



ICC International Coordinators' Meeting

3-5 November 2020

Online

MEETING REPORT

Introduction

Cities that are members of the international Intercultural Cities (ICC) network hold coordination meetings once per year to take stock of achievements, put forward new challenges, and prepare the next programme of work with a view to further develop both the intercultural cities' network and the intercultural integration policy model.

This year the meeting was hosted online over the course of three days due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The programme included two high-level sessions aimed for the political level of the member cities and two practical sessions on the intercultural checklist and the review and planning for the upcoming year respectively. The Intercultural Cities Programme has grown further in the past year, and now has 141 member cities from new countries including South Korea.

The ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic has had a large impact not only for all the member cities of the international network, but also for the work of the Programme. The situation has brought forward new ways of working, including webinars and online brainstorming meetings, as well as new thematic initiatives. The growing social inequalities, racism nurtured by fears, and lack of proper occasions for in-person interactions brought forward by the sanitary crisis have taken a strong place in the political agenda of interculturally committed local authorities. One notable event was the timely discussion meeting on solutions to issues brought forward with the pandemic, where cities could to discuss and share good practices in early spring, assisting each other with innovative materials, approaches and know-how. It was a great opportunity for making good use of the ICC as a network covering the five continents. All materials have been shared on a specific Covid-19 page on the ICC web, which is regularly kept updated as long as the sanitary situation continues to affect us all. This collaborative and timely way of working is a positive development that the ICC wishes to bring into future work.

The list of participants to this year's meeting can be found in **Appendix II**.

High-Level Session, 3 November 2020

Opening of the session

The first session of the meeting targeted the political level of the ICC member cities, following a request expressed by the ICC Coordinators at their meeting in Odessa. Opening the meeting the Intercultural Cities Programme was brought forward as a model for harnessing the potential of diverse societies, including in times of crisis. The extensive geographical coverage of the programme is a source of richness in practices, challenges, and experiences, as well as a factor for high quality policy innovation. The programme promotes fearless policies for forward-looking public authorities, and while achieving these goals is not an easy task, the model has been proven efficient with cities ranking well on intercultural integration also ranking better than others when it comes to dynamism of the job markets, sense of security and other markers of quality of life. Further the global network shows the model is flexible enough to be applied to a variety of situations and contexts.

Creative bureaucracy: from a "No, because..." to a "Yes, if" culture



In line with its innovation mood, the ICC programme welcomed Charles Landry, President of Creative Bureaucracy, to present the creative bureaucracy philosophy, focusing on how to find new innovative solutions to administrative problem-solving in the city. The inspiration of the creative bureaucracy idea is to go against negative perception of public service as corporations, and respond to the decline of the public as a force for the common good, a recognition that the solution is a collective endeavour between the different interest and components of a region or city. Opening with an inspirational dialogue on the current state of change in society, asking ourselves how we can create a civic city in this digitally nomadic society as well as how we are to make the shift from the I to the we, Mr. Landry touched upon a host of challenges cities and citizens alike face in today. It was concluded that there is a deep desire to connect.

The question is then if we can think afresh on what bureaucracy is able to do? Within this lies the respective three aims, pillars and goals of a creative bureaucracy:

- Revaluing public interest as a vocation;
- Shifting the image of what bureaucracy can be;
- Attracting the young to reshape bureaucracy.

The three pillars of a creative bureaucracy are:

- Rethinking regulations and incentives for the 21st Century;
- Reshaping the inner life of the bureaucracy;
- Creating trust via new links to the civic and business world.

The three goals of a creative bureaucracy are:

- Address the global issues that really matter;
- Turn urgent policies into reality; and
- Help create fairer more liveable cities.

It was underlined that it is important to have the vision to reshape the rules and not the other way around. **Creative bureaucracy therefore aims to find ways to function creatively in a rigid system.**

Closing, Mr. Landry concluded that effectively the intercultural lens of the ICC approach is a manifesto for a new urbanity and that imagination and change can come from all parts of the organisations, hence the importance of promoting participation at all levels.

Some practical examples of change were raised, including SynAthina and a model in Adelaide, where a project legitimated from the top allowed anyone to attempt to address a problem in 90 days. The approach enabled many seemingly intractable problems to be solved, which finds a parallel in the solutions cities have come up with in the context of the pandemic. Another example came from Eindhoven, where a social enterprise gave students accommodation at a reduced price in exchange for 20 hours a month of academic mentoring for local children and their families. Eventually the initiative led to local schools becoming one of the best in the country.

