

Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme

ASAN CITY: INTERCULTURAL PROFILE

Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

**BUILDING BRIDGES,
BREAKING WALLS**



Asan City, Republic of Korea

INTERCULTURAL PROFILE

Following the Expert Visit of the Council of Europe from 15-16 September 2025

Published in September 2026

Intercultural Cities Programme

Intercultural Inclusion Unit

Directorate General of Equal Rights and Dignity

Council of Europe

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

France

www.coe.int/interculturalcities

Executive Summary

Asan City has made rapid progress in developing its intercultural approach, building on its long-standing experience in supporting multicultural families and its strong political commitment to intercultural inclusion. Since joining the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme in 2024, the city has translated this commitment into concrete strategies, administrative structures and budgeted action plans.

The ICC Index and the expert visit highlighted a number of strengths. Asan has developed extensive support structures for foreign residents and multicultural families, while its education and labour market policies respond actively to the city's rapidly diversifying population. Cultural activities, community facilities and participatory mechanisms also provide important foundations for intercultural interaction. The city's commitment is further demonstrated by dedicated administrative structures and resources, as well as cooperation with civil society organisations and other local actors.

At the same time, Asan's rapid demographic diversification presents new challenges. Many existing policies remain strongly oriented towards multicultural families and children, while single migrant workers, long-term foreign residents and other groups are becoming increasingly important parts of the local community. There is therefore scope to build on existing support measures by placing greater emphasis on interaction, participation and shared responsibility among all residents, and by embedding intercultural principles more systematically across municipal policies.

Key recommendations emerging from the expert visit include:

1. Broadening the policy focus beyond multicultural families and children;
2. Embedding intercultural principles into mainstream policy areas through a whole-of-government approach;
3. Strengthening intercultural competence among public officials, educators and service providers;
4. Complementing targeted education support with initiatives for two-way interaction in schools;
5. Making more strategic use of public space, culture and community initiatives for sustained interaction;
6. Continuing active engagement with the ICC Programme, including monitoring, peer learning and sharing experience; and
7. Strengthening the public visibility and accessibility of intercultural policies, notably through the city's website.

Building on its strong foundations, Asan is well positioned to consolidate its development as an intercultural city. By combining its established support systems with a stronger focus on interaction, participation and shared belonging, the city can further strengthen social cohesion and develop a sustainable intercultural approach for its increasingly diverse population.

ASAN CITY

Intercultural Profile

2025

Contents

1.	Introduction to Asan City	6
2.	National policy context.....	6
3.	Local diversity and policy context	7
4.	Commitment	7
5.	Education.....	9
6.	Culture.....	9
7.	Equality	10
8.	Public Space	11
9.	Business	11
10.	Conclusion and Recommendations	12
	Annex I. Agenda.....	15

This report is based upon the visit of the Council of Europe on 15 and 16 September 2025, including the Council of Europe staff and Intercultural Cities (ICC) expert Keizo YAMAWAKI. It should be read in parallel with the ICC index report for Asan City, which also contains recommendations and examples of good practice.

The Council of Europe has defined the intercultural city as encompassing people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief, where:

- Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource;
- The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population;
- The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation;
- The city encourages greater mixing and meaningful interaction between diverse groups in public spaces.¹
- Real equality, diversity, meaningful intercultural interaction and participation and active citizenship are four inter-linked values that underpin the development and sustenance of an intercultural city.²

Equality refers to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights, and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or 'access') can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equal outcome.

Diversity is the condition of a group or entity within which individuals differ from one another in various ways, some but not all of which are characteristics protected by human rights law. Aspects of identity such as age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, social class, education, economic background, religion, work experience, language, geographic location, political opinion, or family status, are among the sources of diversity.

Meaningful intercultural interaction is any constructive encounter in a social setting between individuals or groups from different cultures and lifestyles in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation. Intercultural policy speaks of 'meaningful interactions' between different cultural or ethnic groups, which recognise both the differences and similarities between such groups/individuals, promote the atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, and counter the tendency towards self-segregation. Meaningful interactions are those that take place on equal terms, be they challenging or positive, and which should ultimately be fulfilling for all involved, advancing common goals.

