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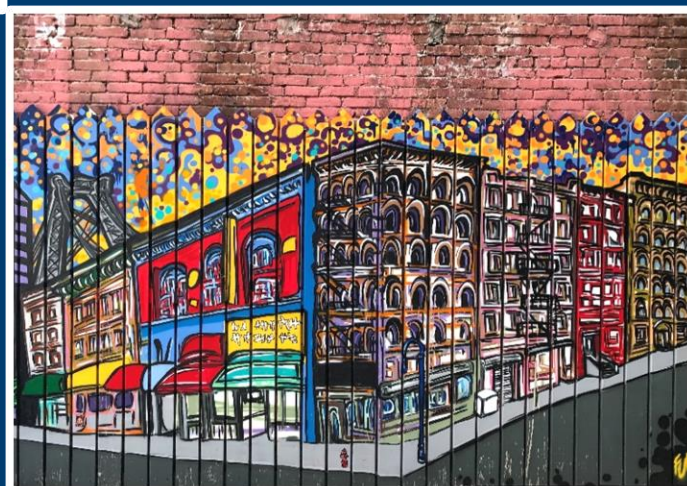


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KUOPIO

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS 2024



Diversity, Equality, Interaction

BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS



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KUOPIO

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

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Intercultural Cities Secretariat

Council of Europe

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Cities is a Council of Europe flagship programme. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.

In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which was rich in content and detail. However, narrative reports alone were relatively weak as tools to monitor and communicate progress. Thus, an “Intercultural Cities Index” has been designed as a benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the programme as well as for future participants.

While this report is being written (December 2023) 162 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 130 (including Kuopio) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found [here](#).

Among these cities, 36 cities (including Kuopio) have between 100'000 and 200'000 inhabitants and 40 (including Kuopio) have less than 10% of foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Kuopio, Finland, in 2023, and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

INTERCULTURAL CITY DEFINITION

The intercultural city has people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/beliefs. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

METHODOLOGY

The Intercultural Cities Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 86 questions (73 of which are mandatory) grouped in 12 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general Intercultural Cities Index).

These indicators comprise the following (including the two new indicators in bold):

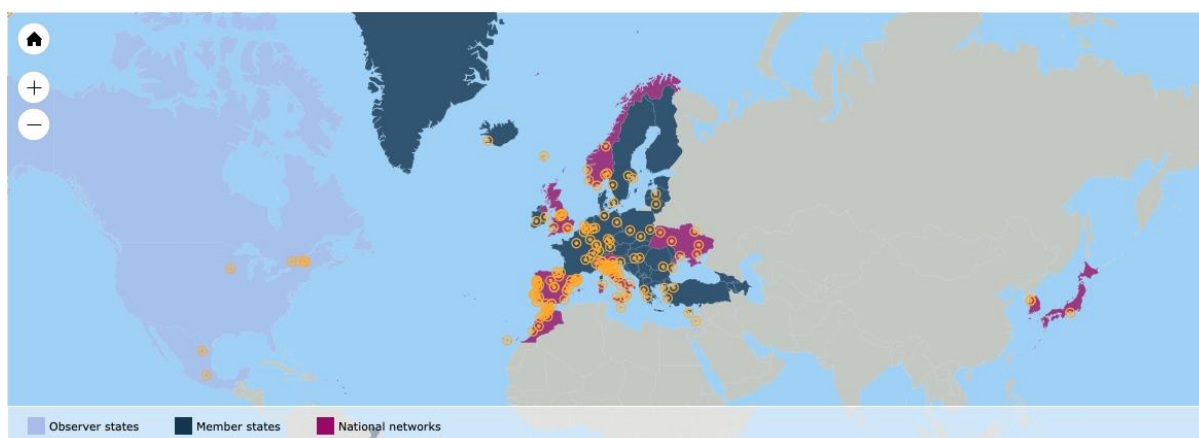
1. Commitment	
2. Intercultural lens	Education
3. Mediation and conflict resolution	Neighbourhoods
4. Language	Public services
5. Media and communication	Business and the labour market
6. International outlook	Cultural and social life
7. Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8. Welcoming newcomers	
9. Leadership and citizenship	
10. Anti-discrimination	
11. Participation	
12. Interaction	

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development, type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended **only as a tool for benchmarking/benchlearning**, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Taking into account the above-mentioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out so far: the size (below 100,000 inhabitants; between 100,000 and 200,000; between 200,000 and 500,000; and above 500,000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (lower than 10 per cent; between 10 and 15 per cent; between 15 and 20 per cent; and higher than 20 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

So far, 46 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Kuopio. Thus, the city will be compared to the entire sample for all the indicators, and to the new sample for the new indicators relating to participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, **Kuopio** has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 65 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.¹

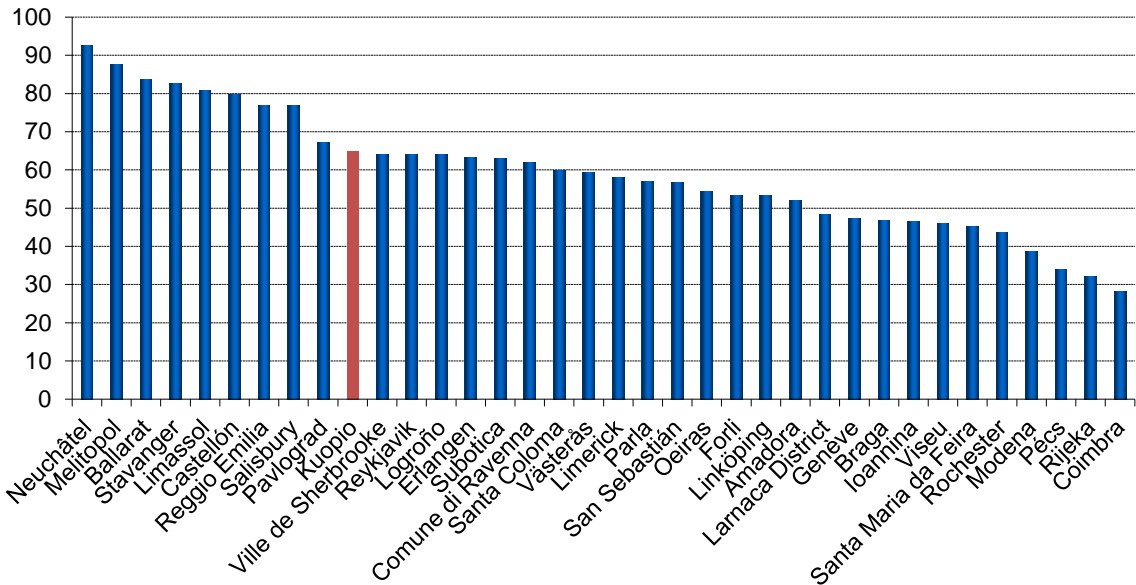


¹ The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended Intercultural Cities Index with 86 questions. As a main rule, the Intercultural Cities Index report applies the scoring from the original Intercultural Cities Index, to ensure the broadest possible comparison group in the global achievement rate.

In addition, the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index is provided in an explanatory footnote for all indicators where it is relevant. This scoring encompasses the assessment of the questions of the original Intercultural Cities Index as well as the new questions of the extended Intercultural Cities Index for each specific indicator. The scoring of the original Intercultural Cities Index and extended Intercultural Cities Index for the same indicator may hence differ based on the differing number of questions. Finally, the indicators which are completely new to the extended Intercultural Cities Index only include the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index. This scoring for these indicators hence shows directly in the text and not in a footnote.

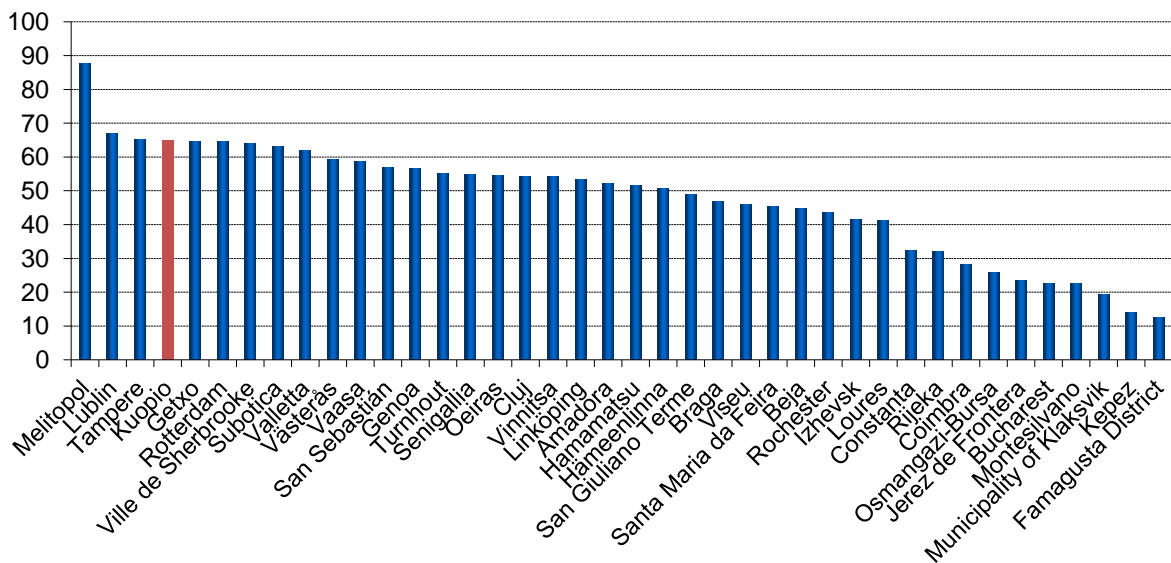
Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (inhabitants 100'000 - 200'000)

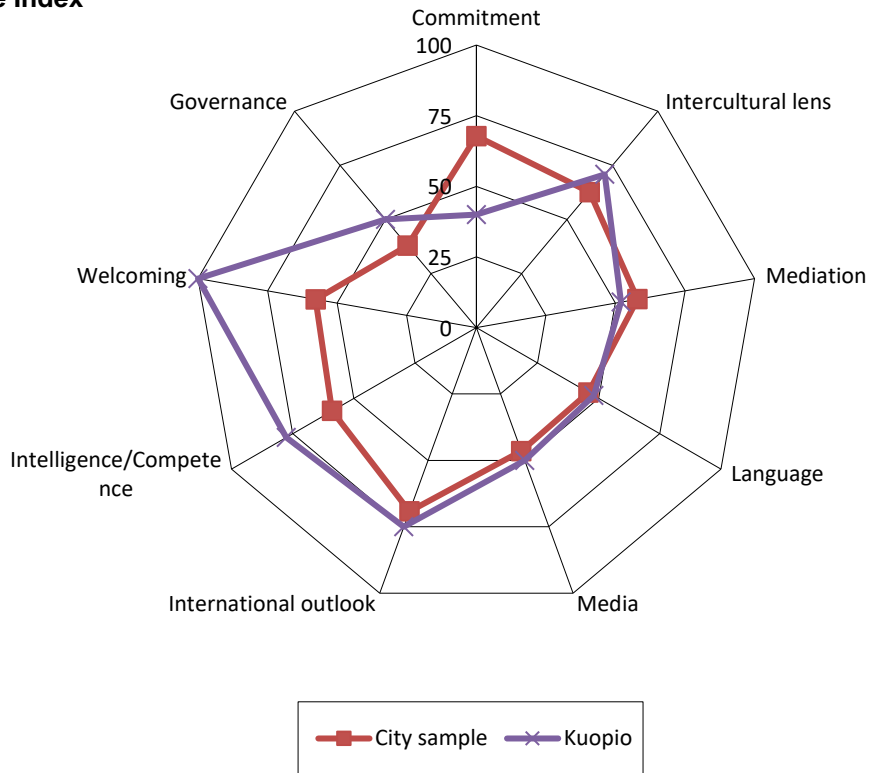


Per diversity

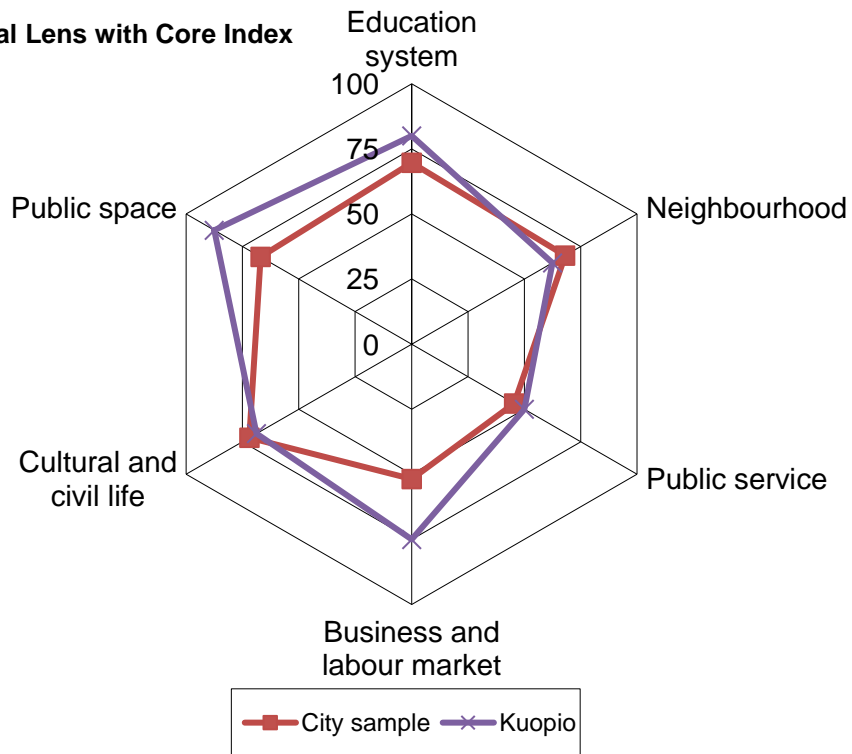
Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns < 10%)



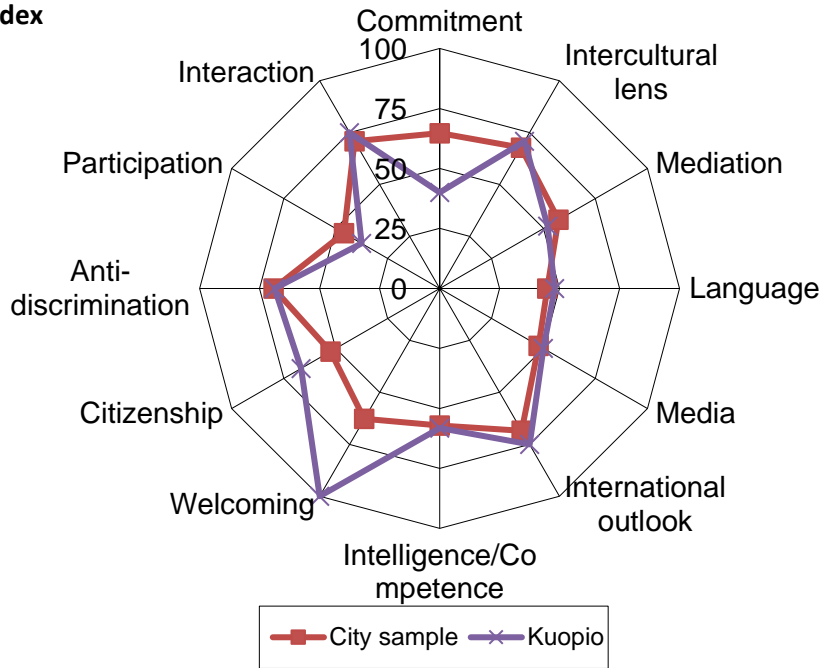
Core Index



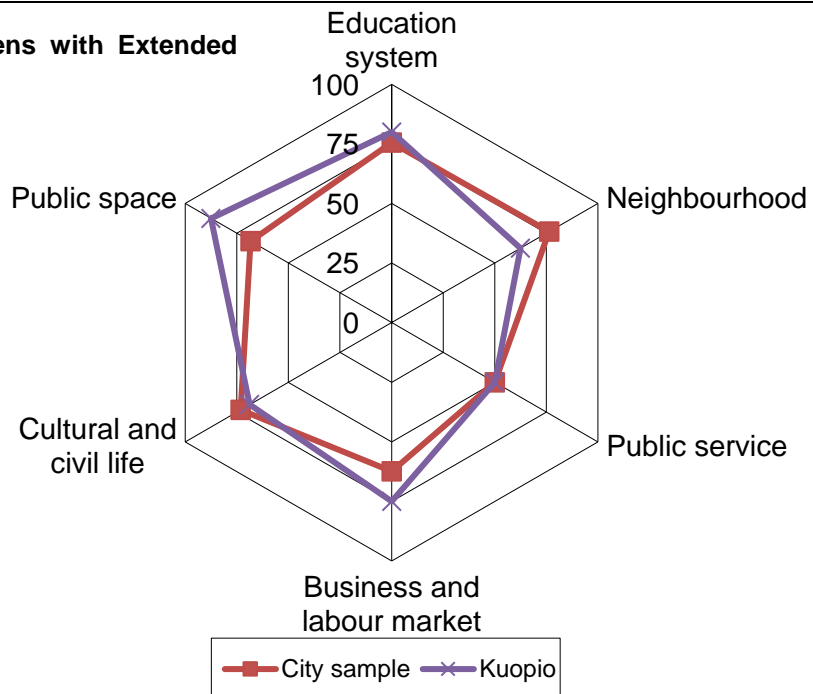
Intercultural Lens with Core Index



Extended Index



Intercultural Lens with Extended Index



KUOPIO: AN OVERVIEW

Kuopio is a Finnish city and municipality situated in the region of Northern Savonia, boasts a population of approximately 124,011 residents. Kuopio serves as a significant urban, economic, and cultural centre in Eastern Finland.

Covering a total area of 4,326.35 square kilometres, Kuopio is renowned for its natural beauty, with over half of its land area covered by forests and numerous lakes. Surrounded by lake Kallavesi, much of Kuopio has been developed on islands. Indeed, one third of Kuopio is water and a half forest. Despite its expansive territory, the city's urban areas are comparatively densely populated, with an average of 1,618 residents per square kilometre.

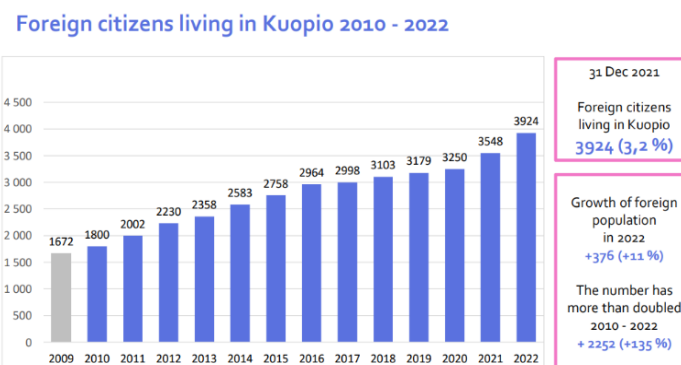
Originally founded in 1653, Kuopio existed as little more than a village until 1776, when King Gustav III ordered new city plans drawn up. It received its municipal charter in 1782. In 1809, Finland was ceded to Russia as an autonomous Grand Duchy following the Finnish War. During this period of Russian rule, Kuopio continued to develop as an important administrative, trade, and cultural centre in Eastern Finland. In the 19th century, the city became a hub for trade, education, and industry, attracting settlers and entrepreneurs from across Finland and beyond. The University of Eastern Finland, originally founded in 1828, further contributed to Kuopio's intellectual and cultural vibrancy. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Kuopio undergo industrialization, with the establishment of various manufacturing industries, including textiles, paper, and metalworking. These industries played a crucial role in the city's economic growth and prosperity. In the modern era, Kuopio is known for its high-quality education and healthcare facilities, as well as its strong cultural scene, including music festivals, museums, and theatres.