In the discussion that followed Landry's presentation, it was highlighted that public administrations across history have not had the role to work on positive narratives nor to create spaces for positive interaction. The question was posed how cities can work for this cultural change. During the discussion, the actions that cities have taken during the Covid-19 pandemic (including translating and distributing materials and allowing parking spaces to be taken over and used as restaurant spaces so to provide open air eating) were brought forward. Examples were also raised on working with police on how to engage with persons of migrant background who have suffered hate speech or have been victims of assault, how to record this data sensitively, using on-call interpreters and translation services to better communicate. Other examples including providing individual support, support with education for children, dedicated medical services offered to the migrant community, language services (initial assessment and personalised support for learning) a cohesion team that provides recognisable points of contacts in municipalities, were also highlighted.

Community Sponsorship for refugees: the role of local authorities

The second theme of the morning was Community Sponsorship for refugees, as one potential solution for how to make cities more welcoming and inclusive for those who arrive often in distress, how to provide community resources that respect and support the fact that those who arrive need to build a new life and give a positive contribution to society, how to involve the citizenry in the welcoming process, and how to make refugee welcoming bureaucracy more creative.

What is community sponsorship? - David Manicom, UNHCR



Manicom highlighted that community sponsorship can be seen as a way of increasing the quantity and quality of integration capacity and, in doing so, build stronger and more inclusive communities. Community sponsorship can also be a way for local communities and states to work together to find solutions for those in need. Practically, it was raised that while states can excel at for example delivering large scale language programmes to all newcomers, the community's

strength lies in being able to assist them in integrating the school system and creating contacts in the local community. Community sponsorship offers a way to combine the two and at the same time

empower local citizens to play a lead role in welcoming refugees resettled to their communities through a facilitated pathway from countries of asylum.

It was raised that there is significant evidence that community sponsorship leads to better and faster employment of refugees, higher rates of access to services and community spaces, as well that sponsored refugees find housing faster, giving newcomers an enhanced capacity to integrate and navigate the social challenges of integration. The community sponsorship model further facilitates resettlement into different parts of the country such as rural areas experiencing labour shortages.

Sponsorship underlies all the pillars of the global strategy on complimentary pathways: it can increase resettlement spaces, enable access to different models of complimentary pathways and serve as a community builder. The practical models vary between the different systems, and hence offers freedom for those states considering the model. Further, community sponsorship helps create social fabric, it creates connections and ways for all participants to learn about their community.

The Canadian Example – Mary Coulter, Counsellor Migration, Mission of Canada to the EU

Canada has over 40 years of experience with community sponsorship and has welcomed over 325 000 refugees through these programmes. It was highlighted that the bonds formed through community sponsorship are beneficial for everyone. Refugees welcomed through the model typically integrate faster and build deeper, more robust relationships with community members. Community sponsorship provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in welcoming refugees into the local community and can help bring people closer. Canada has both a resettlement programme, a community sponsorship programme and a blended programme combining the two methods.

The Canadian experience with community sponsorship has shown that resettlement depends on involvement across multiple levels of government. For instance, in Canada, a newly arrived family will interact with federal authorities for visa and arrival issues, the provincial government for health care, and the municipal government in order to register children for school. Further, municipalities have a mandate for areas such as housing, public transport and community services and are also the conveners of federally funded Local Immigration Partnerships, which help mapping the resettlement and settlement journeys that operate at the regional and municipal levels.

Canada's model of immigrant integration is premised on the participation and support of a wide array of actors. Apart from provincial/territorial and municipal governments, partners include service provider organizations, public institutions, regulatory bodies, employers and individuals as volunteers.

A high level of public support to immigration in Canada is partly due to the fact that it is a whole-of-society project. Community sponsorship is a community development measure, not simply a resettlement policy measure where sponsors perform an important role in assisting and supporting newcomers in navigating these multiple levels of government and beyond. The participation is also flexible as it can take many forms, ranging from fundraising, assisting with setup for newcomers, helping with language practice and local integration, and other support for newcomers during the preparatory process and after arrival.

The UK Sponsorship Programme – Jane Kennedy, UK Home Office

The UK scheme is newer than the Canadian scheme and was launched in 2016. The programme was originally born out of the reaction to the situation in Syria. While there are different models of community sponsorship, the UK model is largely modelled on the Canadian one.

Community Sponsorship groups are now present in every local authority region, with a concentration in certain areas, as a result of groups having grown the scheme there. The UK further works closely

with the capacity building organisation Reset, which is assisting with training and support to groups. For the UK, the community sponsorship model is a partnership between local communities, civil society organisations and the government. Through the collaboration, the state has modified the scheme based on the parties' feedback. This approach has changed how government works with communities and it is now seen as an example of good practice on how to work in partnership. The state also can support with funding support for the groups.

