BUILDING MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTERCULTURAL CITIES

Policy brief

2023

A guide to the 'Appreciative inquiry approach'

INTERCULTURAL CITIES
CITÉS INTERCULTURELLES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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POLICY BRIEF

Intercultural Cities programme

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Intercultural Cities programme
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FOREWORD

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme supports local and regional authorities worldwide in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens. The hope is that, where intercultural policies are applied, most residents will regard diversity as a resource rather than a problem and accept that all cultures change as they encounter each other in the public arena.

Intercultural cities, having a diverse population including people of different nationalities and origins, and with different languages, religions/beliefs and backgrounds, base their policies on four pillars which underpin their development and sustenance: real equality, valuing diversity, meaningful intercultural interaction and active citizenship and participation.

With the adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration, active citizenship and participation officially became the fourth pillar of the intercultural integration approach. Nonetheless, the Council of Europe's ICC programme has been promoting citizen participation among its members since its beginning in 2008. Consultation and participation of communities in the development, implementation and evaluation of the intercultural city strategy is not only crucial for better policy but is also a value in itself. A genuinely intercultural city can only be achieved through the active participation of all the major institutions, groups and communities in the city. An intercultural city therefore actively seeks the participation of all its residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support for, and thereby the sustainability of, local policies, while at the same time reducing the economic costs of social exclusion.

Participatory processes play a key role in the setting up of a multilevel governance model where the national government cooperates with regional and local authorities as well as civil society organisations: the approach allows for policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and – ideally – with all relevant stakeholders, in areas of shared competence or common interest.

The multilevel governance model must be complemented by public participation, in the design, delivery and evaluation of intercultural integration plans, in line with the wider Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of the Committee of Ministers on the participation of citizens in local public life. Such participation, by individuals and through non-governmental organisations, is essential to reflect the complex "diversity of diversity" in globalised cities, to engender a sense of belonging and democratic involvement in society, especially on the part of individuals and organisations of minority backgrounds, and to gain widespread public buy-in to intercultural integration plans.[1]

This guide is mainly intended for local authorities and practitioners involved in the various stages of participatory processes, from the initial planning to evaluation. While there are many specific types of participatory process – such as participatory budgeting, participatory policy development, participatory feedback and many more – the present guide intentionally focuses on participatory processes in general, so as to allow for its broadest possible use. The guide invites the reader to reflect on the meaning of co-construction in practice, on how to generate group dynamics based on social participation principles such as equality and mutual respect, and on the factors necessary for long-term sustainability of such processes.

The guide is based on the paper "Guía de Claves para la Participación Social en la Diversidad" prepared by the Group on Social Participation set up for Tenerife's intercultural strategy *Juntos En la misma dirección* (Together in the same direction) in 2017. The present guide is built on the original work of the following authors: Roxana de Ortiz, Concepción Sicilia, Alicia Torres, María E. Fonte, Dácil Baute, Sofía Lewit, Carolina Martín Dácil Baute, Sofía Lewit and Carolina Martín, Gladys Gutiérrez, Sergio Barrera, Lorena Oval, Carmen Diaz, Lamine Cissé, Montserrat Conde, Carmen Luisa González, Vicente Zapata. The guide was adapted to fit the international context of the global ICC programme and now also includes inspiring good practice examples from the member cities of the ICC network.

[1] See: Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level, Council of Europe (2021)

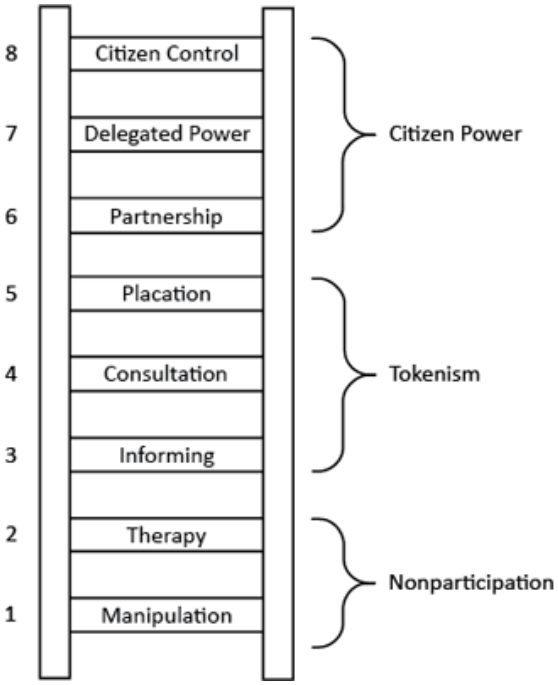
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why participation?

The intercultural model places great importance on promoting spaces and opportunities for meaningful intercultural interaction, participation and intercultural dialogue.

With the adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration, active citizenship and participation became one of the core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model.

Participation is understood not only as the exercise of the right to vote, but also as actions of advocacy, deliberation, co-production and monitoring of policies by the citizenry. The Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level indeed specifies that voting rights alone do not guarantee active citizenship and participation for foreign residents, and that alternative forms of participation to enable them to at least contribute to local level policies should be explored.



Participation implies power-sharing. It means involving people of diverse origins and characteristics in the decision-making of institutions, be they political, educational, social, economic or cultural. As Sherry Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (image on the left)[2] indicates, participatory policies allow for varying degrees of participation: from mere information-provision or even manipulation, to a real ceding of power to residents. For more information on how to build intercultural competence on this topic, you may wish to familiarise yourself with the excerpt of the Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence in Appendix II).

Participation is also a core principle of democracy and human rights and, when successful, it will increase both an individual's sense of belonging and the community's sense of shared values.

Participation and 'active citizenship' do not apply only to citizens by nationality. It can occur whenever stakeholders (including non-national residents where appropriate) enjoy the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support necessary to freely express their opinions and influence decision-making on important matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural participation requires an equal and respectful basis, in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain peoples' active participation.[3]

The Council of Europe encourages intercultural cities to set up longer-term participatory processes wherever appropriate, rather than to only work with one-off actions or project-based approaches. To ensure the sustainability of these processes, the intercultural city needs to take into consideration that a process might evolve, with its objectives (short-, medium- and long-term) being revised and redefined as the process advances.

While there are a range of methodologies that can be applied to participatory processes, this guide focuses on a particular approach known as **'*Appreciative Inquiry*'**. [4] This approach maintains a special focus on what already works within the city and how to build new solutions based on past successes.

[2] See: Sherry R. Arnstein "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.
[3] Intercultural Cities Glossary, Council of Europe (2022).
[4] Barrett, F. J. and Fry, R. E. (2010). A Positive Approach to Building Co-operative Capacity. A TAOS Institute publication.

1.2 The Appreciative Inquiry approach: definition and application

Any participatory process involves meaningful interactions within a group of people. The Appreciative Inquiry approach is a tool to create conditions in which people are supported in their communication and their teamwork towards shared goals. This in turn can help the group find new solutions.[5] The Appreciative Inquiry approach also helps participants address a wide range of questions: What reality and future do we want to build? What meaning do we want to give to what is happening around us? How should we communicate with others regarding our goals?

Appreciative Inquiry is an action-centred methodology, based on a positive mindset, which can help intercultural cities establish a collaborative process. It aims to establish a shared vision of the future, based on the strengths of the city and its past achievements. While a traditional problem-solving mentality focuses on shortcomings, Appreciative Inquiry builds on the positive. It emphasises what already works and explores the potential to expand that success within available resources. It aims to accelerate learning and stimulate creativity, and to make everyone involved more flexible and more confident about change.[6] Throughout, the approach applies an intercultural lens, centred on inclusivity.

1.3 Building inclusive participatory processes in diverse societies

Interculturalism is a policy approach for ensuring equality and cohesion in culturally diverse societies. It encourages mixing and interaction among people of different origins, cultures, and backgrounds to build a collective identity that embraces cultural pluralism, human rights, democracy, inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination. It is based on the simultaneous application of several principles: equality of rights and opportunities, diversity as an advantage (rather than a problem to be solved), meaningful intercultural interaction, and, finally, active citizenship and participation as a way to mobilise the contributions of all residents for the development of their society.

When developing participatory processes through an intercultural lens, it is vital to invest time and resources in involving residents from all kinds of backgrounds. The appreciative inquiry approach is useful for this, as it takes our differences and all that we have in common as twin starting points for the discussion. It is important for the process to recognise that everyone has resources and ideas to contribute, so they should be welcomed to do so in an open and equal forum. Creating strong intercultural relations also helps build a process that will last over time.