Over the years, Kuopio's population has steadily grown, fuelled by factors such as urbanization, immigration, and economic opportunities. Kuopio has a rich history shaped by several municipality mergers since 1969, resulting in the incorporation of surrounding countryside. Notably, its population surpassed 100,000 with the addition of Nilsisä in 2013 and Maaninka in 2015, making it the 8th most populous municipality in Finland.

In recent years, Kuopio has witnessed significant development projects, positioning it as a prominent tourist destination, particularly with the establishment of the Tahkovouri tourist centre. Kuopio Airport, located in the Siilinjärvi municipality, stands as Finland's fifth-busiest airport. Designated as the European Region of Gastronomy in 2020, Kuopio is also celebrated for its culinary heritage, including the traditional Savonian dish, Kalakukko. The city is divided into 52 neighbourhoods.

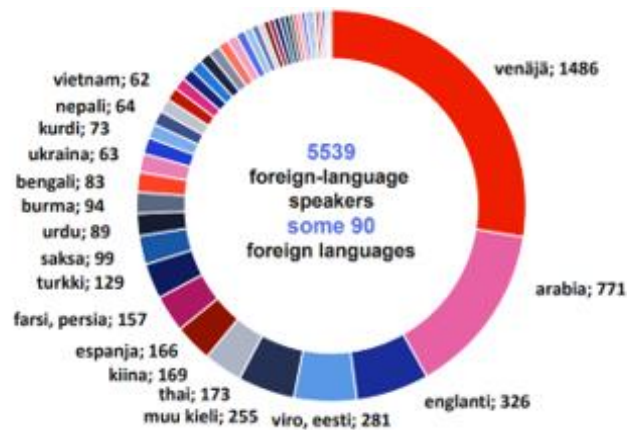
Kuopio is recognized for its high quality of life, with residents expressing high levels of satisfaction according to various surveys. Moreover, it ranks favourably in terms of attractiveness and investor appeal among Finland's cities. The GDP of the Kuopio region (including Kuopio and Siilinjärvi municipalities) is 38,789€ per capita.

The statistical tracking of non-nationals and migrants in Kuopio, primarily focuses on foreign residents holding foreign passports, excluding international students, while also monitoring foreign language speakers. As of 2022, Kuopio's population comprises approximately 3.2% foreign citizens.



Source: [Foreigners in Kuopio 2022](#)

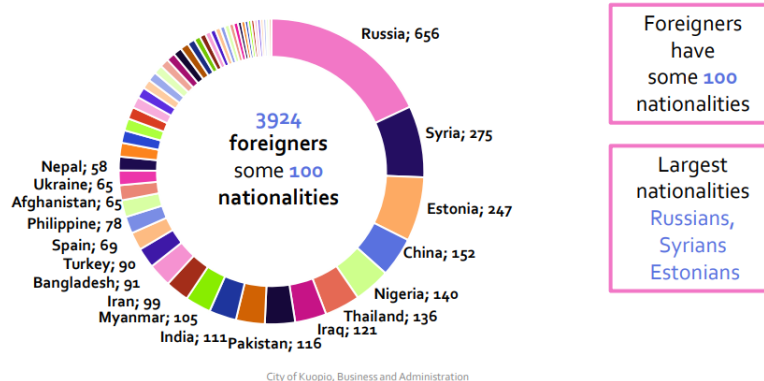
The city hosts an estimated 6,000 foreign language speakers out of a total population of 123,000. Among the largest migrant/minority groups in Kuopio are Russians, Syrians, and Estonians.



Source: [Migration and migrant population statistics - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.europa.eu/press-communication/infographic/2022/07/migration-and-migrant-population-statistics-statistics-explained_en)

Kuopio recognizes native-born minority groups, including Finland-Swedes, Sámi people of Lapland, and Roma people, with dedicated advisory services for Roma affairs. Additionally, the city acknowledges the presence of diverse groups with different origins, religions, languages, or sexual orientations, with resources like the multicultural centre "Kompassi" and counselling services available.

Foreigners by citizenship 2022



Foreigners have some 100 nationalities

Largest nationalities: Russians, Syrians, Estonians

Source: [Migration and migrant population statistics - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.europa.eu/press-communication/infographic/2022/07/migration-and-migrant-population-statistics-statistics-explained_en)

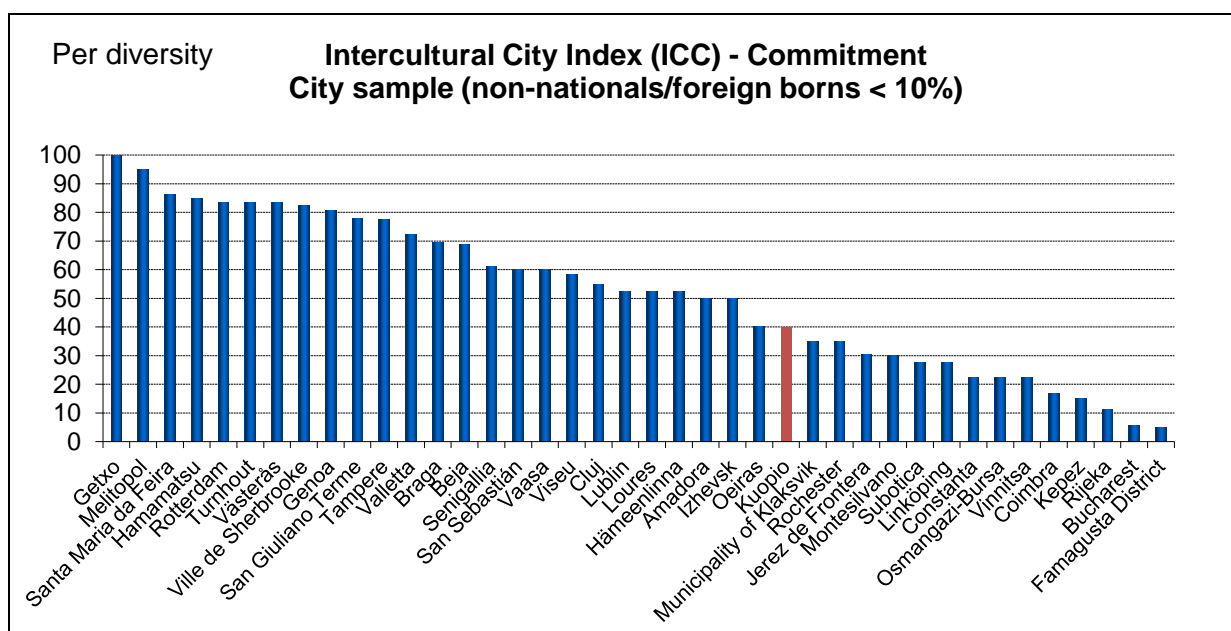
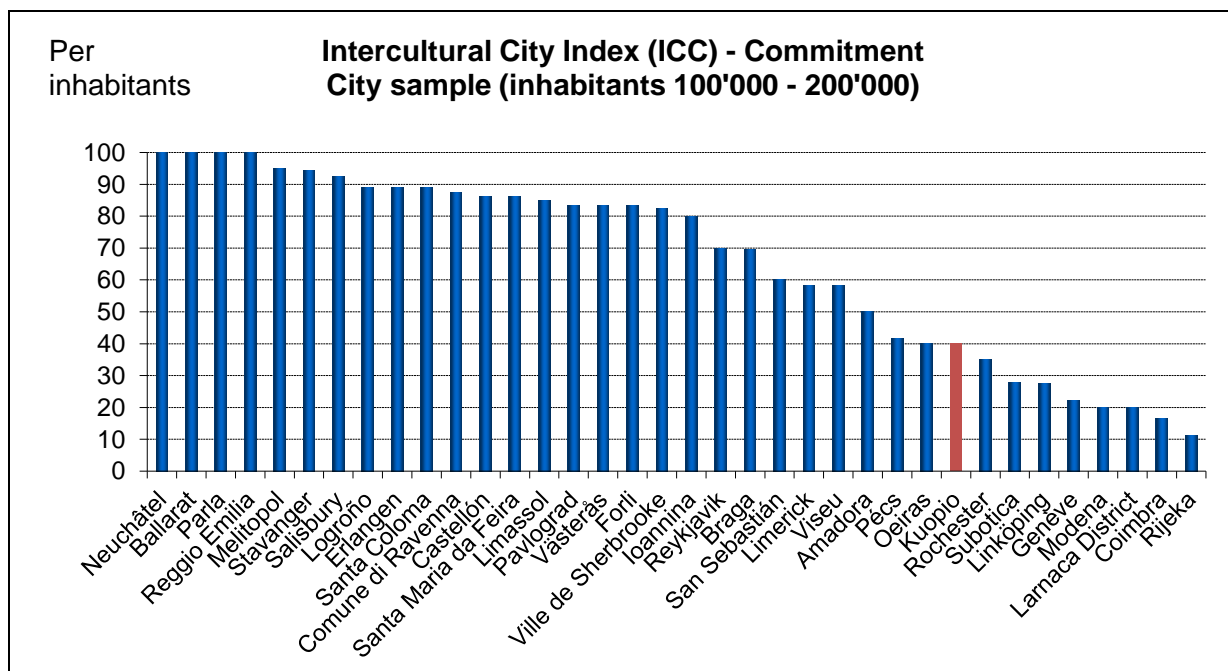
Recent years have seen a notable increase in the number of foreign nationals moving to Kuopio, driven by various factors such as family reunification, work, and study, with the influx of temporarily protected Ukrainians due to the war significantly impacting the city's population composition.



COMMITMENT

For intercultural inclusion to occur, city authorities need to send out a clear and well-publicised message emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality and interaction. Ideally, a majority of elected officials and senior policy officers will have a clear understanding of these core principles and their implications for policy-making. City authorities also need to initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions. Most importantly, an intercultural city actively seeks to include residents of all nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups in the policy-making process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 40%, which is a lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68%.



While there is no official public statement formally declaring the city's aspiration to be recognized as an Intercultural City, this objective is indirectly aligned with the declaration against hate speech adopted by the Kuopio City Council in 2018. Furthermore, the same goal is reinforced by the [Kuopio Non-Discrimination and Equality Plan 2022-2025](#), which was updated in 2022 and approved by the City Board in November of the same year.

The city currently lacks an adopted intercultural integration strategy, a diversity/inclusion strategy, or an intercultural action plan. Nevertheless, following the Finnish Integration Act, Kuopio has an integration programme, which will be updated during 2024. The **Kuopio Integration Plan** ([Kuopion kotoutumishjelma](#)) includes topics such as integration measures to promote employment, learning of Finnish language, adult education, child care, housing, etc., along with promoting intercultural dialogue and good relations. The plan is connected to the [Kuopio's 2030 Strategy](#).

Furthermore, Kuopio does not have a specific body or cross-departmental coordination structure responsible for implementing intercultural strategies. There is also no adopted process of public consultation open to all residents, including those from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Additionally, there is no dedicated website addressing intercultural or integration-related questions.

Official communications from the city do not reference its commitment to interculturalism, nor does it acknowledge or honour local residents or organizations that have made exceptional contributions to promoting interculturalism within the community.

It is worth to mention that Kuopio is one of the Finnish cities involved in the “**Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland**” EU/CoE joint project. The project provides technical support to the implementation of inclusive integration policies based on the [Finnish Good Relations](#) concept and the Council of Europe's Intercultural Integration model. The aim is to improve community relations and to support better integration of migrants across society in areas such as participation, education, cultural and social life, urban planning, business, labour market, anti-discrimination, and multilingualism. The Good Relations Model, promoted by the Finnish Ministry of Justice, provides indicators for the comprehensive fostering of equality between people.

Suggestions

There is room to improve Kuopio's commitment to intercultural principles and policies. Introducing the intercultural approach in Kuopio could be quite easy, as it implies reinforcing the storytelling about its intercultural work, including ideas already present in its programs such as equality and non-discrimination, good relations, interactivity, etc.

Several cities have made important efforts to communicate their intercultural commitment. In the Finnish context, and following the national Integration Act, Vaasa has an integration programme ([Kotouttamishjelma](#)) required by law. The **Integration Programme 2023-2026** is developed by the Vaasa Multiculturalism Board and aims the city “to be a good home for everyone”. The integration programme does not describe existing services or structures, and mainly provides a conceptual framework for integration as a starting point (see below) to create a common understanding of the broader dimensions of integration. The goals of the integration programme are concrete actions, chosen and formulated in cooperation with different lines of business and representatives of organizations and associations whose work promotes and develops good integration. The integration programme contains seven dimensions: work, living, education, health and wellbeing, social relations and contacts, services for the children and young people, and safety, and there are different working groups composed by professionals from different areas (education, employment, health, etc.). The programme includes an annual evaluation, the first expected in 2024. The Integration Programme is coordinated by the **Integration Unit** in the municipality, which has as main responsibility to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

Similarly, the district of Neukölln (Berlin, Germany) published “Normalising Integration - Living together in an intercultural metropolis”, a comprehensive policy document that also is a set of principles of good governance. The concept was developed in a participative process including the local migration advisory board as well as the integration committee. The full version also contains the complete list of the measures and projects being

implemented by the Neukölln District Office. They were developed with an intercultural lens, having in mind the district's vision of integration as the empowerment for equal participation in our society. As a matter of principle, the focus is on the people of the district as a whole. The five guiding principles of the intercultural work of the district are also detailed in the policy document and are the following: Promoting equity in education; empowering people instead of just providing for them; taking a holistic approach; acting pragmatically and transparently; and enforcing democratic values and rules.

Otherwise, in the Portuguese city of Cascais, the municipality created the Municipal Merit Award to honour local citizens or organisations that have done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community.

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

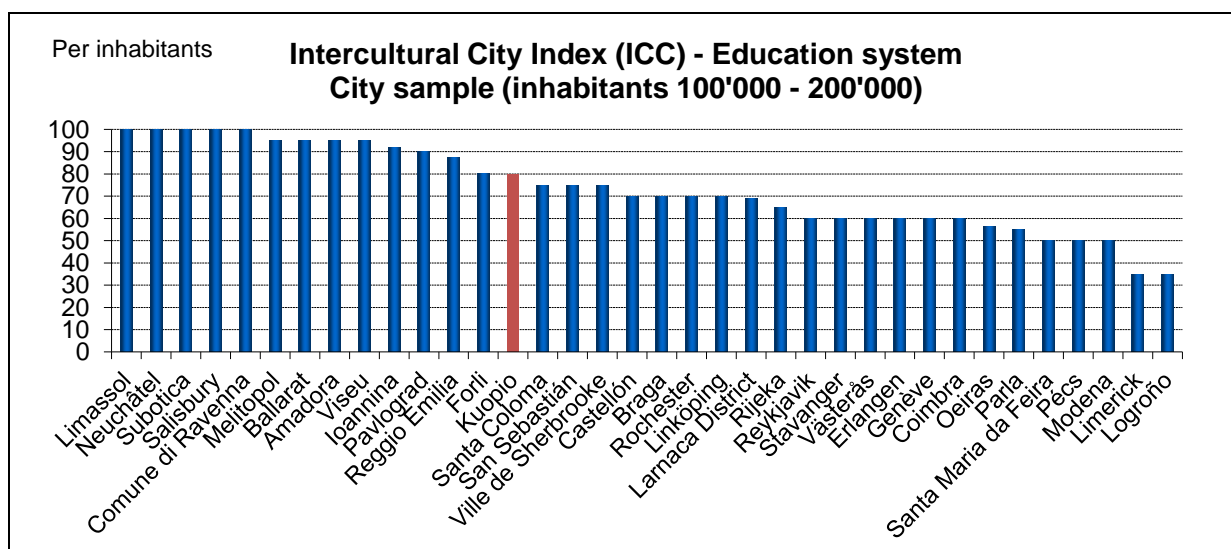
Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore be re-conceived and re-configured in order to assure they provide adequate service to all residents regardless of their nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientation and age group. This is most notably the case for policies concerning education, neighbourhoods, public services, business and the labour market, cultural and social life, and public space.

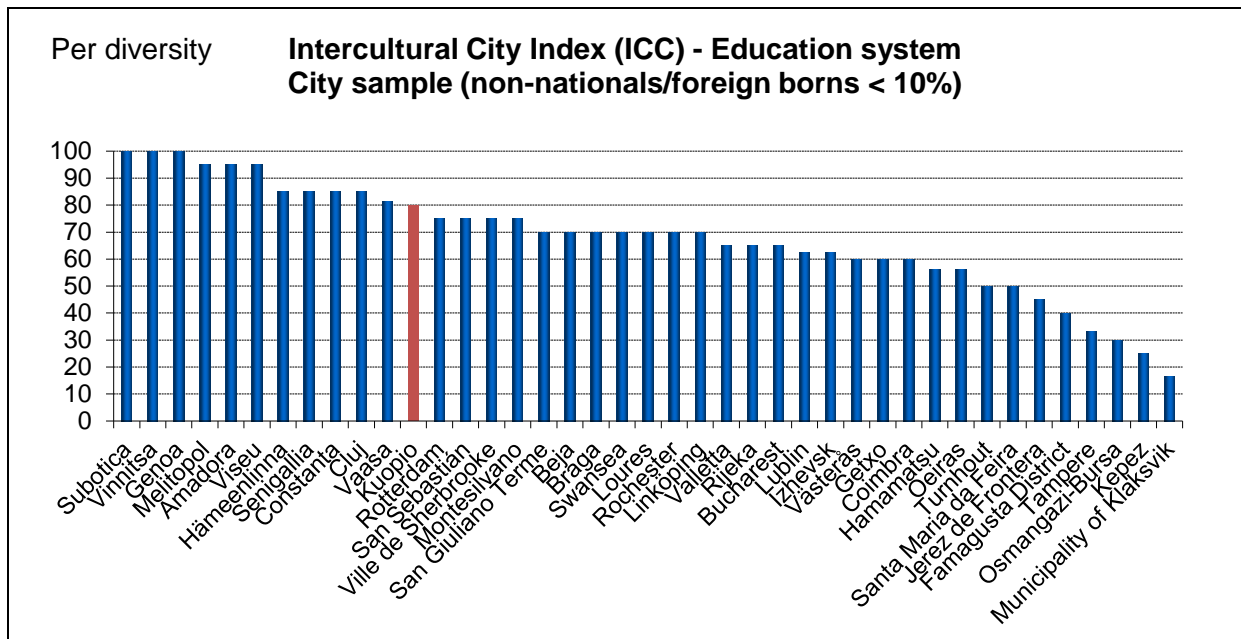
The overall rate of achievement of the urban policies of Kuopio, assessed as a whole through an "intercultural lens" is slightly higher to that of the model city: 65% of these objectives were achieved while the rate of achievement of the model city reaches 62%.

EDUCATION

Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Schools therefore have a strong potential to reinforce or, on the contrary, challenge prejudices and negative stereotyping. Although school programmes are defined primarily at the national or regional level, local schools can look at alternative and innovative ways of providing 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. From the intercultural perspective, cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools also consider parents of pupils with migrant/minority backgrounds on an equal basis as other parents. They 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.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 80%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 70%.





In Kuopio, like all of Finland, basic education is provided free of charge. The compulsory education of a child permanently residing in Finland begins at the age of seven and continues until they reach 18 years of age or complete an upper secondary qualification (or equivalent). Typically, children are enrolled in schools closest to their residence in the city, which may result in certain areas having a higher representation of people with different languages or backgrounds than others.

In most primary schools in Kuopio, children tend to share the same ethnic or cultural background, and the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of teachers sometimes reflect the overall composition of the city's population.

Many schools in Kuopio actively strive to involve parents with migrant or minority backgrounds in school life. These efforts include providing information in accessible and friendly formats, engaging arts or faith groups, organizing inclusive meetings to help educators understand diverse family concepts, hosting festive occasions to celebrate culinary or artistic traditions, and initiating collaborative projects like intercultural gardens within schools. These efforts contribute to fostering an inclusive and welcoming school environment that respects and celebrates the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all families.

Similarly, most schools carry out intercultural projects to promote cultural awareness and understanding among students. Some of the activities commonly include organizing intercultural festivals, study visits to cultural centres, debates on topical issues, and open days where students can showcase their skills and achievements. These projects help to create a more inclusive and diverse learning environment that celebrates the different cultures and backgrounds of students.

