



# Implementation report

## Limassol Intercultural Strategy

2018-2020



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## **1. Introduction**

The Municipality of Limassol became a member of the Intercultural Cities Network of the Council of Europe in 2010. Implementing one of programme's good practices, a migrants' advisory body to the Municipality of Limassol, known as the Limassol Intercultural Council, was created. The Council consisted of over 40 representatives of migrants' associations, diplomatic representations, labour unions, media etc, who met and discussed the various challenges that migrants are facing at the local level, as well as possible measures to solve them effectively. They prepared the "Limassol Intercultural Strategy 2018- 2020", which was adopted in a joint session with the Municipal Council of Limassol in January 2018.

By appointing its first Intercultural Counsellor in April 2020 and assigning to him a number of tasks including the evaluation of the previous Intercultural Strategy 2018-2020 (Strategy) and the development of the new one for the period 2021-2025, the Municipality of Limassol has expressed its clear commitment to further develop and sustain its inclusive/intercultural integration policies.

This document briefly presents the objectives, results and activities done during last three-year period, providing recommendations for the future strategy for each of 11 strategic themes. It is also worth mentioning that this report was developed after the submission of the Intercultural Index questionnaire in November 2020. It is therefore expected that the Intercultural Index Analysis report, which will be provided by the Council of Europe, will provide the city additional insights towards improved policies and best practices, complementary to this report. It is proposed that both documents are integrated into the new Strategy document.

## **2. Executive summary**

Between January 2018 and December 2020, Limassol implemented its first Intercultural Strategy. It had been developed by the Limassol Intercultural Council through a series of public discussion sessions, around 11 themes which included Culture, Education, Youth, Family & Parenting, Housing, Health, Labour issues, Policing and Security, Access to public services, Citizenship and Participation and Intercultural Branding & Media. This report briefly presents the achievements around these themes with an overview of their main initial objectives, implemented actions and recommendations for future Intercultural Strategies. Along with the recommendations of Limassol Intercultural Index Analysis report, this internal evaluation aims to put the basis for improved political and social actions, based on diversity advantage concepts, and intercultural/inclusive integration methodology, as developed by the ICC programme, for the forthcoming years.

### **3. Implementation of Intercultural Strategy themes 2018-2020**

#### 3.1. Culture

##### 3.1.1. Objectives

Limassol is often considered to be a center of cultural life of Cyprus. The functioning of numerous cultural organisations, programmes and events were identified by the Intercultural Council as some of main potential inclusion and integration drivers. The objectives of the Cultural chapter of Intercultural Strategy were to enable the participation of all people living in the city to take part in the cultural actions and express creatively and freely their multiple identities.

##### 3.1.2. Activities

During the strategy implementation period, Limassol has significantly increased the visibility of migrants' communities in its cultural life. Already traditional Intercultural festivals (around the International Migrants Day), but also those organized by Russian, Vietnamese, Kurdish, Bulgarian, Sri Lanka and many other communities, have been regularly taking place in the city, along with municipal neighbourhood festivals. The Municipality is supporting migrants' associations, mainly in-kind, by providing free space or other permissions. The presence and addresses of the Mayor, Municipal Councillors or other Municipal representatives is almost always a part of these festivals' programmes. Through the municipal integration program, a number of migrants was introduced to the Cypriot history and culture.

##### 3.1.3. Recommendations

Cultural and Sport life shall remain an important part of the Intercultural Strategy. More efforts need to be paid to the institutionalized participation of migrants and other communities in the cultural life, not only as individuals and artists, but also as members of boards, staff, volunteers, and cultural professionals. Possible synergies between civil society working in the field of culture (Limassol Council of Cultural Organisations) and migrants associations shall be structurally encouraged through targeted programmes and supported through the EU and nationally funded integration programs. Awareness campaigns and public discussions about the increased participation in the cultural NGOs by residents with migratory background could be some of the possible future actions. The municipality could consider rewarding those NGOs which encourage the participation and inclusion, applying specialized and measurable evaluation criteria throughout its cultural funding programs. In that term, by adding a new priority "Neighbourhoods", the new strategy might foresee further spreading of highly decentralized, grassroots cultural and sport activities like "neighbourhood festivals" or sport tournaments with high participation of migrants.

#### 3.2. Education

##### 3.2.1. Objectives

The objectives in the fields of education were concentrated around the non-formal methods and life-long learning for the newcomers, mainly on the topics of Greek and English languages, communication, and intercultural education in the schools.

