



Coordinatore tecnico



RETE CITTA' DEL DIALOGO

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021 ACTIVITY REPORT

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1. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORK

Addressing common challenges based on joint policy solutions and actions is one of the priorities for the network.

We've been **monitoring the development and implementation of the RCD strategic plan 2020-2021**, focusing on what has been achieved so far and what still needs to be. Many objectives we set together with our member cities have been reached, despite the uncertainty and the variability of priorities and actions due to the pandemic period.

On May 4th we held our **Coordination Meeting online "Perspectives beyond emergency"**, with 7 cities attending: we went through the issues identified in 2019 and we worked on updating the strategic plan accordingly to the new needs and challenges. During the meeting, we focused on the importance of campaigning together and how communication can be a very powerful tool to make the network and its influence grow. The Anti-racist Pact of the Municipality of Turin, one of our main best practices, was presented by Assessore Marco Giusta.

From November 30th to December 1st, 2021, we held the **RCD Annual Coordination Meeting "Intercultural Dialogue beyond emergency"**, finally in presence. It was hosted by the City of Reggio Emilia, and 8 cities attended, for a total of 18 persons. During the two days' event, cities had the opportunity to share challenges, best practices (through presentations and study visits) and priorities, while strengthening potential collaborations and mutual knowledge.

The second day was dedicated to in-depth group works to identify the network priorities for 2022 and start defining the new strategic plan 2022-2023.

Lastly, in the framework of an international working group promoted by the ICC Program, ICEI also contributed to the **elaboration of a questionnaire** aiming at collecting information and analyzing needs from member cities in the field of intercultural competences. The questionnaire (available in English and Italian) supported a process carried out by the ICC Program, involving ICC experts from ICEI, Spain, Portugal, Ukraine and Canada that will develop new training materials and tools on intercultural competences for local authorities. The training program will then be offered to Cities of the ICC network with the following objectives:

- help municipalities and municipal related entities respond to the challenges of increasingly diverse urban settings using an intercultural lens

- building capacity in terms of individual and organizational competencies, in order to provide better services, foster the diversity advantage and empower citizens to participate in public life
- provide practical applications of intercultural principles for local authorities in the process of designing policies and projects

2. SUPPORT, PARTICIPATION AND DISSEMINATION OF AND GOOD PRACTICES

Good practices collection and sharing from member cities have been not only our priority but also gave us the opportunity to work even more closely to our member cities and intercultural colleagues in the difficult time of the pandemic, while disseminating intercultural and inclusion messages in this period of social and economic tensions.

Moreover, good practices sharing is a way to optimize efforts and resources, while spreading result driven intercultural models.

ICEI collected, analyzed and communicated through RCD communication channels (website and social media) good practices from member cities related to:

- The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21st). With the aim of giving visibility to the actions on the topic of anti-discrimination and anti-racism, good practices from the following municipalities have been received and disseminated: Bari, Ravenna, Reggio Emilia, Torino, Pontedera. We gave wide visibility especially to the Antiracism agreement of Torino ("Patto di collaborazione per una Torino antirazzista").
- Initiatives related to intercultural events and activities during the spring-summer period, where some in presence activities finally restarted due to better pandemic conditions:
 - 14th Edition of Festival delle Culture of Ravenna, on the topic "Una storia che parla di noi", dedicated to the theme of identity (2, 3 and 4 July 2021)
 - 3rd Edition of the Summer School in Ravenna, titled "La questione migrante nel contesto pandemico. Flussi, lavoro, integrazione" (30 August – 3 September 2021)
 - 23rd Edition of "Suq Genova", the well-known intercultural festival considered a best practice in Europe (27 August – 5 September 2021).
- Practices and initiatives shared during the RCD National Meeting (from November 30th to December 1st) and in the occasion of the International Migrants Day, December 18th, from the city of Reggio Emilia ("Green Lanterns" Initiative and "DTutti" Project).