Beyond schools, it is worth to mention that the Savonia University of Applied Sciences is in Kuopio. This is a multicultural institution that welcomes students from all over the world. The university offers a variety of degree programs in English, which makes it a great option for international students who want to study in Finland. The University has a welcoming and supportive environment for international students. There are various services and resources available to help international students integrate into Finnish society and the university community, such as language courses, cultural events, and mentorship programs. Internationals and Finnish students are often sitting in the same room for lectures, group work and different types of classroom activities. They are involved in different types of group work in a multicultural way. It provides an opportunity for students to learn from different perspectives and gain a better understanding of different cultures and ways of thinking. Overall, the presence of international and Finnish students in the same classroom creates a dynamic and enriching learning environment that benefits everyone involved.

Suggestions

Kuopio shows a good experience in education, promoting an education system that emphasizes equality, high standards, and student-centred learning. Kuopio is working to increase interculturalism in their city, combat segregation and support an intercultural educational environment for students.

To continue its work in this area, Kuopio could find inspiration in other cities. In Patras (Greece), the municipality has signed an agreement with the University of Patras targeting the Roma children. The main aim of this cooperation is the provision of holistic support to Roma children towards their full integration in the formal educational process. For the achievement of this goal, the partners will implement actions such as the operation of supportive teaching teams, problem solving and empowerment sessions for Roma pupils, as well as awareness events and activities for Roma parents, so that they acknowledge the importance of both coherent participation of their children in the learning process and their active involvement in all school activities and obligations. The expected results of this inspiring cooperation scheme is tackling the educational inequalities and marginalization of Roma pupils by applying a more participatory methodology and improving the activation process for minimizing the educational dropout.

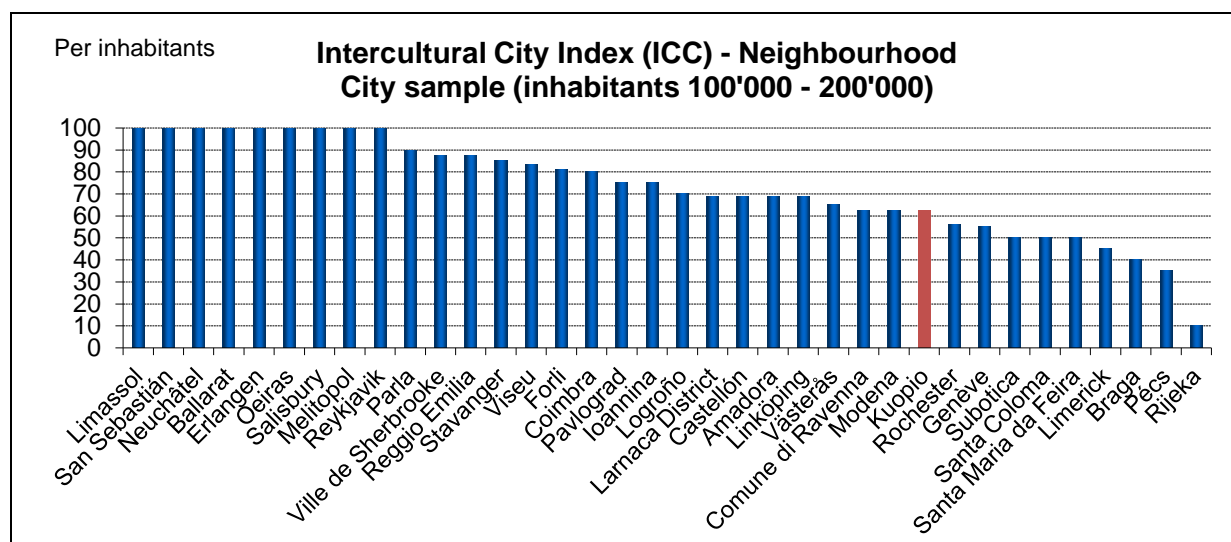
In the city of Donostia/San Sebastian (Spain), the project ["Ongi etorri eskolara" \(Welcome to School\)](#) consists of appointing (volunteer) mentor families to help newcomer families to be part of the local community. Usually, families have children in the same class so that the two-year programme of support can include both academic and extra-curricular activities. The interaction and exchange of cultures is crucial for the programme, but the main focus is the shared situation (parents with children at the same school and in the same classes). The programme has had positive impacts so far on teachers, classes, students and parents, while raising awareness about the diversity advantage for the overall population.

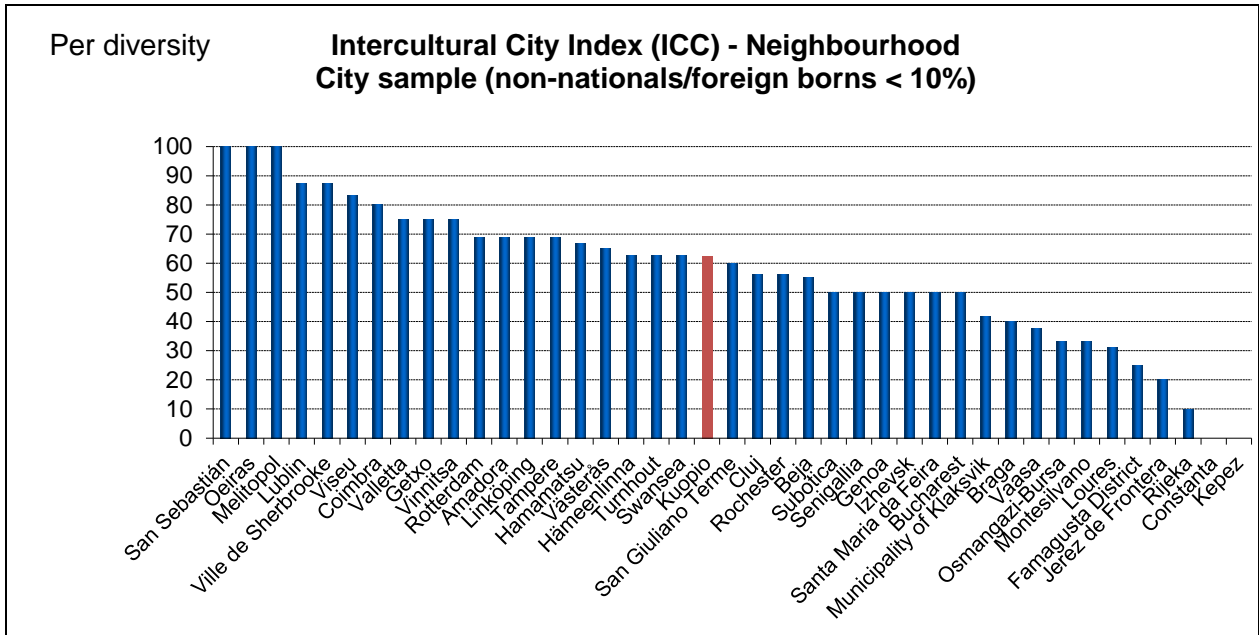
Lastly, ICC programme resources on education are also available [here](#).

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within a city, districts, neighbourhoods, or other territorial sub-units, can be more or less culturally/ethnically diverse. People are indeed free to move and settle in the neighbourhood of their choice. To be intercultural, a city does not require a 'perfect' statistical mix of people in all neighbourhoods. It will however make sure that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood does not convert into socio-cultural segregation, and does not act as a barrier to the inward and outward flow of people, ideas and opportunities. In particular, the intercultural city ensures the same quality of public service delivery in all the neighbourhoods and plans public space, infrastructures, social, cultural and sport activities to encourage intercultural and socio-economic mixing and interaction.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 63%, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68%.



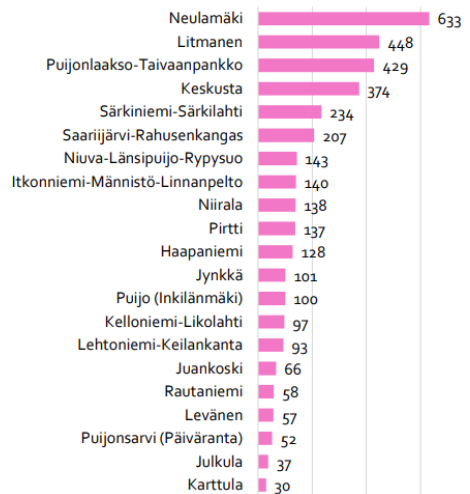


In Kuopio, few districts are culturally or ethnically diverse.

Foreign citizens living in Kuopio by sub-area 2023

Sub-areas, with most foreign citizens

In Kuopio foreign citizens are scattered across the sub-areas.



Source: [Foreigners in Kuopio 2022](#)

It is a principle of the city of Kuopio to try to avoid ethnic concentration and to support the diversity in the districts for example in city planning and housing services.

The city of Kuopio does not actively promote initiatives to facilitate interactions between residents of different neighbourhoods with diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds. However, it does encourage residents, especially those with migrant or minority backgrounds, to engage and interact with others within their own neighbourhoods. The Department for Wellbeing Promotion in Kuopio organizes yearly neighbourhood events called 'Lähiössä' in approximately five districts during the spring months. These events are open to all residents of the respective areas. Additionally, the annual city festival '[Meidän Kuopio](#)' ('Our Kuopio' in Finnish) includes activities where immigrants are welcomed. For instance, the 'Night of Arts' ('Taiteiden yö') event features live music and has seen active participation, including dancing, from foreign residents joining the event in the city's central marketplace.

[Suggestions](#)

There is room for improvement in the neighborhood area by promoting awareness throughout the entire city and encouraging interaction among residents in different parts of the city.

Kuopio could get also inspired by the experience of Sabadell (Spain) and its [Mescla't \(Mix It Up\) project](#). This is a one-day festivity to celebrate the city's diversity, fostering social inclusion and human rights. The programme of that day includes different activities in the public space: concerts, traditional music, various workshops, seminars, photo exhibitions, etc. Although it is led by the City Council, it is designed and developed with social organisations. "Mescla't" is a unique opportunity to gather organisations and people with a committed programme with the rights of all the citizens and the equality in the public space. "Mescla't" is also useful for the organizations to meet in a common space and to know better each other, so they start collaborations that bring up different areas (for example, to implement projects together with a double purpose: gender and human rights, or LGTBI and cooperation).

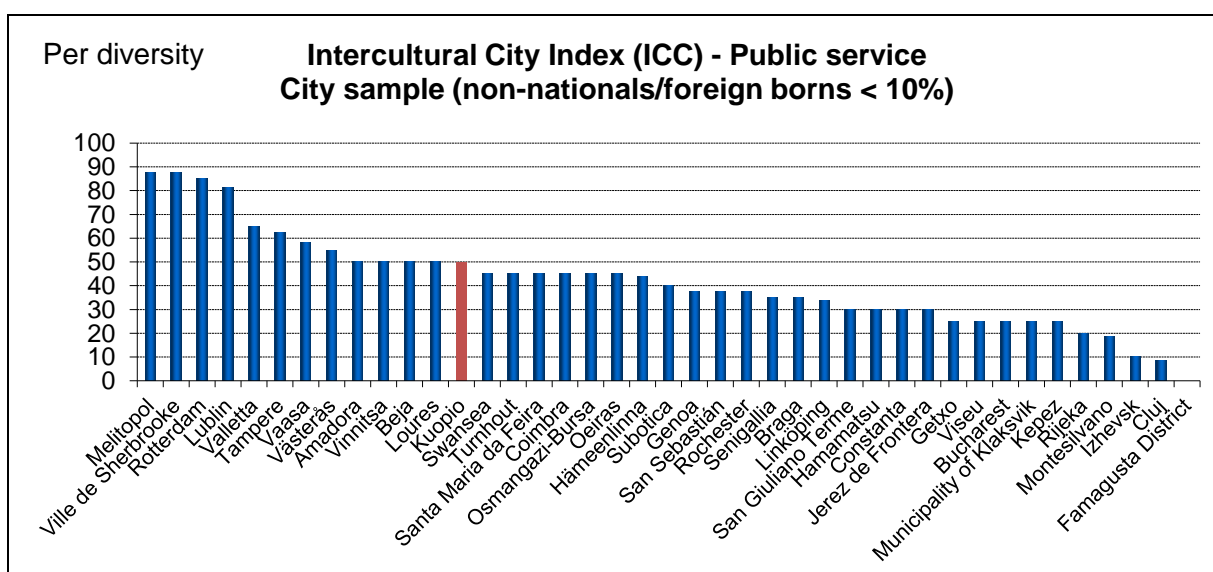
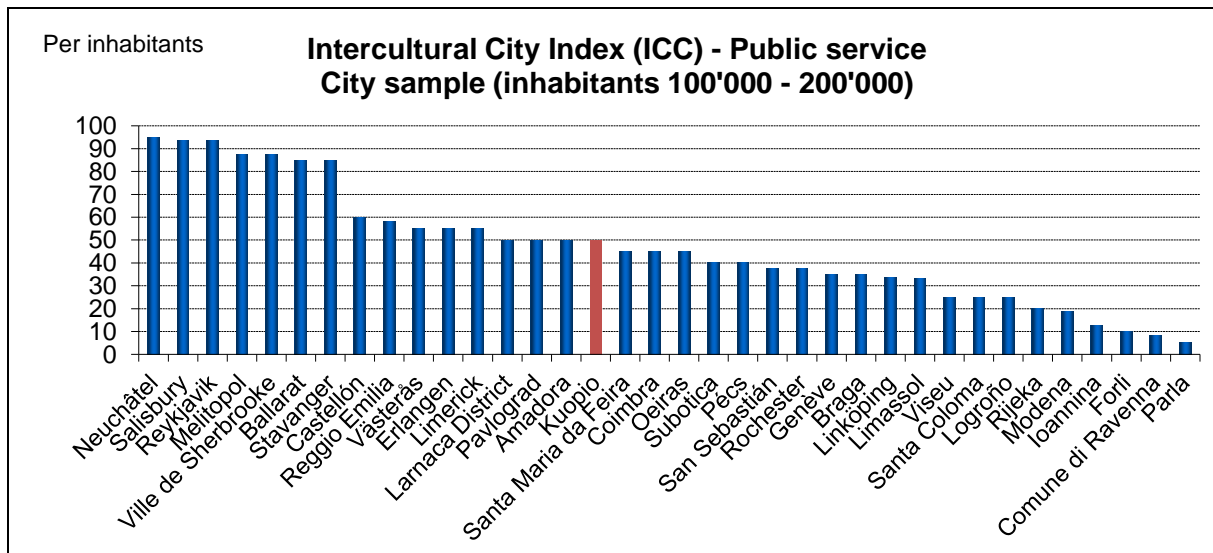
In Loures (Portugal), the 'Bairro e o Mundo' (Neighbourhood and the World) project aims regenerating a stigmatised neighbourhood through large-scale art. Quinta do Mocho was for many years the most stigmatized of neighbourhoods in Loures, associated with poverty, crime and ethnic exclusion. Through Loures' membership of the C4i project, a determined effort was made to change the district's image amongst the citizens of the wider region. During October 2014, a set of breath-taking frescos were painted on 33 buildings in the neighbourhood, with the help of 2000 artists and local residents, 25 NGOs and 43 private companies. The area was transformed into a Public Art Gallery. Since October 2014, the C4i team in Loures hosted 46 visits from enterprises and artists, including 28 guided tours and 18 media tours and including interviews for newspapers, television, radio and internet. In addition, at least 80 news items from around the world covered the neighbourhood regeneration process. The evaluation of the initiative, made through empirical observation and an extensive survey, demonstrated that it has contributed to fostering social cohesion and local development through cultural expression.

The [ICC study on managing gentrification](#) offers a range of strategies and examples of how to create inclusive public space, manage positively socio-cultural mixing, nurture sense of belonging and encourage diverse businesses to thrive.

PUBLIC SERVICES

As their very name implies, public services work for the benefit of the public as a whole. If the population is diverse, public services will be more efficient in delivering adequate benefits and information if city officers, at all levels of seniority, are as diverse as the population in general. This requires much more than simply ensuring equal opportunities to access public service employment. When taking action to encourage a diverse municipal workforce, an intercultural city acknowledges that a 'one size fits all' approach to public services and actions does not guarantee equal access to public benefits. The city also recognises that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds should never be treated as passive consumers of public benefits but can contribute actively by suggesting new ideas and innovative solutions to public problems.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 50%, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 45%.



Kuopio does not currently collect data on the migrant or minority backgrounds of its public employees, and there is no specific recruitment plan in place to ensure diversity within its workforce.

However, the city has taken steps to promote diversity, intercultural mixing, and competence within the private sector. Given the current challenges in Finland regarding the lack of skilled workforce and international talents, various development projects have been initiated with EU funding, along with co-financing from the City of Kuopio, to address this issue. These projects aim to provide adequate internship opportunities in local companies and organizations for international students studying in Kuopio. Additionally, the City of Kuopio's recruitment services will soon offer anonymous job search options to enable equal opportunities for all applicants. [International House Kuopio](#), which provides employment services, shares the same goal of promoting diversity in the workforce. A dedicated business cooperation coordinator is tasked with enhancing this objective, collaborating closely with local entrepreneur organizations.

Regarding the provision of public services, Kuopio considers the migrant and minority backgrounds of its residents in various aspects. For example, special diets are considered in the city's school meals, and the needs of immigrant women are considered in the arrangements of swimming pool facilities, including women-only sections/times. It's worth noting that funeral services are not among the municipality services in Finland. As the foreign population

among residents and students continues to grow, Kuopio's approach to inclusivity is evolving positively, with more initiatives and examples emerging over time.

Suggestions

Kuopio already has some good policies in the field of public services but could explore other initiatives.

In Neuchâtel (Switzerland), the city has approved a [roadmap](#) designed not only to combat discrimination but to capitalise on diversity proactively so as to create a climate fostering creativity and dynamism. Through this innovative approach, the Canton is making an exemplary commitment to ensure that everyone is recognised as a full citizen and has equal access to public services. The roadmap included different activities through the years, stating that it is a Canton that attempts to lead the way, through its communication and its awareness-raising campaigns, and ensuring that it applies the principle of equal rights in all its activities; a Canton that provides services, ensuring that important information is available and understandable to all its population, and whose workers are trained in and aware of diversity management; and lastly, a Canton that sees to it, as an employer, that it promotes diversity and encourages job applications from people of diverse backgrounds at all hierarchical levels.

