Checklist for the evaluation of intercultural project proposals

HOW INTERCULTURAL IS YOUR POLICY OR PROJECT?

MEANINGFUL INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

Interaction is the cornerstone of intercultural integration and is what gives an intercultural city its distinctive value. Interaction means creating conditions for meaningful and constructive everyday encounters across cultural and other differences. Prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people, even where there are protective laws. Evidence has shown that, under the right 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.

Indicators:

1. **Increasing meaningful every-day encounters across difference**
2. **Interaction and working in partnership**
3. **Understanding fears and barriers to interaction**
4. **Proactively facing challenges and conflicts**
5. **Maximising sustained intercultural interaction**

New to the topic? Take a look at the description of the indicators and an introduction to the intercultural principle of meaningful intercultural interaction.

The intercultural checklist aims to be **simple and transparent**. Questions are phrased so that you can **tick the boxes which apply** to your project. The more boxes ticked – the more intercultural the project is. After completing the intercultural checklist, you should be able to easily identify to what extent the principle is reflected in the policy or project.

INDICATOR 1/5: INCREASING MEANINGFUL EVERY-DAY ENCOUNTERS ACROSS DIFFERENCE

An intercultural city works hard to maximise positive everyday encounters across difference between residents. The first step is the adoption (and implementation) of strategies that facilitate meaningful intercultural encounters and exchanges and promote equal and active participation of residents and communities in the development of the city, thus responding to the needs of a diverse population. At the level of individual projects or activities, the potential for increasing intercultural interaction is something that should be considered carefully.

1. Does this project have the potential to increase meaningful everyday intercultural interactions between residents in the city? This is the case if:

- ☐ The city has evidence on intercultural interaction and what interaction currently takes place.
- ☐ There is a clear plan for how the project will increase meaningful intercultural interactions in the city.
- ☐ There has been a review of how all aspects of the project will affect interaction and the possibility to increase it.
- ☐ The project has sought advice from other departments such as education, planning, housing, where needed.
- ☐ The evaluation analyses whether meaningful interactions were increased and recommends any improvements that could be made in future projects.

2. If the project involves public space, was maximising intercultural interaction an integral part of its planning, design, renovation, and use? This is the case if:

- ☐ The city has considered where the project will take place and how different infrastructure and amenities may impact or limit interaction.
- ☐ The city has considered how specific design features may have an impact on different groups.
- ☐ The city has taken into account the views of a diverse group of experts, partners and citizens to ensure that the plans will be able to maximise interaction.
- ☐ The city has used participatory approaches in the project design.
- ☐ The project plans or designs have been communicated in an accessible format including in pictorial and other forms.

Before you move on....

The ICC Step-by-step guide includes sections on interaction and public space. You could also consider looking again at the ICC Index questions on public space and neighbourhood for more ideas. Further, the policy study and brief on managing gentrification may be of interest. You may also wish to consider the evidence you have as a city on interaction and how this can be improved, including by discussing it with the city's partners and other stakeholders.

Want to learn from your peers? Take a look at these good practice examples from member cities in the Intercultural Cities network. You will for example learn about the renewed Tabakalera in Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain).

INDICATOR 2/5: INTERACTION AND WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The intercultural city cannot increase intercultural interaction alone, although it can certainly encourage this through its activities, festivals, actions, communication, and funding. It needs a broad range of allies. Co-design of projects and policies with communities, residents and those who use the services and spaces, are one of the main ways of ensuring that a city works in partnership and that its projects are based on evidence and achieve the desired results.

3. Is your city working in partnership with others to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups in this project? This is the case if:

☐ The project takes a 'bottom-up' approach to the project design and planning.
☐ The project has a participatory approach or co-design or other elements of real engagement with diverse city residents from the beginning stages of planning and throughout.
☐ The project is creative and proactive in its outreach, going beyond the 'usual suspects'.
☐ There is a clear plan for how and when to engage with other stakeholders.