Participation and active citizenship occur when stakeholders (all citizens, including foreign residents where appropriate) have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support to freely express their opinions and influence decision-making on matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural participation requires an equal and respectful basis,

¹ The Intercultural City Step by Step: Practical guide for applying the urban model of urban integration, Council of Europe, 2019, page 14.

² Council of Europe, Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level, Intercultural integration strategies: managing diversity as an opportunity, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-093421-gbr-2555-intercultural-integration-strategies-cdadi-web-a/1680a476bd>

in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain stakeholders' active participation.

These four principles should also follow two key transversal approaches – **a whole of society** and **whole of government** approach. For the former, that means working with all sectors of society for inclusion – not just migrants or those of a migration background. It means that everyone has a responsibility to promote inclusion and develop intercultural competences which means that society as a whole is strengthened.

For the latter, **a whole of government approach**, it means that cities need to break down institutional silos which often act as a barrier to a holistic approach to inclusion – too often separated off in an office dealing with equality or migration. Instead, every part of the administration should aim to see its activities through an intercultural lens – whether that's human resources or urban planning, education or city strategy. Whatever the sector, applying an intercultural lens will help ensure that public policy works for everyone.

This report provides the first intercultural profile of Asan City, following the Index Report completed in 2025.³

1. Introduction to Asan City

Asan City in the Chungcheongnam-do province of the Republic of Korea has a population of 389 354 including migrants (numbers from July 2024). Asan City's administration consists of:

- Six departments in charge of the city's main administrative functions.
- Two direct agencies connected to the city hall.
- Three business offices that perform specific projects or services.
- One council that forms the Asan City Council and performs policy decision-making and monitoring.
- One committee for specific topics or fields.
- 61 departments that handle various administrative tasks
- 17 townships and two divisions operated as administrative districts at the regional level
- 335 teams in charge of detailed work within each department and agency
- 11 health institutions in charge of community health work.

According to data released by Chungcheongnam-do in December 2023, Asan City's per capita gross regional domestic product (GRDP) was 91 104 000 won (approximately 63 000 euros), nearly twice the national average, reflecting the city's strong manufacturing base.

Within the Intercultural Cities Programme, Asan represents a city experiencing rapid demographic change in a relatively short period of time and responding through accelerated institutionalisation. Compared with cities that have developed intercultural policies over several decades, Asan is still at an early to intermediate stage of its intercultural journey. However, the city stands out for the speed with which it has translated political commitment into concrete strategies, administrative structures and budgeted action plans.

This approach builds on a period of preparatory learning and self-assessment, during which Asan examined international intercultural practices and reflected on its own demographic and policy context prior to joining the ICC network.⁴

³ See Asan City – Intercultural City Index 2025.

⁴ Asan City, A Study on the Designation of Asan City as an Intercultural City, September 2023.

Asan's experience therefore contributes a distinctive perspective to the ICC network, illustrating how a city facing sudden diversification can move quickly from a family-centred policy framework – focusing on migrant women and their children, driven by concerns around the birth rate – towards a more comprehensive approach to intercultural governance, while continuing to refine participatory practices and interaction-oriented policies.⁵

2. National policy context

South Korea's multicultural policy framework began in the mid-2000s, driven largely by the increase in international marriages and migrant labour. The government introduced the Basic Act on the Treatment of Foreigners (2007) and the Multicultural Families Support Act (2008), both of which institutionalised support for migrants by offering integration courses and establishing multicultural family support centres across the country.

Key features of the national policy include:

1. National leadership: The central government has taken a strong role, establishing nationwide programs and funding schemes since the late 2000s.
2. Family-centred policy: Early measures primarily targeted women from international marriages and their children, reflecting a demographic concern with low birth rates and social integration.
3. Expansion of diversity discourse: In recent years, the scope has widened to include foreign workers, refugees, and broader migrant communities, though the policy discourse still tends to emphasize assimilation rather than intercultural exchange.