In the UK, the requirements for community sponsorship group include the need for registration as a charity or community interest company, proven experience of working with vulnerable or refugee groups a comprehensive plan, a safeguarding policy and £9000 upfront. The funding partially ensures the groups' commitment to the scheme, while also acting as a buffer as the group often must supplement the cost of rent. The group is expected to offer wrap-around integration support for one year, including welcoming the newcomers at the airport, arrival planning, language support, registering the families at local GP surgeries. The group also provides support for housing, which runs for a two-year period. The goal is to support the families towards of self-sufficiency and to meet a number of milestones in their integration journey. The UK has also introduced a pilot for trusted sponsors to help bring a family earlier in the process, tailored to allowing them to bond earlier.

Working with local authorities is a very important part of the community sponsorship process. It is the local authorities who give community sponsorship groups permission to apply, and they have a crucial role in introducing groups to safeguarding policies and teams, perform a housing inspection to ensure the accommodation offered meets the local authority's housing standards, and are invited to attend pre-approval visits and post-arrival support visits to the sponsored families. Lastly, the local authority has to approve the particular family for the resettlement to that area ensuring all specific medical or social needs can be covered. Further the local authority can help the group by acting as a bridge with agencies, provide knowledge about the cost and availability of housing, understanding the wishes of local residents and potential underlying tensions, provide awareness of local facilities, signposting to schools, linking to English language courses providers, and supporting with the resettlement plan.

The role of local authorities - Ignacio Blanco, General Direction of Equality, Valencia region

For the Valencia Regional Government welcoming people fleeing hardship was highlighted to be not only a political, but an ethical commitment. Spain and Valencia have recently started working with community sponsorship. The Valencia Region has launched a pilot project in 2020 for five refugee families. The region collaborates with two NGO's who have formed community sponsorship groups in five cities. They are in the first month of the programme and so far, the project has received good feedback. The region is aiming to provide a network to support full inclusion in society, which is tricky today with the Covid-19 restrictions. The support group also helps with registration and ID, which requires collaboration between the state, the regional and the local levels. This is essential to have a successful programme. While the state offers the legal avenue for arriving in Spain, the regional level offers funding and the local level works on answering to day-to-day challenges. The role of civil society is also essential, as they provide a practical support.

Experiences with community sponsorship - Gordon East, Charis Refugees

Gordon East shared concrete stories which have arisen through the work with community sponsorship. He highlighted that the model has created massive change for all participants involved.

- Through the community sponsorship programme a young girl who had been confined to her home, spoke limited English and had been bullied, received English lessons and an opportunity to meet others in the community. She has since thrived, passed her final exams in English and dreams of being a doctor after attending the university.

- Community sponsorship also creates friendships. This was seen when a family who had arrived through community sponsorship, did not wish to move as they had formed a close bond with Andy, their older neighbour who suffers from Parkinson's disease.
- Participating in community sponsorship is also helpful for those volunteering. One volunteer was grieving her husband and suffered from depression when she joined the programme. She has since sponsored three families and has found comfort in her task and the shared experience of grief with the Syrian family who have also lost everything.
- Community sponsorship can also help close gaps in the existing systems. In one instance the group offered to help teach English and the programme built a partnership, each involved entity providing resources such as a learning space or teachers to get the programme rolling. The programme is now on its third academic year.
- Finally, community sponsorship as a way of building sense of belonging. A family who arrived through community sponsored came forward to offer their sponsorship for future families.

The conversation on community sponsorship continued on 5 November morning with a practical workshop for interested practitioners. A summary report can be found in **Appendix I**. For more information on the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative: <https://youtu.be/FpPi0CapM-s>

Meeting of ICC international coordinators, 4-5 November 2020

Intercultural project's assessment checklist

The session was opened with an overall summary of the background for the intercultural checklist, stemming from the last meeting of ICC coordinators in Odessa where a need for a quick and easy tool for assessing projects was put forward. The draft checklist presented this year is a response to that need and will be completed after the discussions in the meeting.

ICC expert Claire Rimmer, author of the first draft, proceeded to present its structure encouraging all participants to assess their needs and share their thoughts. It was highlighted that the checklist has in fact become a much more complex document, including three narrative parts covering the three pillars of interculturalism: diversity, equality and interaction. The purpose being to ensure common understanding of the three principles, clarifying terminology, and carry out some pedagogy on intercultural integration. Each section further includes five indicators and ten questions (the proper checklists), with two questions corresponding to each indicator.

