



PAPHOS REGIONAL  
INTERCULTURAL NETWORK

# Action plan for inclusion and diversity in Paphos District

2023-2025

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## Introduction

*Intercultural Cities (ICC) 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.*

Successful cities and societies of the future will be intercultural. They will be capable of managing and exploring the potential of their cultural diversity to stimulate creativity and innovation thus generating economic prosperity and a better quality of life. Diversity can be a resource for the development of a city, if it is promoted as an advantage through public discourse, the city's institutions and administration and amongst the community.

The creation of the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network was supported by the ["Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus"](#)<sup>1</sup> project which was implemented by the [Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme](#) and the European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support in partnership with the Civil Registry and Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus.

The project aimed to support the Republic of Cyprus in implementing its [National Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals 2020-2022](#), by empowering local authorities, NGOs, and migrant organisations to be part of the integration process and the policy development through the design and implementation of a tailor-made Action Plan/Strategy for each district.

In this framework, five Regional Intercultural Networks were created in the Districts of Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, Nicosia and Paphos.

[Cross Culture International Foundation Cyprus \(CCIF Cyprus\)](#), the coordinator for the [Paphos Regional Intercultural Network](#), worked closely with the local authorities, civil society, academia and migrant organisations in the Paphos District to design this Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity.

During the network meetings, the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network adopted its terms of reference; prepared and discussed the results of the [ICC index analysis report for Paphos district](#) (May 2022); decided on the priority actions for the district and approved the present "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District". Furthermore, following the participation of five members of the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network in the [Training on combating rumours for Cyprus networks](#), briefings and follow-up actions were discussed.

The "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District" was based on the results and recommendations of the [ICC index analysis report for Paphos district](#) and discussions with the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network and the experts from the Council of Europe. A summary of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis is provided at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" project is being carried out with funding from the European Union, via its Structural Reform Support Programme, and in co-operation with the European Commission's DG for Structural Reform Support. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Council of Europe.

# Members of the Paphos District intercultural network

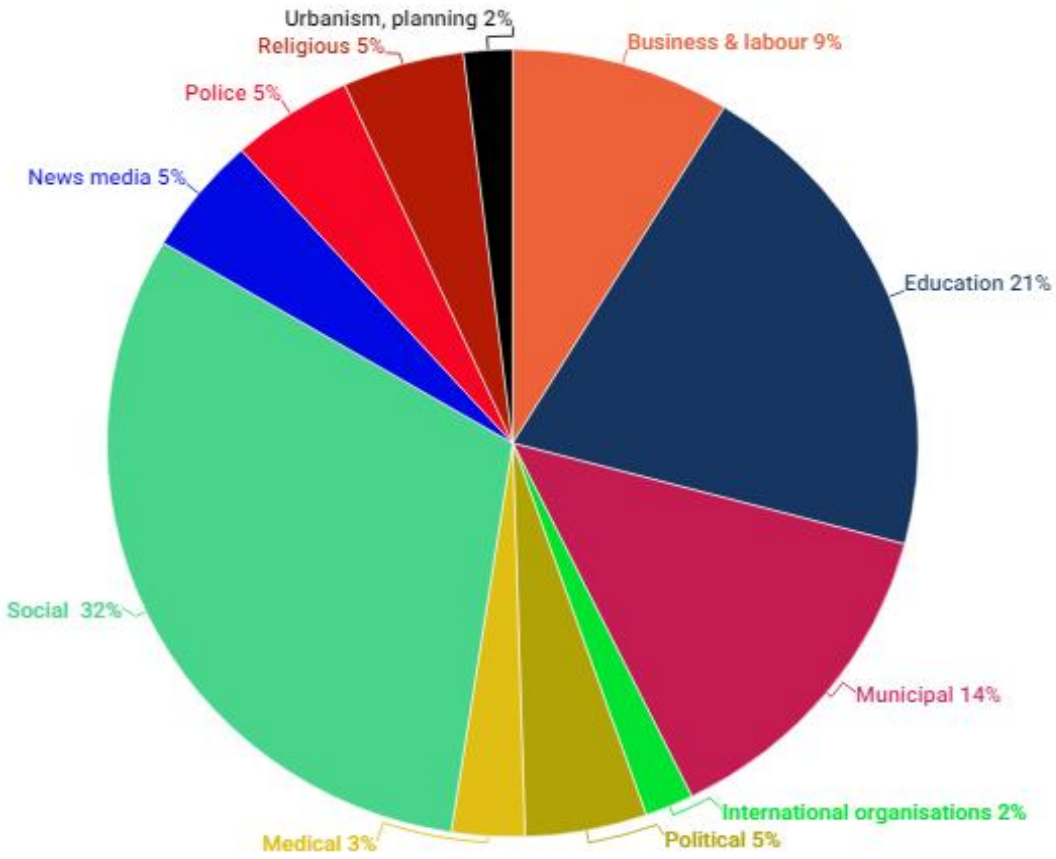


Figure 1. Chart of the membership of the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network.