##### 3.2.2. Activities

Despite the fact that the formal education, according to national legislation, is not a competence of

local governments, the Municipality of Limassol has established close connections with the public schools, providing complementary artistic and intercultural actions, supporting the children with migratory background and encouraging their school staff to further explore the concept of inclusive integration (i.e. through Anti-rumours training). Through its integration programme funded by EU AMIF, the Municipality has additionally offered a wide range of trainings including those on internet safety, crafts, Cyprus culture and languages. The language classes are also regularly offered by the Educational Institutes of the national Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MoECSY).

### 3.2.3. Recommendations

The education in all its projections, including formal and non-formal methods, covering people of all ages and ethnical, cultural, language and other backgrounds, shall remain an important priority of the next Intercultural Strategy of Limassol. The stress needs to be given to the creative synergies between the Municipality and MoECSY and all its departments including, but not limited to the Pedagogical Institute, Cultural Department, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education Directorates. The abovementioned synergies shall not be limited purely to the provision of education, but also to the inclusive content development, like extra-curricular activities, social, sport and cultural events, the appropriate staff selection (matching the ethnic background of teachers to those of specific neighbourhoods). The role of Parents' associations is also very important, if not crucial, on this path and they need to be systemically and systematically approached.

## 3.3. Youth

### 3.3.1. Objectives

During the previous planning period 2018-2020, youth and young people irrespectively of being of migratory background or not, have been detected as a strategic target group. Young people coming from multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, due to their exposure to juvenile delinquency caused by complex exclusion phenomena, would have been approached in holistic and multiple ways.

### 3.3.2. Activities

During last years, Limassol has been a center of various formal and non-formal youth activities. In 2013, the city developed a bid applying for the European Youth Capital, mobilizing various youth organizations, stakeholders, universities and NGOs. The projects done in synergies with EU funded programs like Erasmus+ brought to Limassol a big number of young people for intercultural and youth empowerment activities. The organisations like DOREA and Euro-Arab Youth Music Center, with strong cross-border mission are active members of the Intercultural Council, themselves organizing in collaboration with the Municipality many EU funded programmes, targeting particularly young persons under 30 years of age. The Municipality itself has approached and trained young people with migratory background (mainly Third Countries Nationals), especially young women, in a wide range of training activities (Cyprus civilization, internet safety, etc). The NGOs like Cultural Movement "Epilogi", AGAPI Cyprus, Kurdish Cultural Center, Cyprus Vietnamese Association and many other, have regularly provided activities involving big numbers of young people. EU AMIF Funded programme Migrants Information Hub has been operating in the city center with frequent collaboration with municipal structures. A number of public and private colleges and universities operating in Limassol, provided a sound support to the municipal and civic sectors' activities, boosting intercultural mixing and dialogue.

### 3.3.3. Recommendations

Despite of the abovementioned results, more efforts need to be put in order to gain an active involvement of young people in tailoring and organizing activities for themselves. Although intercultural mixing in the educational structures (schools and universities) is nowadays a part of everyday life of young Cypriots, there is a lot of space for its practical improvement. This should be done bearing in mind the lifestyle of young people, their habits, connection to technology, ways of entertainment and certainly by unlocking youth creativity. The new Intercultural Strategy needs to structurally approach young people and motivate them not only to be recipients and participants of social programs, but their active creators. An emphasis could be given also to the EU and CoE funding opportunities, like Erasmus+ programme, European Youth Foundation, CERV programme etc.

## 3.4. Parenting & Family life

### 3.4.1. Objectives

The family life and parenting were important priorities of the Limassol Intercultural Strategy 2018-2020. During the development process, the members many times stressed that support to the parents and families has a complimentary role to other strategy priorities such as youth, education, safety and crime or labour issues. It was detected that parents with migratory background often have difficulties in providing support for schooling of their children, mainly due to lack of knowledge of Greek language or women unemployment. This as a result might have deeper exclusion phenomena with all its negative consequences. Lobbying for extended working hours of private and public kindergartens, afternoon and extracurricular activities for children, non-formal education methods for parents, hotlines and awareness campaigns about domestic violence, Greek language and other educational campaigns for parents have been proposed by the Strategy, among other.

