



INTERCULTURAL CITIES
BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS



Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme Advisory Group

Second meeting

13 November 2023 – Bilbao, Spain

Summary report and follow up actions

1. Introduction to the purpose of the meeting and Advisory Group objectives

The objective of the meeting was for the ICC Advisory Group to take stock of the actions implemented and pending since its 1st meeting (Strasbourg, 4-5 July 2023). Members advanced with the completion of pending tasks, discussed the priorities identified for 2024-2025 through a survey filled in by cities/networks and prepared the presentation of their work at the ICC Annual Coordinators meeting the following days (14-15 November 2023). Members were also reminded of the overall objectives of the Advisory Group (Appendix III) which remain valid for the whole duration of its Terms of Reference (ToR).

The Advisory Group welcomed Myfanwy Mogford, Manager Community Health and Wellbeing, who replaced Vesna Haracic as representative of the city of Salisbury, Australia.

2. State of Play

During its first meeting in July 2023, the Advisory Group discussed a number of follow-up actions to operationalise the objectives assigned by its ToR. The summary of this discussion is available in the [meeting report](#). Due to time limitations and the need to prepare for the ICC Annual Coordinators meeting, the Advisory Group continued its work on the follow up actions already in progress rather than tackling new objectives.

- **Objective 1 – Guide the strategic and operational framework of the ICC programme and provide a shared (Council of Europe Secretariat – member cities) governance to it**

The ICC Secretariat provided feedback on the two proposals made in July 2023 by the Advisory Group, regarding the possibility for cities to designate a group of people rather than a single person, to ensure the coordination of ICC-related activities. As the “mission description” of ICC City Coordinators is an internal document of the ICC programme, the Secretariat can amend it as suggested and circulate it again as relevant.

Concerning the possibility of adding this “mission description” as an Appendix to the Statement of Intent (SoI) which cities sign when joining the ICC programme, this action would require a longer administrative procedure, as the Statement of Intent is an official document not produced by the ICC Unit itself. The ICC Secretariat has therefore advised not to move forward with this idea.

Agreed follow-up actions:

Agreed actions	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
The ICC coordinators mission description will be updated with a set of suggestions to coordinate ICC-related activities as a group. E.g. set up intercultural working groups; appoint liaison officers in each department; ensure interculturalism is spread transversally by making use of existing inter-departmental units/ meeting /structures. The updated document will be shared with ICC city and network Coordinators.	January 2024	ICC Secretariat
As the Statement of Intent (Sol) is an official document that is not prepared by the ICC team, the ICC Secretariat considers that the administrative burden necessary to add the ICC coordinators mission description to the Sol as an appendix would offset the benefits of the action.	N/A	N/A

- **Objective 2 – Assess needs with the view to prioritising services and tools to be offered to ICC members**

The three members of the ICC Advisory Group who had volunteered in July to record videos showcasing real stories about good practices or changes that took place thanks to knowledge of interculturalism, shared the status of completion of this action. One finalised video was shown during the meeting. It was agreed to align the following videos to this one. The city of Salisbury also offered to look for a compatible video among the ones they have already produced and share it with the Group. The language to be used in these videos was also discussed and it was highlighted that words such as “interculturalism” and “intercultural”, if used, should be explained, as the majority of the city’s population may not be familiar with this vocabulary.

As a complement to the videos, and following the recommendation to develop indicators to measure the impact and benefits of interculturalism, the Advisory Group had proposed, during its first meeting in July, to create a list of inspirational questions to survey the population of ICC members. The ICC Secretariat started compiling this list using the surveys that the cities of Bradford (United Kingdom) and Stavanger (Norway) shared. In addition, the questions of a survey used in the framework of an EU/CoE project in Cyprus were also added to the list. This first draft was discussed during a separate session of this meeting. A request for further cities to contribute to this list will be sent out after the ICC Annual Coordinators meeting to collect further inspirational questions.

Finally, the challenge of explaining fluctuations in the collected data was also rediscussed and the idea of designing guidelines for city officials and politicians was confirmed. The Advisory Group has offered to share its experience first, to inspire other members of the ICC programme.

