



**INTERCULTURAL CITIES**  
BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS

## INTERCULTURAL CITIES KEY TERMINOLOGY

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### ➤ The Basics

**Equality:** The equal respect and access to rights and opportunities for every individual, in dignity and without discrimination

**Diversity:** a range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical value systems, national origin, and political beliefs<sup>1</sup>. Diversity is an intrinsic feature of human communities, and a source of resilience, vitality and innovation, if managed in a respectful and competent way.

**Diversity advantage:** Diversity advantage is both a concept and an approach. It premises that diversity can be a source of innovation bringing valuable benefits to organisations, communities and businesses, when managed with competence and in the spirit of inclusion. The diversity advantage is also the result of policies that unlock the potential of diversity while minimising the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity.

**Interaction:** Supported by the contact theory, interaction is about creating conditions for positive and constructive everyday encounters across people of different backgrounds and lifestyles in a climate of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation.

**Human rights:** rights that universally belong to all human beings. Human rights are indivisible, inalienable and universal and respect the equality and dignity of each individual<sup>2</sup>.

*(Effective) Equality, Diversity (advantage), and positive Interaction are the three core principles of the intercultural inclusion policy approach promoted by the Intercultural Cities programme<sup>3</sup>.*

**Intercultural integration:** the result of a two-way process based on [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)1 on intercultural integration](#) and on the Intercultural Cities policy model, consisting in the effective, positive and sustainable management of diversity, on the basis of reciprocal and symmetrical recognition, under an overarching human rights framework.

**Intercultural city:** an intercultural city has people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats prejudice and discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for all by adapting its governance structures, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population, without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In partnership with business, civil society and public service professionals, the intercultural city develops a range of policies and actions to encourage mixing and interaction across cultural, gender, age and other differences and to stimulate the participation of all residents in social life and decision that affect their everyday life. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already

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<sup>1</sup> See the [Intercultural Cities Step by Step Guide](#).

<sup>2</sup> See Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

<sup>3</sup> See the [Intercultural Cities Step by Step Guide](#).

exist in the city. The high level of trust and social cohesion this leads to helps to prevent conflicts and violence, increases policy effectiveness and make the city attractive for people and investors alike<sup>4</sup>.

**Cultural diversity:** an essential condition of human society, a dominant European characteristic and a fundamental political objective in the process of European construction resulting in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products<sup>5</sup>.

*The Art of mixing: Intercultural Cities motto. The Art of mixing is about finding the right dosage of Equality, Diversity and Interaction in each specific policy field and situation with the view of creating an inclusive society<sup>6</sup>.*

### ► Integration Policy Models

**Assimilation:** While there is no strict definition of this term, assimilation commonly refers to a theoretical and policy model that considers integration as the process where cultural differences should be absorbed into the host society culture and disappear in order to create homogeneous societies. In societies supposed to apply this model, newcomers are expected to give up their heritage when they arrive in order to become part of the dominant culture. Differences and cultural specificities will not be encouraged and may even be discouraged or suppressed if they are considered a threat to the integrity of the majority group<sup>7</sup>.

**Multiculturalism:** Multiculturalism is another theoretical and policy model that recognises that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture. It works to remove stigmatisation, exclusion and domination in relation to such groups. By doing so, multiculturalists categorise groups by ethnicity, race or religion. In practice this can over-emphasise differences between groups and, as a result, sometimes create circumstances that lead to separation, marginalisation or segregation of diverse cultural groups<sup>8</sup>.

**Interculturalism:** Interculturalism is a policy model for ensuring equality and cohesion in culturally diverse societies. It encourages mixing and interaction among people of different origins, cultures, and backgrounds to build a collective identity that embraces cultural pluralism, human rights, democracy, gender equality and non-discrimination. It is based on the simultaneous application of the principles of equality of rights and opportunities, diversity as an advantage, and positive interaction as a way to mobilise the contributions of all residents for the development of their society. Interculturalism recognises that heritage and identity are dynamic and may intersect and overlap, and that cross-cultural interaction in increasingly globalised and diverse societies is inevitable and desirable. It suggests that such change has to be facilitated and supported, and that identity has to be seen as chosen and developmental.

*Inclusion: Inclusion is the goal of intercultural integration policies that value diversity and aim to afford equal rights and opportunities by creating conditions which enable the full and active participation of every member of society<sup>9</sup> based on a common set of values, a shared sense of belonging to the city/community, and a pluralist local identity.*

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<sup>4</sup> See [The Intercultural Cities Index: a methodological overview](#), 2019

<sup>5</sup> See Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' "[Declaration on cultural diversity](#)"

<sup>6</sup> See ICC "[Bridging the equality, diversity and inclusion agendas : background paper](#)", 2017

<sup>7</sup> The ICC, [didactic video on Interculturalism](#).

<sup>8</sup> The ICC, [didactic video on Interculturalism](#).

<sup>9</sup> According to ECRI's general use of this term.

