

# How the Intercultural integration approach leads to a better quality of life in diverse cities

Migration Policy Group: Anne-Linde Joki and Alexander Wolffhardt with the support of Thomas Huddleston

---

## Introduction

The *Intercultural Cities Index* (ICC) has been completed by 80+ cities and towns across 28 countries in order to assess to what extent local authorities implement interculturalism. The full ICC questionnaire is well-established as a gateway for cities to learn from each other and to identify their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to a model Intercultural City Strategy. The impact of the ICC approach has also been positively self-assessed by member cities, who have seen positive changes in the areas of education, culture, arts, sports and local political participation (Council of Europe 2015). But how can ICC's local intercultural policies actually improve interculturalism and well-being in practice<sup>1</sup>? To answer this key question, the Migration Policy Group has conducted a yearlong research project with the aim to improve the reliability and usefulness of the ICC Index. This report identifies the links between cities' local intercultural policies, national integration policies and local well-being.

Overall, this report confirms the reliability of a new core ICC Index for measuring local intercultural policies, evaluating the links with local attitudes and well-being, improving local policies and raising the national debate. This report's recommendations present the ICC secretariat and cities with new opportunities to reflect and to act.

## A new core ICC Index: the most reliable indicators of local intercultural policies

The Intercultural Cities network uses the full ICC questionnaire for the initial assessment of new cities joining the network. This long list of indicators allows for a thorough assessment of strengths and weaknesses and comparison to all other ICC cities. But only the most reliable ICC indicators are needed for further use by cities and experts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Only a few studies have discussed the reliability of the ICC Index (Zapata-Barrero 2016) and identified significant correlations between the Index and several well-being outcomes (Bakbasel 2011 & Rubicondo 2016). However, these studies often lack the necessary local-level outcome data, non-ICC cities and controls for the other factors.

A new core ICC Index has been designed based on our findings that a few core policies are the drivers of an intercultural approach at local level. These building blocks usually lead to many systemic changes in both city-wide and department-specific services, especially in areas where the city plays a leading transformative role as the main public employer, service-provider and partner. Based on our conceptual and statistical review, a final list (see Appendix) was agreed of 14 reliable ICC indicators under 5 dimensions:

- 1) Mainstreaming interculturalism
- 2) Public commitment to interculturalism
- 3) Dedicated intercultural strategy and budget
- 4) Intercultural competences
- 5) The city as a catalyst for interculturalism and participation

While the ICC full questionnaire should be used to fully assess new cities joining the network, the new core indicators and index are recommended as a more robust tool for analysis, updates and target-setting (see appendix).

### The links between local intercultural policies and local well-being for all

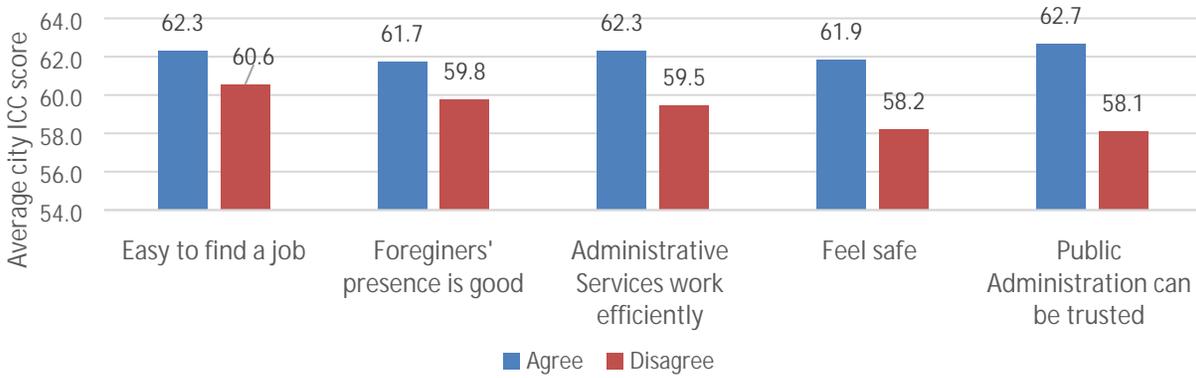
This new core ICC Index make it easier to update cities' Index scores and use them for research and analysis. For example, MPG evaluated the links between local intercultural policies and the intercultural attitudes and well-being that these policies aim to improve. Correlation and multivariate analyses are a good start to identify whether the relationships intended by policymakers emerge between policies and outcomes. Local well-being is best measured across Europe through Eurobarometer's 2015 Quality of Life in European Cities (QoL), which surveyed around 500 respondents in each of the 79 European cities. Questions included:

