NICOSIA DISTRICT

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS
2024

Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS

NICOSIA DISTRICT
INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

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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/2024) more than 160 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 132 (including Nicosia) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found here.

Among these cities, 35 cities (including Nicosia) have between 200 000 and 500 000 inhabitants and 21 (including Nicosia) have between 15% and 20% of foreign-born residents.

This report was prepared in the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe joint project: "Enhancing policies and structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus".[1] It is based on information gathered by the coordinator of the Nicosia District Intercultural Network (**Citizens in Power (CIP)**) that was established under the project. The report presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Nicosia District (Cyprus) 2024, in comparison to the previous analysis prepared in 2022 under the "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" joint project 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 three 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 insofar: 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, 51 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Nicosia. 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, Nicosia has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 38 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained bellow.[2]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

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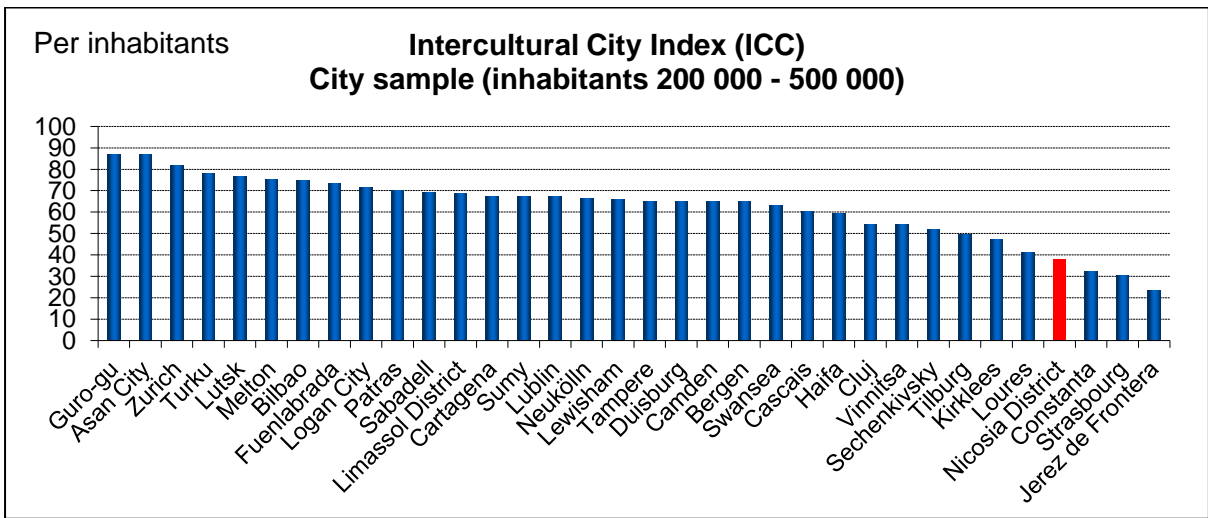
[2] The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended 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 diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

Core Index

Legend: Nicosia District 2022 — City sample — Nicosia District 2024
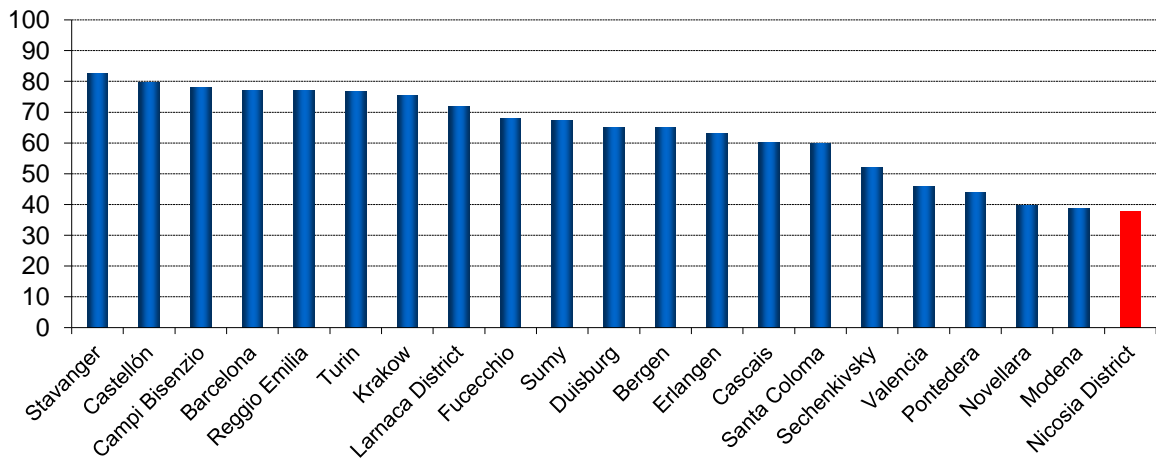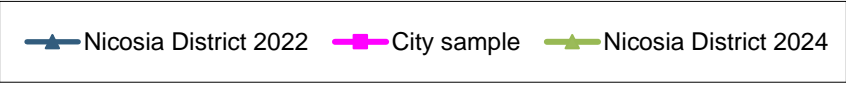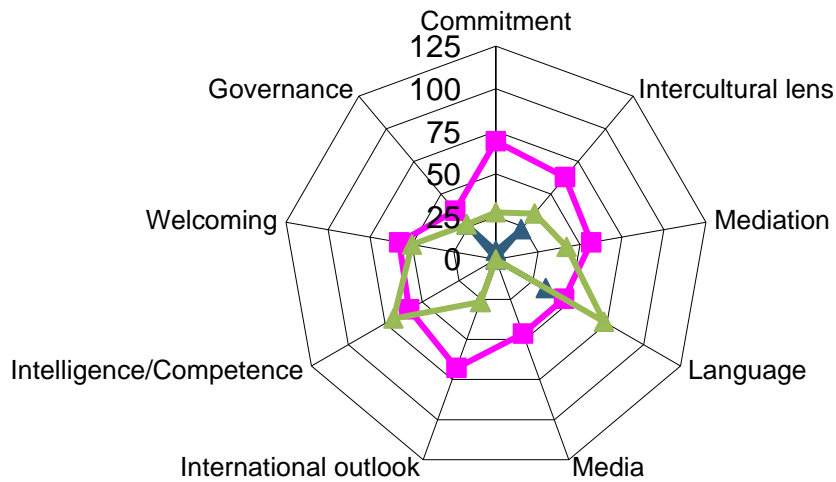
Intercultural Lens Index with Core Index

Categories: Education system, Neighbourhood, Public service, Business and labour market, Cultural and civil life, Public space

Legend: Nicosia District 2022, City sample, Nicosia District 2024

Extended Index

Categories: Commitment, Intercultural lens, Mediation, Language, Media, International outlook, Intelligence/Competence, Welcoming, Citizenship, Anti-discrimination, Participation, Interaction

Legend: Nicosia District 2022, City sample, Nicosia District 2024

Intercultural Lens Index with Extended Index

Education system — Neighbourhood — Public service — Business and labour market — Cultural and civil life — Public space

Legend: Nicosia District 2022 — City sample — Nicosia District 2024

NICOSIA: AN OVERVIEW

Nicosia District is one of the five districts of Cyprus. Its largest town is the country's capital, Nicosia, and is the seat of the Government of Cyprus. As the capital of the Republic, Nicosia is Cyprus' political, economic and cultural centre.

The District of Nicosia covers 2 719 km² and is home to a population of 350 035, the 37.9% of the total population of the country (2021 Census). This implies an increase of 7,1% in the last 10 years. The population density is approximately 120 people per square kilometre.

The District of Nicosia has five officially established municipalities. These municipalities are: Nicosia, Aglantzia, Strovolos, Engomi and Lakatamia. In addition to the municipalities, the district includes several rural communities and non-municipal areas. It is important to mention that, due to the political division of the island, part of the Nicosia District is under the control of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is not internationally recognised.

The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities of Nicosia segregated into the south and north of the city in early 1964. This separation became a militarised demarcation line after Turkey invaded the island in 1974, occupying the north of the island, including northern Nicosia. Like the island, the city of Nicosia is also divided: the southern part is the capital of the Republic of Cyprus, and the northern part is the capital of the non-UN recognised state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Consequently, the municipality of Nicosia, has a complex administrative organisation due to the political and territorial division that affects both the city and the whole island.

Main minority communities in Cyprus are Maronites, Latins (Roman Catholic) and Armenians. Roma people are not recognised as being entitled to minority rights but are deemed part of the Turkish Cypriot community with no special rights at all. Concerning the religious groups belonging to the Greek Cypriot community, at the end of 2019, Armenians constituted 0,4% of the community, Maronites 0,8% and Latins 0,1%.

In 2011, there were 34% of foreign nationals, of which half of them were EU-nationals (55%). Data from 2021 Census[3] shows an important decrease in these figures: 17.6% of the Nicosia District are foreigners, where 51.5% are EU-Nationals. From a national comparative perspective, Nicosia District has the lowest percentage of foreigners. When observing the country of birth, these figures increase, as 21.1% of the population born in a different country than Cyprus.

The largest groups of foreign nationals are Greeks (28%), Romanians (12.6%), Filipinos (7.4%), Bulgarians (6.7%), Sri Lankan (5.6%) and Syrians (5.5%). However, ten years ago these nationalities were different. The nationalities that have decreased the most have been Georgian (158%), British (127.6%), Vietnamese (88%) and, to a lesser extent and surprisingly, Russian (72.9%) and Ukrainian (64.7%). However, other nationalities not very present in 2011 have considerably increased their numbers, such as Syrian (97.2%), Indian (75.48%) or Greek (65.43%). The latter is remarkable for the volume of people, being the most present nationality after the Cypriot, as it has increased from 8 732 to 17 224.

Since 2015, Cyprus has been receiving an increasing number of refugees, particularly from neighbouring Syria. This increase intensified in 2018, with a 72% increase over the previous year and saw a further increase of 65% in 2019. In 2021, 13 235 new asylum applications were lodged, ranking Cyprus as the first asylum receiving country, per capita, among EU Member States. More recently, and according to the Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, 11 617 applications were received in 2023.[4]

Lastly, concerning the gender perspective, Cyprus Gender Inequality Index was 0.253 in 2022, which indicates relatively low inequality between men and women. However, it shows a 71.4% gender gap in share of seats in Parliament.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 28, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 69. The district still needs to dedicate efforts to build its intercultural commitment and narrative.

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[3] Available here: https://cystatdb.cystat.gov.cy/pxweb/en/8.CYSTAT-DB/8.CYSTAT-DB__Population__6.Population%20Census__

[4] Cyprus | Reception Capacity 31 December 2021. Available here: https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2022/02/UNHCR-Cyprus_Reception_thru-2021.pdf

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Commitment City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)
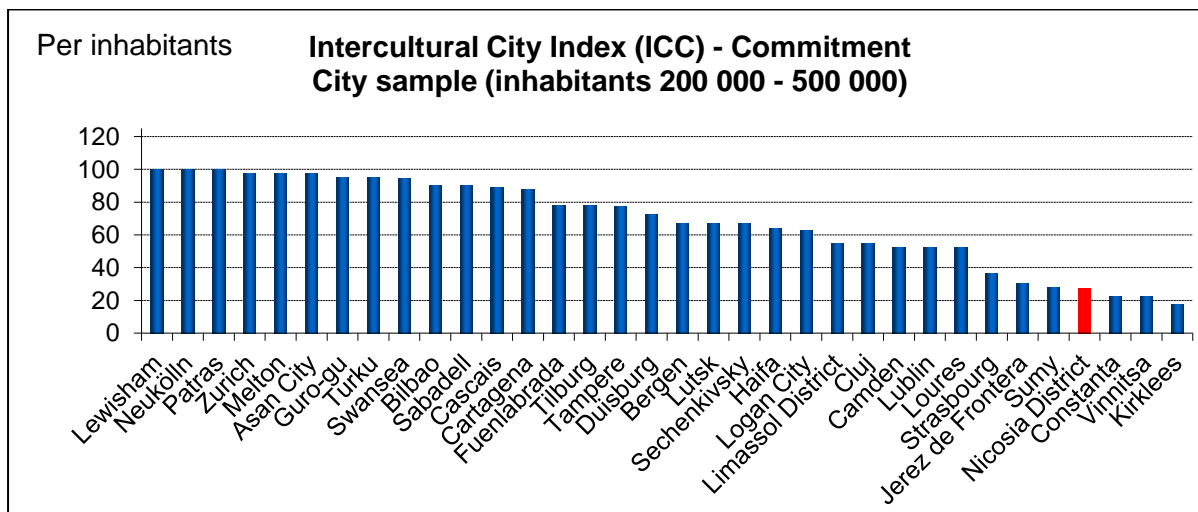
The Nicosia Regional Intercultural Network adopted an intercultural integration strategy, the **Nicosia District Action Plan for Social Integration (2023-2025).** The design of the strategy was not the result of a consultation process with citizens, but it was based on the results derived from the Intercultural Cities Index (2022) as well as relevant discussions within the Nicosia District Network (professionals from the governmental sector, ministries, and state agencies, local authorities, NGO's) and experts from the Council of Europe. This process was carried out under the framework of the Council of Europe and EU joint project, "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus".

The Action Plan gathers recommendations on the following fields, following the ICC Index: Commitment, Education, Access to public services, Improving labour market inclusion, Welcoming Newcomers, Language, and Participation. However, an evaluation of the Plan is not foreseen.

The project "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" supported the creation of the Regional Intercultural Network in the District of Nicosia with the aim to empower local authorities, NGOs, and migrant organisations to be part of the integration policy development process through the design and implementation of a tailor-made action plan/strategy for each district. A follow-up project "Enhancing structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus" provided further support for the implementation of the district action plan.

Regarding the district's narrative and communication, municipalities in the district have not formally adopted public statements in favour of intercultural polices, and official communications making clear reference to the city's intercultural commitment are rarely made. In addition, there is no official website communicating the intercultural work.

Lastly, the municipalities do not acknowledge or honour local residents and organisations that have done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community.

Recommendations

Municipalities in the Nicosia District still need to work towards the improvement of commitment to the intercultural approach. This should be done both through governance tools and narratives.

To promote policies with an intercultural perspective, it is key to have appropriate governance tools to ensure that they are implemented, coordinated and monitored and that their impact is properly evaluated. The case of Barcelona City Council is particularly of interest, as its Intercultural Plan (2021-2030) has been approved in Plenary in tandem with the Government Measure "Move towards interculturality. Governance instruments and

[mechanisms](#)". The intention of this government measure was to boost the institutional commitment with interculturality and the integration of this perspective in every action the municipal government takes by improving the governance instruments. As an example, it created an evaluation system and an inter-department Commission to monitor the implementation of the Plan.

The municipalities may wish to show this commitment in a more visible way online, and by formally adopting a public statement concerning their commitment towards interculturalism and inclusiveness.