Cities such as Ansan, Guro and Asan have been at the forefront of experimenting with more interculturally inclusive approaches. These areas, with high proportions of foreign residents, illustrate how local governments are navigating between national frameworks and the lived realities of diversity.

3. Local diversity and policy context

The major ethnic groups in Asan City are Koreans of Korean descent who speak Korean as their native language and share a common bloodline. They represent the majority of the population of Asan City, making up approximately 90%. Migrant groups account for approximately 10% of the population. As of 1 November 2022, among the 36,183 foreign residents of Asan City, Central Asians are the largest group, accounting for 9,845 (27%), including Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Russians. They are mainly Koryoins.⁶ The second largest group is Chinese, accounting for 9,211 (25%). They are mainly Korean-Chinese. Minor groups include ethnic groups from 57 countries, with less than 10 people each.

Korea was divided into South and North Korea in 1945, and the division was solidified after the Korean War ceasefire in 1953. Since then, “defectors” from North Korea who have settled in South Korea are recognised as a minority group.

⁵ Asan City's intercultural approach is grounded in its “Basic Plan for Policies on Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families (2025–2029)”, which establishes a five-year framework for governance reform, settlement support and intercultural interaction. While continuing support for multicultural families, the plan broadens its scope to all foreign residents and the wider community.

⁶ Koryoins are ethnic Koreans who settled in the former Soviet Union, particularly in Central Asia. They are descendants of Koreans who migrated to the Russian Far East in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fleeing Japanese colonization. In 1937, many were forcibly deported by Stalin to Central Asia.

Asan City recognises groups that require special support, such as North Korean defectors, Koryoins, Korean-Chinese, foreign residents and multicultural families, and provides support through a dedicated department.

While the total population of Asan City is growing at an annual average of 1.7%, the number of migrant residents is rapidly increasing at an annual average of 8%. As a result, the proportion of foreign residents is continuously increasing, reflecting social and cultural diversification. The city is changing into a local community where various ethnic groups live together, and policies and support for foreign residents are needed accordingly.

4. Commitment

The city's commitment to intercultural inclusion was shown in the visit, with a courtesy visit to the vice mayor, Mr. Beom-Soo Kim, followed by a meeting with the chairperson of the city council, Mr. Hong Sung-pyo, as well as three members of the Committee on Culture, Welfare and Environment.

With the launch of the 8th local government in July 2022, Asan City confirmed the “designation as an international intercultural city” as one of its pledges and made it public through the official website of Asan City. In January 2023, the city announced the implementation plan for this pledge and the city's intention to join the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme in 2024 was formalised.⁷ They organised a research project on the possibility of Asan becoming “an intercultural city” in the sense of the Programme from March to August 2023.⁸ This study was a preliminary review conducted to examine the concept, policy directions, and indicators of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme, and to analyse whether Asan City's current situation and policies align with the Programme's objectives, while also receiving recommendations on future policy directions and tasks for developing Asan as an intercultural city. In November 2023, Asan City signed an agreement for cooperation with the Multicultural Research Institute of Ewha Woman's University to achieve the city's pledge of 'joining the Intercultural Cities Programme'. In May 2024, the delegation of Asan officials, led by the mayor, visited Hamamatsu City in Japan, which is the first intercultural city in Asia. In August 2024, Asan City officially joined the ICC network and in October 2024, the city held a public ceremony of the ICC membership at the First Asan International Intercultural Festival.⁹

To establish a systematic integration strategy following the official statement of pursuing to become an intercultural city, a research project was launched in 2024 to examine the living conditions, policy needs and support gaps of foreign residents and multicultural families, based on questionnaire surveys and interviews, and to inform the development of a mid- to long-term policy framework. The research was finalised in March 2025.

This commitment has been institutionalised through the adoption of Asan City's Basic Plan for Policies on Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families (2025–2029), which translates intercultural principles into a structured, budgeted policy framework across multiple policy areas. The plan places particular emphasis on consolidating support structures, developing shared access points and institutional hubs, and strengthening cooperation between municipal authorities, civil society organisations and other local actors, providing a concrete framework for translating intercultural commitment into coordinated action.