Inclusive participatory processes should therefore include anyone who is interested and should invite representatives of all backgrounds present in a city to take part under equal conditions. Just as diversity among individuals is important for producing a non-discriminatory and realistic outcome, a broad range of allies (organisations, public and private bodies, cultural groups etc.) are needed to represent different perspectives, to bring different resources, and to form multilevel and multistakeholder networks.

The Montreal Intercultural Council, Canada

The Montreal Intercultural Council (CiM) is a consultative body dealing with intercultural relations. It consists of 15 volunteer members, including a chair and two vice-chairs from various professional backgrounds who reflect Montreal's cultural diversity. It advises, and issues opinions to, the city council and the executive committee on all issues of interest to the cultural communities and on any other matter relating to intercultural relations. It seeks opinions and receives requests and suggestions from any person or group working on intercultural relations. It also carries out or commissions research that it thinks necessary to inform its advice.

[5] Cooperider, D. and Whitney, D. (2005). *A positive revolution in change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
[6] *Trosten-Bloom, A. & Whitney, D. (1999). Appreciative Inquiry: The path to positive change. In Cram, Fiona. (2010). Appreciative Inquiry. MAI Review. 3. 4.*

The ICI Sherbrooke immigration consultation body: Quebec, Canada

To improve the participation of civil society organisations and local associations working in the fields concerned with intercultural integration, Sherbrooke launched the ICI Sherbrooke immigration consultation body in 2019 through its programme "Sherbrooke, healthy city": **an inter-sector collaboration in favour of well-being and inclusion.** This body brings together all the organisations that are involved – directly or indirectly – in the ecosystem of immigrants settling there. The city administration also sits on this body. Meetings are held regularly in order to maintain the mobilisation of partners, and to oversee implementation of projects for the community.

The Equalities Assembly, Leeds City Council, United Kingdom

Leeds' Equalities Assembly is a mechanism aiming to ensure participation and involvement of diverse communities, including gender diversity. It is a forum made up of equality hubs, which helps to ensure the city engages with the full range of citizens when making decisions. Each year Leeds holds a conference that brings together the hubs to discuss key challenges and opportunities faced by groups across the city. The current hubs are: a religion or belief hub, an age hub, a black and minority ethnic hub, a disability hub, a lgbt+ hub, and a women and girls hub.

Religious Leaders' Forum, Haifa, Israel

The Haifa Forum for Interfaith Cooperation (HaiFIC) is a diverse group of spiritual and religious leaders from all the different religions and cultures represented in the city of Haifa, that gathers to promote interaction between the faiths and foster peaceful coexistence. It fulfils the need for a distinctly religious voice to call out for interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Supported by the Ministry of Interior, the National Mediation Center and others, the group holds 4-6 meetings a year, focused on peer learning and on developing social activities that will bring the communities together.

Starting Points:

- ☐ The city is working in partnership with others to encourage more intercultural mixing and interaction between diverse groups.
- ☐ Participants have been offered the opportunity to share their diversity and what it is that makes them special.
- ☐ Participants have also identified what they have in common.
- ☐ Both their differences and what they have in common are respected and valued.
- ☐ Everyone present feels they have the chance to contribute equally to the meeting and process, based on their own personal perspective and experience.
- ☐ The activity is being planned, agreed on and implemented by everyone together from the outset.

2. METHODOLOGY: THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH

An intercultural city can use the Appreciative Inquiry methodology with a view to building a sustainable participatory process in a diverse society. This process involves five stages – the '5 Ds': **Definition (of the topic); Discovery (of resources); Dream (shared for the future); Design (of the process path); Destination**. (NOTE: The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is another complementary approach that may be applied with a view to organising participatory group planning. For more information on the approach, you may familiarise yourself with the matrix on participatory group planning in Appendix I)

In the Definition stage (1), participants affirmatively select the topic (not problem) they want to study. The Discovery stage (2) focuses on identifying the resources that will enrich the process, highlighting and illuminating the best aspects of the group in any given situation, as well as participants' experiences in different areas of life. The Dream-building stage (3) focuses on the creation of a common vision among participants. In the Design stage (4) the group works together to plan a realistic series of steps by which to realise their shared dream. Destination (5) is then the final phase of the approach, focused on building participants' commitment to achieve their aspirations and aims.

2.1 Definition (of the topic)

Processes often bring together different interests and aspirations. While some participants may be more interested in dealing with immediate problems, others may place more emphasis on structural aspects and medium- or long-term goals. At the same time, some participants may be more interested in economic issues, while others identify social, cultural or environmental challenges. The process of jointly defining the topic should therefore start to generate cohesion in the group and to unite the participants around a common understanding. A commitment to true co-creation (rather than allowing certain dominant voices to control definition) is vital to this working well.

Irrespective of the topic chosen, it is important to combine all motivations and concerns and to begin with discussing what the topics each mean to the members of the group, what their expectations are, and why a topic interests them. Through this discussion, implicit understandings should be made explicit, and a sense of what is common to the motivations in the group should emerge and be formulated into words. This can be further synthesised into a slogan to be applied throughout the work of the group, summarising shared expectations.

The process shall challenge preconceived ideas if necessary, with an invitation to generate or open up new courses of action in relation to the topic. The process of defining the topic is ideally both creative and dynamic and lays the foundations for the next steps of the participatory process. It is important that the spirit of the discussions is motivating and inclusive to ensure a successful outcome of the process as a whole.

Self-check questions on defining the topic:

- ☐ Have all members of the group been enabled to actively co-define the topic by expressing and sharing their thoughts? If not, is there anything you can do to support members who have not really taken part?
- ☐ Is the understanding of the topic shared and accepted by all participants of the group? If not, is it helpful to make this and the reasons for it more explicit?
- ☐ Do participants want to involve creative approaches, such as visual images or music, when defining the topic?
- ☐ Has the group found words that speak to the heart, shed a new light on the situation, leave conventional wisdom aside, and forge new bonds between members of the group? Have enough questions been asked?

2.2 Discovery (of resources)

Once the topic is defined, the next step is to identify the personal resources and strengths of all individuals involved: capabilities, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, contacts, etc.; as well as to define the resources of the group: what materials and money are available, what information, structures and support exist, etc. It is important to work with the relevant communities to define the available resources, in terms of infrastructures, on a professional level or through local organisations.

It is often useful to come back to past success stories (identified through interviews and other such tools) when progress was made. Looking back at those stories and their key moments helps to understand why the past action was successful and to build on those factors. A visual account of the collected resources and success stories can be shared with the group and returned to, for inspiration, throughout the process.

All-group exercise:
"Buying abilities"

Imagine you are in a shopping centre, but one which only sells positive personal abilities and traits. You are not looking for anything in particular, just going from shop to shop, until you suddenly see something you realise you need. What positive things would you buy to be a part of you or your group? What abilities, virtues, etc. would you take with you? What will the others in the group notice about you that is different? How will this new ability influence you in your future and that of the group? This activity can help to identify abilities (or needs for abilities) that will help you achieve your aim.

Self-check questions on effectively identifying joint resources:

- ☐ Has the topic been clearly enough defined to facilitate the identification of relevant resources?
- ☐ Is everyone aware of the various types of 'resources', and the differences between them, so that they can discover personal, group or community resources?
- ☐ Has every member of the group brought forward what they consider to be a resource and/or said which resources they think should be used?
- ☐ Have relevant previous successes been discussed?
- ☐ Has the work and its conclusions been presented visually so that everyone can have access to the same information?

2.3 Dream (shared for the future)

The third phase of the process is building a shared dream, where content is added to the agreed topic. It is during this stage that specific objectives are defined in detail, and the group becomes more aware of the direction of the process.

To build the shared dream, it is important to continue encouraging the participants to talk about their vision for the future and to imagine the potential outcome should the goal be accomplished. Activities based on provocation and suggestion can be used to help the group project itself into the future (see below exercises). Facilitators shall encourage exchanges with a view to transcending individual dreams and ending up with one collective and inclusive dream shared by all.

Once the participants start to share their dreams/aspirations, they can ask questions and blend their aspirations through dialogue, visualising the points they have in common and asking questions. The shared dreams can be further visualised through drawings, paintings, or words.

"A call from the future"	**''The newspaper from the future''**	**"The time machine"**
Imagine a friend in the group calls you on the phone in a year's time, to say how happy they are that you and the team have achieved the goal you set a year earlier and that they would like to share their positive thoughts about the process. What would they say about you and the team and your achievements? What would they say gave them the most satisfaction? What did they like best? And what would you answer?	Imagine you are in the future and you buy a newspaper. In the paper there is a front-page story about your group and its great success. What would the headline be? What would you read in the article?	Imagine you enter a time machine that takes you into the future, exactly one year from now. Leaving the machine, you discover that you and your friends in the group or organisation have achieved the goal you set yourselves. What is different? What is happening that didn't happen before? How do you know that? What do you do think of the result? How does your organisation function in this new future?