Intercultural policies must be supported by narratives, and vice-versa, so it is consistent and coherent. There are different ways of grounding and communicating an intercultural narrative: by publicly presenting diversity as an advantage for the city (including public statements) or using a slogan or motto. We highly recommend the Guide '[Migration and integration, which narratives work and why?](#)'. It contains interesting examples such as the photographic project 'Genève, sa gueule'. The objective of the project is literally to give a human face to the story of Geneva's diversity, acknowledging and revealing its extent. Photo sessions, at which brief life stories are also taken via written forms, have now produced over 2 000 portrait images and matching biographies. These images were used for poster campaigns and gallery exhibitions in 2015-17.
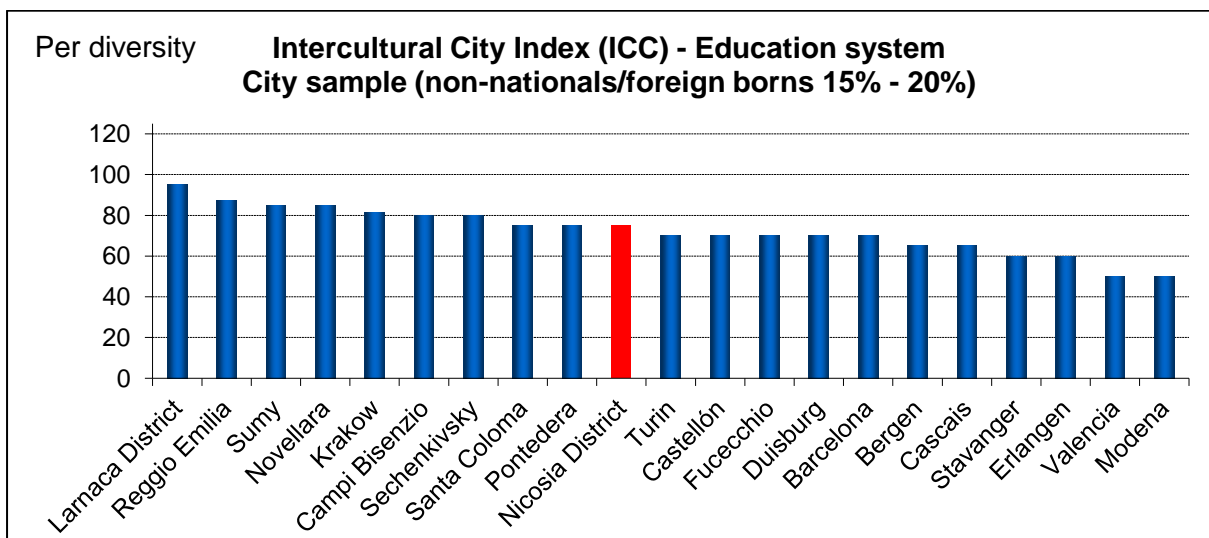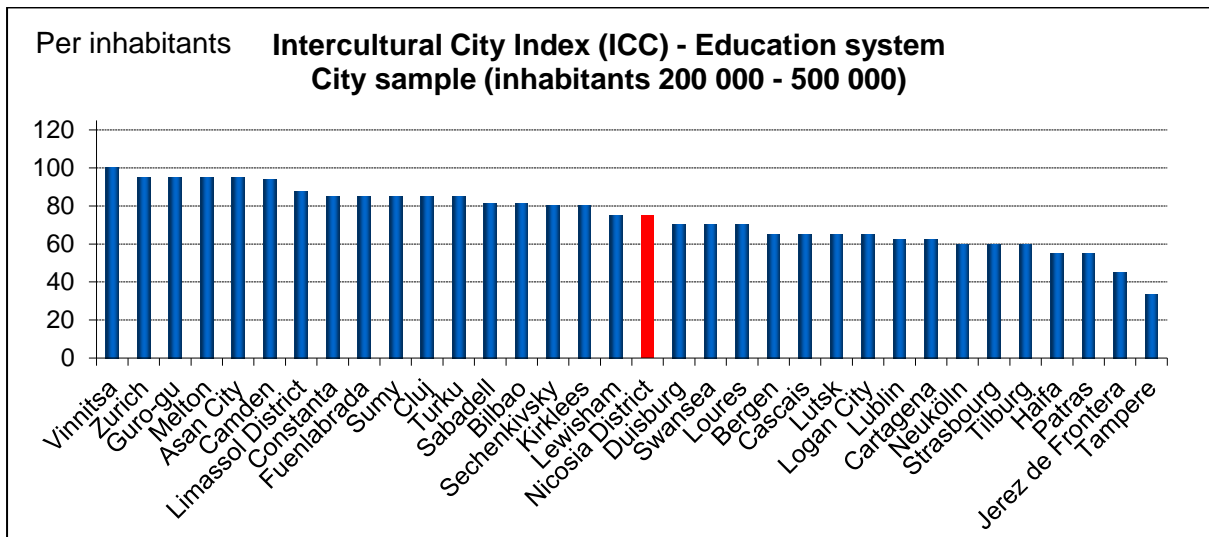
THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

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 Nicosia District, assessed as a whole through an "intercultural lens" is considerably lower to that of the model city: 35% of these objectives were achieved while the rate of achievement of the model city reaches 63%.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 75, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 70. The District has a range of initiatives relating to intercultural topics and works with parents from diverse backgrounds.

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Education system
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Education system
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

In Nicosia District, almost all children in primary schools are of the same ethnic/cultural background.

Most schools actively strive to engage parents from migrant or minority backgrounds in school activities. In 2022-2023, the Minister of Education introduced measures to enhance interaction between schools and families of children whose first language is not Greek, with a focus on closely monitoring students' learning progress and outcomes.[5]

Schools frequently implement intercultural projects. For instance, the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth in Cyprus maintains a webpage on Intercultural Education, highlighting initiatives that foster cultural exchange and understanding.

Ethnic mixing in Nicosia, like in all districts of Cyprus, is promoted through national policies that require children to enrol in the nearest school, with only a few exceptions. An important initiative by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth in Cyprus is DRA.S.E. One of the key target groups for these services is migrant families, ensuring they receive the necessary support for successful integration, including psychosocial support for students and parents, experiential workshops for students, educators, and parents, as well as supportive equipment and educational materials in schools.

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[5] https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/entaxi/ODIGOSDIAMESOLAVITON.pdf (p. 186)

Nicosia District shows very good results in this area. Although it has a very good cooperation with the parents of children of different cultures attending educational facilities, it may wish to draw further inspiration from other cities of the Intercultural Cities programme. In this regard, Salisbury (Australia) provides a good example, as some local schools run programmes for parents in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. Furthermore, these schools have access to translators so parents can communicate in their own language.

Despite the fact that the city councils do not have the competence on teachers recruitment process, Nicosia may explore offering intercultural competences training targeting teachers and schools workers as well as activities against segregation in schools.

An inspiring project, European cities against school segregation, highlights that, regardless of the particular attribution of responsibilities to each administration level, it is important that education policies prioritize equity and inclusion, allowing at the same time the necessary flexibility to meet the diverse needs of learners, both within and outside of mainstream education. Policymaking needs to involve all relevant stakeholders to achieve this objective and create shared ownership and accountability.

The project has designed training materials focused on policies and strategies to prevent, limit or manage the effects of school segregation (i.e. compensatory policies, free activity school in specific districts, recruiting and retaining skilled leaders and teachers in vulnerable areas).

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 0, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68.[6]
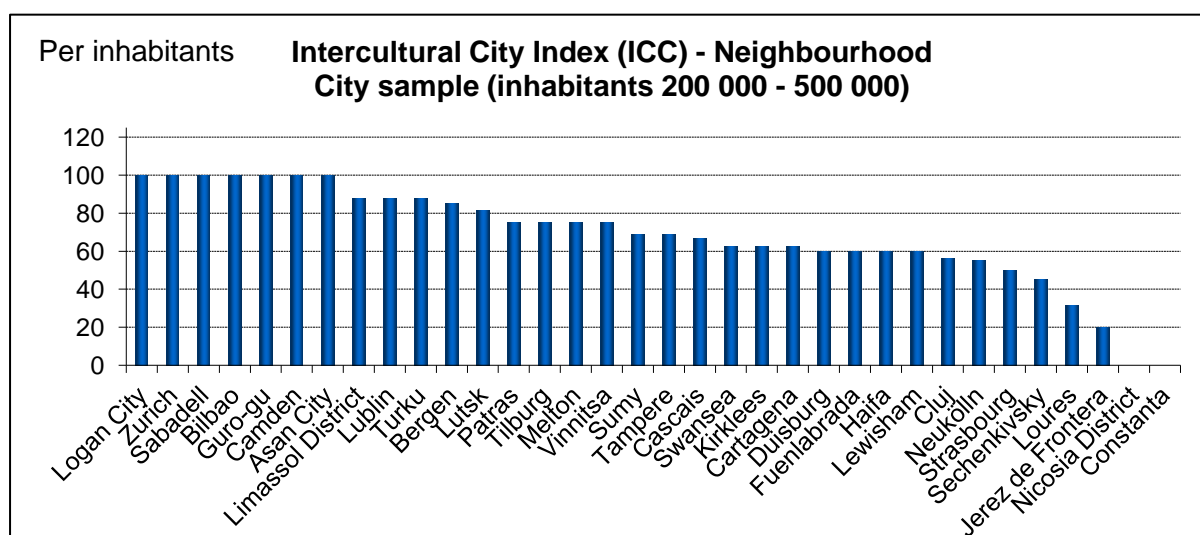
Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Neighbourhood City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

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[6] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 0, while the city sample achievement rate is 74.

Per diversity — Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Neighbourhood
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)
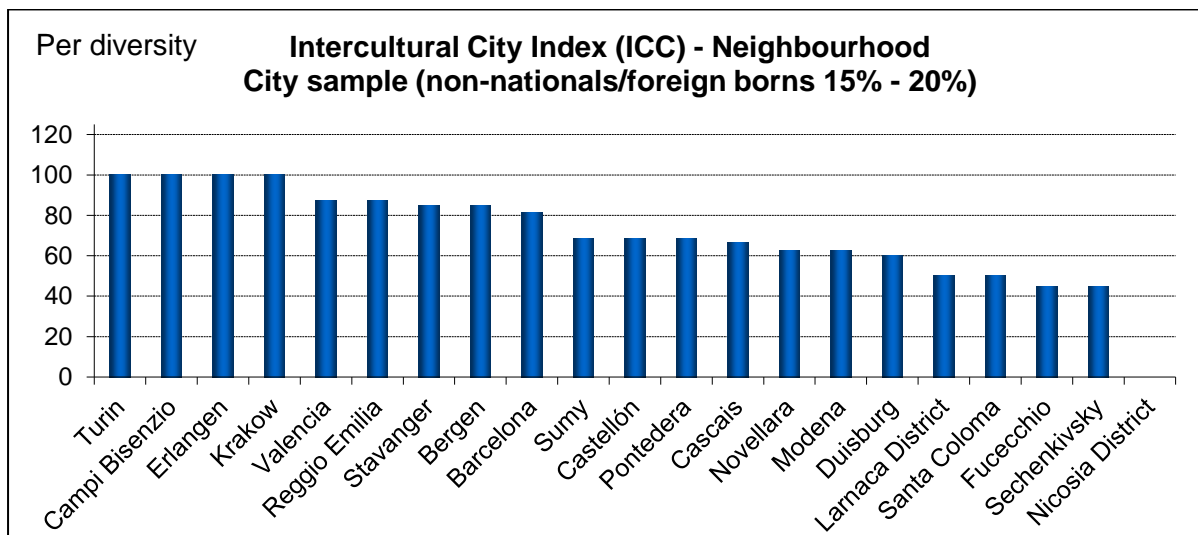
Municipalities in the Nicosia District do not have a policy to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods nor to avoid ethnic concentration. One of the reasons might be the fact that no data is available on diversity in neighbourhoods.

The municipalities do not have a policy nor encourage actions to foster interaction between residents with different migrant/minority backgrounds.

Recommendations

Data and information is key to policy making, as it helps with evidence-based decision making. In this sense, it might be important to know the migrant and ethnic composition in the different neighbourhoods to detect whether concentration / segregation occurs.

Many ICC cities work to increase the mix of their citizens and could provide some ideas to Nicosia's efforts. One exmple is Zambujal Melhora Programme in Amadora, Portugal, which works at a smaller scale meetings of individuals who work together at district level. The programme established the "facilitators neighbourhood" idea which is the joining of two people with different ethnic backgrounds who receive training at the same time in a specific area. They then go on to work together in their own neighbourhood or others.

Municipalities in the District of Nicosia could consider further encouraging the interaction between the neighbourhoods through existing cultural and social initiatives, like festivals and intercultural events. For instance, Nicosia might get inspired by the example of the city of Donostia-San Sebastian (Spain). The project "La Familia de al lado" (The Next Door Family) started in 2012, and the idea is to gather migrant families and local families together. The project operates on a local area, focusing on building relations among families within the same neighbourhood; the final goal is to build a network of connections that will strengthen the feeling of belonging, encouraging acceptance and social cohesion. The host household cooks a meal and welcomes the guests. A mediator coordinates the session until everyone feels at ease. Once the ice is broken, children will play together while parents will get to know each other's culture and habits even providing language support.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 17, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 46. The district, however, takes into consideration the migrant or minority backgrounds of all residents when providing school meals.

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public service City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public service City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)
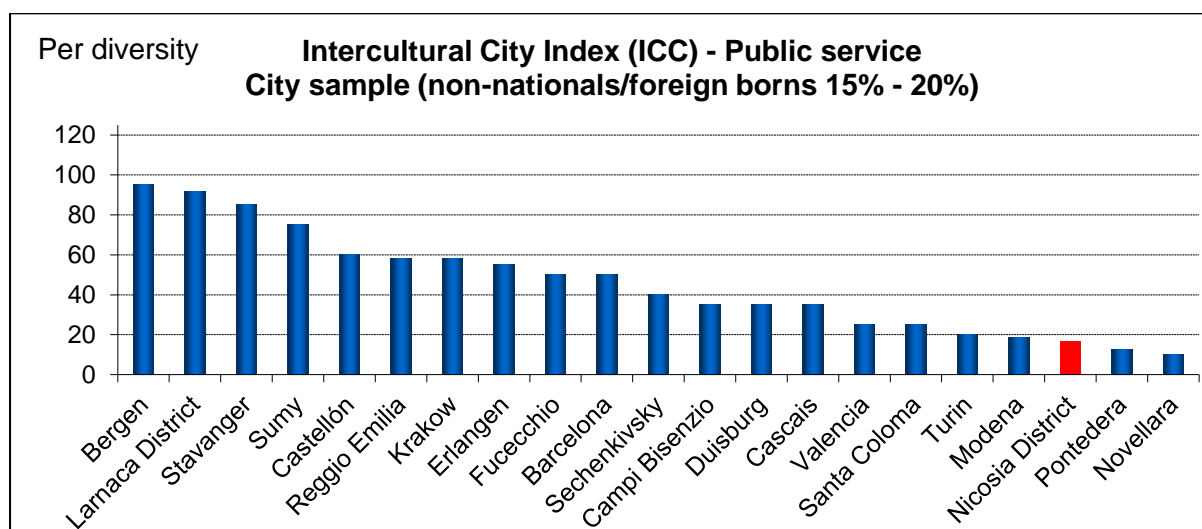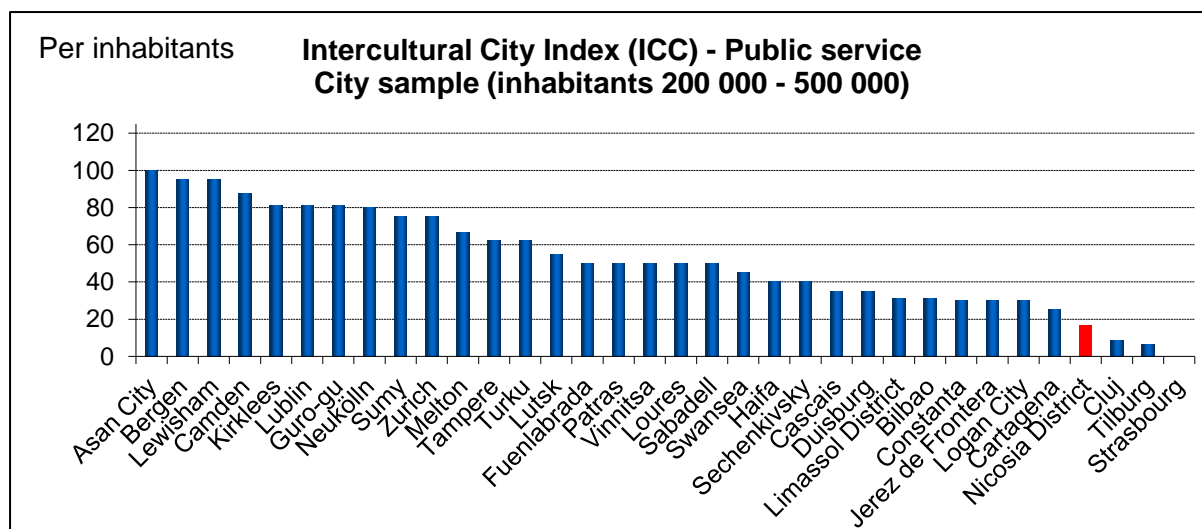
It is reported that the migrant or minority background of public employees does not reflect the composition of the district's population. Yet, the municipalities do not have a recruitment plan to ensure diversity in the workforce. In addition, also municipalities do not to take action to encourage a diverse workforce, intercultural mixing and competence in private sector enterprises.