Asan City allocated a budget for the implementation of the intercultural strategy and the Intercultural Cities Programme in 2024 and has since increased the related budget annually. It has established a foreigner living support team to promote the intercultural city work and has

⁷ <https://www.offlinenews.co.kr/3734> (in Korean)

⁸ <https://www.asanfocus.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=17299> (in Korean)

⁹ <https://www.daejeonilbo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=2163086> (in Korean)

established the Asan City Family Centre to operate a dedicated centre for foreign residents and multicultural families. This centre is conducting events and education to improve the intercultural awareness of the local community.

Asan City systematically carries out public consultations that include people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, taking the following measures to reflect policy processes that include people of diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds in the policy process:

- Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families Support Council: A support council in which foreign residents and multicultural families are represented as members and have the possibility to make policy proposals.
- Participatory Budgeting System: A system in which residents directly participate in the budget preparation process, collect opinions on budgets needed for the region, and review and adjust them.
- Asan Citizen Proposal System: A system where citizens can propose ideas for improving administration. The submitted ideas are reflected in the administration, utilising the creativity of the private sector in policy development and resolving current issues.

The Asan City Family Centre: A dedicated organisation for foreign residents and multicultural families in Asan City that has formed an advisory committee to collect diverse opinions in the policy process.¹⁰

5. Education

Asan's education system is facing a rapid increase in the number and diversity of students with migrant backgrounds and has reacted with a relatively comprehensive set of targeted measures. In 2024, children from foreign or multicultural families accounted for around 6.2% of pupils in the city's 49 elementary schools, with much higher proportions in certain neighbourhoods such as Sinchang and Dunpo. At the same time, several universities – especially Sun Moon University, where international students constitute more than half of the students' body – are reshaping the local educational landscape and contributing to Asan's emerging role as a regional “intercultural education hub”.

The Chungnam Education and Lifelong Education Centre provides tailored programmes for multicultural families, including Korean language classes, parenting support and cultural diversity education. Since 2021, a training scheme for multicultural education instructors has allowed married migrant women to become paid instructors who visit schools and community facilities to deliver country-specific and intercultural awareness sessions. These instructors play a key bridging role between schools, migrant parents and the wider community, helping both to improve communication and to normalise the presence of diverse languages and cultural references in the classroom.

Several schools in Asan have developed innovative practices. Sinchang and Dunpo elementary schools prepare school newsletters in both Korean and Russian for pupils and parents from Central Asia, and run bilingual open classes to encourage participation of parents with limited Korean. In schools with high concentrations of Central Asian pupils, the Provincial Office of Education has deployed four Uzbek teachers who support Korean language acquisition, mediate between families and staff, and help teachers to better understand pupils' previous educational trajectories. In Dunpo, where the share of foreign pupils exceeds 70%, after-school programmes and care classes are used not only as support measures but also as

¹⁰ The operation of the Asan City Family Centre and its advisory committee is based on the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family's Family Service Guidelines (Vol. 1), which require Family Centres to establish a management committee including representatives of service users and relevant stakeholders. The guidelines are available (in Korean) at: https://www.mogef.go.kr/mp/pcd/mp_pcd_s001d.do?bbtSn=705022&mid=plc503.

spaces for mixed group activities where children from different national and linguistic backgrounds can collaborate in a structured environment.

Higher education institutions are also engaged. Sun Moon University operates a global language department, offers leadership camps for international students and co-organises forums on the integration of young people with migrant backgrounds into Korean society. Collaboration between the university, the Asan Youth Culture Centre and the Asan Office of Education has begun to create pathways that connect language learning, career exploration and civic participation for young migrants.

From an intercultural perspective, Asan's education policy has so far focused strongly on helping migrant and minority pupils adapt to the Korean school system. The Index analysis and the expert visit therefore suggest complementing these efforts with more systematic measures to enhance intercultural competences among majority pupils and teachers, promote two-way interaction and develop whole-school approaches to diversity. Such measures could include integrating intercultural learning into the mainstream curriculum, developing peer-to-peer initiatives between majority and minority pupils, and strengthening training for school staff on issues such as prejudice, discrimination and classroom communication across languages and cultures.