## ➤ Main intercultural tools and resources (non-exhaustive list)

**Alternative narratives:** The communication of facts and commentary in relation to phenomena which may be subject to prejudice, stereotypes, and hate speech, as an alternative to prejudice-based discourses. Alternative narratives are a form of constructive and inclusive communication, promoting critical thinking while avoiding a paternalistic or morally superior attitude (see also Counter-narratives)<sup>10</sup>.

**Anti-rumours strategy:** a long-term process of social change that seeks to prevent discrimination, improve coexistence, and harness the potential of diversity by countering diversity-related prejudices and rumours. Its ultimate goal is to trigger a change in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours among the general population and specific target groups<sup>11</sup>.

**Community-based Result Accountability**<sup>12</sup>: The principle of results based accountability means that public agencies measure their performance not on the basis of the efforts they make to address a social issue, such as good community relations, but on the basis of results on the ground, which are agreed with the participation of all community stakeholders. Targets are set and indicators for success are identified through a community consultation process, results are constantly monitored (in the medium and long term through a set of indicators and in the short term through a smaller set of performance indicators called “dashboard”). Solutions to issues are imagined collectively and involve the participation of agencies but also families and the broader community (co-investment of institutions and citizens).

**Community development:** processes that foster citizen’s engagement and community empowerment to face the daily challenges of more diverse urban areas in a participatory and inclusive way.

**Community policing:** a policing strategy that develops an approach to surveillance and prevention based on ties and mutual trust, by engaging citizens in defining community-based and public space safety solutions<sup>13</sup>.

**Counter-narratives:** Narratives that aim to dismantle and delegitimise prejudice-based narratives or hate speech in a direct way, by bringing up facts, human rights principles and legal standards<sup>14</sup>.

**Diversity connectors for start-ups:** Public or private sector-supported incubators which offer training (general and specific), networking, access to finance and marketing assistance to all enterprises with an emphasis on including immigrant enterprises. These entities are housed under one roof within the incubator<sup>15</sup>.

**Intercultural competence:** The ability to understand and respect each other across all types of cultural barriers. Intercultural competences refers to the set of knowledge and skills necessary for people and organisations to act in an intercultural way. This includes the knowledge of intercultural principles such as human rights, equality, anti-discrimination, diversity advantage, interaction, participation, etc., and a range of soft skills (such as empathy, critical thinking, ability to listen and interact with different others in a non-violent manner, etc.). Intercultural competence is not only needed in the public administration, but should also be mainstreamed among the general public.

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<sup>10</sup> See ICC Policy brief on “[10 criteria for the creation of effective alternative narratives on diversity](#)”, 2020

<sup>11</sup> See [The Anti-Rumours Handbook](#), 2017

<sup>12</sup> The Intercultural Cities programme has adapted The Community-Based Results Accountability approach (CBRA) developed by the Washington Centre for the Study of Social Policy as a tool for structuring the development of the ICC strategy and monitoring results.

<sup>13</sup> See the ICC [Manual on Intercultural Community Policing](#), 2019

<sup>14</sup> See ICC Policy brief on “[10 criteria for the creation of effective alternative narratives on diversity](#)”, 2020

<sup>15</sup> See [Guidelines for Becoming a Diversity Connector for Start-ups](#), 2017

**Intercultural dialogue:** an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect<sup>16</sup>.

**Intercultural Education:** Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Intercultural education challenges prejudices and negative stereotyping, provides opportunities for children of different cultures to build trust and mutual respect, and create thereby favourable learning conditions for all pupils, irrespective of their nationalities, origins, languages, sexual orientation or gender identity, religions/beliefs. Cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism, are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools take steps to ensure that all parents overcome any reluctance they may have in engaging with the school and give them in this way the possibility of playing the educational role usually expected from parents.

**Intercultural lens:** In the Intercultural Cities approach, the development of a cultural sensitivity, the encouragement of intercultural interaction and mixing, is not seen as the responsibility of a special department or officer but as a strategic objective and an essential aspect of the functioning of all city departments and services. It therefore requires an overall overview of existing city policies, structures and actions, revisited through “the intercultural lens”.

**Intercultural mediation:** a process whereby an interculturally competent third person or institution helps anticipating, preventing or settling intercultural conflicts by promoting a respectful and empathic discussion about differences, using culturally specific narratives and building trust.

**Multilevel governance of migration:** A governance approach that implies the setting-up of participatory processes that allows for policies co-creation, co-operation, and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and – ideally – all relevant stakeholders, in areas of shared competence or common interest. It is applied throughout the whole policy/strategy cycle, from the needs assessment to the conception, implementation and evaluation. Multi-level governance of diversity and migration should be sought to ensure policy consistency, knowledge and resources sharing, best-practice exchange and mutual learning. However, the way in which multi-level governance is established may vary greatly from one country to another.

**Participatory approach:** Putting in place processes that enable inclusive participation in political and social institutions. Participatory processes are both a means to achieving an optimal balance between individual and common interests in decision-making, and a way of building and maintaining personal relations, sense of belonging, and of co-responsibility. Participatory processes are likely to be successful if they are facilitated in a competent way, and if there is strong commitment that their results will influence policy and other outcomes or decisions.