Agreed follow-up actions

Agreed actions	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Short videos sharing real stories about good practices or changes that took place thanks to knowledge of interculturalism are currently being produced by ICC Advisory Group members. One is ready, another is being finalised and the third one has to be recorded.	First half of 2024	Bradford Stavanger Reykjavik Salisbury With the support of the ICC Secretariat
A draft list of inspirational questions cities can use to carry out their own surveys has been prepared.	November 2023	ICC Secretariat
Ask ICC cities to contribute with further questionnaires, if they have.	November 2023	
A final list of inspirational questions will be drafted and published on the ICC website (page to be created, see next action).	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat with the support of the Advisory Group
Create a webpage with the recorded videos, the list of inspirational questions, and the existing resources on participatory processes.	Ongoing in 2024, back-to-selected pages of the ICC website	ICC Secretariat with the support of the experts hired to review the website
The Secretariat can include in the 2024 planning for the ICC programme the development of a guide on FAQs and possible replies. This guidance document would collect the most difficult or unsettling questions asked to city officials by politicians and other departments, or by the media to politicians, and compile tips for possible replies to defend/promote the intercultural inclusion work and model.	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat
Advisory Group members will share some examples of questions and answers that could be included, prior to their 3 rd meeting, scheduled for May 2024.	End of April 2024	

The ICC Secretariat reiterated the difficulty in engaging Mayors in ICC-led activities. This is both a problem of available time and interest. Language difficulties were also mentioned, i.e. Mayors not speaking English. Several possibilities were discussed, such as a policy lab or biannual meetings back-to-back with other events. In the end, it was agreed that, in order to measure Mayors' interest, a concrete outline for dedicated services and tools should be designed first.

Agreed follow-up actions

Agreed action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Develop a concrete outline for services/tools for Mayors.	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat with the support of the Advisory Group

A proposal of the Advisory Group to assess needs by surveying ICC members about possible 2024-2025 programme priorities was discussed under a separate point of the agenda (i.e. Priorities 2024-2025 identified by cities/networks).

The annual survey has also been updated following comments from the Advisory Group. The improved survey will be sent to all ICC coordinators and coordinators of national ICC networks after the Annual Coordinators meeting (14-15 November 2023). As suggested, respondents will be able to download a copy of their replies.

Finally, Advisory Group members reiterated the importance of continuing organising regular exchanges in person. This is also to foster intercity collaboration, as mentioned by members in the 2024-2025 priorities. The idea of a study visit in Bradford for 2024 was rediscussed and the city of Bradford shared that they have been nominated UK City of Culture for 2025, which may therefore be a better year to organise a study visit in Bradford. The possibility of inviting ADI-INT members to the study visit was also discussed and it was felt that the practical organisation may pose a certain challenge due to conflicting dates.

Agreed follow-up actions

Agreed actions	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Respondents to the Annual survey will be able to download a copy of their replies after submission.	Survey to be launched in December 2023	ICC Secretariat
Increase opportunities for in person meetings, starting with study visits.	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat

- **Objective 3 – Ensure that the communication around the ICC programme, including its tools and services, is consistent, easy to access and clear, so to increase the programme’s visibility, uptake, and utility**

In its management response to the evaluation, the ICC Unit has accepted to restructure its website in order to better communicate on the ICC programme and ensure that resources are available to different audiences. At its first meeting in July 2023, the Advisory Group felt the restructuring of the website was enough to address the recommendation. For this, two actions are ongoing: 1) a revision of the good practices page, including layout and text of each good practice and layout of the overall webpage; 2) revision of selected pages of the ICC website, e.g. “Resources”. For this second task, two experts have been contracted to make a proposal on how to present the ICC resources in a more user-friendly way. At their meeting in July, the Advisory Group was asked to provide feedback on the current configuration of website pages. The comments received until October 2023 have been shared by the ICC Secretariat with the experts working on the website. It is worth mentioning that the ICC Unit does not have any team member solely dedicated to the website or even to communication, and therefore resources are limited.