- Is the presence of foreigners good for the city?
- Do the administrative services of the city help people efficiently?
- Generally speaking, can the public administration of the city be trusted?
- Do you feel safe in the city?
- Is it easy to find a job?

MPG was able to work with local integration experts to update the ICC core indicators as of December 2016 in 14 ICC cities participating in the QoL survey (Barcelona, Bucharest, Dublin, Geneva, Hamburg, London Lewisham, Lisbon, Paris, Oslo, Reykjavik, Rotterdam, Turin, Valetta & Zurich) and to add 11 non-ICC 'control' cities (Amsterdam, Berlin, Bologna, Bordeaux, Cluj, Leipzig, Madrid, Manchester, Marseille, Naples & Rostock). On average, the 14 ICC cities scored 13% higher on the ICC core indicators than the 10 control cities, with the strongest intercultural policies found in Manchester, Berlin and Hamburg and the weakest in Cluj and Marseille.

In terms of local well-being, the majority of people thought that their city was safe and good for finding jobs, the presence of immigrants was good and services were trustworthy and efficient. A first glance shows that people were more likely to report local well-being in cities with higher ICC Index scores:

Chart 1: Average city ICC score of respondents agreeing / disagreeing with local well-being statements



In a first step, correlation analysis confirms that a significant link exists between local intercultural policies and residents' local well-being. Cities with strong policies have more people reporting local well-being. Significant relationships emerge between the core ICC Index (both the overall score and each of the five dimensions) and all five measures of local well-being. The correlation is presented between local intercultural policies, as measured by the new core ICC Index, and attitudes to foreigners (Chart 2), trust in public administration (Chart 3) and feeling safe (Chart 4).

