

Guide to intercultural competencies

applied to the development of public administration projects



A project funded by:



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Editorial: Fundación General at Universidad de La Laguna.

Country of edition: Spain.

1st edition.

ISBN: 978-84-09-26270-0

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25145/b.ManComInt.2020>



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
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Introduction



1 | Introduction

In essence, 21st-century society is multicultural.¹

It is clear that, in recent decades, the demographic diversity of our territories has been increased and enriched by the arrival of people of different origins.

It is a fact that people move within the same country, or to other countries, in search of options and opportunities for human development and well-being that a certain place or context does not offer, or in search of international protection to flee from situations of conflict, violence, violation of human rights, environmental degradation, etc.

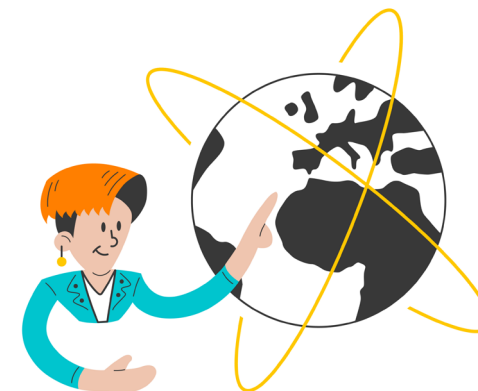
The process of migration entails an opportunity, such that migration has formed part of human development throughout history, so much so that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights already specifically includes the freedom of all people to move freely and choose their residency in the territory of a State.²

If we stick to recent history, in the past 150 years migration, both internal and international, has had great significance for the development of European regions. The majority of these migratory pro-

cesses were, at first, led by European citizens leaving their countries behind. What sets more recent migratory processes apart is precisely the fact that, within just a few years, Europe has become a key destination for immigrants from diverse origins and, especially, for refugees and applicants for international protection.

In effect, as Bauman reminds us, “mass migrations are not a new phenomenon: they have been a feature of modernity from the very start, although they are constantly changing, sometimes even reversing their direction”.³ This is an aspect that should be taken into account, given that more than half of the world’s 20 main migration corridors are located along the South-South axis, as a consequence of the economic growth of countries that produce natural resources, such as Angola, Papua New Guinea and the Gulf Countries, amongst others, with the United States of America being the main destination of immigrants, both those from Northern and Southern countries.⁴

In recent decades, migration has become one of the most important, complex matters in the international arena. It has gained new impetus, especially spurred by globalisation and the inequalities existing in levels of development and well-being between different areas of the planet. And, in effect, globalisation has compressed time and



¹ Council of Europe (2012). *Intercultural competence for all. Preparation for living in a heterogeneous world*. Council of Europe Pestalozzi Series, No. 2, pg. 25.

² UN. General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10th December 1948, 217 A (III), Paris.

³ Bauman, Z. (2016). *Extraños llamando a la puerta*. Ediciones Paidós Ibérica, Barcelona, pg. 10.

⁴ IOM (2013). *Informe sobre las Migraciones en el Mundo, 2013: El Bienestar de los Migrantes y el Desarrollo*, Geneva, pg. 61.

space on an unprecedented scale, at the same time as revolutions have taken place in the field of telecommunications, new communication media, transport and tourism, which have made national cultural systems more accessible, and have put millions of people in direct contact, multiplying the possibilities for intercultural dialogue.⁵

But despite these circumstances and the demand for labour that this process of globalisation encourages, free trade agreements have focused on facilitating the movement of goods and capital, without addressing the movement of people, who suffer from the countless restrictions imposed by States. This creates a paradoxical and unsustainable situation, due to which there is a demand for immigrant labour, but no legal mechanisms to allow workers to move legally and live in conditions of equality in host societies.⁶

At the same time, we find a public debate fed by victimhood and human suffering which, as a spectacle, magnifies the phenomenon of migration, exacerbating the tempers of certain sectors of the population and generating social and political positions of rejection and distrust towards “foreign” people. Thus, a much more complex reality is misrepresented, a reality which shows the significant benefits generated by immigration, responding to economic, demographic and productive arguments, and even innovation and creativity in the host societies.

These restrictions on migratory flows affect the fundamental rights of immigrants, and translate

into the appearance of obstacles in terms of welcome, adaptation and social integration, which take shape in the local sphere; in other words, where coexistence is woven. In the majority of cases, these limitations are related to the position adopted by each host society, and their way of addressing and tackling the challenges of an intercultural society.

The European Commission echoes the importance of local actors, especially in cities, highlighting that the local level is currently undergoing radical new changes involving the growth of its population, accentuating and making the diversity of its people even more evident. As people from all over the world come to take up jobs that our ageing population and workforce cannot, municipal administrations must be aware of their proximity to citizens and their privileged position that allows them to provide faster and more effective policy responses,⁷ with the capacity to have an impact on three types of differentiated areas of action, namely welfare policies, reception policies and policies promoting coexistence.

This is not a temporary matter. It represents a significant, qualitative change. If the politics of the second half of the 20th century was basically about social policy, 21st-century politics is about policy underscored by vectors of managing migration and cultural diversity. Today, social policy requires those making political decisions and the technical staff in charge of managing them to be trained in cultural diversity, and to have a “multicultural mindset”.⁸

⁵ Council of Europe (2008). *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together As Equals in Dignity”*, Strasbourg, pg. 16.

⁶ Petrozziello, A.J. (2013). *Género en marcha: Trabajando el nexo migración-desarrollo desde una perspectiva de género*. UN Women, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, pg. 35.

⁷ Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security (European Commission)(2007). *Manual sobre la integración para responsables de la formulación de políticas y profesionales*. Comunidades Europeas 2007. 2nd Edition, pg. 4. Taken from <https://n9.cl/r0v2d>

⁸ Zapata-Barrero, R. (2009). “Diversidad y política pública”, en “Reflexiones sobre diversidad(es)”, Dossier CIP-Ecosocial – PAPELES, pp. 93 – 104.

Furthermore, it also requires a positive, proactive vision that takes into account and understands how to make the most of the contributions that arise from a diverse body of citizens, and the economic, social, political and cultural advantages offered by an intercultural city model. Intercultural and inclusive cities present better attitudes and a predisposition towards innovating and responding boldly and responsibly to the difficult challenges that we are facing as a society at this historic moment (the discourse of hate and the increase in violent extremism, migration crises and forced displacements, the rise of divisive populist politics, etc.). When national policies do not offer effective tools to address the civil inclusion of the foreign population, “cities can innovate and try practices that, if successful, can lead to changes in legislation, including at the state level”.⁹



From this perspective, using an intercultural perspective in the development of public policy is based on a dedication to equal rights, duties and social opportunities; on constructing a positive discourse around diversity and, above all, on promoting positive social interaction and participation amongst all citizens, fighting discrimination against and exclusion of individuals or groups.

Developing intercultural competencies amongst the staff at the service of the local administration from different areas of sectoral action is a key aspect in advancing the construction of intercultural cities and territories, understood according to the definition in the guide “La ciudad intercultural paso a paso” (The Intercultural City Step by Step), as well as those that “Have a diverse population that includes people of different nationalities, origins, languages and religions/beliefs. The majority of citizens consider diversity as a resource, not as a problem, and accept that all cultures change when they coincide in public space. The city’s authorities publicly advocate for respect for diversity, and for a plural identity for the city. The city actively combats prejudice and discrimination, and guarantees equal opportunities for everyone, adapting its structures, institutions and governance services to the needs of a diverse population, without betraying the principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law”.

As a consequence, an interculturally competent person working for the public administration will promote the provision of better municipal servic-

⁹ Council of Europe (2017). Nuevo paradigma CIUDADES INTERCULTURALES Conectando las agendas de igualdad, diversidad e inclusión, pg. 17. Taken from <https://n9.cl/9zr9>

es (or island services, in the case of islands with supra-municipal services), increase the satisfaction of users and will contribute to services being more efficient. For this, it is necessary to develop and implement practical tools that allow precise knowledge to be acquired and the needs of diverse cities to be addressed.

In these pages, we will try to approach the intercultural perspective in a practical manner, addressing the it in detail, as well as the fundamental theoretical and methodological aspects to take into account for its launch through the management of projects at the local level. We will also present different experiences of a municipal nature that have already been launched and that, with their achievements, firmly and boldly contribute to the collective construction of this learning process and a new paradigm of inclusive coexistence, promoting the common values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance, citizen participation, anti-discrimination and mutual respect as the cornerstone of its political culture.

**Management models
for immigration,
cultural diversity
and coexistence**



2 | Management models for immigration, cultural diversity and coexistence

We can safely say that we are facing one of the most controversial and complex social and political issues: designing and implementing social inclusion policies for a culturally diverse population. Being established in our territory, this population becomes part of our society and also contributes to shaping its future thanks to their social, economic and cultural contributions.

Of course, the suitability, efficacy and applicability of different theoretical paradigms in relation to the inclusion of immigrants in host societies has been an important topic of debate in the social sciences in recent decades. We could say that these models try to establish a road map or script to follow in order to try and satisfactorily approach the phenomenon of migration, achieving good coexistence between local and foreign residents. We will see what the main options implemented are.

By taking into account how the process of migration itself is perceived (as something temporary or permanent), how the freedoms and rights of all people are understood, respect for human identity and diversity and the specific legal measures to be adopted as a result, as well as other basic aspects, we find many different approaches to

the management of cultural diversity. There is the model that simply ignores it, such as “**guest worker**” approaches that perceive immigrants as temporary workers who will return to their countries of origin, which are limited to providing a dignified work context, encouraging the segregation of this group. There is also the **assimilationist approach** that requires minorities to abandon their ethnic identity in an attempt to homogenise culture and rights; or the case of **multiculturalism** that emphasises respect for differences and equal rights, but from a context of simply existing alongside one another, reinforcing the distance existing between culturally diverse groups. We then arrive at the **intercultural model** that puts the emphasis on promoting interactions between different cultural groups, based on dialogue, respect and valuing difference, understanding that intercultural coexistence is a bidirectional process of mutual recognition and enrichment.

