INITIAL STUDY ON PARTICIPATORY PROCESS & INTERCULTURALISM

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INTRODUCTION.

This report seeks to present an overview of key concepts that have been reflected in different intercultural policies and documents related to civil participation and interculturality in the last years in the Council of Europe context, with the objective of offering a theoretical framework to support European cities involved in the ICC Programme.

The preparation of this report has been coordinated by the Observatory of Immigration of Tenerife (OBITen), linked with the University of La Laguna and member of the Diversit-ACI (Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities).

OBITen's choice was to elaborate this document in a simple way, ensuring to add to the general theoretical framework some inspiring examples, presenting questions for the cities to self-reflect on the reality of their communities and neighbourhood, as well as a summary of an interest tool of self-assessment that seeks to support local authorities in the complex but necessary task of mapping and identifying key stakeholders and to understand better the community. This reports, hence, will address crucial aspects to enable cities to design and promote intercultural participation, main objective of this initial study.

1. PARTICIPATION.

The starting point is the definition of participation; according to the Council of Europe, we understand by participation that citizens have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, when appropriate, the support, to freely express their opinions, be heard and contribute to the decision-making in the matters that affect them.

From a human rights approach we can understand participation as a right where the basic principles of dignity and equality or non-discrimination apply. It is important to highlight that the participation cannot be only understood as the exercise of the right to vote, but as the action of incidence, deliberation, co-production and monitoring of local policies by the citizens to achieve collective constructions of policies.

But as the definition implies, the right to vote would be "empty" if not accompanied by means that promote participation and eliminate or reduce the obstacles that prevent it.
Some ideas and actions that need to be taken in consideration:

- Promote social equity instead of "blind" equality, where it is important to take into account differences in abilities.

- A definition of citizenship (those who can participate) that is independent of nationality, gender or residence status.

- The importance of local citizenship and the responsibility of cities in promoting full and meaningful participation.

- Appropriate measures must be a priority in order to facilitate the participation of people that traditionally have been "excluded" or whose voices have not sufficient space in the public sphere.

- Participation can cultivate a sense of ownership and belonging to the community, and it can extend to people that are more transient or face systematic barriers, including for example migrant, refugee and Roma communities.

- Strategies for participation can also encourage greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public space.

1.1. Participation and Power.

From the perspective of public policies, participation can imply a contradiction, because the natural starting point of a participation process should not be imposed by the public authorities on a top-down basis, it should be requested by a group of people who want their interest to be represented.

However, as a matter of fact, the local authorities have a prominent role in promoting these processes, especially when the relevant groups are minorities that do not have the same opportunities to be heard.

At the same time, it has to be taken into account that participatory processes are always intertwined with issues of power. As the Ladder of participation" of Sherry Arnstein shows us, the policies of participation allow for very different degrees of participation: from mere information or even manipulation, to a true transfer of power to citizens.

8. Citizen's Control	**Citizen Power**
7. Delegated Power	
6. Partnership	
5. Placation	**Formal Participation / Symbolic**
4. Consultation	
3. Informing	
2. Therapy	**No-Participation (Other Objectives)**
1. Manipulation	

The ladder of participation (Sherry R. Arnstein, 1969)

The degree of participation is not only decisive for the relevance of a participatory process, but also with respect to its potential to foster interaction within the community - if I can only answer "yes" or "no" in a questionnaire, there is no space to share arguments and perspectives, get to know the "other" and break stereotypes and prejudices.

Yet, less intensive participatory processes such as consultations can be a good starting point to engage and empower groups that currently do not have a "participation culture".

The relationship between participation and power is also linked with empowerment, democracy and development from below: participation is about the citizens gaining power.

Analysing power further, we can confirm that the real power stands in the decision-making process, on who makes the final decision. In this sense, the degree of power is measured by the extent the participatory process has power over the decisions it is involved in (Mansuri and Rao).

1.2. Neighbourhood Participation.

In a participatory process and/or social structure of a city it is important to assess if all neighbourhoods, and therefore, the different groups of people are being taken in account. In this process one needs to consider not only the participation process, but also the urban settings, the rapid changes of today's historical migrant neighbourhoods in shifting to other modes of coexistence.
Therefore, it is important to assess if the neighbourhood's feeling of belonging or involvement in everyday life is being reduced or is growing, if the everyday socialization codes/conducts in the neighbourhoods are promoting more presence in the decision-making or are playing against all these key aspects that establish the ground for participation.

Giménez (2009) applies a multidimensional approach focusing on neighbourhoods, and conceptualizes participation as one of the dimensions of neighbourhood coexistence, with three major features:

1. Involvement in social life.
2. Presence in decision-making.
3. Feeling of belonging.

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In order to be able to capture the dynamics of coexistence we will understand neighbourhood participation as individuals or groups taking part and intervening in an action or process, together with other neighbours, bringing practices and expressing opinions, with a purpose or objective.

The neighbourhood participation is developed through the plots of strong and weak relations, that can translate in two types of participation:

- **Informal participation**: the one that is carried out without institutional mediation or affiliation, which does not mean that there are no rules. It is usually part of the daily practices derived from living in the same neighbourhood and in many cases, it is frequent and repeated in time. Example: greeting each other in the street, take the children to the local park.

- **Formal participation:** is developed through the formal and/or institutional setup and occupies a central place. Common examples could include sport associations or, based on timeframes, participation in local festivals or in campaigns promoted by neighbourhood associations and /or groups.
  Extensive literature has shown that joining an association or a formal group is related to the existence of prior interpersonal ties with their members (Granovetter 1973; Ariño and Cucó 2001).

