



# City of Erlangen

## Intercultural Profile

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

Erlangen is a Bavarian city with a population of approximately 110,000 residents located 20 kilometres from Nuremberg. Erlangen's identity as a city is closely tied to its history in particular the formative influence of French Huguenot refugees in the 17th century. This historical narrative provides a strong foundation for the city's positive approach to integration. More modern associations with migration are linked to the University and the significant influence of the company Siemens on the area. The international outlook of the region and the existence of a population, over 25% of which has a migrant background, helped the city to take a very pro-active approach to intercultural policy-making. Although Erlangen is a recent signatory to the International Cities Charter (ICC), it became the 100th city to sign the Charter in October 2016; the city's work has been closely linked to interculturalism for many years due to the inclusive and open-minded approach of the city administration.

It is impossible to describe Erlangen without referencing two key developments in its recent history. The first is the founding of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, which was founded in 1742. The second is the arrival of Siemens as a key employer in the area. Siemens AG employs around 23,000 employees in the area today, nearly 25% of the Erlangen workforce. This contributes to a city with an international focus based on its global links through education and industry. However, the city also has a focus on developing local interaction and community. The physical manifestation of this thinking can be found in the city centre where emphasis is placed on the pedestrian and the cyclist over that of motorised traffic. Automotive

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based upon the visit of the CoE inspection team on the 4-6 October 2016, comprising Irena Guidikova, Matthew Cannon and Anne Bathiliy.

traffic is kept to a minimum which helps to foster a safe central space for all residents to meet and mix. During the ICC visit many of the sites visited were accessed by bicycle which is a testament to this style of pedestrianized planning and makes for a more sociable space thereby providing a basis for building intercultural 'spaces' between the populations.

Erlangen's city slogan translates as 'Open by Tradition'. This phrase encapsulates many of the qualities and some of the challenges faced by Erlangen in developing its intercultural approach. Throughout its history Erlangen has promoted approaches which could be deemed 'intercultural' even though some of these developments occurred before they could be identified by the term 'intercultural'. While many of the projects and people we met with were very open and supportive of intercultural integration they were also constrained by the institutions and traditions they were working within. In a way, it is this conflict between what is 'open' and working methods based on 'tradition' that is the central tension which intercultural Erlangen is currently and steadily experiencing.

## National Context – Diversity

Germany has a very diverse population, which is derived from historical, economic and political trends. Germany has moved from a country with a history of emigration to a place where immigration is increasing. The Second World War had a significant impact on the early wave of immigration in the 20th century that continues to influence German society. The need for a labour force in the post-war years led to recruitment policies that sought to employ "guest workers" from other countries. This was largely made up of workers from other parts of Europe as well as Morocco and Turkey. The traditional idea of a "guest worker" has implications for how the German population perceived immigration which was that migrants would return to their home country once their work was no longer needed. As a result there was little by way of institutional infrastructure from the federal and/or regional governments to ensure local and regional integration.

In recent years the number of people with a migrant background has increased, for instance figures from the German Federal Statistical Office show that the number of

people with immigrant backgrounds living in Germany increased by 216,000 from 2010 to 2011. Multiculturalism has been a fiercely controversial topic in Germany in recent years, engendering vigorous debate over the integration of immigrants, many of whom moved to the country in the 1960s as guest workers from Turkey.<sup>2</sup> There are now 16 million people with an immigrant background living in Germany which is 20.5% of the country's population.

More recently the arrival of refugees has raised greater awareness of migration as a political and policy topic. A great deal of discussion around migration issues currently focuses on the role played by national, regional and local government policymakers in regard to asylum and refugee policy and housing. While intercultural integration is a much wider topic the focus of many of the programmes and discussions we had over the two days addressed refugee integration as part of the discussions regarding intercultural integration.

## Local Context – Diversity

Erlangen has a long history associated with immigration which is tied to its historical development as well as the influence of economic and education draws for a migrant population, such as Siemens and the University.

The literature on the migrant population in Erlangen produced by the Office for Integration and Migration states that the total population is comprised of approximately 110,000 inhabitants, with 66.3% that identify with a German background, and 16% identifying as non-nationals. The government statistics office also cite 27% as being foreign-born with the 34% are second or third generation migrants.<sup>3</sup> According to the Office for Integration statistics the highest number of 'new' migrants in Erlangen comes from Turkey and it counts 2,674 individuals: the 1.52% of the total population.

## National / Regional Policy Context

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/19/germany-multiculturalism-immigration>

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the questionnaire differentiates between Germans and non-Germans, where the term non-Germans describes "people with a migration background".

The German national policy regarding migration is closely tied to international trends and the global debate currently underway regarding immigration and integration. German federalism also impacts on how local responses are developed on the topic of immigration and integration. Policies, such as education, have a regional as well as a local and national dimension.

Germany was initially slow to acknowledge immigration, however in the late 1990s the process of recognising and legislating led to the reform of the Nationality Act of 2000 and the Immigration Act of 2005. The 2005 Act made the promotion of integration a national responsibility. Following the national recognition there have been several federal initiatives on immigration which means that there is some national leadership on the topic of integration. These initiatives include the establishment of Integration courses which include German language classes as well as an orientation to German culture, administration, and work. The language course consists of 600 hours of instruction and the orientation course is 60 hours. At the end of the course all participants take a final exam which assesses their language skills.