How to build a shared dream:

- ☐ Participants identify what they want to have, what unites them, and which resources are available to them.
- ☐ Participants have been asked what they would wish to see more of and which areas of work they want to expand.
- ☐ Local cultural features and factors related to the group have been included.
- ☐ No judgment regarding the proposals made by participants has been made.
- ☐ Individual participants, and the group as a whole, have been asked about their visions of a better future in relation to the identified topic.

2.4 Design (of the process path) and Destination

In Affirmative Inquiry, the fourth and fifth phases – Design and Destination – overlap. This is because they both concern effective implementation. Tasks start to be assigned and implemented as soon as the group defines the activities needed to reach the goal of the shared dream.

In the Design stage, the group defines and organises the strategies and activities needed. It is important to incorporate the available resources (material resources or resources related to the skills and knowledge of the participants, as well as examples of successful experiences or success stories) as defined by the group in the previous phases. It is also common that new ideas emerge in this phase, and such ideas should be welcomed whenever they might contribute to realising the shared dream.

In the Destination stage, the tasks and commitments needed to implement the activities are defined. It is important to remain aware of the resources available within the group to effectively assign tasks. After this phase, the plan will need to be adapted to new circumstances throughout the period of implementation, and the group will sometimes be required to return to the design phase to re-check that the implementation continues to serve the goal.

Ideally, the process shall adjust to the different ways of working within the group. While some wish for everything to be mapped out before starting implementation, others are happy to implement with less planning. Hence, a balance between consensus on prior organisation or moving into implementation with a faster schedule shall be sought. It is often beneficial to invite smaller units to discuss within their groups to find the ways of working that are best suited to them.

How to facilitate the Design and Destination stages:

- ☐ Incorporate available resources in the Design phase, making sure that no particularly valuable resources are being overlooked.
- ☐ Include cultural aspects, such as values and beliefs, as well as structural aspects, related to forms of communication, decision making, etc., in the discussions.
- ☐ Proven solutions and strengths are the point of return whenever planning gets blocked.
- ☐ Make the objectives and strategies proposed, as well as the activities and tasks needed to implement them, as clear and concrete (achievable and measurable) as possible.
- ☐ Establish a timeframe after determining how much time will likely be needed to implement each of the activities or tasks.
- ☐ Ensure that the plan is flexible enough to be adapted to potential changes to the circumstances of the process or the participants.
- ☐ Keeping noticing and checking that all participants feel equal and free to participate in a democratic manner within the group.

3. PRACTICAL ASPECTS

3.1 Planning a meeting

Co-production and co-creation invite everyone to participate from the outset. A strength of co-creation is more sustainable results. However, sufficient time and resources should be allocated for the process as it can be challenging and time-consuming. Therefore it is important to prepare and plan the meetings well, and to facilitate collaborative development during the discussions.

When facilitating collaborative processes, it is important to consider the following factors: awareness of the objectives, knowing the group, nurturing relations between the people involved, a degree of flexibility, humour, the time factor, and the need to avoid limiting creativity. Facilitators should therefore plan the session in advance, but at the same time be ready to adapt to the needs of the group.

Once the objectives of the process are clear, a brainstorming session can help produce ideas on how to go about the task ahead. Here it is useful if the group considers what they would like the session to include. This phase should be declared open to creative ideas and outside-the-box thinking.

It is also important to identify any natural leaders attending the meeting, as the facilitators may wish to hear their ideas for the meeting's structure. Once all participants have shared their thoughts, they shall be assessed to identify the best ones for the group, the most feasible ones in terms of achieving the aims, as well as the most useful and effective ones. When deciding, it is helpful to consider what has

worked well in previous, similar meetings. The most suitable ideas should then be selected, put in order and narrated as a story with a beginning, storyline and ending.

It is always useful to allocate time at the end of each meeting for participants to share their reflections on the meeting and the process. This can be done publicly, with the full group answering the question "How did you find the meeting and what did you find useful?" or "What did you like most about the meeting?" or carried out privately and anonymously. If it is not the first meeting, the facilitator can take some time at the beginning to review what was expressed previously and, if necessary, clear the air. The facilitators may also wish to speak to potential participants individually beforehand, to find out about their needs in terms of the subject matter of the meeting, thereby facilitating their participation in the meeting and process.

How to plan an effective meeting:

- ☐ The meeting has been co-planned, ensuring the planning functions as a means of exchange, comparison, and improvement of ideas.
- ☐ The purpose of the meeting and the expected outcomes have been clearly communicated.
- ☐ The organisers know participants in the group well enough.
- ☐ The organisers know if the participants attend the meeting voluntarily or as part of obligations.
- ☐ The organisers are aware of what the participants hope to gain from the meeting.
- ☐ The organisers know if participants met on other occasions, if they know each other or have worked together before.
- ☐ Aspects to encourage conviviality, mindful of cultural diversity, have been included in the planning process.
- ☐ An icebreaker to help the participants to get to know each other and improve communication as has been prepared.
- ☐ Timings have been considered and sufficient time has been allocated to each activity.
- ☐ The meeting has been planned in detail.
- ☐ A « Plan B » has been prepared in case there is not enough time or the contrary.
- ☐ All necessary equipment has been prepared before the arrival of the participants.

3.2 Convening a meeting

When convening the meeting it is essential to provide clear and inclusive information to ensure as many individuals from diverse backgrounds join in the process. The information should be inspiring but not raise false expectations that cannot be fulfilled. The logistics also need to be considered with intercultural sensitivity. This may mean holding events at times which are convenient for the participants rather than the officials, the choice of a venue in the community or in a public authority building, the availability of culturally appropriate refreshments and places/times for prayer, and recognition of specific needs such as free childcare arrangements and free transportation.

Defining the message: The invitation shall state the aim of the meeting clearly and concisely. The message shall be phrased in everyday, accessible, inclusive and motivating terms, with a simple design. The venue, date and time of the meeting should be highlighted. If it is not a one-off invitation but a part of a wider, sequential programme, it should be made clear to what part of the process the invitation refers and to whom it is addressed. If addressing the message to a specific group, it is useful to reflect on how it affects the content of the message and its formulation.

Defining the communication channel: There are a wide range of 'channels' which can be of help to reach people with different backgrounds. It is important to be aware of their features and use the most effective tools for getting the message across.[7]

[7] Please, watch the video to get more information on how to communicate inclusively.

Timing: Think about the timing of the communication process. As a rule, the invitation should go out at least two weeks in advance but not more than four weeks. The frequency with which the message should be sent depends on the cost, but it is recommended to send out reminders for good measure, at least a few days beforehand, in addition to the official invitation.

Cooperation with local media broadcasting companies to reach the target audience: Ansan (Republic of Korea)

Ansan City, in cooperation with local media companies, runs a multicultural newspaper subscription project. It aims to provide non-nationals with a range of information and inform them about the city's policies. The multicultural newspaper is published twice a month, with a circulation of 20,000 copies. The city invests 30,024,000 KRW (approximately 23,400 Euros) annually in this project.

Ansan City's media department also works with broadcasting companies in the Republic of Korea to publicise international cuisines, intercultural education, intercultural streets, and Ansan City's non-nationals policy. In 2019, seven episodes were filmed and aired.

Information boxes as a means to communicate information about an event: Copenhagen (Denmark)

Copenhagen developed information boxes in public spaces which included information on public transport, citizens' services, conferences, cultural and sporting events. These aim to allow newly arrived persons, including students, to engage in and make the most of the city's offering.

Promoters and multipliers: The organiser promoting the event should be well-known and have the means of promoting or marketing the process widely, but also credibility among the target audiences. To ensure the target audience is reached, indicators, such as the number of telephone calls requesting information, or searches on the website, can be useful to set and monitor.

Distribution of the invitations can be done in cooperation with other partners – opinion shapers, religious leaders, etc. – as they are close to the target audience and have a multiplier effect, as well as through sharing the information in print at, for example, their congregation, sports club, or the local restaurant.