## Context

*The intercultural city aims at building its policies and identity on the explicit acknowledgement that diversity can be a resource for the development of the society.*

An intercultural city welcomes people of different nationalities, origins, languages, and religions or beliefs. The political leaders, local authorities and most citizens regard diversity positively and as a resource. The Paphos District, for its part, already makes efforts to actively combat discrimination but needs to adapt its governance, institutions, and services to the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

The analysis of the Paphos Index results determined the region's performance in various criteria set by the Council of Europe - it is worth mentioning that they were very positive based on the usual scores of first assessments. In particular, Paphos District recorded a high score in terms of access to education, international perspective, and commitment in formulating local policy to enhance integration. On the other hand, the district scored low on some issues including participation in the decision-making process, public services, welcoming newcomers, encouraging diversity in public service recruitment processes, language learning, and mediation for conflict resolution among its diverse residents.

## **Paphos Regional Intercultural Network's Action Plan**

*The goal of the Intercultural Cities programme is to encourage and facilitate policy change. Its methodology has been tailored to achieve this goal. Unlike the majority of city projects which focus either on research and the production of written recommendations/guidelines, Intercultural Cities has implemented a comprehensive methodology including action research, peer review, good practice exchange and local policy change/action/strategy development<sup>2</sup>.*

The "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District" considers the priorities and challenges highlighted in the Index analysis report. It aims to facilitate positive intercultural encounters, equal access to rights and opportunities for all residents, without ignoring or failing to address possible intercultural misunderstandings or conflict. The Paphos Regional Intercultural Network has a very important role to play in the implementation of the "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District" as the members of the network and their actions will be the agents of change in the city.

The "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District" aims to support the growth, interculturality and aspirations in the district, moreover, it will feed into the new national plan for integration in Cyprus. It focuses on practical actions to meet the needs of people coming from diverse backgrounds and stimulate social cohesion. Particularly, it seeks to contribute to an inclusive community that embraces and values cultural diversity, improves the integration of migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers into the host community and promotes the diversity advantage in the Paphos District.

The five key themes are:

- Commitment;
- Education;
- Language;
- Meaningful interaction and participation;
- Conflict and Mediation.

To develop the "Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Paphos District", community members and key stakeholders were consulted. The municipalities of Paphos, Geroskipou and Pegeia, civil society and the members of the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network, recognised that community participation and engagement are vital part of local democracy and cohesion.

The consultations included participants from relevant government bodies, the local community, civil society networks and associations, migrant organisations, asylum seekers, community leaders, elected members of municipal councils, officers, the Paphos Police Division and municipal staff.

The themes covered during the consultations and meetings, included access and equity, community capacity, social cohesion, collaboration and service delivery.

Individual interviews and meetings with focus groups were also ways of collecting information. Where required, interpreters have been used to assist individuals and groups with limited Greek and English language skills. Surveys were also completed by community members during one public workshop held in Paphos for which interpreters were provided as well.

## 1. Commitment

*A first step on a city's intercultural journey is for city authorities 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 policymaking process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.*

When it comes to showing their support and engagement with the intercultural goals, the authorities and the municipalities in the District of Paphos could send out clear and well-publicized messages emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality and interaction.

Ideally, a majority of the elected officials and senior policy officers may take the stance of supporting the goals and the core principles of the [ICC programme](#).

Municipal authorities may also initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions - an example would be to actively include residents of all nationalities in policymaking procedures.

### **Field of work - Welcoming and social integration of migrants:**

#### **Actions:**

The adoption of a coordinated, clear and focused welcoming statement demonstrating the commitment of the municipalities in the District of Paphos;

- Drafting of the statement;
- The welcoming statement may be publicly announced in the presence of representatives of the Council of Europe, European Commission, officials, local and national media, posted on the websites and in the premises of the Municipalities, schools, libraries and other public and private spaces. The welcoming statement could be curated by Paphos Regional Intercultural Network, to be promoted and shared with relevant stakeholders and civil society;

- The welcoming statement may be translated into different languages spoken by citizens in the Paphos District.
- A memorandum of cooperation or a letter of support may be signed between the members of the network and the municipalities.