In response to the increasing number of asylum seekers the German government created its first comprehensive Integration Law at the national level in July 2016. The law includes a range of supportive measures as well as some more punitive aspects. The law was cited by Chancellor Angela Merkel as a 'milestone', however it has also been criticised for some of its assumptions, such as the idea that incoming migrants may be unwilling to integrate.<sup>4</sup>

German politics is characterised by two *Volksparteien*, the Christian Democratic (CSU) and Social Democratic (SPD) parties, which in the past tended to get approximately 90% of the overall vote. The proportion of the population supporting these parties has gradually shrunk nationally with smaller parties taking up a portion of the vote. The most recent Erlangen local council elections in 2014 resulted in the following breakdown: 17 CSU (34%), 15 SPD (29, 3%), 8 "Grüne"-Greens (15, 8%). While the traditional division between the CSU and SPD remains there has been an

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on German Integration policies see Hubschmann, Z. (2015), 'Migrant Integration Programmes : The Case of Germany', Global Migration Research Paper, Global Migration Centre : Geneva.

increase in the vote for the Greens as well as other third parties, which is reflective of broader national and European trends.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has pursued a pro-immigration policy under the leadership of Angela Merkel which has played an important role in leading and engaging people nationally and internationally on the topic of integration and, in particular, in regard to refugees and asylum seekers. The ongoing national and international debates around the role of migrants in German and European society have had an impact throughout Europe and the world. Most recently the British Referendum on the European Union, more popularly known as BREXIT, was driven to a great degree by those who perceived a negative impact regarding immigration. The US election of Donald Trump could also be cited as an example where negative attitudes towards immigration had a significant impact on the result. While other countries begin to see a move towards more restrictive approaches to immigration, and therefore less emphasis on integration, Germany acts as a case where the opposite has managed to survive to some degree. However, it is important to note that Germany is not immune to the changes that have occurred throughout the world and Europe. The larger 'tent' parties have gradually been losing seats to smaller more extreme parties in recent years, and again migration has been part of the reason for those changes. It is within this global and national conversation on immigration that the wide range of efforts in Erlangen to act as a leader for intercultural innovation at a local level becomes even more significant. The intercultural history of Erlangen, both in its historical and more recent economic and education forms provides an example of a city which has worked extremely well by applying an emphasis on the advantages of diversity.

## Local Policy Context

While there is a history of immigration in Erlangen what is most notable is the influence of the University and Siemens in contributing to the diverse population in the area. It is with this in mind that the modern take on 'Traditionally Open' is evident. The city officials and administration have recognised the importance in stressing diversity as an asset that has helped to encourage students and companies to come to Erlangen.

Erlangen's leadership in the area of migration is clear since early 1974 when it became the third city in Germany to set up a migrants' council. It is important to note that while it was the third to establish such a council in Germany it the first such council to be composed of elected members. Following the establishment of the council, over 80 people from politics, education, police, trade unions, and NGOs started working on the principles of integration. It took over a year for the Council to unanimously adopt the ideas put forward. Bottom-up development was the central to success of integration planning as instead of imposing a draft strategy and asking for approval Erlangen brought on board a diverse range of contributions. While internal offices in the administration of Erlangen, such as the integration office were more focused on the aspects of discrimination, there was an agreed understanding that a focus on positive collaborative measures would be crucial to promoting a positive mind-set regarding immigration. There is recognition that this approach has been successful in promoting intercultural approaches throughout the local administration.

The city created a steering committee for integration with the Mayor, several departments and the migrants' council. They prepare political decisions, monitor implementation and request specific data (e.g. the educational success of third generation migrants). The steering committee helps to identify indicators where the city has an influence in understanding migrant integration. The integration of intercultural thinking into the local authority was made a priority for the administration by the Mayor for two consecutive years, and the decision to join the ICC was due to the realisation that Erlangen wanted to learn from other cities undergoing similar challenges.

The local responses to integration courses gives an indication as to how Erlangen can act as a leader amongst local, regional and national actors in Germany. The courses, which are part of a national integration policy, are not open for everyone, only for those from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Eritrea. The city council decided that it would pay for the courses for everyone, without distinction. In addition this approach seems to have been adopted by members of the general public as there is

a demand amongst the more long-term residents of Erlangen, city employees to learn Arabic, as well as amongst volunteers to learn Sikh and other languages.<sup>5</sup>

## International Club

The city began its relationship with intercultural integration through the creation an intercultural month in the 1970s. The club acted as a focal point for the beginning of intercultural activity in the city and provided the foundation for the aspects of intercultural integration that would comprise later policies. These acted as an early catalyst for intercultural policy amongst a range of actors; however more recent work has highlighted the need to move the focus away from a multi-cultural model featuring a specific monthly celebration and integrate it into the broader policies.

There are a number of socio-cultural centres in the neighbourhoods around Erlangen which provide a space for engagement through a range of programmes. Each centre has one employee who is responsible for managing the centre in consultation with local communities. The centres also act as spaces for democratic participation in a decentralised style. Based on the discussions a process is under way to elect representatives in each neighbourhood to form an advisory board which will advise the city council on behalf of the citizens in their neighbourhoods. Meanwhile there are also plans to develop neighbourhood engagement meetings in the centres several times during the year.

