

Capacity building of Italian Cities

GRANT AGREEMENT GA_DGII_0343_2024

The capacity-building initiative developed within the present Grant encompassed a series of actions, designed to employ diverse modalities and methodologies, with the aim of engaging and empowering a broad and varied target audience.

The capacity-building was rooted in the strategic objective of equipping the cities within the Italian network with thematic expertise and practical tools to address challenges effectively and develop new interventions.

The programme specifically targeted three priority areas, each of significant relevance to fostering inclusion and combating discrimination:

- **Sport as a tool for intercultural inclusion and anti-discrimination:** Delivered through an online webinar, this session highlighted the potential of sports in promoting dialogue, breaking down cultural barriers, and fostering community cohesion.
- **The inclusion of Roma and Travellers communities and addressing anti-gypsyism:** This online webinar provided a platform to deepen understanding of the historical and social marginalisation faced by these communities, offering practical strategies to combat prejudice and promote equitable inclusion.
- **Developing effective counter-narratives and combating disinformation:** Conducted as an immersive two-day in-person workshop, this session focused on equipping participants with the skills to identify and challenge harmful narratives, counteract misinformation, and foster critical thinking within their communities.

Participants were not only able to enhance their knowledge and skills but also to exchange best practices and create networks of collaboration, laying the groundwork for initiatives aimed at building more inclusive and resilient communities.

The 3 capacity-building actions are described below:

i) Sport and Interculture: Promoting inclusion through sporting activity

The Webinar “Sport and Interculture: Promoting inclusion through sporting activity” has been held on the **12th March 2024**.

The field of sport emerged several times during the previous meetings of the Network as an area in which to work to promote effective intercultural policies in local territories, and this webinar aimed to be a first moment of reflection to share experiences and lay the foundations for future initiatives on this issue. During this webinar, the network explored how sport could be used as an effective tool for intercultural dialogue and to create more cohesive and united communities. **19 participants and 5 Italian cities participated in the activity.**

The webinar was structured as a session guiding participants through the exploration of the role of sport in creating intercultural cities. It began with a welcoming introduction, during which the importance of sport as a tool for fostering inclusion and breaking down cultural barriers was emphasised. This segment set the stage by highlighting how sport can contribute to building more cohesive and harmonious urban environments.

Following the introduction, the session moved into a detailed presentation of case studies.

The first example focused on **ICEI's collaboration with Sassuolo Calcio**, showcasing how football can serve as a platform for promoting community engagement and combating discrimination.

This was complemented by **insights from UISP (Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti)**, which shared their innovative approaches to making sports accessible and inclusive for diverse populations. These real-world examples provided tangible evidence of the transformative potential of sport in intercultural contexts.

The webinar then had an interactive discussion, during which participants had the opportunity to share their own experiences and perspectives. This **collaborative exchange** allowed cities to voice their specific challenges and needs, while also presenting proposals on how to better integrate sport into intercultural policies and practices. The discussion fostered a rich dialogue, highlighting the diversity of approaches and inspiring new ideas for future initiatives.

The session concluded with a succinct summary of the key insights and outcomes, leaving participants with an understanding of the next steps and potential avenues for collaboration.

Overall, the webinar served as a valuable platform for knowledge sharing and collective learning, reinforcing the critical role of sport in building inclusive and interconnected urban communities.

ii) *Local strategies for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. Projects, services and policies*

On **10th April 2024**, through the cooperation between ICEI, the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, UNIMORE University, and the Mondinsieme Foundation, an online Webinar titled “Local Strategies for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers: Projects, Services, and Policies” was organised.

The webinar sought to engage local and national authorities in a platform for knowledge exchange and discussion, focusing on **political and social strategies** for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers communities, with particular emphasis on the territorial dimension. The session featured a series of insightful interventions. It commenced with introductory remarks from ICEI and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, followed by an expert presentation by researcher Eva Rizzin, who provided a thematic analysis of anti-Gypsyism in Italy, exploring its historical roots, current realities, and future challenges.

The subsequent segment of the webinar examined the critical role of cities in fostering policies and social practices that support the inclusion of Romani culture. This was illustrated through practical examples

from UNIMORE's initiatives in the Reggio Emilia area and the Municipality of Milan's experiences. The discussion highlighted effective practices in school inclusion, cultural decolonisation, and community participation.

The webinar attracted approximately **50 participants** representing various sectors, including public institutions (9 Italian Cities and two national bodies) and territorial services.

In addition, a direct result was the establishment of a first Working Group on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers communities and the fight against anti-Gypsyism coordinated by ICEI and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and joined by the Municipalities of Modena, Casalecchio di Reno, Montesilvano, Milan, Venice.

iii) Workshop "Disinformation in Cities" - 24-25 October 2024, Prato, Italy

Disinformation is having a significant effect on cities. In these unprecedented times of rapid information dissemination, distrust, and upheaval, cities find themselves at the forefront of the battle against disinformation. Local governments, as the most accessible tier of governance for citizens, are charged with guiding communities through an increasingly complex array of societal and global challenges.