Of these approaches, the last one is the only one in which diversity is perceived as a value in and of itself, and not as a problem. The intercultural model is underpinned by values such as equality, respect for minorities and enriching cultural exchange, and promotes equal enjoyment of rights, as well as equal opportunities for all people.

Furthermore, interculturalism moves away from cultural determinism by understanding that people have multiple identities related to origin, gender, age, profession, family situation, place of residence, etc., such that we talk about complex and fluid identities that adapt according to the context and vary over time. That is, perceiving identity not as something that is “a given” or is “given” to us in a passive sense, but rather something that is “enacted” and is defined by doing.¹⁰ As such, intercultural integration is based on an understanding of humanity in which people are not defined in relation to a single signifier of identity, but rather by many, as well as the perception that, despite the many differences between human beings, the most important thing is what unites us, what we have in common.

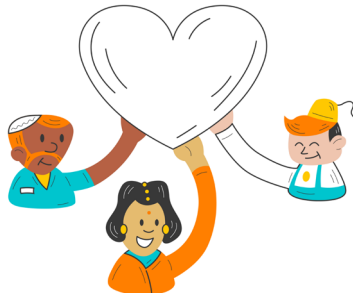
In this way, we would understand interculturality from a holistic and inclusive perspective that, based on respect for and valuing cultural diversity and recognising human rights, seeks gender equality, overcoming racism, discrimination and exclusion, promoting communication and mutual understanding to achieve the democratic transformation of society in terms of social justice. Therefore, interculturality:

Immigration management policy matrix

	Economic rights	Social and civil rights	Cultural rights	Development of community and social cohesion
Guestworker	+			
Assimilationism	+	+		
Multiculturalism	+	+	+	
Interculturalism	+	+	+	+

Source: Intercultural Cities. Council of Europe.

¹⁰ Council of Europe (2017). *Op. Cit.* Pg.31.



- Is a way of understanding society that involves perceiving diversity as a value in and of itself.



- Involves change and exchange in all individuals that make up society, not only minorities.



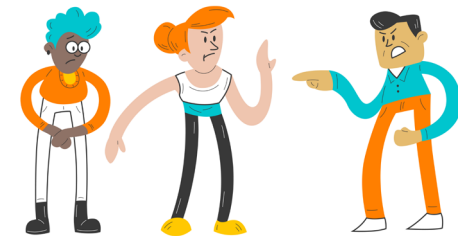
- Encourages meeting and interconnection to contrast points of view, overcome conflicts and generate shared learning.



- Recognises the rights and contributions of all persons in the construction of the society they are living in.



- Promotes dialogue and communication as the basis of interaction and comprehension of people of diverse origins, and with complex identities.



- Seeks to fight against any form of discrimination.

**Principles of
interculturality**

3

3 | Principles of interculturality

According to Carlos Giménez,¹¹ in order to successfully overcome this challenge, interculturalism is underpinned by three fundamental **PRINCIPLES: equality, respect for diversity and positive interaction:**

- **Equality:** emphasising policies and programmes for equality (legal equality, equal treatment, equal opportunities and gender equality) as an essential requirement in the fight against models of exclusion (racism, xenophobia, discrimination and segregation).
- **Respect for diversity:** this is complemented by the principle of equality, as it is only within a framework of equality (absence of stark inequalities), that the differences and features of different groups can be respected without essentialism or paternalism.
- **Positive interaction:** emphasising what we have in common, in other words, making the most of diversity to formulate and boost this common sphere and establish intercultural collaboration or cooperation. This shared sphere is not a given. It is dynamic, it changes over time, and will continue to be identified and formulated, both collectively and through participation.



¹¹ Buades, J. and Giménez, C. (Coords.) (2013). *Hagamos de nuestro barrio un lugar habitable. Manual de intervención comunitaria en barrios*. Valencia. Ed. CEMIGRA, pg. 48.

“Through the Intercultural Cities programme, the Council of Europe works from the premise that diversity is an opportunity and a key resource for the overall development of society at all levels, such that diversity, if it is approached and managed based on intercultural principles (equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, positive interaction) can constitute an advantage that helps achieve more positive results (social, economic, educational, cultural, well-being, etc.) to be achieved than would be without this diversity, or without a specific way to manage it”.¹²

Promoting the intercultural approach, taking these principles into account, involves the public authorities guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination in all areas of interrelation and action (equal treatment, opportunities and dialogue); promoting recognition, respect and positive assessment of diversity as a prerequisite for its normalisation and, finally, encouraging interaction in order to create the conditions necessary for positive and constructive meeting in everyday life, based on cultural differences and different identities, on the basis of potential common inter-

ests (well-being and quality of life, citizens' rights, participation, etc.), intercultural collaboration to achieve shared objectives (between women, young people, retailers, etc.) and community work, under the criteria of shared responsibility, through mediation and intercultural dialogue.

Furthermore, we understand that diversity, when managed based on these principles or axes of interculturalism, may also facilitate the construction of coexistence amongst citizens, and social cohesion at the local level.

¹² RECI (2017). *La ventaja de la diversidad en la ciudad intercultural*. Dossier RECI, pg. 3.

**The dimensions
of coexistence**

4

4 | The dimensions of coexistence

In this regard, Giménez also examines modes of sociability and puts forward three possible cases: The first, coexistence, is understood as a **positive relationship** based on respect and communication, in which potential conflicts are resolved through dialogue, respectfully and without violence. The second refers to **simple cohabitation**, in which people and groups share a space without any relationship, and without tackling potential conflicts, if there are any. Finally, there is the case of **hostility**. When this kind of relationship exists, it is negative and presents clear situations of conflict that arise from confrontations, demonstrating latent or manifest violence.

These modes of sociability are expressed in or manifest themselves at different levels of relationships, attitudes, regulations, axiology, participation, communication, conflict, identity and policy, which the author calls “dimensions of coexistence”. These demonstrate the levels of cohabitation, coexistence and hostility in a given situation or context, in other words, a neighbourhood, area, etc.

Following this multidimensional model, when working in the interests of neighbourhoods, for example, we are advised to give due attention (observing, commenting, analysing, organising activities) not only to the system of relationships and attitudes existing amongst residents, but also to other dimensions such as that relating to rules (uses, customs, regulations), values (which are shared, and which aren't), participation in a broad sense (not only associations), communication (languages, channels, moments, misunderstandings), potential conflicts (latent or manifest) and identities (shared or otherwise). And all this taking into account both the whole and the parts, in other words, contemplating the community as a whole, but also its different sociocultural segments. In this model, the outline “closes” with the political dimension, as this is as decisive as the relational dimension: all relationships have their expression in the polis, in the public and political.

Dimensions of coexistence

Dimensions of coexistence	Aspects to consider	Possible action to improve coexistence
RELATIONAL	Existence (or not) of social and interpersonal interaction/Nature of this interaction.	Promoting the de facto social relationship and its positive character between the actors involved in the neighbourhood.
REGULATORY	Shared rules/Understanding and acceptance of the rules/regulatory adaptation.	Promoting respect for the rules of the community of neighbours, adapting applicable regulation and the participative generation of new rules.
AXIOLOGICAL	Shared values and aims/Recognition and respect for what is not shared.	Promoting attitudes of respect and active tolerance in the social space and specifically regarding minorities, foreigners or those who have recently arrived.
PARTICIPATIVE	Presence in areas of decision-making/Feeling (or not) of being involved/Involvement of everyone in shared social life.	Promoting shared values and not only respect for specific values.
COMMUNICATIONAL	Existing communication/Guidelines and spaces for communication/Efficacy.	Promoting citizen participation in the neighbourhood.
CONFLICTUAL	Handling latent and manifest conflict/Peaceful or violent behaviour/Negotiation versus third-party intervention.	Promoting social and intercultural communication amongst residents and other actors.
ATTITUDE	Respect for others and nature of tolerance/Desire for inclusion or exclusion.	Encouraging peaceful management of conflict in the neighbourhood, promoting regulation systems such as community and intercultural mediation.
IDENTITY	Shared and non-shared identities/Feelings of belonging.	Promoting local and civil identity, as well as the shared feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood.
POLITICAL	Empowering subjects' action/Democratising access to information that guides and positions subjects' decisions/Including multiple perspectives in local debates.	Promoting local democracy.

Source: adapted from Giménez (2013)

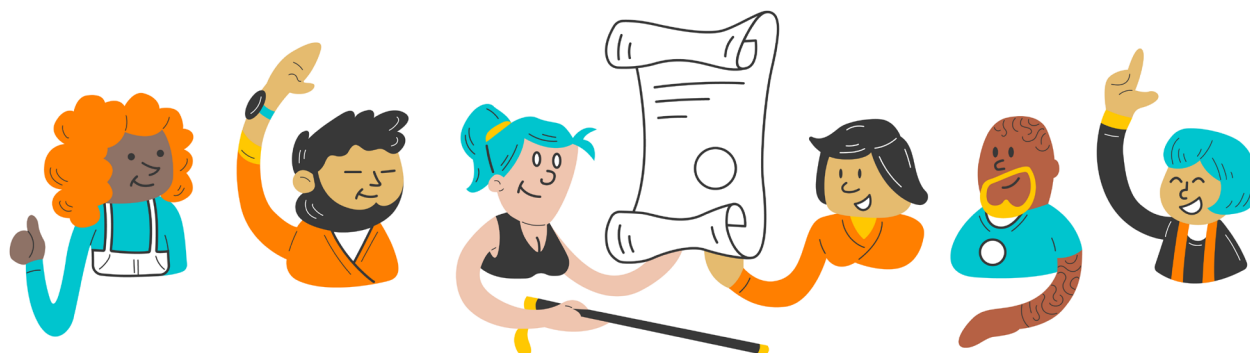
Following this model, our actions under an approach based on intercultural coexistence applied to these different dimensions could move from a scenario of hostility to one in which positive coexistence predominates. For this reason, identifying or understanding the modes of sociability in each of these dimensions or levels in a particular context will largely allow us to design specific programmes, projects or actions to improve appropriate and effective intercultural coexistence in each case, as we will see below.