### 3.4.2. Activities

The Municipality and local stakeholders provide a wide range of activities targeting parents with migratory background in Limassol. They inter alia include the "School interventions" program for parents as an activity funded by the EU AMIF funded project, where school social workers meet with children and parents, trying to support them in learning activities. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport successfully runs the "DRASE" program in some of the primary schools offering creative extracurricular activities for free, covering the fields of arts and music, in combination with social and other non-formal education activities.

### 3.4.3. Recommendations

An active role of parents, especially those with migratory background, seems to be crucial in the inclusive integration processes of the city. In order to achieve a greater and deeper outreach, the new type of synergies need to be developed. Those could include collaborations with Parents associations, including their capacity building for their more inclusive work and intercultural competences, based on the sensitivities of migrants' communities. An example for that is the gender issue (i.e. among the Muslim communities), where women/mothers might feel more comfortable and more ready to engage or volunteer if they are surrounded by other

females or in informal female/mothers' groups/teams. This type of work could become a regular activity of Parents' associations in Limassol.

### 3.5. Housing

#### 3.5.1. Objectives

The Intercultural Strategy has emphasized the challenges of ensuring proper accommodation facilities for all citizens of Limassol. During the Intercultural Strategy development period, the problems of housing have been clearly identified as some of most urgent ones for a wide range of Limassolians, especially migrants. Specifically, relatively high price of rent, high density (lack of living space) of those not being able to afford proper accommodation, bureaucracy and regulatory framework (i.e. mandatory documents provided by renters, which in case of refugees create various problems), are some among of those often emphasized. The strategy therefore suggested various lobbying and public activities which would build the awareness around the affordable accommodation for all, as well as the taskforce for the most urgent cases (i.e. asylum seekers).

#### 3.5.2. Activities

During the period 2018-2020, the Municipality has proceeded with a number of large projects, including the Support center for homeless persons "Schedia" and large social housing project between the Municipality and Cyprus public Land Development Organisation KOAG worth over €100M. A number of public services (local and national) has been working for accommodating the arriving refugees and asylum seekers. Many local NGOs and intergovernmental organisations (AGAPI Cyprus, IOM, UNHCR etc) has efficiently supported unaccommodated and unaccompanied minors. A social movement lead by volunteers and activities implemented live and online activities aiming to build the awareness about the negative sides of gentrification and uncontrolled or unregulated urban development. Nevertheless, the overall urban and economic and financial development of the city, its recognizable geographic position in the Eastern Mediterranean region and large investment and gentrification projects keep the renting prices relatively high, which has it negative impact on quality of life of most vulnerable social classes, often being of diverse ethnic, national and of migratory background.

#### 3.5.3. Recommendations

The topic of (social) housing is the complex one and requires actions in multiple ways in order to be approached properly. Again, the simultaneous actions between public and private stakeholders (urban planning, local authorities, immigration, etc), NGO sector (covering social, integration, environmental etc fields), financial stakeholders (banks, land development, funds etc) might lead to the improvement in this field. The paradigm from other countries shows that only through a coordinated and well-planned activities, a city could progress towards more human-centered urban planning and accommodation. In addition to that, the new initiative of the European Commission under the title "New European Bauhaus", could be used as a starting point for wider social consultation around this issue.

### 3.6. Health

#### 3.6.1. Objective

The access to health insurance and services was another important part of Limassol Intercultural Strategy. It detected that a number of people with migratory background, ethnic or sexual minorities are highly vulnerable to the health problems and have limited access to the health services. People living alone or those without proper understanding of Greek or English language, had been particularly identified as people at risk. The proposed actions combined online support measures, free check-ups and site-specific support for pensioners and families with migratory background.

#### 3.6.2. Activities

Several factors strongly influenced the implementation of this part of the strategy. Firstly, the implementation of the national health systems (GESY), provided access to a wide range of locals and documented migrants to public health services. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an urgent need to detect and measure efficiently the health situation and communicate it across any social and cultural boundaries, covering of all people living the city. The Municipality responded immediately to COVID-19 sanitary measures, by communicating the public health guidelines in the decades of languages. Emergency Intercultural Councils meetings were held, chaired by the Mayor and with participation of municipal social, cultural stakeholders, and representatives of other Intercultural Cities. This resulted in an increased response and compliance by all target groups. The access to anti- COVID vaccines was also raised as an issue by the members of the Intercultural Council and specific instructions were provided to the community leaders. Apart of this, the Municipality and Intercultural Council, have provided numerous legal and practical advises to the people in need (i.e. pregnant women) on their labour, health, social and migration-related rights.