At the first meeting of the Advisory Group (July 2023), it was also agreed that additional clarity can be provided by linking the resources produced by the ICC Programme with a broader initiative, e.g. an event or a study visit. The ICC Secretariat tested this idea during the second day of the Annual Meeting of ICC Coordinators 2023 by proposing a training session on how to organise an intercultural competences training. This session was organised with the aim of linking the latest ICC publication, the [Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence](#) with a practical explanation of how a training can be implemented in different cities and networks. Feedback on this session has been requested to participants as part of the general feedback form of the Annual Meeting of ICC Coordinators 2023. The ICC Secretariat will analyse the answers and discuss with the Advisory Group the best way forward.

Finally, clarity around the ICC programme, its tools and services, should be provided to new members, as well as to cities planning to join the programme, via welcoming sessions, once a year. ‘Refresher’ sessions could be envisaged for long-term members who wish to update their knowledge.

Agreed follow-up actions

Agreed actions	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Revision of ICC website good practices and “resources” pages.	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat
Feedback of a session on how to organise an intercultural competences training, linked with the ICC latest publication, will be analysed by the ICC Secretariat and discussed with the Advisory Group.	Ahead of the May 2024 meeting of the Advisory Group	ICC Secretariat with the support of the Advisory Group.
Organise a welcome session (online) once a year for cities joining or planning to join the programme and for new staff members in the municipality who will be involved in ICC, e.g. how it works, membership fees, functioning of index visits.	Starting in 2024 and repeating every year	ICC Secretariat

- **Objective 4 – Identify areas in which additional capacity building is needed and – where appropriate – explore ways to secure additional funding to the programme**

To better identify in which areas additional capacity building is needed, and as discussed during the first Advisory Group meeting (July 2023), the ICC Secretariat added questions to the annual survey to know if member cities need: 1) support before starting the index; 2) support after the index process to draft strategies; 3) intercultural competences training.

The Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI) updated the group about its work on a model to draft strategies at the local level. A RECI working group is being created to discuss the minimum criteria, but no concrete output has been produced for the time being. In order to avoid duplications, the Advisory Group agreed that it would be wiser to wait and see the result of this work instead of starting a parallel process. Once a draft model has been produced, the ICC Secretariat, in co-operation with the Advisory Group, will discuss ways of adapting it to different local contexts.

Agreed follow-up actions

Agreed actions	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Collect input on additional capacity building needs of members via the annual survey.	Dec 2023 - First quarter 2024	ICC Secretariat
Consider providing a template to design strategy in the city – i.e. a model strategy (the step by step guide and model framework should be used when designing the template).	The ICC Spanish network - RECI - is currently working on this and will share an update on its work by the next meeting (May 2024)	ICC Spanish network

- **Objective 6 – Ensure member cities’ participation in institutional communication by drafting, agreeing and issuing communications on behalf of the ICC network and/or by addressing public events in the name of the network**

The idea of having the Advisory Group issuing statements on behalf of the ICC network at specific occasions, as discussed at the first meeting of the Advisory Group (July 2023), was piloted until the end of October 2023. This test was requested by the Advisory Group members in order to have further clarity on the task itself and on the type of messages they would be asked to endorse/sign. An opportunity for such message presented itself on 31 October, World Cities Day, and the Advisory Group agreed to sign a [short message](#) to mark the day.

It was agreed that this practice can continue for similar messages (non-political) and that the ICC Secretariat would provide a list of such opportunities beforehand for the year 2024. Members will always be asked for their permission before the message is published.

Agreed follow-up action

Agreed action	Timeframe for implementation	Responsible body
Prepare a preliminary list of days on which it would be useful for the ICC Advisory Group to issue a statement and share it with the Advisory Group.	Ongoing in 2024	ICC Secretariat and Advisory Group
The ICC Advisory Group will continue to sign non-political messages, as appropriate.	Ongoing in 2024	Advisory Group with the support of the ICC Secretariat.

3. Priorities 2024-2025 identified by cities/networks

In order to operationalise the overall aim of Objective 2 on assessing needs, and upon a proposal of the Advisory Group, on 11 September 2023, the ICC Secretariat launched a survey on priorities for the ICC Programme for 2024 and 2025. The survey was sent to all ICC coordinators and coordinators of national ICC networks, who had until 8 October 2023 to fill it in. 14 replies were received and compiled for the attention of the Advisory Group. The identified priorities are:

- Anti-discrimination;
- Intercultural competence training;
- Active citizenship and participation;
- Communication and awareness raising.