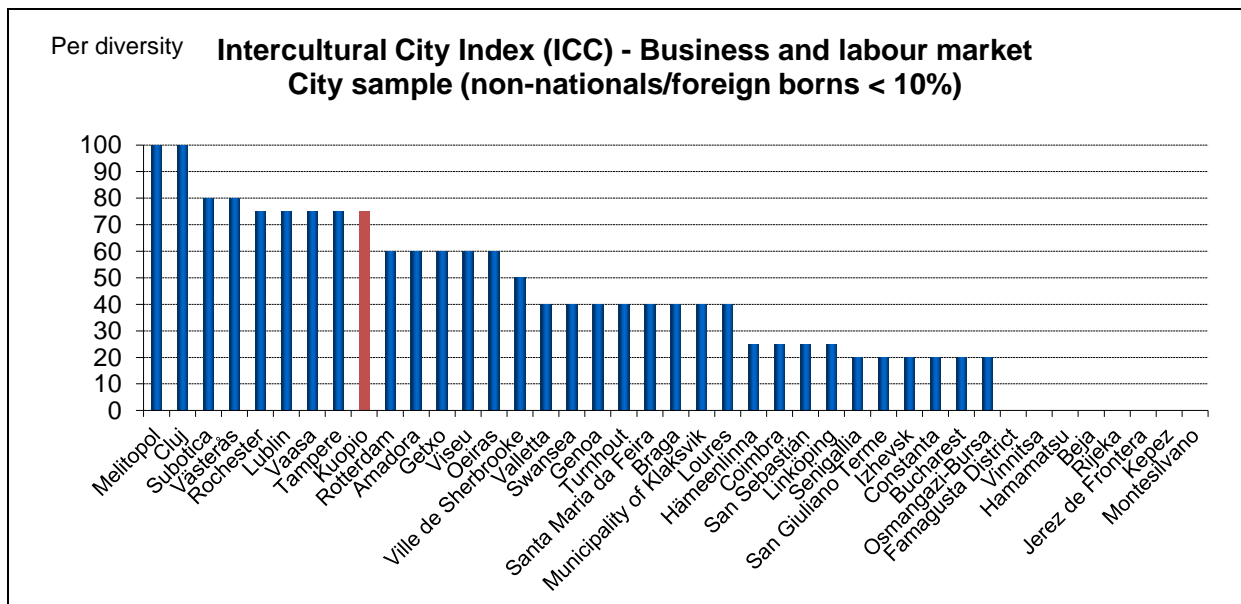
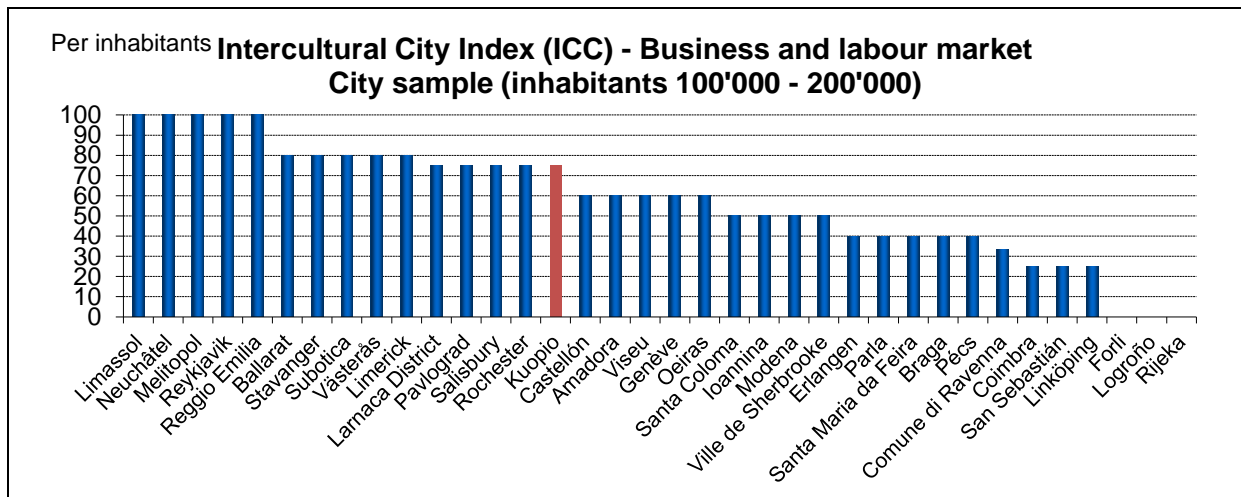
In Bergen (Norway), the public library has been developed as a place for social dialogue. The Public Library of Bergen aims to facilitate a learning hub centred around language and intercultural meetings between Norwegian residents and newcomers. The motivation behind the initiative is to enhance the inclusion and integration of newcomers in Norwegian society as well as expanding Norwegian residents' intercultural knowledge and foreign language skills. The Public Library of Bergen offers a variety of Norwegian and foreign language courses and cafés, provides books and newspapers translated in several languages, and facilitates the project Language Friends where two people can “switch” language with one another. The expected impact is to create meaningful cultural encounters between Norwegian residents and newcomers through language activities.

ICC programme resources on public and community services are available [here](#).

BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to the public sector labour markets is often restricted by national or regional legislation. When this is the case, the private sector may provide an easier route for people with migrant or diverse backgrounds to engage in economic activity. As a result, private companies and activities tend to offer much more diverse working environments than the public sector. Research has also proved that it is cultural diversity in private companies, and not homogeneity, which fosters creativity and innovation. By constantly highlighting the diversity advantage in business, and partnering with their chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, cities can influence how diversity is perceived in the private sector in such diverse sectors as shops, clubs, restaurants, industry, technical services and science.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 75%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 52%.



At the moment, “Ely-keskus” (Northern Savo Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) is the regional government office for promoting the internationalization of local business life and employment activities. The city of Kuopio is collaborating with Ely-keskus on many levels and participating in working groups and several development projects and networks. Ely-keskus is for example financing a new development project (budget over 5 million euros) with title Talent Hub Eastern Finland by August 2027. The project contains a large collaborating network of educational institutions from cities Kuopio and Joensuu regions, and it aims to help in matching international job seekers and local employers.

Kuopio is at the forefront of the ongoing TE (Employment and Economic Development Services) services reform in 2024, serving as the region's primary coordinator. This national reform entails the transfer of TE services from the state's jurisdiction to the municipality. By consolidating the responsibility for employment, municipal education, and business services under one entity, our aim is to expedite the process of employment. In conjunction with the TE services reform of 2024, we are also gearing up for the Reform of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration.

The city takes actions to encourage businesses at the local level. [Business start-up services](#) are also available to those from minorities and those intending to become entrepreneurs. Services have been developed to be more accessible by ensuring the availability of information in foreign languages. The [Uusyrityskeskus](#) (Finnish Enterprise Agency) is a key actor in helping in this matter. As a rule, the personnel working in the services are able to advise

clients not only in Finnish but also in English and, in some cases, also in less common languages. The City's Business Services Unit also provides advice. Local [employment services](#) also provide guidance and counselling services for people who are thinking about entrepreneurship. These services are open for immigrants too.

Similarly, the city encourages business districts and incubators open to all. For example the City of Kuopio's science park area consists of several business and innovation services, like the [Business Centre](#), where counselling and incubator services could be found for all business starters and also foreigners' needs considered as well. The idea is not to have extra services but services for all who need them.

Finally, there is no local normative to facilitate the procurement of goods and services in favour of companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy.

Suggestions

Although Kuopio has very high achievements in this field, it is always useful to learn from the experience of others.

In Bradford (United Kingdom), a private firm have developed an [Inclusive Employers Toolkit](#) in partnership with the local authority. This aims to help local employers to become more inclusive by providing them with a method for self-evaluation, including clear instructions for how to collect data on current levels of diversity and established practice within the business, set targets and then implement a plan to achieve these. It also provides guidance for evaluating progress and updating targets based on this new information. It does this based on five inclusion factors, relating to: talent attraction; talent development; strategic development, which assesses the quality of the inclusion strategy itself; organisational culture; and external impact, relating to the effect on customers, suppliers and the wider community. The toolkit can be used by small to large businesses. The toolkit provides links in the Resources section to numerous best practice guidance, templates and organisation that can support a business on their journey. The toolkit itself can be used to assess how inclusive an employer a business is and to evaluate progress. In this way, the council is providing leadership for the local business community, in partnership with a leading champion of inclusive business practices.

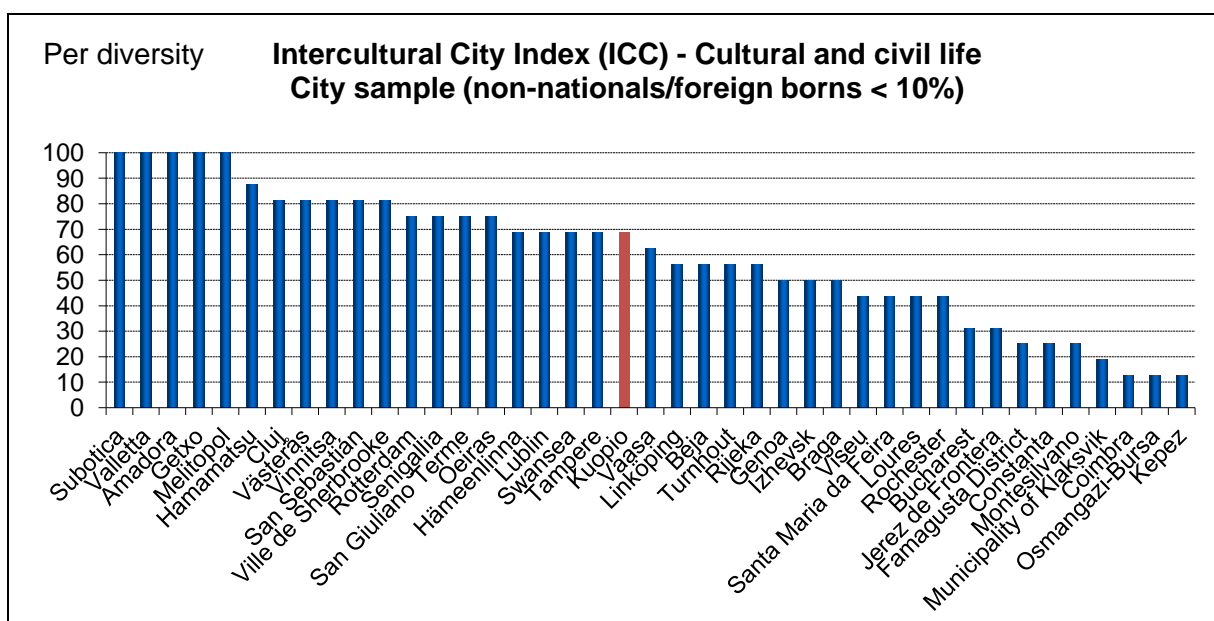
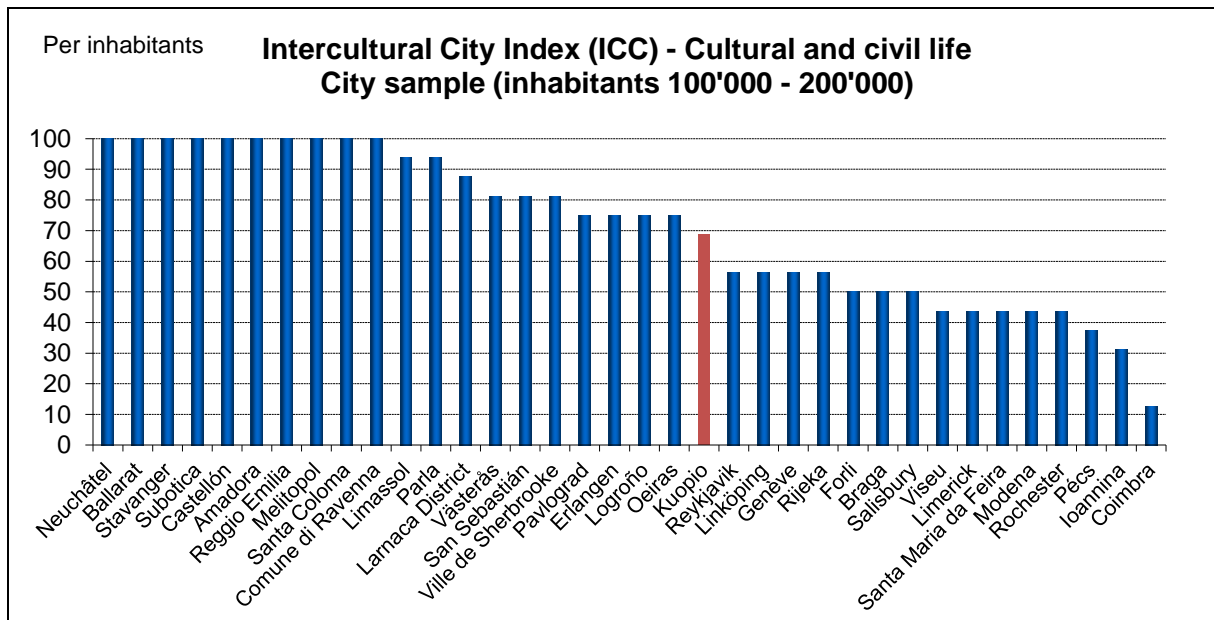
In Vienna (Austria), the city created the SpaceLab to offers support to young people, often of migration background, who are "lost in the transition". The lab is based on open and detached youth work and the goal is to provide skills about learning, communicating, gaining confidence and hope for the future. Based in 4 locations across the city, SpaceLab offers recreational activities, vocational training, coaching, sports, knowledge workshops.

ICC programme resources on business and employment are available [here](#).

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Whereas people living in a city may have different migrant/minority or other backgrounds, they very often share the same interests and satisfaction when engaging in leisure activities, especially in the fields of arts, culture and sports. Such activities are sometimes structured along ethnic lines. That is quite understandable when they aim to preserve folklore traditions or the language and history of countries of origin. What is problematic is when cross-cultural leisure activities are organised along ethnic lines, for example when a football team only accepts players from one ethnic group. The intercultural city can encourage cultural openness through its own activities and by introducing intercultural criteria when allocating resources to artistic, cultural and sports organisations.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 69% in cultural and civil life, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 72%.



Kuopio currently does not factor interculturalism into its criteria for allocating funds to associations and local initiatives. However, the city actively promotes social interaction through a variety of organized events and activities. Encouraging community engagement has long been a policy of the City of Kuopio, which urges local partners, including NGOs and those working with immigrants, to host cultural and other events. Financial support is extended to numerous third-sector organizations by the city.

The City of Kuopio hosts regular orchestra concerts that appeal to foreign residents and students, leveraging music as a universal language. Additionally, the city library is proactively integrating international perspectives into its offerings. As the city prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2025, the City Board has made a commitment, since 2023, to ensure that the anniversary year's program and events are accessible to all Kuopio residents, regardless of their background. This inclusivity initiative focuses on engaging third-sector organizations that are best positioned to reach local communities, including minorities, effectively.

The city has recently launched a specific Culture Kuopio program for years 2023 – 2030. This is a part of Kuopio's wellbeing planning. The aim of Culture Kuopio is to promote opportunities for intercultural dialogue in various ways like supporting and developing events.

Occasionally, the city of Kuopio hosts public debates and campaigns addressing cultural diversity and harmonious coexistence. Collaborating with local partners such as NGOs, Kuopio is actively engaged in various developmental initiatives. One notable partnership involves the Anti Contemporary art organization, which serves as a pioneering participant in the European-wide "[Futuredivercities](#)" development project, focusing on pertinent aspects of cultural diversity. This initiative encompasses partners from approximately 10 European cities and receives funding from the European Union (European Commission, Creative Europe program), the Finnish Ministry of Culture, and the City of Kuopio. Another local collaborator in the project is the Savonia University of Applied Sciences, situated in Kuopio.

Kuopio collaborates with various local partners, particularly in the realm of culture and diversity. One notable organization is Anti Contemporary Art, based in Kuopio, which actively engages in the EU's Creative Europe program. As a participant in a European-wide project, Anti Contemporary Art highlights pluralistic urban culture aspects, organizes performances, and supports job opportunities within the creative industries. The City of Kuopio contributes as a co-founder to the project known as Future Divercities2, demonstrating its commitment to promoting cultural diversity and creative initiatives in the community.

Suggestions

Kuopio has considerable efforts in this area, yet it could still take inspiration from other cities, particularly given the prominence of cultural infrastructures in the city.

In Braga (Portugal), the city presented its initiative "[Braga: an Intercultural Journey](#)". The project introduces Human Library sessions across schools in the municipality as part of its mission to foster dialogue, respect for human rights, and combat stereotypes. Through the Human Library initiative, individuals share their personal immigrant experiences, reflecting on leaving behind family, changing careers, and starting anew in a foreign land like Braga, Portugal. These sessions, occurring online or face-to-face in schools, offer a platform for intercultural dialogue, challenging stereotypes, and promoting the inclusion and integration of migrants within the school community. Instead of traditional books, "human books" engage with readers, sharing their immigrant journeys and fostering mutual learning. Developed under the DiverCidade Braga Project, this initiative aims to showcase the diverse immigrant population in Braga, combat stereotypes, and promote dialogue among communities. From Senegal to Côte d'Ivoire, participants share their migration stories, discussing reasons for leaving their home countries, choosing Braga as their destination, and their experiences of settling in. The project has seen the participation of 17 human books in face-to-face sessions and the publication of 108 video testimonials, reflecting the impactful exchange of personal narratives and the promotion of understanding among diverse communities.

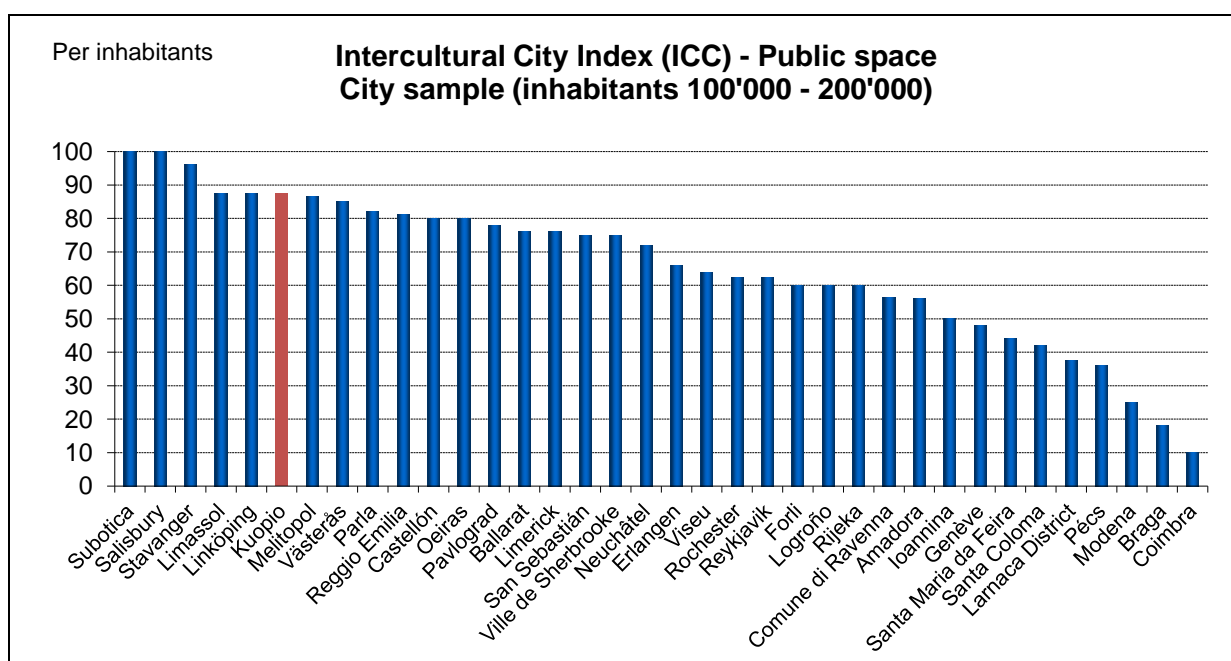
In Dudelange (Canada), the art project "Quartier Italie en couleurs" worked from 2009 to 2019. The project aimed to revitalize the image of the neighbourhood by empowering residents to positively impact their living environment. Young people are the ambassadors of these changes within the neighbourhood and their families. The project introduces students to contemporary art forms, specifically "Street art," as they paint the neighbourhood's stairs. It involves mentoring students from Lycée Nic Biever and children from Diddelfamill to collectively create a representative work reflecting their aspirations. The goal is to empower young people to view their artistic actions as enhancing their neighbourhood. Positioning them as artists enables them to co-create civic actions, fostering community participation in the Quartier Italie. The initiative aims to engage youth in beautifying their surroundings, instilling a sense of ownership and awareness of the challenges involved in such efforts. By fostering collective respect for group efforts, the project aims to enhance community life. It seeks to showcase the neighbourhood's

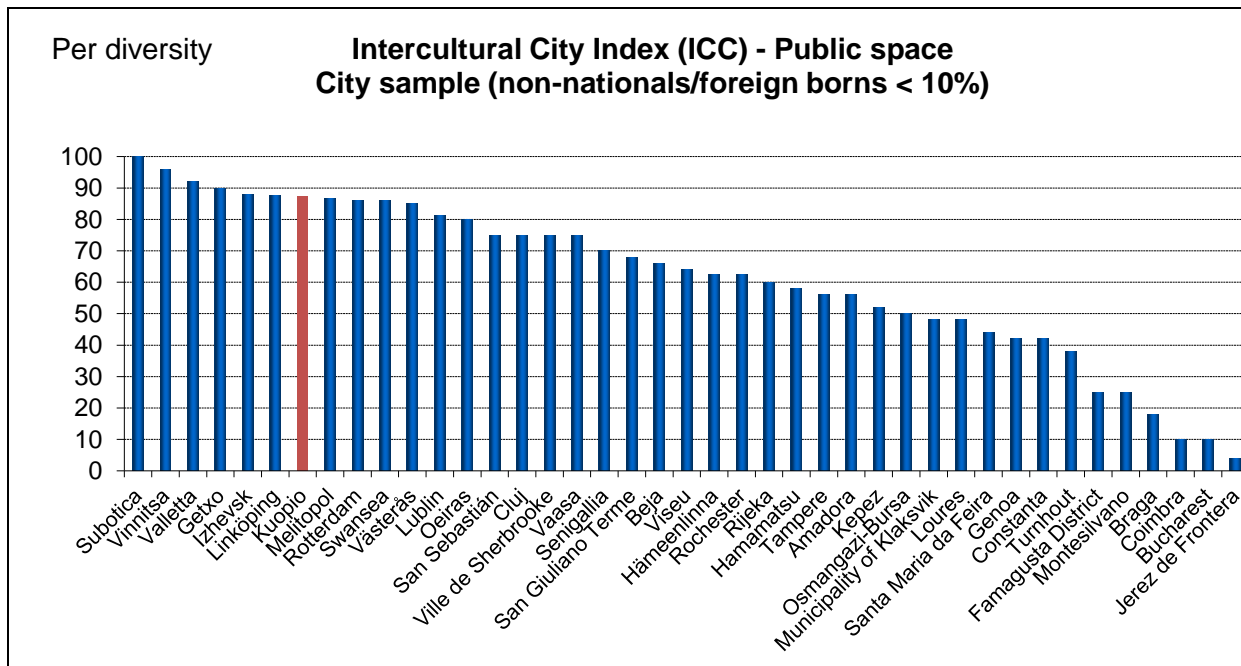
talents and foster individual and collective identities among participants, promoting cohesion for future projects. Cooperation involves schools, the Red Cross refugee center, and the Youth Center.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) and facilities (public buildings, day centres, schools, health centres, etc.) are places which most citizens are obliged to use. They offer the possibility of meeting people of different nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups. For encounters between diverse people to actually occur, such spaces and facilities should be designed and animated in a way that all residents feel comfortable when using them. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the “other”. When this is the case, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions largely support by them.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 88%, which is higher than the city sample’s achievement rate of 67%.