#### 3.6.3. Recommendations

The access to health services (with emphasis on anti-COVID vaccines) by undocumented migrants seem to continue to be a burning issue. Access to GESY by them has its limits now. A number of elder people from other countries, and even those coming from other EU countries (thus supposed to have equal rights to Cypriot nationals), continue to be in a disadvantaged position. Among them there are elder persons reliant on the health care to their relatives, live in a legal gap, not being able to properly register, obtain permanent legal residence and therefore access to health and social services. The new Intercultural strategy will need to further develop the issues around the access of health for all, especially those who are not formally visible for the public structures.

### 3.7. Labour issues

#### 3.7.1. Objectives

As rightfully detected by the Intercultural Strategy and numerous CoE documents, the access to labour and financial independence is an essential segment of any inclusive integration process. This complex topic has its impact in a wide range of other public sectors, other strategy priorities and become a horizontal issue connecting all parts of the intercultural puzzle. The Intercultural Strategy proposed a development of thematic working group aiming a supporting migrants and other target groups in ensuring their basic labour rights and access to employment services, as well as the support to enterprises established by migrants.



### 3.7.2. Activities

During the implementation period, the Municipality has provided a great priority to the labour issues. It successfully applied and implemented a wide range of activities, mainly through the CoE funded project “Intercultural Twinning: Cultural Diversity for Inclusive Growth”. The project brought together various stakeholders ranging from labour unions, employers and industrialists’ federations, universities, and NGOs, on a round table, which in a parallel process with the city of Ioannina (Greece), have exchanged their experiences and ideas and resulting in the Intercultural Twinning between the two cities. The project aimed to utilize the cultural diversity of the two cities as an asset for the inclusive and smart growth in the post-covid period, providing a policy document with a strategic deepness.

### 3.7.3. Recommendations

The abovementioned project offers a good starting point for the new Intercultural Strategy of the city. The Municipality and Intercultural Council shall further communicate with already informed and involved stakeholders and proceed with an action plan covering the specific topic. Joint activities might range from policy discussion to awareness campaigns and standards and policy improvements, accordingly to the specific sub-priority, as a continuation of previous CoE funded projects. The migrants’ entrepreneurship is already approached by the city’s comprehensive strategy 2021-2036 and further synergies with business-support instances (local business incubators and accelerators) are necessary for further improvement of city’s intercultural economic performance. Signature of European Diversity Charter by the Municipality might be one of good ideas towards an overall aim of utilizing labour as an inclusive integration and sustainable development driver of the city.

## 3.8. Policing and Safety

### 3.8.1. Objectives

The Intercultural Strategy 2018-2020 dedicated one of its chapters to combating exclusion and ghettoization of urban areas, through collaboration with Police and local (neighbourhood) stakeholders. The proposed actions embraced intercultural policing training courses and awareness building campaigns.

### 3.8.2. Activities

In November 2018, the Municipality of Limassol, Cyprus Police and ICC Unit of the CoE implemented successfully an Intercultural Policing training course with participation of all Police departments and members of Intercultural Council. The actions contributed to the CoE report and policy brief on this topic. The awareness on a positive role of Police was supported by the Intercultural Council in their regular awareness building actions. Certain difficulties in collaboration between Intercultural Council and Police have been faced during the investigation process of serial-murders of migrant women in 2019 (see Mitsero murders). The case revealed a number of systemic discrimination issues within the Cyprus public services. Upon strong criticism by the Cypriot civil society (and of the Intercultural Council among many others), the Cyprus Police and Ministry of Justice and Public Order rigorously reacted to all those challenges and with a series of important improvement measures.

### 3.8.3. Recommendations

The collaboration between the Municipality, the Police and civil society organisations is of utmost importance. The Community Policing department could play an important role in this

process. Building on the respective suggestions and policy recommendation of the CoE, the Municipality could continue to co-organize joint events, bringing together local stakeholders and improving public discussion around the issues of inclusion, urban planning and public safety.

### 3.9. Access to Public Services

#### 3.9.1. Objectives

The Intercultural Strategy stressed the need for an equal access to public services by vulnerable groups (Migrants and Refugees). This was suggested to be done by publishing guidelines, support, consultancies in various languages, and building awareness of public instances around the issues of diversity.