Chart 2: Correlation of core ICC Index & Attitudes to Foreigners

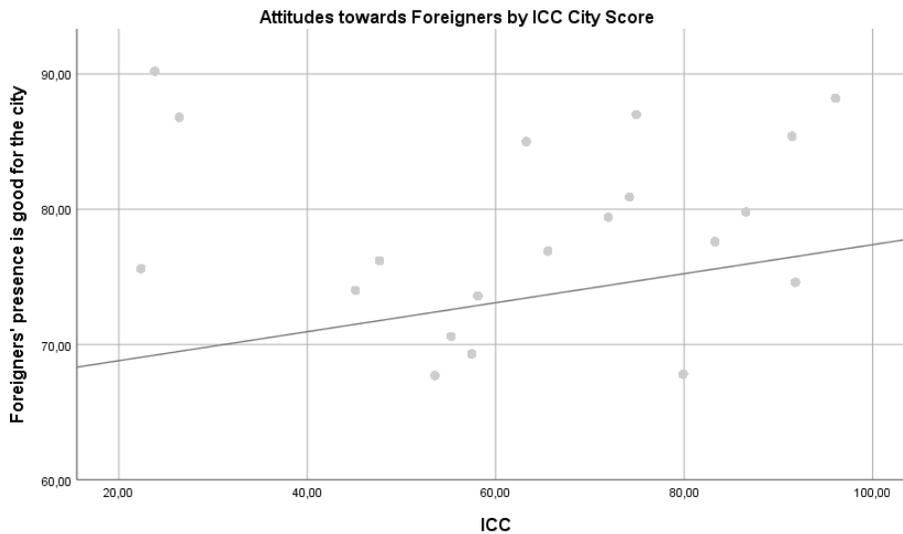


Chart 3: Correlation of core ICC Index & Trust in Public Administration

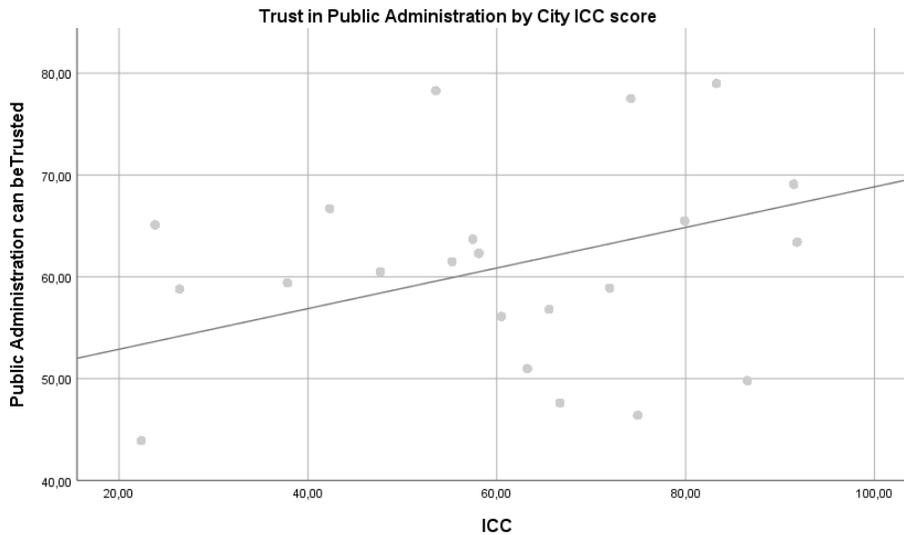
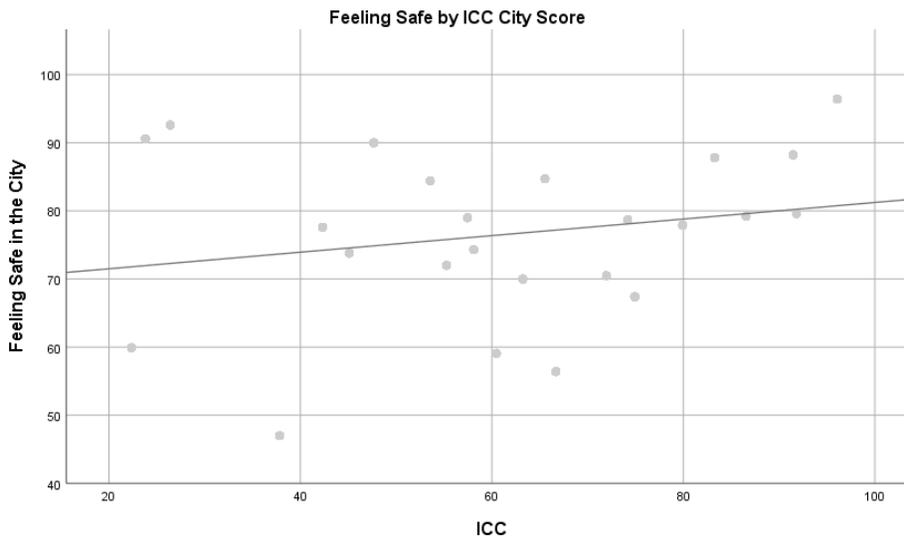