The district takes into consideration the migrant or minority backgrounds of residents when providing school meals. For instance, municipalities provide a special menu for Muslim children.
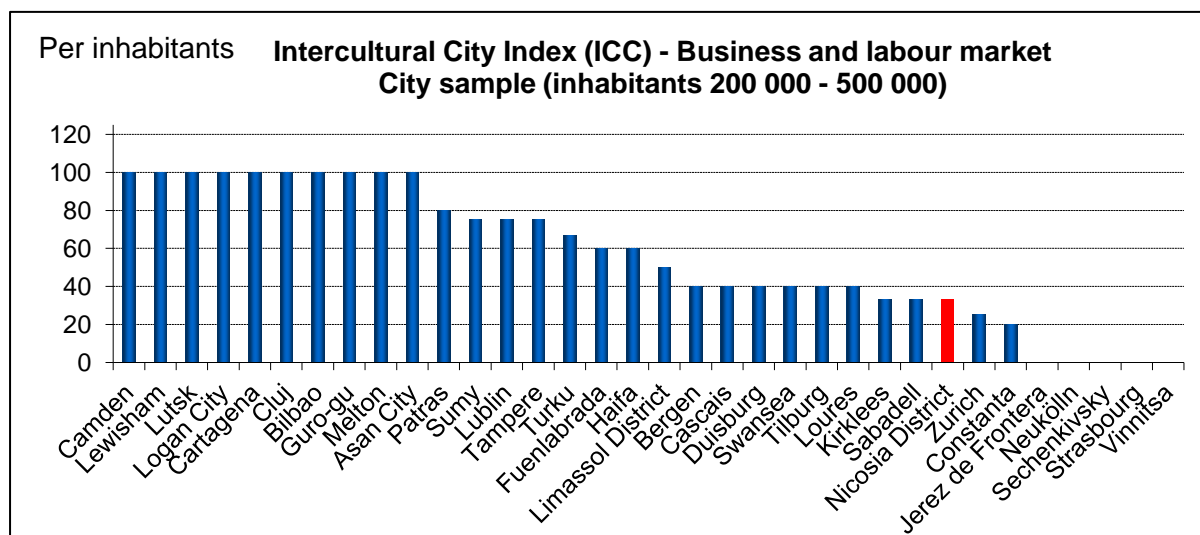
Nicosia has established itself as the island's financial capital and its main international business centre. This offers a great potential to encourage diverse workforce, intercultural mixing and competence in the private sector. Inspiration could be drawn from Riga, which implements a programme aimed at encouraging international talent to move and work in Riga. The programme is implemented in collaboration with private, mainly high-tech and other innovative companies, that wish to attract and employ highly qualified foreign specialists.

Concerning the provision of public services, Nicosia may be interested in exploring the funeral and burial services offered. In Botkyrka, Sweden, there are different sections in the local cemetery for all religions in the municipality, including for Muslims and Syrian Orthodox. This is a part of the work done within the interreligious network in Botkyrka and is coordinated nationally by the Swedish (protestant) Church.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 33, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 52. However, Nicosia offers information, training and support services aimed at promoting employment and developing entrepreneurship, especially among the most vulnerable groups of the population.[7]

Per inhabitants — Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Business and labour market
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

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[7] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 33, while the city sample achievement rate is 59%.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Business and labour market
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)
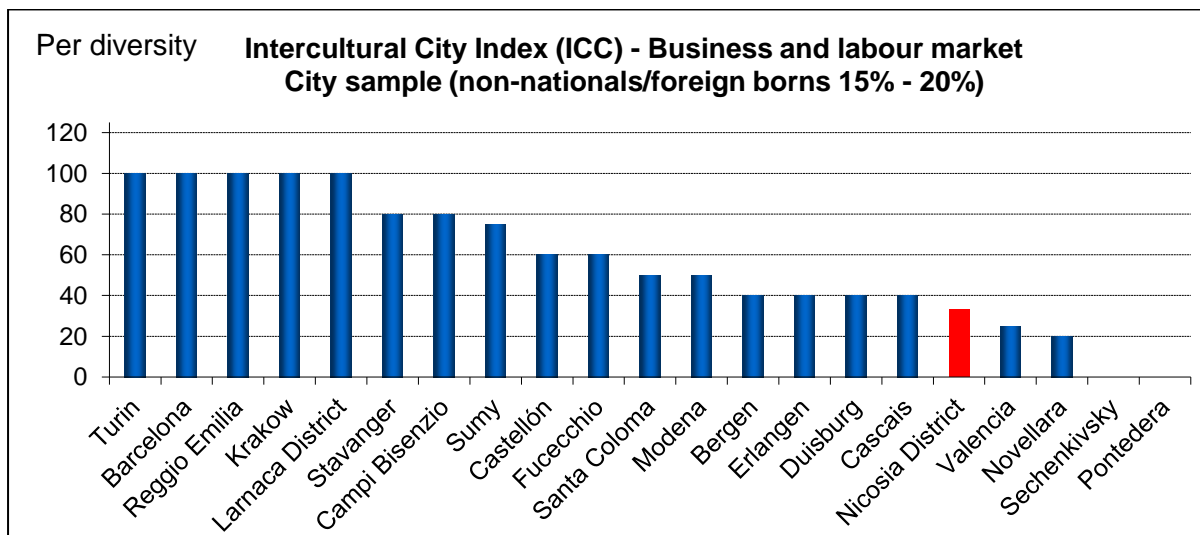
The Cyprus Federation of Employers and Industrialists (OEB) promotes diversity and better employment practices for foreign workers. The city contributes to this effort by taking part in discussions on employment policies. However, Nicosia District does not take action to encourage businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond the ethnic economy nor to encourage 'business districts/incubators' to involve entrepreneurs with migrant/minority backgrounds.

The Information and Training Centre for Employment and Entrepreneurship for Vulnerable Groups – KEEAED (ΚΕΕΑΕΔ), offers information, training and support services aimed at promoting employment and developing entrepreneurship, especially among the most vulnerable groups of the population. In particular, specialised consultants of the Centre provide the following services.

- Facilitating the integration and reintegration of people into the labour market through programmes and targeted actions that require their active participation.
- Raising awareness among professional bodies, enterprises and employers on issues related to the promotion of employment.
- Provision of all the information needed concerning integration and reintegration into employment.
- Referring those concerned to the Public Employment Services (PES).
- Promoting cooperation and networking of employment support structures and institutions.
- Identifying and supporting the development of the beneficiary's business profile.

As for the procurement of goods and services, municipalities in the Nicosia District do not favour companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy, as national regulations do not foresee it.

Recommendations

Municipalities in the Nicosia District may wish to explore collaboration with the private sector, creating opportunities for people with migrant or ethnic backgrounds to engage in economic activity. Oslo, Norway, provides a good example through its OXLO Business Charter, a forum and network for collaboration between the city and the business community. It works to promote migrants as a resource for business and economic growth with actions to support diversity recruitment, business leadership for diversity, and workplace diversity and inclusion.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 25, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 71. The district occasionally encourages cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.

Per inhabitants **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Cultural and civil life City sample (inhabitants 200'000 - 500'000)**

Per diversity **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Cultural and civil life City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)**
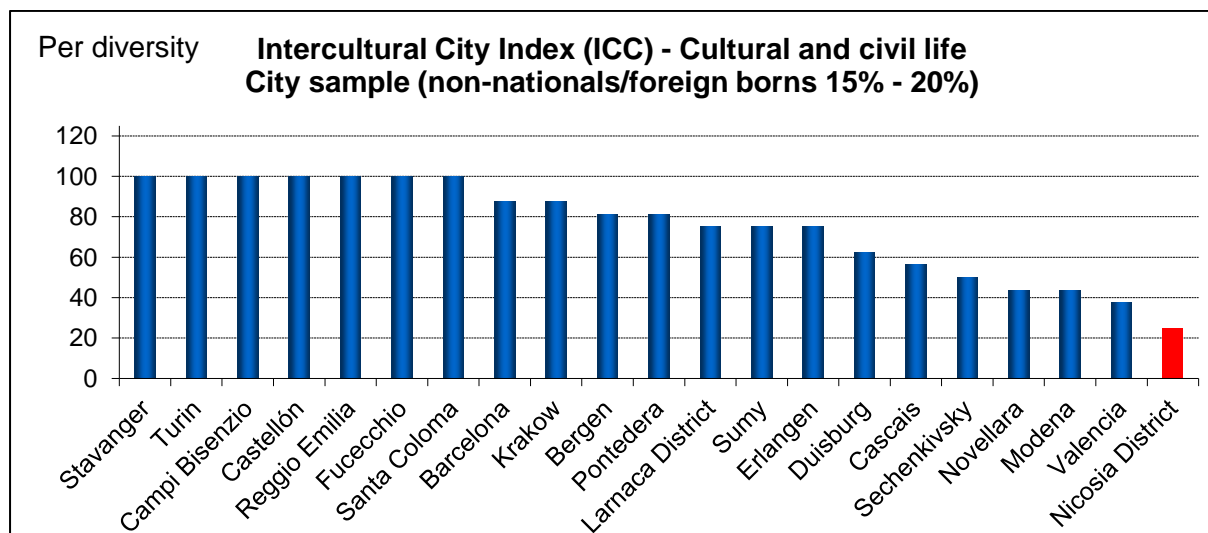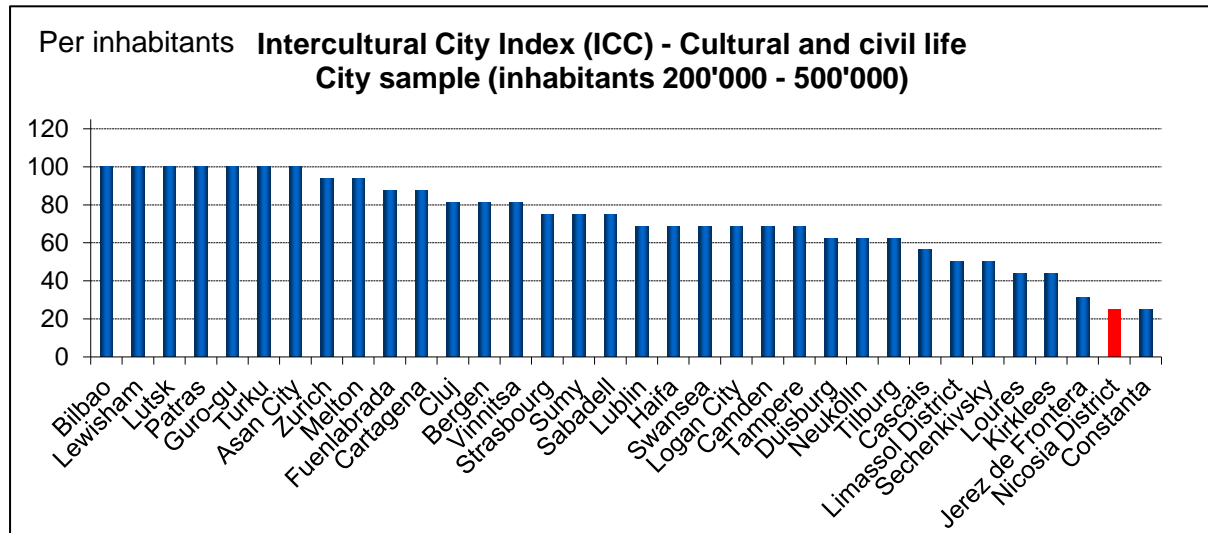
Nicosia District municipalities do not use the intercultural approach as a criterion when allocating funds to associations and initiatives. In addition, it does not organise but support the organisation of events and activities in the fields of culture that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact (mainly food festivals). It does not organise public debates or campaigns on the subject of cultural diversity and living together though occasionally cultural organisations are encouraged to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.

Recommendations

Several Spanish cities use interculturalism as a criterion to provide funding to civil society organisations. This is a key tool to mainstream the intercultural approach outside the public administration. One example is Bilbao, Spain, where they asked questions related to: CSO involvement in participatory bodies, such as the Bilbao Migrant Council and the socio-cultural origin of the Board. It also managed to include the Intercultural perspective together with the Gender and Euskera (Basque language) perspective. Boxes to tick are:

- It takes into account the cultural diversity of the territory and/or aspects linked to migrations and refuge.

- Objectives and activities aligned with the values of equality and non-discrimination, recognition of diversity and promotion of positive interaction between people of different origins and cultures.

- It promotes the participation of people from different cultures throughout the project cycle.

- Develops an intercultural communication strategy.