#### 3.9.2. Activities

During the period 2018-2020, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemics, the awareness about the equal treatment of all citizens was rapidly increased, for obvious reasons. Apart of official Greek and Turkish languages, many local and national authorities and departments are now providing their guidelines at least in English, with increasing use of Russian and Arabic. Several NGOs (AGAPI, Cyprus Refugee Council etc) are offering support services guiding the migrants on their rights and available services, not only on the issues of migration but also about social services, permissions, taxes etc. The Municipality examine by priority the requests for permission of use of public spaces submitted by the cultural organisations for their festivals and manifestations and very often support them by providing the space and permissions free of charge.

#### 3.9.3. Recommendations

Bearing in mind the fact that many suggestions from the previous Strategy were not fully implemented, their implementation could be continued in the forthcoming period. Actions like public services guides, websites, complains letterboxes or free of charge translations services, could continue to be priorities in the forthcoming period. This could be done only with a proper allocation of human resources, which need to reflect the population and know well their needs and culture. An equal treatment in terms of employment policies shall be further promoted and applied. The public services furthermore need to be adapted to the people of different ethnic, religious and cultural habits, which inter alia include food in public schools, availability of various types of funerals, or the access to sport venues by migrant women etc.

### 3.10. Citizenship and participation

#### 3.10.1. Objectives

The Intercultural Strategy emphasized the fact that the participation in public life and voting rights are some of the most important prerequisites in an inclusive integration process. It suggested various awareness building campaigns around the issues of the migrants' rights as well as capacity building measures for their effective participation in an organized and systematic way.

#### 3.10.2. Activities

The awareness among the local stakeholders (i.e. political parties) about the importance of active participation in the elective and voting processes has raised rapidly during the

implementation period 2018-2020. As a result, numerous political parties have approached people of foreign background to participate in the parliamentary elections in May 2021, while such trend is expected to continue around the local elections in December 2021. The state and the city provide continuous support to migrants NGOs, encouraging their formation, organization, operations and implementation of actions and projects. The use of technology and social media seems to be supportive for the deepening of the democratic processes throughout Cyprus and Limassol society.

### 3.10.3. Recommendations

Further actions under this priority should be concentrated around the awareness building process, using the local elections in Cyprus as a starting point. The umbrella and supportive organisations like Cyprus Volunteerism Coordination Council would be possibly some of good partners, along with political parties, public instances and other CSO. An increased capacity to operate (leadership building, lobbying techniques, finances, HR etc) and incentives for self- organization by migrants and other communities (provision of seed funding for offices and meetings, administration, and transport), shall be an integrated part of any local strategy related to social and political life.

## 3.11. Intercultural image and media

### 3.11.1. Objectives

The Intercultural Strategy clearly identified socio-economic benefits of an improved Intercultural image and perception, firstly by the citizens of Limassol and then by the national and international stakeholders. The mass-media in that term has been seen to play a very important role. The strategy proposed actions like Anti-Rumours, roundtables, intercultural guides and publications for migrants and visitors, aiming at further awareness building (locally and internationally) an inclusive and intercultural identity of the city.

### 3.11.2. Activities

During the implementation period, the City of Limassol, its Mayor(s) and leaders have been constantly stressing on the multi/inter-cultural identity of the city. National and local authorities in charge for foreign investments are continuously talking about the benefits of the cultural diversity of Cyprus and Limassol, where people from all-over the world can transfer their businesses and work in a stable environment. The Anti-Rumours campaign will become an ongoing city's activity. Still, the efforts for the implementation of the "Welcome to Intercultural Limassol" guide for an increased participation of foreigners in local cultural organisations, did not obtain financial support of respective national authorities. The Municipality has recently opened the position of the Advisor for International Relations, which is expected to continue the work of the Intercultural Counsellor in this field. The intercultural twinning projects with Ioannina and Haifa, and the development of Mediterranean Intercultural Cities Network would serve as an excellent starting point in the future Intercultural Strategy document.

### 3.11.3. Recommendations

Even though Limassol took great steps ahead in terms of its intercultural image, both locally and internationally, there is still some space for improvements of this priority. Cyprus International Business Association (based in Limassol), bi-lateral or international chambers of commerce, national foreign policy initiatives around Trilateral collaborations (Cyprus + Greece + MENA country) covering Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and other countries in the region, seem to provide a solid ground for

international/intercultural branding activities, despite the fact that social policies are not at the moment high in the agenda. The phenomenon of two-speed migration (wealthy vs. deprived) needs to be approached and mainstreamed towards equal treatment for all. Collaboration with media is still an objective that needs to become a priority in the forthcoming strategy period 2021-2025.