## **Field of work - Welcome policies**

### **Actions:**

- Development of a one-page document with welcome policies could be prepared by the Paphos Regional Intercultural Network;
- Organise multilingual language aids (similar to language mats that were prepared for Ukrainian school children) that could be distributed throughout the Paphos District and in private places like restaurants and coffee bars. The multilingual language aids may help residents from diverse backgrounds, who have no or limited knowledge of Greek and English, to communicate through the introduction of simple and common sentences;
- Design and develop a welcoming guide (a roadmap with information for newcomers);
- Increase the use of social networks to promote initiatives to all residents, especially locals that may wish to provide their support, knowledge and expertise to civil society organisations;
- Create info-points where residents with expertise and knowledge could guide newcomers to find a solution to practical or bureaucratic issues. This interaction may be opened further to mentoring services (like the mentor figure that young volunteers have);
- “Adopt a family” an all-encompassing mentoring umbrella. For instance, by pairing individuals to families, newcomers can benefit from receiving information and guidance about the new city and navigating the health system directly from locals, this could include interpretation assistance;
- Each municipality may create a process to issue “residents’ cards with benefits”. Newcomers, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and locals may apply for this card. Each cardholder could have free access to:
  - Language lessons (Greek, English, Arabic etc);
  - Guided excursions in the district or other districts including free meal package;
  - City tours, treasure hunt with prize (sweets, coffee, ice cream);
  - Cooking lessons to promote intercultural cuisine. All recipes may be gathered to create recipe books;
  - Food trucks/cooking festivals/food exchange event. Each represented nationality may have its own stand/kiosk to present their food culture.

- Produce and publicise leaflets and brochures containing information about the safety regulations and a cultural navigation guide;
- Create newsletters for all residents, particularly promoted to refugees and asylum seekers to increase their knowledge about community and cultural activities. The sign-up for the newsletter could be promoted on municipal and civil society organisation websites;
- All those who sign up for the newsletters in each municipality (newcomers, immigrants, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and locals) could benefit the following:
  - Information about all the events in the district, translated into different languages;
  - An intercultural calendar;
  - Information and registration forms for free language, dance and art lessons in the area;
  - An intercultural networking list with people willing to share their knowledge, skills and ideas and become members of a knowledge pool of great potential that may be valorized and enhanced as newcomers rarely have the opportunity to transfer their knowledge and skills in a new country. Community work, focus groups with ideas, networking and the practical work of NGOs may be organised;
  - Small job vacancies in the district may be shared.

## 2. Public services

*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 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 challenges.*

*With community participation, citizens can achieve mutually beneficial relationships and feel empowered to take ownership, be involved in decision making that affects their lives, facilitate equal access to administrative hierarchies and increase access to resources. It shifts current paradigm from passive to active participation.*

### **Field of work - Access to information**

#### **Actions:**

- The municipalities in the district may follow the example of the Municipality of Paphos and add translations of their webpages in different languages;
- The municipalities may be engaged in recurrent meetings with relevant stakeholders to monitor progress and discuss further updates on how to continuously improve access to services;
- The municipalities could add to their webpages:

- Useful links and messages in different languages;
- Create short videos (with animation or TikTok's) which could facilitate the access to information, shared through their social media accounts;
- The residents card (explained under the previous field of work) may be used:
  - in internet spots with computers and printers to facilitate access to information, printing of their documents etc (like internet café). The use may be free or with a reduced cost;
- Mini shuttles may connect the city centre with different neighbourhoods, government offices etc;
- Regular updates of the information about places and activities that may enable interaction and participation between locals and migrants, newcomers, and other groups with different backgrounds;
- Give tips about the district, the municipalities, municipal services, including information about neighbouring districts;
- Insert a list with the names and contacts of civil society; and voluntary organisations, local NGOs etc.

### **Field of work - Access to public events**

#### **Actions:**

- A welcoming calendar could be organised including the city's related actions, activities, language courses, events etc;
- The municipalities could provide public spaces to host intercultural events:
  - Theatrical events;
  - Live music events where each one performs songs from own country;
  - Sport events to promote the interaction between different cultures through physical activity.

## **3. Education**

*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.*

Although it seems that the mix of Greek, English and many other languages makes Paphos District de facto multilingual, however, the truth is that to find employment, good knowledge of both Greek and English is required for almost all jobs.