Neuchâtel, Switzerland, promotes cultural participation thanks to a partnership between the Multicultural Cohesion Department and cultural institutions. To this end, cultural institutions offer bilingual guided tours of museums and exhibitions (in Arab, Persian and Tigrinya), to enable non-French speakers who have recently settled in the canton of Neuchâtel to become aware of their cultural environment and make it their own and to develop their own identity, while contributing to the enrichment of society's cultural diversity.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 56, which is lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 67. Nicosia still has a great deal of initiatives to encourage intercultural mixing and interaction in the public space.[8]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public space
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

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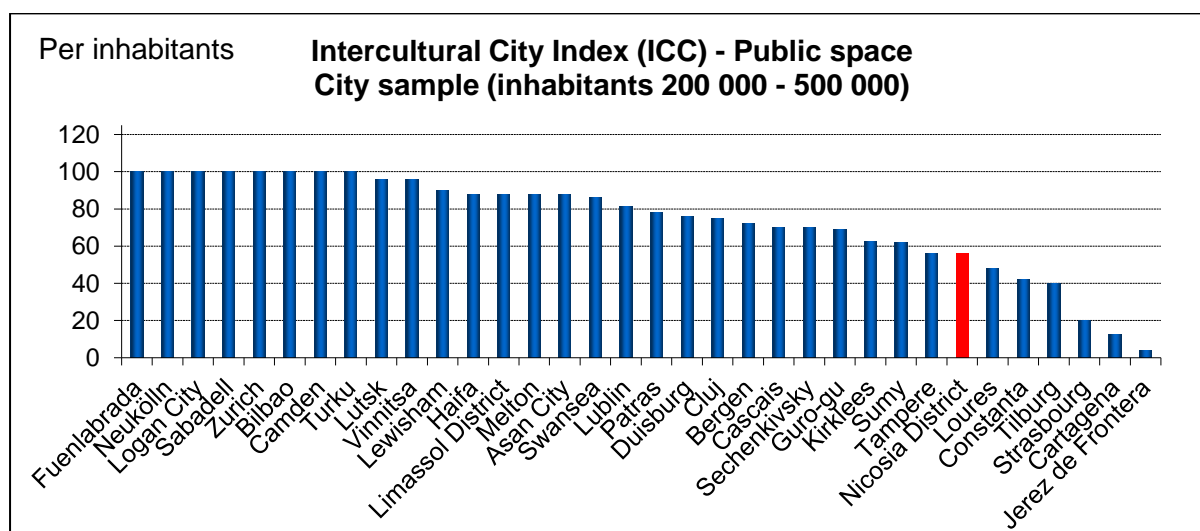
[8] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 56, while the city sample achievement rate is 67%.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Public space
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)
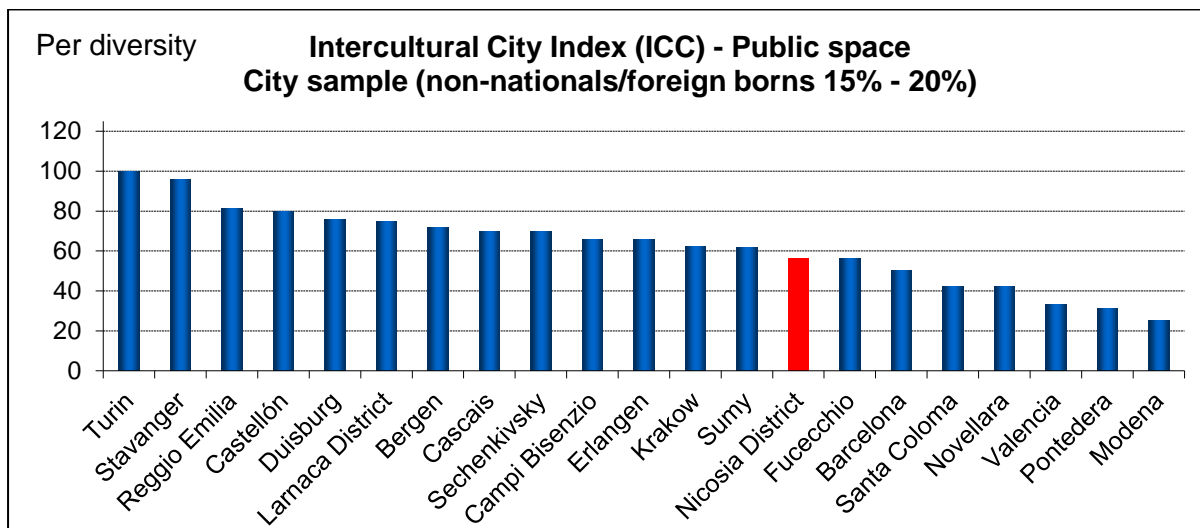
It is reported that municipalities encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public spaces. In particular, in museums, playgrounds, and parks. The MINGLE initiative was a EU-project designed to support Third Country Nationals feel more at home in their host communities. It offers language learning opportunities and intercultural workshops (trainings and visits) to TCNs as well as social activities to connect with locals, and practical support for navigating daily life in a new country through mentoring sessions, for instance. The project was funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and was led by the Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation in collaboration with the MMC Management Centre.

The organisation CIP, through the EU and Council of Europe joint project, has organised the "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" initiative. This innovative action brings locals and migrants together in a safe, engaging environment to promote intercultural interaction. Participants explore the city, highlighting shared cultural heritage and fostering mutual understanding of history and values. The initiative also facilitates direct contact between residents and local authorities, promoting open dialogue and community-building. The first Nicosia Walk initiative was completed on 15 June 2024, and the second took place on 9 November 2024.

It is reported that Nicosia takes into account the diversity of the population in the design, renovation and management of some public buildings or spaces, aiming to create inclusive environments that meet various cultural needs and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. The city emphasizes public consultation and participatory planning to incorporate input from diverse residents.

Lastly, it is reported that there are not spaces or areas dominated by one ethnic group (majority or minority) in the district and where other people feel unwelcome or unsafe and, consequently, there is not a policy to deal with this. However, this might be related with the lack of available data.

Recommendations

Besides guaranteeing the sustainability of the MINGLE initiative, Nicosia might be interested in exploring other ways to encourage intercultural interaction in public space. Montréal (Canada) has several good practices in this area. Through intercultural events and initiatives geared towards integration, Montreal helps to ensure mixing between the various communities present within its boundaries.

Every year for the past five years, under a partnership with the Quartier des spectacles entertainment district, the city has run an open-air event called "Les Jardins Gamelin" designed to encourage living together in public spaces through an extensive cultural programme.

All neighbourhood library services are designed to take account of the diversity of the local communities and run their collections (print, audiovisual, digital) and mediation activities in such a way as to turn libraries into places where all cultures can exchange with one another and learn without criticism. Of particular note here, the "Living library: borrow a life" programme takes up a Council of Europe good practice by inviting representatives of Montreal's cultural communities to turn themselves into "human books" and talk about their life stories. They can be "borrowed" to find out about the worlds of Indigenous peoples or migrants in one-to-one exchanges that offer ideal opportunities for fighting prejudices and building bridges between cultures.
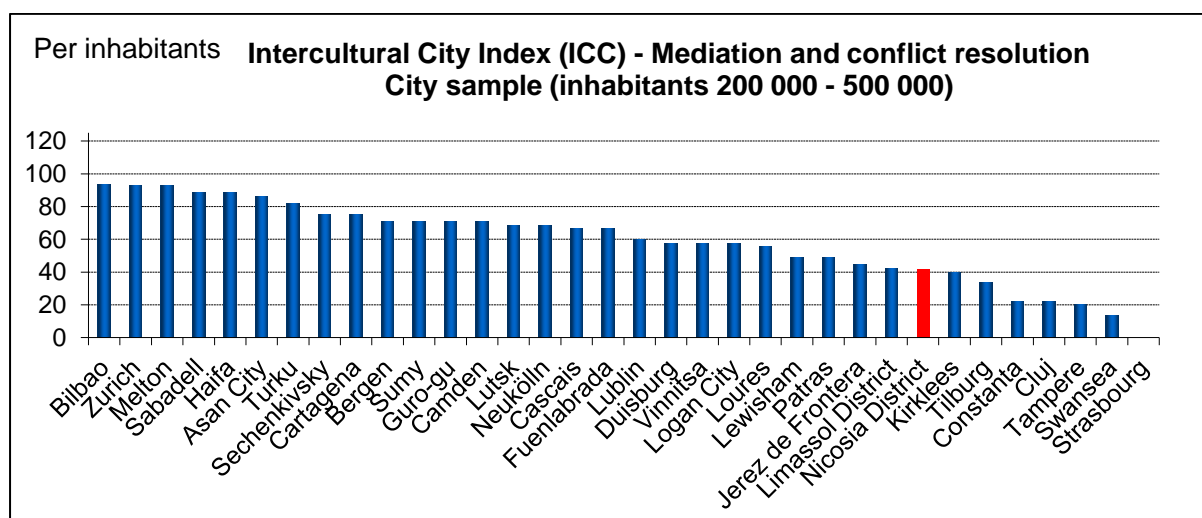
In addition, as part of cultural trail activities, the city runs a tour of Montreal Island from the Indigenous perspective, consisting of a bus tour in which participants visit various neighbourhoods to find out about the history of Indigenous peoples in urban areas down through the centuries.
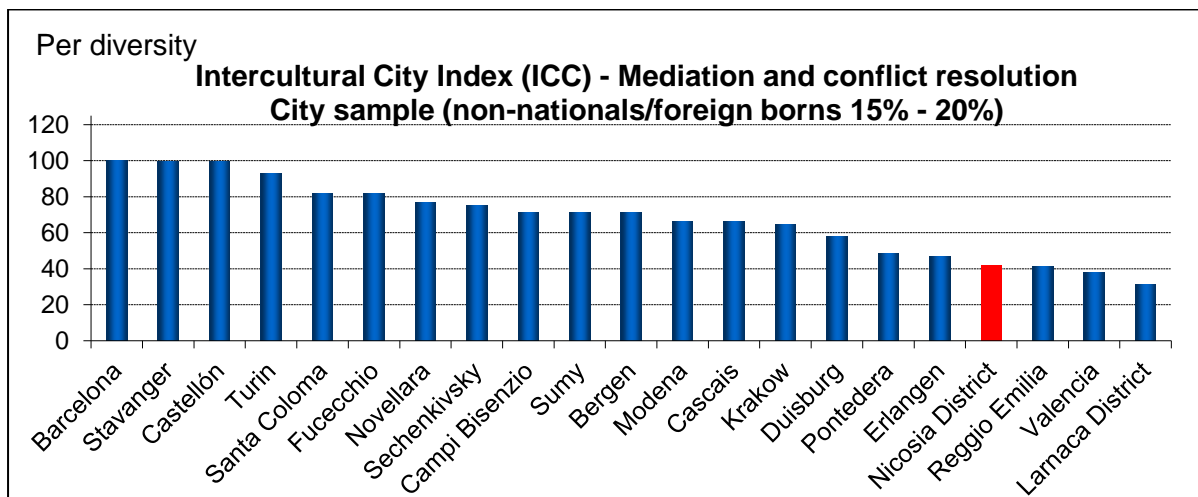
When it comes to include the intercultural perspective in participatory processes for the (re)design of public buildings or spaces, further inspiration could be drawn from Pontedera, Italy. The city has developed a multi-sectoral policy combining policing, social work and communication and defined after consultation of the population of the area to deal with areas which may be unsafe for some. They set-up Neighbourhood Consultations, organisations whose main task is to interact with local residents by, for example, promoting meetings and public assemblies on any topic of interest.   In this sense, the Council frequently organises events to listen to residents' views, from which neighbourhood actions and initiatives are born. For example, in a complex area, an urban renewal programme has been launched, involving the recovery of derelict areas to create a new bus station, the installation of various community facilities, the creation of a space for co-working and the redevelopment of public buildings through the activities of an association to recover facades with murals created by foreign artists.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 42, which is lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 57. Different organisations in Cyprus offer mediation services and inter-religious relations.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Mediation and conflict resolution
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Mediation and conflict resolution
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

A region/state-run mediation service provides a professional service for mediation of intercultural communication and/or conflict. This mediation is provided:

- within the city administration for general purposes
- In the neighbourhoods, on the streets, actively seeking to meet residents and discuss problems.

The Municipal Multipurpose Centre of the Nicosia Municipality has launched the initiative of the **Centre of Social Solidarity and Networking "TO STEKI".** This shelter operates as a counselling centre and as a multi-purpose solidarity space. On the one hand, it offers innovative psychosocial support services and multifaceted actions to promote the social integration and re-integration of the most vulnerable groups of the population. This support is offered by specialised staff (Psychologists and Social Work Officer on the Street), legal support, logistical support (Family Budgeting Advice) and through referrals to partner agencies (networking) offering specialised services.

When dealing specifically with inter-religious relations Nicosia counts on the RTCYPP peacebuilding initiative. Under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, the religious leaders of Cyprus are committed to work together for human rights, peace, and reconciliation. The Office of RTCYPP was established to encourage, facilitate, and serve the religious leaders' dialogue and efforts for religious freedom and peace in Cyprus and to contribute positively and constructively to the Cyprus peace talks.

Recommendations

Although Nicosia offers certain mediation services (more focused on counselling), cities are encouraged to provide such services in a variety of contexts, including education, health, housing, commerce, etc. ICC programme good practice on mediation is available here.
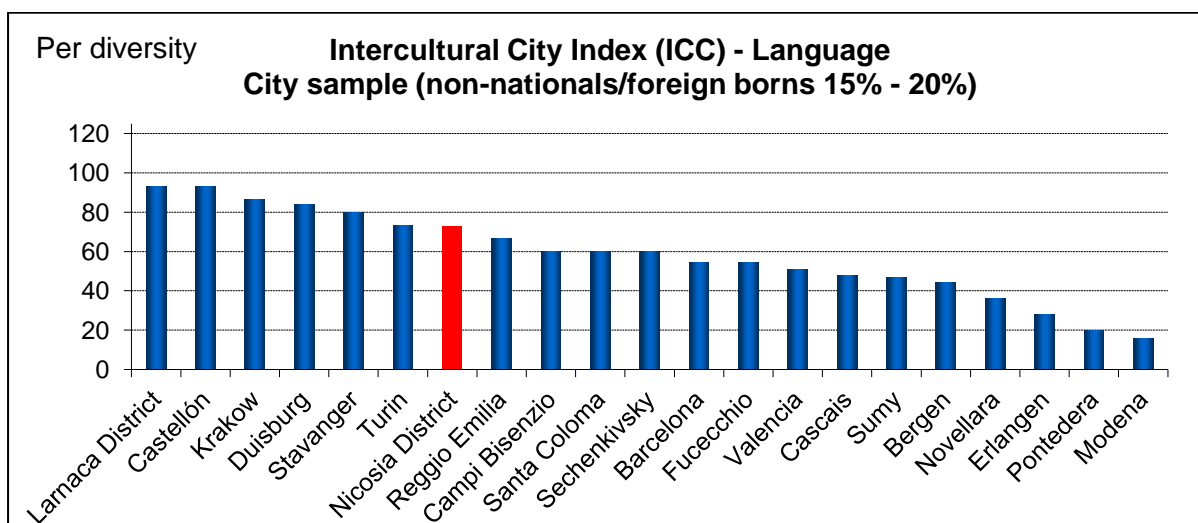
Bergen (Norway) can serve as an inspiration. Bergen has set up a municipal mediation service committed to interreligious issues specifically. The Cooperation Council for Religion and Faith is an interfaith organisation in Bergen. Most faith communities in Bergen are represented in the council, which is supported by the municipality.

Another example which might be interesting to explore comes from Botkyrka (Sweden). The municipality implements initiatives to prevent youth violence following the Tåget and Mentors in Violence Prevention methods, targeting schools with pupils aged 9 to 15. Those initiatives are the result of cooperation between social services, the safety and security unit of the municipality, the police, a housing company and civil society. They focus on empowering children/youth to report situations of violence and raise awareness among peers on ways to prevent violence. With these methods, teenagers also can become mentors for younger pupils.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 73, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46. Nicosia provides a wide range of services in the field of language competences and raises awareness on migrant/minority languages.