4. Has the city considered intercultural interaction as a criterium for funding, events, partnerships, or other elements of this particular project? This is the case if:

☐ The project has identified the main stakeholders, places and issues that could bring together residents over and above cultural differences.
☐ The city collaborates with civil society and grassroots organisations active in fields concerned with intercultural inclusion.
☐ It is clear which specific parts of the project will enable more intercultural interaction.
☐ Intercultural interaction is included as a topic for specific project events, materials or activities.
☐ It is clear which partnerships will enable more intercultural interaction.
☐ Increasing intercultural interaction has been considered as one of the criteria for partners' activities to be included in the project.
☐ Intercultural interaction is a criterion for partners' activity reports.
☐ The city encourages schools to organise intercultural extra-school activities that occupy the public space and contribute to its desegregation.

Before you move on....

An intercultural city cannot work alone and needs the support of allies including on encouraging intercultural interaction. Consider joining local, regional, or national forums to find different partners, or learning more from other cities from the Intercultural Cities network. Sometimes it is also easier to include value-based criteria in overall programmes rather than one specific project or when funding a specific proposal. For example, an art commissioning programme could have a programmatic objective to be diverse and increase interaction but not necessarily each individual artwork within the programme. However, it is always useful to check where a city can do this and where events, funding and reporting criteria can be used to increase interaction or understanding on interaction and its barriers. See more inspiration from our cities below.

Want to learn from your peers? Take a look at these good practice examples from member cities in the Intercultural Cities network. You will for example learn about inclusive public transport in Dublin (Ireland).

INDICATOR 3/5: UNDERSTANDING FEARS AND BARRIERS TO INTERACTION

An intercultural city tries to understand fears and barriers to intercultural interaction. This means that an intercultural city needs to regularly 'test the waters' or find ways of understanding what barriers exist. Where there are fears or tensions, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions with them.

5. Has the city taken measures to understand if there are any fears and barriers to interaction in a particular location or with regards to this project? This is the case if:

☐ The city has data on intercultural interaction in the city and any gaps or barriers more generally that the project could learn from.

☐ The project has considered as wide a range of factors as possible that could be barriers to interaction, including the infrastructure, street lighting, transport links etc.

☐ The place and time of any event or consultation takes into consideration factors such as the safety of women, accessibility for different groups and 'safe' spaces.

☐ Barriers from daily lives have been taken into account such as work times, school pick-up times, if childcare is needed or if children can attend, provision of food.

☐ There is a clear plan to disseminate information to ensure this is not a barrier to participation.

☐ When organising any consultation or meeting, the arrangement of the room, where participants are sitting, and how they are welcomed, is considered to ensure that everyone feels at ease to actively participate.

☐ There are plans for mitigating barriers to interaction where they have been identified.

6. Communication can be a particular barrier to interaction. Does your project have a clear plan to ensure that these barriers are minimised as much as possible? This is the case if:

☐ Inclusive language is used, for example non-gendered.

☐ The project has considered if messages need to be delivered differently for different groups. The vocabulary used is accessible.

☐ The project has considered if messages need to be delivered differently for different groups. The vocabulary used is clear.

☐ Images to be used are representative of the target group of the project.

☐ Materials are translated into different languages where possible.

☐ There are simple communications or images to help those with low literacy skills.

☐ Where input is needed, there are different ways of interacting, for example, in one-to-one meetings, in writing, verbally, by phone.

☐ The communication department is able to support differentiated communication strategies for different groups.

Before you move on....

If you have not yet involved your communications or media department, consider consulting them for advice from the experts. You should also try asking other partners or departments who are experienced in this field or who you know have recently published accessible materials. Ideally, you would involve the group the city hopes to engage in discussions on what barriers to interaction could be and how to mitigate them. You may also wish to consult the policy brief Migration and integration – which alternative narratives work and why?.

Want to learn from your peers? Take a look at these good practice examples from member cities in the Intercultural Cities network. You will for example learn about the anti-racism campaign in Geneva (Switzerland).

INDICATOR 4/5: PROACTIVELY FACING CHALLENGES AND CONFLICTS

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 interactive communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

7. Has your city conducted a risk analysis of any potential conflicts that may occur because of, or as part of this project? This is the case if:

- ☐ The city has undertaken risk analysis for the project to see if there could be potential fears, barriers or conflicts related to it, particularly in terms of intercultural interaction.
- ☐ Residents and target groups are included in the project planning, including to ensure that any tensions that may arise are noted early in the project cycle.
- ☐ There is a clear action plan to deal with challenges or tensions during or because of this project.
- ☐ The city undertakes mediation services or specific activities as part of the planning or policy or project cycle, or work with other organisations who do this work to address challenges and tensions when they arise.
- ☐ The city takes measures to try and elaborate solutions with residents, ensuring all voices are heard and respected.