6. Culture

Culture is a particularly dynamic field in Asan's intercultural journey. While the city is still better known nationally for its industrial base and hot springs, it has begun to position itself as a "city of everyday intercultural encounters" through a growing number of festivals, artistic initiatives and community-based programmes. Many of these activities build on the existing infrastructure of the Asan City Family Centre, local libraries and youth facilities, which increasingly act as cultural platforms rather than purely social-welfare institutions.

The annual Multicultural Family Festival brings together residents from a wide range of backgrounds around performances, exhibitions and food from different countries. Choirs such as the "Dasom Choir" present songs and stories from various cultures, while participants can experience traditional costumes, calligraphy or cuisine at interactive booths. In recent years, the festival has been combined with events such as the Foreigner K-Trot Song Festival, which invites migrant residents to perform popular Korean songs. This format both validates migrants' familiarity with Korean culture and allows Korean audiences to see foreign neighbours on stage as active cultural contributors.

Libraries in Asan have provided multicultural programmes since 2016, including multilingual story-telling sessions, exhibitions on the cultures of major migrant groups and workshops on everyday intercultural communication. Collections of books and media in languages such as Russian, Uzbek and Chinese have been expanded, and librarians cooperate with the Family Centre and schools to reach new audiences. These activities help to transform libraries into shared spaces where residents can encounter unfamiliar languages and narratives in a low-threshold environment.

At the neighbourhood level, cultural activities are often embedded in broader community events. In Sinchang-myeon and Dunpo-myeon, multicultural performances and food stalls form part of the Chuseok celebrations and the Dunpo-myeon Citizens' Day Festival. The Art Valley Asan "Earth One Round" event features a traditional costume parade and world food booths, explicitly framing the city's cultural diversity as an asset. Sports-related cultural gatherings, such as the Myanmar Football Tournament and Global FC matches, further contribute to intercultural contact by linking sporting activities with music, food and informal socialising.

Looking ahead, Asan could make even more strategic use of culture as a driver of intercultural interaction. This might involve co-creation processes where residents of different backgrounds jointly design events or exhibitions, targeted support for migrant-led cultural organisations, and the use of small-scale grants to encourage neighbourhood-based intercultural initiatives. Ensuring that cultural policies and funding criteria explicitly recognise diversity and interaction as key objectives would help to consolidate the progress already achieved.

7. Equality

Asan City demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to equality through dedicated structures and policies that aim to ensure fair access to services and opportunities for all residents, regardless of background. While national frameworks such as the National Human Rights Commission Act and the Multicultural Families Support Act provide the legal foundation, Asan has operationalised these at the local level via the Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families Support Council and the Equality Improvement Plan embedded in its Best Council framework. These mechanisms bring together representatives from migrant communities, local officials, the education office and police to review policies biannually, identify gaps in service delivery and propose equity-focused adjustments.

A key feature of Asan's equality approach is the Foreigner Living Support Team (established 2022), which coordinates across departments to address barriers faced by diverse groups, including Central Asian workers, Korean-Chinese families and North Korean defectors. Practical measures include civil service interpreters fluent in Russian and Uzbek, multilingual administrative guidance at the Family Centre, and targeted support such as women-only pools and shelters for female migrants vulnerable to exploitation. The city also recognises historical minorities like Koryoins through specialised programmes, ensuring that equality extends beyond recent arrivals to long-term residents with unique integration challenges.

Participatory equality is promoted through the Participatory Budgeting System and Asan Citizen Proposal System, where both Korean and foreign residents can directly influence budget allocations and policy ideas. Businesses receive Global Family Enterprise signs for demonstrating fair employment practices and cultural sensitivity, while exemplary migrants are awarded Honorary Citizenship, fostering a culture of mutual recognition. During the expert visit, discussions with city officials highlighted how these tools help combat subtle forms of exclusion, such as language barriers in housing access or employment discrimination against single migrant workers.