Kuopio takes action to encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public space. The city promotes and encourages intercultural initiatives in libraries, museums, playgrounds, squares, and public parks. The City of Kuopio adheres to the principle of providing open and inclusive public services accessible to all residents regardless of their background. Rather than creating separate services for immigrants and Finnish residents, efforts are focused on ensuring equal access for everyone. This includes translating general information on public services into multiple languages, employing service design methods, and collaborating with organizations familiar with the needs of diverse communities. Public parks, outdoor and indoor sports facilities, libraries, and museums are designed to appeal to residents of both Finnish and foreign backgrounds, with a particular emphasis on ensuring safety for all users through the implementation of a dedicated safe spaces protocol. Additionally, the city-owned community college has a longstanding tradition of offering a wide range of language courses to cater to the linguistic needs of its citizens. These initiatives collectively contribute to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment where all residents can access and benefit from public services.

The city is deeply committed to ensuring accessibility in the planning of public buildings and spaces, prioritizing inclusivity to ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate and enjoy these areas. Through the organization of workshops and events, diverse perspectives and ideas are gathered, fostering community engagement, and ensuring the consideration of various needs and preferences in decision-making processes.

Expanding events to include different languages, especially English, can significantly enhance international participation and cultural exploration, promoting a more inclusive and diverse community atmosphere. This facilitates a richer exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives, ultimately benefiting the overall development and growth of the city.

Language accessibility is as crucial as physical accessibility, and providing translations or offering events in multiple languages can bridge communication barriers and create a more welcoming environment for international participants. By embracing these initiatives, the city is taking substantial steps towards fostering inclusivity, diversity, and cultural exchange, enhancing community engagement, and contributing to the overall vibrancy and prosperity of the city.

When deciding to reconstruct an area, Kuopio does use different methods to involve people from different backgrounds. The city is actively engaging residents through events and workshops, but ensuring inclusivity for those with migrant or different language backgrounds is crucial. To improve participation, communication and explanations should be available in English alongside Finnish, using translation services or bilingual materials. Hosting events in English can also enhance inclusivity and encourage engagement from international residents.

Additionally, online participation tools should be accessible and user-friendly for people with diverse language backgrounds, potentially through translations or multilingual options to create a welcoming environment for all participants.

The city does not have areas in which people feel unwelcome or unsafe.

Suggestions

Cities are encouraged to strengthen policies and actions to support a public space for all. Kuopio has already taken several steps to increase the accessibility of the public space and could draw further inspiration from other local practices.

In Leeds (United Kingdom), the city launched an initiative to transform a common public space through cooperation. The city demonstrates a commitment to inclusive public spaces through its 'Our Spaces' Strategy, which aims to cater to all ages, abilities, and diverse communities. Several projects have been implemented, including the creation and improvement of spaces like Playhouse Gardens, Woodhouse Gardens, and Queen Square, with more planned for areas like Cookridge Street and Meadow Lane. The city employs stakeholder mapping exercises to engage relevant groups early in the project development process, ensuring their feedback is considered in project outcomes. Additionally, initiatives like the communications campaign in Harehills address community cohesion by involving multiple sectors and partners to promote positive behaviour and facilitate local resident engagement through various activities.

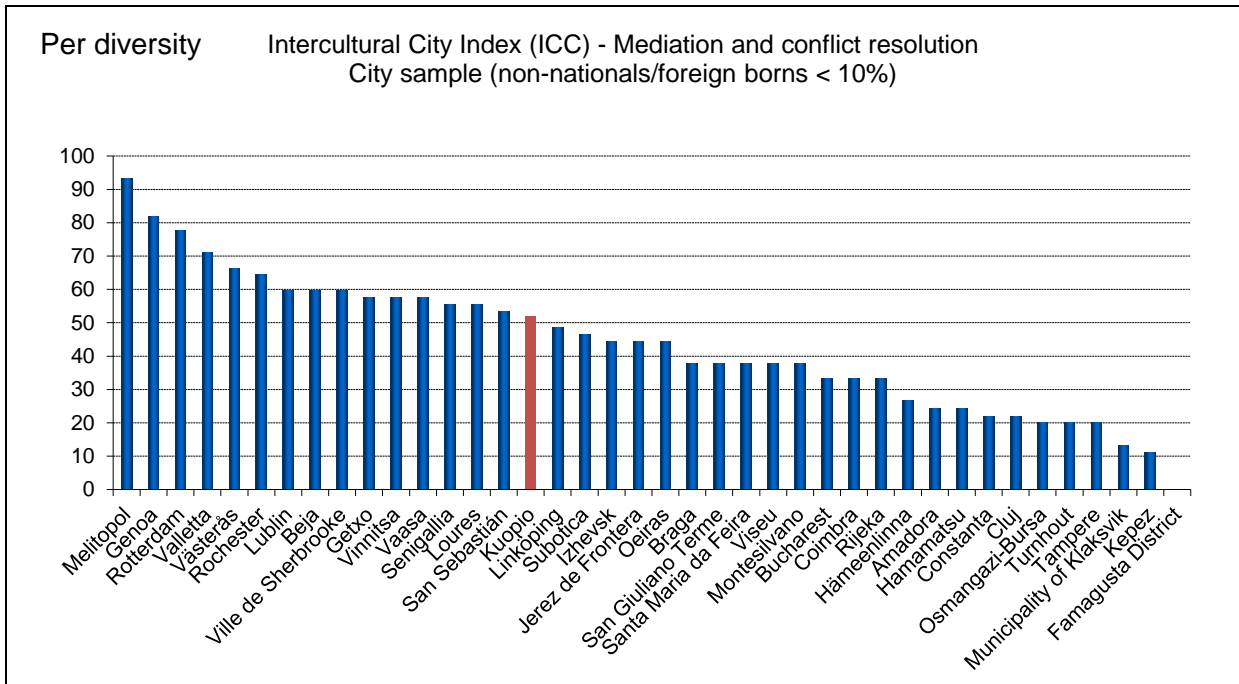
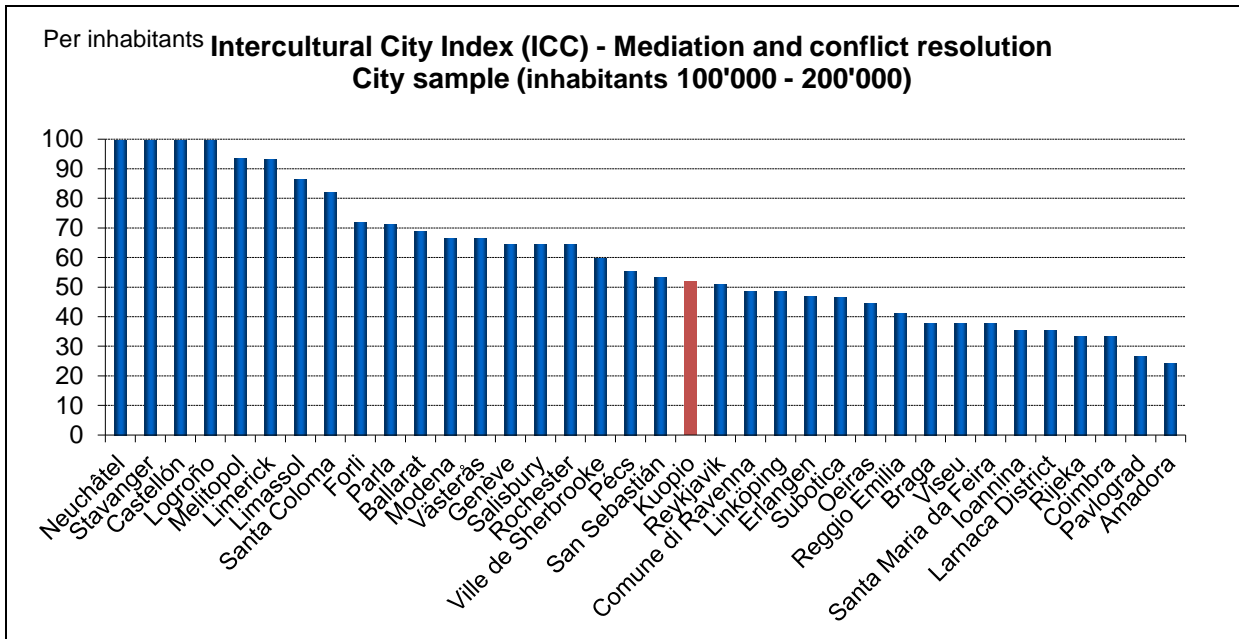
In the area of urban renewal, Montreal (Canada) has a universal design guide for new buildings and the extension, renovation and maintenance of existing city buildings; a universal design policy supplements regulations that include technical criteria to be met when designing or refurbishing buildings or public spaces. Following the entry into force of these instruments, the city has, for instance, worked on standardising the design of public spaces so as to make it easier for people who do not speak French or have intellectual or visual impairments to find their way about; it provides family changing/locker rooms accessible to everyone (persons with reduced mobility, assisted by a person of the opposite sex, prams, LGBTQ +); it provides level or gently sloping routes for persons with reduced mobility, prams, delivery workers, staff with cleaning/maintenance equipment; and it also provides new short, direct routes and resting places for elderly people and short or overweight people, convalescents or people with other mobility issues.

ICC programme resources on housing, public spaces and urban planning are available [here](#).

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In diverse societies there is always the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over values, behaviour or resources. In cities, where people with different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses live together in close proximity, such tensions are natural and indeed part of everyday life. Instead of denying, ignoring, or repressing conflict, the intercultural city seeks to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction of all protagonists without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The intercultural city views conflict as a normal feature of free, dynamic and communicative communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 52%, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement of 58%.



Kuopio does not have a dedicated mediation service, but instead addresses cases individually, seeking consultation from a local network of relevant stakeholders, including specialized authorities. Given the relatively small proportion of immigrants in Kuopio, comprising only a few percent of the total population, and concentrated in one medium-sized residential area, serious conflicts are rare. However, the city remains proactive in preparing for potential challenges through ongoing network and partner cooperation, intervening early when issues arise. Additionally, Kuopio efforts to collaborate with representatives of minority groups to jointly address emerging challenges and find effective solutions.

The city provides intercultural mediation for general purposes. Dealing with intercultural challenges involves various city departments and services. For instance, the central administration's security manager and the employment services' integration services play crucial roles in addressing these issues. Specifically, the city's

security manager is responsible for developing the contingency plan, with collaboration from the immigration coordinator.

The city does not have an organization or unit specifically dedicated to inter-religious relations. However, Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox parishes serve as important stakeholder partners in the city's immigration services.

Suggestions

There is room for improvement for Kuopio regarding intercultural mediation. If the municipality is interested in expanding its work in this area, it could be interested in the case of Modena (Italy). The [Punto d'accordo - Centro di mediazione dei conflitti](#) is the social mediation centre of the Municipality of Modena, which deals with the peaceful resolution of small conflicts such as disputes with neighbours, among relatives, disagreements between young people and adults, and misunderstandings between teachers, parents, and students. The social mediation service offered by the center is free of charge. The centre provides information and guidance to citizens experiencing conflict situations, listens to the parties involved, mediates between them, and designs and manages negotiation interventions. Mediation, conducted by a third party, allows the parties to tell their conflict, facilitating a reopening of dialogue. "Punto d'Accordo" was initiated by the Centro Servizi per il Volontariato di Modena, the Municipality of Modena, and Acer Modena. The structure also collaborates with Social Services, the Municipal Departments of Environment, Education, Youth Policies, and Sports, the Family Centre, schools, municipal police, sports clubs, the Foreigners Centre, district offices, and volunteer associations.

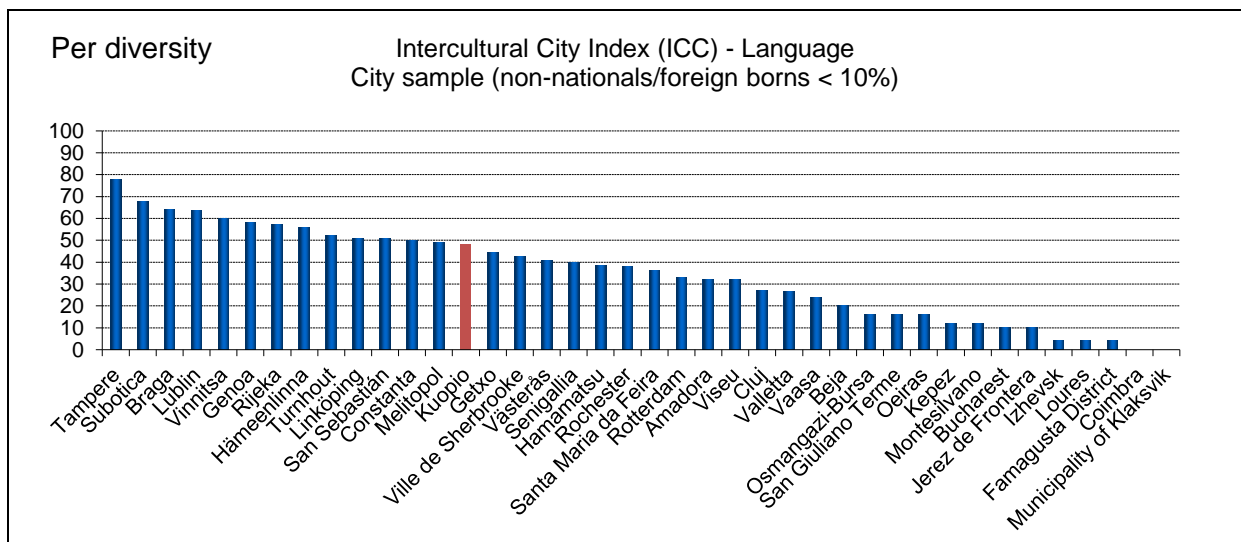
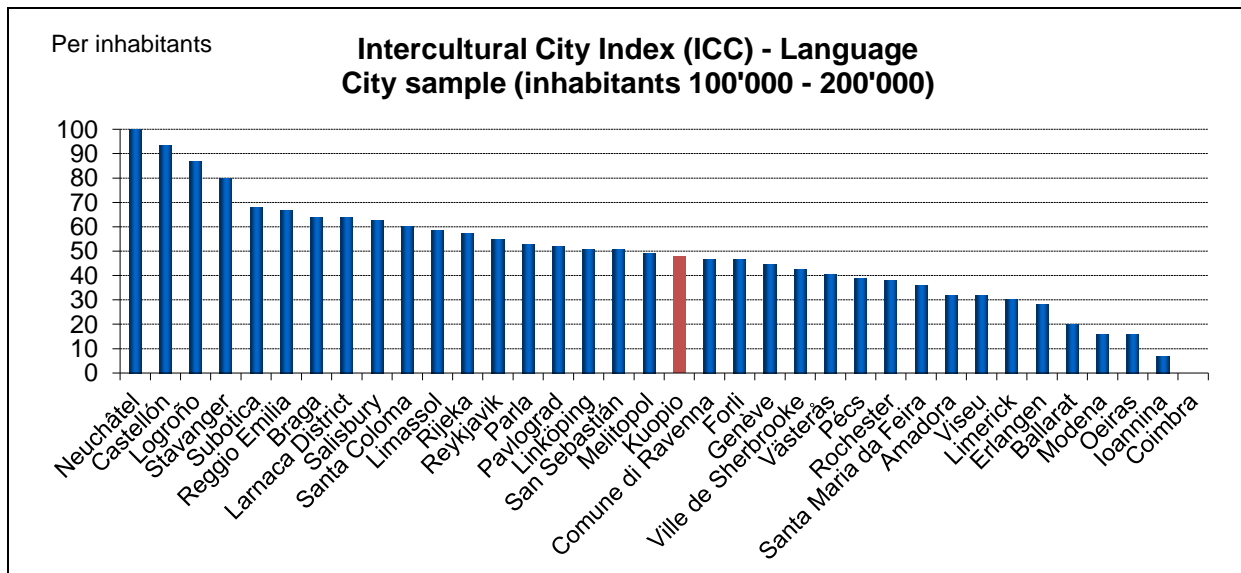
In Oslo (Norway), the mediation panel organised by the Norwegian Peoples Aid is a service where victims of discrimination can present their complaints, get advice, and engage in dialogue through mediation with the offenders the police and the discrimination tribunal in cases that don't meet the criteria of documentation and evidence required by the law for prosecution. The panel provides professional mediation services; outreach and counselling to victims organized by the Norwegian Centre Against Racism and Queer World; courses for businesses, organizations and public services on how to recognize and prevent discrimination; and an annual conference on human rights, in collaboration with the Oslo Pride Foundation and other stakeholders.

ICC programme resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available [here](#).

LANGUAGE

The provision of courses and other facilities for people with migrant backgrounds to learn the receiving country's language(s) is important to ensure social and economic integration. It does however need to be supplemented with activities which highlight the value of other languages, and enable people with migrant origins not only to preserve and transmit their languages to their children and other members of the community, but also to take pride in them as a heritage enriching the local community. An intercultural city promotes multilingualism as a resource for education, business, tourism, cultural life, etc. It underlines the value of all languages present in the city, for instance by giving opportunities to diverse language speakers to express themselves in their mother tongue in public and at cultural events and by promoting all events that offer opportunities for linguistic exchanges and mixing.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 48%, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46%.



Finnish law outlines the organization of language teaching in comprehensive schools and the realization of the right to study one's mother tongue. Municipalities like Kuopio can supplement these services by offering additional programs through the city's community college, separate projects, or by financially supporting NGO partners to organize language courses. Kuopio has been at the forefront of government projects, experimenting with innovative approaches to language teaching, with successful practices integrated into everyday work. Municipalities are required to address these issues in their official integration program documents, as mandated by Finnish law. Employment services in Kuopio provide "Welcome to Finland" courses through the local multicultural centre Kompassi, operated by the NGO organization Puijola, a key partner in Kuopio's initiatives. Integration training is also offered by TE-services, the local government office. Additionally, Finnish language courses are available through various educational organizations, including local universities.

