



INTERCULTURAL CITIES PROGRAMME Medium-term strategy

2016-2019

About Intercultural cities (ICC)

The growing cultural diversity of European societies may pose distinct challenges to human rights, democracy and community cohesion. Designing public policies which help manage diversity as a resource, amplifying the social and economic benefits of heterogeneous communities and minimising its potential negative effects, is one of the greatest challenges of our century.

The Intercultural cities is a capacity-building and policy development programme that supports cities across Europe and beyond with the participative design, implementation and evaluation of diversity and inclusion strategies. These strategies cut across institutional silos and mobilise leaders, policy officials, professionals, businesses and civil society towards a model of integration, called Intercultural integration¹.

While a range of projects involving cities and other actors, in particular NGOs or certain professionals such as teachers and academics, deal with specific aspects of diversity management and migrant integration, Intercultural cities is the only initiative which:

- Is based on a range of European values and principles, in particular those of the Council of Europe;
- Has a strong research and impact evaluation dimension;
- Is long-term (not project) based and thus enables sustainable policy changes in participating cities;
- Has a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach, engaging a wide range of actors in cities, thus ensuring effectiveness and sustainability of policy change in cities;
- Is supported by an intergovernmental organisation, thus increasing outreach and political commitment.

Based on the successful implementation of Intercultural cities, the Council of Europe member States have endorsed² intercultural integration as an effective policy approach at the local level and have developed tools to support local authorities in applying intercultural integration in practice. In fact, this approach validates different cultures, ideas and beliefs within an overarching human rights framework, avoiding both the stifling conformism of assimilation and the moral relativism of multiculturalism. Over a hundred cities in Europe and beyond are currently engaged, through the Intercultural cities network (one of the main tools of the ICC programme), in further

¹ The model is presented in [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on intercultural integration](#) and the Step by step guide appended to it.

² See [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on intercultural integration](#)

developing the intercultural integration know-how, and exchanging good practice to improve their policies. An impact evaluation³ of the intercultural integration approach has confirmed its effectiveness for building cohesive, tolerant local communities, with a greater level of safety and fewer conflicts. Compelling research evidence⁴ demonstrates the value of an inclusive approach to diversity for human groups and communities.

The Intercultural cities programme helps cities to:

- Create a city's sense of pluralistic identity based on the pride and appreciation of its diverse population and minimise ethnic tension and conflict.
- Set up a governance model empowering all members of the community, regardless of their origin or status, and thus benefit from their talents, skills and links with developing markets.
- Break the walls between ethnic groups, build trust and thus ensure community cohesion and solidarity.
- Make the public space and services accessible to all and end the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion which goes hand in hand with ethnic segregation.
- Empower intercultural innovators in public institutions and civil society and - through them - ensure that policies encourage intercultural interaction.
- Build a positive public discourse and encourage a balanced approach to diversity in media to foster positive public perception of migrant and minority groups.

The Intercultural cities programme provides expert and peer support to cities which chose to learn how to better manage diversity and benefit from the diversity advantage. The programme offers an internationally tested and validated methodology which is constantly being enriched and deepened, and a set of analytical and learning tools. It also helps with re-shaping city policies and services to make them more effective in a diverse context, and to engage citizens in building an understanding of their society's diversity as a competitive advantage.

Medium-term objectives of the programme

The goal of the Council of Europe in relation to the Intercultural cities programme in a medium-term perspective includes the following:

1. Controlled expansion of the network's membership

Target for 2016-2019: 120 cities

Rationale

The Intercultural cities programme relies upon its network of cities as:

- A source of policy know-how and good practice;
- A political coalition, advocating a positive and inclusive approach to diversity and countering xenophobic discourse;

³ See: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/results-and-impact>

⁴ [Meta analysis](#) of research

- A relay for introducing the intercultural approach to regional and national policy levels.

In order to increase the Intercultural integration's impact on migrant integration policies in Europe, the ICC network needs to grow. At the same time, growth should be controlled in order to make sure that the Council of Europe's can maintain the level and quality of support provided to each city, and ensure (financially) participation opportunities for all members in ICC events and activities.

A majority of the current members are concentrated in a few countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal) while there are a few members from the largest and most diverse CoE member states (Germany, France, United Kingdom) and none in some member states (Turkey, Hungary, the Czech republic, Austria, Belgium...). While the intercultural integration approach is most readily embraced by cities in regions with a relatively recent, but rapidly growing inward migration, it is certainly relevant for countries with a longer history of migration which are seeking to update their policies.