Furthermore, at the local level, the effective incorporation of these principles and dimensions of intercultural coexistence involve permeating all areas of public policy by directly involving the technical staff and the politicians responsible. This exercise, which would form part of what we know as “intercultural mainstreaming”, is an essential requirement if territories are to be able to make the most of the benefits of diversity.

**Intercultural
mainstreaming**



5 | Intercultural mainstreaming



Along the same lines as the more well-known and generalised concept of “gender mainstreaming”, which involves applying the principle of equal treatment and opportunities to both men and women in public policy, **INTERCULTURAL MAINSTREAMING** is a strategy to ensure that the needs and experiences of all cultural groups are precisely taken into account in the drafting, launch, monitoring and assessment of all policies, programmes and institutional projects, in such a way that the diverse population benefits from conditions of equality, under the basic principles of equity, participation and respect for human rights.

The importance of applying this approach to all public policy and municipal programmes is backed by two central arguments:

- **Regulatory argument:** interculturality as an end in and of itself. Cooperation is based on values that guide our objectives and actions towards the recognition and validity of human rights, including individual and collective rights, and contributing to social justice and compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- **Functional argument:** interculturality as a means to an end. The recognition and management of cultural diversity generates better results and greater sustainability in the impacts of our actions.¹³

As part of this point, it is worth recalling the regulatory framework that serves as our departure point, highlighting some key aspects:

¹³ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (2013): *Guía metodológica de “Transversalización del enfoque de interculturalidad en programas y proyectos del sector gobernabilidad” a partir de la experiencia del Programa “Buen Gobierno y Reforma del Estado” del Perú*. Lima, pg. 23.

- **Organic Law 4/2000, of 11th January, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration**

Article 2 ter. Integration of immigrants.

2. The Public Administration will incorporate the objective of integration between immigrants and the host society, with a cross-cutting nature, in all policies and public services [...]

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2000-544>

EUROPEAN SOFT LAW

- **Common European Framework for the integration of nationals from third countries**

Common Basic Principles (CBP) for the Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union (2004), adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 19th November 2004.

10. Policies and measures to include the issue of integration in all relevant policy areas and levels of government and public services should be given due consideration when designing and implementing public policy. Integration should be addressed not only in a cross-cutting manner in all policies, but also by adopting specific policies.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TX-/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A114502>

- **European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Zaragoza, 15th and 16th April 2010). ZARAGOZA DECLARATION**

As cities and their neighbourhoods are privileged areas for fostering intercultural dialogue and promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion, it is important for local authorities to create and obtain capacities to better manage diversity and fight racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination. For this, they would need to try to hone tools that help them to produce public policies adapted to the diverse needs of the population.

<http://www.intermigra.info/archivos/noticias/Dec-Zgza.pdf>

- **European Agenda for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (Brussels, 20.7.2011 COM (2011) 455 final)**

B. MORE MEASURES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Integration policies should be adopted and applied with the active participation of local authorities. Local authorities are responsible for a wide range of services and activities, and play an important role in configuring the interaction between migrants and the host society.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0455:FIN:ES:PDF>

- **Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027**

24.11.2020 COM(2020) 758 final

The European way of life is an inclusive one. Integration and inclusion are key for people coming to Europe, for local communities, and for the long-term well-being of our societies and the stability of our economies.

Integration happens in every village, city and region where migrants live, work and go to school or to a sports club. The local level plays a key role in welcoming and guiding newcomers when they first arrive in their new country. In addition, civil society organisations, educational institutions, employers and socio-economic partners, social economy organisations, churches, religious and other philosophical communities, youth and students' organisations, diaspora organisations as well as migrants themselves play a key role in achieving a truly effective and comprehensive integration policy.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/qanda_20_2179

Although there are specific needs that may require additional and selective measures at certain times (the process of receiving migrants, legal status, etc.), general programmes aimed at all citizens can also promote the integration of immigrants if certain existing processes or structures are adapted accordingly.¹⁴

Thus, integration of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities within the framework of general policies involves modifying two basic aspects of their management, namely:

- **At the procedural level**, referred to as “ways of doing” administrative activity with the aim of analysing the different situations and positions of cultural groups to satisfy their needs in an equitable way.
- **At the structural level**, in relation to the administration’s organisational structures and means, with the aim of eliminating elements that may be susceptible to causing social inequalities from the outset.

Thus, intercultural mainstreaming seeks to introduce a factor of equality to influence and modify situations of exclusion and/or vulnerability that may be experienced by certain parts of the population in terms of accessing and enjoying services, goods or public spaces, specifically introducing an intercultural perspective into different local policies and actions, as well as in the corresponding budget allocation.

In this respect, it should be specified that intercultural mainstreaming does not constitute a policy in the strict sense, but is rather a way of doing politics. It involves keeping certain conceptual frameworks, methods and criteria in mind, which are integrated into the design, implementation and assessment of all public policy.

This task, which fundamentally depends on political commitment and leadership of governments, requires, as well as political will, certain key matters such as:

- *deep analysis and understanding of the territory’s multicultural context and its system of relations.*
- *encouraging the active presence of diverse populations in spaces of participation and citizen consultation, and in decision-making processes.*
- *the inclusion of an intercultural approach in all stages of managing a policy, plan or programme (identifying the problem, diagnosing the situation, design, implementation, monitoring and assessment).*

¹⁴ Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security (European Commission) (2007). *Op. Cit.* Pg. 14.

- *strengthening dialogue and collaboration between the different administrative departments.*
- *active participation and collaboration of other agents (businesses, NGOs, educational institutions, etc.).*
- *working with technical staff trained in intercultural skills to effectively facilitate the different processes of intercultural coexistence and to prevent potential situations of institutional racism arising.*

Different economic and psychological research shows that diversity offers considerable advantages for cities in terms of greater innovation, productivity, ability to solve problems and, in particular, in managing urban policies, as involving people of diverse origins in policy design increases its effectiveness.

As indicated by the Intercultural Cities Network (Red de Ciudades Interculturales, or RECI, in Spanish) “making the most” of diversity is not a way of improving the image of an institution, city or business, but is rather a philosophy to be used in governance, management and decision-making. Thus, we must keep in mind that developing cultural sensitivity, promoting interaction and intercultural intermingling is not considered the responsibility of a specific department or authority, but is a strategic objective and an essential aspect of all the city’s departments and services.

Additionally, it will always be more likely that a significant and long-lasting change takes place when coordinated and comprehensive action is taken by all municipal areas and departments, to make the vision of the city a reality.

But how do we approach this challenge? How can we start working from an intercultural approach? As we will see below, a key element will be acquiring intercultural competencies.

**Intercultural
competencies**



6 | Intercultural competencies

The term “intercultural competencies” has broadly been developed by sectors such as education and business, and even in relation to the field of communications and learning foreign languages. Nevertheless, very little research has been carried out to analyse the acquisition of intercultural competencies by technical and political staff who work in public administration, particularly at the local level. Let’s look at what they consist of:

“ Intercultural competency is the ability to mobilise and implement relevant psychological resources to provide an appropriate and effective response to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by intercultural situations¹⁵ ”

Put more simply, intercultural competency would be all the cognitive, affective and behavioural skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication and interrelation with people belonging to other “cultural systems”.

Acquiring these skills empowers participating groups and individuals, and enables us to interact with people with a broader view, allowing us to rec-

oncile differences, defuse potential conflicts and shape the foundations of peaceful coexistence.¹⁶

The first step to developing our intercultural competency is understanding how **stereotypes tend to guide our thoughts and behaviour in an unconscious way**. In fact, Allport (1954) suggests that negative stereotypes are the components of a prejudiced attitude, defined as “a hostile or mistrustful attitude towards a person who belongs to a certain group, simply because they are part of that group”.

Certainly, a lack of knowledge makes us rely on prejudices and stereotypes, which are mere simplifications of reality, to generalise and manage what is different and unknown. In this way, we categorise groups of people according to certain characteristics, such as their sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, origins, social class, or even physical features, such as being blonde or redheaded, and we assign particular characteristics, practices, features or images to these groups, which may or may not correspond to those belonging to this particular collective.

It is important to be aware that perceiving groups of the population as homogeneous largely contributes to the appearance of attitudes and ac-

¹⁵ Council of Europe (2018). *Reference framework of competences for democratic culture – Volume 1. Context, concepts and model*, Strasbourg, pg. 32.

¹⁶ UNESCO (2017). *COMPETENCIAS INTERCULTURALES Marco conceptual y operativo*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Cátedra UNESCO- Diálogo intercultural, pg. 10.

tions based on mistrust, rejection, intolerance and even discrimination, and may result in processes of marginalisation and social exclusion. This kind of perception may also lead to us developing biased and ineffective interventions.

Our understanding and interpretation of other cultural systems is obviously based on an ethnocentric perception of our culture and the stereotypes it offers us. That is why it is fundamental to progress in terms of intercultural coexistence, promoting spaces for meeting and positive interactions to demystify stereotypes and preconceived ideas. "From this point of view, interculturality aims to achieve communication that goes 'beyond prejudices, stereotypes and divergences' in cultures of origin, and requires permanent effort regarding interacting positively and creatively in order to construct possible ways of relating to one another under conditions of equality".¹⁷ De hecho, existe una evidencia abrumadora para demostrar que cuanto más contacto (directo e indirecto) In fact, there is overwhelming evidence showing that the more contact (direct and indirect) there is between people of different origins and lifestyles, the less chance there is of them thinking and behaving in a prejudiced way.¹⁸

But what are the main components of intercultural competency?

Taking into consideration the different research carried out in this field and the numerous con-

ceptual models that have been put forward, Martyn Barret (2018), based on the Reference Framework produced by the Council of Europe on Skills for a Democratic Culture, extracts 14 of the 20 components identified, considering them necessary for the development of intercultural competency:¹⁹

Values

- Human dignity and human rights.
- Cultural diversity.