Rede Portuguesa de Cidades Interculturais (RPCI) and cooperation with influencers with a view to reach the youngsters creating the positive alternatives narratives

RPCI developed the project "Inclusion influencers" with a view to prevent the increase of discriminatory behaviours identified at the local level. The main target of the project was the youngest part of the population as their daily exposure to social media ends up influencing their behaviours and actions in society. The goal of the project was to create content that would serve as positive alternatives, spreading kind and factual messages to balance the scale of negative messaging in those media, and to offer more tools to create empathy to teachers and other technicians working with children and teenagers. One of the key decisions was to work with Influencers to help create the content and spread the message more efficiently to the target audience.

Channels of communication					
Word of mouth	**Megaphone or loudspeaker**	**Printed word on a traditional flyer**	**Radio and audio-visual media, television**	**Online digital media**	**Telephone (land line or mobile)**
The oldest means of communication, a slow process and not particularly accurate, but effective in the long term as a means of informing people.	This means can be particularly useful for work in local contexts and is frequently used from a vehicle driving round the streets, neighbourhoods etc. to announce popular events.	This channel is the most direct. If the budget dedicated to communication allows it, it can be presented in a more elaborate and costly form, for instance, as a poster or an announcement in the local or regional press, or alternatively utilising places frequented by diverse people (civic centres, schools, etc.).	These channels are costly, but there may be spaces which are more accessible and community oriented. Local radio and television can be very effective when the target is a particular area or territory.	There is a wide range of means of online communication (public or private web pages, independent blogs, social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc.) Online digital media has an instant effect, with many audio-visual resources, targeting options, and little cost. However, certain people can have difficulties accessing and using those tools.	Direct calling is perhaps the means of communication par excellence, but it is very costly and resource intensive.

Venue

When defining the venue, you need to consider: the expected number of participants; accessibility to those with disability (including acoustics); location and reachability; and if the space will contribute to an inclusive sense of community. The space should be neither too small nor large and should contribute to a good atmosphere, offering good lighting, ventilation, accessibility, etc. It is recommended to choose a venue for the meeting that is already identified and well-known by the members of the community, as that encourages sociocultural diversity. The venue's owner or representative must not have any ideological conflict or reservations and be respectful to the target audiences. Further, when possible, successive meetings should be held in the same venue or at the headquarters of each participating group in turn.

The public library: a place of social and cultural mixing for dialogue (Bergen, Norway)

The public library of Bergen plays a key role in the inclusion of refugees and has a strong cooperation with the refugee reception centre. It is a hub for cultural activities, provides books in several languages, as well as bilingual versions of famous Norwegian publications. Everyone can access and use the library without the need for papers or identity documents. The library has a learning centre and some learning activities including a reading group, an IT club for immigrants - run by a Somali refugee - and a Norwegian language café, in cooperation with the Joint Immigrant Council in Hordaland. Especially over the past five years, the library has become a meeting place for dialogue and has increased the number of meeting opportunities between Norwegian residents and newcomers. For instance, the library organises events during which the refugees can present their countries through a historical and socio-cultural lens and explain the reasons that made them feel unsafe in their homeland. The last event of this kind was about Eritrea and the attendance of Eritreans and Norwegian was equal in proportions.

Erlangen (Germany) gathers people of all ages and backgrounds in an intercultural place

In the neighbourhood of Anger, the city of Erlangen has established a centre called the Villa, which is an intercultural meeting place for people of all ages and backgrounds. The intercultural centre offers an extensive programme: Sunday brunches, juggling and painting, all-female conversation groups, etc. For the youngest, the centre organises the Universal Children's Day where children have fun in the city playground. The Villa centre incrementally increases contact between the diversity of residents in the neighbourhoods. Moreover, its wide range of activities ensures that all generations, cultures and genders are equally involved in the integration process.

What to consider when promoting the meetings:

What to consider when defining the message:

- ☐ Gender neutral, simple and easy to understand language has been used.
- ☐ The text is big enough for everyone to read.
- ☐ The information is accessible and made available in ways that can be accessed by people who are illiterate or have lower literacy skills.
- ☐ Images and icons with text to help illustrate the contents have been used.
- ☐ Communication is available in all the main languages spoken within the major migrant communities and minorities.
- ☐ The images used represent different groups and communities.
- ☐ The message that we together can achieve what we cannot do individually has been shared.

How to define the channels of communication to convene a meeting?

- ☐ The organisers are aware of the variety of the channels and communication strategies available to reach different groups.
- ☐ The organisers have asked which media are most consumed or used by each target community.
- ☐ The pros and cons of each means of communication to best reach out the target audience have been assessed.

Reaching the target audience - Which factors to focus on?

- ☐ Have the organisers explained what it means to be part of a local project which has far-reaching repercussions?
- ☐ Do the communications convey a horizontal relationship characterised by proximity, equality and freedom of expression between those organising and those participating?
- ☐ Symbolism that strengthens the feeling of belonging, for example by devising a common slogan that will motivate everyone involved in the process, has been used.
- ☐ The cultural and environmental values of the city have been transmitted.
- ☐ Communication has emphasised what each person can contribute with, as well as what they will get out of the experience.

How to organise the meeting practically, considering timing and venue?

- ☐ Organisers have assessed how far in advance of the meeting the invitation should be sent.
- ☐ Organisers have assessed the frequency with which the message should be resent.
- ☐ Organisers have assessed if an informal reminder in addition to the official invitation should be sent and when.
- ☐ The representative or venue's owner is open-minded and does not have any prejudices against the public attending the meeting.
- ☐ The place and time of the meeting take into consideration factors such as the safety of women, accessibility for different groups, child-care arrangements, prayer spaces and safe spaces.
- ☐ The set-up in the room, seating arrangements, and how participants are welcomed, ensure that everyone feels at ease and able to actively participate.

3.3 Conducting a meeting

During the meeting the facilitator plays an important role, encouraging and steering the discussion.

Creating a climate of trust is essential for the success of the meeting and the growth of the group itself. Facilitators may wish to arrange the chairs in a circle so that everyone can see each other and feel on the same level. Providing food and drink and combining periods of work with moments of relaxation, during which the participants can socialise and get to know one another, helps to generate a positive atmosphere for group work.

Making the meeting amusing and enjoyable is important if the group is to work well and the participants are to feel motivated. Humour, activities and games that involve changes of rhythm can be used. Choosing the right venue is also important, even if it means seeking out unusual settings, such as a park, a square, a café, etc.

Keeping an eye on the time, from the start to the finish, sets a solid framework for the meeting. Facilitators may wish to start by waiting five or ten minutes for late arrivals, but no more, out of respect for those who arrived on time. It is important to keep to the time allotted to each subject, which will depend on the importance and complexity of the subject. Ending the meeting on time is essential to not discourage participants from attending future meetings. Although these details are important, the facilitator must be able to strike the right balance between sticking to the schedule and knowing when to set 'protocol' aside because the group is making interesting progress.

To help the participants get to know each other, it is useful to hand out name tags at the start of the meeting. The facilitator may wish to start by introducing themselves and, if not more than ten people are in a group, invite the participants to do the same. When introducing themselves, participants may be asked to say whether they are attending as private individuals or representatives of a particular entity and to raise their reasons for taking part in the meeting or process. If it is the first meeting, a special effort can be made to break the ice, such as pairing participants to interview each other with simple questions to get to know one another better.

To encourage equality of opportunity in the group, the participants should always be encouraged to participate at the outset of every meeting, no matter how long ago the process was initiated. To allow participation on an equal basis, the facilitator may wish to remind the participants about the work previously done and the agreements reached so far. It helps to define the context of the meeting for all participants to know what is going on and what to expect. This should also include a clear summary of the agenda. As each item is addressed, the participants should all be invited to share their thoughts in a manner that allows their ideas to be taken into account. The discussion must be orderly, clear and to the point, ensuring all participants have the chance to share their opinion, even those who are more reserved, and without one or more participants dominating. One way of doing this is to propose participants write the answers to questions on cards, which can then be read out or simply posted on the wall. At the end, the degree of satisfaction with the meeting should be assessed, any suggestions noted for future reference, with the place, date and time of the next meeting agreed.

Confirming rules with the group can be useful. Where necessary the norms and rules to be followed should be defined by the participants themselves based on a common agreement. For instance, each participant might speak in turn, or it can be decided to fix a time limit for each speaker. Working with a group of people attending the meeting voluntarily to discuss a particular subject of interest to them is not the same as working with a group of secondary school pupils, for example, or a group of workers who have been mandated to attend. Even so, there are certain values common to all meetings: mutual respect and equality between all those present.

Summarising of the achievements in a visible manner (using a flip chart, paper or coloured cards to note down all the relevant information) will help the participants see and understand the content of the meeting. It is also useful to have supplies to help visualise the subjects discussed, such as paper, pens, pencils, markers, coloured cards, kraft paper, adhesive putty, post-it notes, sticky tape and glue. At the end of each discussion, a brief summary should be made; at the end of the meeting, it is important to highlight the work done, the conclusions and the agreements reached.