Actions

- Participation in international events for cities in order to raise awareness about the programme and encourage new members;
- Direct and proactive contacts with specific cities, either on a "cold call" basis or through established contacts by other Council of Europe departments, or external contacts.
- Possibly, an open call for candidates can also be launched. Increase of the membership of existing national networks and setting up of new ones (eg. Poland, Greece, Cyprus).
- Organisation of introductory meetings about ICC in specific countries (eg. UK, Germany).
- Expansion in the South European neighborhood (via the CoE-EU South programme) and in other regions/continents if there is demand (although Europe remains a priority).

Timeline: 100 cities by end 2017, 120 cities by end 2019

Risks: a sharp increase in demand which could undermine the quality of services; lack of political will following the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks.

Risks' mitigation measures: selection of members based on political and geographic criteria, scheduling accession in manageable intervals. Priority to be given to cities in under-represented countries, and to capital cities.

Gender equality dimension: mainstream gender equality dimension in key programme tools such as the ICC expert reviews and index.

2. Devise new tools to support cities in developing, implementing and applying intercultural strategies

Rationale

The Intercultural integration concept is well-defined in terms of its principles and general policy guidelines. However, many cities require assistance in translating principles into policies, building partnerships with public, civil society and private stakeholders, implementing policies and evaluating their impact.

Actions

- Design and test a tool to support the development of specific policies in an intercultural perspective as well as a tool to measure opportunity/achievement gaps for different communities and identify remedial actions (a “mind the gap tool”), as well as tools to encourage diversity and diversity advantage approaches in business and entrepreneurship;
- Prepare a range of policy briefs to further explain and illustrate the intercultural integration approach in different policy fields;
- Offer to cities members of national networks to benefit from expert visits and reviews;
- Mainstream successful innovation (eg. the anti-rumour approach) by providing resources for new cities to adopt tested innovation, by initiating new cities, as well as by designing a standard initiation online course (MOOC).

Timeline: ICC policy development tools to be piloted by end 2017; policy briefs collection to be published by end 2017; all national network members to undergo expert visits by end 2019; anti-rumour methodology to be exported to 20 new cities by end 2019, MOOC to be ready by end 2017.

Risks: lack of sufficient number of experts to carry out the work.

Risks' mitigation actions: identify and train new experts.

Gender equality issues: include gender equality dimension explicitly in the policy development tool and in the anti-rumour work. Increase the number of female ICC experts.

3. Deepen the policy know-how of officials and other actors involved in the intercultural work in cities

Rationale

The Intercultural cities approach is in constant development. As new ideas are being tested in cities and as the political and diversity landscapes evolve, the programme continuously enriches its knowledge base, its good practice collection and its pool of experts. It is important to ensure access to policy innovation on the ground and adequate means for analysing and sharing good practice.

Actions

- Set up learning clusters for cities and experts to gather experience/examples and generate knowledge; develop and mainstream tools in specific priority areas (eg. intercultural competence training for local stakeholders, refugee reception and inclusion, media and political discourse, etc.);
- Organise thematic events on topics which are a priority for ICC member cities, involving also outstanding academics and practitioners originally unrelated to the cities; enlargement of the circle of ICC experts and improving the gender balance, as well as linguistic diversity of experts (in particular adding more French speakers).

Timeline: launch two learning clusters in 2016 and two other in 2018.

Risks: learning clusters and thematic events not coming up with new ideas or representing added value for the cities and the programme.

Risks' mitigation actions: give learning clusters and their lead experts detailed terms of reference and expected results and monitoring closely their progress. Open up the learning process to more participants via webinars and other online forms of participation.

Gender equality dimension: ensure gender balance in the membership of learning clusters and include these issues in the terms of reference.

4. Increase outreach and impact

Rationale

While the take up of intercultural integration at the local level is encouraging, there are clear limits to the mandate and scope of action of local authorities, which make it important to introduce this policy approach at the national level as well. It is therefore essential to convince national authorities to embrace the approach, adapting it as necessary for application at this level. Applying the intercultural paradigm to the national level would require States to commit to adopting a public discourse fostering a pluralistic - as opposed to ethnocentric - regional or national identity, ensuring equal access to citizenship and civil and social rights for all residents in the country, encouraging socio-cultural mixing and interaction in institutions, as well as rendering governing bodies more diverse and developing the diversity/intercultural competence of public officials.

In Council of Europe member states there is, however, no official channel for transferring policy know-how from the local to the national level and rarely opportunities for constructive thematic policy dialogue between local and national policy makers. In most cases, there are no platforms for structured, inter-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder national debate on migrant integration policies either. In these circumstances, it is necessary to set up ad hoc structures and opportunities where this transfer of policy know-how can take place. It is equally important to create the conditions for a national-level policy debate by building up coalitions of actors of various backgrounds who can take the lead for organising such debates.