The city currently lacks initiatives aimed at raising awareness of migrant or minority languages. However, it has previously co-funded a minority language newspaper. Despite this, the city does not actively support projects that aim to promote positive images of minority languages.

Suggestions

Kuopio could be interested in improving language provision, including more languages (besides English) in the local services and communications.

In Barcelona (Spain), the Espai Avinyó-Llengua i Cultura (Avinyo Space-Language and Culture) is a project under the BCN Interculturality Programme. It promotes the recognition and knowledge of cultural diversity, through cultural-activity programmes in order to improve interculturality and developing a culture of openness and citizens' rights and diversity. The Espai Avinyó aims to be a dialogue and a meeting space for promoting reflection on what cultural diversity implies in every sphere of society and on the challenges involved in exchanging knowledge from various parts of the world. Its goal is to boost the principles of interculturality by raising the profiles of and lending recognition to the various forms of cultural expression found in Barcelona. It does this under a quarterly programme of free activities open to everyone. These activities come in several formats (talks, itineraries, cinefora, workshops, artistic exhibitions etc.). The Espai Avinyó also creates exhibitions with an intercultural approach that are at the disposal of the city's facilities and associations which aim to work, through the exhibition, on intercultural perspectives. The quality and impact of the Espai Avinyó's activities are continually assessed through forms that are given out to attendees. These forms are not only aimed at assessing the public's level of satisfaction with the activities but also the extent to which these have proved useful for achieving the Espai Avinyó's goals, as an intercultural project. In this regard, and bearing in mind the principles of interculturality, in 2018 approximately 89% of the attendees who assessed the Espai Avinyó's activities considered that cultural diversity had been recognised in the activities.

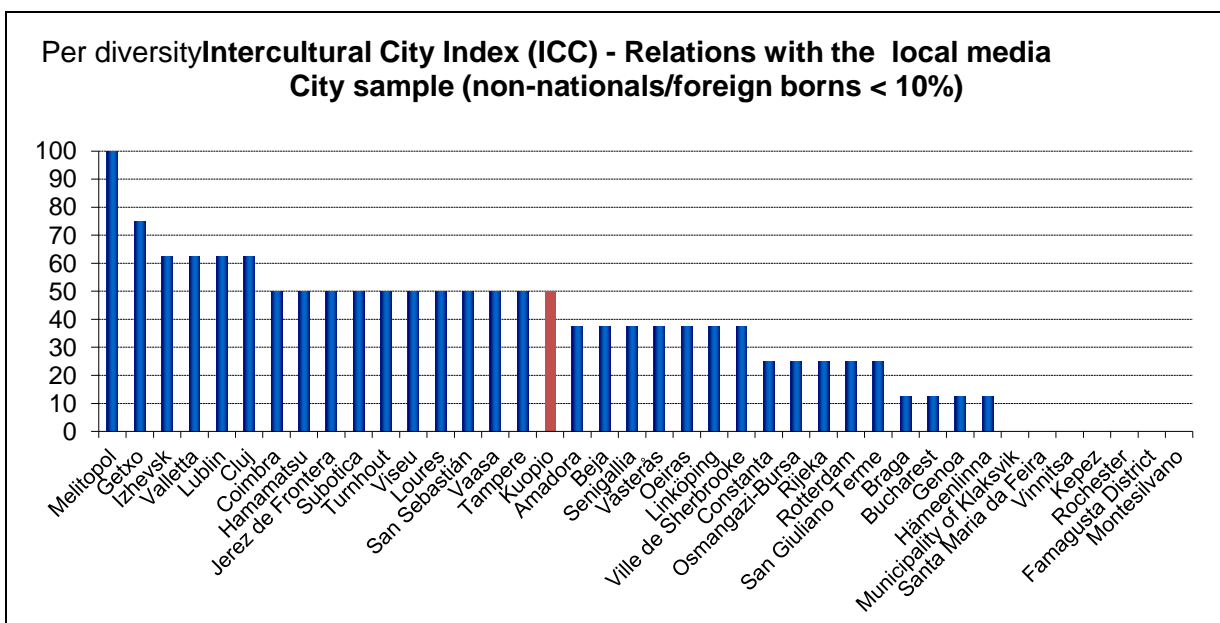
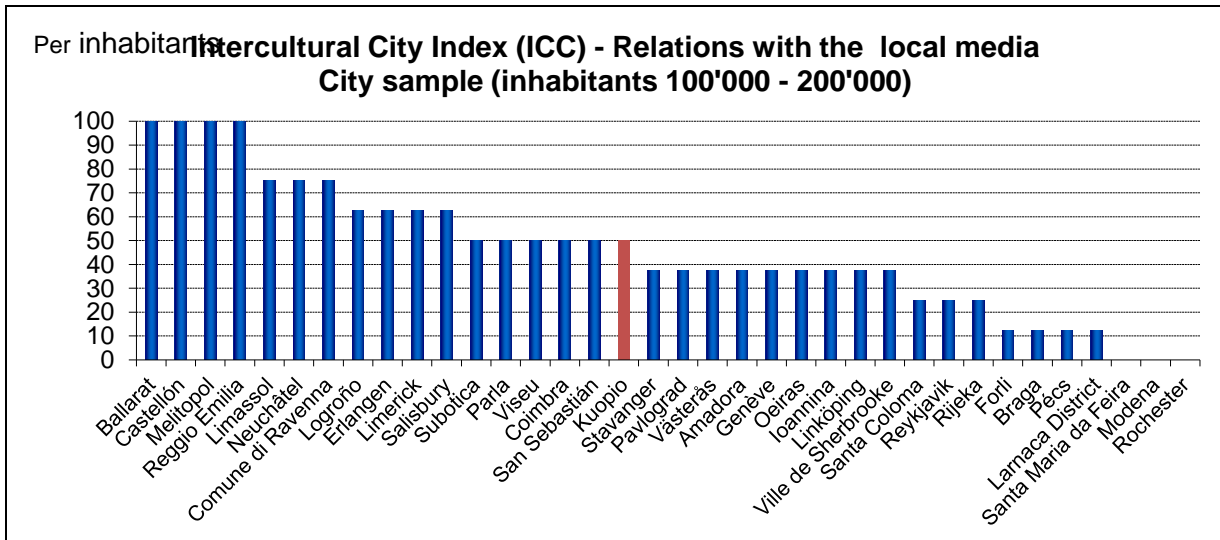
The city of Auckland (Australia) participates in the Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week), a celebration of the culture and language of the 700,000 Māori people living in New Zealand, by organizing various events and activities across the city. These include bi-lingual story-telling in te reo Māori and English, performances by Māori artists, competitions in the knowledge of Māori words, reading groups for adults, workshops in specific Māori traditions (e.g. flax-weaving) and various after-school Māori traditional activities for children. The Auckland libraries play an important role in organizing and hosting these events. The Auckland Council's Māori Language Policy and Māori Language Implementation Plan 2016-2019 sets principles for how the Council will contribute to the celebration, protection, revitalisation and the integration of Māori language throughout its functions and activities. Staff is supported to learn and use te reo Māori which is one of the three official languages of New Zealand (the other two are English and New Zealand sign language).

ICC programme resources on multilingualism are available [here](#).

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Traditional and social media have a very powerful influence on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities. Much of the information people access is generated by international newsgroups, national media, or by private persons in the case of social media. Nevertheless, there is still much the city authorities can do to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an intercultural city constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. More importantly, the city partners with local media agencies so that they purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 50%, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 47%.



Kuopio currently lacks an official communication strategy aimed at improving the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media. However, several measures have been implemented in this direction. The city actively communicates with citizens in English and Russian, with a focus on making immigrants visible in website and social media content. Recently, a photo shoot was conducted with Navigaattori immigrant service staff to showcase diversity.

The social media department is instructed to highlight diversity in various communications. While the city monitors its own social media channels, it does not monitor how traditional media portray people with migrant/minority backgrounds.

Additionally, the city does not provide support for advocacy, media training, mentorship, or setting up online media start-ups for journalists with migrant/minority backgrounds.

Suggestions

Kuopio may be interested in developing a more comprehensive media strategy aimed at raising awareness on interculturalism and diversity, including monitoring how social and traditional media portray those with a migrant or minority background.

In Lublin (Poland), the city launched an awareness raising campaign called “Faces of Lublin”. The initiative was developed following the first phase of the Lublin 4 all project, notably after the collection of social research results on the perception of foreign presence among Lublin residents. Indeed, the study showed that most of Lublin’s inhabitants were not aware of the presence of migrants and foreign minorities or did not recognize them as an important component of the city’s population. The city council therefore decided to invest in an awareness raising campaign to show the Lublin residents the multicultural face of their city. It contacted the photographer Oksana Tsymbaliuk, author of the Faces of Lublin exhibition, to propose her to resume her project of shooting portraits of men and women of Lublin with the aim of presenting and nurturing the cultural diversity of the city. Together with the portraits, interviews were also conducted to collect the respondents’ views on multiculturalism and their opinions on how new initiatives could improve the quality of city life. The photographs and interviews were collected in a Lublin 4 all publication and published on a dedicated website.

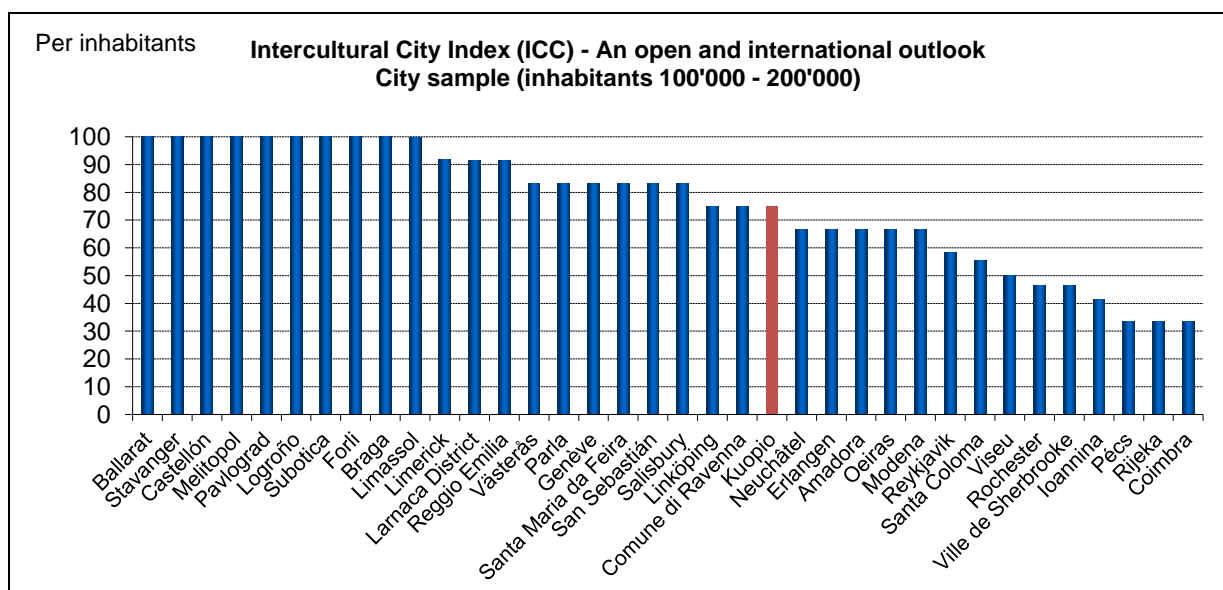
In the Basque city of Bilbao (Spain), the municipal communication office develops the communication strategy of the Municipal Citizenship and Diversity Plan, organising communication of the strategic milestones of Bilbao City Council’s intercultural action. Communication is made through press conferences and releases, as well as through social networks with specific intercultural content, where publications related to this content are made. Bilbao City Council provides support to different media projects, promoted by journalists with a migrant background through grants such is the TV channel from the ‘Emigrados sin Fronteras’ association and Candela Radio. The city also has an [antirumours initiative](#) that has been providing training and developing actions to fight against prejudices and to improve social cohesion for the last 10 years.

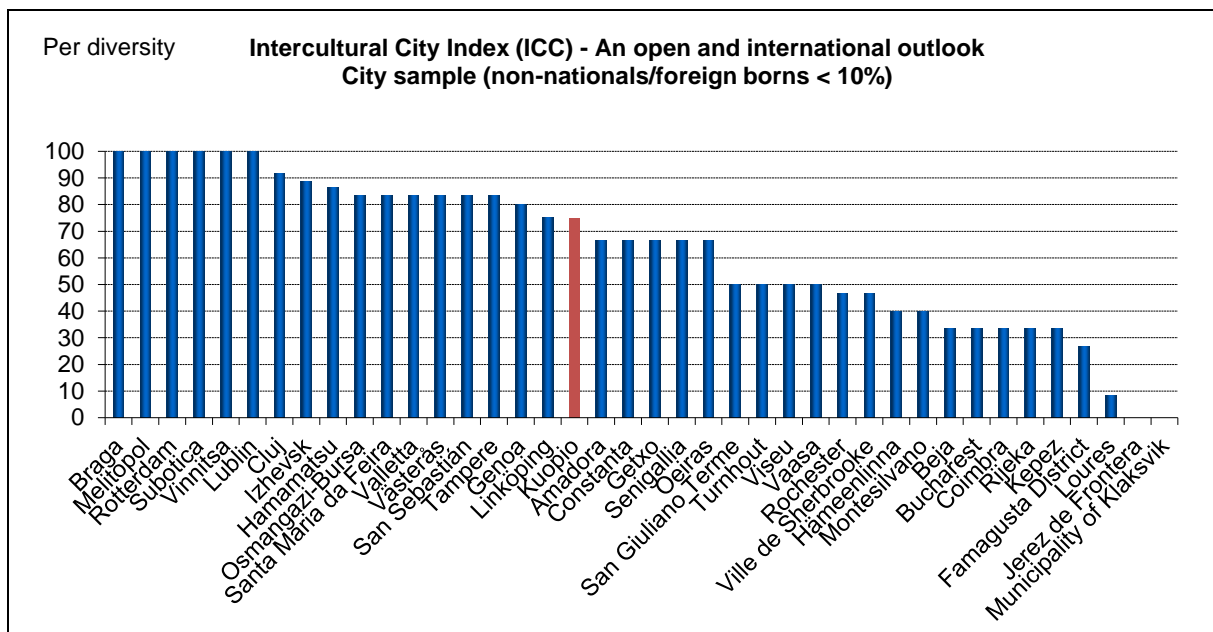
ICC programme resources on communication and public awareness are available [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Although cities have little or no competence in foreign policy, they can actively seek to make connections in other countries to develop business relations, exchange knowledge and know-how, encourage tourism, or simply acknowledge the ties the city may have elsewhere. An intercultural city actively encourages interactions with the outside world and in particular with the cities, regions or countries of origin of its inhabitants.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 75, which is higher than the city sample’s achievement rate of 69%.





Kuopio has a public policy to encourage international cooperation. In fact, promoting the international dimension of the city is a key objective outlined in the [Kuopio's strategy](#). This goal is advanced through the efforts of the city's international working group and through the organization of events centred around international topics. With a history spanning two decades, the International Working Group comprises representatives appointed by the City Board. Kuopio has an active engagement on the [international stage](#). Past initiatives include a collaboration project on children's health services with Maputo, Mozambique, aimed at fostering cultural exchange. Kuopio also pioneered the placement of a business representative in Shanghai in the early 2000s. Aligned with its vision to be the capital of good life, Kuopio participates in the WHO's European Healthy Cities Network, facilitating the exchange of well-being practices among member cities. Furthermore, EU projects and the presence of an EU office in Brussels provide avenues for international cooperation. Locally, various networks and information exchange events facilitate cross-organizational collaboration on international issues, such as supporting the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the region.

Kuopio has established relations with [15 twin cities worldwide and a twin region in Estonia](#). The main objective of these twinning activities is to enhance collaboration between cities and their stakeholders, foster internationalization in the Kuopio region, and facilitate various forms of cooperation. Typically, cooperation activities are outlined in mutual agreements that specify the main themes of collaboration for extended periods. Some of these partnerships have endured for as long as 40 to 50 years, encompassing cooperation in diverse areas such as education, culture, science, business, and more.

The city's central administration and key departments allocate annual funding in the budget specifically earmarked for international cooperation. Priorities for this funding are determined on an annual basis. While the allocated sums may not be substantial, they enable the city to engage in communication with key partners. Additionally, since 2005, city staff have had the opportunity to apply for international work exchanges, with a dedicated budget set aside for this purpose.

The city of Kuopio collaborates closely with local educational organizations, including universities, with the longstanding objective of enhancing student services to facilitate smoother integration into the area. Organizing events is among the key initiatives undertaken for this purpose. The city's new Navigaattori, within the employment services department, caters to all job seekers and newcomers, including international students. Additionally, there have been several collaborative projects, co-funded by the EU and local organizations, aimed at developing new services for international talents such as students. The budget of Kuopio includes funding dedicated to enabling internships for foreign higher education students within the local organization.

The city does not develop business relations with countries or cities of origin of its diaspora groups.

Suggestions

Kuopio could reinforce its role as a multicultural and welcoming city by improving its international outlook. Some examples from other ICC cities could be inspirational in doing that.

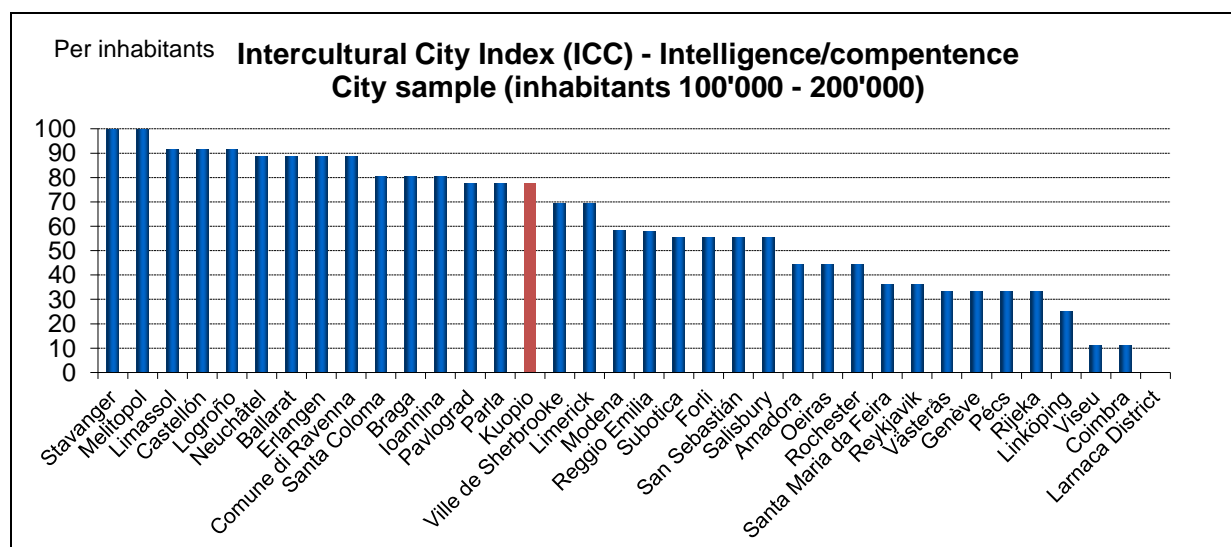
In Logan (Australia), the City Council approved its international strategy for the period 2019-2021. Logan City Council's Global Connection Strategy 2016-2021 aims to enhance the city's international economic and cultural relationships through specific outcomes, including increased exports, local company output, and employment growth, ultimately leading to a stronger local economy. Implemented by the Council's Economic Development and Strategy branch in 2012, the strategy envisions Logan as a regionally and globally connected city. It focuses on five main themes: export development, investment attraction, cultural identity, education, and communication. The strategy includes a dedicated financial provision to support activities such as international trade missions, participation in trade and investment events, cultural engagements, membership in international Chambers of Commerce, development of an international education strategy, and marketing initiatives. Through these efforts, Logan aims to strengthen its global connections and position itself as a vibrant and internationally engaged city.