Visualising the process as it unfolds in each meeting is important as it helps the group stay on track and not lose sight of its objectives. The minutes of previous meetings can be useful here, as well as any material produced by the group showing what has already been done. Moreover, it will give any newcomers a clearer picture of what has been achieved so far. The process can also be shown to people who are not present at the meeting, by photographing or recording the proceedings and posting

the result on the social networks, subsequently or even live, so that more people can participate and comment or simply see what is going on. It is recommended to distribute any minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.

Ensuring the participants feel that their contributions are valued and consequential. The group should feel ownership of the material and activities produced in the process, because they can see traces of their influence on it. Taking active part in the tasks involved in the group's activities makes people feel more valuable, bearing in mind that different people may prefer different tasks.

Lastly, **the facilitator must project a positive attitude** that motivates the participants and encourages discussion and decisions in the group. They must find a way to encourage communication, through discussion or activities involving each member of the group. The tone of voice, body language and way of moving needed to be taken into account by the facilitator. The facilitator must always remain objective in the meetings, neutral and democratic, not authoritarian or imposing. They must show interest in the results and in the quality of the results, but also in the process and the growth of the group itself, ensuring the participants feel they are the protagonists and responsible for the successes achieved. By using communication skills, the facilitator can constructively disagree and redirect the meeting if necessary, motivating the group to overcome any difficulties and achieve its aims.

Checklist for a successful meeting:

- ☐ The meeting is amusing and enjoyable for all participants.
- ☐ The time dedicated to the meeting is well-managed.
- ☐ Participants have been given an opportunity to get to know each other.
- ☐ All participants are treated equally.
- ☐ Common values and attitudes have been built within the group.
- ☐ A clear and visible presentation of discussions and decisions has been made.
- ☐ The conditions to make the process accessible for all participants, including those with disabilities or language barriers, has been created.
- ☐ All participants feel they are important to the success of the group.
- ☐ Motivation is maintained by positivity but also honesty and transparency.

3.4 Reaching consensus conclusions

Getting new social initiatives to work well requires open, horizontal social dialogue where different ideas can converge. To reach agreement, it is important to create the right atmosphere, assemble the relevant information and use language that keeps people's minds focused on dialogue and agreement. It is therefore important to clearly define and establish the concept of **social participation** (involving social action and interaction in the population around common goals); **social dialogue** (implying negotiation, consultation and exchange); **agreement** (entailing decision-making on issues freely raised by peaceful means); and last but not least, **consensus** (agreement reached by common consent of all the members of a group or between various groups). Decision by consensus is a decision-making process that not only seeks the agreement of the majority of the participants but also endeavours to resolve or attenuate the objections of the minority, finding the most satisfactory compromise. These concepts interrelate to help produce resident participation strategies and steer them towards joint consensual actions.

Three keys to success should be borne in mind: creation of an atmosphere conducive to the convergence of ideas; sounding out of different points of view; and consensus.

Creating an atmosphere conducive to the convergence of ideas is needed when preparing the venue, and can be achieved by cultivating certain values and attitudes throughout the process, including openness to differences, sharing ideas, knowing how to listen, being patient with people and with the process itself, etc. The first step to integrating the different visions, and making all participants feel they are part of the agreements reached, is to create safe and open spaces that facilitate participation and group cohesion.

The values that steer relations in the group and how to promote them can be defined by the participants themselves, so that the whole group is aware of them and jointly responsible for implementing them. Making decisions and reaching agreements, it is particularly important to insist on the importance of working horizontally, with no hierarchy. It is important to put people first, to be flexible and adapt to the circumstances, avoiding rigid structures. People need to have time for exchange of views and to develop a collective vision. This is the reason why the working method must always be flexible, looking

at the subjects under discussion, the aspects on which agreements have to be reached, and the questions and approaches needed to achieve that.

Different points of view should be sounded out and their origins (social, cultural, economic, political/institutional) need to be unpacked, so that this leads to a better understanding of the issues and enhances the group outlook.

When sounding out different points of view, special attention needs to be paid to how the ideas are assembled and summarised; looking for common ground and inviting people to consider different points of view helps to reach agreements. When gathering ideas, different methods can be used, including group work, brainstorming, work plans (explaining an idea, or two or three basic premises, and developing them into a working plan), mosaic (working on different ideas then bringing them together into one), working groups, exchange groups (a timed approach where different groups or tables address different issues and people interact for a short time, rapidly expressing general ideas that can subsequently be used to develop more concrete themes), interviews, free recordings, drafting ideas, etc. These approaches help to structure the exchange of views, keeping people focused on the essentials and giving each participant an opportunity to express his or her opinion.

Having done this, it is important to pool all the information collected, highlighting any shared aspects. Whatever technique was used, the pooling of information should be visual (the facilitator can for example use cards to keep track of the ideas suggested). It is suggested the facilitator takes notes on kraft paper or a flip chart to remember the conclusions and agreements reached. Another possibility is to write the suggestions on a board, which will help participants remember the discussions. This visualisation helps to make the most of the contributions and to understand how they fit into the general scheme of the process.

Consensus is an alternative to the traditional voting system and is an essential aspect of work that wants to be inclusive of minority views. Throughout the process, as subjects are discussed, a shared language and vision are developed. As that collective vision takes shape, it is important to keep mentioning the diverse views expressed, even if they differ from the overall vision. As the debate progresses, these different viewpoints may begin to converge, as the participants hear other views and opinions that may cause them to revise their initial thoughts on the matter. Through this exchange of views and ideas a consensus hopefully emerges that embodies all the divergences that shaped it.

The questions and contributions of the facilitator must invite the participants to see things from different points of view, to seek alternative solutions in the face of difficulties and to discover what they have in common. Asking participants about their aspirations generally makes it much easier to agree. When the participants make suggestions, it is important to validate their right to express different points of view, by asking questions to gain a clear understanding of what is behind the suggestion and how, in the opinion of the person concerned, it can help to achieve the group's objectives. Seeing the advantages of each suggestion will help to identify and highlight what they have in common, and ideally it should be the participants themselves who point out these common features.

Shared features need to be questioned, and it is important to ask how they can be improved by taking into account the more divergent ideas. Some may be compatible and easy to incorporate, as additional steps or actions, while other ideas may require rethinking the initial premise to overcome the obstacle. If one or more participants are not convinced by the solution, they should be asked what they would need to see added or changed in order for them to be satisfied with the result. When ideas are suggested that help opinions converge, they should be put to the whole group to decide if they improve the initial proposal.

It is also recommended that questions be asked that focus on what is practical across society and in the different cultures. It is important here to mark the short-term objectives and to ask whatever questions are necessary to determine exactly which steps are needed to achieve them. It helps to translate agreements into action-oriented results, which in turn boosts the group's motivation when it sees the fruit of its efforts and the progress made.

3.5 Dissemination

Dissemination is used to get the message (information, results, vision, etc.) across and to catch the target audience's attention. Hence, when disseminating the information after the meeting, the organisers should consider not only the type of audience they wish to reach but also which means of communication are most likely to reach them.

Internal communication will help get the information across to those who are already involved (the members of an association, the people who usually attend meetings, or entities and/or people who form part of a network), while channels of **external communication** serve to reach, inform, interest and involve people who are not yet participating in an initiative, either because they do not know about it or because they believe they are not interested. In such cases the communication must be more elaborate.

It is important to remember to share information and communicate with all people who will be impacted by the outcomes of this initiative (neighbourhood, city, users of a particular facility, etc.). This must be done throughout the process, before it is launched, during and after. Using mass media and social media will make this endeavour easier and ensure wider reach than bureaucratic channels alone. Other means and considerations such as those already mentioned in section 3.2 shall be taken into account.

Checklist for your publicity and dissemination plan:

- ☐ Leaders and/or social workers from different areas have been involved, with a view to pass on information of interest to their networks and contact groups.
- ☐ External observers have been invited to learn about the experience for the benefit of other contexts and environments.
- ☐ Symbolic, eye-catching materials have been produced and sent out with a clear, simple and motivating message.
- ☐ The shared messages shed light on the hard work done – objectives, process and results – and communicate that such constructive and peaceful work is possible across lines of cultural, ethnic and other difference.
- ☐ A variety of communication tools have been used and the message has been adapted to suit each of them, as well as for each target audience.

4. PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

It may be difficult to keep the participants actively interested in the process over time as they often hope to achieve immediate results and grow weary when those expectations are not met. To mobilise and work together for a short time to solve a specific problem may therefore be easier, and a good place to begin. Yet working on sustainability is one of the most important aspects of a participatory process, as sustainability means duration in time and perseverance in commitment to larger improvements.

Four aspects should be taken into account while fostering sustainability in a participatory process: **objectives**; **values and attitudes**; **training and information exchange**, and **evaluation of the process.**

Shared **objectives** keep the actions on track.

Shared **values and attitudes** are often the place to find common ground. It is essential not to personalise things and instead focus on a common good: the successes achieved together, not those of one individual. Throughout the process, personal values (reflection, critical thinking, responsibility, and perseverance), and social values (freedom, respect, equality, etc.) should therefore be constantly emphasised.

Training and information exchange need to be promoted throughout the process. The training should be tailored to the needs of the group and address various legal and scientific subjects related to the issue the group is working on, as well as personal development needs. The results should be assessed. If possible, the training should be organised by the members of the group themselves, with financial support. It can be organised on an ad hoc basis, based on a specific theme of immediate interest, or on a more continuous basis when it comes to changing or strengthening attitudes.

When ensuring the sustainability of the participatory process it is also important to focus on its **evaluation**. This can be a formal, conscious and structured action, or it can be a part of the process itself, done on a daily basis. Both approaches are valid, and even complementary, as long as there are milestones or moments when a more thorough evaluation is carried out by the group (and by those with a more independent perspective from outside the group).

The evaluation should include participatory feedback. After each meeting or activity, the following questions can be asked: How did it go? What could be improved for next time? What lessons have we learned?

How to sustain commitment to the process?

How to organise the process in order to achieve its sustainability?

- ☐ Periodic meetings, with a date, an agenda and a clear procedure to follow, are organised.
- ☐ The tasks to be performed are defined and shared between the members of the process.
- ☐ Any steering group changes over time.
- ☐ The networking with other groups is based on mutual interests and incentives.
- ☐ The networking creates permanent ties that strengthen the group.

How to plan and execute actions to ensure a sustainable participatory process?

- ☐ The easiest tasks are placed at the start of the meeting and process, and the question of available resources is dealt with openly and honestly.
- ☐ The actions taken are reviewed and contributions for the next move are gathered.
- ☐ The work is planned in keeping with shared needs and feelings.
- ☐ Successes achieved are celebrated.
- ☐ The evaluation of the participatory process engages residents to provide feedback about what's working for them.

How to communicate and disseminate information to make the participatory process sustainable?

- ☐ Effort is continuously made to spark the interest of new people outside the starting or core group and to involve them in the process.
- ☐ News about the actions taken and successful results achieved are shared via different means of communication, including where possible via mass and social media.
- ☐ Information networks for locals have been set up through partners trusted by those locals, such as social collectives, NGOs, professional or labour groups, religious communities, etc.

5. CONCLUSION

Creating participatory processes that follow the Appreciative Inquiry approach gradually improves mutual knowledge and relations among a city's residents with diverse backgrounds. This process in turn strengthens coexistence and intercultural dialogue, uniting people through the co-creation of new actions, policies and societies, where discrimination and stereotypes are challenged, making the city a welcoming place for everyone to live.

To build a participatory process, a well-planned strategy needs to be elaborated: it is essential to move from individual self-interests to a sense of the collective good, from a project-based to a process-focused point of view, and from specific short-term anxieties to longer-term dreams.

The participatory process requires the elaboration of a joint action plan where the residents, social agents and local administration participate in the design of shared objectives and strategies with a view to fulfilling them in a cooperative way. The Appreciative Inquiry approach is one highly effective means of creating a relational space for a collaborative construction of reality and creates conditions in which people can define, concretise and implement the positive aims they set for themselves. It is essential to build the joint action plan with a positive mindset, focusing on the strengths and achievements of the city in the past and the strengths and achievements that the participatory process can therefore produce in the future.

It is essential to pay attention to the organisational aspects of the process and to acknowledge that there are multiple means of communication by which to reach the vast majority of the diverse population of the city. Sustainability must be a cornerstone of the participatory process. That is the reason why the process should be constantly evaluated, revised, and improved, keeping the momentum of residents' involvement, despite all the other demands on their time and energy.

Trouble-shooting: what to do when participants clash?

The outcomes of the process will be more meaningful and richer if the group involved is diverse and this diversity is managed properly. Frictions of course will occur, and part of the management process is to ensure these do not escalate into conflicts. It is about approaching these conflicts and complexities as they appear rather than hiding or ignoring them until they grow into much more significant conflicts. It is advised that facilitators are trained on intercultural competence as this will allow them to interact and communicate in a more inclusive way and to better anticipate, understand and manage potential conflicts and divergences. Intercultural mediation - a process whereby an interculturally competent third person or institution helps anticipating, preventing or settling intercultural conflicts by promoting a respectful and empathic discussion about differences, using culturally specific narratives and building trust – may be required.

During any meeting, it is important to focus on what people share and what brings them together, hence moving the focus away from differences towards commonalities, without excluding diversity. Language focusing on "majority" and "minorities", or on cultural difference as a factor of social ills or conflict, should be avoided.

In case of friction between participants during a meeting and in order to avoid escalation, facilitators may try to lower the tension by temporarily redirecting the conversation towards more neutral topics. Humour can be useful, but it must be used well as it otherwise can be counterproductive. Depending on the situation, it may also be useful to ask people to visualise the negative consequences that the position they are defending can have in practice and in the life of certain people. This might help their awareness of the complexities and consequences that their beliefs or proposals may have on specific individuals, so that they try to correct or adjust some aspects of their argument. As a last resort, bringing in expert intercultural mediation services might be the best way to go forward.

Useful resources :

Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence
Policy brief on inclusive communication

6. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LFA Matrix for participatory group planning

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) can be applied when organising participatory group planning. The LFA encourages collaboration between the members of the group from the outset, helps avoid adversary relationships, and functions to build a clear vision of the process and the identified goals.

The LFA organises information so that the important questions can be asked and weaknesses identified, and allows the participants involved in the process to make decisions based on their increased insight and knowledge.

Stakeholder analysis
This stage helps identify the relevant stakeholders (individuals, group of people, institutions, or organisations). Their likely views as well as their potential support for the process can then be assessed. The stakeholder analysis will help identify the causes of problems and potential solutions throughout the other stages of the planning by means of acknowledging interests, motivation and capacity (knowledge, skills, resources) of the different stakeholders.
Problem tree
At this stage, each participant offers ideas concerning the problems detected with regard to the issue to be addressed. Cause and effect relationships are then established, making it possible to analyse the situation and to make an initial general diagnosis of the problem. The roots of the problem tree show the primary causes, the main issue is visualised in the trunk and the effects of the causes found in the roots of the tree are in the branches. This stage requires extensive dialogue, open questions, and a search for consensus as a particular concept or situation is not always interpreted in the same way. This stage is therefore essential to achieve consensus, cohesion and determination within the group itself.
Objective tree
This stage aims to transform the problems identified into objectives, creating a new view of the situation originally identified, this time casting it in a more positive light. The cause-and-effect relationships are replaced by means-to-achieve-goal relationships. The roots (causes) of the objective tree can be seen as means of achieving the goals, which can be found in the branches. At this stage, collective work on the identification of common objectives and the transformation of the effects into goals will foster the consolidation of the group or collective.
Analysis of alternatives
An analysis of the branches or themes which grow out of the objective tree, is crucial. At this stage, it is necessary to establish criteria for the different possible strategies to be used and determine which challenges should be given priority.
Planning matrix
Devising the planning matrix is the final outcome of the LFA planning process. It provides a clear and concise summary and produces a single schematic showing the general goal to which the group wants to contribute, the specific objectives the group hopes to achieve, the results needed to achieve each specific objective, and the activities that have to be carried out to accomplish those results.