For Italian cities members the ICC Programme, **understanding the mechanisms behind the spread of disinformation and developing effective responses** has become ever more crucial. Their ability to lead and implement sound collective decisions hinges on this knowledge. The landscape of disinformation is constantly shifting, with strategies for addressing it being developed and refined across various levels of governance.

The Workshop brought together representatives from cities and various sectors to exchange knowledge, practices, and research on addressing disinformation in urban contexts.

The workshop was a collaborative activity of ICEI in cooperation with the Disinformation in the City project at the University of Melbourne, Monash Data and Democracy Research Hub, Monash University European Research Foundation, German Marshall Fund of the United States Cities Program.

Participants received practical training tailored to cities and their collaborators, building upon the **2024 Disinformation in the City Response Playbook**, which had been co-created by 40 cities alongside representatives from the media, technology, academia, and civil society.

The event also served as a platform to explore opportunities for collaboration and related funding within the European framework and beyond.

The agenda of the event included the following sessions:

24 October 2024		
09.30 - 10.15	Welcome session	Presentation from host and City of Prato Introduction to the Workshop, its objectives and methodologies

10.15 - 11.00	Disinformation in the City Playbook	Presentation of the key learnings and framing of the Disinformation in the City Response Playbook
11.00 - 11.30 – COFFEE BREAK		
11.30 - 12:15	Panel discussion to introduce and reflect on specific tools and measures to identify, analyse and respond to mis/disinformation	• Paula Gori Secretary General, EDMO • A/Prof Ika Idris Director, Data and Democracy Research Hub, Monash University Indonesia • Syali Gestanon Head of the Public Opinion and Aspirations Management, DKI Jakarta Provincial Government • Rita Marascalchi Head of the Council of Europe Inclusion and Integration Unit, Council of Europe • Alessio Baù Head of Campaigns, C40 • A/Prof Matteo Bonotti Monash University Australia (moderator)
12:15-13:00	World Café To refine knowledge of anti-disinformation tools and connect them to own experience / needs	World cafe with panellists - three tables (2 panellists at each, one facilitator at each) Relate panel discussion to three phases of disinformation response.
13.00 - 14.00 – LUNCH		
14:00-15:30	Learning Lab 1: Pre-emption and early intervention	Developing responses to a disinformation case study scenario Working groups: • Mapping the trust landscape, building structures of collaboration, communicating and listening
15:30 - 16.00 COFFEE BREAK		
16:00 - 17:30	Reflection/ Collaboration	• To reflect about lessons learned • Identify opportunities for collaboration • To think ahead to the following day

25 October 2024		
9.00 - 9:30	Welcome session	

9:30 - 10:15	Panel discussion to introduce and reflect on specific tools and measures to identify, analyse and respond to mis/disinformation	• Maria Vittoria Beria Director International Relations, City of Milan • Dr Kseniya Rubicondo Director of the Ashburn Intercultural Institute, Coordinator of National ICC Network of Ukraine • A/Prof Matteo Bonotti Monash University Australia • Ayan Huseynova Urban Diplomacy Officer, City of Dortmund • Riki Permana Data and Democracy Research Hub, Monash University Indonesia • Imogen Crump Editor in Chief, Pursuit @ The University of Melbourne • A/Prof Ika Idris Monash University Indonesia (moderator)
10:15-11:00	World Café To refine knowledge of anti-disinformation tools and connect them to own experience / needs	World cafe with panellists - three tables (2 panellists at each, one facilitator at each) Relate panel discussion to three phases of disinformation response.
11.00 - 11.30		
11:30-12:15	City Lab 2: Pre-bunking and spread prevention	Working groups - Articulating and applying phase two response activities to the realities of city practice.
12:15-1:00	City Lab 3: De-bunking and recovery	Working groups - Articulating and applying phase three response activities to the realities of city practice.
13.00 - 14.00		
14:00 - 15:30	Reflection/ Collaboration	Individual reflection on opportunities and challenges of applying tools to their own context, and opportunities for collaboration. Distil themes for collaboration.
15:30 – 16:00		
16.00 - 17.00	Collaboration	Break into groups to discuss collaborations. Including articulating the need, identifying partners and specific funding opportunities. Identify next steps.
17:00 - 17:30	Close	

A total of 32 participants attended the event, including the presence of three Italian Network cities (Milano, Pontedera, Reggio Emilia) and Rita Marascalchi, Head of the Intercultural Inclusion Unit of the Council of Europe.