Chart 4: Correlation of core ICC Index & Feelings of Safety

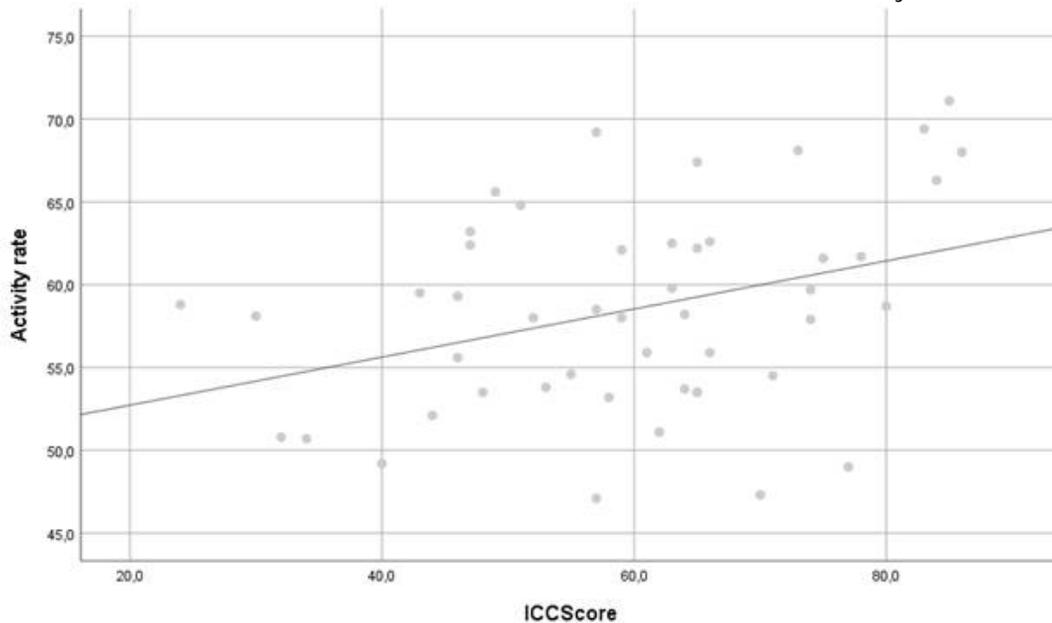


For example, a city scoring 100% on the new core ICC Index could expect that around 80% of its residents will agree that immigrants' presence is good for the city, while around 70% think the public administration can be trusted.

Correlations also emerge between local intercultural policies, as measured by the core ICC Index, and the few available local objective measures of well-being like economic activity and average income levels<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Well-being is a multidimensional concept that can be measured by subjective perceptions and objective measurements. So far, local well-being across Europe is only measured through subjective perceptions, such as those captured in the QoL survey. Objective multidimensional measurements of well-being are being pioneered at national and, recently, regional level in Europe, largely thanks to the OECD's 'Better Life Index.' Given the absence of multidimensional data at local level, a few incomplete measures are available through Eurostat's Urban Audit. Although objective measurements were traditionally favoured to measure well-being, research supports the validity and reliability of subjective measures of well-being.

Chart 4: Correlation of core ICC Index & local economic activity



Source: Urban Audit data (N=48)

Correlation does not automatically imply causality. The two could be linked to some third underlying cause; for example, wealthier cities may have stronger intercultural policies and higher reported levels of well-being. Or a causal relationship may exist in the opposite direction than expected; for example, only populations with high levels of well-being may be willing to support an intercultural approach.

To control for this, our multivariate analysis first controls for major individual factors. Studies show that the major determinants of public well-being and attitudes to immigrants are people's age, gender, family situation and socio-economic status. Our multivariate analysis then controls for a few major contextual factors. People's well-being and attitudes to immigrants can be significantly influenced by the proportion of foreigners in the local population, overall wealth (national GDP per capita) and the inclusiveness of the national integration policies (MIPEX). For example, studies regularly find a strong link between anti-immigrant attitudes and national integration policies as measured by MIPEX (see review in Callens 2015). Our analysis also controls for whether or not cities are members of the ICC network because the cities that choose to join may be a rather self-selective group.