Attitudes

- Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, points of view and practices.
- Respect.
- Self-efficacy.
- Tolerance to ambiguity.

¹⁷ Luna, F. (2004). "Interculturalidad, un signo de los tiempos". Lima, CAAAP. Tomado de Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (2013): Guía metodológica de "Transversalización del enfoque de interculturalidad en programas y proyectos del sector gobernabilidad" a partir de la expe-

riencia del Programa Buen Gobierno y Reforma del Estado» del Perú. Lima, pg. 14.

¹⁸ Council of Europe (2017). Op. Cit. Pg. 9.

¹⁹ De Torres, D. (Coord.) (2020). *Guía antirumores en el ámbito educativo*. Red de Ciudades Interculturales, pg. 60.

Understanding

- Of one's self and self-reflection.
- Of languages and communication.
- Of the world: culture, cultures, religions.

Skills

- Critical and analytical thought.
- Listening and observation.
- Linguistic, plurilinguistic and communicative.
- Empathy.
- Flexibility and adaptability.

According to this model, in the context of democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, we would consider that a person acts competently when they tackle the requirements, challenges and opportunities presented by intercultural situations in a suitable and effective way, through mobilisation and deployment of some (or all) of the 14 skills mentioned.²⁰

It should be specified that in this model, the term “competency” is not being used in a generic way as a synonym of “skill”, but in a technical sense, to refer to the psychological resources (values, attitudes, skills and knowledge) that need to be mobilised to respond to the challenges and requirements of intercultural situations. Accordingly, values and attitudes are considered essential in order to behave appropriately and effectively in an intercultural situation. In other words, just like skills, knowledge and understanding, values and attitudes are resources that we can activate, organise and apply through behaviour to be able to respond adequately and effectively to intercultural situations.

Although we can find emphasis on one or other elements in different methodological proposals and investigations, there seems to be overlap when establishing that the acquisition and development of intercultural competencies is a lifelong process and, as such, is one that can always enrich us. Training, along with experience and day-to-day practice derived from the interaction that is produced in intercultural spaces and situations

will allow us, for example, to become interculturally competent, both in our personal and professional lives.

Certainly, in practice, these competencies are rarely mobilised or enacted in an isolated way. Normally, competent behaviour involves activating and applying a set of competencies depending on the situation, requirements, challenges and opportunities presented by each context, as well as the objectives and specific needs of the people involved.²¹

Moreover, understanding intercultural competency as a set of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that allow us to be effective in plural spaces presupposes, at the same time, understanding that communication, which undoubtedly acquires special relevance, is a process that is governed by different patterns depending on the reference framework. In this way, cultural differences do not only affect a particular product (the concept of family, the role of women, use of public or private spaces, etc.), but they also affect the way in which facts are stated and communicated.²²

The White Book on **Intercultural Dialogue** defines intercultural dialogue as “an open and respectful exchange of opinions, based on mutual understanding between people and groups that have different origins and different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage” and highlights the importance of dialogue taking the spirit of democratic culture and its essential components into

²⁰ For more in-depth information on the skills mentioned and their fundamental components, see: Guía antirumores en el ámbito educativo. Red de Ciudades Interculturales, pp. 60-64. Taken from <https://n9.cl/urq2>

²¹ Council of Europe (2018). *Op. Cit.* 33.

²² Relinque Medina, F., Mora Quiñones, N.G. (2015): *Interculturalidad y gestión de la diversidad: el reto de la nueva sociedad*. Junta of Andalusia, Justice and Home Affairs Council. Seville, pg. 38.

account: mutual respect amongst participants and each person's desire to seek and accept a consensus.

In effect, we understand our surroundings using the social categories we have acquired from our culture and, as such, we also express and interpret the messages in accordance with this knowledge, which may or may not coincide with ways of expressing and interpreting used by people from other cultural groups. In this regard, Rodrigo (1997) states that it is necessary to "metacommunicate". In other words, being able to explain what we want to say when we say something. In intercultural communication, assumptions or what is said implicitly should be explained so that they can be interpreted correctly and, although this leads to a less agile conversation, we can ensure that the person we are talking to will understand the message in the way it was intended.

There are some tools or techniques to improve our intercultural communication, which can help to facilitate better understanding. Some of the most useful are: active listening, using open questions, positive reinforcement, emitting assertive messages, paraphrasing, reframing communication in a descriptive way, using non-verbal language consciously: using visual contact, smiling, etc. In this table we summarise some guidelines for maintaining effective communication.²³

What does active listening consist of?

Active listening is a way of responding that implies an understanding of the thoughts, feelings and experiences of others, in other words, empathy. It shows the listener's belief that communication is not merely a unidirectional process, and that what is said is worthy of being heard and understood. It allows both participants to exchange and understand, verbally and non-verbally, information on their values and communication styles. When empathy and respect are shown, and there is no judgement, people are encouraged to keep talking and feel better about expressing their thoughts and feelings.

Guidelines for active listening:

Trying to understand what the other person is saying and how they feel about it.

Showing understanding and acceptance through non-verbal behaviour:

- Tone of voice
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Posture

Repeating the person's most important thoughts and feelings.

Not interrupting, giving advice or suggestions. Do not present similar feelings or problems from your own experience.

Remain neutral. Do not adopt the position of one side or the other.

Ask open questions to better understand what is bothering the other person.

Source: Guía duIN! (2015).

Moreover, by bringing intercultural competencies into play, we can also consider some brief rules to facilitate communication in an intercultural context:²⁴

- Avoid or abstain from making automatic interpretations, assumptions or judgements.
- Try to leave our reference framework to one side.
- Be willing to explain the obvious.
- Listen and ask any necessary questions.
- Employ critical thinking, challenge preconceived thoughts and ideas.
- Share and debate potential value judgements (beliefs, ways of living, values, etc.).
- Always focus on the solution, not on the problems.

Without doubt, training and acquisition of intercultural competencies will be necessary to approach

intercultural dialogue, although unfortunately this will not always be enough. There are other obstacles linked to power and politics, such as social position, situations of discrimination, poverty and exploitation, etc., which mostly affect disadvantaged groups, and which constitute considerable structural barriers that hinder dialogue. In this regard, we cannot overlook the surge of organisations and political groups that incite hate for “foreigners” and anything “different” or certain religious identities. Racism, xenophobia, intolerance and other forms of discrimination reject the idea of dialogue, and represent an obstacle to coexistence. As a result, they represent an additional challenge for governance in terms of interculturality.

Intercultural dialogue provides an essential start point. Although knowing others never ensures sympathy or the establishment of continuity in interpersonal relationships, it can contribute to reducing prejudices and stereotypes, and to encouraging more open attitudes and recognition of and regard for people with different cultural affiliations.

²³ Maza, S. and García, S. (Coords.) (2015). *Guía duIN! Resolución pacífica de conflictos. Guía de recursos y experiencias prácticas para educadores/as*. Ayuntamiento de Vitoria - Gasteizko Udala. Unidad de Juventud, pg.36.

²⁴ Council of Europe (2012). *Op. Cit.* Pg. 38.

**Managing projects with
an intercultural focus**



7 | Managing projects with an intercultural focus

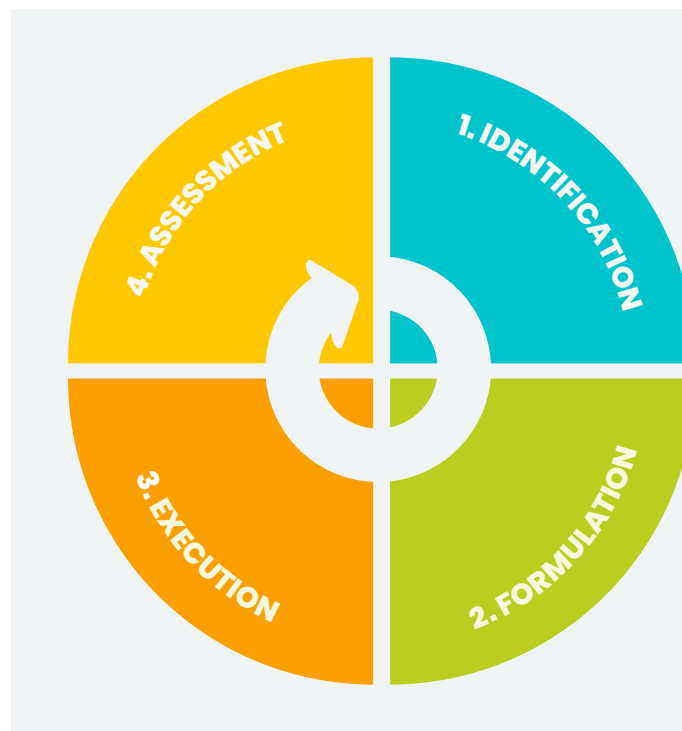
If you work in public administration, it is likely that you are familiar with project management. These projects are normally launched by the different departments in which they are organised, or by different social institutions with municipal support or collaboration.

Although we can find countless definitions of what exactly a project is, we are going to approach this concept in a simple way, with the help of Giménez (2013): “a project consists of a series of activities aimed at achieving certain clear aims and specific objectives at a particular time, within a predetermined budget, and certain quality criteria for the results achieved. Other features include its singularity and gradual production; in other words, advancing through coherent steps, planned from start to finish”.

It should be noted that in this definition, the author places great value on the necessity of gradual production, advancing through coherent steps from start to finish, in a perfectly planned and orchestrated way. Furthermore, other definitions, such as that given by the *German Agency for Technical Cooperation* (GTZ) also highlight the importance of empowering the people and institutions participating to guarantee the social impact and sustainability of actions, in other words, their continuity over time. Both aspects

are of special interest, and should be taken into consideration.

In effect, addressing the point about gradual production, we should know that all projects have four essential phases or stages known as the project cycle, of which we give an overview below:



1 IDENTIFICATION: Analysis of the context, producing a diagnosis and analysis of issues, objectives and alternatives.

2 DESIGN OR FORMULATION: Overall description and planning of the intervention proposal, including methodological and economic aspects, in a precise way.