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations - Towards a new Intercultural strategy of Limassol**

- 4.1. The implementation of Limassol's first intercultural strategy was an important step forward for the city's overall development. Despite the fact that the city made huge progress, the inclusive/intercultural integration process itself continuously develops with new and fresh ideas, which is probably the biggest advantage of this method. The below-mentioned points might be additionally considered for the development of the forthcoming strategy.
- 4.2. Bearing in mind that the ICC programme of the Council of Europe rapidly develops and tests new approaches and themes, in order to keep up with the international trends, the city might consider fully aligning (chapter to chapter) its strategy documents to the main Council of Europe's Policy documents: Step by Step Guide and Intercultural Index Questionnaire.
- 4.3. With that in mind, the new strategy could integrate some of previous chapters into more generic ones: i.e. Youth, Education, Parenting and Family life.
- 4.4. At the same time, it might add several new chapters like Neighbourhoods, Intercultural Mediation, Welcoming newcomers, Multilingualism, Data collection and Intercultural intelligence and Innovation, while broadening three horizontal ICC priorities: Anti-discrimination, Participation and Interaction, which could be integration to all other priorities.
- 4.5. The future Intercultural Strategy, which would be supported by an action plan needs to foresee more specific (internal and external) evaluation indicators, for which the set of CoE documents and expertise on Intercultural Integration might be further used and applied.

## Intercultural Council of Limassol:

# Intercultural Strategy for the city of Limassol 2018-2020

### Introduction

This document was produced within the framework of pilot-action “Intercultural Council of Limassol”, being a part of a wider integration project “Limassol – one city, the whole world”. It is based on good practices coming from “Intercultural Cities” Programme<sup>1</sup>, run by the Council of Europe, a network with over 120 cities, in which Limassol participates since 2010. Between September 2017 and January 2018, the Intercultural Council with over 40 representatives of migrants’ associations, diplomatic representations, labour unions, media etc, have been meeting and discussing various challenges that migrants are facing and possible measures to solve them. As a result, the Council developed the present strategy, which aims to become a guiding chart facilitating the development of Limassol as an open and intercultural city by 2020.

### Sectors of intervention

The Intercultural Council has detected 11 themes that are relevant for migrants’ communities and need immediate intervention. It is however clear to us that this list embrace a wide range of issues for which the Municipality of Limassol, as a local authority, does not have the powers and inferences and that a wider synergies with other instances and organizations are necessary. Along with the Contexts and Proposed actions, they are listed at each separate chapter below. The following sectors/issues have been detected and further elaborated:

- 1) Culture
- 2) Education
- 3) Youth
- 4) Parenting
- 5) Housing
- 6) Health
- 7) Labour issues
- 8) Policing and Security
- 9) Access to public services
- 10) Citizenship and Participation
- 11) Intercultural Branding and Media

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities>

## 1) Culture

### Context

The culture is a main identity driver of each person. In an intercultural city, all the citizens are free and welcome to keep their cultural identities and on that way to contribute to the social life of the city. All the citizens shall be in a position to develop and participate cultural and sport activities, as well as to preserve their language and culture. The authorities shall provide special facilitation for them to participate in general and specially designed programs. Public spaces should be accessible and free for them, while no language and other barriers shall exist.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Support to cultural activities promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity with a micro-grant scheme (around 1,000€)
- ii. Support to operational expenses (offices, meeting spaces, technology) to the cultural associations of migrants.
- iii. Creation of an Intercultural Library within the Limassol Municipal Library with books on various languages and/or translations to Greek and English.
- iv. Publishing of a handbook for migrants' participation in local cultural and social organizations.
- v. Music and other artistic activities for children and young migrants.
- vi. Priority procedure for the access to public spaces for cultural purposes.

### Partners:

- Coordinating Council of Limassol Cultural Organizations.
- Cultural and Sport NGOs
- Mass Media
- Ministry of Education and Culture

## 2) Education

### Contexts

A genuine integration of migrants could be achieved only through adequate education. Due to change of the living space, migrants' knowledge and skill often do not match the one that employers are looking for. In reality, the picture is even more complicated, since the education level is different for each adult, so no unison approach could be made. At the same time, the local community is lacking in intercultural education, necessary for the development of culture of openness and tolerance.