8. Have you considered developing an anti-rumour strategy, plan, and activities in relation to this project to challenge stereotypes and prejudices that can limit meaningful interaction? This is the case if:

- ☐ The city knows about the antirumours methodology advocated by the Intercultural Cities programme of the Council of Europe.
- ☐ The city is aware of the wide range of activities and projects that can use this strategy.
- ☐ There are specific activities in the project or materials and information that could include an antirumours element.
- ☐ There are project partners or other stakeholders who are able to work on potential antirumours elements of the project.

Before you move on....

The Intercultural Cities programme has a wealth of materials that include guides for cities, training materials for allies, examples of good practice and the different ways cities have used the anti-rumours methodology to challenge stereotypes, prejudices and hate speech, as well as evaluation tools. You can find more information on the dedicated Anti-rumours page on our website, where you find for example the Toolkit for antirumours dialogue. You may also wish to consider assessing the risk of the project. Risk assessment for projects is always recommended, so as in for example the policy brief Preventing the potential discriminatory effects of the use of artificial intelligence in local services.

Want to learn from your peers? Take a look at these good practice examples from member cities in the Intercultural Cities network. You will for example learn about the anti-rumours cafés in Botkyrka (Sweden).

INDICATOR 5/5: MAXIMISING SUSTAINED INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

Increasing interaction as part of a project is very useful but it is also helpful to consider the outcomes of any project or policy to see if it can lead to longer-lasting change and more interaction as an outcome of the activity. In this way it should be verified if the project works with all those who can create more interactions as a long-term feature of the activity or policy. Perhaps it can be considered a pilot project that you can evaluate and improve next time with more interactive features. A regular event may mean more participation and interaction. Perhaps the project or policy can include communication or training to ensure that results are sustainable, or interaction can be built into criteria for assessing projects with other partners or funding for civil society groups. Events or meetings to discuss or showcase good practice can also lead to mutual learning and interaction between projects.

9. Does the project have elements which may encourage a sense of ownership among residents or specific groups? This is the case if:

☐ The project is based on an identified need in the community.
☐ There are diverse residents included in co-design or participatory processes for designing and evaluating the project.
☐ Residents and other stakeholders' views are taken into account regularly throughout the project to ensure two-way communication.
☐ Resources or materials are be passed to communities or groups at the end of the project to enable them to continue the work (e.g., tools from a garden project).
☐ The project publicises its successes including the input and work of diverse stakeholders and residents who are helping to make the project a success.

10. How can you ensure that more meaningful interactions take place but also that the effects are long-lasting? Will the project outcomes lead to more interaction? This is the case if:

☐ The project design includes clear indicators on meaningful interactions that can be reported on.
☐ There are elements of the project design that will ensure meaningful interactions continue after the project has ended (e.g., sustainable funding elements or a place or activity that will continue after the project ends).
☐ There are elements of the project that will change how residents think about and participate in intercultural interaction.
☐ The evaluation includes criteria on meaningful interactions both for the city and any partners.
☐ The evaluation allows for consideration of any unintended effects of the project that either negatively or positively affected interaction.
☐ There are elements of good practice that can be shared with other cities or stakeholders, including the Intercultural Cities network.
☐ There are elements of the project that need to be included in core areas of work for the city or more formal structures to ensure their sustainability at the end of the project.

Before you move on....

You may wish to consider the ICC Step-by-step guide which provides examples of practices and tools used by cities to gather an in-depth knowledge of their population in a sustainable way, including: collaboration with universities, research institutes, establishment of monitoring and evaluation bodies, surveys, minority and local councils, etc. There are also structures aiming at fostering civic and political participation in a sustainable way that offer the city opportunities to tap into local resources and knowledge, collect important data and, at the same time, foster trust and participation. You may also wish to review if ownership in the project by other stakeholders can be encouraged to maximise sustainability at the end of the project.

Want to learn from your peers? Take a look at these good practice examples from member cities in the Intercultural Cities network. You will learn about Leeds equalities assembly (United Kingdom).