3. COMMUNICATION AS A KEY DRIVER OF GROWTH

In 2021 we strongly focused on **increasing the reach of our communication, addressing specific targets, and on growing our Facebook followers**, to disseminate and develop awareness on ICC and RCD principles, initiatives, and resources. Moreover, we encouraged continuous multilateral exchanges and dissemination between member cities to share practices, ideas and experiences, to reinforce the “we culture” of the network.

In the first quarter 2021 we launched a wide communication campaign leveraging intercultural and diversity messages on social media. The goals were increasing the audience following Rete Città del Dialogo, raising awareness around the network and its mission, and sensitising the public about intercultural, diversity and inclusion values.

While developing a specific unique tone of voice (TOV) and layout, and multiple formats, we kept on enhancing our Facebook editorial plan and sharing insight, data and initiatives from the cities.

From January to March, a Sponsor Ads campaign was planned, sponsoring some key posts. With 19 organic posts published, of which 11 sponsored, we managed to have a coverage of 721.928 persons, 27.150 social interactions and add 9.503 net new followers.

We kept on focusing on a rich and engaging editorial plan and on specific online campaigns, publishing an average of 5.3 posts per week during the entire year, leveraging the following contents:

- best practices and initiatives from the member cities (e.g., Bari, Pontedera, Ravenna, Reggio Emilia, Torino, Modena, Genova, Ravenna, Fucecchio).
- special local communication campaign developed together with the cities: for example, we realised a unified online campaign for the Week against Racism (March 21-27), promoted by the city of Reggio Emilia and in collaboration with Project ITACA (ITalian Cities Against Discrimination). A common graphic layout and messages were created (hashtags #21marzocontroilrazzismo, #FightRacism, #JoinTogether) and a specific communication toolkit was shared within the Italian network, to allow cities to participate.
- Joint campaigns promoted by ICC Program
- Intercultural resources, thematic papers, and tools from ICC Program (mainly translated in Italian) and from RCD network.
- 3rd parties' high-quality content from organizations closed to RCD network
- Videos (videos in English were posted with Italian subtitles to reach a wider audience).
- Special projects, as our Intercultural Glossary “*Parolario Interculturale*”, targeting the non-technical audiences.

Our RCD Facebook page counts now **12.720 followers**, and it is characterized by a high level of engagement and participation.

In 2021, we published 63 posts (average 5.3 per week), with an annual feed coverage of more than 730.000 persons and a growth of +617% y/y.

Moreover, while keeping on updating our brand-new RCD website, **we improved our visitors experience by realizing and refreshing specific web areas**, in particular: 1. Section dedicated to new cities interested in joining the RCD network (How to subscribe); 2. Section presenting all main intercultural resources and tools; 3. Press area, where we collect Press Clips related to RCD and the ICC Program; 4. The RCD Facebook News Feed was embedded in the Home Page of the website to give more visibility to our social media activity.

Regarding **PR and advocacy**, we contacted and interviewed in March - under the umbrella of RCD and Project ITACA (ITalian Cities Against Racism), Triantafillos Loukarelis, the Director of UNAR (National Office Against Racial Discrimination of the Italian Government), to go in details of intercultural policies in Italy and the impact of the pandemic.

We promoted and collected 12+ press articles published in 2021 on Italian newspapers (mainly regional and local) and published 20 featured articles on our RCD website, communicated through our RCD newsletter and Facebook page, talking about RCD and ICC programs and cities' initiatives and best practices.

We studied, developed, and launched on 19 November the initiative called "Parolario Interculturale": an online Intercultural Glossary, where we defined, described and contextualized 20 main intercultural terms targeting non-technical audiences, communicating them through our RCD Facebook page, with text and visual formats. So far, on RCD Facebook we reached 3.850 persons with 9 posts. Beside the social media campaign, including text and graphic posts and a Facebook Album, we are also creating a digital booklet of the Glossary to be promoted on social media and the RCD website. The campaign is planned to end January 2022 and the digital Booklet will be published in February 2022.

As **intercultural communication and storytelling are becoming key factors in our strategy**, we promoted and participated to the "Intercultural Academy on alternative narratives and intercultural communication", April 19-21 organized by ICC Program, together with other cities (Olbia and Casalecchio di Reno).