For the Intercultural integration approach to effectively influence policies across Europe, it is necessary to enlarge not only the number of cities which embrace it but also to reach out to other important actors, in particular regional and national authorities, academia and NGOs.

Actions

- "Incubate" ICC advocates/evangelists among people who are influencers in the higher levels of national administrations, academia and NGOs. This can be done for example by organising a series of events - part introduction/training, part think-tank - for a mixed group of individuals - ICC representatives and experts, national officials, academics and NGOs under a brand such as "Inclusive integration policy lab". These gatherings could take

place 2-3 times a year with the same membership to help raise a community of ICC advocates and thinkers who can help propagate the concept but also enrich it.

- Support existing national ICC networks – both financially and methodologically encourage their controlled growth and their partnerships with relevant institutions and sponsors.
- Develop new national networks.
- In addition, targeted partnerships should be cultivated with organisations which can make a strategic knowledge contribution to ICC, eg. Welcoming America, Migration policy group...

Target: two new national networks by the end of 2019.

Timeline: Launch the Inclusive integration policy lab in 2017.

Risks: not enough diverse, influential or motivated participants in the policy lab; not sufficiently stimulating programme; alternatively, interest by people who are not very relevant but difficult to refuse.

Risks' mitigation actions: publicise the policy lab broadly through official channels, networks and social media, hype it up, raise interest and expectations. Apply clear criteria to select participants. Work extensively on its programme, involving a wide variety of partners and use interactive, engaging methods.

Gender equality dimension: ensure gender balance of participants and focus on gender issues on the programme.

5. Increase the visibility and authority of ICC

The visibility of the Intercultural cities programme is an important condition for its impact and sustainability, both at the level of member cities, and at the Council of Europe level. At the same time, it is important to consolidate the evidence base of the programme by collecting data to demonstrate that cities which have adopted the intercultural integration approach are successful in terms of other outcomes such as improved safety, better educational outcomes, higher rates of employment and entrepreneurship, lower level of discrimination etc.. This is essential for persuading a greater number of cities to embrace the approach and stick to it if the majority changes.

Actions

- Update/redesign the ICC website, newsletter & brochure;
- Produce an animated video on the ICC concept;
- Improve the content and outreach of ICC social media tools by appointing a community manager;
- Present ICC at conferences and events;
- Publish articles in scientific publications and the press;
- Commission research on the impact of intercultural policies in cities.

Timeline: 2016: update of the ICC website, newsletter and brochure; production of an animated video; improve the content and outreach of ICC media tools by appointing a community manager.

Impact study to be carried out by end 2019.

Risks: social media success is notoriously difficult to engineer, so despite efforts and the quality of campaign design, massive success may not ensue. It may not be possible to raise funds for the impact evaluation from the EU or other donors.

Risks' mitigation actions: issue a call to invite a number of experts to propose social media strategies; if additional funds are not available until 2018, design a less ambitious study and use ICC own funds; alternatively, partner with universities to carry out the study as a part of students' course work.

Gender equality dimension: build gender issues into the social media strategy and research design.

Funding and resources

The Intercultural cities programme is primarily funded by the Council of Europe ordinary budget. Specific actions and projects can be co-funded by the European Union and other donors. Fund-raising is a permanent objective of the programme's secretariat. National networks are particularly encouraged to raise resources from national donors such as foundations or national integration funds. Member cities' contributions (5000€ administrative fee) should be applied in principle to all new member cities (exception can be made for cities in a particularly challenging financial situation) and will be used for temporary staff reinforcement or for specific projects.

Management and governance

The Intercultural cities' annual programme of activities is designed jointly by the Secretariat and member cities, and with the support of experts. It is presented and validated at the annual coordinators' meeting. The programme includes bilateral activities such as expert visits in member cities or the provision of expert support for the development of specific policies or actions in cities, as well as multilateral activities (thematic workshops, learning clusters, conferences).

National networks develop their own action plans, which have to be approved by the Council of Europe. They are represented in the ICC coordinators' meetings by a lead city and the network's coordinator.

Appendix 1

Membership criteria and procedures for accession

What is Intercultural cities

Cities can gain enormously from the entrepreneurship, variety of skills and creativity associated with cultural diversity, provided they adopt policies and practices that facilitate intercultural interaction and co-creation. The Council of Europe has analysed the experience of a range of cities across the continent which are managing diversity as an asset, rather than as a threat.

The collective input of these cities has shaped a unique concept to migrant/minority integration called *Intercultural integration*. The concept is supported by extensive research evidence and a range of international legal instruments.

