



INTERCULTURAL GLOSSARY

This glossary aims at fostering a shared and consistent understanding of the principles linked to intercultural integration. Definitions stem from key resources produced over the past years by the Council of Europe, may it be by the Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme, the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) or other Council of Europe entities. These resources include in particular the [Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level](#), adopted by the CDADI in June 2021, the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration](#), adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 6 April 2022, and various ICC [thematic papers](#). Unless specified otherwise, the definitions included below stem from one or several of these Council of Europe resources. They are not meant to build a normative basis and are shared for the purpose of common understanding.

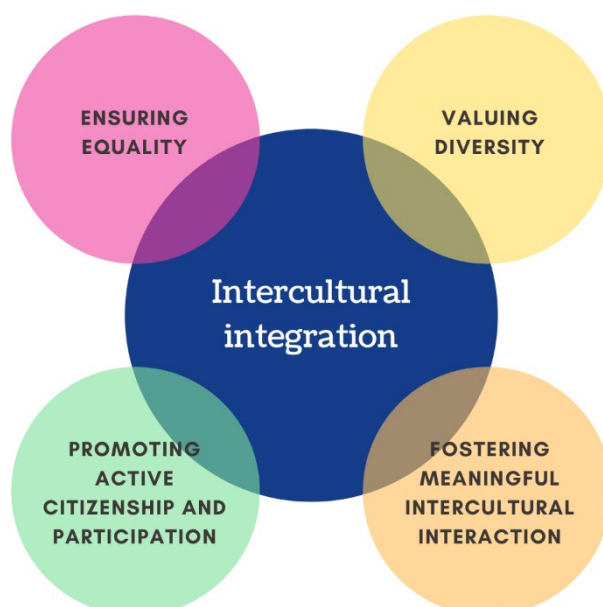
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GET STARTED: Intercultural integration

Intercultural integration: Intercultural integration is a two-way process involving individuals, communities of individuals, and the society as a whole. It consists of effective, positive and sustainable diversity management policies, aiming to help society to benefit from the potential of diversity and manage its complexities, on the basis of reciprocal and symmetrical recognition, under an overarching human rights framework. The “intercultural integration” model requires a holistic approach which can guide co-ordinated and long-term policies in all fields and levels of governance in order to promote and ensure equality for all members of society, to foster a common pluralistic sense of belonging through valuing diversity and building social trust, community cohesion and meaningful interaction between people across their different socio-cultural backgrounds, and to facilitate their equal participation in and contribution to society. As a model, intercultural integration is based on four fundamental components: **Equality**, **Valuing diversity/Diversity advantage**, **Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction**, and **Promoting active citizenship and participation**.



Equality: refers mainly to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights, and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or ‘access’) can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equal outcome.¹

Diversity: a range of human features which make individuals differ from one another in various ways, some but not all of which are characteristics protected by human rights law. Aspects of identity such as age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities,

¹ Intercultural Competence Training Manual, Council of Europe, 2022.

social class, education, economic background, religion, work experience, language, geographic location, political opinion, or family status, are among the sources of diversity.

Valuing diversity/Diversity advantage: the idea that diversity can bring benefits for organisations, communities and businesses, making societies more resilient and successful, when managed with competence and in the spirit of inclusion. This can happen when diversity is considered an asset, to be promoted and included in all decision-making processes. Promotion of diversity is not a singular action but represents a vision and a philosophy of governance.

(Fostering) Meaningful intercultural interaction: any constructive encounter in a social setting between individuals or groups from different cultures and lifestyles in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation. Intercultural policy speaks of 'meaningful interactions' between different cultural or ethnic groups, which recognise both the differences and similarities between such groups/individuals, promote the atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, and counter the tendency towards self-segregation. Meaningful interactions are those that take place on equal terms, be they challenging or positive, and which should ultimately be fulfilling for all involved, advancing common goals. Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction through public policies 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.

Promoting active citizenship and participation: active citizenship and participation occur when stakeholders (all citizens, including foreign residents where appropriate) have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support to freely express their opinions and influence decision-making on matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural participation requires an equal and respectful basis, in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain stakeholders' active participation.

Intercultural society: a community of people with diverse backgrounds that values diversity as a collective advantage and aims to afford equal rights and opportunities for everyone by creating the conditions for full and active participation based on a common set of values, a shared sense of belonging, and a pluralist collective identity. The public authorities actively combat prejudice and discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all by adapting their 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. They adopt participatory approaches and multilevel governance to develop a range of policies and actions to encourage mixing and interaction across differences and to stimulate the participation of all residents in social life and decision that affect their everyday life and environment. The high level of trust and social cohesion helps to prevent conflicts and violence, increases policy effectiveness and make the territories attractive for people and investors alike.