Another key aspect to take into account to understand neighbourhood participation is who its actors are and the relationship between them.

In principle, the "main" actors would be the group of neighbours, but another question arises implicitly or explicitly, about who are **"legitimate actors"**. A clear example is the questioning of the legitimacy of immigrants considered as undesirable neighbours, given their culture and socioeconomic situation, not only from a native vs immigrant understanding, but also from the "Insider-Outsider" point of view, where often the two concepts overlap (Elias 1993). There is no possible real representative participation without recognizing the other as a legitimate neighbour.

Normally immigrant neighbours who have been living in an area for a long time and have established relationships fall into the category of insider/native, however other factors (such as the area's level of development, or common stereotypes) can be in some cases stronger that the length of residence in the area in order to be considered an insider.

1.3. Citizen's Engagement.

The citizens engagement into policy-making processes is traditionally linked to two main paradigms:

- **A Top-Down approach:** where policies descend from decisionmakers to citizens, based on the principles of deliberative democracy and representation.
- **A Bottom-Up approach:** expression of a participatory democracy, implying a direct engagement of individuals in political decisions and policies.

These concepts are neither opposed nor mutually exclusive, but rather represent two ends of a circular process, initiated by citizens, whether through representation (i.e., voting) or direct participation.

Although both perspectives ensure citizen feedback, the successful integration of citizens instances in policymaking - stemming from direct participation - carries an added value in terms of trust and sense of ownership.

Either way, two necessary features always characterize citizen participation (Pellizzoni 2008, 93- 116), namely:
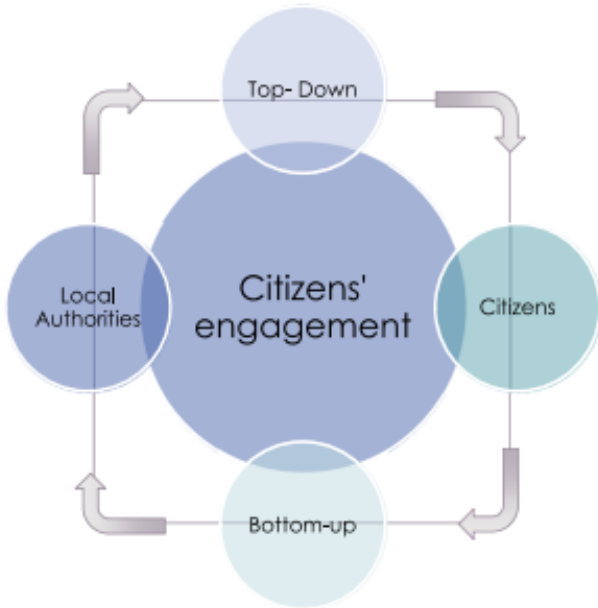
- **The willingness to participate**: endogenous to the individual. The lack of it might be rooted in low level of trust in the participation process or in low sense of belonging/preparedness to the direct involvement process.

- **The possibility to participate**: exogenous to the individual and determined by the institutions.

In order to achieve effective civil participation, public authorities must be aware of the community stakeholders, but also understand that it is not obligatory nor desirable to engage all stakeholders at all times.

Citizens, CSOs and civil society at large represent the stakeholders a local government organisation engages with. They have an interest for the local government organisation activity and for the area and community it operates within because they are being affected by it, or being able to influence it, in a positive or negative way.

In conclusion, there cannot be a valid participation process if there is no circle and commitment from the citizens and the local authorities, ensuring that both parts are, in one way or another, involved in the participation process and in the policy-making and decision-making processes.

2. CIVIL PARTICIPATION.

The civil participation is understood as the engagement of individuals, NGOs and civil society at large in decision-making processes by the public authorities.

Civil participation in political decision-making should seek to:

1. Collect and channel views of individual, directly or via civil society organizations (CSOs).
2. Substantive exchange of factual and evidence-based information.
3. Inform on the decision-making process and ensure that real public needs are met.

Getting people to participate is not a simple task. There are obstacles such as a lack of capacity to participate or a lack of engagement with political organisations or issues.

This might be caused by the fact that citizens, including politicians, are not always well-informed about the implication of participation and the role they can play in the democratic life of the community.

Without appropriate knowledge, civil society cannot actively integrate a participatory approach in their daily discourses, consequently, in local identity. Training programs are a key aspect for the proper and effective start of civil participation.

2.1. The Key Principles of Civil Participation Process.

1. Respect for:
- All actors as the basis for honest interaction and mutual trust.
- The independence of NGOs even those with non-mainstream opinions.
- The position of public authorities.

2. Openness, transparency and accountability, meaning that up -to-date, comprehensive information about the decision-making process and procedures for participation should be provided to the citizens.

3. Responsiveness, providing appropriate feedback, in the sense that adequate information should be provided in a timely manner at all stages allowing for substantive input from citizens as from the earliest possible stage of the decision-making process.

4. Non-discrimination and inclusiveness so that all voices, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, are heard and considered, ensuring the use of adequate means and channels.

5. Gender equality and equal participation of all groups including young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, minorities, etc., in the sense that public authorities should encourage the widest possible input.

6. Accessibility of the process of participation using clear language and appropriate means of participation, offline or online, and by any device.

2.2. Civil Participation in Decision-Making Tool.

Participation is not a one size fits all solution. Successful participation cannot be achieved with a standard methodology to be applied for all decision-making processes and towards all stakeholders.

While transparency, availability of information and trust-building must be ensured for and towards all stakeholders, effective participation implies a clear understanding of the context, the community and all actors.