3 EXECUTION AND MONITORING: Carrying out activities and continuous monitoring or evaluating its execution, as well as the project resources and cost.

4 ASSESSMENT: Analysis of the project’s results or impact. Systematisation and return of results for the purpose of learning.



There are two main formulas we can use in order to work from an intercultural perspective in our projects, depending on the intended objectives and the area of intervention they will be part of. That is, **as a central element of our intervention, or rather, in a cross-cutting way** to guarantee the highest rates of inclusion in a culturally diverse community in which local and foreign residents live side by side, and in which they are also given differentiated legal statuses by virtue of regulations on foreigners and asylum.

- **Sectoral priority:** interculturality as an area of intervention per se. The aim of the project (objectives) is working to promote intercultural co-existence and, as such, the bulk of the actions and results proposed are directed at this.
- **As a cross-cutting line or axis** in projects from other areas of intervention (health, sport, education, youth, economic development, etc.), which are likely to provide:
 - A strategy to work on managing cultural diversity.
 - Measures to encourage the participation of a culturally diverse population throughout the whole execution of the project.
 - The incorporation of a culturally diverse population's interests/needs, spaces for interaction, intercultural communication and dialogue, diverse representation, empowerment of women and children, etc.

Without doubt, proper "mainstreaming" of the intercultural perspective in the project, just like with the gender perspective, which has already been incorporated into the management of municipal projects as a cross-cutting line, will depend on whether it is properly incorporated from start to finish in our work on identification, planning and execution, in other words, that it is **taken into account from the process of identification to the final assessment of the project**, including being clearly reflected in the intervention methodology, and, as a result, in the budget.

Certainly, the inclusion of both cross-cutting approaches results in an exercise that complements and enriches our intercultural action, to the extent that they seek to protect people's individual and collective rights, and allow:²⁵

- Our personal and institutional relationship with citizens to be strengthened, and differences in gender, culture, age, disability, etc., to be valued from an intersectional perspective.
- Analysis of how violating fundamental rights impacts minority groups and those who have traditionally been excluded differently, and to a greater extent.
- Municipal management actions, procedures and systems to be strengthened.
- Measures and changes aimed at improving relationships of equality amongst different groups to be encouraged.

²⁵ Peruvian Ombudsman (2015). *Los enfoques de género e interculturalidad en la defensoría del pueblo*. Lima, pg. 10.



In this way, when approaching a project cycle, stopping to think from an intercultural and gender perspective can lead to more inclusive results, and can result in the social cohesion of the town or city. For this, we need to look through an “intercultural and gender lens”, which will help us to analyse reality so we can respond in a more suitable way.

If you work in the public administration and you are going to develop a new project, or even review an existing one, these questions may contribute to generating conditions that lead social change in intercultural terms, as a result of a process of prior reflection. Here we will look at some

key elements to consider, following the project cycle phases:

7.1. Identifying the project

The exercise of identification allows us to take a “photograph of the reality” in which we wish to take action. It requires searching for and analysing relevant information that, for diagnostic purposes, allows us to situate ourselves clearly before the origin and causes of possible difficulties in tackling them, taking into consideration different viewpoints and sensitivities. During this stage, we should find precise responses to the following key questions (amongst others):



Identification (Diagnosis)

Data disaggregated by sex and cultural groups.

In relation to groups/collectives in the territory:	Which cultural groups coexist in the geographical area of intervention (neighbourhood, district, etc.)? (Detect the existing means of sociability, community climates..)
	Is there data on these cultural groups? (Socioeconomic, legal and administrative aspects, religious beliefs, access to resources, etc.)
	What needs/issues are expressed by the different cultural and/or religious groups?
	How are the different groups affected in relation to the issue(s) detected (cultural divides)? (Quantitative and qualitative data used in the description of the problem/needs, intersected with the variable of ethnic affiliation, sex and age.)
	Have potential differences in meaning and/or understanding of concepts related to the potential problem been identified?
	Which individual and collective rights have been violated in relation to the issue?
Which potential positive or negative effects may originate in the different alternatives for intervention for all the cultural groups?	
In relation to the available resources:	What is the regulatory framework that we must consider in relation to the issue and support for cultural diversity?
	Are there local initiatives trying to resolve the difficulties detected?
	Which potential actors or social agents operate in the area that are likely to be involved in the solution? (Social and educational institutions, civil society and citizens' organisations, NGOs, educational centres, health centres, etc.)
	Are there links with representatives from the different cultural and/or religious groups?
In relation to existing capacities:	Are there specific limitations that impede the participation of a diverse population?
	Are staff at the administration and other agents trained in intercultural approaches?
	Is there a department or service at your administration that promotes and manages intercultural coexistence? Has contact been established? Are there other options for guidance?
	Are there any experiences or good practices at other public administrations that could serve as inspiration for us?



This exercise should provide us with enough information to understand why we should propose one intervention and not another. In other words, it allows us to precisely and clearly understand what is happening, why it is happening, who it affects and how it can be resolved. All of this is in response to the consequences of the problem or needs identified for each cultural and gender group, until a **PARTICIPATIVE DIAGNOSIS** of reality is obtained.

Modifying a situation based on the knowledge of the people actually involved in this situation, using their participation to define the problem and potential solutions, involves significant added value to management of the project, as it is decisive to guarantee **OWNERSHIP** of the project and to facilitate its subsequent **SUSTAINABILITY**.

7.2. Designing and formulating the project

In this second phase of the project cycle, we give shape to the project. We structure and plan the

intervention that we intend to carry out as a result of the context analysed and the difficulties found, outlining the main features and defining elements of the project that has been identified. In this way, we will carry out a planning exercise in which:

- The alternative/strategy chosen will be presented and justified in a participative way.
- The different resources necessary (which will be specified in a budget) will be methodologically described and quantified.
- The deadlines necessary to meet the project's objectives will be set.
- The time sequence (timeline of execution) is established.

Some questions that we might ask when designing the project to guarantee proper inclusion of the intercultural perspective are:

[See the table on the next page.](#)



In relation to groups/collectives in the territory:

Does the project design respond to the needs/difficulties expressed by different cultural and/or religious groups, and does it take their requirements into account?

Are the objectives and results proposed relevant to modifying the causes of the problem, or attending to the prioritised needs from a gender and intercultural perspective?

Will the proposed results have an impact on potential linguistic, legal, economic, cultural and gender barriers that cause the problem/difficulty?

Does the method for working with the population take into account the differences between groups of people in accordance with age, sex, religious and cultural affiliations, etc.?

Is the work involving women appropriate for their practical needs and strategic interests, and established in accordance with their availability and preferences?

In relation with the activities proposed:

Do the activities proposed encourage the participation of cultural and/or religious groups, taking into consideration their contributions in conditions of equality (knowledge, practices, ideas, innovations, etc.)? Are different levels of involvement proposed for different participant profiles?

Does it allow for an exchange of positions and a real deliberative process?

Have specific activities been designed to reduce inequalities based on cultural group and gender?

Does it include activities to encourage positive interaction and intercultural dialogue aimed at all citizens?

Does it include activities that facilitate dialogue between different religious communities?

Does the project work on the eradication of stereotypes and situations of discrimination that could generate conflict? Does it consider the inclusion of tools for proper management of potential intercultural conflicts?

Do the proposed results encourage the population to participate, and do they improve people's access to resources or their capacity to influence public decisions?

Have precise indicators been established that allow the scope of the project's achievements to be measured, based on gender and the different cultural affiliations concerned?





**In relation to
the available
resources:**

Does the project design take into account the regulatory framework and the rights that underpin the intercultural and gender perspectives?

Is the project design adequately framed within the local or regional development plans of reference?

Which mechanisms and resources are proposed to guarantee equitable participation of men and women based on different cultural groups? Is the allocation of responsibilities and decision-making taken into consideration?

Are specific resources allocated to adapt institutional processes to the requirements of the intercultural approach (training staff, hiring expert consultants, etc.)?

Are the human, financial and logistical resources necessary to respond to the specific needs of different cultural groups guaranteed?

Are multicultural technical groups involved? Does the technical team include people whose profile corresponds to those we want to attract to participate? (positive reference)

Are other potential key social agents involved?

When designing our intervention proposal, we will seek to consider its viability (*guarantees of success and continuity of the project in the mid- to long-term*), as well as its subsequent sustainability (*degree to which the positive effects that result from the intervention will continue once the project has been closed and external support has been withdrawn*).

Guaranteeing viability of the project involves keeping four basic aspects of analysis in mind, which we will examine through an intercultural lens, not forgetting, of course, our participating groups:

- **Technical aspects:** suitability of the technological, material, human and methodological resources expected.
- **Economic aspects:** sufficient and suitable funding.
- **Institutional aspects:** support of the public authorities, traditional authorities and/or other institutions representing different groups.
- And **sociocultural and environmental aspects:** diversity in terms of ethnicity, affective-sexuality, religion, language or ability, and



the project's impact on the environment and natural resources

Meanwhile, facilitating the subsequent sustainability of the project requires weaving the measures and actions that have the potential to promote its continuity in the future in order to prolong the positive effects achieved in terms of intercultural coexistence, from the moment of design and, especially, during implementation. Establishing commitments, different alliances or working in a network with different social agents and cultural groups, or training the target population and other potential involved agents are some of the measures to be considered.

We should pay particular attention to:

- FACTORS (economic, sociocultural, environmental and technological).
- Installed CAPACITIES (population, technical staff and authorities).
- Possibility of MULTIPLICATION and/or REPLICABILITY of the project in different contexts.

7.3. Execution and monitoring

During the execution phase of the project, we will launch all the actions laid out in accordance with planning and the execution timetable established during formulation, paying special attention to the

set of indicators established to properly monitor the project.

Monitoring or follow-up is a management tool that allows us to periodically review the central aspects of the project, and facilitate decision-making on advancements and potential obstacles that may arise, in order to optimise and guarantee that the expected results and impacts are achieved.