The physical expression of this approach is the move to 'open up' more traditional approaches to intercultural integration. The 'International Club' was the space in which we started our interviews with Erlangen and it provided a perspective on the development of policies in Erlangen. In many ways Erlangen is to be commended for the early efforts to establish links and a physical space for those links through the 'International Club'. The space facilitates lectures, concerts, informal meetings and there are no fees for the use of this space which all groups are welcome to use. It was noted during our discussions that the challenge for the Centre is to reach out to refugees and those who are marginalised. Although refugees attend the integration

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<sup>5</sup> According to our interview with education representatives the *Volkshochschule* provides 5 Arabic courses and the demand is increasing.

courses in the building it was felt that it will take more work and a presence in every district to ensure the engagement of all communities in the club.

## Cultural Projects

The city has a Coordinator for socio-cultural integration who brings experience and good practice between different cultural institutions. The strong cultural approach to integration in Erlangen has been supported by an understanding of the role played by cultural institutions such as the library, museums and theatre in getting residents to engage with current and historical issues around migration.

Theatrical projects help to provide a cultural space but also challenge residents' perceptions around migration and refugee integration. An example which was cited was *Neuland* (new country) a play with refugees and migrants working with German actors which created a space for the residents of Erlangen to rethink some of their assumptions around the topic of migration. There was also a Christmas theatre for children in which they involved the refugee volunteer society to produce a play to involve students and others who tend to be marginalised. The challenge here is getting families to work with theatre and pedagogy and the hope is to open the programme up and involve a range of migrant groups to further build on the diverse opportunities. The theatre is also considering working in different languages and trying multi-lingual plays as a way to engage new communities. The theatre opens its doors also to public events and debates, involving migrants and refugees. They also provide internships for refugees, in line with similar approaches from the museum, and the city council. An interesting 'advocate' that was identified is the very popular international band *MIASANZIM* which plays a mix of Bavarian, Balkan and fusion and has some links to the Roma community.

The progressive approaches of the museum are also worth noting. The museum is a public space that has used exhibits to engage Erlangen's residents in promoting understanding amongst different communities on the topic of migration. The museum has run previous exhibitions, such as the My Intercultural Erlangen exhibit in 2014. These types of exhibits provide a public space for discussion of the role migration has played in the history of Erlangen.

The library also engages in policies that promote integration. Free access to the library is provided to asylum seekers and guided tours are also provided. The library also looks to buy books in many languages. The facilities include children's books in 40 languages, bilingual dictionaries, free Wi-Fi, and a gaming zone for refugee children. It is a quiet space for refugees to study in comparison to the more crowded and noisy refugee centres. One thing that was noted by the library administration is that it attended mainly by men; however women do attend when accompanied by children to events such as storytelling sessions.

All of the cultural projects are indicators of the willingness on the part of arts and culture to ensure that the approach to culture in Erlangen is one based on the core concepts of interculturalism and diversity awareness. While the directors of each of these sections acknowledged that there has been some progress in the areas of interculturalism they also raised the need for ongoing work and engagement, in particular with recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers, as well as the challenges accessing more marginalised groups such as refugee women.

## Local Administration

In Erlangen an intercultural approach to local administration was pursued even before it was officially recognised as 'intercultural' and many aspects of intercultural policy-making at the local level are evident well before Erlangen's decision to join the ICC Network. The local administration is comprised of 2,500 employees, and in some departments an aging population has meant that an increasing number of positions are becoming available in the local authority. This provides an opportunity for the local authority staff to become more reflective of the community and promote migrant employment in the administration. Thus, the Human Resources (HR) department in Erlangen consulted with communities to develop an equal opportunities strategy in order to target under-represented groups.

Discussions with the various departments that make up the local administration highlighted the efforts on the part of the local authorities to embed the diversity work of the integration department into the core work of other departments. To this end a

consultative process was undertaken and 54 concrete measures, short, medium and long-term, were developed. The plan will be funded and supported by Erlangen City Council to ensure that intercultural policy-making is integrated into the entire council structure.

The administration recognised the need for the local authority staff to be more reflective of the population. While current structures mean that cannot happen immediately there are efforts to engage young people from migrant communities to work in the administration. The HR department cited 20-25% of apprentices as coming from a migrant background. An example is the involvement of a local Mosque which has helped make some Turkish youngsters to aware of the opportunity to work for the city. It was interesting to note that for some of the potential young people the decision to work with the local authority tends to be more of a family decision than an individual one so there are many people to convince in order to promote migrant participation in the administration.

The topic of intercultural awareness training was also addressed during our visit. The challenge is to change the mind-set of the employees to realise that intercultural approaches, diversity advantage and change management are not an add-on but a way to improve processes and results. The city has in the past offered many training opportunities on anti-racism and intercultural awareness; however one of the challenges is that for many staff the training was not in great demand partly due to the feeling that many staff members felt they did not need the training. The city has experienced more recent success with training programmes where a more effective approach to training started with getting the support of city managers who were convinced first. As far as potential for future training the HR Department cited the areas of youth and social development as a priority for future training.