Below is a summary of a framework intended to guide local authorities and practitioners, in a step-by-step approach, on how to design and implement context-based strategies to boost civil participation, based on the key dimensions that are relevant for participation: human dimension, social dimension, political dimension and economic dimension.

In this evaluation process, it should be emphasized that each context is different and what can be a positive variable under a given context, might not be such in another community.

The tool kit has been inspired by and recollects the following tools elaborated in the past:

- C.L.E.A.R Tool (2008).
- European Experience of Citizens´ Participation in Cross-Border Governance (2015).
- Guidelines of Civil participation (2017).
- Recommendations on the participation of citizens local public life (2018).

This tool is composed of two parts:

1. Community Evaluation: a component of Community evaluation turned into a self-assessment tool aiming to identify community-specific most relevant dimensions influencing participation.

2. Stakeholder Evaluation: a component for the mapping of each stakeholder in the framework of the decision-making process.

The table below presents in a visual way all the dimensions and variables taken into account in the decision-making tool when assessing a city/town.

	DIMENSION	VARIABLE	ELEMENTS
COMMUNITY EVALUATION	Social Capital	**Variable of identity: degree of citizens belonging to the community**	- Population arrived in the last 5 years. - Population that has left in the last 5 years. - Work commuters to other cities/towns (age 30-60). - Population that belongs to a minority.
		Variable related to demography and access to information	- Population under 30. - Population with internet access.
		Variables related to the existence and vitality of civil organization	- Active civil society organisations. - Annual membership in civil society organisations.
	Economic Capital	**Variable employment/unemployment**	- Per capita average income. - Unemployment rates. - Youth unemployment rate (below 30). - Female labour force.
		Variables social class and resources	- Households in potential economic difficulty. - Households in absolute poverty. - Self-employed workers that are women. - Self-employed workers that are below 30.
	Human Capital Variable	**Variable related to education attainment**	- Population (age 25-64) with at least a high school diploma. - Women (age 35-64) with at least a high school diploma.
		Variable related to both skill/knowledge of the citizens and resources available for capacity building	- Presence of civil education courses with compulsory school curricula in the last 15 years. - Professionalism. - Population with digital competences. - Population actively engaged in volunteering activities. - Presence of life-long learning possibilities. - Accessibility of life-long learning possibilities.
	Political Capital Variable	**Variable of trust and citizenship**	- Electoral turnout at last municipal election. - Population actively involved in political life. - Women actively involved in political live. - Representatives of minorities actively involved in political life. - Women councillors in the local administration. - Affluence of citizens to public political debates/events. - Representativeness of interest of vulnerable groups in the local policy making process. - Level of participation in previous participatory decision-making processes.

	VARIABLE	DIMENSION	ELEMENTS
STAKEHOLDER EVALUATION	**Relevance Variables**	**Social Dimension**	- Capacity of the stakeholders to involve other stakeholders. - Level of representativeness of the stakeholder of a specific category. - Level of participation of the stakeholder to local civil society activities. - Capacity of the stakeholder to start/influence change. - Level of acknowledgment of stakeholder among citizens.
		Economic Capital Dimension	- Capacity of the stakeholder to act as donor. - Capacity of the stakeholder to influence resources' allocation. - Capacity to facilitate access to existing exogenous resources. - Capacity of the stakeholder to provide in-kind support. - Influence of the stakeholder on the job market.
		Human Capital Dimension	- Knowledge/skills of the stakeholder on the topic. - Awareness of the topic by the stakeholder. - Capacity of the stakeholder to engage in public debate. - Capacity of the stakeholder to communicate through a range of different media. - Capacity of the stakeholder to access public venues.
		Political Capital Dimension	- Trust of the local administration towards the stakeholders. - Capacity of the stakeholder to engage further political actors. - Capacity of the stakeholder to engage with local authorities/stakeholders. - Political awareness of the stakeholder.
	Interest Variables	**Social Dimension**	- Interest for the stakeholder to engage in networking for the topic at stake. - Interest of the stakeholder to represent a specific category for the topic at stake. - Interest of the stakeholder to be involved further in civil society activism for the topic at stake. - Interest of the stakeholder to start/influence change. - Interest of the stakeholder to increase its own acknowledgment among citizens.
		Economic Capital Dimension	- Potential economic benefit for the stakeholder. - Willingness of the stakeholder to mobilize resources. - Willingness of the stakeholder to support access to existing exogenous resources. - Willingness of the stakeholder to provide in-kind support. - Interest of the stakeholder in increasing its own influence on the job market.
		Human Capital Dimension	- Interest of the stakeholder to share/increase own knowledge/skills on the topic. - Willingness of the stakeholder to share/increase awareness on the topic. - Willingness of the stakeholder to engage in public debate. - Willingness of the stakeholder to communicate through a range of different media. - Willingness of the stakeholder to access public venues.
		Political Capital Dimension	- Trust of the stakeholder towards the local administration. - Political interest of the stakeholder in the topic. - Willingness of the stakeholder to engage with local authorities. - Interest of the stakeholder to reach out to a wider public. - Willingness of the stakeholder to share/increase its own political awareness.

CATEGORIES	ELEMENTS
STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	
Institutional Actors	- Local and regional authorities concerning the local level of decision making (municipalities, municipal agencies, towns, cities…)
	- National authorities and national agencies such as government departments, ministries… of decision-making processes implying the need to consult at national level.
	- Cross-border institutions (EGTC) for decision-making process impacting at transnational level.
Civil Society	- Youth associations. - Women associations. - Associations representing the interest of minority groups. - Associations representing the interests of disadvantaged groups. - Volunteering associations. - Awareness raising associations. - Consumers' associations. - NGOs. - Trade unions.
Private Actors	- Trade associations (chambers of commerce, etc.). - Professional associations. - Private investors (foundations, trusts, etc.). - Entrepreneurs.

3. INTERCULTURAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS OBJECTIVE.

Intercultural citizen participation means that citizens are invited to participate because of their citizen status - taking into account the diversity that this implies.

Consequently, the fact of being an immigrant or belonging to a cultural minority would not imply any barrier to participation, nor would it happen, for example, for reasons of age, gender or sexual orientation.

According to the ICC Scoping Paper "Participation in Intercultural Cities" in order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to "build cities where all people have the skills, knowledge, confidence and opportunities to participate" in the decisions that worry them, regardless of their origins and residence status; and "where the public authorities are committed to a diverse participation".

3.1. The Three Principles of the Intercultural Approach.

The intercultural approach is based on three principles, which we apply to participation as follows:

The principle of equality is based on the assumption that an essential prerequisite to advance in interculturality is the respect for real equality of rights, duties and social opportunities for all citizens. That is, we have to implement ambitious policies in favour of equality and against situations of exclusion and discrimination. We will have to act by all means to overcome the specific obstacles encountered by groups with problems affecting participation.

The principle of recognition of diversity refers to the need to recognize, value and respect diversity understood in a broad sense. This principle goes beyond simple contemplation or passive tolerance, and emphasizes the need to make an effort to take advantage of the opportunities that derive from sociocultural diversity. In the case of participation policies, this principle implies the need to know diversity and monitor whether the diversity of the population is also reflected in them.

The principle of positive interaction is the one that properly defines the intercultural approach. From the recognition of our differences, we must focus our interest on the common and shared aspects that unite us. Coexistence needs to be developed, work from the everyday life and therefore the importance that, in parallel with social policies and the promotion of equal rights and responsibilities, we encourage contact, mutual understanding and dialogue as a way to reinforce the common sphere, as well as a feeling of belonging, which is the foundation of cohesion. In this sense, participatory processes can be an opportunity to encourage interaction between different people and groups, especially when their objectives are relevant to the participants.

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH		
DIVERSITY	**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**	**POSITVE INTERACTION**
Get to know and measure the diversity in the participatory processes.	*Eliminate the obstacles for full equal opportunities to participate.*	*Enhance the positive interaction though participatory processes.*
Recognition of diversity emphasizing on what we have in common as community.	Ensure access to our rights and compensate inequalities	Importance of the relationships between people of diverse sociocultural background and origins.

3.2. The Double Transversality of the Intercultural Approach.

An important principle of interculturality is transversality, since the intercultural approach is not understood as a policy, but as a way of making policies (Pinyol, 2013). From the point of view of a city council, this means permeating all the departments and all those responsible with a vision and a commitment, and applying a perspective of intercultural participation not only to coexistence policies, but also to urban planning, youth, culture or economic policies.

Furthermore, as UNESCO's "Inclusive policy lab" indicates, participation should not be limited to one part of the policy cycle, such as policy formulation, but should start already with problem identification, and continue in implementation and evaluation. In other words, intercultural participation must also be transversal with the rest of the phases of policy development.

4. KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE INTERCULTURAL CIVIL PARTICIPATION.

1. Impulse

Each political innovation needs an internal or external impetus to develop in the form of a challenge or a need that arises or is identified by the citizenry, civil society or the city council itself.

From the point of view of the city council, you will be able to innovate to the extent that we know how to listen and understand the new challenges of the people of the city.

Assessment questions

- *Does the city council collect and analyse data useful to identify emerging challenges for citizens?*
- *Does the municipality have links with organizations/entities that represent immigrant minorities in order to identify needs or challenges?*
- *Is local civil society trained to identify and communicate participation challenges?*

Experiences

Curing the Limbo and Co-Athens for more active neighbourhoods, Greece.

Implementing actor(s): Municipality of Athens, in partnership with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (UoA), the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)
Curing the Limbo proposes a holistic social inclusion model to address the issue of long-term forced inactivity" affecting a large part of the refugee population.

The programme supports refugees that have been granted asylum and currently live in Athens to overcome social exclusion. Beneficiaries receive enhanced priority integration support, ranging from a social rental agency, language courses and soft skills training, to case monitoring and psychosocial support. At the same time, participants can establish partnerships and connections with other locals and participate in citizen-led activities.
In order to favour collaboration between refugees and other locals, in 2013 the City of Athens created the Co-Athens Platform (SynAthina in Greek). Co-Athens empowers them to co-develop actions that have a positive impact on the local context, and also bring people together. The programme consists of open calls, a funding scheme for urban start-ups, workshops, ideation sessions, mentoring and capacity building, public debates, neighbourhood outreach events, and other activities.

As of today, the platform supports 9 collaborative projects with 40 participants working on a range of thematic priorities related to local needs: a neighbourhood initiative for the creation of a football academy, a green energy cooperative, an exchange food laboratory, theatre and music platform, a pilot documentary-based educational programme, and a training collective for street theatre and acrobatics.

Co-Athens coordination mechanism is based on a crowdsourcing model. A group of project officers and a manager coordinate the collectives through a structured framework. Each collective is then responsible for developing partnerships with refugees, neighbourhood communities, and local stakeholders.

Social Diagnosis for the Citizen in Cascáis, Portugal.

The municipality of Cascáis offers citizens a social diagnosis: an organization that regularly assesses the wellbeing of the residents of the city. The objective is to involve the citizens and organizations in the public discussions about the life conditions of Cascáis, creating a more participative and cohesive municipality.