To monitor and accompany the process of executing the project, we should ensure that:

- The expected objectives and results are being met.
- The resources are being applied as planned.
- The levels of "diverse" participation are suitable and are kept constant.
- The project actions are contributing to strengthening the process of intervention and are empowering the target groups.

It allows us to:

- Identify advancements and difficulties arising from the process of execution.
- Analyse weak points and strengths.
- Note possible variations by making the relevant adjustments.



- Promote diverse participation and make the appropriate adjustments to facilitate their maintenance.
- Anticipate and manage potential intercultural conflicts.
- Incorporate modifications and corrective measures in real time.
- Properly monitor the technical and financial reality of the project.

In this stage, how we COMMUNICATE regarding the project becomes especially relevant. This is a key aspect to which we will have to dedicate time, work and budget (designing posters, images, communications, the use of social networks, contact with the media, etc.). We should also take into account some key intercultural aspects, for example:

Could the information reach the target group more effectively if we translated part or all of it into a series of languages relevant to the territory's sociolinguistic characteristics?

Could we use traditional and accessible means of communication and information?

Could we distribute the information generated in an accessible way to reach all citizens? (by different means, aimed at and adapted to different groups, etc.).

Are we using inclusive language and are we making use of non-stereotypical images by taking the gender perspective into consideration?

Do the visual, audiovisual and printed materials generated when executing the project transmit a real and positive image of the different cultural groups involved?

Do the visual, audiovisual and printed materials generated when executing the project transmit the contribution to local development made by the different cultural groups involved?

Could we propose a joint strategy with local media or journalism schools to encourage the presentation of news in an interculturally responsible way?

Could we work with leading people in the city who act as local ambassadors in defending interculturality and supporting the project?

Could we generate innovative intercultural activities that awaken the media's interest (that show diverse participation or an intercultural context, break down stereotypes, propose new ways of seeing reality, etc.)?

Could we facilitate participation of the different groups involved in the project with the design and creation of communicative materials?

Could we facilitate the process of "welcoming" migrants with precise information for people who may want to participate?

Are we able to generate new debates that leave aside the phenomenon of migration as a spectacle of suffering?



In line with the Participative Anti-Racist Social Communication strategy,²⁶ the results of our communication process should take into consideration social norms, current policy and the context of development to construct new reference frameworks and new ways of interpreting reality. Perhaps we could contribute to generating other necessary debates which, by leaving behind the “southern border”, allow us to progress with the construction of inclusive and intercultural societies.

7.4. Assessment

Once execution of the project is finalised, we begin to assess the intervention as a whole, carrying out an objective and systematic analysis and processing the data generated during the project. This exercise, which is largely supported by the monitoring process that was already carried out, will allow us to find out whether:

- The objectives were in line with context and needs (**RELEVANCE**).
- The project achieved the desired results and objectives (**EFFICACY**) with the resources available (**EFFICIENCY**).
- The long-term effects were positive or negative, expected or unexpected, direct or indirect (**IMPACT**).
- The continuity of the results over time (**SUSTAINABILITY**).²⁷

We can evaluate the action inserted in the process of social transformation to which it intended to contribute.

There are lessons to be learned and taken into consideration in future actions, both from the positive results and any potential errors.

Analyse the participative process and the contribution of the different cultural groups concerned.

Analyse the allocation of resources to respond to the specific needs of different cultural groups.

Analyse possible changes to the target groups and the context of reference:

- What has improved in the lives of the people involved in the project?

- What did it mean in terms of increase or improvement of their abilities and potential (empowerment)?
- Have processes of meeting and citizen participation been promoted?
- How has the project encouraged acquisition of and training in different intercultural competencies?
- What effects has it had on institutions, organisations and citizens in terms of intercultural coexistence and empowerment?
- To what extent has it reduced inequalities based on culture and gender?
- Has it promoted respect for diversity, positive interaction and intercultural dialogue? Has it generated intercultural meeting spaces?

²⁶ Buraschi, D; Aguilar-Idáñez M.J.; and Zapata V.M. (2016): *Comunicación social antirracista participativa: la propuesta metodológica de los laboratorios dialógicos de la red antirrumores en Tenerife*, Publicación *Docu-*

mentos de Trabajo Seminario Permanente de Ciencias Sociales, Number 11, pg.12.

²⁷ *Criterios de evaluación de la ayuda al desarrollo, según la OCDE*. Taken from <https://n9.cl/z98p2>

In addition to the obvious exercise in accountability, assessment is a new opportunity to initiate an intercultural dialogue with the participants and to reflect on the results obtained, not only to learn from the process itself, but also to incorporate what was learned into existing projects or new initiatives; to detect new needs or opportunities for social transformation; to nurture the process of “intercultural” empowerment for all participants, actors and social agents involved; to institutionalise the results by favouring their dissemination among different administrative departments in order to promote and inspire new actions; to contribute to the generation of knowledge and good intercultural practices. Furthermore, it also allows us to carry out important dissemination and final communication work in order to reach other sectors, cultural groups, civil society organisations and academic institutions, etc.

7.5. A central element: participation

As can be seen, **PARTICIPATION** acquires great importance in all intercultural action. The consultation and participation of different communities in the design, development, launch and assessment of the intercultural project is fundamental in reaching success and guaranteeing that the effects of the social operation carried out are maintained over time, and result in a real improvement in coexistence.

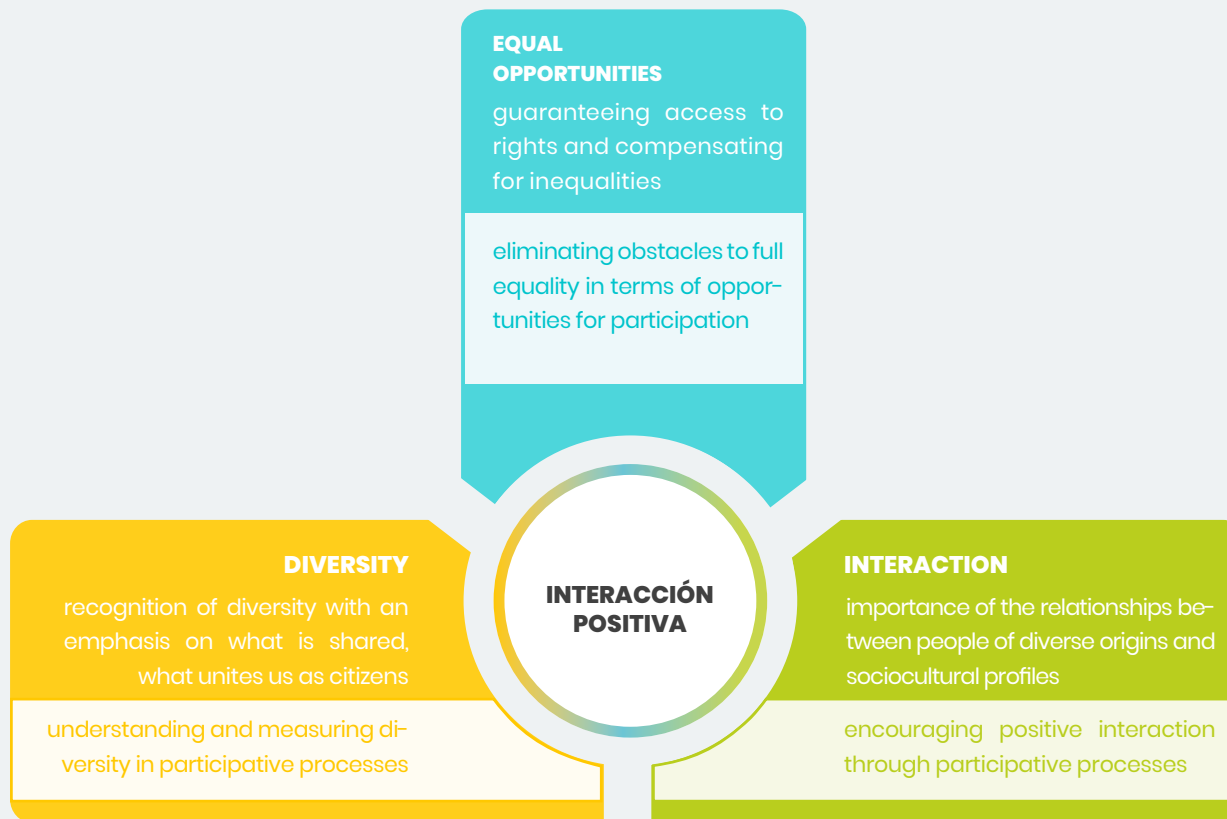
But we are referring to active Participation with a capital “P”, understood as that which allows “people to be present in, be part of, be taken into account for and by, to get involved, intervene in, etc. Participating is influencing, it is taking responsibility. Participation is a process that is inherently linked to subjects and groups; somebody’s participation in something means this person relates to the others who are also involved. Being a participant involves being co-agent, co-operator, co-author, co-responsible”.²⁸

In fact, we can only achieve authentic intercultural coexistence if we are able to promote the active participation of institutions, the private sector, and the main groups or communities in the municipality or island territory.

According to the Intercultural Cities Network, citizen participation means that citizens are invited to participate due to being a citizen, attending to the diversity that this involves. In this way, being an immigrant or belonging to a cultural minority does not imply any barrier to participation, nor does age, sex or sexual orientation, etc. In accordance with the ICC Scoping Paper Participation in Intercultural Cities, to achieve this objective we must “construct cities in which all people have the skills, knowledge, confidence and opportunity to participate” in the decisions that affect them, regardless of their origins or their residence status; and “where the public authorities are committed to diverse participation”.²⁹

²⁸ Giménez, C. (2002). *Dinamización comunitaria en el ámbito de la inmigración*, en M.J. Rubio y S. Monteros (coord). *Exclusión social. Teoría y práctica de la intervención*, Madrid: CCS.