From an intercultural lens, Asan's equality efforts are comprehensive in addressing access and non-discrimination (ICC Index: high scores in Anti-Discrimination and Public Services), but could be strengthened by explicit integration of equity principles – allocating resources based on need rather than uniform treatment. Greater emphasis on outcomes equality, such as monitoring employment rates or educational attainment across groups, would provide evidence of impact. Additionally, expanding equality hubs to include voices from single workers and long-term residents (beyond family-focused support) aligns with the city's diversifying demographics.

8. Public Space

Asan's public spaces are undergoing gradual transformation in response to demographic change. While the physical layout of the city is still shaped primarily by industrial zones, residential areas and transport corridors, the municipality has begun to view public space not only as an infrastructure issue but also as a potential arena for intercultural interaction.

In districts with higher proportions of foreign residents, the Asan City Family Centre and its branches function as semi-public spaces where people can meet, attend classes and participate in community events. Language courses, legal information sessions, parenting

workshops and cultural activities are deliberately combined, encouraging residents who initially come for practical support to engage in broader social contacts. The use of schools, youth centres and sports grounds after hours for community events – for example, Global FC activities or neighbourhood festivals – further extends the availability of shared spaces where different groups can interact on relatively equal terms.

At city level, large-scale events such as the Asan International Intercultural Festival and the Multicultural Family Festival make visible use of central public spaces, signalling that diversity is part of the city's identity. Food stalls, stages and information booths are arranged to encourage circulation and informal encounters, while interpretation support and multilingual signage help newcomers to navigate the events. Public communication around these events increasingly includes foreign-language materials and English subtitles in promotional videos, lowering symbolic and practical barriers to participation.

The Index analysis suggests that Asan is well placed to move from event-based approaches towards a more systematic intercultural use of everyday public spaces. Possible avenues include incorporating intercultural considerations into urban design and regeneration projects, ensuring that parks, markets and community centres in all neighbourhoods are welcoming to diverse users, and supporting initiatives that activate public space through regular, small-scale activities rather than only occasional festivals. Drawing on experiences from other ICC cities, Asan could also experiment with participatory processes where residents co-design the use and appearance of specific public spaces, thereby strengthening both a sense of ownership and intercultural contact.

9. Business

Asan's business and labour market policies reflect its economic strengths as an industrial hub while addressing the needs of a rapidly growing migrant workforce. With Dunpo and Smart Valley industrial parks attracting foreign labour, the city hosts significant numbers of Central Asian and Chinese workers in manufacturing and logistics sectors. The ICC Index awarded Asan a perfect score of 100 in this domain, recognising its comprehensive approach to fair employment, skills matching and entrepreneurship support.

Key initiatives include the Foreign Workers Rights Protection Council, which convenes employers, unions, migrant representatives and city officials to monitor working conditions, resolve disputes and prevent exploitation. The Asan Migrant Workers Centre provides on-site services at industrial parks, including legal advice, health checks and Korean language training tailored to workplace needs. Civil service interpreters and the Mobile Language Talk Talk Car extend support directly to factory sites, reducing communication barriers that often lead to workplace isolation or unsafe conditions.

Entrepreneurship is actively encouraged through the Chungnam Creative Economy Innovation Centre, which offers business incubation, fair trade certification and micro-financing for migrant-led ventures. The Global Family Enterprise programme awards signs to businesses demonstrating inclusive hiring, cultural sensitivity training for staff and community engagement, creating visible markers of good practice. During the expert visit, city officials from the Job and Economy Division shared data showing improved retention rates among migrant workers in certified firms, attributing this to trust-building measures like multilingual contracts and family support linkages.

From an intercultural perspective, Asan excels in access to employment opportunities but could deepen interaction by fostering mixed workplace initiatives – such as cross-cultural team-building or joint Korean-migrant apprenticeships – to leverage diversity as a business asset. Strengthening monitoring of outcomes (e.g., wage parity, promotion rates across

nationalities) and expanding support for self-employed migrants beyond family businesses would address emerging needs among single workers.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Asan's high Index scores reflect its long-standing policy experience in supporting multicultural families, robust education and labour market structures, and strong political commitment, including joining the Intercultural Cities Programme and developing a comprehensive policy plan for foreign residents.