The diagnosis involves the participation of 240 residents, independently of their nationality or ethnicity. Also, the project involves secondary students, youth linked to association movements, elders and academics, people with disabilities and people from diverse origins.

The project is divided in two phases:

- First, the citizens fill a questionnaire focused on a wide range of topics, such as health, housing, culture, leisure, income, employment, education, etc.

- Second, they are asked about their perceptions of the wellbeing in Cascáis, with questions such as: What is wellbeing for you? Or What would you do to ensure your wellbeing or the wellbeing of others?

More information: Quem Somos; Rede Social

2. Leadership and Commitment.

The city council's leadership and commitment are the key ingredients in linking the drive for a participatory process with its design and implementation. This is related to the recognition by the local institutions of the three principles of the political framework of participation that we mentioned above, in the form of, for example, formal decisions in the plenary sessions, official strategies of the city council or political speeches.

This commitment must result in the allocation of resources and the implementation of concrete measures.

Assessment Questions

- *Is there a formal commitment from the council to promote greater participation?*
- *Is there a recognition of the fact that immigrant minorities are part of the local citizenship and have the right to participate?*
- *Has the will to make a specific effort so that everyone can participate been expressed by responsible politicians?*
- *Have resources (staff, budget) been identified to increase participation in an inclusive way?*

<u>Experience</u>

Diversity in Youth Policy Programme, Netherlands.

Implementing actor(s): ZonMw; CBS (Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics); SCP (Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office); NJi (Dutch Youth Institute); NCJ (Dutch Centre for Youth Health); NVO (Dutch Association of Educators); NIP (Dutch Association of Psychologists); MBO-Raad (Dutch Council of Vocational Education); Verwey-Jonker Institute.

Migrant youth and their parents have unequal access to public services such as parenting support, youth support, and sports and cultural services, with negative implications for their growth and development. To counter this, the Diversity in Youth Policy Programme aimed to develop knowledge and expertise based on the cooperation between migrant youth and their parents and professionals and service providers. The programme was divided into three work packages, namely Intercultural Knowledge, Intercultural Craftsmanship, Strengthening of Local Youth Services and is meant to improve:

- Access to services, and early identification and prevention of issues in parenting.
- Existing mechanisms to reach migrant youth and their parents at an early stage in order to mitigate the damage caused by possible periods of neglect by support services.

In addition to migrant youth and their parents, the project targeted professionals, migrant organizations, municipalities, knowledge institutes and educators to build capacity and support existing service providers. The activities conducted included an awareness raising campaign, cultural sensitivity trainings, identification of barriers in services access, creation of a measurement tool for the intercultural quality of interventions.

Commitment for the Social Equity in the City of Seattle, USA.

In 2009, the city of Seattle launched an initiative of social justice and race for the equity in all the city. An objective of this strategy is that the participants of the public meetings that the city organized reflect the diversity of the population of the city.

The initiative is based on the following analysis: "despite the best efforts of the technical staff, the public funds invested and the good intentions of the local authorities, the minorities still see the efforts of the city as a waste of time or as something that does not concern them".

With the objective of overcoming this challenge, a group of tools were developed to enhance civil participation and commitment that would offer support to the technician of the city, to ensure that the different voices of the different communities of the city were involved in the planning process of the city. Service of free translation and interpretation in the meetings and public events was established.

More information: www.seattle.gov/rsji

3. Identify and Understand the Target Group(s)

Regarding the target group, we focus above all on those segments of population that, in previous processes, have not been involved. In order to improve the participation of these groups, we must first collect information about their life circumstances and make a diagnosis of obstacles (linguistic, informational, cultural, economic, etc.) that prevent their participation.

It is recommended to have a proactive attitude, seeking contact with the identified groups by reaching the neighbourhoods or specific places where they meet or even creating /reproducing similar places so that the persons belonging to these groups can be engaged and self-empowered.

In order to measure the fulfilment of our objectives, quantitative objectives can be set to measure the participation of these groups that we see underrepresented and define their fulfilment based on indicators of success of the process itself.

However, the lack of quantifiable information should not be an obstacle to achieving a more balanced representation of profiles that we know are not among those who are normally involved in participatory processes.

Assessment Questions

- *Has it been identified who does not usually participate?*
- *What sources of information exist on these groups?*
- *Are there previous experiences regarding the (non-) participation of these groups?*
- *Where can you make contact with these groups?*
- *Are there links with representatives of these groups?*

Experience

Citizenship and Immigration Board, Catalonia.

The Citizenship and Immigration Board is a consultation and participation body for migration policies promoted by the Departament d'Igualtat i Feminismes (DIFE) of the Generalitat of Catalonia. The Board was created by Decree 86/2008 and replaced the Immigration Advisory Council.

The Board aims to provide the Catalan autonomous government, local bodies, entities, unions, and employers with a space for dialogue and exchange of information regarding strategic cooperation in the field of immigration policies.

The objectives of the Citizenship and Immigration Board are as follows:
- encourage active participation of the immigrant population, returnees and other residents in monitoring all matters and policies linked to migration.

    ⁻ contribute to inclusion in Catalonia.

    ⁻ raise awareness about migration and non-discrimination.

    ⁻ formulate evidence-based proposals on how to respond to specific needs of migrant and returnees.

The Board is composed of several internal bodies, including the Plenary, the Standing Committee, Working Groups, and Territorial Tables. Currently, more than twenty entities are part of it.