In the last quarter, **we also developed and delivered a specific Intercultural Communication course in Italian** targeting staff of public administrations in charge of cities' communication, public relations, press office and institutional communication. It aimed to provide strategic and operational tools for the creation of a system of public and institutional communication, to promote interculture as a means of equality, diversity, and integration. The specific objectives of the course were:

- Provide tools for building effective communication strategies
- Help structure a communication ecosystem for intercultural issues
- Offer an overview of the best communication campaigns for interculturalism and anti-discrimination
- Provide a basic knowledge of inclusive language

The course had a duration of 8 hours, divided in 3 modules (online), held on 11, 18 and 25 November 2021. It had a theoretical part, aimed at acquiring medium-high skills to manage a communication strategy, and a practical part, with a workshop in which everyone can put into practice the tools learned and measure them on their own local reality.

16 participants working in communication offices of 8 Italian cities participated: Municipalities of Modena, Novellara, Unione Terre di Castelli, Viareggio, Reggio Emilia, Casalecchio di Reno, Montesilvano, Fucecchio.

Finally, **we consistently prioritized and transferred relevant communications and initiatives from the ICC Program** to the local network, checking and stimulating participation.

Emails, calls, videoconferences with the cities but also social media and web articles have been key communication channels we used to guarantee relationship building, initiatives' visibility and information sharing. We encouraged and promoted participation to trainings and joint campaigns ("Feel Diversity", "World Refugee Day", "International Migrants Day"), leveraging also ICC resources (videos and documents) and toolkits, localizing them.

4. NEW CITIES JOINING THE NETWORK AND OTHERS IN PIPELINE

With the objective of developing the RCD network in Italy, we kept on promoting RCD and ICC Programs through different channels and strategies: website, social media, direct contact, and word of mouth, while connecting with interested cities.

We are glad to communicate that **Montesilvano, located in Umbria region, joined the network** in November 2021.

Other cities have shown a great interest and we are in advanced stages of dialogue with regards to their joining the network, in particular the cities of Bolzano, Bollate and Zagarolo.

5. NETWORKING AND COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Networking and cooperation have been promoted with national stakeholders to increase RCD impact, influence, and results.

The collaboration with partners creates synergies and opportunities in various areas:

- **UNAR – National Office Against Racial Discrimination of the Italian Government**, is directly involved in the project ITACA (Italian Cities Against Discrimination), led by ICEI in cooperation with 7 Cities of the Italian ICC network.

As RCD and Project ITACA, we interviewed UNAR Director Triantafillos Loukarelis on antiracism scenarios in Italy and related initiatives during the Week against Racism (March 21-27), spreading the content and the important messages on our social media channels and on the RCD website.

Moreover, in the framework of the RCD and Project ITACA, ICEI participates in the process promoted by UNAR – National Office Against Racial Discrimination of the Italian Government (associate to the project ITACA) aiming at developing the **“National Plan against racism, xenophobia and intolerance 2021-2025”**. A first meeting was held June 22 (online).

Following this meeting, ICEI and the City of Reggio Emilia discussed and planned the following actions:

- Share information and involve the Italian ICC Cities in the process promoted by UNAR to increase the participation of local authorities in the elaboration of the Plan.
- Propose the RCD as a key-stakeholder to support Cities in the adaptation of the national Plan into local Plans.

ICEI, with the City of Reggio Emilia, will follow up the process promoted by UNAR (next steps planned in 2022).

- A new collaboration was built with **ASGI – Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration**, in order to provide juridical competences in the field of migrants’ integration to support local policies and programmes, directly cooperating with ICEI and the RCD in the framework of the project ITACA, and with the **CNR - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche** who is conducting a test on systemic “intercultural” design of public services.

6. SUSTAINABILITY AND SYNERGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK

The project “ITACA – Italian Cities Against discrimination” funded by the RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME (REC) of the European Commission started its activities with the goal of promoting non-discriminating policies and practices in 7 cities of the Italian ICC Network (Reggio Emilia, Modena, Novellara, Olbia, Viareggio, Fucecchio, Casalecchio di Reno), improving the skills of the staff of municipalities and engaging civil society to raise awareness on this topic.