²⁹ Kaleidos Red (2019). *El desarrollo de procesos participativos interculturales en el ámbito local. Red de Ciudades Interculturales*, RECI, pg. 7.



From an intercultural perspective, citizen participation is based on or underpinned by the three aforementioned fundamental principles: **equality**, **respect for diversity** and **positive interaction**. As such, in order for it to be effectively implemented, it is essential to guarantee a context of real equality of rights, duties and opportunities for all

citizens; recognising and respecting diversity in the broadest sense, making the most of the opportunities that arise from sociocultural diversity and, through positive interaction, putting emphasis on that which unites us, and endeavouring to ensure that the subject of these participative processes is relevant to all participants.

Source: Kaleidos (2018)

Although there are countless arguments for promoting diversified and plural participation,³⁰ as well as the benefits that this leads to when constructing intercultural societies, their stimulation and launch often require certain additional efforts. As well as the necessary roll-out of our intercultural competencies, some measures that we can consider to facilitate management are:

- Agreeing on what we all understand by “participation”.
 - Incorporating intercultural professional teams.
 - Generating comfortable spaces to encourage participation (by cultural group, religious group, sex, age, etc.).
 - Introducing measures to encourage communication and intercultural dialogue: simultaneous translation, intercultural mediation, collaboration with leading spaces, etc.
 - Introducing specific measures to facilitate the equal participation of men and women.
 - Introducing flexibility in terms of schedules, and showing understanding when faced with difficult circumstances.
 - Providing support services: child care, school support, etc.
- Carrying out diversified consultation and participation processes (different participation channels, styles, locations) to reach all kinds of people.



Participation in the intercultural project is an essential requirement to guarantee success and promote shared learning and training in intercultural competencies amongst all involved actors. Managing intercultural coexistence requires the leadership of public institutions, as well as the assistance and intervention of different key local actors, such as different types of social organisations and policy areas, educational and religious institutions, private entities, businesses, etc.

³⁰ For more information, see: Kaleidos Red (2019): *El desarrollo de procesos participativos interculturales en el ámbito local. Red de Ciudades Interculturales, RECI*, pp. 10-11.

**The dimension of promoting
interculturality through
public contracting and
support lines**



8 | The dimension of promoting interculturality through public contracting and support lines

In effect, there is no doubt about the important role played by different social organisations in the processes of welcoming, integrating and promoting intercultural coexistence. The activities they direct towards immigrants constitute a source of experience and fundamental knowledge that municipal politicians and technicians can and should take advantage of, seeking new ways of collaborating, also by promoting public-social cooperation.

The organisations are constantly adapting to the context and changing reality of a diversified society, experimenting and learning in ways that allow them to reinforce the social cohesion of the societies they are part of. Their contribution to local development and the generation of social inclusion processes involve significant added value, which we should take into consideration and develop to facilitate the management of intercultural societies. For this reason, it will also be necessary to drive the improvement of intercultural competencies, guaranteeing that projects and actions take cultural diversity into account in an effective way.

Ultimately, political and technical leaders at the local level and social organisations that may potentially provide services must work together in a coordinated way. Furthermore, we must critically

analyse our activities in order to incorporate the “intercultural lens” into all local programmes and actions, thus incorporating intercultural mainstreaming into our management and daily activity.

To take the lead on this process, the administration has two basic tools, namely public contracting and lines of support or subsidies aimed at different entities.

Regardless of the extent to which our municipal structure provides us with the necessary support, in other words, whether we have a specific department or area responsible for promoting integration that can advise us; whether there is a specialist in our own team who can take on this task, or whether we should capitalise on the experience and knowledge of external entities to carry out this exercise, it is essential that we become aware of the importance of promoting the intercultural performance of the other social agents from our municipal sphere of action.

Below, we bring together some general ideas and simple guidelines that we can keep in mind when assessing proposals, both for the awarding of different public contracts that we usually manage, as well as for the selection of projects financed through calls for support and nominative assistance from different municipal departments.

Have we ever stopped to wonder whether the municipality's/island's contracting policy favours businesses or organisations with inclusive profiles?

Would it be possible to incorporate some clauses or criteria on this matter for awarding contracts?

Would it be possible to generate specific conditions for its execution?

And in calls for support and subsidies in your municipal department or service?

8.1. Considerations for the promotion of interculturality through public contracting

From a practical approach, some considerations that we can incorporate into public contracting processes are:

CONTRAT OBJECT: When defining the object of the contract, explicitly mention the need for the intercultural perspective to be taken into account in a cross-cutting way in any proposals put forward.

SOLVENCY OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER: include conditions related to the profile, experience and institutional position of the service providers in relation to improving coexistence and promoting interculturality, trying to make some of these mandatory:

- In the case of non-profit entities, improving coexistence and promoting interculturality should be part of the organisation's purpose, with express mention in the service provider's statutes and/or in their planning documents.
- Having specific diversity and intercultural coexistence plans.
- Having an internal policy on promoting cultural diversity in teams at work (multicultural teams).
- The service provider must have demonstrable experience in the matter of cultural diversity.

- The team must have specific training (courses, postgraduate education, master's doctorates, etc.) and/or demonstrable work experience in the matter of cultural diversity.
- Having certification or official recognition, including standardisation, from a public entity.
- Having the endorsement of leading local/community organisations or institutions that are involved in managing diversity and promoting intercultural coexistence.

CRITERIA FOR AWARDING CONTRACTS: In general, reject proposals in which language and/or images are used that do **NOT** adequately represent cultural and other types of diversity in the community. This is a prime indicator of service providers' degree of commitment to promoting cultural diversity and intercultural coexistence.

No entities and/or natural or legal persons who have been administratively or criminally sanctioned for discrimination on the grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance may obtain the status of beneficiary or collaborating entity.

Include possible assessment criteria for the proposals related to incorporating the intercultural perspective in intervention proposals, for example:

- It must include a socio-cultural diagnosis that analyses gaps at the level of exercising rights,

installed capacities, participation, etc., amongst cultural ethnic groups from the region/area of intervention and/or potential users.

- It must include data on the cultural diversity present in the communities or spaces in which they will be involved, by cultural and ethnic group, and different subgroups (sex, age, etc.).
 - That suitable measures are proposed to facilitate or promote intercultural participation.
 - That the development or stimulation of community intercultural spaces for organisation, interaction, participation and exchange is promoted.
 - That processes of transfer of knowledge and/or skills to groups or ethnic and cultural minorities that are vulnerable or excluded are included.
 - The use of language (and other cultural expressions) must be promoted as a manifestation of diversity and a shared element of social cohesion, both official languages and other significant languages used by the population living in the area of intervention.
 - The innovative aspects of the proposals must be highlighted when attempting to translate diversity into a real, concrete advantage.
 - It must incorporate a broader intersectional perspective that takes into account other perspectives, such as gender or human rights.
- The activities proposed must promote processes of empowerment in a culturally diverse population.
 - The proposals must include an analysis of their viability and the social sustainability of the strategies, actions and measures, aimed at improving coexistence and promoting interculturality.
 - They must have the material, human and technical resources necessary to implement these strategies, actions and measures.
 - They must work with multicultural technical teams and professionals with training in managing diversity and/or intercultural competencies.
 - Precise indicators must be established to evaluate the impact of interventions in terms of improving coexistence and promoting intercultural coexistence.
 - An intercultural communication strategy or plan must be proposed to disseminate and publicise the project or action's main milestones.

8.2. Consideraciones para la promoción de la interculturalidad a través de las convocatorias y líneas de ayudas públicas

Asimismo, a la hora de establecer los criterios que nos permiten baremar un proyecto, podemos tener en cuenta los siguientes aspectos que nos faciliten su valoración en clave intercultural:

³¹ The proposal presented below arose as the result of reviewing and conducting detailed analysis of the different calls for assistance and public and private public subsidy lines at the local, regional, state and European level, which include promoting interculturality in a specific way, whether as a sectoral priority or in a cross-cutting way.

Aspectos a considerar en su evaluación técnica³¹

<p>BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION</p>	<p>Organisations' commitment to improving coexistence and promoting interculturality (reflected in statutes, strategic plans, policies and other documents from the entity).</p> <p>Organisations' experience: trajectory of intercultural work (projects executed/groups that represent or accompany them).</p> <p>Carrying out a socio-cultural diagnosis that describes the gaps at the level of exercising rights, installed capacities, participation, etc., amongst ethnic and cultural ethnic groups in the area of intervention.</p> <p>Degree of participation of culturally diverse groups in the phases of diagnosis and designing the intervention.</p>
<p>OBJECTIVES, RESULTS AND INDICATORS</p>	<p>Proposing objectives and results that seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote intercultural coexistence (respect for human rights, equality, recognition of cultural diversity, positive interaction). • Construct a community of citizens and a participative democracy that are the backbone of social cohesion. • Actively fight against racism, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination and other discourses of hate using education in values. • Promote the empowerment of migrant women and ethnic minorities. <p>The community-centred and bidirectional nature of the interventions.</p> <p>The development of specific indicators of intercultural coexistence for the follow-up or monitoring of the intervention and measuring the achievement of the results/objectives proposed.</p>
	<p>Degree of participation of people of diverse origins in the execution, monitoring and assessment phases of the interventions.</p> <p>The development of community-action methodologies and working as a network, which include different actors and social agents.</p> <p>Generating spaces and processes of welcoming, meeting, exchanging experiences and positive interaction that result in understanding and recognition between people and groups from different cultures to construct common links and identities.</p>

**METHODOLOGY,
RESOURCES,
VIABILITY AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

Encouraging intercultural communication and promoting attitudes of solidarity and inclusion, dialogue and active respect for distances, as well as shared civic and community values for the prevention, regulation, resolution and transformation of conflict.

The development of strategies to deactivate negative stereotypes, rumours and prejudices towards migrants.

The inclusion of innovative aspects of the proposals when attempting to translate diversity into a real, concrete advantage.

Economic, technical and methodological, environmental and, above all, social viability of the strategies to improve coexistence and promotion of interculturality launched by the intervention.

