped.

It would also be interesting to identify between the cities of the Spanish network and similar European experiences of participatory processes to identify and share good practice and exchange ideas, methodologies, evaluation systems etc. ( with cities like Parla , Barcelona , Getxo etc . )

The momentum of the " anti-rumor " project in Tenerife should have continuity and we need to foster the exchange between cities that are implementing anti-rumor strategies. From RECI these spaces must be provided to facilitate collaboration, but the cities themselves should also take the initiative to contact each other directly in order to consolidate a culture of networking . This should be true not only between RECI cities but among all European cities linked to the ICC program.