Empowerment Spaces for the Youth: "Joves I Vida Quotidiana a Salt", Girona

The main objective of this initiative is to move forward in the construction of a common identity of "satencas" (citizens of Salt), to include the most amount of people that live in the city. To this purpose, a space for youth to debate was created, where they can share their thoughts and opinions freely, without been judged: a space of active listening and recognition of any limiting situation that they have experienced in their everyday life. The role of the professionals attending these meetings is purely as facilitators, always ensuring that discussions are raised autonomously.

4. Objectives

Defining objectives is a crucial step in sharing the commitment to participate. It is about defining the interest and relevance, and also the limits, of a participatory process in a specific, achievable, quantifiable, relevant way, and with defined deadlines.

We cannot expect a high and representative participation of the population in absence of significant commitment. Approving measures that affect the vital environment of the population, such as neighbourhood or school services, are examples of objectives whose relevance is easily understood by a majority of the population.

The power ceded to the citizenship can be a good indicator of the relevance of a participatory process, but not entirely so. If the goal is to achieve inclusive and diverse participation, or to create spaces for interaction, it may be necessary to lower one's expectations about the intensity of participation, because not all people have the same resources to get involved. The important thing is that objectives are defined clearly and transparently.

Assessment Questions

⁻ *Has the purpose of a participatory process been clearly defined?*

⁻ *Are these objectives relevant to the entire population?*

⁻ *Is significant decision-making power ceded to make it worthwhile to participate?*

⁻ *Has expectation control been taken into account?*

<u>Experience</u>

Participatory Budget in Bilbao, Spain.

In the participatory budgeting program in Bilbao, all registered citizens over 16 years can decide on where to allocate a total of 12 million euros each year, for the prioritization of works and improvement actions in the neighbourhoods. Citizens can vote as many proposals as they are interested in.

More information: www.bilbao.eus

Promotion of Political Participation in Geneva

In Geneva, the foreign electorate is traditionally less involved than the Swiss citizens.
The canton of Geneva with the municipality's involvement started a large awareness-raising and information campaign with the objective of communication to the targeted people (86,000 foreigners with the right to vote), the basics of the right to vote and to motivate them to participate.

The campaign was called "I have been living here for 8 years and I vote in my municipality" was exposed in public spaces and printed in seven languages. In addition, personalized letters were sent to all the people that had the requirements to be able to vote.
Some results of the campaign were:

- One of six foreigners acknowledged that they had the right to vote, compared to 1 of 4 for citizens of European origin.
- It helped to reduce the gap with the Swiss participation, from 16.3% to 13.7%.

5.   Channels and Communication Methods.

The identification of clear objectives, and of one or more underrepresented target groups, makes it possible to propose communication channels and methods suitable for reaching a more diverse audience.
The main idea is to use several channels simultaneously in order to reach a more diverse population. For example, some conventional but successful means are:

- Face to face communication: which allows the message to be adapted to the individual context.

- Proactive search for a large audience

- Outreaching the places related to the objective of the participatory process: when children get out of school to reach their families, on public transport if we want to plan its improvement, etc.

Assessment Questions

- *Are the objectives and their relevance communicated clearly and briefly?*
- *Have you considered adapting the message according to the different profiles?*
- *Are a variety of communication channels used?*
- *Are there non-traditional methods of outreach to engage people?*

Experience

Engage the Local Community to find Points of Contact in Auvergne-Rhône (France)

Soleil Devant is an organization based in Brivadois, a rural area of France. As part of the project "I have a dream", they created "Télé Regain", a participatory television that has proven to be an effective tool for engaging the community in discussions and debates. Through the project, the organization wanted to facilitate the debate on migration and the migration-related stereotypes rooted in this rural area.

In rural areas, some people tend to use stereotypes because they do not have the opportunity to meet migrants and learn more about migration-related issues.

To address this issue, Soleil Devant used participatory television to bring people together and discuss the issue. The programs interviewed representatives of local institutions, migrants, and residents, organizing discussion meetings to facilitate mutual knowledge and understanding of the factors that lead people to leave their country of origin. The message and language used are highly accessible to the public as the discussions and video broadcasts are created and produced by people living in the same context.

Soleil Devant organized and led training seminars to support participatory television activity. Gathering the debates, interviews and footage filmed during the execution of the project, lead to the elaboration of a webdoc titled "Odyssées" published in 2020.

The project offered migrants tools and communication spaces with which to tell their own story directly, without mediation.

Today Télé Regain continues being an active web participatory television project.

More information: https://tele-regain.fr

6. Participatory Tools

The tools, methods and techniques which will be used make up the core of a participatory process and are crucial to its success. Some of the key points to consider regarding tools:

- An open and accessible design, non-intimidating for the target group
- The support (including linguistic) caters to the different profiles of people
- The possibility of having a meaningful exchange with other participants, without excluding those who would like to participate.

The specific design of the participatory processes makes us aware of the fact that we are actually faced with several conflicting objectives:

- Allowing people to make complex and meaningful decisions.
- That as many people as possible participate: it is not a question of gathering the diversity of the city randomly, but to look for the multiple citizen voices that exist in the territory and that need to be heard in order to achieve greater support and legitimacy.

Designing a participatory process in a way that one can achieve a good balance between these two objectives is a major challenge.

Assessment Questions

- *Do the tools, spaces and methods of participation reflect, are suitable for and welcome all citizens?*
- *Do the places chosen for the participatory processes invite participation?*
- *Do "welcome" processes with information and instructions for new participants exist?*
- *Does the team of people driving the participation process include people whose profile corresponds to those we want to attract to participate?*
- *Are issues/barriers (language, location, time, transportation, child care, food, incentives, appeals, power dynamics, etc..) considered throughout the process?*
- *Are multiple forms of contributing with comments and opinions (feedback) offered?*
- *Are there different levels of involvement for different participant profiles?*
- *Is an exchange of positions and a real deliberative process allowed?*

Experience

Involving the Public Design of a Public Park in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In the design of a park located in the multicultural neighbourhood of Norrebro, the objective was to reflect the entire population living in the area and, at the same time, involve them in the design of the park. Thus, the neighbours were asked directly what elements (benches, litter bins, trees, playgrounds, signage) they would like to see in the park.