The meeting then proceeded in three working groups on each of these topics. The results of the working groups were then shared and discussed in plenary. Each of the three group discussions were moderated by ICC experts Carla Calado (diversity), Claire Rimmer (equality) and Dani de Torres (positive interaction), with the support of an ICC team member. The conclusions are presented below.

General Feedback on the Intercultural Checklist

The general feedback on the intercultural checklist was overall positive and city coordinators said that the checklist will be useful in their work and adaptable to a diversity of contexts and purposes.

However, for these multiple uses to happen, participants highlighted that a clarification of the target group and means of exploitation should be made. The checklist could for instance be used not only by the city to assess the degree of interculturality of project proposals prior to the decision on their funding, but also by partners and other external actors to get a quick overview of the interculturality of the projects and actions they implement. It was also highlighted that it would be useful to specify that the checklist is conceived for assessing projects and draft projects or actions, not really suitable for policy pre-evaluation at this stage.

**The Guide/Checklist:
Overall feedback**

1. Useful tool, simple and user friendly
2. Answers a need
3. Format is adapted
4. Survey Monkey for the checklist is a good idea
5. Could have multiple uses, for evaluating project proposals, policy proposals, etc.

An illustration showing two stylized human figures, one in a blue shirt and one in a white shirt, standing on a yellow background. They are facing each other with large speech bubbles above them, one red and one blue, suggesting a conversation or feedback exchange.

All groups asked if the list is to be used only when planning a project, or if the use could be expanded to include evaluation of a project when the latter comes to an end. Some cities have their own evaluation tools, which could complicate the use of the list; however, it was seen that elements of the list could be used in conjunction with the evaluation tools. One group also proposed to use the checklist as a certification tool. However, the ICC team clarified that the Council of Europe cannot issue certifications, apart from in very specific circumstances. Hence the cities were encouraged to consider the possibility to devise their own certification system.

Some of the working groups identified indicators in which there is a need to broaden the scope of the information provided, so that users can find examples in areas they may have not thought about before, and barriers can be identified beforehand. Suggestions on harmonising terminology were also made. One group highlighted it would be useful if available feedback is tailored to the answers, and to add the empathy perspective or stories of cities or projects that have experienced similar issues and yet have been able to overcome them. Another group also raised the question on quantitative or qualitative indicators and how questions should be phrased to let the user know when the threshold for a positive response has been reached.

There was a general consensus to amend the checklist so that questions would be asked separately rather than grouped. Also, it was suggested the checklist could be seen as a collaborative tool to which the project team would respond and at the same time assess their project as it is being set up or evaluated.

Finally, it was also clarified that feedback will be provided in the form of examples for all responses “no” or “partially”. A survey tool will be used to have a flexible instrument allowing tailored feedback and recommendations, including good practices from other cities. The background information will be available in a separate document, allowing the user to access additional information and descriptions as needed.

Review of the past year

Through a general presentation the ICC team provided feedback on the implementation of the ICC programme in 2020, and on the follow-up to the decisions taken at last year meeting of coordinators. It was emphasised that the ICC programme largely builds on member cities’ needs and contributions to ensure the model keeps evolving and building capacity.

In 2020¹ membership raised up to 141, counting five new cities, namely: Ansan and Guro (South Korea), Camden (UK), Neumarkt (Germany), and Valencia (Spain). In addition, membership processes were initiated in seven other cities. New members mean more richness and more good practices to share, but also entail a need to adapt services and tools to new contexts and to an ever-increasing size of the ICC network. In 2020, particular attention was paid to providing more **tailor-made services**.

Among the most relevant:

- A **Welcome pack** initially conceived for new cities, which has become a useful tool for all the members. It contains practical documents for a quick dive into the ICC programme, including the Mission description of ICC coordinators; a brief for politicians; a Glossary; and a resource pack referencing the main ICC documents and resources.
- A **brand pack** for a common identity, particularly when participating in joint campaigns. The tool is available in several languages, so as the ICC logo.
- **New format for index reports**: twelve index reports were prepared in 2020 based on a new internal guide for index report writing which has allowed for a quality increase and better harmonisation. This year the index reports are advertised through the ICC newsletter as they contain useful information for both the concerned city and readers from other cities who can take inspiration from the relevant recommendations.
- **Thematic surveys** to collect good practice examples: carried out to prepare the thematic webinars, these surveys – combined with the spontaneous reporting from member cities – allowed to collect and share 107 good practices, on top of the know-how developed to deal with the sanitary crisis.
- **The ICC Index Charts**: they allow for the graphical display of all cities' index results in the database, with possibility of filtered search by size of the city/population, foreign-born/non-nationals, country, policy areas, core index / «advanced» index, and progress over time. Coordinators are invited to test the online charts and provide feedback by 10 December 2020.
- **Translation in Non-official languages**: saving in travels allowed for translations of the most relevant ICC guidance in languages other than English and French, giving priority to the languages of the national networks.