The Intercultural cities programme supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage. The programme proposes a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of the process.

Why join Intercultural cities

Over 100 Cities across Europe and beyond (Japan, Mexico, Canada) are now embracing the principles of intercultural integration and using the Intercultural cities tools. Cities participating in the Intercultural cities programme enjoy the advice of leading international experts and privileged access to the Intercultural cities tools, and engage in intensive exchanges with other cities through thematic events and study visits. Moreover, member cities benefit from the international exposure and credibility of the Council of Europe.

The Intercultural cities network, one of the main tools of the ICC programme, is suitable for cities of at least 30 000 inhabitants with a significant level of diversity⁵, whose leadership is strongly committed to making diversity an advantage in city-making and who are ready to invest political capital, time and resources in the implementation of the programme.

How to join the network

In order to ascertain that a city is able to benefit from the Intercultural cities programme, the admission process involves several steps:

1. Candidate cities complete the Intercultural cities INDEX questionnaire and receive an analytical report on the results with examples of good practice from other cities.

⁵ Including at least 5% foreign residents, foreign-born or people belonging to national minorities

2. An expert visit (see Guidelines for first expert visit) takes place (an independent expert and a Council of Europe representative) to meet city officials and a wide range of local stakeholders in order to confirm the INDEX results and make an in-depth "diagnosis" of the city's achievements and needs in relation to intercultural policies and governance. The visit results in a report (so called the "intercultural profile") which is the basis of subsequent work with the city.
3. If both parties are satisfied, an agreement is signed for participation in the programme.
4. Conditions for participation are outlined in the draft agreement in appendix.

What do member cities do?

Following the accession process, member cities set up an intercultural support group and start the process of reviewing different urban policies from an intercultural perspective, re-shaping them and integrating them into a comprehensive policy strategy. Detailed guidelines for this process are provided in the [Step-by-step Guide to Building the Intercultural City](#) (also available in hard copy).

The cities are encouraged to involve citizens broadly in the strategy development process, in identifying indicators for success, monitoring progress and implementation. A methodological guide for this work is available, as well as excellent moderators/advisers.

In order to support this process, the Council of Europe can provide experts and facilitators for the policy discussions within the city. To motivate and help city officials and other local stakeholders learn from the experience of other cities, it organises (and funds, including travel/subsistence for city delegates) thematic workshops and study visits. High-level meetings are also organised for the city leaders to exchange and manifest/reinforce their commitment.

What are the costs for member cities?

Members contribute 5000 € a year towards the administrative costs of the programme. The rest of the expenses (index analysis, expertise, international meetings and visits) are covered by the Council of Europe within the limits of its available resources.

Appendix II

An overview of activities and resources for participating cities

The successful cities of the future will be those best able to harness the talent and energy of their diverse citizens. A city can minimise the threats and maximise the potential of diversity by developing, negotiating and implementing a comprehensive strategy to realise its diversity advantage. The Intercultural Cities programme helps cities to devise such strategies cutting across institutional silos and mobilising leaders, policy officers, professionals, businesses and civil society behind a new model of integration based on the mixing and interaction between people from different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The programme helps cities to:

- Create a sense of pluralistic identity based on the pride and appreciation of its diverse population and minimise ethnic tension and conflict.
- Set up a governance model empowering all members of the community, regardless of their origin or status, and thus benefit from their talents, skills and links with developing markets.
- Break the walls between ethnic groups, build trust and thus ensure cohesion and solidarity
- Make the public space and services accessible to all and end the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion which goes hand in hand with ethnic segregation.
- Empower intercultural innovators in public institutions and civil society and through them ensure that policies encourage intercultural interaction.
- Build a positive discourse and encourage a balanced approach to diversity in media to foster positive public perception of migrant and minority groups.

The Intercultural cities network provides expert and peer support to cities which chose to learn how to better manage diversity and benefit from the diversity advantage. It offers an internationally tested and validated methodology and a set of analytical and learning tools, as well as help with re-shaping city policies and services to make them more effective in a diverse context, and to engage citizens in building an understanding of their diversity as a competitive advantage.

Below is a set of examples of services and activities cities can benefit from. It should be noted, however, that the programme works in a very open, flexible way, adapting to the needs and expectations of individual cities.

Initial analysis of the level of intercultural development through the Intercultural cities index assess where a city stands in the different policy and governance areas and measures progress over time; to indicate where efforts should be concentrated in the future and identify “good practice” cities and city learning clusters; to communicate results in a visual, graphic way the level of achievement of each city and progress over time in comparison with other cities or the network as a whole.