Voluntary organisations and sport clubs, as well as self-help organisations, form an important pivot within this project. The municipalities may consider supporting these organisations to be able to pay for teachers, expand their classes to an "on the spot" approach to facilitate the attendance to the language courses.



## **Field of work - Language**

### **Actions:**

- Increase language training in non-formal education to compliment the formal education.  
Goal : 5 language groups/classes for 48 teaching hours to run for 12 weeks to provide functional day-to-day language communication skills. For about 100 adult migrants (those who complete the classes could be provided with a certificate of participation);
- Open municipal spaces (like libraries) to the civil society and voluntary organisations, and local NGOs to be able to organise classes. School classrooms could be used in the afternoon, with the permission of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture;
- Create a networking list of working groups for language learning in non-formal education;
- The members of the networking list could potentially work closely with municipalities' appointees, to create and manage the language learning groups;
- A drop in Multi-language and Linguistic Café in person and or online. It will provide all residents a fantastic opportunity to meet new people and practice language-learning skills – for free – in a fun and friendly environment, practicing whichever language one feels like on the day with the different groups.

### **Future actions for national level:**

- Increase the institutional offer for Greek language learning. The scope of extending formal Greek language learning – and possibly English – could facilitate the employment insertion rate for migrants, as both languages are crucial for local workforce;
- The institutional offer may include the learning of other languages spoken in the district, for locals to learn in a true intercultural spirit;
- Increase language training for adults in formal education with the goal of 2-4 new teachers to deliver 96 hours of teaching per year, at A1 and A2 level, in the premises of KIE. Financing required from the Ministry of Education. Other contributions include voluntary teachers (e.g. retired teachers to be mobilised by the NGOs and the city).

## **Field of work - Online learning**

### **Actions:**

- Online resources, material, online courses/tutorials for learning Greek and English could be provided. EU funding could be sought, to allow the creation of content;
- Call for volunteers from the community, to participate in online language cafés. Possible to solicitate public and maybe even private universities, in case they may be able to provide expertise and knowledge.

## 4. Meaningful interaction and participation

*Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. 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.*

*Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policymaking. 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.*

### **Field of work – Calendar of events**

#### **Actions:**

- The Zero Waste Park: a municipal area may be used for an Intercultural Park with recycled material, on the outskirts of the town (not in the city centre or certain neighbourhoods). In the park there will be playgrounds, coffee shop (low-cost drinks and food), internet. In the construction and set up of the park, all residents could contribute with manual labour: planting, painting, building. A map of all countries could be created by coloured plants. All signs and basic information about each country will be in different languages. During summertime, open air film projections, including films from different countries. Different festivals could be organised in this park (through EU funding);
- Mixed group of residents may perform sports, cultural, and dance activities;
- Learning-by-doing activities on local culture and civilization. Archaeological sites, museums, businesses, artists, pottery, icon making, painting ateliers, sweet shops/businesses open their doors for small groups to watch, learn and follow their productions;
- Creative fairy tale writing and fairy tale narrations. The fairy tale writers read their tales, create a new story with the participants. The fairy tale writers could sell their books;
- Shadow or puppet show. Participants create their own puppets, tell their story, create plays or events at the end;
- It is necessary that all residents (not only the target group of migrants and refugees etc), participate in all processes or activities. This will lead to better inclusion, integration and communication among the local community (EU funding for medium-big projects).

## Field of work - bottom-up approach for increasing participation

### Actions:

- An intercultural committee would be a key opportunity for representatives from diverse communities to play a role in influencing current and future priorities of the municipal councils. The intercultural committee may be comprised of community representatives, community service providers alongside council staff and municipal councillors. The Mayor of Pegeia has already started this action;
- Create an opportunity for all target groups, to share their knowledge, skills and ideas, as members of a knowledge pool with great potential that may be valorized and enhanced as newcomers have rarely the chance to transfer their knowledge and skills in a new country. Community work, focus group with ideas, networking and the practical work of the NGOs may be organised with this pool;
- Engage residents to increase participation:
  - Empower all citizens, especially those from diverse backgrounds. From a practical point of view: municipalities may allow space for their participation in the organisation or development of local events and projects;
  - Organise free-entry days in museums, galleries, etc.;
  - Reach out to the community to find guides who speak different languages.
- The programme of CCIF Cyprus “I learn Greek with my friends” could be expanded, together with other programs offered by private language institutions, NGOs, sport academies, dance schools etc. through EU funds;
- A networking list could be created, with retirees, volunteers and actors in the community who are interested in being involved in civic services for the provision of language lessons or direct or indirect mentorship relationships (new mother to new mother, retirees and young people etc). The interaction could emanate between migrants and locals, with the possibility of increasing sensitization to migrant issues as locals interact more with foreign communities.