Extensive changes were applied to working methods, largely due to the unprecedented situation brought forward by the pandemic. Some of those changes have however given positive results and will be sustained as far as possible in future. The most relevant are:

- **Grants** to support inter-city work (good for practice sharing, piloting, and networking);
- The **meeting of Coordinators of ICC National networks** (excellent for aligning national and international priorities);
- **Webinars and online brainstorming meetings** (allow for more regular contact; reach out to a larger audience and facilitate participation from non-European members; are organised over short and focussed sessions with less impact on the workload of ICC coordinators; infuse energy and enable the preparation of comprehensive policy packages).

Work in progress to be finalised during the first half of next year includes the preparation of **online courses** which use will be restricted to member cities only (on the Step by Step Guide to build an intercultural City; Artificial Intelligence and its discriminatory effects; and Intercultural communication), and two short video-tutorial, on systemic discrimination and on how to fill-in the ICC index respectively, to be published in December.

¹ Information included in this report relates to figures as of 31st October 2020.

Regarding **visibility**, visits to the ICC website have exponentially increased, thus boosting the image of the member cities and the relevance of the ICC programme within the Council of Europe alike. The same trends can be observed on ICC social media, namely thanks to attractive activities like the joint campaign for the International Refugee Day (thirty Mayors portrayed) or Voice-Over, an online magazine combining provocative reflections on intercultural matters from both artists and member cities' personalities.



Finally, the ICC team informed of the latest progress carried out by the **Council of Europe Working Group on Intercultural Integration (GT-ADI-INT)**, an intergovernmental body mandated to prepare a draft Model framework for multi-level governance of migrant integration. The working group is the first ever intergovernmental structure composed of both national and local authorities. Ten ICC member cities are taking part and work towards the goals is advancing smoothly despite the sanitary crisis.

It was highlighted that GT-ADI-INT represents a unique opportunity for transposing the Intercultural Cities integration model at the national level, thus reinforcing the institutional role that cities play in the process.

The session that followed provided a detailed feedback on a number of outstanding activities². These are the following:

- **Managing and preventing gentrification**: Dr. Noah Nasser, ICC expert, presented the main outcomes of the survey of ICC members that led to an extensive research study and subsequent policy brief. The research was originally presented in a webinar which gathered over 40 participants from ICC member cities.
- **Identifying and preventing Systemic Discrimination**: Niall Crowley, ICC expert, outlined the genesis of the research study on systemic discrimination and how it harvested experiences from member cities; he presented the policy package that derived from the consultation process, highlighting the role of participating cities in grounding the work at a very practical level. The study provides many examples on how to effectively address systemic discrimination. It sets out 4 strands in terms of how cities can create the conditions to effectively tackle systemic discrimination.
- **Intercultural Citizenship test**: this is a pedagogical tool addressing citizens to find out more about what it means to be an intercultural citizen acting in line with the aspiration of building an inclusive, fair and cohesive diverse community. The test can be taken online on the ICC web or offline with the help of facilitators. Apart from English and French, the test will be soon available in Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Ukrainian. Cities willing to collect and analyse data of the respondents are invited to contact and consult the ICC team.
- **Social trust barometer**: this is a pilot project trying to answer to the need of measuring the impact of intercultural actions in a smart, compelling, efficient and cost-effective way. Social trust would indeed be an excellent criterion to bring evidence of the efficiency of intercultural measures; yet, it is also something difficult to assess. The social trust barometer will work on connecting three dimensions: big data including social media data, social sensing, and observing social interactions at a micro level, mostly analysed by artificial intelligence.

² A detailed summary of each of the activities below will be provided in the ICC Annual report 2020.

Botkyrka has volunteered to carry out a pilot test; results will be shared before the end of the year. The next step will be to develop a user-friendly app and to carry out tests at a larger scale.