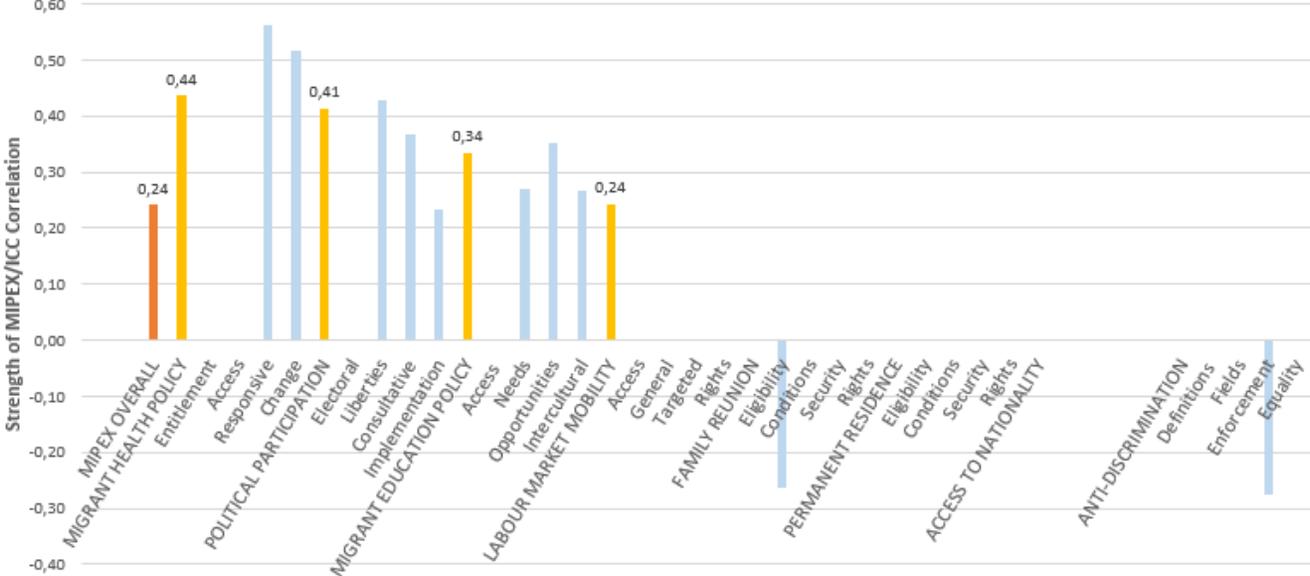
Even after all of these controls, our multivariate analysis shows that local intercultural policies still emerge as a significant driver behind local well-being and attitudes towards immigrants. In fact, local intercultural policies emerge as one of the strongest drivers, just as significant as a person's age or education. Cities with stronger intercultural policies are significantly more likely to have populations that think foreigners are good for the city, services are trustworthy and efficient and the city is safe and good for finding jobs. Local intercultural policies also seem to matter more in countries where national integration policies are weak and under-developed. The dimension of local intercultural policies that seems most important for local well-being is mainstreaming interculturalism, which means better cross-departmental coordination, evaluation of action plans, diversity plans for public sector jobs and support for discrimination victims.

While more longitudinal data on more ICC cities is needed to prove any causal link between the ICC Index and local outcomes, these results demonstrate the strong link that local policymakers expect and report between intercultural



In contrast, no link emerged between local strategies and national policies in areas of core or exclusive national competence. These areas are also generally considered by MIPEX to be areas of weakness in national policies. Whether it's national policies on family reunification, permanent residence, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, access to education and health for the undocumented or electoral rights—all seem to have little-to-nothing to do with the local intercultural dynamics in the country.