**Urban citizenship:** A locally-based contemporary alternative to the legal notion of citizenship, deriving directly from the residence as a fact, and founded on relationship-building processes that develops and acknowledge strong links and sense of belonging to a given urban territory. Urban citizenship allows for the effective participation and representation of all groups in the life of the city, as well as for building trust between the communities and in the public authorities<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> See Council of Europe White Paper “[Living Together in Dignity as Equals](#)”, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> See ICC Policy brief on “[Urban citizenship and undocumented migration](#)”, 2019

## ➤ Most frequent ICC Diversity-related terms

**Discrimination:** any distinction, exclusion or restriction of preference, which is based on any ground such as race, culture, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, physical handicap, or other characteristics not relevant to the issue in question<sup>18</sup>.

**Systemic discrimination:** rules, norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behaviour in institutions and other societal structures that, consciously or unconsciously, present obstacles to groups or individuals in accessing the same rights and opportunities as others and that contribute to less favourable outcomes for them than for the majority of the population<sup>19</sup>.

**Stereotype:** an oversimplified, generalised and often unconscious preconception about people or ideas that may lead to prejudice and discrimination. A generalisation in which characteristics possessed by a part of a group are extended to the group as a whole.

**Empowerment:** increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities<sup>20</sup>.

**Citizen:** “Any person (including, where appropriate, foreign residents) belonging to a local community”, whereby “belonging to a local community involves the existence of a stable link between the individual and that community”<sup>21</sup>.

**Migrant/s:** The United Nations Migration agency (IOM) defines “migrant” as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products<sup>22</sup>. Descendants of migrants are sometimes wrongly referred to as migrants or persons with a migrant background to indicate their multiple belonging.

**Newcomer:** for the purposes of this glossary, “newcomer” refers to an individual who has migrated to another country, and who does not owe the nationality of that country. It does not include second and third generations.

**Undocumented migrant:** A non-national who enters or stays in a country without the appropriate documentation. This includes, among others: a person (a) who has no legal documentation to enter a country but manages to enter clandestinely, (b) who enters or stays using fraudulent documentation, (c) who, after entering using legal documentation, has stayed beyond the time authorized or otherwise violated the terms of entry and remained without authorization<sup>23</sup>.

**Minority:** Considered in the broader sense, i.e. not referring exclusively to national minorities protected under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities, the term “minority” refers to a group which is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State and in a non-dominant position.

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<sup>18</sup> See Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

<sup>19</sup> See ECRI General Policy Recommendations No. 2: Equality Bodies to Combat Racism and Intolerance at National Level, adopted on 7 December 2017.

<sup>20</sup> See Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

<sup>21</sup> See [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life](#)

<sup>22</sup> IOM International Migration Law, [Glossary on Migration](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2011

<sup>23</sup> IOM International Migration Law, [Glossary on Migration](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2011

**Refugee:** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. The refugee definition can be found in the 1951 Refugee Convention and regional refugee instruments (including the Organization of African Unity or the 1984 Cartagena Declaration), as well as UNHCR's Statute<sup>24</sup>.

**Internally displaced persons (IDPs)** are people "who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border"<sup>25</sup>.

**Asylum seeker:** A person seeking safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaiting a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international, regional and national instruments.<sup>26</sup>

**Gender identity:** Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, and includes the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender (that is, "gender expression") such as dress, speech and mannerisms. The sex of a person is usually assigned at birth and becomes a social and legal fact from there on. Gender identity should be differentiated from sexual orientation.<sup>27</sup>

**Sexual orientation:** Sexual orientation refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction for, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender (heterosexual) or the same gender (homosexual, lesbian, gay) or more than one gender (bisexual).<sup>28</sup>

**Intersectionality:** Coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a black feminist civil rights activist and legal scholar, to raise the issue of black women facing racism and multiple discrimination, the term "intersectionality" was included in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2015 as follows: "The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise<sup>29</sup>." In Merriam-Webster's definition intersectionality is "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups<sup>30</sup>."

**Gender equality:** An equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference, and aims to promote the full participation of women and men in society. It means accepting and valuing equally the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society. Gender equality includes the right to be different. This means taking into account the existing differences among women and men, which are related to class, political opinion, religion, ethnicity,

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<sup>24</sup> [Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#).

<sup>25</sup> [Guiding principles of internal displacement](#), The UN Refugee Agency (hereafter, UNHCR).

<sup>26</sup> See UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/asylum-seekers.html>

<sup>27</sup> Council of Europe, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit, Questions and Answers: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680481ed5>

<sup>28</sup> Council of Europe, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit, Questions and Answers: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680481ed5>

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/intersectionality>

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality>

race or sexual orientation. Gender equality means discussing how it is possible to go further, to change the structures in society which contribute to maintaining the unequal power relationships between women and men, and to reach a better balance in the various female and male values and priorities<sup>31</sup>.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making<sup>32</sup>.

*Equality, Diversity, Interaction*

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<sup>31</sup> See Council of Europe "[Gender Equality Glossary](#)", 2016

<sup>32</sup> See Council of Europe "[Gender Equality Glossary](#)", 2016