- **Academy on intercultural communication and alternative narratives:** preparatory work has started for creating a training programme for an ICC academy specifically targeting communication needs. Building on past training experiences with training on intercultural communication, and on the work of the national networks – RECI in particular – on alternative narratives and positive intercultural communication, the academy will focus on how to embed intercultural principles in local authorities’ public communication. It will target both cities’ communication officers and ICC coordinators and be delivered as an in-person course, as well as an online course accessible to member cities only.
- **Preventing the discriminatory effects of Artificial Intelligence:** Machine learning and algorithmic decision-making are currently a subject of debate which however does not seem to be in the immediate horizon of city officials in charge of inclusion initiatives. Yet, both impact people’s access to human and social rights, including education, housing, justice, etc. Machine-driven algorithmic discrimination has been the topic of one of the six ICC webinars provided this year and will be the basis of an online course for member cities. In the meantime, a [policy brief](#) is available on the ICC website.
- **Anti-rumours: Manual for the school environment and Escape Rumours:** answering to the need to develop anti-rumours tailored tools for schools’ use, the RECI and the Italian Network *Città del Dialogo* have worked on a manual that aims at promoting critical thinking in young people and educate them on how to dismantle rumours and stereotypes that hinder peaceful and productive coexistence in diverse societies. The Manual further builds on the results of the *Io Rispetto* (I respect) project, run by *Città del Dialogo*. Besides, based on the escape room concept, the Escape Rumours targets and engages young people around challenges and games to identify underlying prejudices, learn how to dismantle stereotypes, and design anti-rumours campaigns. The escape rumours is being now tested in a number of RECI member cities.

Participants welcomed the feedback on the programme of activities; many of them attended ICC online events and/or used the new tools. There was general agreement that – although online events do not allow for the same interaction that happens when meeting in person, they present the advantage of making participation easier and more regular, focus discussions on specific topics, rapidly exchange and collect information, and reduce carbon emissions. The forthcoming programme of activities should include a good balance of both online and in-person meetings.

Translation in non-official languages was also welcomed. Bursa Osmangazi offered to translate the ICC test into Turkish for wider dissemination. The inter-city grants were also appreciated, as a tool to promote multilateral work, as a network should do. Finally, Limassol suggested that the ICC programme should try to map the awareness raising initiatives led by the members, with the help of ICC coordinators, so to amplify their impact.

A number of questions were raised on the possible uses of the ICC test. It was recalled that cities willing to adapt it to their own contexts are kindly requested to liaise with the ICC team beforehand: in fact, the test underwent two years of pilot phase that revealed the sensitivity of some of the questions asked. It is important to ensure that any changes do not turn it into a tool for spreading rumours rather than combating them.

The regional and national dimensions of the ICC programme

The ICC programme has for many years supported the creation and development of regional and national networks. These are often at the forefront of pilot initiatives and at the origin of new ICC methodologies which benefit the whole international network. The latest developments concern the following:

- **Australasian Network:** the expansion of the model to South Korea and the increased commitment in Australia and Japan has pushed concerned cities to organise themselves into a regional network. At the moment they are working at a common intercultural strategy and at the setting up of a governance model for their network. The members have also been very active also individually, with a number of awareness raising events and training organised.
- **Città del Dialogo:** a very prolific year with three main highlights: i) the launch of the ITACA (Italian Cities Against Discrimination) project, ii) a good practice from Turin; iii) a social media communication campaign. ITACA is a project funded by the EU, scheduled to last 24 months. It will focus on two main topics, i.e. fighting systemic discrimination inside and outside local administration, and raising awareness on citizens' rights. Both are among the priorities identified in the network's action plan for the next three years. In the field of anti-racism, in March 2020 the city of Turin issued an official decision declaring anti-racism an urban common good. As a follow-up, the city launched a call for the co-creation of a plan for the implementation of the decision. Participation from the civil society has been very high (the proposals are now being assessed). This can be considered as an inspirational practice since it implements a bottom-up approach and shows that the administration can reach consensus to serve the citizens, beyond political belonging. Finally, Città del Dialogo just launched a communication campaign to showcase success stories from the member cities. It targets citizens at large, youth and civil society, each with specifically tailored contents.
- **Norwegian and Nordic networks:** active for a decade, the Norwegian network is more a forum for consultation and cooperation among Norwegian cities on policies and initiatives. Last year, the coordinator of Klaksvik (Faroe Islands) proposed to initiate an informal platform for cooperation among Nordic cities, so to expand the geographical scope. However, the Covid-19 crisis has slowed down any attempt to work together in a meaningful way. However, there is an attempt to set up a common mandate for the cities interested in this regional cooperation, and to welcome smaller cities that are not necessarily part of the ICC programme. It was pointed out in fact that bigger cities are already part of a number of inter-cities fora and that their commitment to yet another one may be difficult.
- **RECI – Spanish network of Intercultural Cities:** in 2020 the RECI has set up – for the first time – thematic working groups on: 1) intercultural competence (mapping needs, and devising resources to ensure training sessions, know-how sustainability, transversality of action, civil society participation); 2) welcome policies from an intercultural lens (putting intercultural principles at the core of the policies); 3) intercultural narratives (work in progress on a practical guide to crystallise the extensive theoretical body of knowledge into practical tips, best practices and strategies to involve politicians and civil servants). The working groups are now in the process of being finalised and/or pilot their materials with the view to make them available to the ICC global network. Besides, the RECI has produced its first communication strategy and branding guide and is now in the process of consolidating the work done on assessing the impact of Covid-19 in view of preparing an intercultural response to its negative effects.
- **RPCI – Portuguese network of Intercultural Cities:** in 2020 RPCI worked on addressing the gaps identified by the members in previous years. They produced an online course on the ICC Step-by-step manual as a way to promote intercultural competence and know-how among staff. They also launched “Welcoming Cities”, a project to increase RPCI members' capacity to