OTHER RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

Intersectionality: the concept of intersectionality recognises that each individual has a complex identity which makes them unique. It is highly unlikely, therefore, that they will think of themselves as defined entirely by one aspect of their make-up. An individual from a minority background may experience exclusion or stigmatisation by their ethnicity, their gender, their perceived sexual orientation or some combination of these. More positively, this complexity of identity allows

identifications to be made with other individuals, for example on gender grounds, which cross social dividing lines.

Discrimination: (in this context) unjustifiably different (distinctive, exclusionary, restrictive, preferential) behaviour towards and/or treatment of certain persons or groups, based on traits of the person or on particular characteristics of the group. Discrimination is generally understood as differentiation which causes harm and is distinguished from prejudice and stereotyping by being an action or outcome of those attitudes.

Systemic discrimination: occurs where the procedures, routines and organisational culture of any organisation contribute to unequal outcomes for minority groups compared to the general population.

Prejudices: preconceived attitudes towards a group or its members, untested and therefore unjustified by evidence. While there are both positive or negative biases, the term ‘prejudice’ has a generally negative connotation, since prejudices do harm and injury. Very often they are closely related to a sense of belonging (or not) to groups and the roles individuals are supposed to have within them, thus altering the ability of the target group to self-identification. They are associated with emotions such as dislike, mistrust, fear, or even hatred. They do not allow us to see others as individuals, nor to recognise diversity among the members of a stereotyped group.

Equality data: any piece of information that is useful for the purposes of describing and analysing the state of equality. The information may be quantitative or qualitative in nature. The main focus is on equality statistics, by which are meant aggregate data that reflect inequalities or their causes or effects in society. Sometimes data that are collected primarily for reasons other than equality-related purposes can be used for producing equality data if adequately disaggregated.²

Migrant: At international level, no universally accepted definition for “migrant” exists. The United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed a definition for its own purposes that is not meant to imply or create any new legal category. According to that definition, migrant is an “umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; and those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.”³ In the past, migration tended to be a once-and-for-all move whereby the migrant lost touch with their country of origin and attempted to make a home for themselves in their country of adoption. In a more globalised and individualised world, migration is often better thought of as mobility: it may involve more than one move and need not imply, given today’s technology, becoming cut off from family.⁴

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

² Makkonen T., European Handbook on Equality Data, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission, 2016.

³ See: International Organization for Migration, *Glossary on migration*, IML Series No. 34, 2019, available [here](#).

⁴ Krings T., Moriarty E., Wickham J., Bobek A. and Salamońska J. (2013), *New mobilities in Europe: Polish migration to Ireland post-2004*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

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.

Refugee: The refugee definition can be found in Article 1.A of the 1951 Refugee Convention and regional refugee instruments (including the Organisation of African Unity or the 1984 Cartagena Declaration), as well as UNHCR’s statute:⁵ A refugee is someone who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”.

States have a mandatory requirement to accept a well-founded claim for refugee status from any individual seeking asylum at or after entry, under the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol.⁶ In particular, they are obliged to comply with the principle of *non-refoulement*, by receiving and assessing such claims on their individual merits, rather than turning away asylum seekers at their borders.⁷

Gentrification: a process through which lower income residents are displaced from the neighbourhood due to an influx of new residents, resulting in a change of character of the neighbourhood. Therefore, gentrification has two key features: displacement, both physical and symbolic and change in social and urban character.

Intercultural Methodologies

Intercultural competence: the ability to understand and respect each other across all types of cultural barriers. Intercultural competences refer to the set of knowledge and skills necessary for people and organisations to act in an intercultural way in diverse societies.

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.

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 solutions⁸.

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 groups⁹.

⁵ Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

⁶ See: www.unhcr.org/uk/1951-refugee-convention.html.

⁷ It is worth noting that the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons establishes the legal definition for stateless persons as individuals who are not considered citizens or nationals under the operation of the laws of any country. A person’s citizenship and nationality may be determined based on the laws of a country where an individual is born or where her/his parents were born. A person can also lose citizenship and nationality in a number of ways, including when a country ceases to exist or a country adopts nationality laws that discriminate against certain groups. See for reference: www.unhcr.org/statelessness.html.

⁸ See the ICC [Manual on Intercultural Community Policing, 2019](#)

⁹ See [The Anti-Rumours Handbook, 2017](#)

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).

Multilevel governance: Multilevel governance is a model of governance which embraces central, regional and local governments, as well as civil society organisations. The ways in which it is organised may vary greatly from one country to another. Ideally, it includes a bottom-up element and implies the setting up of participatory processes for policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and with all relevant stakeholders, in areas of shared competence or common interest.

Participation in decision-making: the vertical process of multilevel governance must be complemented by a horizontal process of public participation, in the design, delivery and evaluation of intercultural integration plans. Such participation, by individuals and through non-governmental organisations, is essential to match the complexity of the “diversity of diversity”, to engender a sense of stakeholding, especially on the part of individuals and organisations of minority backgrounds, and to gain widespread public buy-in to intercultural integration plans.

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.