The 2025 ICC Index visit confirmed that Asan has progressed beyond policy declarations, actively implementing intercultural strategies across education, labour integration, and cultural activities, backed by dedicated resources and institutional cooperation. These strengths have improved service access and fostered positive attitudes towards diversity, positioning Asan as an emerging intercultural city with solid foundations for further growth.

At the same time, the analysis highlights several areas for further development. Despite the rapid growth and increasing diversity of the foreign resident population, many policies and budget allocations remain strongly oriented towards multicultural families and children. While this focus addresses important needs, it risks overlooking the growing presence of single migrant workers, foreign residents without family ties, and long-term residents who fall outside existing support categories.

From an intercultural perspective, there is scope to strengthen a shift from primarily support-oriented policies towards approaches that emphasise interaction, participation, and shared responsibility among all residents. Asan could further integrate intercultural principles into mainstream policies, ensuring that diversity considerations are embedded across sectors rather than confined to specialized programs.

In the fields of education, culture, public space, and business, **the city may benefit from placing greater emphasis on two-way interaction. Encouraging sustained contact, cooperation, and dialogue between different groups can help move beyond coexistence** towards deeper forms of social cohesion and mutual trust. This includes strengthening intercultural competences among public officials, educators, employers, and community leaders.

Asan is well positioned to consolidate its role as an emerging intercultural city by building on its strong foundations. Continued engagement with the Intercultural Cities Programme will be important to support Asan's further development in this sense. By aligning its ambitious policy plans with an explicit intercultural vision focused on interaction and shared belonging, and engaging further with the ICC Programme and other cities across the globe, Asan can further enhance social cohesion and long-term urban competitiveness.

Asan could consider further strengthening the **shift from primarily support-oriented policies towards a more explicitly intercultural approach** that places interaction and participation at the centre of diversity governance. While existing support measures remain important, greater emphasis on shared spaces, dialogue, and joint activities may help deepen social cohesion among all residents.

Based on the findings of the expert visit and the ICC Index, the following recommendations are proposed to support Asan City's further development as an intercultural city.

Recommendation 1

Asan should **broaden its policy focus beyond multicultural families and children** by developing strategies that more systematically address the needs and potential contributions

of single migrant workers, long-term foreign residents, and other groups that are currently less visible in policy frameworks.

Recommendation 2

Asan may wish to **further embed intercultural principles into mainstream policy areas**, including education, culture, public services, and economic development, through **a whole-of-government approach**, and **strengthen institutional cooperation with other departments**.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen intercultural competence among public officials, educators, and service providers in order to support more consistent implementation of intercultural policy across sectors and develop a truly intercultural approach based on a two-way, whole of society approach.

Recommendation 4

In the field of education, Asan could consider **complementing existing targeted support for students with migrant backgrounds with initiatives that promote two-way interaction** in schools. Encouraging intercultural learning among all students may contribute to more inclusive and cohesive school environments.

Recommendation 5

There is potential for Asan to make **more strategic use of public spaces, cultural activities, and community initiatives as platforms for sustained interaction between different groups**. Supporting initiatives that move beyond one-off events towards longer-term collaboration could further enhance mutual trust and a sense of shared belonging.

Recommendation 6

Asan could benefit from continuing its active engagement with the Intercultural Cities Programme by **systematically monitoring progress, learning from peer cities, and sharing its own experiences**. This ongoing exchange may help the city consolidate its position as an emerging intercultural city and refine its long-term strategic direction.

Recommendation 7

Asan could consider **strengthening the public visibility and accessibility of its intercultural policies** by consolidating relevant information on the city's official website, enabling residents to easily access policies, services and initiatives related to intercultural inclusion and engagement, thereby supporting civic awareness and shared ownership of the city's intercultural agenda.

Finally, the Intercultural Cities Programme would like to **thank Asan City** for a constructive visit and **congratulate the municipality** for its engagement and commitment to intercultural inclusion. Since the city's official declaration in 2022, Asan has made rapid and coherent progress in developing its intercultural approach, and the work undertaken to date is inspiring. Building on these foundations, Asan is well placed to further develop its intercultural approach in the years ahead.