interculturally welcome the new residents. For the latter, RPCI members consulted each other and aligned their migrant integration plans, assessed gaps and needs, and worked on i) finalising the welcoming app for migrants; ii) putting in place a database of events and campaigns, iii) and developing a customisable welcoming course for newcomers and other groups.

- **ICC-UA – Ukrainian network of Intercultural Cities:** the national events initially scheduled to take place in 2020 have been postponed to next year due to Covid-19 emergency. Yet, the shift to online meetings provided new opportunities for the involvement of Ukrainian cities in the work of partners outside the country. Synergies have been built with other projects from the Council’s Anti-discrimination department, such as the one on the protection of national minorities in Ukraine, aimed at stabilising the dialogue between national minorities and regional administrations. Besides, Melitopol has involved all other member cities into a project on developing intercultural competence of public officials, which also involves cities in Australia.
- **Québec – REMIRI:** this is not yet an ICC network but an informal initiative of a number of Quebec cities backed by academia. Following the visit of the ICC team to Montreal last year, REMIRI cities are working on restructuring their network and mobilising the relevant administrations so that they can officially join the ICC programme.
- **Intercultural Regions:** this is an initiative of the Assembly of European Regions with the support of the EU and the Intercultural Cities programme. A Roadmap for the network to implement the intercultural principles has been prepared and funding opportunities are being looked for. Also, work is ongoing to prepare an index to measure intercultural results, based on the ICC index model. The network represents a great potential for promoting regular contact between the cities and the regions, and collaboration on intercultural matters. Next year, the ICC programme will provide support for the organisation of a Regional Integration Academy, to develop intercultural policy frameworks and strategies for the regional level.



In reply to the questions raised during the presentations, the ICC team further informed that efforts toward the setting up of a Swedish network of intercultural cities are ongoing, and that discussions are being held with a number of Polish cities which expressed the wish to use the ICC umbrella to work – among others - on the rights of LGBTi persons using the intercultural approach to diversity management and inclusion. It also recalled

the process and opportunities to set up national networks in countries where the number of ICC member cities becomes important.

The ICC agenda 2021: priorities, services, and tools

The ICC team exhorted the coordinators to think about the services and tools they receive from the ICC programme and express their wishes for the next year, also in light of new priorities that the Covid-19 crisis may have brought forward.

Four main trends for participating in the ICC programme were highlighted: 1) the possibility to use the ICC index analysis as an evaluation tool for the cities’ strategies; 2) Council of Europe support to build and keep momentum for mobilising the citizenry toward a deep change at a local level; 3) the ICC know-how – webinars, study visits, guidance, policy briefs, etc.; 4) the support and acknowledgment of an international organisation to the local level’s commitment, and the opportunity to work internationally.

Participants highlighted the progress made in boosting collaborative work within the network, namely through the ICC grants, the support given to the national networks, and the meeting of coordinators of national networks. This is certainly something that needs to be pursued and further improved.

Participants agreed that next year the ICC could organise more periodic online brainstorming meetings (on the model of the meeting organised to face the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic) example every three months, so to offer coordinators of member cities an opportunity to meet and exchange on current issues.

Coordinators also particularly appreciated more practical tools such as the checklist and the ICC test.

Some coordinators emphasised the difficulties for cities that are not organised under an ICC national network to have meaningful contacts and exchange with their national authorities. Although the setting up of the intergovernmental Working Group on Intercultural Integration may soon deliver good results in terms of setting standards for multi-level governance in this field, support in developing capacity on intercultural narratives and discourse would be welcome.



In particular, tools and advice on how to embed intercultural integration into larger institutions that do not feel directly concerned by diversity management would be welcome. E-learning tools to educate the wider public (including staff of public administration) on the intercultural principles could be a way to achieve a basic level of understanding of the core principles of interculturalism. Also, it would be beneficial for the member cities to receive ICC support in organising national Policy Labs, where cities can exchange with their national authorities on an equal foot and in a creative way.