APPENDIX II: Excerpt from the Manual to design a course on intercultural competence, chapter on "Promoting active citizenship and participation"

Definition

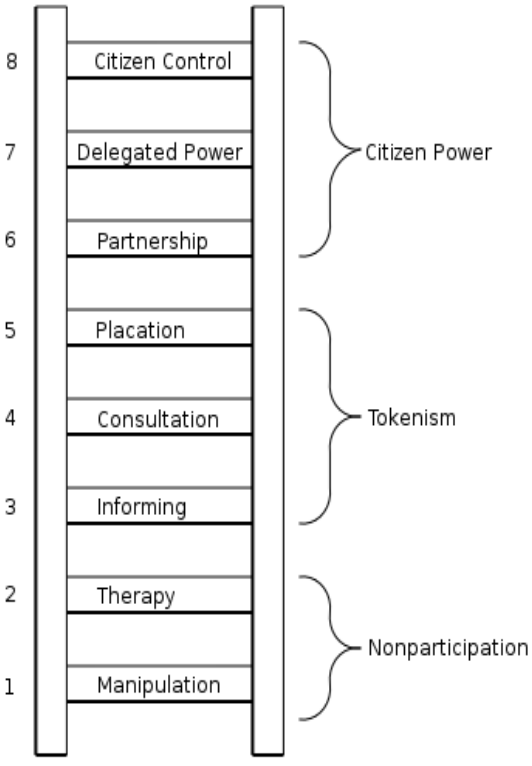
Active citizenship and participation occur when stakeholders (all individuals, including foreign residents where appropriate) have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support to freely express their opinions and influence decision-making on matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural participation requires an equal and respectful basis, in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain stakeholders' active participation.

Longer context

The intercultural model places great importance on promoting spaces and opportunities for meaningful intercultural interaction, participation and intercultural dialogue.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration which reaffirms that *meaningful economic, social, cultural and, where appropriate, political participation by all members of society, including migrants and persons with a migrant background, should be encouraged and supported, with special efforts made to empower marginalised, socially excluded and vulnerable people*[8].

Participation is understood not only as the exercise of the right to vote, but also as actions of advocacy, deliberation, co-production and monitoring of policies by the citizenry. The Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level indeed specifies that voting rights alone do not guarantee active citizenship and participation for foreign residents, and that alternative forms of participation to enable them to at least contribute to local level policies should be explored.



Participation implies power-sharing. It means involving people of diverse origins and characteristics in the decision-making in institutions, be they political, educational, social, economic or cultural. As Sherry Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (image on the left) indicates, participatory policies allow for varying degrees of participation: from mere information or even manipulation, to a real ceding of power to residents. The degree of participation that is allowed is not only decisive for the relevance of a participatory process, but also for its potential to foster meaningful intercultural interaction within the citizenry; if participants can only answer 'yes' or 'no' in a questionnaire, there is no room for sharing arguments and perspectives, getting to know the 'other' and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. However, less intensive participatory processes such as consultations can also be useful to gradually start engaging and empowering groups that may not think public policy decision-making is a space for them. While digital technology's newer forms of consultation and participation (e.g., social networks, online community forums, petitioning and crowdsourcing) certainly expand the quantity of participation, they sometimes risk reducing the quality of civic engagement. The key point is that any level of participation should be consequential; if people do not feel that their contribution has the potential to really influence the process then they will become demotivated and cynical about participation.

[8] See paragraph 32 of the Appendix to CM/Rec(2022)10.

From a human rights perspective, there is a need to pro-actively facilitate the participation of individuals or groups who have been traditionally excluded or whose voices do not have sufficient space in the public sphere. Intercultural participation means that all stakeholders have the right to participate, even if they decide not to exercise this right. Consequently, being a migrant or belonging to a minority should not in itself imply any barrier to participation, and the whole process must be non-discriminatory.

Participation should not be limited to one part of the policy cycle (such as policy formulation) but should ideally be applied throughout the different phases of policy development, implementation and evaluation. Moreover, a truly intercultural society works to apply intercultural participation in all the areas of public intervention, from urban planning to culture, education to policing.

The Council of Europe has long been concerned with promoting participation as an element of building higher quality democracy. Addressing the state level, the Committee of Ministers adopted a set of Guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making pointing out that collaboration in a decision-making process reinforces the strength of the institution and leads to a better quality of decision. In 2018, they adopted a far-reaching Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 to member states on the participation of citizens in local public life which includes principles of local democratic participation policy (Appendix A) as well as steps and measures to encourage and reinforce the participation of citizens in local public life (Appendix B). The Recommendation explicitly includes foreign residents within the definition of citizen, where this is appropriate.

Other international bodies have likewise expressed the importance of full, diverse and meaningful participation at the local level – see, for example, The European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City and the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City of United Cities and Local Governments with more than 400 signatory cities. In Article 4 of the Charter, cities commit to adopt active policies to support the population in vulnerable situations, guaranteeing each person the right to citizenship and participation. Through Article 8, on the right to political participation, the Charter recognises that cities must promote the extension of the right to vote and to stand for election at the municipal level to all non-national citizens of legal age after a period of two years of residence in the city.

The New Urban Agenda of the United Nations Habitat III Programme calls on cities to encourage participation, generate a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants, as well as to create public spaces that contribute to improving political participation. In line with the intercultural model, the agenda commits to the promotion of respect for diversity and equality as key elements of the humanisation of cities as well as the establishment of institutional, political, legal and financial mechanisms to broaden inclusive platforms for meaningful participation in decision-making, planning and universal monitoring processes.

Why we need active citizenship and participation?

Commitment to an intercultural mode of participation is necessary to ensure that everyone has the knowledge, confidence and opportunity to participate. Consider the following arguments when making the case for an inclusive and diverse participation:

- Representativeness: Participation (from elections to less formalised processes) is a mechanism to guarantee representation. However, if certain groups are systematically under-represented, so-called participation can become an additional instrument of exclusion and a threat to democracy.

- Accommodating diversity: The concept of 'superdiversity'[9] teaches us that we should no longer think about how to 'integrate' migrants, but rather how to organise participation in a society to reflect its diversity. Socio-cultural diversity goes well beyond migration (elderly people, religious minorities, people with disabilities, people belonging to a minority ethnic group, people with non-normative sexual orientations, etc).

- Improving effectiveness: Considering the needs of the population will make public services more effective and cost efficient. When organising a participatory process, if the results do not consider the needs of an important part of the population, resources would be allocated to partial solutions. By increasing the support behind public policies, their credibility and sustainability increase as well.

[9] Vertovec, S. (2007), 'Super-Diversity and Its Implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024-1054.

- Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction: A participatory process that manages to involve all types of people in problem identification and decision-making will not only produce more inclusive results, creating spaces and services for all, but will also encourage meaningful intercultural interaction and show people they can work together in meaningful, constructive ways. An ideal participatory process resembles a deliberative process – that is, a thought-provoking dialogue about preferences, values, and interests in a non-coercive way between different groups and individuals[10]. Within a deliberative model, a decision is made based on the best arguments rather than power, and the exchange of arguments also leads to a better understanding of the other's perspective. Furthermore, this effect is reinforced by the 'contact hypothesis', according to which interaction between people from different backgrounds helps to combat stereotypes and foster a common identity, as long as the participants are on equal footing and are solving a common problem[11].

- Empowerment: Participatory processes are a laboratory of democracy where we learn to express opinions and ideas, accept other people's opinions, and reach compromises, adhering to communicative and democratic 'rules of the game'. They can become a tool for the empowerment of people who are under-represented or without any direct political spokesperson in institutions.

- Building trust: Participation can establish or strengthen the links between the public administration and different groups that feel neither represented nor heard, building bonds of trust and mutual understanding that are then useful in future, especially during crises.

Partnering with other levels of government: the role of regional and local authorities in fostering active citizenship and participation

The objective of policies promoting active citizenship and participation should be that of creating societies where a diverse range of people have the rights, skills, knowledge, confidence and opportunities to participate, but also where public authorities are open and welcoming of diverse participation. It is the duty of governments at all levels to provide the means needed to make channels open, transparent and accessible, in order to favour participation and maximise the diversity of participants.

However, when national policies do not, or cannot, offer effective tools to address civic inclusion of foreign citizens, there is much that a regional or local authority can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. Most cities have established consultative bodies of foreign residents where these councils or committees have an advisory role. Practice shows that such committees are impactful when those involved believe the process will actually affect their everyday lives, and when they can take the initiative to actively express opinions, rather than waiting to be consulted on pre-determined issues. Ideally, an appropriate budget as well as logistical support should be provided by the relevant public authority.

When it comes to newcomers, nationality and voting rights clearly do not guarantee their participation in political life. Further, not all have the same opportunity or wish to obtain the nationality of their country of residence. Therefore, states and governments at all levels need to test alternative and innovative forms of participation that can enable non-citizens to be involved in shaping their communities, such as deliberative forums, roundtables for co-creation, co-implementation and co-evaluation of local policies, and participatory budgeting, arts and education. Such participation by individuals, and via non-governmental organisations, is essential to match the complexity of superdiversity.