While the success of the integration department is evident in the wide ranging work it does, for instance, in addition to a range of local engagement programmes with migrant communities there are also many twinning partnerships and other EU funded projects running simultaneously under the direction of the Department. The story of local administration in Erlangen is one where the initial efforts to recognise diversity have opened the doors to a more integrated approach to interculturalism at many

levels in the local administration. Still some aspects of local planning require further development and the constraints of 'traditional' institutional structures will require the combination of the plan for diversity and local leadership in order to ensure that an 'open' approach is taken.

## Political participation

Political participation of migrants has been a challenge for Erlangen which it is still trying to come to grips with. During our session we met with one member of the City Council who came from a migrant community and there was some sense that there remains a good deal of work before the migrant population is represented proportionally in the Council.

Institutional constraints based on federal law does not help this as people can be encouraged to take part in political debate, however in Germany non-nationals cannot vote or stand for election. Germany is only one of the few EU countries where the vote of non-EU nationals is not allowed. A change to this is a key demand of the local integration council, however it remains to be seen whether this can be incorporated into national policy.

Another constraint is the institutional requirements regarding citizenship. The average time for a migrant to achieve citizenship in Germany is 8 years. However some years people spent in Germany do not count, for instance people on benefits or those with convictions do not qualify, and in order to qualify as part of the national integration policy migrants need to pass an exam which includes a good knowledge of the German language. The fee can be restrictive for those on limited means as it can add up to approximately €700. Another aspect which impacts the number of applications for German citizenship is the lack of dual-citizenship arrangements with many countries that have a long history of German immigration (i.e. Turkey).

Despite these 'institutional' constraints the city actively tries to promote political engagement and participation amongst migrants. By law once a year in each neighbourhood the politicians and officials go into the neighbourhoods and conduct an exchange about local policy. In addition when there are specific plans for opening

refugee centres or urban rehabilitation there is a dialogue. All departments go out of their way to involve everyone from the community in discussions about policy. But it is difficult to find objective ways of measuring participation at the community level. The migration council is cited as a very important part of that engagement; however the effectiveness of the council to influence overall policy could undermine its future potential to recruit effective participants. The selection process for the migrant council was raised in the discussion and it was stated that some thought was given to adding some statutory position in addition to the elected representatives from a migration background as the involvement of some organisations and institutions which are stakeholders would be beneficial.

The looming political challenge that was touched on in some of our discussions is the challenge of countering extreme right politics. These political groups play on fears around housing and resources, such as starting rumours that the government will start putting refugees in people's homes, and that the poor will not receive support any more etc. While these are challenges which are faced by many cities there may be lessons for addressing far right rumours in some of the work already carried out by the Erlangen C4i Anti-Rumour team. Further development of this approach could help dispel some of this far-right influence through migrant-led campaigns to counter some of the myths. Some of the potential suggestions are using 'migrant' ambassadors going to villages etc., and introduce spaces where they can deal with fear. Another idea is to appoint street mediators or an employee to whom people can talk if they have fears, perhaps with some professionals - doctors, police etc. could be involved in a way to ensure that people get to air their concerns.

## Formal and Informal Education

Education presents a significant challenge for intercultural integration in Erlangen. The 'traditional' institutional structures combined with the limits to local policy-making in this area (formal education is within the remit of other levels of government) results in further segregation which is impacted three-part school system, which in Erlangen clearly affects the children from non-German-speaking parents' homes, as well as residential district segregation. The dual system of education, a high-quality and internationally recognised system, which can offer pupils from middle schools

very good job prospects, can be even more popular and their attractiveness can be exhibited by large companies such as Siemens which see the education system as a key reason for establishing in the area. In Erlangen there are 3 middle schools (11-16) then children have to attend vocational school until 18. There are also 6 gymnasiums in the city which tend to have a more academic focus for their students. Children have to go to school in their neighbourhood, and all schools are of good quality, although the impact of different levels of schools means that students end up in an institutional system where they are defined as either 'vocational' or more 'academic'.

In Germany teachers need to be a German or EU citizen which has an impact on the recruitment of teachers from migrant populations. The teacher education colleges were not very proactive in attracting migrants until recently. The influence over education policy is largely the responsibility of the Länder, and thus the city does not have much influence over the recruitment and allocation of teachers in schools.

The education team produced a statistical report on education in the city which identified that 83% of young people from non-German families are on the vocational track, and 51% of those with migrant background go to this track. At the age of 10 years old (after 4th grade) there is already a selection process underway which streams the young people into various schools. The education team pointed out that are studies which demonstrate that foreign sounding names do not get recommended to the gymnasium and low teacher expectations do not help migrant schools' results. Another point to note is that many of the migrant workers in large companies such as Siemens tend to send their children to an international school which is not included in the statistics, and therefore it is hard to determine where those migrant children fit into the formal education picture. The results which we currently have are for those migrants who are more economically marginalised.

As the city is constrained by regional education policy structures it has had to come up with alternative approaches. To this end the city provides learning support for pupils outside of the traditional schooling hours, as well as a peer volunteer mentoring programme and some support from the youth department which engages in intercultural work with parents from a migrant background. The result of these

efforts is that it helps some pupils who would be left behind the opportunity to catch-up, the draw-back is that due to resources this can only be carried out on a limited basis and does little to challenge some of the broader structural issues which have resulted in a divide between migrants attending schools and existing communities.