## 5. Conflict Mediation

*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, intercultural cities seek 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.*

1. An Intercultural Council: members of different ethnic communities become “Intercultural Ambassadors” for the Municipality of Paphos and other municipalities. Leaders within different ethnic groups with good communication and language skills could be approached to see if they wish to take on the role of “Intercultural Ambassador” within the community. The selected members will receive training and develop their skill sets. Their collaboration with municipal authorities and their role may decrease the potential for misunderstandings and conflict amongst different groups. The “Intercultural Ambassadors” of each

community will be given motivation and benefits such as help in finding jobs, direct contacts with the municipalities, neighborhood policemen etc.

2. An “Observatory Park” could be developed to reduce underage drinking

## Appendix: Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Paphos District

The [Intercultural Cities Index](#) was designed to help a city assess where it stands in the different governance/policy areas in relation to intercultural integration. The Index is a knowledge-sharing tool in matters of exchanging practices, but also allows cities to implement strategies that have already been tested in other cities, therefore, minimising the risk of taking the wrong action while also maximising the benefits of allocating resources for potential actions. This can be crucial for countries such as Cyprus where local communities can be small and not have access to significant resources.

The findings of the [Intercultural Index Analysis Report for the Paphos Region \(April 2022\)](#) were the basis to define the future intercultural actions in the Paphos District and facilitate decisions that will allow our municipalities to make improvements in the required areas, thus charting steady progress over time on issues of interculturalism.

Below are bar charts summarising the results concerning the District of Paphos in comparison to the city average for each intercultural indicator. This information can also be found on the [Paphos District page of the Intercultural Cities website](#).

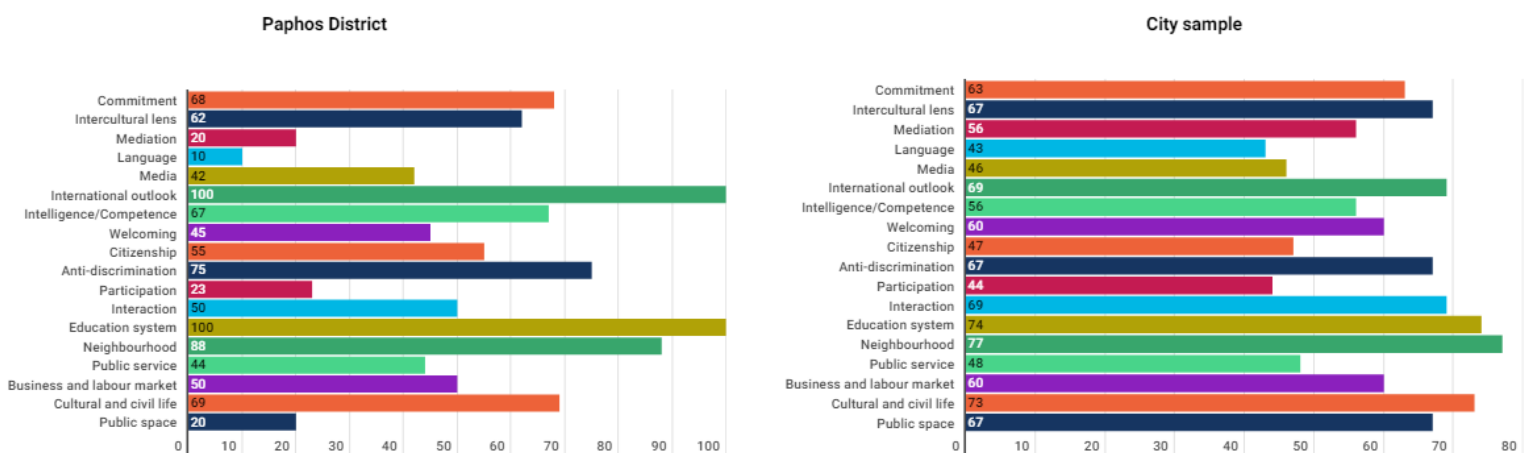


Figure 2. Overview of Paphos District Intercultural Cities Index results in comparison to the average from similar sized cities