- The allocation of human, material and technical resources specifically for the development of strategies related to promoting intercultural coexistence.
- Presenting diversity and the academic/professional profile of the teams or people in charge of carrying out the intervention.
- Promoting training of the people who act as agents of change in the community.
- Stimulating participative community processes in diverse spaces (educational, health, cultural, sporting, social and religious spaces, etc.).
- The use of language as a manifestation of cultural diversity and a shared element of social cohesion, both official languages and other significant languages used by the population.
- Involvement of or coordination with other community and local organisations and institutions in the interventions.
- The interventions' complementarity and synergies with other existing local and community initiatives.

The basis for the intercultural intervention's sustainability, existing at the economic, technical and methodological, environmental and, above all, social, institutional and political levels.

- The degree of integration or alignment of the interventions with local/community policies and strategies promoting intercultural coexistence.
- The establishment of commitments, alliances and network proposals that are likely to guarantee continuity of the project.
- The inclusion of processes of empowerment and/or training for culturally diverse groups and specific subgroups in the population.
- The possibilities for replicating and/or multiplying the project.

**ASSESSMENT
AND IMPACT**

Considering actions to assess and/or standardise the intervention in a participative way, including analysing the processes that were carried out and the impact achieved in terms of improving intercultural coexistence.

The development of specific indicators of intercultural coexistence to evaluate the impact of the intervention and standardise the processes.

The multiplier effect of the intercultural intervention in terms of social impact.

The generation of spaces and tools to collect and standardise the lessons learned from the intervention, which can be shared with other agents in other spaces.

The degree of replicability of the intervention in other intercultural spaces and contexts.

**The role of people with
political responsibility
in promoting
intercultural coexistence**



9 | The role of people with political responsibility in promoting intercultural coexistence

Commitment and political will is a *sine qua non* for promoting intercultural societies. Moreover, we can add that it requires courageous local political leadership capable of imbuing its management with high levels of innovation to be able to respond to the needs of future society.

The commitment and involvement of those with political responsibility is key. Their conviction will not only extend to the internal level of the administration, but will have a key impact on external agents such as the media and relevant actors in the social, economic or cultural fields, encouraging the development and persistence of positive public attitudes towards diversity.

The Council of Europe warns that European societies need to become societies of learning, familiarising themselves with new types of interaction and communication, and with new and different groups of people, including immigrants and refugees. In this respect, there are two processes that are the basis of policies of integration and that are particularly critical: suppressing inequalities and acquiring competencies.

A government that wants to assume a responsi-

ble and committed attitude, consciously accompanying this process of social diversification and social transformation, must without doubt introduce technical and cultural management into its design, application, monitoring and assessment of the policies of all relevant sectors and should, preferably, do so without further delay.

A commitment to intercultural governance requires strong political leadership and commitment, which allows for:

- local management that makes the most of general municipal programmes aimed at all citizens to promote the integration of ethnic and cultural minorities, in addition to the initiatives implemented to respond to the specific needs of these groups;
- facilitation of the awareness and training necessary for the different institutional, social, public and private agents;
- construction of a positive discourse on diversity, highlighting the contributions of culturally diverse people to economic and local development;

- driving the creation of spaces for social interaction and the participation of culturally diverse citizens;
- promoting bold and innovative actions within the possibilities offered by the existing regulatory/legal framework;
- sharing experiences with other local governments, establishing alliances and collaborative networks to contribute to generating knowledge and shared learning;
- clearly and decisively showing openness to and recognition of differences through solid positions and public declarations, valuing the wealth of a culturally diverse society;
- commitment to equal rights, duties and social opportunities;
- ultimately, understanding that 21st-century society is multicultural in essence, and our commitment is to make it intercultural.

**Experiences
that inspire us**

10

10 | Experiences that inspire us

BILBAO CITY COUNCIL, in collaboration with the Ellacuria Foundation, is developing a partnership consolidation programme, aimed at immigrant associations. Considering that the associationism promoted by immigrants is exposed to structural conditions that generate situations of special vulnerability when it comes to articulating their civic participation, the programme aims to promote autonomy in the management and operation of associations, as well as consolidating these associations in the participatory map of Bilbao. The programme develops actions aimed at strengthening, training, and supporting internal and external management of the association, incorporating the gender perspective and promoting meeting and interaction between migrant associations and other associations in the municipality.

Likewise, the municipality of Bilbao is developing different initiatives in coordination with different municipal departments. This is the case of the Programme **“Preventing misogynistic violence against women”**, which promotes equality and within the intervention framework in Violence against women,

seeking the effective mainstreaming of the intercultural perspective, by translating the list of services into different languages; incorporating an interpreting and translation service; seeking to make cultural diversity visible in its different awareness-raising campaigns and preventative programmes, and offering express training on the matter of diversity and cultural guidelines to the team of social workers.

And also of the project with the title: **“Early detection and action in situations of risk in especially vulnerable people”** articulates a working protocol with the Municipal Police, with the aim of formalising and promoting specific mechanisms of detection and intervention, in the case of racist, xenophobic, homo/lesbophobic and discriminatory incidents or attitudes. To this end, the project addresses the establishment of a conceptual framework around the principle of equal treatment, non-discrimination and hate crimes, identification of conduct in this area that violates the legal system, identification of indicators of hate, as well as the articulation of a detailed procedure and its stages for police action in these cases.

BILBAO CITY COUNCIL

More information about partnership consolidation at:

<https://n9.cl/sd7ni>

More information about the programme “Preventing misogynistic violence against women” at:

<https://n9.cl/4z7i>

More information about the project “Early detection and action in situations of risk in especially vulnerable people” at:

<https://n9.cl/d5im>

The **TOWN HALL OF THE ISLAND OF TENERIFE**, with the aim of properly managing cultural diversity on the island, and with a commitment to intercultural coexistence amongst citizens, using the approach based on Human Rights, Gender and Interculturality as basic guidelines to achieve social cohesion and development, is constructing its strategic framework, which was approved in 2019 in a participative way, working with 50 collectives and more than 300 people.

This work is reflected in a simple document in which the conceptual and regulatory framework of reference for the proposal is organised. It states the method followed to produce “Tenerife vive diversidad” (Tenerife lives diversity), describes the process of analysing the current reality, characterises the socio-territorial context that is the starting point, and transfers some of the experiences analysed during the process of identification carried out, thus justifying the contributions that allow the content of the Intercultural Coexistence Strategic Framework to be articulated in detail.

DONOSTIA-SAN SEBASTIÁN CITY COUNCIL, through its Cultural Diversity Department, promotes the programme “**Ongi etorri eskolara!**” (**Welcome to School**) at various educational centres in Donostia-San Sebastián. The objective consists of collaborating in the inclusion of families from different countries, starting with the school community, and raising awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity amongst all school agents.

To this end, it seeks to raise awareness amongst the entire educational community. Amongst other key actions, it supports families of foreign origin through the biannual “**familia-laguna**” programme (pairing a local family with a foreign family to support, help and introduce the newly arrived family to local networks and Basque culture). The programme includes intercultural activities in the classroom, with parents’ participation; it celebrates specific days with an intercultural perspective; it creates a group made up of teachers, families and technical staff from the municipal service to drive the organisation of activities; it conducts

TOWN HALL OF THE ISLAND OF TENERIFE

More information about the proposal “Tenerife lives diversity” at:

<https://n9.cl/5us5>

DONOSTIA-SAN SEBASTIÁN CITY COUNCIL

More information about the programme “Ongi etorri eskolara!” at:

<https://n9.cl/h5zlr>

an intercultural study of pupils which includes their origin, language, interest in Basque and their expectations for the future in the municipality; and it collaborates with social organisations in the neighbourhoods where the schools are located in order to promote the organisation of participatory activities with an intercultural perspective.

This project, which originally came about as a voluntary initiative amongst parents, is currently funded by the local administration.

CASTELLÓ DE LA PLANA CITY COUNCIL promotes intercultural coexistence amongst young people aged 14-26 years through the arts. The “**InterculturArte**” project encourages the creation of a stable participative space where young people can

reflect on how cultural diversity is managed in the municipality. The reflections resulting from the work sessions are transferred to citizens through community art of various kinds, including documentaries, photo exhibitions, murals, Theatre of the Oppressed, etc.

For this, the creation of socialisation groups that facilitate the integration of young people who have recently arrived is encouraged, especially refugees and unaccompanied minors, or young people lacking a network. Workshops are organised for cultural self-knowledge and spaces for positive interaction are created, where group cohesion, recognition of the diversity of the group and shared concerns can be worked on. Creative artistic workshops and community actions are also organised. A large part of the proposals created seek to generate critical thinking amongst citizens.

CASTELLÓ DE LA PLANA CITY COUNCIL

More information about the project “InterculturArte” at:

<https://n9.cl/b7gcn>

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This **GUIDE** to intercultural competencies applied to the development of public administration projects arose as a result of a concern shared by the cities of Bilbao, Castelló de la Plana and Donostia-San Sebastián, along with the island of Tenerife (represented by its Town Hall), all of which are members of the Intercultural Cities Network (Red de Ciudades Interculturales, or RECI, in Spanish), driven by the Council of Europe, within the framework of the European Intercultural Cities programme.

The Guide was developed within the framework of a broader project, which seeks to offer professionals in the public administration a way to approach the intercultural perspective, as applied to public management and local government. Furthermore, its content responds to specific needs expressed by civil servants in different administrative departments, through responses to an ad hoc questionnaire designed to iden-

tify to what extent interculturality is addressed in the exercise of their duties, what difficulties or limitations there are, and to what point the resources and services available are suitable for this purpose.

The results of this questionnaire were brought together in a final report, the conclusions and recommendations of which were taken into account when writing this text, with the aim of ensuring that it is relevant and of practical use. We hope that this is the case.

This initiative is part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and shares the 2030 Agenda's vision of the future, which transports us to "a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world" that respects "ethnicity and cultural diversity [and] equal opportunity, permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity".

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