A number of fields to be explored next year were evoked, namely: i) how could diversity contribute to the economic recovery? How to promote diversity in business and development? How to harness diversity advantage or positive interaction for economic benefits? ii) what could interculturality bring to the anti-racism movement? How to further build bridges between the two? iii) competence building on systemic discrimination; iv) intercultural narratives and political communication and systemic discrimination; v) making interculturalism a factor for sustainable development, bridging the ecological and the diversity agenda; how integration and inclusion intersects with the climate emergency? vi) targeted and peer support for the development of intercultural strategies and plans, as a complement to the ICC index analysis.

It was also suggested to compile and disseminate a calendar with key dates during which cities will be invited to join specific actions or participate in joint activities.

The coordinator of the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities also offered facilitator trainings to those who may wish to implement the Diversity Charter in their public administrations.

Finally, the ICC team informed that they will soon circulate the annual survey to collect further feedback on the topics and tools that the coordinators would like to explore next year.

Appendix I

Workshop on Community Sponsorship, 5 November 2020



This practical workshop followed up the first session on community sponsorship and focused on the questions and challenges presented by the participants.

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) promotes advocacy, and mainly works with assisting with the concrete implementation of community sponsorship programmes across the

globe. They can for example provide dedicated staff to countries to build their programme and can also support countries who have already moved past implementation to help scale the programme and assess the policies implemented. The GRSI can finally offer connections through their global network to share experiences.

Community sponsorship was introduced as a community led initiative offering a pathway. The latter is a key feature of the community sponsorship compared to other integration models which do not address the way in which the refugee arrives in the country. The role of the community group was also highlighted, as the entity leading the initiative rather than only taking part in the process. It is also important to highlight it is always a group - never a sole individual - who assists with the sponsorship. Finally, it was highlighted that there are different models of community sponsorship and even regional differences in how the model is implemented. Globally, there are fifteen countries who have implemented community sponsorship and many more which have shown interest. Cities were also highlighted to have an important role, both in advocacy, facilitation and implementation. Sponsorship is a question of sustained support for a period of time.

In Canada there are various methods for bringing together actors. At the moment there are three different approaches, the resettlement programme, the community sponsorship programme and the blended programme. However, the community aspect of the sponsorship programme is indeed unique as entails positive effects on all parties and creates ripple effects in the society.

The participants highlighted the limitations of the programmes more commonly implemented, as there can be strict requirements, limited visas available and the costs can be significant depending on the country. Participants from cities located in countries which do not yet implement community sponsorship asked how to start the work from a local level and how to bridge the gap between the public sector and civil society who have a wish to contribute. It was highlighted that in a country where there is no framework or resettlement programme in place, the state can for example try a small pilot project to test the approach. This has been the case in Argentina, where they wished to build the support among the population for a larger resettlement programme. One option is also to start with specific cases such as refugee students. If several cities are interested in the model, an avenue is for the cities to get together and raise the question with the government to start the discussion. In these situations, the GRSI can offer assistance, and the Council of Europe Working Group on Intercultural Integration can be used as a forum for multilateral discussion on the matter.

Another question concerned the advocacy methods used to convince national governments to increase resettlement places through community sponsorship. It was highlighted that the community

sponsorship initiative is community led. All individuals in society should be able – in a way or another - to communicate with the leadership. Participation is of course easier when individuals are organised, for example the civil society. In that sense, community sponsorship can easily activate new groups to advocate for a more engaged resettlement. Furthermore, the positive results of community sponsorship in terms of faster integration and the commitment from society are a powerful argument for advocacy.

A concern was also raised regarding the risk of the community group not being able in the end to complete the sponsorship. It was also asked if all cities are suitable for the model or if smaller communities where it is easier to integrate would be more suitable. In larger cities housing is limited, access to social housing restricted, and access to schools can provide a hurdle.

In reply to those questions, all cities in countries with community sponsorship highlighted that when the model is presented, the response from the communities is high. It is however of vital importance to have a good structure in place to ensure that the commitment can be channelled to the correct places and community sponsorship allows for an effective avenue in this respect. The GRSI also works with states to help them move the community sponsorship programmes from a pilot phase to a programme at scale and assists with the infrastructure and distribution of risk. Each party of the sponsorship group has their own role – state, region or local level, but also within the community sponsorship group – roles can be purely financial, purely social, or even a one-off action such as providing a couch or specific assistance. Sponsorship as a whole is a highly coordinated effort.

Appendix II

List of participants

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