As a result, the park has swings from Iraq, a fountain from Morocco, sand from Palestine, a boxing ring from Thailand, benches, map posts and neon signs from different parts of the world. The variety that can be found in this public space reflects the diverse population of the area, the experiences and background they have brought to their new country.

Diverse Participation in the Definition of Priorities for the Integral Plan "Imagine Boston 2030"

To define the priorities of "Imagine Boston 2030" plan in an inclusive way, an extensive work was done to involve the maximum of neighbours, asking each one of them to identify their main priorities and concerns. The citizens of Boston responded the following: house access, an education that opens possibilities and an efficient and reliable transport.

Via this participative process, the answers of 14000 people were collected/gathered through traditional methods such as discussion panels, visioning kits, "open houses", workshops in different communities, online maps and surveys through text messaging. Around 9000 answers are gathered by the team working at street level. These teams, in addition to reflecting the diversity of the city, used different techniques such as games to draw attention and to be able to attend markets, parks and other public places where the citizens gather.

7.   Evaluation, Feedback and Learning

At this final point, we seek to assess/evaluate the diversity of participation and share back the results, that is, to explain what is done with the results of the participatory process.

The feedback has to be as inclusive as the participation and, to this purpose, diverse communication channels have to be established, relying on the network of actors and citizens (all) that has been created during the process.

At the same time, it is the beginning of a new cycle of participation since conclusions have to be drawn about the degree to which we have met our participation objectives, what did not work, and how participation can be improved in future processes.

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Assessment Questions

- *To what degree have the objectives of the participatory process been achieved?*
- *To what degree have the diverse objectives of participation been met?*
- *What conclusions do we draw from the strengths and weakness of the participatory process in order to improve its reach next time?*
- *Have events and communication channels been identified to return the results of the participatory process and ensure that they reach everyone?*

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<u>Experience</u>

II Intercultural Plan - Civil Participation and Social Support.

In evaluating the I Plan of Diversity management, as in the design of the II Plan, a key factor was the participation which has been used not only to inform the neighbours regarding the new process, but also to make the decision of challenges and priorities participatory as well. To enrich the elaboration process of the II Plan, a participatory model was put in place that involved all relevant agents at local level. Specifically, in this process the district municipal councils and the local immigration council have participated through meetings, as also neighbours of the municipality through 506 questionnaires administered in the municipality offices of the city and through the website, with the participation of key local organizations involved in the management of intercultural diversity of the city, as also the citizens in general.

This section of the report is a translation to English of a part of the document titled "The development of intercultural process at local level", elaborated by Kaleidos.Red and RECI (Ciudades Interculturales).
<u>"El desarrollo de procesos participativos interculturales en el ámbito local"</u>

5. DIVERSITY INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATION PROCESS.

Diverse societies, wishing to avoid that a large share of their population is excluded from the democratic process, have two main options:

1) National competence: include newcomers, understood as migrants and refugees namely, into the group of citizens by facilitating their access to citizenship/nationality.
2) Local public authorities' competence: explore and test alternative forms of participation that would facilitate access of non-citizens to civic and political rights, and contribute to the local, political and social life of the community.

Both options can be complementary and do not exclude each other. Local authorities are particularly well-placed to test, create and enable opportunities for people of different backgrounds and experiences to come together to make, shape and influence the decisions that affect their lives.

An important step has been to take in account diversity in the definition of citizen:

- Any person (including, where appropriate, foreign residents) belonging to a local community. Belonging to a local community involves the existence of a stable link between the individual and that community.

5.1. Challenges for Intercultural and Inclusive Participation in Diverse Communities.

Many cities that are part of the Intercultural cities network have already adopted and implemented serious and fruitful steps in this sense. And yet, there are a **few challenges and obstacles that need to be addressed, for instance**:

1) The low levels of participation of migrants, refugees, minority groups, and of people with a foreign background in the political life, even when the legislation provides them with the relevant rights.
2) The normalization of hate speech, so as the growing populism, and the spreading of xenophobic public speeches.
3) The increasing lack of trust of citizens in public institutions, which also materializes in a lack of interest for politics and participation.
4) The spreading of online collaborative platforms that, though undoubtedly opened the opportunity for citizens to influence the power through petitioning, policy initiatives, policy evaluation, fact-checking and crowdsourcing, actually lead to diminished participation transformed into a sort of easy civic engagement without real commitment.

The working groups held in Tenerife in 2018 with the ICC thematic seminar identified two major challenges shared by all the cities participating in the seminar:

- **Bureaucratic inertia**: A much discussed issue was that within the public administration the capacity to think out of the box is rarely rewarded, rather is often seen as a disturbance of daily routine. Whereas innovation is the driving force in the private sector. Organisational flexibility can indeed be very challenging for public administrations. The higher the level of government, the more difficult it is to manage public policies in a flexible manner. Local authorities can be more reactive and pragmatic, for example by setting ad-hoc structures (advisory groups, consultative bodies, etc.) that function with less hierarchical and more informal rules. Rigid bureaucratic procedures leave little room for new ideas to emerge.