Per inhabitants
**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Language
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)**

Per diversity
**Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Language
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)**
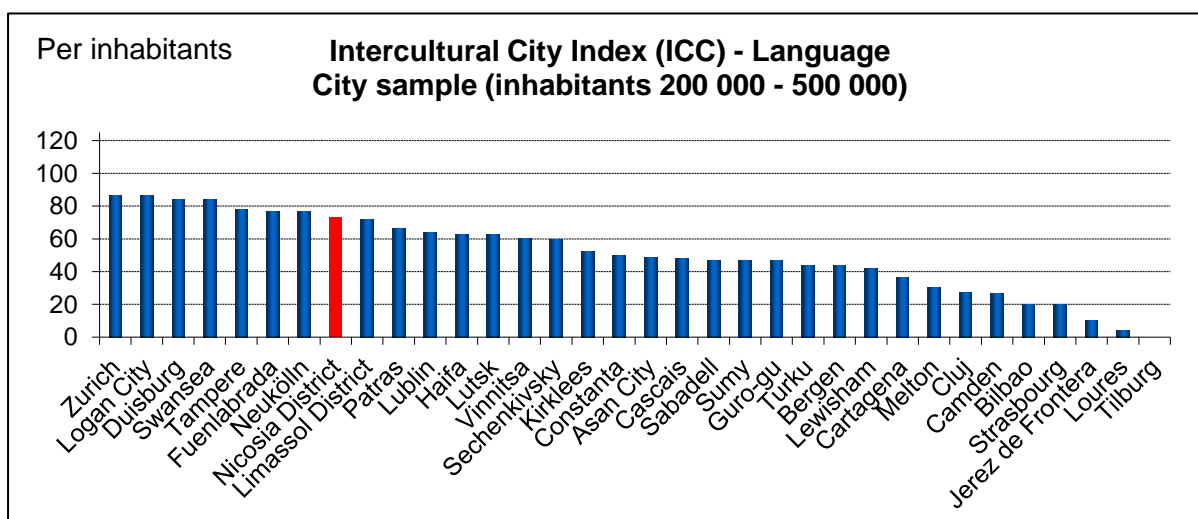
Nicosia District provides the following services in the field of language competences:
- specific language training in the official language(s) for hard-to-reach groups (e.g. non-working mothers, unemployed, retired people, etc.). Part of this services are provided through he MINGLE initiative (developed in the Public Space section).
- teaching migrant/minority languages as part of the regular curriculum at schools
- support for private/civil sector organisations providing language training in migrant/minority languages

Nicosia raises awareness on migrant/minority languages by providing logistical or financial support to local minority radio programmes in migrant/minority language(s) and to local TV programmes in migrant/minority language(s). The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, the national TV and radio network, offer programmes in Turkish, Armenian, and Cypriot Maronite Arabic, thereby promoting these languages.

The Republic of Cyprus has signed and ratified the Framework Convention on National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe. Thus, the Republic of Cyprus has an obligation to safeguard and promote both the Cypriot Maronite Arabic and Armenian languages. However, no specific projects are supported by municipalities that seek to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages.

Suggestions

Many different cities within the ICC programme offer specific language training in the official language(s) for hard-to-reach groups, as it helps to reduce the factors that contribute to, and encourage, segregation processes. Good practice that can serve as an inspiration comes from Novellara, Italy, promotes the participation of migrant women into the Italian language courses organised in the city, and Sabadell, Spain, which offers language support for youngsters who come to the city through family reunification.

Promoting access to information by providing translations to minority and migrant languages also facilitates inclusion of persons with minority/migrant background. For example, the city of Lisbon (Portugal), in partnership with the Portuguese Ministry of Health, local NGOs and hospitals, developed the project INFORMA em AÇÃO. Guides on how to access to health services in several languages (Portuguese, English, French, Nepali, Bengali and Mandarin) were designed in partnership with local groups of migrants who indicated the most pressing topics to discuss.
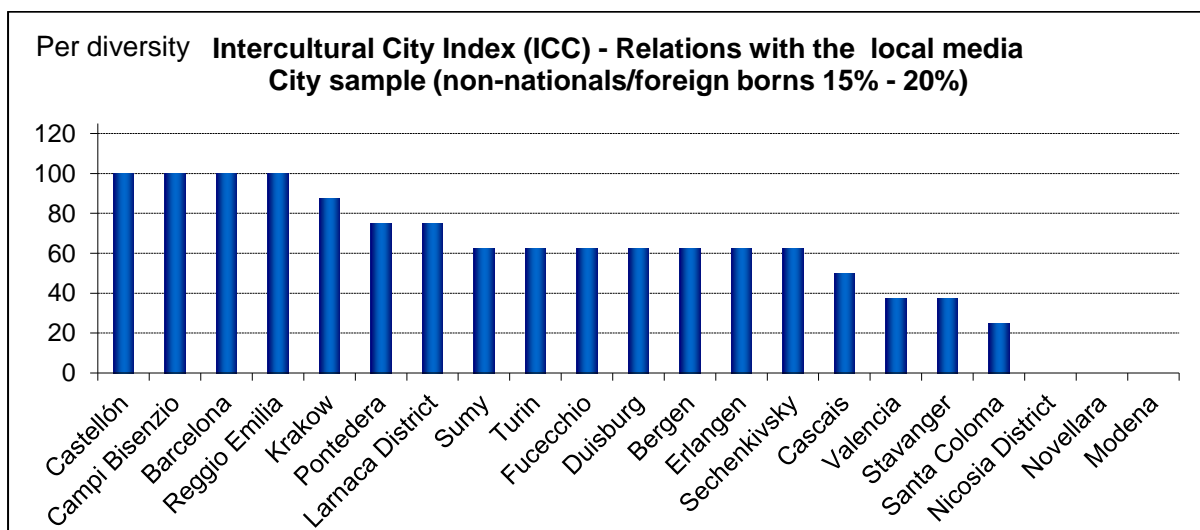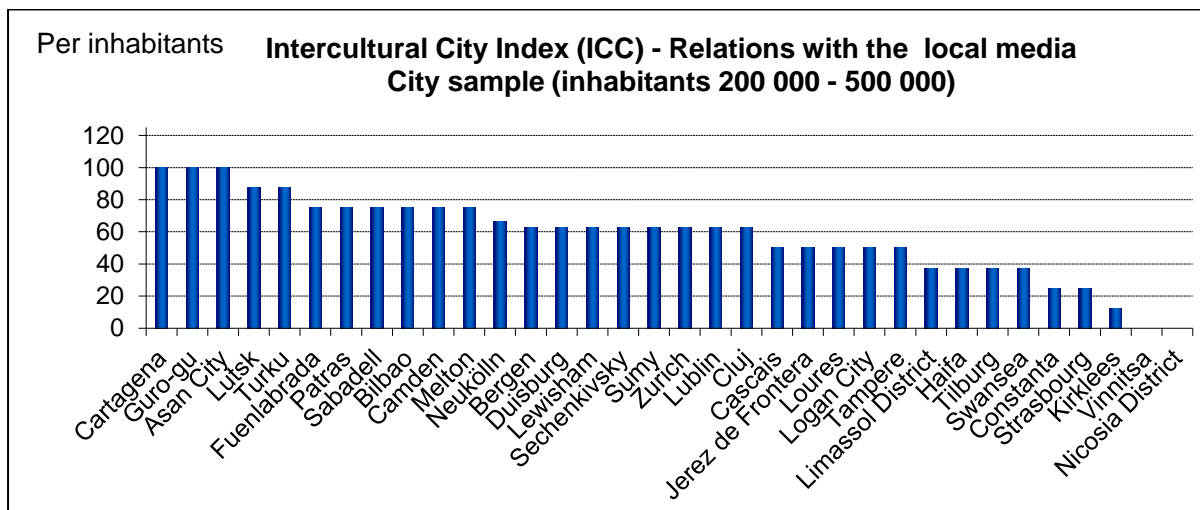
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 0, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 46.[9]

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[9] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 0, while the city sample achievement rate is 46%.

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Relations with the local media
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Relations with the local media
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

No municipality in the Nicosia District has a communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media and the communication departments are not instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage. There is no collaboration with local or national media around issues such as the portrayal of diversity or the use of negative stereotypes.

Recommendations

Partnering with local media and journalists is key to have a greater impact around positive climate on diversity and migration. To strengthen the links with journalists and support a positive narrative of diversity the municipalities could consider not only to monitor their work, but to build strategies targeted to journalists. Inspiration could be drawn from Malta's Anti-Rumours Action Plan envisages actions such as creating spaces and channels for meeting with the media to share relevant information; generating content of interest for the media that conveys a more rigorous and positive image of diversity (focus on reports, identification of new referents, etc.); and offering training on the intercultural perspective to media and other communication professionals.
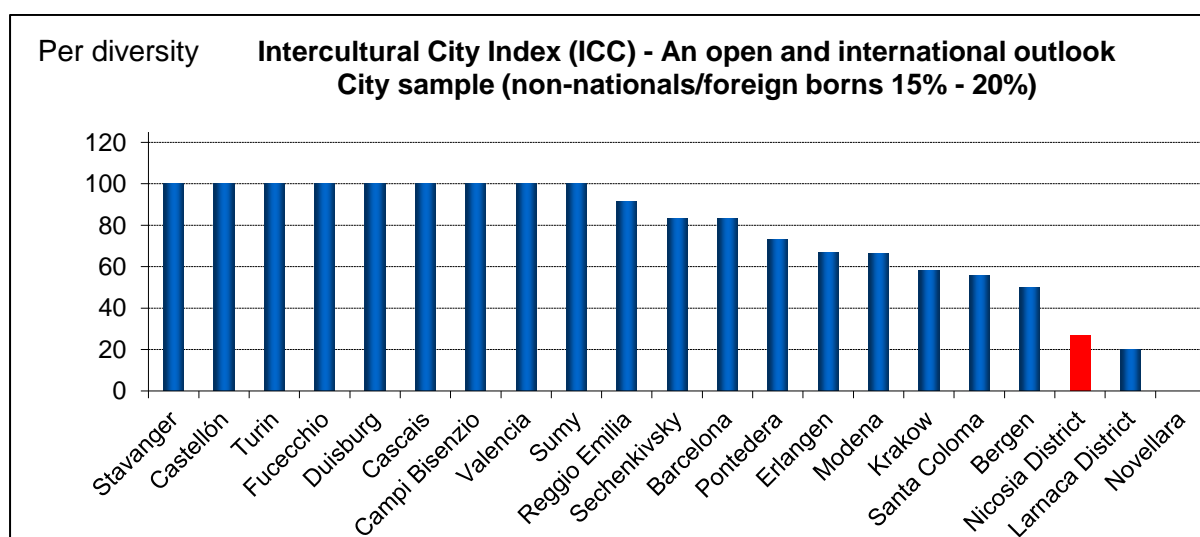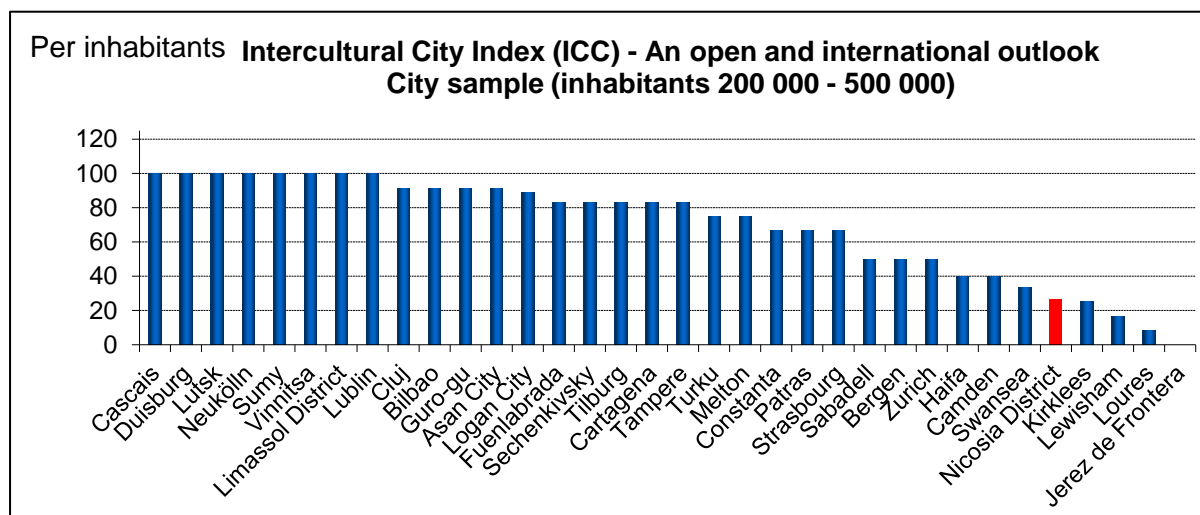
ICC has developed very rich and diverse material to support a positive narrative of diversity, such as the Guide on how to design a communication strategy or the Policy Brief 'Inclusive communication'.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 27, which is considerably lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 68. Despite this result, Nicosia reports to take actions to develop international connections and business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups.[10]

Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - An open and international outlook
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

Per diversity

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - An open and international outlook
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

Municipalities in the Nicosia District do not have explicit and sustainable policies to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, or other areas. However, it is reported that municipalities seek to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of their diaspora groups.

Recommendations

Connections in other countries to, for instance, exchange knowledge and know-how, might be encouraged by *maintaining regular contact with twin towns and sister cities, etc.* The city of Riga (Latvia) has 25 twin and partnership cities around the world based on different kinds of signed agreements. In connection with the possibilities and interests of Riga and its twin or partnership cities, multiple larger or smaller scale bilateral

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[10] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 7, while the city sample achievement rate is 64%.
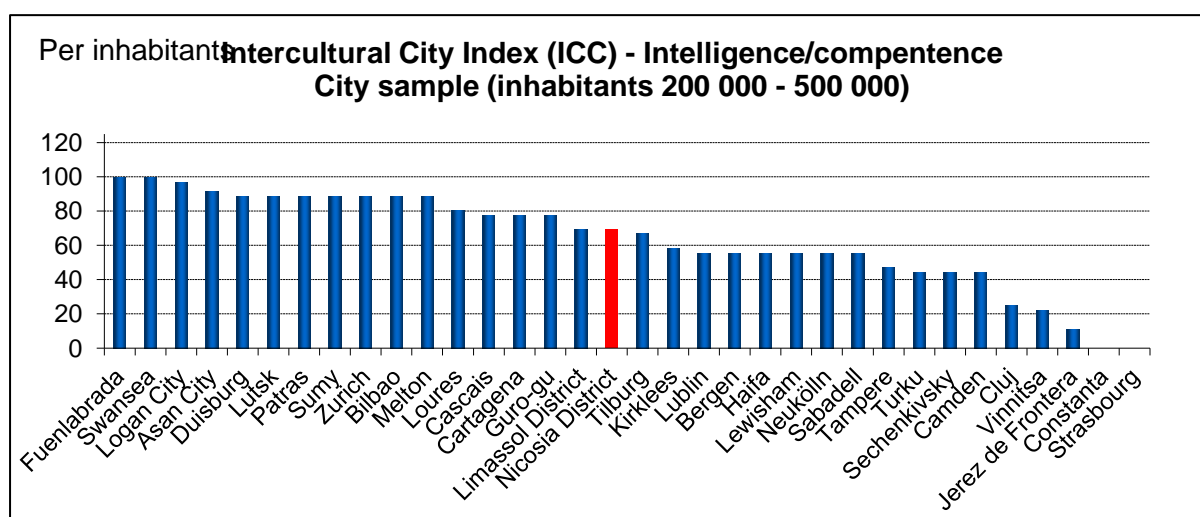
cooperation events in different fields are implemented every year. Riga Investment and Tourism Agency is the main coordinator of activities with twin and partnership cities of Riga.