Perhaps the best example of this comes from the research carried out by the Erlangen Anti-Rumour C4i programme which showed that those with a Gymnasium education have the most stereotypes. This is notable as in the German education system the Gymnasium is recognised as the most advanced of the three types of secondary school. This may be due in part to limited access to the school by migrant communities as many of the international workers would send their children to an international school and other migrants are restricted to schools in their area. Given the limited access to migrant populations this could have the potential to lead to further segregation based on institutional lines and thus the local authority must develop more informal tools to counter the formal segregation. One suggestion was that the city can encourage twinning or joint projects between gymnasium and vocational schools to change the bad image of the latter and de-segregate. But the image is already changing because the educational department is investing in projects with artists and others to make vocational schools more fun and more attractive. The problem is that teachers in the Gymnasium earn more, so therefore working in vocational schools is seen as less attractive. One approach to counter these trends is to develop teacher awareness training courses which would raise awareness about the discriminatory effect of prejudices in recommending other types of school. Another suggested approach is to develop exchange projects between different types of schools to promote (inter) cultural exchanges between the pupils.

Overall the challenge that exists is that the current 'traditional' system is too rigid to make any significant differences to how migrant children are distributed amongst the varying levels of schooling and make the system more 'open'. The current approach on the part of the local authority is to support a range of informal programmes which attempt to address the existing system which is very rigid and divisive. While the informal programmes are useful they are to a degree treating the symptoms without addressing larger structural challenges. Future changes will have to happen at a national and regional level to affect any significant change.

## Informal Education – HIPPY Project

Another example of where Erlangen has been successful with an informal programme which addresses migrant needs is in the form of the HIPPY Project (Home Interaction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters). The project involves 40-50 families from Arabic countries, China, Ukraine, Kazakhstan etc. It is funded through a combination of support from the city and private donations. The project focuses on pre-school age children and their families taking a holistic approach to education by developing activities that take place at the home and bringing together migrant families to learn aspects of German life and culture. The ethos of the project is to empower the families by providing an informal structure for addressing educational and cultural issues. The feedback from the project is that it has a positive impact on the mothers as well who have traditionally been harder to engage in city and community projects. The motivation for participation in these programmes is linked to the cultural expectation in the schools in Bavaria which expect parents to attend meetings and help the kids with homework. The parents participate as they want to ensure the best possible future for their children.

The HIPPY project has an interactive approach to working with a range of families. Once a week the volunteers visit the families, next the families meet in the centre and speak German. The project includes visits to introduce the participants to social life and opportunities, visits to the library / museum, and to introduce the *Volkshochschule* to the families. Information is also provided at the meetings about the school system and the health system. Upon completing the programme the women become more confident to engage in the community. The informal (NGO) character is important as the participants can initially be intimidated by official institutions..

The project highlights how this type of informal structure can access migrant women from countries such as Eritrea, Somalia and Pakistan who may not have arrived with German language skills and have few avenues for community integration. The HIPPY project is looking into developing a programme more specifically addressing women in marginalised communities. The city would like to extend the project to

Arabic refugee families. The programme is very successful however it is still a small-scale programme which does not meet all of the needs of the community.

Mentoring programmes such as the HIPPI project promote integration and equal opportunities in Erlangen, and should be expanded as a result of increased demand. It is also possible to consider how, for example, more mentoring programmes can be launched by the Equal Opportunities Officer. This is a very promising model especially for refugees because it also simplifies and promotes integration into social life. You can also think more about working with Siemens as the company can be a very important partner in the field of mentoring, and as the biggest employer it is a very important player in the city.

## Communities and Civil Society

An examination of the composition of the migrant population in Erlangen demonstrates that there are a number of large groups that participate actively in community engagement by working with individuals as well as local officials. As the range of groups residing in the area is large the local authority has demonstrated adaptability in its work with a range of centres including mosques, migrant representative organisations and projects.

## Muslim Community

There is a sizeable population of approximately 3,500 Muslims in Erlangen and the local Mosque community has developed positive relations with the local authority to ensure good relations amongst the community. The Mosque has acted as a focal point for many of the Muslim community which according to the Imam we met is comprised of 80% Turkish, 40% male, 60% female members. While the Mosque served a mostly Turkish community in the past the arrival of new migrants from areas such as Syria and Iraq means that the number attending is increasing and new space is necessary. They have established inter-religious dialogue with Catholic, Jewish, Buddhists.

However there are some informal links which means that approximately 1000 pupils visit the mosque in a as part of their education. It was felt that a similar model for adult visits could be encouraged too by building links with companies, such as Siemens as well as with staff in the local authority. There is every year on 3 October (Germany's reunification day, a national holiday) an open door day for all Mosques in Germany, however the Imam pointed out that not many people attend this event citing approximately 30 people who attended the last event. There was a feeling in the discussions that the association should proactively work with other groups and associations, retirement houses to encourage people to visit.