Annex I. Agenda

The Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme Expert Visit to Asan City

September 15, Monday

Time	Details	Location	Remarks
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (150 min)	Gimpo City Hall (Meeting with Council of Europe officials) ⇒ Transfer to Asan-si	Gimpo City Hall	Accompanying interpretation
1:30–2:30 p.m. (60 min)	Lunch	Mindeulle Bapsang (Dandelion Table)	Bibimbap
① 3:00–3:30 p.m. (30 min)	Visit to Asan City Hall - Welcome remarks by the Mayor - Presentation of gifts, commemorative photo session	2nd Floor, Asan City Hall (Sarangchae)	Interpretation
② 3:30–4:00 p.m. (30 min)	Visit to Asan City Council - City Council Chairperson and Council Members (Committee on Culture, Welfare, and Environment) Welcome Remarks and Commemorative Photo Session	Council Chairperson's Office	Interpretation
4:00–5:00 p.m. (60 min)	Meeting with Asan-si's officials on Intercultural City Indicators (Relevant Departments) - Brief introduction of Asan-si and departments related to Foreign Resident Support - Introduction to the Council of Europe Intercultural City Programme and presentation of index analysis results (Presentation of best practices from other member cities) - Open discussion (questions, requests for advice, etc.)	Meeting Room, Council Building (2nd Floor)	Expert from the Asan-si Secretariat
	□ Relevant departments: Job and Economy Division (Employment Policy Team, Labor-Management Cooperation Team), Women's Welfare Division, Autonomy Administration Division [Human Rights (Civil Rights) Team, Resident Participation Team - Participatory Budgeting and Autonomy Programs], Civil Affairs Division (Civil Administration Team), Municipal Library (Central Operations Team - Multicultural Resources, etc.)		Interpretation
5:00–6:00 p.m. (60 min)	Dinner	Sonamu House (Pine Tree House)	Department Director (Bulgogi)
6:00 p.m.	Restaurant ⇒ Transfer to Onyang Grand Hotel to rest	Onyang Grand Hotel	

September 16, Tuesday

Time	Content	Location	Remarks
09:30–10:00 a.m. (30 min)	Transfer from Onyang Grand Hotel ⇨ Oeam Folk Village		
10:00–11:00 a.m. (60 min)	Tour of Oeam Folk Village	Oeam Folk Village	Interpretation
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (60 min)	Lunch	Sigol Bapsang Mago (Country Table Mago)	Grilled Fish
12:00–1:00 p.m. (60 min)	Coffee break (Rest)	Sinjeongho Lake	
1:00–2:30 p.m. (90 min)	Visit to related agencies for foreign residents in Asan-si and meeting with Asan-si's officials (relevant organizations) - Related organizations: Family Center, Education Support Office, Chungcheongnamdo Office of Education International Education Institute Multicultural Global Citizenship Education Center, etc. - Introduction to the Council of Europe Intercultural City Programme and presentation of index analysis results (presentation of best practices from other member cities) - Brief introduction during facilities tour - Observation of program operations	Family Center Headquarters (9-1, Asan-ro)	Interpretation
2:30–2:40 p.m. (10 min)	Transfer from Asan-si Family Center Headquarters ⇨ Citizen Culture and Welfare Center		
2:40–3:30 p.m. (50 min)	Field visit to Multicultural Immigrant Plus Center and Migrant Worker Center Global Children and Youth Team (Family Center)	Citizen Culture and Welfare Center	Interpretation
3:30–5:00 p.m. (90 min)	Tour of Hyeonchungsa Shrine and Ginkgo Tree Avenue	Hyeonchungsa Shrine	
5:00–6:00 p.m. (60 min)	Dinner	Terni (Sinjeongho Lake)	Manager (Pasta)
6:10 p.m.	Rest	Onyang Grand Hotel	

September 17, Wednesday

Time	Content	Location	Remarks
08:00–10:30 a.m. (150 min)	Transfer from Asan-si ⇨ Ansan City (Vehicle provided by Ansan-si)	Farewell	Onyang Grand Hotel

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. Almost two decades after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

www.coe.int/interculturalcities

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