- **Mutual trust:** to be able to talk about diversity participation, migrants must have enough self-confidence and sufficient trust in the host society. On an individual level, people with a migrant background often face a number of additional barriers to public participation compared to the indigenous population, such as:
  a) Lack of awareness/understanding of how participatory mechanisms impact public policy outcomes.
  b) Limited access to information and resources because of the language barriers.
  c) Lack of experience in social participation.

All these factors inhibit participation and make it difficult for migrants to fully understand the issues at stake, voice their concerns and formulate proposals.

6. METHODOLOGIES FOR CIVIL PARTICIPATION.

Based on recent policy briefings published by the ICC network, two methodologies to ensure participation can be considered.

6.1. Assembly Methodology.

The first assemblies date back to 5th century BC in the Ancient Greece, where decision on difficult topics were made by taking time to consider a wide range of evidence and discuss extensively on the merits of different proposals and positions.

The idea of citizens assemblies or citizens juries is being implemented in cities all around the world, and it is being used in countries like Ireland regarding the laws on abortion, climate change policies in France…

The assembly methodology is based on horizontal relationships and develops a decision-making based on consensus, in which all members are granted the same power of influence and decision. In an assembly, the groups participate in all the stages of the process, from the analysis or discussion phase, conflict resolution and decision-making, but it must be done in an orderly and clear way for everyone.

6.1.1. Advantage of the Assembly Method:

- Involves a representative sample of residents (a mini-public) rather than official representatives of specific groups who can be seen as biased, elitist or disconnected with reality.

- Produces positions/recommendations/decisions which are evidence-based, well thought-through and taken with a high level of consensus, representing a solid basis for decision-making.

- Generates strong engagement and bonding among the members of the assembly, which also spread through the broader community through peer contacts.

- It is an example of democratic participation and inclusion of diverse participants, including migrants, in negotiating a common understanding of challenges and making decisions about issues of common concern.

- Good communication about the work of the assembly helps society understand and accept its decisions and arguments in times of growing mistrust in experts and politicians.

- While the assembly method shows similarities with other approaches such as scientific symposia, dialogue tables, focus groups and action/participatory research, it is more democratic, structured, and comprehensive in nature.

- If we are seeking for qualitative information, a survey can be a suitable option, however it always involves an external view on a community. Conversely, a citizen assembly will have an enduring impact and make the communication of the results in a credible way much easier.

- It truly transforms the public perceptions and attitudes to migration and its impact on society.

- It facilitates the development of a shared vision for the future of the community by:
    1. Hearing all voices.
    2. Accommodating pluralistic perspectives.
    3. Negotiating a common position.

6.1.2. How do Cities Assemblies work

- Timeframes of assemblies: the whole process can take several weeks or even months.

- Participants: between 20 and 100 residents are randomly selected. The normal size of a city assembly would be between 20 and 50 participants, national-level assemblies may reach 100 participants.

  The participants are normally recruited from the voters register; however, it is important that other lists are considered to ensure that the sample is representative of the population as a whole in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, income and education. Candidates can reject/decide not to participate, they will be replaced with others until the group is formed.

- Fee and services: it is recommended that the participants are paid for their time, to compensate for losses of income and to highlight the value of their work, therefore an amount of money per session will be provided, along with baby-sitting services and simultaneous interpretation services according to the context.

- Organizers and moderators should be previously trained to ensure that they are representing the diversity of the city.

- The assemblies should interview a wide range of witnesses and experts of the city: for example: managers, social workers, small business owners, NGOs representatives, police officers, school principals, refugees, artists… so the assemblies' participants will explore perceptions, facts, ideas, figures, stories… related to the topic/s that they are analysing.

- The discussion in assemblies' assessments (conclusions) will need to be well documented and communicated to ensure that the information is clear and accessible to all the citizens.

- The resulting vision, strategy and policy recommendations need to be shared:

  - Submitted to the city council and existing consultative bodies.
  - Discussed with the local community by using the available media channels or by organizing neighbourhood meetings.

6.2. Appreciative Inquiry Methodology.

Any participatory process involves meaningful interactions within a group of people. The Appreciative Inquiry approach is a tool useful to create conditions in which people are supported in the communication process and in their teamwork towards shared goals. This in turn can help the group find new solutions. The Appreciative Inquiry approach also helps participants address a wide range of questions: What reality and future do we want to build? What meaning do we want to give to what is happening around us? How should we communicate with others regarding our goals?

Appreciative Inquiry is an action-centred methodology, based on a positive mindset, which can help intercultural cities establish a collaborative process. It aims to establish a shared vision of the future, based on the strengths of the city and its past achievements. While a traditional problem-solving mentality focuses on shortcomings, Appreciative Inquiry builds on the positive. It emphasizes what already works

and explores the potential to expand that success given the available resources. It aims to accelerate learning and stimulate creativity, and to make everyone involved more flexible and more confident about change. Throughout, the approach applies an intercultural lens, focused on inclusivity.

An intercultural city can use the Appreciative Inquiry methodology with a view to build a sustainable participatory process in a diverse society. This process involves five stages – the 5 Ds :

- Definition stage: participants affirmatively select the topic they want to study (no problem)
- Discovery stage: focuses on identifying the resources that will enrich the process, highlighting and illuminating the best aspects of the group in any given situation, as well as participants´ experiences in different areas of life.
- Dream-building stage: focuses on the creation of a common vision among participants.
- Design stage: the group works together to plan a realistic series of steps by which to realize their shared dream.
- Destination: is the final phase of the approach, focused on building participants' commitment to achieve their aspirations and aims.

This is a summary of a policy brief "Building meaningful public participation in Intercultural cities, all the information and checklist and recommendations in the following link:
www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/new-policy-brief-on-participation-in-intercultural-cities

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