This initiative supports the sustainability of the Italian Network by strengthening the role of members Cities in implementing non-discrimination legislation, policies and practices, and by promoting public-private cooperation in order to increase rights-awareness among citizens.

In the framework of Project ITACA, we developed an **analysis and mapping of the anti-discrimination practices of 7 cities** of the Italian ICC Network (Reggio Emilia, Modena, Novellara, Olbia, Viareggio, Fucecchio, Casalecchio di Reno).

The document has been presented to the Cities to share the key-findings and stimulate the discussion among staff from municipalities, with the support of ASGI – Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration. The final version of the analyses will be published in the coming weeks.

Moreover, ITACA started the **elaboration of the training modules** that will be provided to the 7 Cities. An in-presence meeting will be held in Modena in September to share a first proposal of training contents and collect feed-back from Cities.

Training sessions are expected to start in November 2021 under the coordination of ICEI and with the involvement of project partners, associates, and external experts.

ICEI, in its capacity of Coordinator of the Italian ICC Network, submitted a new proposal to the **Call for Proposal “Networks of Towns” of the CERV Programme** (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) of the European Commission. The proposal was developed in partnership with several ICC networks and cities and with the ICC Program as associate. In particular, **the project “NET-IDEA “Network of European Towns for Interculturalism, Diversity, Equality and Anti-discrimination”** is based on a transnational partnership involving the ICC networks in Italy (ICEI is the lead applicant), Spain, Portugal, Sweden and the Municipalities of Erlangen (Germany) and Lublin (Poland). The objective of the proposal is to reinforce the role of local authorities and their cooperation in the fields of diversity promotion, interculturalism, anti-discrimination and inclusion of minorities.

Moreover, NET-IDEA promotes the cooperation among LAs, CSOs and youth groups to design and spread new narratives to fight discrimination and racism, thus creating a more inclusive European society.

In November 2021, ICEI and the RCD started a new initiative called “Youth Spaces free of Rumours – Young people against discrimination” (1/11/2021 - 30/04/2022).

The project promotes youth activation and civic protagonism to fight discrimination within youth spaces, establishing environments “free of prejudice”.

In particular, the project will support actions of youth protagonism based on the “Anti-rumours” methodology in 8 Italian municipalities members of the Italian network: Milano, Torino, Venezia, Casalecchio di Reno, Novellara, Palermo, Modena, Reggio Emilia, for a total of 18 youth centers involved.

7. FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Thanks to the Intercity grant obtained in 2020 by the cities of Reggio Emilia and Novellara for a **project promoting interreligious dialogue, ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) decided to create a working group within its Migrations’ Commission**, which is dedicated to this very important issue. The Working group shall be composed of politicians or technicians from interested Italian municipalities, coordinated by Reggio Emilia, with the following objectives:

- reflect around this important topic
- define a moment of public debate

- elaborate proposals for national reform on this topic.

ANCI opened participation to the group to member cities of the Italian network, and the city of Torino and Novellara joined the group.

8. INTERCITIES GRANT 2021

The **project "Diversity Management, integration, skills of migrants and business competitiveness"** submitted by Comune di Novellara, together with Reggio Emilia and Mondinsieme Foundation, was approved for the Intercities Grant 2021.

We supported them during the whole process, with suggestions on the proposal and helping them in engaging new partners. This resulted in the adhesion to the project partnership of Unione Rubicone e Mare.

The project is a systemization and a collection of good practices on the theme of diversity management, integration, skills of migrants and business competitiveness. It intends to develop a training kit on Diversity Management, containing training tools for companies to be implemented at two levels: training actions targeting managers - to foster understanding of the actual dynamics triggered by the diversities present within the company and in the development of enhancement strategies; training actions targeting workers, not only to support an awareness of submerged soft skills, but also to "educate them to diversity and the value of differences", in the awareness that this has positive repercussions both within the workplace and on the social cohesion of the territorial community of membership.