“Intercity collaboration” was also mentioned as a way of working that can be used across priorities, rather than as a priority per se.

The Advisory Group agreed not to go into a further operationalisation of these suggestions, but rather to present them to the Annual meeting of ICC Coordinators as mentioned in the survey. This suggestion was taken up on 14 November. The ICC Secretariat will be working on operationalising these priorities in 2024 and 2025.

4. Follow-up to the first meeting

a) Annual survey

Following the recommendations received by the evaluation of the ICC programme carried out in 2022 and of the Advisory Group (see agreed actions under Objective 2 and 4 above), the following paragraph has been added as part of the introduction to the annual survey:

“Please note that, should you not have the time to double check all answers with your colleagues, replies can be based on the individual knowledge of the respondent.

Upon submission, you will be able to download the answers you entered in a PDF format. Please choose this option if you would like to get a copy of your answers for your files."

The following two questions were also added:

"Would your city need support at any of the following stages/on the following topics?

- before starting the ICC index process*
- after the ICC index process to draft strategies*
- intercultural competences training"*

"In the year 2023, have there been any changes in your city that have been influenced and/or inspired by the ICC programme?"

The Advisory Group agreed on the formulation of these additions. The ICC Secretariat will send out the revised annual survey in December 2023.

b) List of inspirational questions for surveys to cities

A first draft of the list of inspirational questions was compiled by the ICC Secretariat and presented to the Advisory Group (see also agreed actions under Objective 2). The current compilation was produced using the surveys the cities of Bradford (United Kingdom) and Stavanger (Norway) had shared. In addition, the questions of a survey used in the framework of an EU/CoE project in Cyprus were also added to the list.

After discussion, the Advisory Group was of the opinion that three surveys might not be representative enough and other ICC members should be asked whether they have further questions to share. The ICC Secretariat will send out a request after the Annual meeting of ICC Coordinators meeting (14-15 November 2023).

5. Preparation of the ICC Annual Coordinators meeting

The ICC Advisory Group prepared a presentation of its work up to end of October 2023 to the Annual meeting of ICC Coordinators. Gemma Pinyol-Jiménez, Coordinator of RECI - Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities, agreed to give this presentation.

6. Working methods

The Advisory Group reviewed the working methods decided upon at the first meeting (July 2023). It confirmed that the ICC Secretariat should continue chairing Advisory Group meetings and that two meetings per year are adequate. The absence from their offices during 3 consecutive days (1 for the Advisory Group meeting and 2 for the Annual meeting of ICC Coordinators) was not seen as a problem.

The ICC Secretariat recalled that the next meeting would be online, as per the ToR. Two face-to-face meetings were exceptionally organised in 2023 for team-building purposes, as the group had just been created.

The Advisory Group expressed the need of having a shared space to work collaboratively, e.g. a Sharepoint or Google Drive. The ICC Secretariat confirmed this could be set up. The use of voting buttons and "reactions" options when sharing emails was also proposed to decrease the volume of messages shared.

The ICC Secretariat will test voting buttons, where appropriate, in future communications and the Advisory Group members can answer through reactions if the question asked requires a yes/no answer.

Finally, Advisory Group members asked to be further involved in the design of the agenda of the Annual meeting of ICC Coordinators. The ICC Secretariat confirmed that the Advisory Group can be consulted.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Advisory Group should take place online in May/June 2024. The challenge of finding a common slot between time zones was discussed. It was proposed to try over a week during, ideally, 3 slots of 2 hours each in the morning CET, so that the time is also convenient in Australia. The preferred date would be the last week of May 2024. The ICC Secretariat will send out a Doodle form to collect availabilities.

The ICC Advisory Group has agreed for its next meeting to focus on Recommendation 15 of the ICC Programme evaluation, under the umbrella of Objective 1 of the Advisory Group: “ensure clarity and transparency around membership fees” of the ICC Programme and, by extent, around membership itself.