A notable example of co-operation between the city and the Muslim community is linked to a pilot programme for a more inclusive approach to religious education in the region. Currently there are compulsory religious lessons (also known as ethics) for Christian and Jewish students however no such arrangement existed for Muslim students. The city administration and the Muslim association convinced the Bavarian Ministry of Education to allow Islam studies in Erlangen as a pilot. This has been extended to other schools but is still not mainstreamed and the Lander government does not want to extend it. There was a problem to find teachers, so the University opened a department of Islamic studies and the community is hopeful that this will have a positive impact on the understanding of Islam in all communities.

Our discussions covered a range of topics related to Islamophobia, such as issues raised by Non-Muslims regarding the wearing of a headscarf. More recent xenophobic events and threats have also meant that the Mosque has had to lock the doors between prayers, something it never had to do before. The Mosque has tried to counter this through public events (which it was admitted did not have as much participation and could take a more proactive approach) and through its good contacts with media. It was felt that the pro-active approach to communication works very well but it is hard to ensure a balanced representation of Muslims in the media especially given the current climate. In addition there is a new officer responsible for anti-discrimination and hate speech which the Mosque and the Muslim community is very happy about. These efforts are a good first step and further co-operation between the Muslim community and the local authority could help to enhance public understanding of Islam and stem the potential for increasing Islamophobia.

## The German-Russian Cultural Association

The association was founded in 1999 with support by the city which provides the premises for free. The origin was a Russian theatre group of 10 people which then expanded to include many more. One of the triggers for the growth of the group was that the Russian-Germans were concerned for their youth who were lacking facilities. The group decided to organise in order to change this within the city and now the group has over 400 members. The first goal was to foster the integration of citizens of Russian origin with educational and cultural activities. Now they also offer support for the maintenance and transmission of the Russian culture and language. Activities include language classes, ballet, mathematics, playgroups, in all 30 of the programmes which are run on a weekly basis. All courses for young children are in Russian to reinforce the mother tongue, but also used as a basis for learning German and other languages.

They organise festivals, a Christmas festival, excursions for kids and families to different cities to introduce the country. To provide all these courses they employ 15 trained professionals on a small honorarium. For some of them this is however the first step towards the labour market (helping with the recognition of qualifications). Members pay €10 membership and €180 per year for each course. There are about 20 nationalities represented, including Germans. Amongst the other nationalities involved in the group there was a group of 130 refugees from Ukraine, and it was interesting to note that within this grouping the recent conflict between Russia-Ukraine was not discussed as it was agreed early on that the work of the Association was about language and culture and not about politics.

A challenge which was expressed during our meeting was that all associations in the city have problems attracting younger members to their groups. Examples were cited where young people of migrant origin tend to socialise in their own soccer clubs or other organisations, even if they are second generation and that this poses challenges for future engagement with migrant communities who are less connected to migrant groups which could represent them.

One interesting insight from the meeting which might be a valuable lesson for other cities is the creation of an umbrella organisation for the migrant representative associations which receives money from the city which the umbrella organisation is required to distribute according to agreed criteria. This gives the city some oversight while also building on the expertise and bottom-up input from migrant groups in the umbrella association.

## Refugee Integration

Refugee integration was a topic which was addressed through a number of meetings as part of the ICC visit. In addition to being a topic which draws European and national headlines it was also very much a topic of local concern. It is commendable that across the many departments and communities the topic of refugee integration was in the fore-front of the discussion which is a demonstration of the ability on the part of the integration team to lead and develop a holistic approach to the issue. It is also a sign that there is an increasing need to address the issue through co-ordinated action and leadership under the guidance of the city administration.

There remains a need to bridge the divide that exists between asylum-seekers and awareness in the general public. While it is possible for asylum-seekers to meet with Erlangen residents in the socio-cultural centres this does not always take place. Also when it does it is largely in populations that have a positive view on refugee integration; however there is little exposure for those who may need it most (i.e. people with negative attitudes towards refugees and asylum-seekers). While the solution may lay in further contact between refugees, asylum-seekers and other Erlangen residents there are barriers to participation for those seeking asylum that prevent this. Cultural differences regarding the experience of community participation and democracy can act as a barrier. In addition the wait for an approval application; it takes 6-12 months to process an application and during this time people are in the 200-300 people shelters and are just waiting, and it is only after an asylum application has been approved that many asylum seekers feel they are ready to participate.

One example of a recurrent issue raised during our discussions was the topic of refugee housing, something that in Germany is normally a Länder task, but in Bavaria was delegated to the city with a very short notice. The response in Erlangen is a testament to the strong leadership on the issue as the response was quick with the construction of more than 40 houses for 2000 people. However challenges still remain as the housing market is restrictive and the in some cases the city must still use temporary accommodation (i.e. available places such as sports hall). This is made more difficult by the adoption of a housing ban by the Bavarian government in which the local authority is not allowed to open or rent new housing. This type of constraint is another example of the challenge placed on the local authority to develop innovative policies to ensure an 'open' society while working against more 'traditional' institutional constraints.

### Third-level Education – FAU Integra

The integration of the University into city planning is evident in the link between local authority staff and the university's international department. Similar to the support given to businesses to promote outward investment based on the principle of diversity advantage the University's international department is closely involved in promoting international student exchanges and programmes. The international department of the University welcomes 700 non-EU researchers a year, in addition to overall figure of 4,000 international students.<sup>6</sup> However, it is within the context of the Refugee programme that the co-operation between the University and the community is most evident.