Good practice to be inspired around contact with diaspora come from Reggio Emilia (Italy). They set up an Agency to sustain the management & improvement of all the city's international contacts and projects: Reggio Nel Mondo. It acts as a crosscutting tool supporting all municipal departments in developing a continuous international exchange and dialogue.
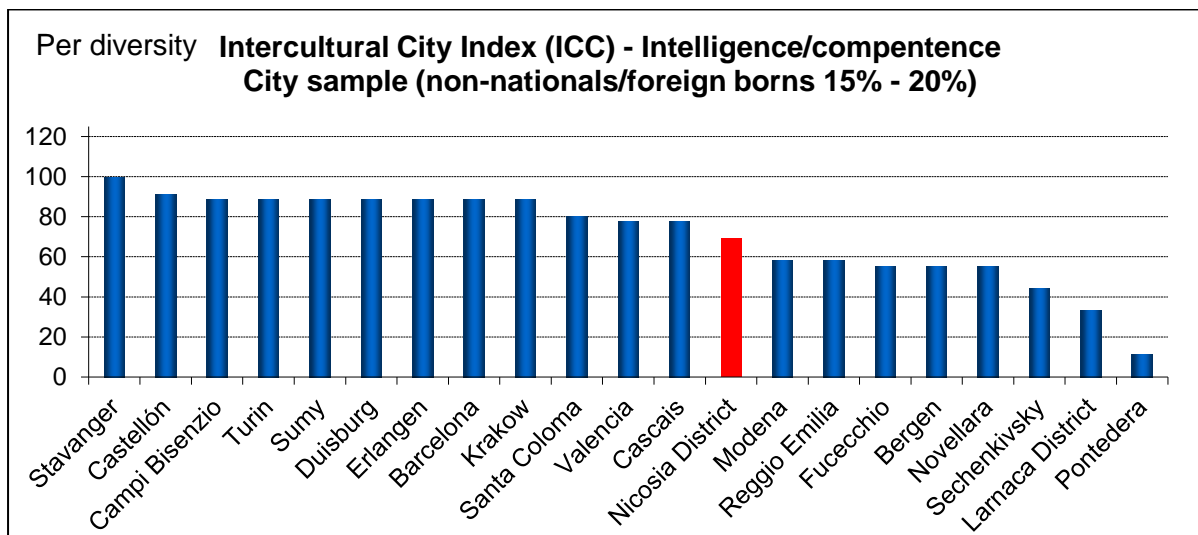
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

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 is 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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 69, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 59. Nicosia sometimes uses qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations to inform policymaking and promotes the intercultural competence of its officials.[11]

Per inhabitants **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Intelligence/compentence City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)**

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[11] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 52, while the city sample achievement rate is 54%.

Per diversity **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Intelligence/compentence City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)**

Statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations is sometimes mainstreamed to inform policymaking. For instance, there have been national surveys on the public perception of migrants/minorities. A study by the University Centre for Field Studies (UCFS) and the University of Cyprus, for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Cyprus was conducted between September and December 2022. The study consisted of both qualitative and quantitative phases, about the Greek-Cypriot community's perception on refugees and asylum-seekers in the country.

As part of the EU and Council of Europe joint project, the Cypriot NGO Citizens in Power (CIP) was the coordinator of the Nicosia District intercultural network which involved representatives of local authorities, NGO's and migrant organisations. In addition, CIP organised a training for press officers and public figures on ethical reporting on migrant issues.

Suggestions

Several ICC examples can be found in relation to mainstreaming statistical and qualitative information about diversity. For example, the Multicultural and Migration Observatory is a joint initiative between the Municipality of Krakow, Poland, and the Krakow University of Economics. Established in 2019, its core work is to produce four reports per year focusing on issues as agreed with the city authority. Besides this data-based picture of migration developments, the Observatory produces analysis of challenges faced by migrants, the host community and policy makers, makes relevant recommendations and creates a space (via workshops and conferences) for dialogue, sharing and problem solving.
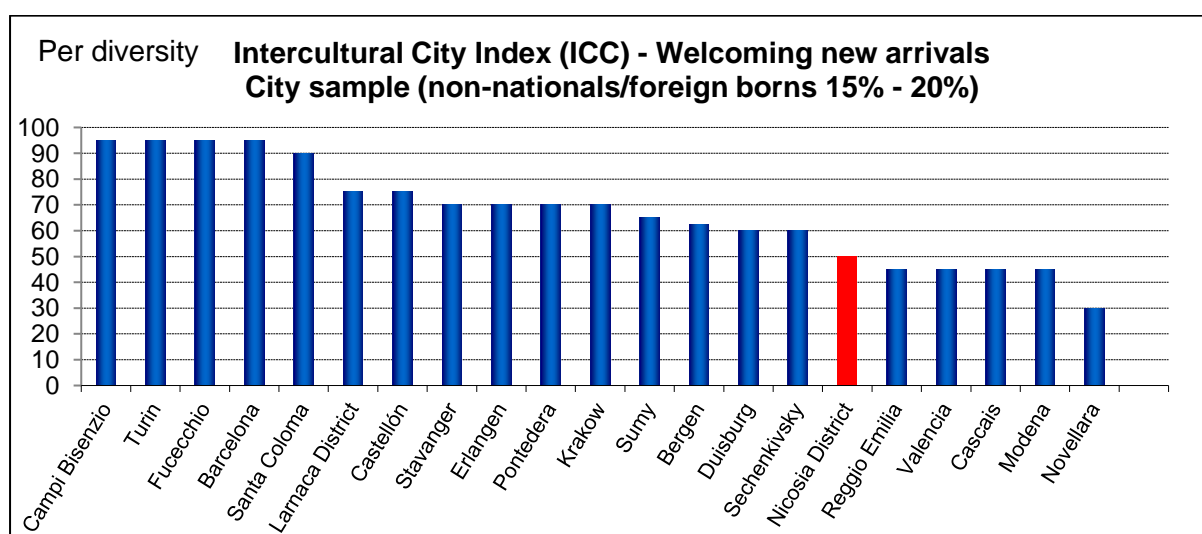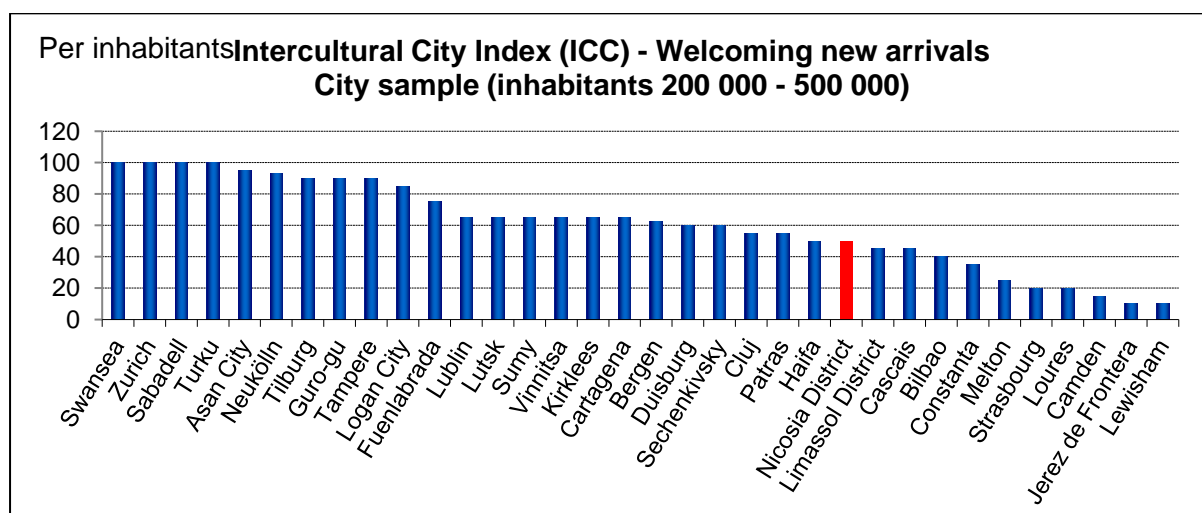
Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 April 2022) states that "[…] institutions and organisations should develop intercultural competences and attitudes among their staff, encouraging them to acquire the skills to enable constructive exchanges, dialogue and co-design based on shared values and goal". The Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion has produced a manual for designing intercultural competence training that specifically focuses on communicating to the participants the value of intercultural integration. Additionally, ICC offers all member cities three easy-to-use intercultural checklists and a full guide to check if their planned or proposed project, policies or actions are intercultural. The manual and the checklist test can be found on the ICC website.

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.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 50, which is lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 57. However, Nicosia has a designated agency to welcome newcomers.

Per inhabitants **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Welcoming new arrivals City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)**

Per diversity **Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Welcoming new arrivals City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)**

Nicosia District has a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure to welcome newcomers. However, it does not have a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers.

Municipalities in the district do not organise a public ceremony to greet all people arriving to live in the city regardless of origin or nationality.

Recommendations

When offering welcoming services, it is important to address particular need of especially vulnerable groups such as, unaccompanied minors and refugees and asylum-seekers. A good practice comes from Pontedera (Italy), as the Council has set up an inter-municipal Welcoming Committee to raise awareness and provide information to

associations and institutions in the area regarding unaccompanied minors. Additionally, the municipality has monitored the reception of citizens from Ukraine, coordinating the migrant counters, social assistance services and family centres.

Regarding the information package, public administration may need to update and adapt their methodologies and tools. An inspiring example is the Welcome App launched in Erlangen, Germany, which helps refugees organise their everyday lives, to overcome the language barrier and find information regarding asylum law.

LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The most powerful and far-reaching action a city can take to be more intercultural is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents of the city irrespective of their origin, nationality or residence status. Formal political rights at the local level are determined nationally or at the regional level in some federal states. Nonetheless, there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. An intercultural city strives to include all residents in the policy-making process and ensures thereby that public services are provided according to their diverse needs and not according to their cultural or political proximity to public decision-makers.

Nicosia District achieved a rate of 30, which is slightly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 37. Nicosia has an independent consultative body through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can voice their concerns and advise the municipal council on diversity and integration matters.[12]

Per inhabitants — Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Governance City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

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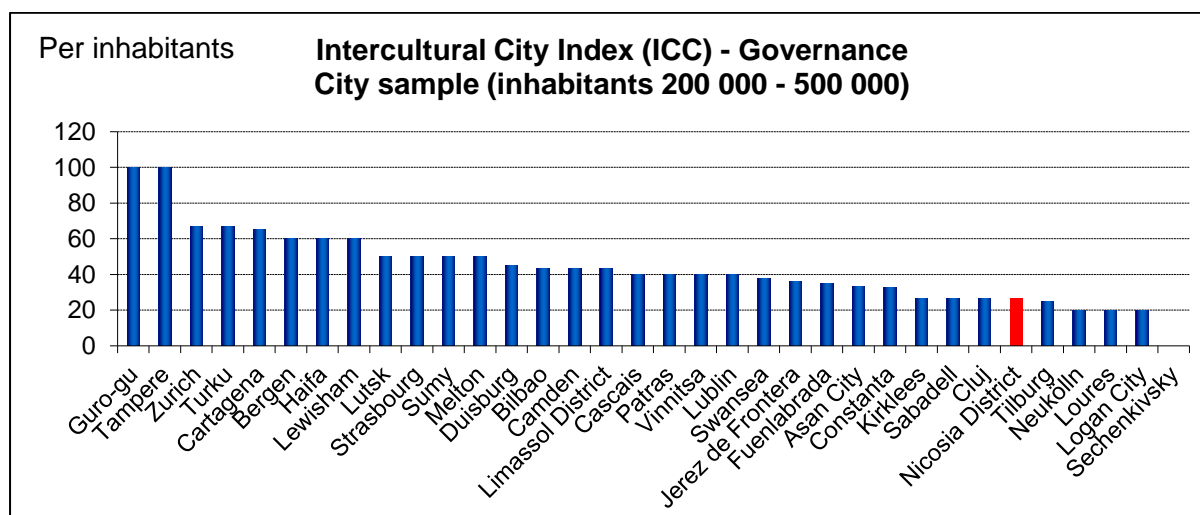
[12] Nicosia achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 30, while the city sample achievement rate is 50%.

29

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Governance
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns 15% - 20%)

Per diversity
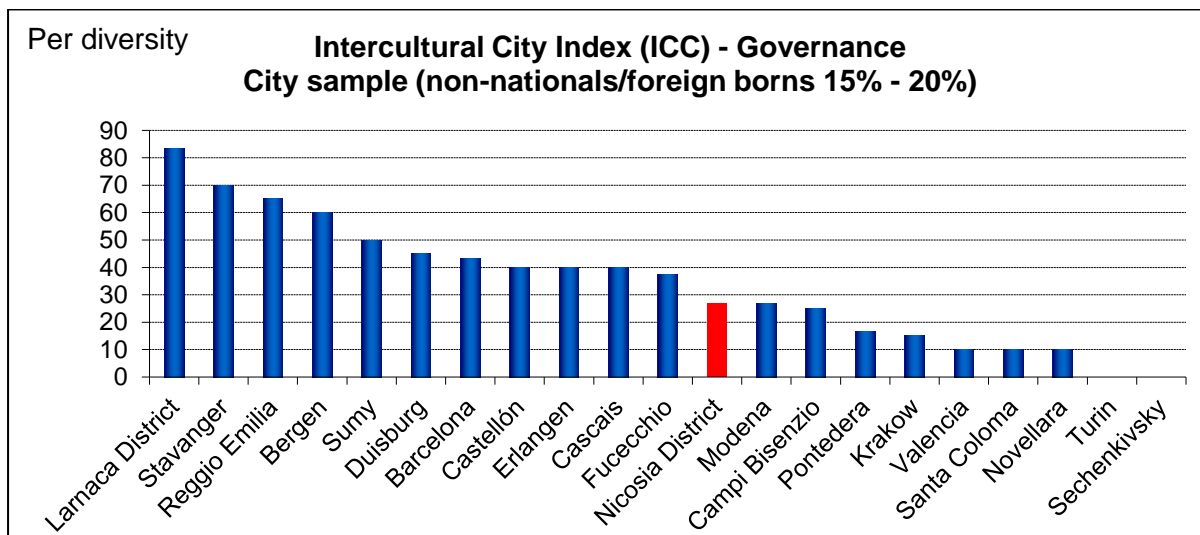
In Cyprus, the right to vote is given to citizens of the Republic of Cyprus or another EU member state and Turkish Cypriots living in the free area, who have reached the age of 18. Additionally, they all should be registered on the relevant electoral roll. To be able to stand as candidate, same requirements apply, in addition to have reached the age of 21. Currently, there are no foreign-born or dual nationals elected members in the Nicosia council.