Chart 6: Significant correlations between ICC Index and MIPEX eight areas and related dimensions  
**Links between local intercultural policies (ICC) & national integration policies (MIPEX)**



Local intercultural policies emerge a distinct but inter-related part of a country's approach to integration. Often national and local integration policies are assumed to be fundamentally complementary or conflicting. Instead, ICC and MIPEX should be used as complementary tools to understand the integration policy dynamics in a country. Analysis of a city's ICC scores should take into account the determining factors in its national context, in particular the national integration policies across MIPEX areas. These findings suggest that more attention is needed to this nuanced and dynamic relationship. Unfortunately, local intercultural policies are not given that attention they are due in national integration policies and debates. Local policies are not monitored systematically within country and comparisons across country are only possible based on the self-selective cities choosing to join the ICC network.

## Appendix: How can the core ICC Index be used to improve local intercultural policies?

Chart: New Core ICC Index: 14 'core indicators' under 5 dimensions (indicator number from full ICC questionnaire)

### *Dimension 1: Mainstreaming interculturalism*

Indicator 12: Does your city have a dedicated body or a cross-departmental co-ordination structure responsible for the intercultural strategy or intercultural integration?

Indicator 9: Is there an evaluation process for the intercultural strategy/action plan?

Indicator 25: Does the city have a recruitment plan to equal representation of people with an ethnic/immigrant background?

Indicator 72: Does the city have a specific service and/or grants that supports victims of discrimination?

### *Dimension 2: Public commitment to interculturalism*

Indicator 10: Do official communications by the city make clear reference to the city's intercultural commitment?

Indicator 35: Does the city organise events and activities to encourage intercultural mixing in arts, culture & sport?

Indicator 38: Does the city act to encourage intercultural mixing in libraries, museums, playgrounds and spaces?

### *Dimension 3: Dedicated intercultural strategy and budget*

Indicator 5: Has the city adopted an intercultural integration strategy or a diversity/inclusion strategy?

Indicator 7: Has the city allocated a budget for the implementation of the intercultural strategy and/or action plan?

### *Dimension 4: Intercultural competences*

Indicator 45: Is intercultural mediation provided in institutions, city administration and neighbourhoods?

Indicator 46: Does the city provide specific language training in the official language(s) for hard-to-reach groups as well as support for learning migrant/minority languages?

Indicator 61: Does the city promote the intercultural competence of its officials and staff (both in administration and public services) through interdisciplinary seminars and networks and training courses?

### *Dimension 5: City as catalyst for participation and interculturalism*

Indicator 68: Does the city have an independent advisory body to represent migrants and/or to deal with diversity and integration?

Indicator 33: Does the city use interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations and initiatives?

The MPG team was able to turn these 14 core indicators into a target-setting questionnaire for cities. Questions asked about the amount of staff, budget lines, consultations and outputs related to the city's intercultural approach. This new target-setting questionnaire was brief and efficiently answered by local experts in 9 ICC cities. The results were more meaningful at local level, easy to visualised and better to update for monitoring over time. This way, local policymakers can obtain clear local statistics and set their own targets for the state of implementation of their intercultural policies in the city's various departments and services.

Chart: Implementing a new core ICC Index step-by-step

1) *Full Questionnaire*: Cities joining ICC complete the full Index questionnaire to appreciate all their strengths and weaknesses and learn from all best practices, benchmarks and elements of an intercultural city strategy

2) *Core Index*: Quality and consistency check by central expert coordination team turns the full ICC questionnaire into the core ICC Index for updating and the target-setting questionnaire

3) *Updating*: The core ICC indicators and target-setting questionnaire are updated regularly (i.e. once every 1-2 years) by the ICC city and supporting local experts, with quality check by the central expert coordination team

4) *Analysis*: Central expert coordination team maintains a user-friendly Index database, promotes wider scientific analysis and recognition of the Index and undertakes analysis of trends and links between policies and outcomes, based on needs identified by ICC secretariat and network cities

5) *Target-setting*: Cities that choose to use the questionnaire to identify needs and set individual targets can draw on ICC expertise

6) *ICC Impact*: Future updates will make visible progress in individual cities and all across Europe