The project is designed to assist refugee access to higher education by providing German courses to C1 level with the language centre of the university; student advice, including financial, tutorials about the procedures and deadlines for registering for university, as well as how to search for information and get organised for their studies; organise student volunteers who help with daily matters, legal advice, medical support in the camps, access to courses with taster studies. Many other universities only offer standard programmes, not tailored for refugees, or leave

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<sup>6</sup> See the FAU International website for additional information on their international programme: <https://www.fau.eu/international/international-profile-new/>

it to volunteers who cannot sustain the numbers. Over 1,800 have so far inquired about possibilities for studying but not all have sufficient years of study. Reaching a C1 (which is the level of German required as part of the national integration programme) in one year is very difficult for people who also need to take care of housing, jobs etc.

The project organisers in FAU wanted to do something effective and comprehensive to address the challenges faced by refugees arriving into a new society. However at the time FAU knew nothing about the numbers of refugees who wished to study and so they planned to start with a small pilot project involving around 30 candidates. Instead 79 participants came to the first meeting plus many volunteers. The FAU managed to raise over €100,000 to run the initial pilot programme and now they have money for staff, teachers, scholarships and finance is currently in place until 2019.

The programme works well because it overcomes some of the key barriers to refugee involvement in higher education. The project works closely with university administration to address barriers to university entrance faced largely by refugees, such as identifying and approving evidence for previous qualifications. In addition the project has a wide approach to education which is not solely focused on third level. For instance those who are not ready for third-level in the programme receive advice about alternatives, such as completing high school or doing vocational training, working for 3 years and then going to university to study in the same field.

As stated by one of the programme directors during the discussion:

*The University is now preparing 200 people for their studies - there is so much motivation to learn...all volunteers feel very satisfied and proud with everything they are doing, they realise how valuable their work is and have very positive memories.*

In the last semester altogether there were 160 students in the preparatory courses, and it was felt that if there are enough teachers they could cater for about 250 in the next round.

The level of networking, coordination and organisation of the city on refugee reception and integration, is a key to this success. The project has enabled cooperation between different institutes and centres of FAU which was difficult prior to this project. It has also triggered a scientific conversation about diversity, integration and society, and academic engagement with the public. They set up an interdisciplinary lecture series on migration and integration - for students and citizens and there were heated exchanges. Now they are planning a cultural workshop programme with refugee students, with photo exhibitions, poetry evenings, to show the home cultures and cultural skills of refugees. The Centre for educational innovation which is also involved in the FAU Integra is leading an innovative approach to use Information Communications Technology (ICT) to enhance learning and distance working and learning as part of the programme.

The project continues to grow and interest has come from other regions as to how it can be replicated. The project has significant potential to impact on local, regional and European integration if allowed to build on its current success. In addition to addressing the education needs of current groups of refugees it also has the further potential to add to the discussions on integration through its public awareness.

## Economic Development

Erlangen has a vibrant local economy supported by a range of business that have located to the area. The most significant of these is Siemens, which in addition to employing over 23,000 employees in Erlangen, also helped to draw smaller companies to open in the area. This provides a strong economic base for the area as well as an additional advantage of a diverse workforce that comes with a multi-national corporation.

The local authority works closely with local businesses to offer a range of supports and services which try to encourage companies to establish a base in the region. This includes supports for finding a locations, establishing a business, etc. While there is a focus on economic development through foreign direct investment the local authority also works with companies to ensure that there is business participation in the creation of local initiatives. For example, the head of the city of Erlangen

Business Department created an association to help young who are out of work to find apprenticeships. This required co-ordination with around 900 member firms that cover a range of services (plumbers, hairdressers, builders, carpenters, violin makers, etc.). They employ between 1 and 1000 workers, although most have 5 or fewer employees. They are in charge of the apprenticeship curriculum, and are very active partners along with the city. Within this group many of the participants are migrants. There are bi-annual meetings with the Mayor to speak about vocational training, refugees, and plans to offer internships for marginalised groups.

Another example of the business involvement engaging with intercultural issues is the involvement of Siemens in the Erlangen C4i Anti-Rumour Campaign.<sup>7</sup> During the Erlangen Anti-Rumour Campaign Siemens provided core support to Erlangen Council in identifying the target audience and providing venues and training which would support a key part of the campaign. The initial campaign lead to a refugee internship programme which is a key success of the programme and could provide a good model for other cities looking at how to engage local businesses in the area of refugee integration.

## Media & Communications

The Erlangen C4i experience was in some ways a new role for the local authority which, although it has a communications department, did not have a great deal of experience in the area of 'campaigning' around the topic of interculturalism and diversity advantage. There remain some challenges such as how to communicate in an already overloaded media which focuses on refugees to an extreme, and how to normalise the integration work as a normal part of the city work and not as exceptional for refugees.