Nicosia has an independent consultative body through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can voice their concerns and advise the municipal council on diversity and integration matters: The solidarity network.

Although the representation in mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services is regulated nationally, Nicosia is advocating for more competences in this area to be able to include people with migrant/minority backgrounds in these bodies.

Recommendations

Regarding the right to vote and to stand in local elections, but also to engage in political life, municipalities in the Nicosia District may wish to raise awareness among people who are entitled to these rights as a way to promote democratic participation and a sense of belonging within migrant communities. This could be done through awareness raising campaigns, such as 'My city, my vote', conducted in Barcelona (Spain). Due to the low level of participation of foreigners in the 2015 elections, the initiative sought to raise awareness around the electoral process and engage Barcelona's largest voting-eligible communities. The program drove registration efforts through a multi-faceted, multilingual approach with four components:

- Barcelona created a user-friendly website page, Can I Register on the Electoral Roll. Those who could were directed to another page explaining the online registration process.
- Eligible residents received letters from the city in their native languages encouraging them to vote, with information on the process and required materials for registration.
- The city collaborated with community associations, consulates, spiritual organisations, and other relevant groups.
- The city targeted residents through social media, using informational videos that were produced in eight different languages.

The outcome was an increase of 53% of people registered for the 2019 municipal elections. As a result of its success, the My City, My Vote campaign was replicated for the 2023 municipal elections under the name, "If you live in Barcelona, you decide in Barcelona".

Cities are encouraged to implement a standard for the representation with people with migrant/minority backgrounds in mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services. A good practice is in Ballarat (Australia,) has established the Multicultural Ambassadors' Program (MAP) to provide leadership within the migrant community, by encouraging minorities to participate in the political life of the city. The programme aims to enhance community awareness while fostering social cohesion and mutual acceptance.

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, 50 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Nicosia District rate of achievement in the field of anti-discrimination is 44%. It is worth highlighting the work of the Solidarity Network Hub, which provides innovative social services to the most needed as well as to integrate various social services.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Anti-discrimination
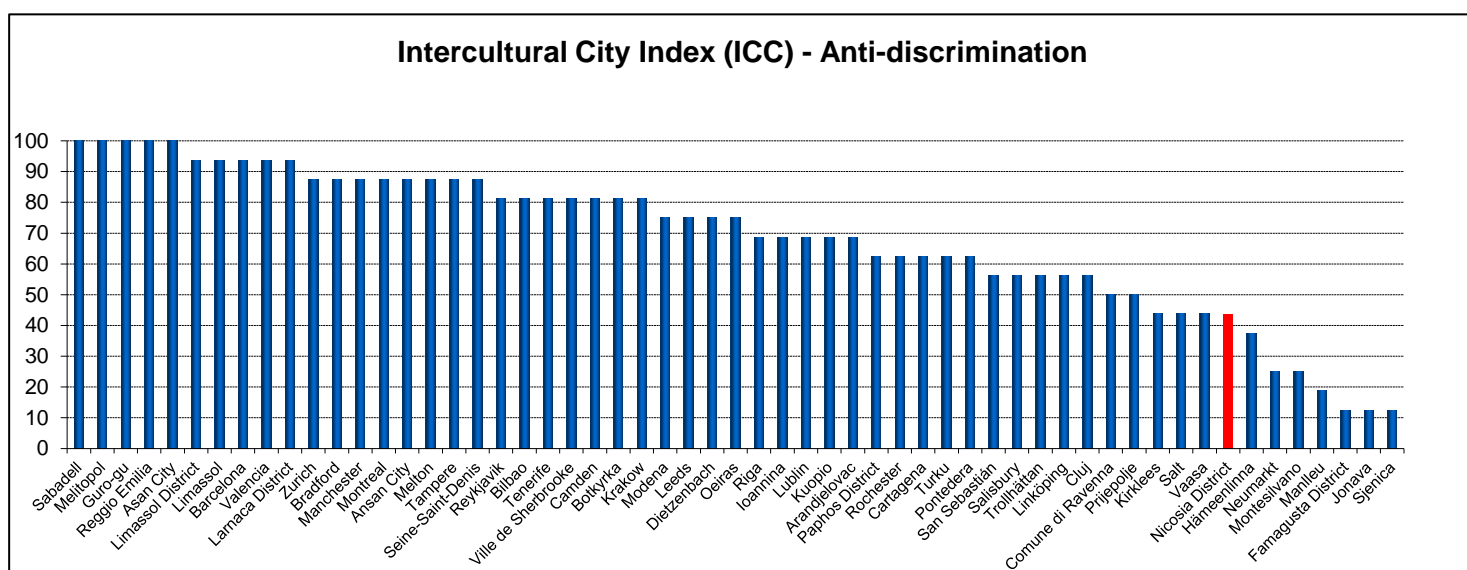
There has not been a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations in the district to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with migrant/minority backgrounds.

Municipalities in the district do not have a charter or another binding document proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation in the municipal administration and services.

Nicosia has a dedicated service that advises and supports victims of discrimination. The Solidarity Network Hub provides innovative social services to the most vulnerable as well as integrating various social services and other NGOs who act within the area of Nicosia Municipality. Specifically, it provides psychological support, entrepreneurship development, career counselling, legal advising, family budget advice and childcare provision.

Municipalities in the district sometimes run anti-discrimination campaigns and raises awareness on discrimination.

Schools in the district participate in national organisations that address the issue of discrimination. These schools are dedicated to upholding the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which ensures a safe and equitable educational environment. They are also part of the network promoting the Ministry of Education's Anti-Racist Policy, including the "Code of Conduct Against Racism and Guidelines for Managing and Reporting Racial Incidents."

Recommendations

Designing an Anti-Rumours Strategy could be a way to further the work done within the EU and Council of Europe joint project Anti-Rumour. It might be interesting to explore the design of an strategy, understood as a public policy, and mainstreaming the approach to all municipal areas and fields. Plenty of good practice that can serve as inspiration could be found in Spanish cities. It is the case of Barcelona, Bilbao, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, and Tenerife.

ICC programme resources on anti-rumours are available here.

To be able to design policies and initiatives to counter discrimination, a city needs to develop tools to monitor/research the extent and the character of discrimination. Inspiration could be drawn from Riga (Latvia). The municipality conducts regular research on society cohesion issues since 2010. The latest research was conducted in 2021. Question 7 of the research on the interpersonal interaction, tolerance and attitude towards different groups of society helps to understand the level of tolerance in Riga towards particularly vulnerable groups.

In addition, the monitoring of discrimination is done in cooperation with the State Police and State Security Service in the format of a newly established Council: PREVENT. It brings together all stakeholders responsible for discrimination prevention (State Security Service, state police, Riga Municipal Police, border guards, Ministries of Education, Welfare and Healthcare, Probation Service and other partners). Each stakeholder has its role in conducting monitoring of discrimination cases and the results are presented twice a year.

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, 50 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Nicosia District rate of achievement in the field of participation is 38%.

Intercultural City Index (ICC) - Participation
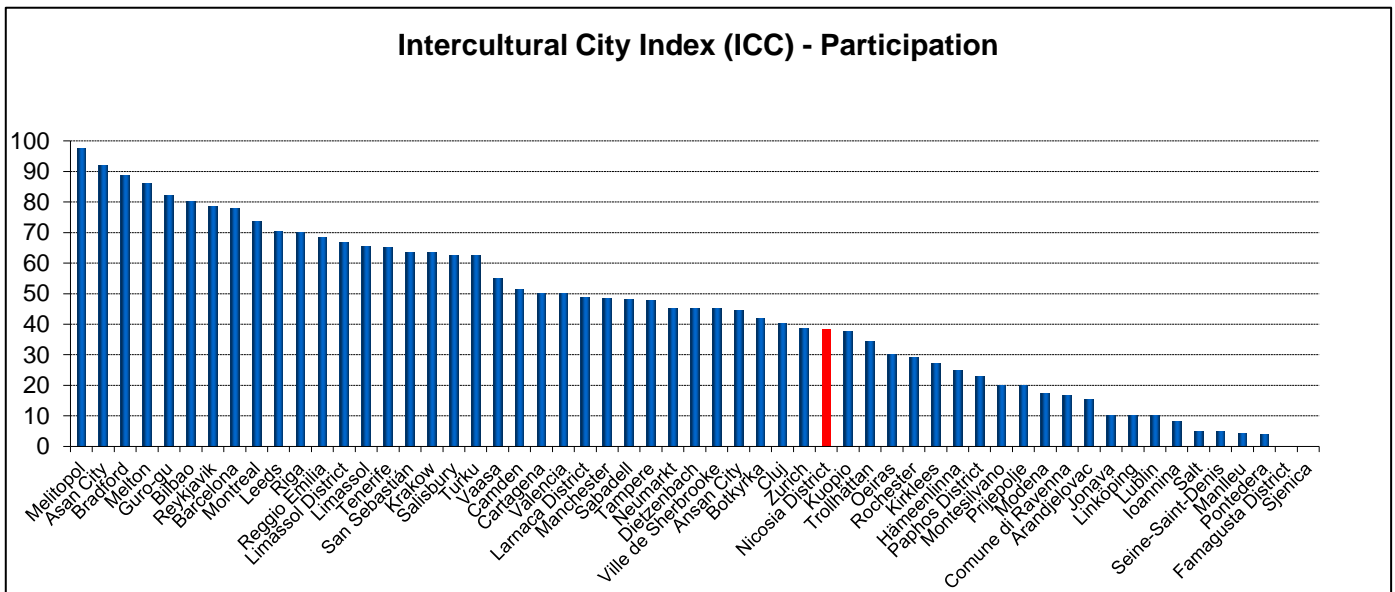
As previously mentioned, the Nicosia District Action Plan for Social Integration (2023-2025) was not the result of a consultation process including people with migrant/minority backgrounds.

Municipalities in the district have not introduced participatory mechanisms, other than voting rights or a consultative body, to enable all city residents, irrespective of their migrant/minority backgrounds, to participate equally in the decision-making process. In addition, no actions have been taken to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions and organisations, on boards or ruling bodies of trade unions, public schools or work councils.

Municipalities in the Nicosia District have not introduced mechanisms to make sure that gender equality is respected in organisations that participate in the decision-making process on matters related to the inclusion of city residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. Although there is legislation on gender equality, an intersectional approach is not applied in topics related to diversity management.

Recommendations

Active participation and representation can take on many forms. When it follows the establishment of a structured group/council so to give a voice to the foreign residents, representatives and but also the foreign community itself should feel that their participation will have an impact in improving their everyday life, and making them contributing more actively to the economic. Nicosia could draw further inspiration from the migration councils set up in several ICC cities in view to achieve a more comprehensive and meaningful participation. These examples include Camden (UK), Salisbury (Australia), Bilbao (Spain) and Montréal (Canada).

An interesting case is the Local Assemblies in Lewisham, United Kingdom, a programme to encourage interaction with the city. There is a forum during which the Council talks to the residents, community organisations, police and businesses in order to create a sense of ownership and improve areas and neighbourhoods. The local planning groups organise the meetings, time and venue. This service has given good results, the community is more active in the integration process and in offering assistance to newcomers. Community leaders and activists aim to engage people of underrepresented backgrounds in the social life and in the decision-making process. Each assembly has a budget of £15 000 to spend on projects which benefit the area. The assemblies are chaired by a councillor, and they come up with a set of issues such as facilities for older people, programmes for younger people etc. and

anyone can apply for the money as long as their initiative meets objectives and priorities. There are different approaches to the budget: from small initiatives to strategic commissioning. It is the community's job to include events with biggest spending. It has been observed that this is the best way of bringing the community together and celebrating diversity and shared values.

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, 50 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Nicosia District rate of achievement in the field of interaction is 42%. Nicosia collaborates with organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion.
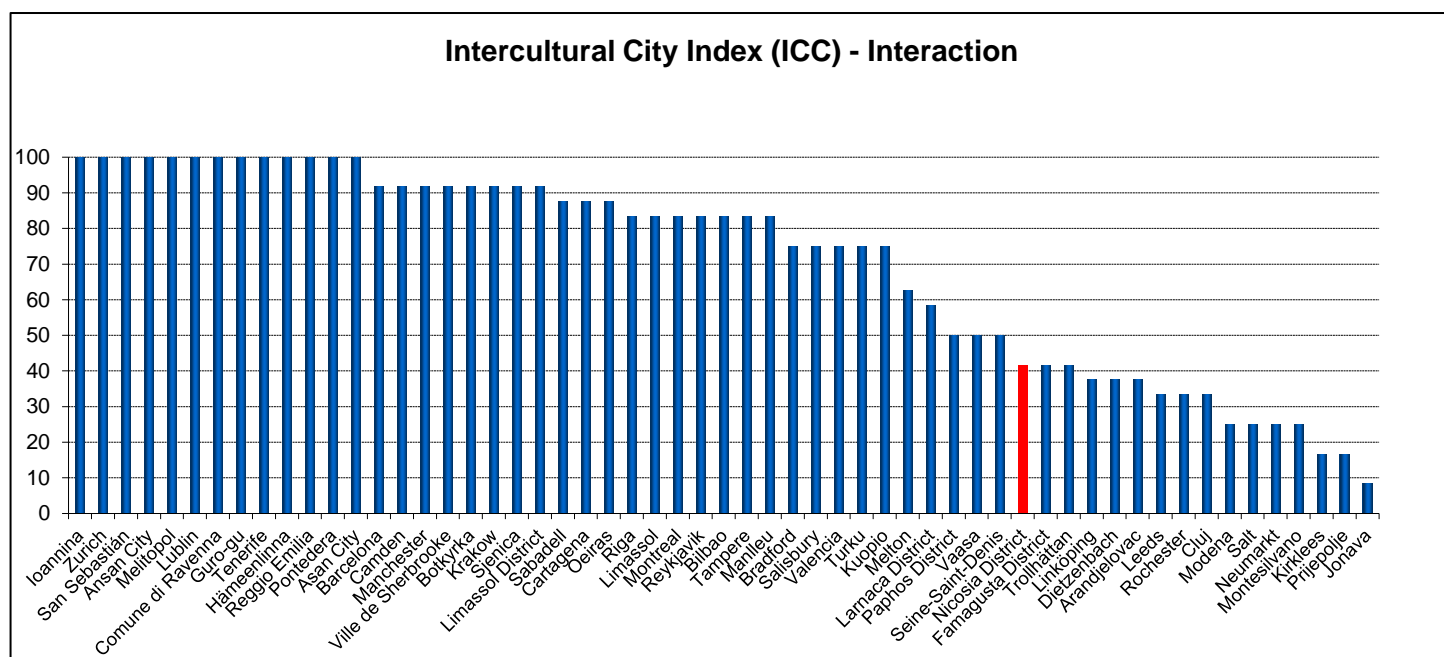
The municipality of Nicosia does not have a list/database of all civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion. Nicosia collaborates with CSO that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion but not in an organised or regular way. For instance, civil society organisations were engaged through the Regional Intercultural Network and they were involved in meetings, training courses, and public consultations. Although these interactions help keep organisations informed and involved in intercultural efforts, they lack a formal, structured system.