8. AOB

The Advisory Group agreed to start looking at the ICC programme from an environmental point of view, including during the organisation of events. The city of Bradford has offered to provide guidance on this.

APPENDIX I. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme Advisory Group 2nd meeting Bilbao, Spain, 13 November 2023 Agenda

Purpose of the meeting: The second meeting of the ICC Advisory Group will take stock of the actions taken since the last meeting and those still pending. Members will discuss priorities identified by cities/networks for 2024-2025, prepare for the ICC Coordinators meeting (Bilbao, 14-15 November 2023) and advance with the completion of other pending tasks.

Chair: Giulia Bianchini, Senior Project Officer, ICC Programme

9:30 – 9:40 Welcoming words and objectives of the 2nd Advisory Group meeting

Thorsten Afflerbach, Head of the Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Programmes Division

9:40 – 11:00 State of play

The Secretariat will present the actions taken since last meeting and the elements that are still pending. The Summary Report and Follow up actions of last meeting will be used as a guideline.

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 12:30 Priorities 2024-2025 identified by cities/networks

Presentation of the replies to the survey, discussion about priorities to present to the coordinators.

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 – 15:00 Follow-up to the first meeting

- Annual survey: discuss the revised list of questions.
- Inspirational questions for surveys to cities: discuss questions from Bradford and Stavanger and how to finalise this action.

15:00 – 16:30 Preparation of the ICC Annual Coordinators meeting

Prepare Advisory Group contribution to the ICC coordinators' meeting and appoint rapporteur.

16:30 – 17:00 Assessment of working methods and date of the next meeting

- Discuss Advisory Group working methods and assess whether a revision is required.
- Agree on the date of the next meeting which will be held online in May/June 2024.

17:00 End of the meeting

APPENDIX II. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Advisory Group members:

- ❖ Barry Cusack, Project officer, Bradford for everyone, City of Bradford, United Kingdom
- ❖ Gemma Pinyol-Jiménez, Coordinator of RECI - Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities
- ❖ Gregory Jaquet, Delegate for Foreigners, Head of the Multicultural Cohesion Department, Neuchâtel state, Switzerland
- ❖ Ingrid Hauge Rasmussen, Special adviser in diversity and inclusion, City of Stavanger, Norway
- ❖ Joanna Marcinkowska, Project manager, Human Rights and Democracy Office, City of Reykjavik, Iceland
- ❖ Silvia Carballo Paz, Head of department of Gender Equality, Development Cooperation, Cultural Diversity and Human Rights, San Sebastian, Spain
- ❖ Myfanwy Mogford, Manager, Community Health and Wellbeing, City of Salisbury, Australia

Council of Europe/ICC Secretariat:

- ❖ Thorsten Afflerbach, Head of Inclusion and Anti-discrimination programmes, Anti-Discrimination Department
- ❖ Giulia Bianchini, Senior Project Officer, Intercultural Cities Unit, Inclusion and Anti-discrimination programmes, Anti-Discrimination Department
- ❖ Célia Charre, Assistant, Intercultural Cities Unit, Inclusion and Anti-discrimination programmes, Anti-Discrimination Department
- ❖ Srdjan Radojevic, Assistant, Intercultural Cities Unit, Inclusion and Anti-discrimination programmes, Anti-Discrimination Department

APPENDIX III. OBJECTIVES OF THE ADVISORY GROUP

1. Guide the strategic and operational framework of the ICC programme, and provide a shared (Council of Europe Secretariat – member cities) governance to it;
2. Assess needs with the view to prioritise services and tools to be offered to ICC members;
3. Ensure the communication around ICC programme, including its tools and services, is consistent, easy to access and clear, so to increase the programme's visibility, uptake, and utility;
4. Identify areas on which additional capacity building is needed and - where appropriate – explore ways to secure additional funding to the programme;
5. Facilitate a more systematic follow-up with member cities to highlight progress in the implementation of intercultural strategies and promote positive changes influenced by the ICC programme;
6. Ensure member cities' participation in institutional communication by drafting, agreeing and issuing communications on behalf of the ICC network and/or by addressing public events in the name of the network.