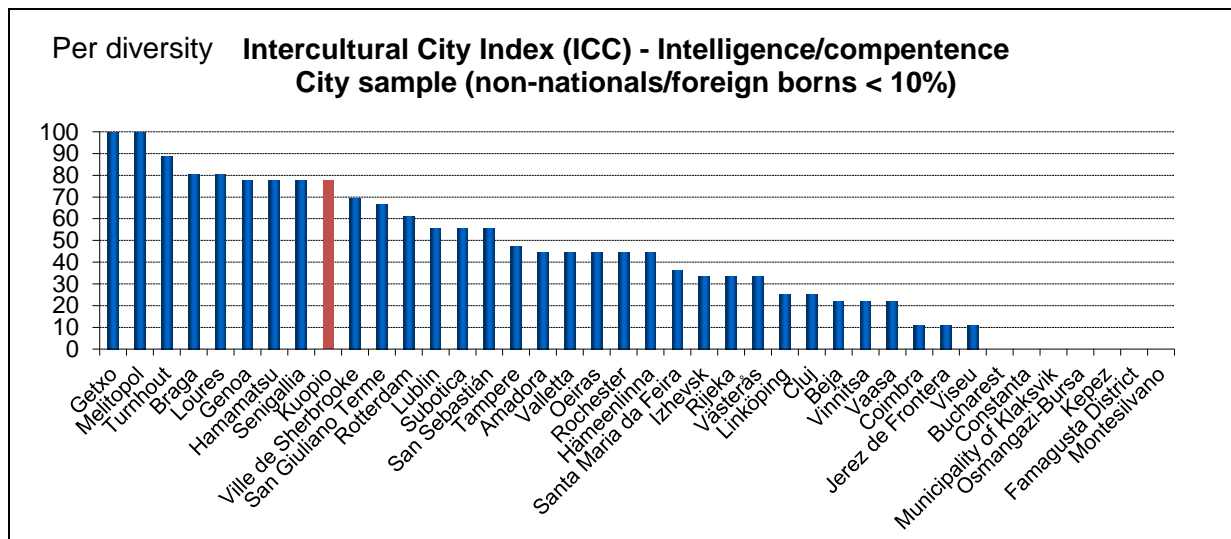
In Manchester (United Kingdom), the City Council has a long standing and sustainable approach to developing international relations which aim to support the broader social, economic and environmental objectives of the city. That includes, for example, the work with Wuhan in China to develop a joint economic collaboration study which led to the appointment of a Manchester Officer within the British Consulate General in Wuhan. This post works on a range of projects on behalf of Manchester City Council, Manchester's universities, cultural institutions and local business community. The Council provides a specific budget to the international policy. The city reaches out to foreign students and other young people arriving through exchange programmes.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Nobody can be an expert in all the languages and cultures that coexist in contemporary cities. Yet, in an intercultural city, officials have an intercultural "mind-set" which enables them to detect cultural differences and modulate their responses accordingly. Intercultural intelligence and competence require a specific know-how when dealing with unfamiliar situations and not an in-depth and often elusive knowledge of all cultures. Such sensitivity and self-confidence are not commonly-seen. It is a technical skill which can be acquired through training and practice. In an intercultural city, the authorities view such skills as equally important and essential to the good functioning of the city as the other professional and technical skills usually expected from public employees.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 78%, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 59%.





In November 2022, the Kuopio City Board approved an equality plan in compliance with Finnish law, which is currently being implemented in service processes. The plan includes aspects of diversity, and action plans and objectives are evaluated at regular intervals. Training sessions are also organized as part of the implementation process. Demographic statistics, such as the structure of districts, serve as fundamental information when discussing service developments and design aspects.

The city's strategy undergoes updates every four years, during which electronic surveys are conducted for residents to provide feedback. Foreign-language residents also have the opportunity to contribute their perspectives on development needs or considerations. However, the city does not conduct surveys specifically addressing the feelings of security or safety among migrants or minorities.

Kuopio promotes the intercultural competences of its officials and staff through training courses on diversity and non-discrimination, accessible via the intranet.

Suggestions

Despite a good scoring for this indicator, Kuopio could easily further improve its intercultural work in this area.

The city of Reykjavik (Iceland) has designed a specific training course for city employees to prevent misunderstandings in a diverse workplace and to open up a dialogue about discrimination, equality, prejudice, and stereotypes. All city departments are targeted, and it is specifically workplace oriented in its focus.

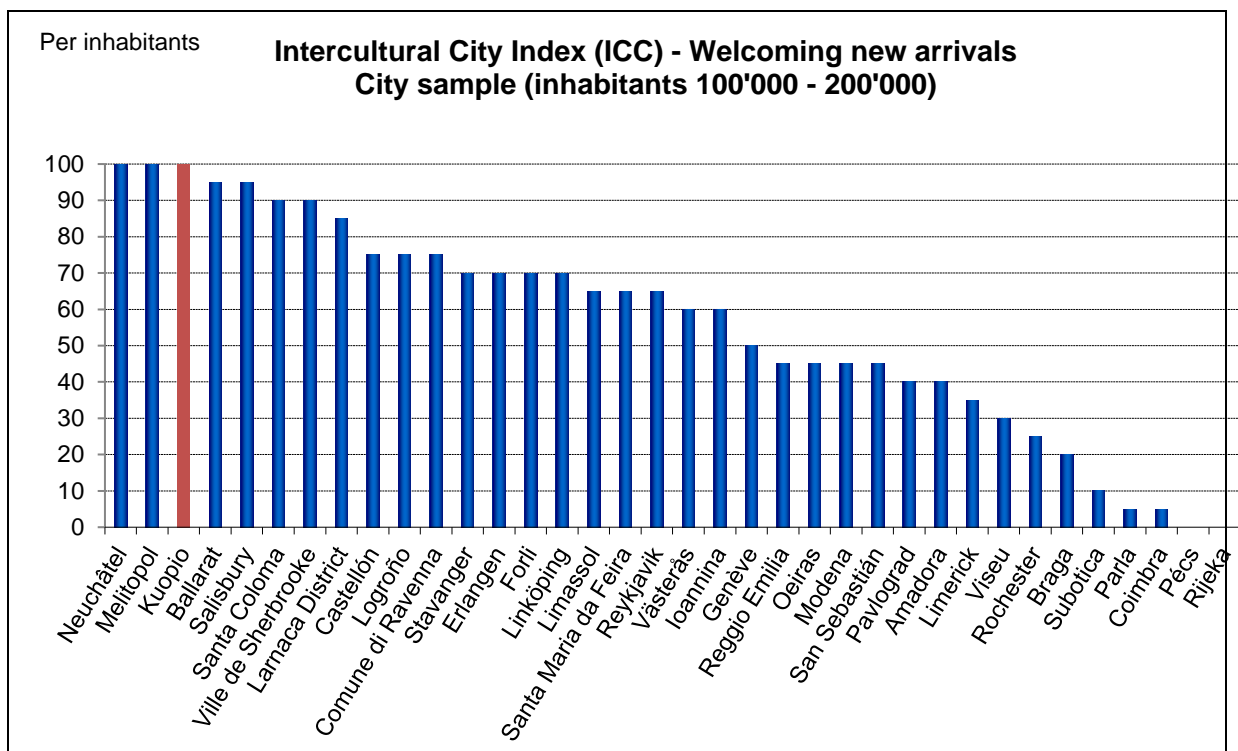
In Montreal (Canada), the City Council launched a major survey to determine Montrealers' views of migration and enable it to target the obstacles to migrants' labour market integration. The results feed into the policymaking to ensure an informed response. The city has also involved various stakeholders to map the views to address in the awareness-raising campaign. In the context of a future project, the city wishes to involve its employees, elected representatives and all local people in eliminating the main obstacles to the socio-economic integration of newcomers. This project reaches out to the host society in all its diversity, it is intended to be a fun, positive exercise and will be developed in co-creation with the relevant players. Apart from trainings for staff on core intercultural competences, the city may wish to consider other capacity building forms, for instance trainings on managing communications in a multicultural workplace or on communications skills to organise inclusive outreach campaigns.

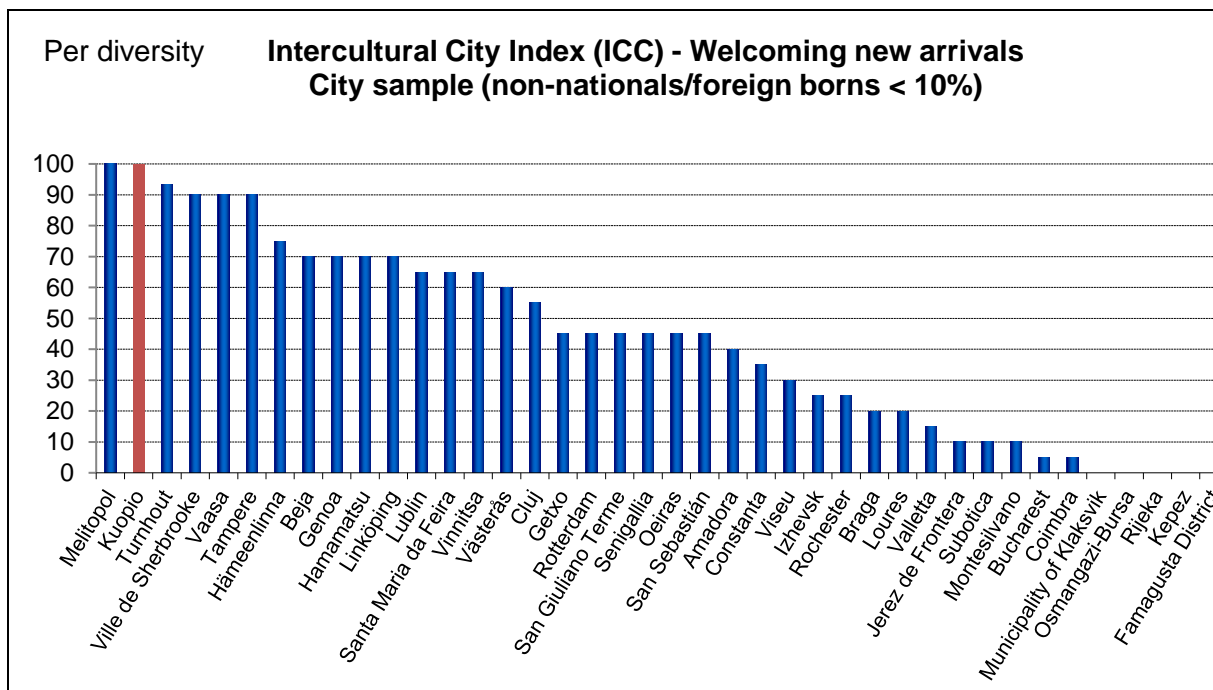
ICC programme resources on intercultural competence are also available [here](#).

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expats, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions their capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined to a cultural “ghetto”. This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city’s population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat. Again, it is the message the authorities convey on diversity, in communication or through concrete actions, that determines to a certain degree attitudes towards newcomers.

Kuopio achieved a rate of 100%, which is considerably higher than the city sample’s achievement rate of 58%.





'[International House Kuopio](#)' (IHK) offers official and advisory services tailored to the needs of international newcomers and companies seeking skilled personnel. Serving as a centralized service point, IHK brings together guidance and counselling services aimed at facilitating settlement and the start of life in Kuopio. With a vast network of service providers, including various officials, educational institutions, projects, and organizations, IHK provides assistance to individuals who may be unsure of where to find services or which authority to contact. Currently, IHK is in the process of developing a [city-specific package of information](#) to further enhance its support services. The information package is being developed and will be managed by Navigaattori (translated as "Navigator" in English), a division of the city's employment services. Navigaattori serves both residents and newcomers of Kuopio, offering expert assistance in navigating educational and career options, as well as other services. Services are available in English, Finnish, Russian, and several other languages to accommodate diverse needs. Navigaattori boasts a broad network of service providers, including various officials, educational institutions, ongoing projects, and organizations, ensuring comprehensive support for individuals seeking assistance.

The city offers welcome support for various newcomer groups, including students, family members, unaccompanied minors, migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers. Navigaattori caters to all individuals relocating to Kuopio and seeking assistance with their studies or job applications. Migrants requiring health and social services, such as refugees, are directed to state-run regional wellbeing services. International House Kuopio, located at Navigaattori, serves as a central hub for guidance and counselling services aimed at assisting newcomers in settling and starting their lives in Kuopio. With a wide network of service providers, including officials, educational institutions, projects, and organizations, International House Kuopio offers comprehensive support to all immigrants in Kuopio, irrespective of their reasons for relocating or residence permit status. The services provided entail low-threshold guidance and advice, emphasizing multidisciplinary collaboration.

Twice a year, Kuopio hosts a [welcoming event](#) for newcomers at the City Hall, providing essential information and services to those who have recently moved to the city and wish to familiarize themselves with local resources and settle smoothly into Kuopio life. Conducted in English, the event offers newcomers an opportunity to learn about the various services available in Kuopio while engaging with participating authorities and asking questions. They are open to diverse residents who have recently relocated to Kuopio and plan to stay in the future. The primary objective of these events is to promote understanding of local connections, facilitate integration, and extend a warm welcome to new residents. Additionally, the events provide an ideal platform for newcomers to connect with fellow residents, local community members, and city leaders. Moreover, the events often feature discussions on

The city currently lacks an independent consultative body dedicated to advising on diversity and integration matters. Additionally, there is no established standard for representation of individuals with migrant or minority backgrounds on mandatory boards overseeing schools and public services.

The City of Kuopio conducts background surveys for its strategy every four years, which also target international residents. The city's website features an electronic questionnaire in English where residents can express their needs and preferences regarding local services and other aspects. The survey is promoted through various partners, including NGOs and educational institutions.

The city does not currently initiate efforts to encourage individuals with migrant or minority backgrounds to participate in political life. However, the Finnish Ministry of Justice and the Finnish ETNO organization have organized events addressing this issue over the years.

Suggestions

Kuopio has a good score in this field, but the work of others can always provide inspiration to take forward new initiatives.

Paris (France) has instituted "Conseils de quartier" or "neighbourhood councils", which are open to all residents irrespective of their nationality. These councils serve as platforms for residents to voice their opinions and suggestions on matters impacting their neighbourhoods, including development projects, community life, and strategies aimed at enhancing quality of life. Functioning as a bridge between citizens, elected representatives, and the mayor, these councils play a crucial role in fostering citizen engagement and participatory governance at the local level.

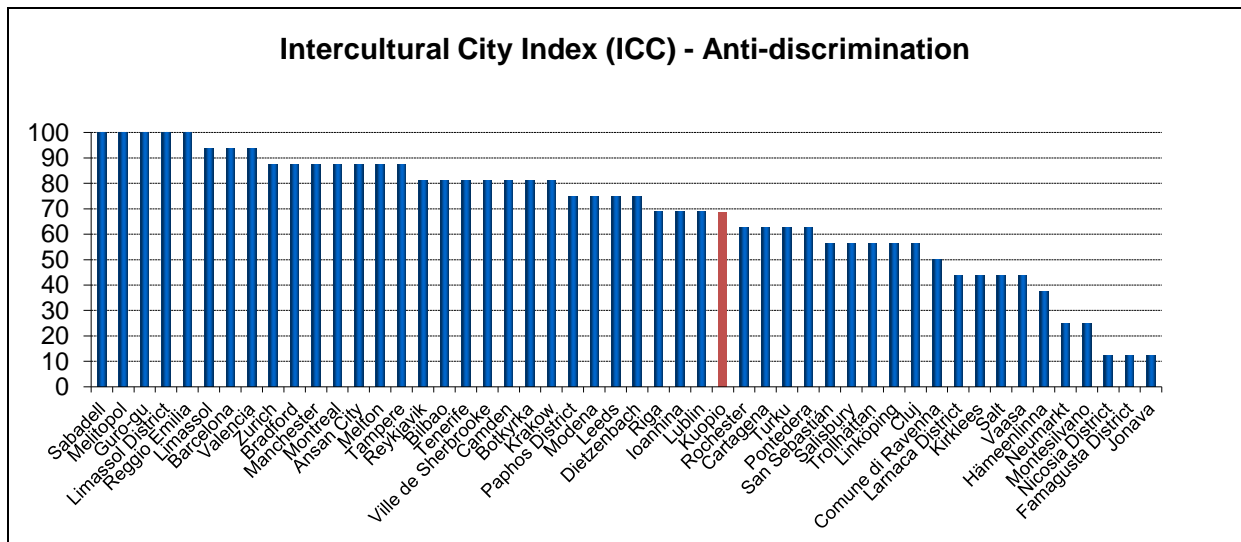
In Lewisham (UK) created its Young Mayor initiative - a robust attempt to put real power and responsibility in the hands of young people and treat them seriously. The young mayor is elected by direct ballot every year and – along with a cabinet of young advisors – is given a budget to initiate a programme of work, as well as to scrutinise the work of Lewisham mayor and of the city council.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available [here](#).

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Racism, xenophobia, homophobia, intolerance against certain religious groups, gender discrimination, prejudice and ethnocentrism, are all conducive to discriminatory attitudes and practices. They often subsist in people's minds despite laws proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation. An intercultural city assures every effort is made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its policies, programmes and activities. The city works in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims. It also communicates widely on the risks discrimination presents for social cohesion, quality of life and the local economy.

Indicators on anti-discrimination have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 46 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Kuopio rate of achievement in the field of anti-discrimination is 69%.



Kuopio has recently updated its [gender equality and non-discrimination action plan](#) as mandated by Finnish law. This plan has been revised in 2008, 2010, 2016, and most recently in November 2022. The current implementation phase aims to identify areas within city processes that may inadvertently lead to discrimination against residents with migrant or minority backgrounds. Workshops were employed during the plan's preparation, and collaboration was established with the National Institute for Health and Welfare to address diversity aspects at the national level. Additionally, Kuopio has also updated its equality plan as required by Finnish law in the aforementioned years, with a similar focus on identifying and addressing potential discrimination against residents with migrant or minority backgrounds during the implementation phase.

The service that advises and supports victims of discrimination is at regional/national level, and the city does not provide financial or logistical support to civil society organisations that advise and support victims of discrimination.

In the process of preparing the city's equality plan in 2022, a survey was conducted to gather information on experiences of discrimination within the city's services. This survey involved interviewing key partner organizations and NGOs that are knowledgeable about the situation of residents and minorities within the community. While the survey was not exhaustive, it provided valuable insights and highlighted areas requiring attention. There is a possibility to revisit and update the interview questions periodically to track developments and changes over time.

Kuopio occasionally runs anti-discrimination campaigns, and in approximately 2018, political leaders signed a declaration against hate speech and discrimination. These declarations are prominently displayed in frames next to meeting venues of the Kuopio City Board and City Council. The city's Wellbeing Services Department organizes an annual wellbeing seminar that invites national and international speakers and participants. The 2023 seminar program focused heavily on multicultural aspects, with the twin city of Kuopio, Bodo from Northern Norway, sharing its practices on promoting interaction between residents from different cultures, including through sport activities.

At the national level, the National Institute for Health and Welfare regularly organizes open webinars on diversity and discrimination, as well as for sharing cities' good practices. All municipalities, including the City of Kuopio, can participate in these online webinars, which are held every couple of months. Additionally, representatives from the City of Kuopio have participated in annual networking events on equality and non-discrimination topics organized by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

Suggestions

There is room for improvement for Kuopio in the anti-discrimination area. The work done in the framework of ETNO and the Good Relations initiative could help in fighting discrimination and promoting equal treatment.

In 2018, in Dublin (Ireland) conducted an Equality Review and Action Plan in its provision of social housing supports and homelessness services on the ground of racial or ethnic origin. It followed up with the preparation of an Equality Action Plan in 2019 to implement the recommendations made as part of the review. An equality review involved an examination of policy, plans, procedures, and practices in an organisation. It aimed to assess the extent to

which discrimination and harassment are prevented, diversity is acknowledged and accommodated, and equality is promoted and achieved in the work and operations of an organisation. Recommendations were made on foot of the review to support the preparation of an equality action plan to improve the performance of an organisation in these areas. The initiative drew from the Irish Human Rights Equality and Human Rights Act 2014 that requires public bodies to have regard, in all their functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights of staff, service-users, and policy beneficiaries.