Teachers in elementary/primary schools receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy. The Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth provides a dedicated platform for Intercultural Education and Training, supported by an assigned committee, a detailed curriculum for migrant students, and supporting materials in multiple languages (e.g. this guide, presentation). In collaboration with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, training materials are available for teachers on a learning platform (Moodle), including articles, activities, and videos.

Workshops on welcoming migrant children have been held, and intercultural tools like the "toolkit" for teachers and principals help support the integration of migrant students. Experiential workshops have already been conducted in 20 primary and secondary schools, while action plans for migrant integration are being implemented.

Recommendations

Nicosia already puts in place interesting solutions and spaces which facilitate meaningful interaction between residents of all backgrounds and origins. The city might wish to look into the practices from other ICC cities for additional inspiration.

A good example that focuses on a particular target group comes from Sabadell, Spain. The "Espacio Mujeres" (Women's Space) programme aims to empower women from all origins and socio-cultural backgrounds by creating relational spaces where women meet and learn and supporting them in the acquisition of skills. The programme offers relational learning spaces located in different neighbourhoods of the city, organising different activities related to the physical and mental health of the participants (knowledge of the environment, female health, personal growth, women's rights, gender violence, etc.).

Finally, Nicosia might wish to enhance collaboration with CSO in a more consistent and organised way. The majority of the Intercultural Spanish cities (RECI) have stable roundtables or spaces for dialogue with entities. In some cases, they are thematic roundtables (Interreligious, Welcoming). In other cases, they are less stable spaces that arise from a specific need.

Another example comes from Leeds (UK). The city collaborates with civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion by holding regular meetings with the organisations. Leeds has a third sector partnership of collaboration which aims to create the conditions for a thriving third sector. This includes investment in Voluntary Action Leeds who assist in bringing together organisations in local areas, alongside local specific networks who can collaborate and respond to challenges and needs. As a result of successful collaboration, Leeds has recently developed the Pledge to Strengthen Civil Society which has been endorsed by the city council and other anchor institutions and partners. One of the key activities includes to provide the conditions to support strong, resilient, thriving communities that value diversity, ensuring that everyone can play their part, and all sectors can work together to create the conditions for a thriving third sector, delivering for the diverse communities of Leeds.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The overall score for Nicosia District is 34 (out of 100 possible points). Below you will find a summary of the report, including the strengths (what Nicosia does) and the weaknesses (what Nicosia does not yet do).

| COMMITMENT | ✔ | The Intercultural Network for the Nicosia District adopted an intercultural strategy, the Nicosia District Action Plan for Social Integration (2023-2025). The strategy is based on the results derived from the Intercultural Cities Index (2022) and discussions within the Nicosia District Network and experts from the Council of Europe. This process has been done under the framework of the EU and Council of Europe joint project, "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus". |
| | ✘ | No municipalities in the district have formally adopted a public statement or any official communications making clear reference to the city's intercultural commitment. In addition, there is no official website communicating the intercultural work. Municipalities in the district do not acknowledge or honour local residents and organisations that have done exceptional things to encourage interculturalism in the local community. |

EDUCATION	✓	Most schools actively strive to engage parents from migrant or minority backgrounds in school activities. Additionally, schools frequently implement intercultural projects.
	✗	No data is available about the ethnic/cultural background of teachers in schools. Policies to increase ethnic/cultural mixing in schools are designed and managed at national level.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✗	There is no policy to increase the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods nor to avoid ethnic concentration. Municipalities do not have a policies to encourage actions to foster interaction between residents with different migrant/minority backgrounds.
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓	Migrant or minority backgrounds of residents are taken into account when providing school meals.
	✗	The migrant or minority background of public employees does not reflect the composition of the district's population, and there is no recruitment plan to ensure diversity in the workforce.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✓	The Cyprus Federation of Employers and Industrialists is a national organisation that promotes diversity and better employment practices for foreign workers. The municipality of Nicosia contributes to this effort by taking part in discussions on employment policies. The Information and Training Centre for Employment and Entrepreneurship for Vulnerable Groups – KEEAED offers information, training and support services aimed at promoting employment and developing entrepreneurship, especially among the most vulnerable groups of the population.
	✗	Actions are not taken to encourage businesses from ethnic minorities to move beyond the ethnic economy nor to encourage 'business districts/incubators' to involve entrepreneurs with migrant/minority backgrounds. Municipalities in the district do not have a procurement policy to favour companies with an intercultural inclusion/diversity strategy for the provision of goods and services.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	Occasionally municipalities in the district encourage cultural organisations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions.
	✗	Nicosia District municipalities do not use the intercultural approach as a criterion when allocating funds to associations and initiatives. In addition, they do not organise but support the organisation of events and activities in the fields of culture that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact (mainly food festivals). Municipalities do not organise public debates or campaigns on the subject of cultural diversity and living together.
PUBLIC SPACE	✓	Nicosia District reports to take action to encourage meaningful intercultural mixing and interaction in public space. In particular, in museums, playgrounds, and parks (i.e. the MINGLE initiative or the "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" initiative. Municipalities take into account the diversity of the population in the design, renovation and management of some public buildings or spaces, aiming to create inclusive environments that meet various cultural needs and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. The city emphasises public consultation and participatory planning to incorporate input from diverse residents.

	✗	It is reported that there are no spaces or areas dominated by one ethnic group and where other people feel unwelcome or unsafe in the district (maybe due to lack of available data) and, consequently, there is not a policy to deal with this.
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓	A region/state-run mediation service provides a professional service for mediation of intercultural communication and/or conflict. This mediation is provided: - within the city administration for general purposes - In the neighbourhoods, on the streets, actively seeking to meet residents and discuss problems. The Municipal Multipurpose Centre of the Nicosia Municipality has launched the initiative of the Centre of Social Solidarity and Networking "TO STEKI". This shelter operates as a counselling centre, offering innovative psychosocial support services and multifaceted actions to promote the social integration and re-integration of the most vulnerable groups of the population. When dealing specifically with inter-religious relations Nicosia counts on the RTCYPP peacebuilding initiative.
LANGUAGE	✓	Nicosia provides the following services in the field of language competences: ▪ specific language training in the official language(s) for hard-to-reach groups (e.g. non-working mothers, unemployed, retired people, etc.). Part of this services are provided through he MINGLE initiative (developed in the Public Space section). ▪ teaching migrant/minority languages as part of the regular curriculum at schools ▪ support for private/civil sector organisations providing language training in migrant/minority languages Awareness on migrant/minority languages is raised through the provision of logistical or financial support to local minority radio programmes in migrant/minority language(s) and to local TV programmes in migrant/minority language(s). The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, the national TV and radio network, offer programmes in Turkish, Armenian, and Cypriot Maronite Arabic, thereby promoting these languages.
	✗	No specific projects are supported by Nicosia that seek to give a positive image of migrant/minority languages.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✗	Municipalities do not have a communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media and the communication department is not instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage. There is no collaboration with local or national media around issues such as the portray of diversity or the use of negative stereotypes.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓	It is reported that municipalities in Nicosia take actions to develop international connections and seek to develop business relations with countries/cities of origin of its diaspora groups.
	✗	There is not an explicit and sustainable policy to encourage international cooperation in economic, scientific, cultural, or other areas. Municipalities in the district do not reach foreign students or other youth groups arriving through exchange programmes.
	✓	Statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations is sometimes mainstreamed to inform policymaking. Nicosia carries out surveys including questions about the public perception of migrants/minorities.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE		As part of the EU and Council of Europe joint project training was organised on intercultural competences and Anti-rumours methodology. As well as the organisation of the district intercultural network meetings involving local authorities, NGO's and migrant organisations.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	Nicosia has a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure to welcome newcomers.
	✗	Municipalities in the district do not have a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers and do not organise a public ceremony to greet all people arriving to live in the city regardless of origin or nationality
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓	Nicosia has an independent consultative body through which people with migrant/minority backgrounds can voice their concerns and advise the municipal council on diversity and integration matters: The solidarity network.

Although the representation in mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services is regulated nationally, Nicosia is advocating for more competences in this area to be able to include people with migrant/minority backgrounds in these bodies. |
| | ✗ | Currently, there are no foreign-born or dual nationals elected members in a municipal council. |
| **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION** | ✓ | Nicosia has a dedicated service that advises and supports victims of discrimination. The Solidarity Network Hub specifically, it provides psychological support, entrepreneurship development, career counselling, legal advising, family budget advice and childcare provision.
Municipalities sometimes run anti-discrimination campaigns and raises awareness on discrimination.

Schools, participate in national organisations that address the issue of discrimination. They are part of the network promoting the Ministry of Education's Anti-Racist Policy, including the "Code of Conduct Against Racism and Guidelines for Managing and Reporting Racial Incidents." |
| | ✗ | Municipalities in the Nicosia District have not carried out a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. They do not have a charter or another binding document proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation in the municipal administration and services. |
| **PARTICIPATION** | ✗ | Municipalities in the district have not introduced participatory mechanisms to enable all city residents, irrespective of their migrant/minority backgrounds, to participate equally in the decision-making process. In addition, they do not take action to ensure that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds are fairly represented in key institutions and organisations, on boards or ruling bodies of trade unions, public schools or work councils.

There are no mechanisms to ensure that gender equality is respected in organisations that participate in the decision-making process on matters related to the inclusion of city residents with migrant/minority backgrounds. |

INTERACTION	✔	Nicosia collaborates with CSOs that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion. Teachers in elementary/primary schools receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy through the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth.
	✘	Nicosia does not have a list/database of all civil society and grassroots organisations that are active in the various fields concerned by intercultural inclusion. Collaboration or interactions with CSOs lacks a formal, structured system.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate municipalities in the Nicosia District for the efforts taken on their intercultural journey, and we are confident that if they follow our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices the results will rapidly be visible and tangible. The district scores very highly in a number of policy areas (education and language), while the most evident gap was the need to design neighbourhoods' policies, adapt public services to the diversity of the city, and work on the city's intercultural narrative and media relations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Commitment: The municipalities may wish to reference their intercultural commitments in official communications more frequently and show this commitment in a more visible way on the city's website and by formally adopting a public statement that it is an Intercultural City.

We also recommend cities develop appropriate governance tools to ensure that intercultural policies are implemented, coordinated and monitored and that their impact is properly evaluated. Inspiration could be drawn from Barcelona Intercultural Plan (2021-2030), approved in plenary in tandem with the Government Measure "Move towards interculturality. Governance instruments and mechanisms". This government measure aimed at boosting the institutional commitment with mainstreaming the intercultural approach by creating an evaluation system and an inter-department commission to monitor the implementation of the plan.

Neighbourhoods: we recommend municipalities increase the mix of their citizens through existing cultural and social initiatives, like festivals and intercultural events. For instance, they might get inspired by **Donostia-San Sebastian**. The project "La Familia de al lado" (The Next Door Family) gathers migrant and local families together with the aim of building relations among families within the same neighbourhood; and in the long-term, strengthening the feeling of belonging, encouraging acceptance and social cohesion.

Public services: Municipalities may wish to explore the potential to encourage diverse workforce, intercultural mixing and competence in the private sector. Inspiration could be drawn from Riga, which implements a programme aimed at encouraging international talent to move and work in the city. Concerning the provision of public services, municipalities may be interested in exploring the funeral and burial services offered. In Botkyrka, there are different sections in the local cemetery for all religions in the municipality, including for Muslims and Syrian Orthodox. This is a part of the work done within the interreligious network in Botkyrka and is coordinated nationally by the Swedish (protestant) Church.

Business and the labour market: To expand further on the collaboration with the private sector, municipalities may want to explore creating opportunities for people with migrant or ethnic backgrounds to engage in economic activity. Oslo, Norway, provides a good example through its OXLO Business Charter, a forum and network for collaboration between the city and the business community.

Cultural and social life: Municipalities may wish to use interculturalism as a criterion to provide funding to civil society organisations, such as Bilbao, where templates include questions related to: CSO involvement in participatory bodies, such as the Bilbao Migrant Council and the socio-cultural origin of the Board. It also includes the Intercultural perspective together with the Gender and Euskera (Basque language) perspective.

Municipalities may wish to consider organising more activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport that aim to encourage people from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds to interact. Inspiration could be drawn from Neuchâtel, which promotes cultural participation thanks to a partnership between the Multicultural Cohesion Department and cultural institutions. Another good example comes from the Cultural Development Policy in Montréal, which encompasses an ambitious range of actions in the field of cultural and social life.

Media and communication: In the spirit of learning, the municipalities may wish to consult good practices of other cities to seek new ideas for partnering with local media and journalists. Inspiration could be drawn from Malta's Anti-Rumours Action Plan, which envisages actions such as creating spaces and channels for meeting with the Media to share relevant information; generating content of interest for the Media that conveys a more rigorous and positive image of diversity (focus on reports, identification of new referents, etc.); and offering training on the intercultural perspective to Media and other communication professionals.

International outlook: Municipalities could benefit from strengthening their contacts with diaspora, such as Reggio Emilia and the Reggio Nel Mondo Agency, which sustains the management and improvement of all the city's international contacts and projects, acting as a crosscutting tool supporting all municipal departments in developing a continuous international exchange and dialogue.

They may consider maintaining regular contact with twin towns and sister cities, as Riga does. The city has 25 twin and partnership cities around the world based on different kinds of signed agreements.

Welcoming newcomers: Municipalities may consider addressing particular needs of especially vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors and refugees and asylum-seekers. A good practice comes from Pontedera, as the Council has set up an inter-municipal Welcoming Committee to raise awareness and provide information to associations and institutions in the area regarding unaccompanied minors. We recommend also to design an information package. An inspiring example is the Welcome App launched in Erlangen, Germany, which helps refugees organise their everyday lives, to overcome the language barrier and find information regarding asylum law.

Leadership and citizenship: Nicosia District may wish to raise awareness among people who are entitled to these rights as a way to promote democratic participation and a sense of belonging within migrant communities. This could be done through awareness raising campaigns, such as 'My city, my vote', conducted in Barcelona.

Anti-discrimination: We recommend municipalities set up Anti-rumours Strategies. A strategy goes beyond isolated activities, that is understood to be a public policy happens when the anti-rumours approach is mainstreamed in the municipalities. Inspiration can be found in different Spanish cities: Barcelona, Bilbao, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, and Tenerife.

Municiapalities may wish to explore initiatives to monitor/research the extent and the character of discrimination. Inspiration could be drawn from Riga.

Participation: We recommend municipalities encourage active participation and representation. To do that, they may want to look into the migration councils set up in several ICC cities such as Camden, Salisbury (, Bilbao and Montréal. A methodology that could be followed is the Local Assemblies, implemented in Lewisham. It consists of

a forum during which the Council talks to the residents, community organisations, police and businesses in order to create a sense of ownership and improve areas and neighbourhoods. Community leaders and activists aim to engage people of underrepresented backgrounds in the social life and in the decision-making process.

Interaction: We recommend municipalities enhance collaboration with CSOs in a more consistent and organised way. A way of doing it is by setting thematic 'tables' or spaces for dialogue with organisations. Here are some examples from Spanish cities on Interreligious, Welcoming.

Municipalities may want to look into other ICC cities experiences that facilitate meaningful interaction between all residents. A good example comes from Sabadell and the Women's Space.

Municipalities in the Nicosia District 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. Almost two decades 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.