### Proposed action:

- i. Development of course of Greek and English languages, as well as the Mother Tongue for foreigners, tailor-made for various target groups (i.e. parents, workers, youth, children, house-wives)
- ii. Participation in national and European lifelong learning programs.
- iii. Intercultural Education Actions in public and private schools.

### Partners:

- Limassol School Council (Eforia)
- Ministry of Educaiton and Culture
- Ministry of Interior (AMIF)
- Public and Private Educational Institutions
- European programs (Erasmus+ etc)

### 3) Youth

#### Context

In an intercultural city, a special emphasis shall be given to the integration of young migrants to the local community. The experiences from other countries, but also from Cyprus, show that migrant youth is especially vulnerable in juvenile delinquency, and that they need to be approached holistically in order to be protected and empowered. The future actions shall target not only youngsters having both parents with migrants' background, but also those ones coming from single-parents families, mixed marriages, foreign students and all Cypriot youth, in general.

#### Proposed activities:

- i. Extra-curricular youth empowerment activities and programs
- ii. Campaign against youth delinquency in various languages
- iii. Youth Cards for free entrance to cultural and sport events
- iv. Campaign on informing foreign students about the legal framework of the Republic of Cyprus

#### Partners:

- Cyprus Youth Board
- Cyprus University of Technology and other Universities and Colleges
- Police of Cyprus
- Ministry of Education and Culture
- European Programs
- NGOs
- Private Educational Institutions



## 4) Parenting and Families

### Context

The family is a basis for a healthy society. In many cases though, the migrants (as well as Cypriot) parents are working for long periods of time, so they and their children face difficulties in taking proper care during the afternoons, evenings and weekends. This has long-term consequences in term of school records and juvenile delinquency. The lack of knowledge of Greek language creates difficulties for the parents. Also, in many cases, there are cultural barriers for women employment, which cause a financial dependence and increased vulnerability to the family harassment.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Public nurseries open in the afternoons, evenings and weekends
- ii. Afternoon curricular and extra-curricular activities for children
- iii. Phone-line and campaign offering help in the cases of family harassment
- iv. Greek language course for parents
- v. Parenting lessons and courses

### Partners:

- Parents associations and confederations
- Limassol School Council (Eforia)
- Cyprus Youth Board
- Ministry of Education and Culture
- Ministry of Labour and Social Insurances
- Ministry of Interior (AMIF)
- NGOs working in the specific fields.

## 5) Housing

### Context

The migrants' families and especially the refugees' ones are facing very often the challenge of finding a safe and appropriate home. There are many cases where in one place leave more than one family. Very often, they live in non-adequate facilities, without access to water and sewerage. In order to rent a facility, according to the law, one needs a legal permission, which is very often lacking or being delayed. The refugees usually have a need of emergent housing, so organizations offering help to them are on 24- hours shift.

### Proposed activities:

- i. A series of discussion sessions aiming at strategic planning of intercultural landscape and civil engineering for the city of Limassol, which would include the mixed income housing.
- ii. Task-force for immediate housing help based on 24-hours shifts.

### Partners:

- Urban Planning Department – Limassol
- Architects Association
- NGOs

## 6) Health

### Context

The issue of access to the health insurance has been discussed widely in the total of Cyprus society lately. The solution of General Health Plan (ΓΕΣΥ), which will define the benefits and responsibilities of all the parts involved, seems to be visible in the near future. However, the question of health insurance of migrants is burning, due to current lack of provision of public health services. Like all people, migrants also need regular health checks, proper information, medical advises, small interventions, support in organization of funerals etc. The situation is even more difficult as there are many cases where persons live alone or separated from their community.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Multi-lingual website with information about health topics
- ii. Emergency 24/7 phone-line with doctors able to communicate in various languages
- iii. Free weekend check-ups (pharmaceutical advice, blood-tests for cholesterol, diabetes, hepatitis, sexually transmitted illnesses etc).
- iv. Support for the organization of funerals.