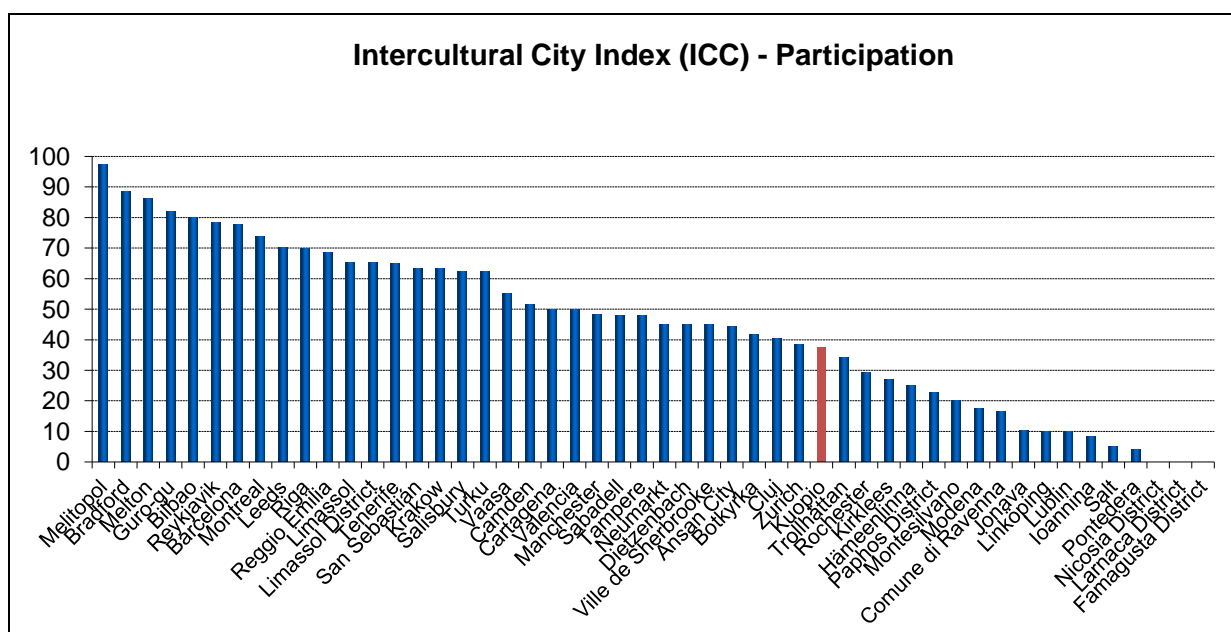
Sabadell (Spain) provides information and protection to victims of ethnic and racial discrimination through the Civil Rights Office. Besides the attention to victims and management of discrimination cases, the Office also trains and raises awareness of the rights and duties recognised in the city. Another body, the Living Together Commission, made up of municipal and political parties' representatives, third-sector organisations and the police, monitors and intervenes in cases of aggression or discrimination due to xenophobia, racism or homophobia. The city also counts on the municipal Ombudsman.

ICC programme resources on systemic discrimination are also available [here](#) and resources on anti-rumours are available [here](#).

PARTICIPATION

Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policy-making. A range of studies have demonstrated that inclusive integration policies produce better outcomes in terms of social cohesion, trust in the administration, safety, quality of services, welfare, good governance and economic growth. People with different backgrounds and experiences can bring innovative solutions to common challenges, as well as anticipate problems that might arise. Conversely, when people encounter barriers to participation, or otherwise choose intentionally not to participate, they may, passively, withdraw from social and public life or choose, actively, to live outside prevailing social customs and law. An intercultural city actively seeks the participation of all residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support, and thereby the sustainability of local policies, while at the same significantly reducing the economic costs of social exclusion and instability.

Indicators on participation have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 46 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Kuopio's rate of achievement in the field of participation is 38%.



While Kuopio does not have a formal "strategy" specifically dedicated to addressing diversity and inclusion, the matter has been partially addressed through the equality plan, which is mandated by Finnish law. The [equality action plan](#) serves as the primary starting point for this process. Workshops were organized during the preparation of the plan, and organizations representing minorities were invited to participate, contributing to the formulation of strategies and initiatives aimed at promoting equality and addressing discrimination within the city.

Kuopio has implemented participatory mechanisms to facilitate the involvement of all city residents in the decision-making process, including participatory budgets and participation networks. However, these inclusion measures are currently undergoing development and updates. While the city has established official influencing bodies, as required by Finnish law, for certain minority groups, these mechanisms do not yet encompass all population groups. Furthermore, residents are encouraged to provide direct customer feedback on the functionality of the city's services to the service providers.

Kuopio does not take actions to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions or organisations. In any case, following the Finnish law stipulates that in any political body the representation men/women need to be at least 40% to 60%.

Suggestions

Comprehensive monitoring of the participation of residents with migrant/minority backgrounds in the decision-making process is key to design better strategies to overcome barriers to participation.

In Vienna (Austria), the [Vienna Diversity Monitor](#) is a comprehensive report issued tri-annually to assess the city's integration processes and diversity policies. It encompasses eight areas, sixty indicators, and eleven benchmarks aimed at identifying structural and systemic factors contributing to inequality related to migration status and/or ethnic origin. Drawing from existing statistical sources, the monitor includes all residents registered in Vienna for over three months in its statistics. The findings from the monitor inform policy decisions, particularly in addressing obstacles to integration highlighted in the report, such as restricted work permits, access to public housing, and voting rights. Notably, the monitor revealed that 27% of eligible Viennese residents above 16 are excluded from voting due to legal restrictions on third-country nationals' voting rights and a restrictive naturalization regime. To promote political participation among non-citizens, Vienna introduced petition rights independent of nationality in 2013.

In Reggio Emilia (Italy), the [Mondinsieme Assembly](#) exemplifies the municipality's commitment to citizen engagement and participation. Operating within the framework of the city's intercultural strategy, the assembly was created in 2011 as part of the transformation of the existing intercultural centre Mondinsieme into a foundation with its own administrative bodies. This decision aimed to empower immigrant associations by fostering their sense of ownership and active involvement in shaping public policies and actions. The assembly, convened at least once a year, serves as a platform for immigrant associations to formulate advisory opinions and proposals on Mondinsieme's activities, programs, and objectives. Chaired by municipal officials, including the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the assembly facilitates open dialogue between the administration and residents with migrant backgrounds. Additionally, the assembly elects its representative to serve on Mondinsieme's Board of Directors, which collaborates closely with the administration to co-design the city's intercultural strategy.

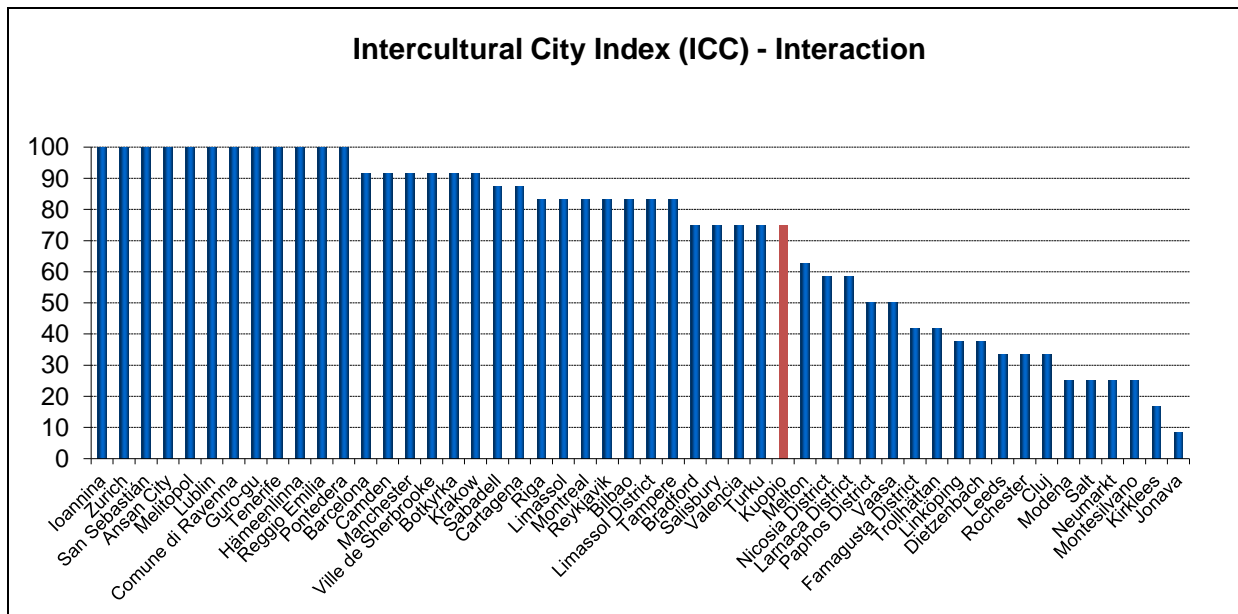
ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available [here](#).

INTERACTION

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. Identity is not 'given' in a passive sense, but something which is 'enacted' and defined through interaction. In spite of protective laws, prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people. There is ample evidence to prove that, under certain conditions, the more contact people with different

backgrounds and lifestyles have with each other, the less likely they are to think and behave in prejudicial ways. Therefore, an intercultural city develops, in partnership with other organisations, a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups.

Indicators on interaction have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 46 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Kuopio's rate of achievement in the field of interaction is 75%.



The Kuopio Wellbeing Services Department maintains a list of third-sector organizations that receive regular funding from the city for their activities, including those actively engaged with immigrant communities. Annually, the department conducts collaborative discussions with most of these organizations. Many sports and cultural organizations also participate in active multicultural initiatives. However, the specific list of organizations receiving funding is considered confidential.

In elementary/primary schools, teachers receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy. However, it's important to note that teachers' education for their profession is not city-based but university-based. After graduating and working in cities, teachers can receive mutual education provided by the cities for all teachers working within the same city.

Suggestions

Kuopio has some good practices in the field of interaction, as it is part of the Good Relations Framework. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement, and examples from other cities could be inspirational.

The city of Sherbrooke (Canada) lists in its organization directory all the organizations that work in sport, culture and life community, including those who work with the immigrant population. The guide to welcoming people immigrants in Sherbrooke also lists the resources that allow newly arrived people to quickly integrate into their new ecosystem. In order to collaborate with civil society organizations and local associations working in the various areas concerned with intercultural inclusion, Sherbrooke launched in 2019, via its Sherbrooke Health program, the immigration consultation body ICI Sherbrooke. This instance brings together all the organizations that intervene directly or indirectly in the ecosystem of immigrants who settle on the territory. The city also sits on the body and

several meetings are held regularly to not only maintain the mobilization of partners, but also implement structuring projects to the community.

In Erlangen (Germany), to launch the C4i project, the municipality organised a banquet table over 180 meters in length and hosted a giant picnic along the main street of the city. About 1,000 native Erlangers and asylum seekers directly communicated and exchanged with each other, and took away with them information about rumours and how to counter them. Along with the city's longest picnic table, a 'Living Library' offered open conversations with asylum seekers, to encourage exchange in a deep and sincere manner, and not just symbolically share a large table. Thus, along the table people were explicitly invited to ask 10 asylum seekers – or 'Living Books' – about their life, talents, skills, experiences and dreams. The aim was to pose questions one would not normally dare to, thus revising assumptions and overcoming rumours. Banquet participants met people with extraordinary résumés with exceptional stories to tell; learned about unexpected talents of people living next door – asylum seekers in Erlangen.

ICC programme resources on anti-rumours are also available [here](#) and resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available [here](#).

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Kuopio's aggregate Intercultural Cities Index achievement rate was 65. This is the good63, indicating a positive step forward on its intercultural journey. Kuopio achieved particularly high scores in several areas, although lower achievements sometimes resulted from the lack of an intercultural approach in its policymaking. There is room for improvement from an intercultural perspective, but it is also true that Kuopio has several programs and policies that could be easily understood and reframed as intercultural actions.

The following table gives more information on what Kuopio does well and areas it could learn more from the experience of other cities.

COMMITMENT	✓	Kuopio is one of the Finnish cities involved in the "Building an inclusive integration approach in Finland" EU/CoE joint project.
	✗	Kuopio does not have an intercultural approach in its policymaking and rarely references its intercultural commitments in official communications. There is a need for creating a comprehensive understanding across all city bodies and sectors of the responsibility of all services (and leadership thereof) in the implementing of intercultural integration/inclusion and good relations in Kuopio.
EDUCATION	✓	Kuopio does not face a clear problem of segregation in schools, and in general, children in primary schools do not have the same ethnic/cultural background. Most of the schools carry out intercultural projects. Schools are used to noticing different cultures in everyday activities. Many schools in Kuopio actively strive to involve parents with migrant or minority backgrounds in school life.
	✗	Kuopio could work more to ensure teachers' ethnic or cultural backgrounds reflect those of their students.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✓	It is a principle of the city of Kuopio to try to avoid ethnic concentration and to support the diversity in the districts for example in city planning and housing services.
	✗	Kuopio may explore how to promote initiatives to facilitate interactions between residents of different neighbourhoods with diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds.
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓	The municipality provides a wide range of services including school and sport services that cater to those from a minority or migrant background. The city has taken steps to promote diversity, intercultural mixing, and competence within the private sector.
	✗	Kuopio could consider a specific recruitment plan in place to ensure diversity within its workforce.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✓	In Kuopio, a regional organisation encourages businesses from ethnic minorities to enter in the mainstream economy. The city has also taken actions to encourage 'business districts/incubators' and to involve an adequate percentage entrepreneur with migrant/minority backgrounds.
	✗	There is no local normative to facilitate the procurement of goods and services in favour of companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	Cultural and social life is well supported by the municipality. Grants are given to organisations that are open to work with everyone. Kuopio occasionally organises events and activities to encourage people to meet and interact.
	✗	Kuopio does not use interculturalism as a criterion when allocation funds.

PUBLIC SPACE	✓	Kuopio takes action to encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public space. The city promotes and encourages intercultural initiatives in libraries, museums, and public parks.
	✗	Kuopio does not have a formal commitment to consider the diversity of the population in urban planning and/or the designing public spaces.
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓	Kuopio works with a regional mediation service funded with State funds. The city provides intercultural mediation in the city administration for general purposes.
	✗	The city could explore extending its work on mediation and conflict resolution by extending it to specialised institutions such as hospitals, youth clubs, retirement homes and within the municipality itself. The city does not have a municipal service which deals with religious conflicts among others.
LANGUAGE	✓	The city provides specific language training in the official languages for groups hard-to-reach. Non-national languages could be learnt under specific circumstances.
	✗	Kuopio does not facilitate the awareness-raising of migrant languages in the city, and it does not support initiatives seeking to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✓	The Kuopio actively communicates with citizens in English and Russian, with a focus on making immigrants visible in website and social media content.
	✗	The city does not provide support for advocacy, media training or mentorship for journalists with migrant/minority background and does not monitor in which way traditional local/national media portray people with minority/migrant backgrounds. The city does not engage with local media when they portray people through negative stereotypes.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓	Kuopio has a public policy to encourage international cooperation. The city has a network of twinning-cities. The city collaborates closely with local educational organizations, including universities, with the longstanding objective of enhancing student services to facilitate smoother integration into the area
	✗	Kuopio does not have an explicit action plan to promote business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups.
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	✓	The city has an equality plan which is currently being implemented. The city promotes the intercultural competences of its officials and staff through training course.
	✗	Kuopio could ensure that data about diversity and intercultural relations was mainstreamed to inform the city's policy formation and could use diverse ways to improve the intercultural competence of the city's staff.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	The city offers welcome support for various newcomer groups, including students, family members, unaccompanied minors, migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers. Navigaattori caters to all individuals relocating to Kuopio and seeking assistance.
	✗	Kuopio achieved a 100% score in this area.
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓	The city conducts background surveys for its strategy every four years, which also target international residents.
	✗	Kuopio does not have a consultative body and does not have any standard for representation with people with migrant/minority backgrounds in mandatory boards supervising schools or other public services.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	✓	Kuopio has recently updated its gender equality and non-discrimination action plan as mandated by Finnish law. The service that advises and supports victims of discrimination is at national level.
	✗	The city does not out a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with /migrant/minority backgrounds or run regular campaigns against racism. The city does not monitor or research the character or the extent of discrimination in the city and does not provide financial or logistical support to civil society organisations that advise and support victims of discrimination.
PARTICIPATION	✓	Kuopio has implemented participatory mechanisms to facilitate the involvement of all city residents in the decision-making process, including participatory budgets and participation networks.
	✗	Kuopio does not take actions to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions or organisations. There is no available data on the participation of city residents with migrant/minority backgrounds.
INTERACTION	✓	The city maintains a list of and meet with third-sector organizations that receive regular funding from the city for their activities, including those actively engaged with immigrant communities. Teachers in elementary schools receive intercultural training regularly.
	✗	Kuopio may consider advancing in creating a more comprehensive and updated list/database of all civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate Kuopio for the efforts taken and we are confident that if the city reflects more on its different areas of work and what it is already doing, as well as follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices, the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When it comes to the intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, Kuopio could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

Commitment: Kuopio could develop an integral strategy for creating a comprehensive understanding across all city bodies and sectors of the responsibility of all services (and leadership thereof) in the implementing of intercultural integration in the city. Kuopio may wish to reference its intercultural commitments in official communications more frequently and give its intercultural statement and strategy more prominence on the website.

Education: The city could work more to ensure teachers' ethnic or cultural backgrounds reflect those of their students more and could encourage more linking between schools and students.

Neighbourhoods: Kuopio may explore how to promote initiatives to facilitate interactions between residents of different neighbourhoods with diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

Public services: The municipality could consider a specific recruitment plan in place to ensure diversity within its workforce.

Business and the labour market: Kuopio may wish to explore local regulations to favour the procurement of goods and services in favour of companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy.

Cultural and social life: The city may explore how to use interculturalism as a criterion when allocation funds. Kuopio may wish to consider organising public debates or campaigns about cultural diversity and living together in more regular basis.

Public space: The city could consider the diversity of the population in designing public spaces and urban planning more systematically.

Mediation and conflict resolution: The municipality could explore extending its work on mediation and conflict resolution to specialised institutions such as hospitals, youth clubs, retirement homes and within the municipality itself. The city could explore the opportunity of a service to deal with inter-faith questions.

Language: Kuopio may consider supporting initiatives seeking to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages.

Media and communication: The city may explore providing support for advocacy, media training or mentorship for journalists with migrant/minority background and does not monitor in which way traditional local/national media portray people with minority/migrant backgrounds. The city could also engage with local media when they portray people through negative stereotypes.

International outlook: The city could explore to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups.

Intercultural intelligence and competence: The municipality could ensure that data about diversity and intercultural relations was mainstreamed to inform the city's policy formation and could use diverse ways to improve the intercultural competence of the city's staff.

Welcoming newcomers: Kuopio could consider sharing some of its experiences in interaction with other ICC cities through the database.

Leadership and citizenship: Kuopio might wish to develop initiatives to encourage people with migrant/minority backgrounds to engage in political life, for example by improving their knowledge of local politicians and municipal staff jobs and raising their awareness of their rights to vote or stand as candidates in local elections. The city could also usefully develop a strategy and procedures to support and achieve a minority ethnic representation on key public boards.

Anti-discrimination: The city could consider a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with /migrant/minority backgrounds and consider running regular campaigns against racism. Kuopio may explore the options to provide financial or logistical support to civil society organisations that advise and support victims of discrimination.

Participation: Kuopio could take actions to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions or organisations.

Interaction: Kuopio could consider developing a more comprehensive and updated database of all civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion.

Kuopio may wish to consider further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided above for each sector as well as in the Intercultural cities [database](#).

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. A decade after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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