The tool involves a combination of facts: demographic data in particular (primarily quantitative); inputs: policies, structures (primarily qualitative); impacts: attitudes and behaviours (primarily qualitative).

Data is collected through a questionnaire to be completed by city officials. Additional information on structures, policies and actions is to be provided through the Policy assessment grid (several departments will need to be involved). The results are then processed by a research institute based in Switzerland (BAK Basel) and analysed by an expert team. The resulting report provides a series of recommendations as well as good practice examples for inspiration.

In principle, the first data collection takes place following a city's accession to Intercultural cities and prior to the introductory expert visit (see below). Subsequent index assessments should be carried out at regular periods, ideally in intervals of 2-3 years.

Introductory expert visit

Following the initial diagnostic through the ICC Index, an independent expert and the programme manager visit new member cities to meet a wide range of stakeholders (politicians, key officials, civil society & trade union leaders, business & media professionals, faith leaders etc.) to assess their understanding of the intercultural approach and readiness to engage in the development of a local intercultural strategy. The visits result in a first review of city governance and policies from an intercultural perspective and a set of recommendations.

International meetings of Intercultural cities co-ordinators

The annual meetings are an opportunity for an exchange between cities and experts on the Intercultural city concept and method, on specific issues and concerns, as well as for building bilateral and multilateral connections, imagining common initiatives, and discussing strategic matters such as impact evaluation and sustainability of local intercultural strategies.

Policy development workshops

This involves a series of meetings with policy officers in different fields such as integration, education, culture, city planning/urban development, social services, as well as discussions with NGOs and media professionals in order to gain a deeper understanding of the specific diversity challenges and potential of the city. The workshops also serve as a way of engaging key policy officer and elected officials in the process of development of an intercultural strategy.

A report with recommendations on the processes to put in place will be provided following the workshop.

Vision-building workshop

Two experts will work in parallel with groups of people of different administrative and professional backgrounds and milieus (policy officers, city planners, education, culture and social service professionals, representatives of migrant and faith organisations and media). The workshops will bring these people to imagine they work/activities differently by applying the "intercultural lens" (how can change our work in order to increase intercultural interaction, mixing and trust). The result will be an overall vision paper which will serve as a basis for the city intercultural strategy

In addition, a public debate on diversity advantage for cities can be organised, with the Mayor and other officials

Study visits to other cities

The study visits represent the key peer learning pillar of the programme. Study visits take place to “mentor” cities which have already completed the “curriculum” and have made significant accomplishments in specific areas. Visits can also take place to a fellow city which has compelling experience or advantage in an area which the member city seeks to develop or learn more about.

Assistance with intercultural strategy development

Expert advice will be provided (from a distance or on the spot) whenever the city requires it in the process of development of its intercultural strategy. In some cases, the “experts” could also be integration officers or Intercultural co-ordinators from fellow cities which have significant experience and understanding of the issue (peer mentoring). In particular, assistance will be provided with developing indicators to monitor the strategy, as well as to identify specific results which will increase the overall community well-being, and the way of measuring success (based on the methodology of results-based accountability, designed and tested by the Intercultural cities programme with the help of experts from the Washington Center for the Study of Social Policy).

Official presentation of the Intercultural city strategy to the local community

Once the strategy has been validated by the relevant city offices and political bodies, a public presentation of the strategy to the media and the community can take place to highlight and celebrate the achievement; a high-level Council of Europe official can be present to give an international dimension to the event; the media networks of the Council of Europe will be happy to publicise the event.

Evaluation of the implementation of the Intercultural strategy

The city will be asked to provide information on the implementation of the strategy through an instrument which will be tailor-made to match the specificity of the strategy. In-depth discussions with politicians and practitioners involved will result in a report and recommendations with a view to ensuring adequate implementation and sustainability.

Managing public perceptions of diversity and busting negative myths

The Intercultural cities programme has developed know-how about public discourse and campaigns which help the public understand the benefits of diversity for the local community and support diversity and inclusion policies. Following an experiment in several cities, the effectiveness of awareness-raising strategies has been assessed via representative polls and focus groups. The learning of this process will be shared with cities to support their efforts in engaging the citizens positively with diversity management. Actions and approaches to busting negative myths will be suggested, in particular based on the Barcelona-born anti-rumour approach which has now been adopted by dozens of cities Europe-wide.

Conflict prevention and resolution

Conflicts based on cultural and faith differences and misunderstandings are inevitable. The ICC experts and experienced practitioners from member cities can provide advice and guidance in such situations, and suggest particular techniques, e.g., the Dilemma Workshops invented in Botkyrka.