### Partners:

- Labour Unions (PEO, SEK, etc)
- Public and Private entities and enterprises active in health sector
- NGOs
- Immigration Office

## 7) Labour issues

### Context

The job placement is essential for smooth integration of any person to the society. It is therefore the most important and most burning issue for all migrants' and refugees' communities. Within this framework, very many cases have been detected that has to do with exploitation, non-registered labour, unequal treatment, earnings discrimination, bad working conditions, as well as the lack of adequate education of migrants. This issue also has to do with the support of migrants to start a new enterprises.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Composition of a stakeholders' working group for migrants' labour issues, including the Municipality, Unions, Employers and Industrialists' Associations, Migrants' Representatives etc,
- ii. Tailor-made, job-finding and advice service programs for migrants.
- iii. Migrants' start-up business incubator.

### Partners:

- Labour and Trade Unions
- Employers' and Industrialists' Association
- Ombudsman Office
- Social Insurance Department
- Business Incubators
- NGOs

## 8) Policing and Safety

### Context

The city areas with high migrants' population seems to be, in general, more vulnerable on developing the phenomena of exclusion and ghettoization, with higher crime and lower safety for all the citizens. It is therefore necessary to develop the activities which bring to a dialogue all local stakeholders, migrants' representatives, youth, local and national authorities, the Police, specifically.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Intercultural policing training program for Police members
- ii. Meetings and seminars, mainly for young people, explaining the role of Police in the society
- iii. Campaign of improvement of public image of Police in the society
- iv. Campaign for "Zero-crime city" in various languages

### Partners:

- Cyprus Police – Limassol District Direction
- Ombudsman Office
- NGO "Friends of Police"
- Local leaders (Koinotarches) and Neighborhood Councils

## 9) Access to Public Services

### Context

The access to public services and proper information about them is one of basic human rights. The migrants and refugees, due to lack of knowledge of official language, the legal framework and regulations, very often do not have access to them. The process of visa allocation, citizenship, driver licenses, other permissions, legal advices, the documentation uniformity and inter-connectedness between various services and departments, support measures for human-trafficking and family- harassment victims etc, must be open for all the members of an intercultural society.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Lobbying for more efficient visa and citizenship granting procedures
- ii. Free legal advices services for migrants and refugees
- iii. Development and publishing of public services handbook in various languages
- iv. Creation of the dog-watch team for equal access to public services
- v. Complaint mailbox dedicated to migrants communities
- vi. Free public-forms translation services

### Partners:

- Ministry of Interior – Limassol District Office
- Immigration Department
- Ombudsman Office
- NGOs

## 10) Citizenship and Participation

### Context

The voting right and the right to be voted are some of basic premises for the integration of migrants to the society. Also, the volunteerism play an important role in this process. It, however, seems that the participation of migrants on the (local) elections and in public life generally, is not equal comparing to the rest of the population of Cyprus. Although, the Municipality of Limassol is a protagonist on the case of migrants' participation in cultural activities, their participation in other socio-political activities face some challenges. The lack of knowledge about the chances for participation is one of the factors contributing to the exclusion of migrants from those.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Info campaign through multi-lingual printed material and website about the rights and chances for participation in the Municipal and national elections, programs and organizations
- ii. Leadership building and support programs for migrants' community leaders.
- iii. Lobbying campaign for increase of migrants' participation in local organizations and programs (cultural, social, NGOs, voluntary, political etc).

### Partners:

- NGOs and volunteers organizations
- Pancyprrian Coordinating Council for Voluntarism
- Volunteering Commissioner
- Political parties and their respective organizations (women, youth etc).

## 11) Intercultural branding of the City and Media

### Context

Being internationally promoted as a unique intercultural point between three continents, Limassol is getting a number of benefits, including the attractiveness for investments, development of tourism and many other sectors. Even though, there is a great improvement space for branding the city as Intercultural, on local, national and international levels. In this process should be included all possible stakeholders that could contribute to the internal and external paradigm shift. Especially important is the participation of mass-media, which have a possibility to promote the benefits of an intercultural identity of our city.

### Proposed actions:

- i. Series of meetings among the Municipality, NGOs, tourism stakeholders, media and migrants' associations aiming at the repositioning of the public image of the city.
- ii. Anti-rumor campaign
- iii. Intercultural city campaign
- iv. Publishing the guidebook "Limassol for migrants"
- v. Intercultural branding strategy and activities

### Partners:

- Local printed and electronic media (TV, radios, newspapers, websites)
- CTO
- Marketing companies
- Investments organizations
- NGOs