One of the challenges is that the city finds it particularly difficult to reach out to some of groups of refugees, making contact between the residents and the refugees more difficult. This lack of contact is something that the extreme right is using to further

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on this campaign see <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/6374912/6911360/Erlangen+C4i+Campaign+and+rumours.pdf/33794f1b-2c56-4a72-a346-6f4d6e8d53fb>

perceptions that newly arrived refugees could take away benefits from the residents of Erlangen as well as driving a wedge between those identified as refugees and long-term resident migrants. This is the main motivation for many of the programmes across the spectrum of work carried out by the local authority to create connections and trust between newcomers and the host society. A growing challenge that must be addressed is that some of the long-term migrants have a feeling that there are fewer resources available for them, which is playing into the narrative that arriving refugees in some way ‘threaten’ their existence. This type of myth is something that an expanded Anti-Rumour programme could help address.

The area of pro-active communication on the topic of migration and refugee housing is where the city could play a more active role in promoting greater understanding of diversity advantage. It is important to inform residents, both migrant and non-migrant, that the resources are available for everyone and to encourage migrants and locals to participate in dialogue to help stem the dissociation that leads to extreme party support.

## Conclusions and next steps

During the Intercultural Cities visit the ICC team came across a wide cross-section of support for the intercultural approach to migrant integration in Erlangen. As the 100th Intercultural City Erlangen is an excellent example of a city that has strived for many years to include ‘intercultural’ thinking into its planning and administration. This is evident in the inclusive aspects of the programmes developed. There was a great level of enthusiasm amongst everyone we met for intercultural approaches, diversity advantage and integration. However, there was also an acknowledgement that some challenges remain and that participation in the ICC network may lead to future shared learning which might assist in developing innovative approaches. Some of the suggestions, which arose as part of the discussions, are covered in each of the sections above. In conclusion certain themes seemed to arise which form the basis for the recommendations given below:

- **Addressing the rise of Xenophobia** is the main challenge for many cities today and also the case for Erlangen. The answer is in developing strategies for dealing with the fears that are irrational. It may be helpful to try and create open spaces that are not about migration, but are safe spaces where people can express their fears and give them a role in which they feel active and recognised to help avoid feelings of loss or lack of control.
- The question of **engaging migrant /refugee women** was raised during many of the discussions. One suggestion would be to examine mentoring programmes that take place in other countries, such as a mentoring organisation for migrant/refugee women in Denmark. Another potential programme is to look at local authority shadowing to the Mayor or the councillors such as exists in Botkyrka, Sweden.
- A defined **media and communications** strategy is not evident. Focus on strengthening democracy and the authorities, as extreme parties are using people's mistrust in politicians and the establishment. Explore how to pass messages in the age of fact-free politics. It is about offering a behavioural therapy - neutralise the negative voices by asking them to do something and give them a role, and then communicate about their contribution to neutralise the current narrative focused on anti-immigrant sentiment.
- **Create a civic innovation hub with the University:** The city could organise hackathons to involve innovators in finding solutions. The city's population changes very fast (Siemens, students), so many people are temporary and do not get involved in society. The next big step could be a hackathon about a current issue such as housing, the huge move of Siemens to a new area and the students moving in, so the urban landscape will change. (i.e. focus on creative engagement and housing).
- One question which was evident is the potential for **future political support** to ensure that intercultural approaches do not fall victim to political changes. Institutionalising the work of the Integration Unit in Erlangen and making sure it is an integral part of all planning. Some key individuals have played an important role in the initial development – however what has been impressive is their ability to link

across departments in the local authority as well as link with other members of the community. The next step would be to sustain this through integrated roles in each department. Some thought should also be given to ensuring political support to intercultural planning amongst all of the major parties in the Council.

- There was a recognition that while **refugee involvement** in programmes is essential it cannot be carried out through top-down programmes. It is important for the city administration to consider how refugees and migrants can be not only consumers of services but also **active participants** (i.e. refugees teaching Italian kids English).
- While it was acknowledged that **Siemens** contributes to interculturalism in Erlangen a next step would be to try and develop more avenues to **engage Siemens and its employees**. The C4i project and the refugee internship programme are a good start however additional programmes should be built on this foundation (i.e. mentoring, creative projects, and campaigns).
- The **FAU Integra** programme is an example of an innovative project that could help other universities develop similar programmes throughout Europe. Further development and **funding** of the FAU Integration Programme should be examined in order to help it develop further links and awareness with other university programmes, and help it to access outside sources of funding (i.e. **European Commissions Horizon 2020, Erasmus+**).

Erlangen has demonstrated an incredible ability to be at the forefront of intercultural integration and diversity well before its involvement in the Intercultural Cities network. Although Erlangen is a new member of the ICC Network the city is not new to the area of intercultural planning and it has a multitude of experience which it can contribute to other ICC cities. It should also go without saying that the experience of other cities should help Erlangen to tackle some of the new challenges it faces in the coming years as the topic of migration moves from an administrative challenge to a political debate. The slogan of 'Open by Tradition' is an interesting paradox that outlines some of the future challenges for the city. Some of the more 'traditional' elements of institutions, such as federal policies regarding second-level education,

institutional constraints on the housing of refugees and cultural differences regarding the integration of migrant women provide challenges for the ongoing efforts to ensure Erlangen's work to remain an 'open' city. The final potential development is that through the participation in an international network Erlangen can build further international links which can support further policy innovation in support of intercultural integration and the recognition of diversity advantage.