Crucial questions include how an authority can plan for more comprehensive and meaningful participation? And what does it take to increase foreign citizens' political and social participation? One answer is further exploring the range of alternative participatory mechanisms – for instance, by establishing standards on the representation of people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds (i.e. ruling bodies of trade unions, school boards, joint ventures with the private sector and non-governmental sector, etc.) or by involving people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in the participation spaces (sectoral or thematic councils, district and neighbourhood districts, citizens' juries, etc.). Moreover, authorities can facilitate the intercultural model in more informal spaces for participation, particularly local facilities such as civic or neighbourhood centres that are meeting points

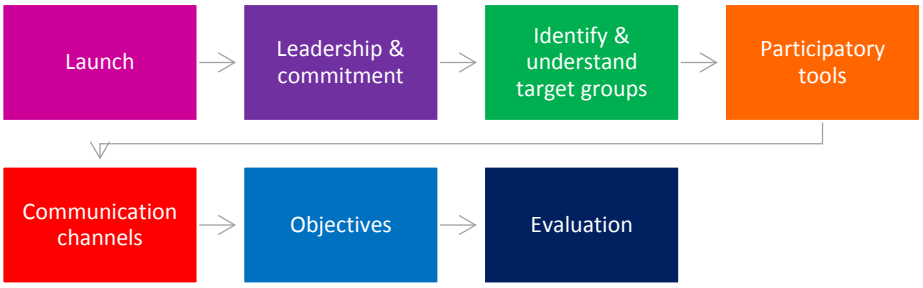
[10] Dryzek, J. S. (2000), *Deliberative democracy and beyond: Liberals, critics, contestations* (Oxford University Press).
[11] Gaertner, S. et al. (2016), 'Categorization, Identity and intergroup relations' in Todd D. Nelson (ed.) *Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination*, 433-454.

and places for dialogue between residents. To do this, cities must identify and work with leading figures from different groups.

One of the challenges that authorities encounter is the difficulty of monitoring the participation of residents with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in the decision-making process. The collection of data is costly and not always allowed by legislation. Other barriers relate to the institution itself: for example, it is essential to build the capacity for intercultural participation and co-creation not only in the departments that work with diversity or participation issues, but within the whole public staff, including its highest decision-makers.

Designing an intercultural participatory process

Key elements that need to be taken into account when designing a participatory process from an intercultural perspective include:



Launch: All policy innovation needs an internal or external motivation in the form of a challenge or need that arises or is identified by the population, organisations or the authority itself. Public authorities must be encouraged to listen to and understand new challenges raised by the general population.

- Does the authority collect and analyse data that enables it to identify emerging challenges faced by the public in a participatory way?
- Does the authority have links with organisations representing migrants, minorities, religious groups, etc. in order to identify needs or challenges as soon as they arise?
- Is local civil society able to identify and communicate its participation challenges?
- Does the authority regularly conduct 'participatory assessments' of its processes?

Leadership and commitment: These are important in linking the momentum of a participation process with the design and implementation of the process. This commitment has to be reflected in the allocation of resources and the implementation of concrete measures.

- Is there a formal commitment from the authority to promote greater participation?
- Does the authority mainstream the gender perspective?
- Is there recognition that people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds have a right to participate, in some cases regardless of whether they are citizens or permanent residents?
- Have politicians expressed willingness to make a specific effort to ensure that everyone can participate?
- Have resources (staff, budget) been identified to increase participation in an inclusive manner?
- Has there been a formal commitment to back feedback with full transparency?

Identify and understand target groups: To encourage the participation of particular groups, we must first gather information about the circumstances and analyse the obstacles (linguistic, informational, cultural, economic, etc.) that hinder participation. Authorities need a proactive attitude, seeking contact with each specific group through facilitators or representatives and going to the neighbourhoods or specific places where the target groups meet, for example.

Although very challenging to carry out, quantification of diversification can be useful as an indicator of success; however, the lack of quantifiable data is no excuse for failing to seek gender balance and more balanced representation of profiles, inclusive of those who are affected but not normally involved in the processes. A concern expressed by many authorities is avoiding a situation where a few voices from a particular group fail to represent the whole group. That is why an approach based on intersectionality and target diversity should be followed even within each identity group. Instead of searching for 'representatives' of minority communities when in reality these communities are very diverse, it is more useful to go for wide participation and consider the diversity of views that may be put forward than to look for a unified response. Authorities should ask themselves:

- Have we identified who does not usually participate and should?
- Why do they not participate? What evidence do we have of this?
- What sources of information exist about those who do not participate?
- Where and how can initial contact be made in a positive way?
- Are there already established links with representatives of these groups and do these links help or hinder intersectional diversity?

Objectives: Defining objectives is a crucial step in shaping the commitment to participation. It is about defining the interest and relevance (but also the limits) of a participatory process in a specific, achievable, measurable, relevant, and time-bound (that is, 'SMART') way.

Large-scale and representative participation cannot be expected to succeed unless there is something relevant to those invited at stake. Deciding on interventions in the immediate space that affect the living environment of residents, such as neighbourhood services or schools, are examples of objectives where relevance is easily understood.

The power transferred to the public may be a good indicator of the relevance of a participatory process, but not always. If one objective is to achieve inclusive and diverse participation, or to create spaces for meaningful intercultural interaction, it may be necessary to lower expectations about the intensity of participation because not everyone has the same resources to get involved. What is important is that objectives are clearly and transparently defined. In addition, it is important that the decision-making spaces (where the objectives of participation are defined) are also representative of diversity.

- Is the purpose of the participatory process clearly defined?
- Are the objectives relevant to the whole population or at least relevant to the target groups?
- Is there a mechanism for individuals to define their own objectives or question the official objective?
- Is significant decision-making power transferred to make participation worthwhile?
- Has expectation management been considered?

Communication channels: The main idea is to use several channels simultaneously to reach a more diverse population. Incorporating media from communities of diverse origins and backgrounds, and communicating in minority languages, can be crucial. Face-to-face communication is a conventional but often successful 'channel'. Being present in places related to the objective of the participatory process (at the school exit when trying to reach parents; in public transport when planning its improvement, etc.) can be helpful for certain methodologies. Finally, the level of transparency and the quality of communication throughout the process will significantly impact people's willingness to contribute.

- Are the objectives and their relevance communicated clearly and briefly, in ordinary words that are not too abstract?
- Has the message been adapted to different audiences?
- Are diverse channels of communication beings utilised?
- Are there any non-traditional methods of outreach by which to engage people?
- Are other languages needed to reach all the people you want to involve?

Participatory tools: It is important to find an open, accessible, and unintimidating design for the process, and to plan the support (including linguistic) offered to different profiles of people. For all levels of participation, it is important to consider where and when the process will take place. It is also important to plan realistically for different levels of willingness to engage, and to provide opportunities for those who wish to participate but who do not dare to enter public discussions.

The design of participation processes makes us aware of the fact that we are confronted with conflicting objectives: to enable people to make complex and meaningful decisions, and, at the same time, to involve as many people as possible. It is not a question of gathering the diversity of the citizenry just for the sake of it, but to seek out the variety of voices and perspectives that exist in the territory and that need to be heard. Designing a participation process in such a way as to achieve a good balance between these two objectives is a significant challenge. Officials assuming roles as facilitators rather than coordinators can often be helpful in creating a basis of greater equality and helping participants feel that they own the process.

The logistics also need to be considered with intercultural sensitivity. This may mean holding events at times which are convenient for the participants rather than the officials, the choice of a venue in the

community or in a public authority building, the availability of culturally appropriate refreshments and places/times for prayer, and recognition of specific needs such as free childcare arrangements.

- Do the tools, spaces and methods of participation reflect, suit, and welcome all?
- Are the venues chosen for participatory processes inviting?
- Are there welcoming processes with information and training for new participants?
- Does the team of people who are facilitating the participatory process include people whose profile corresponds to those we want to attract to participate?
- Are there barriers (language, location, time, transport, childcare, food, incentives, power dynamics, etc.) that need to be considered throughout the process?
- Are the support systems related to the process advertised and accessible to all, or are they over-complicated to access?
- Are there multiple ways to contribute with feedback and opinions?
- Are there different levels of involvement on offer?
- Is a real deliberative process and exchange of positions going to be possible?

Evaluation: Evaluation and feedback processes should be as inclusive as the participation in decision-making itself. For this purpose, diverse channels of communication and the network of actors that has been created during the process have to be re-utilised. At the same time, it is the beginning of a new cycle of participation, as conclusions are drawn about the extent to which participation objectives have been met, what has worked and what has not, and how participation can be improved in future.

- To what extent have the objectives of the participatory process been achieved?
- To what extent have the objectives regarding diversity of participation been achieved?
- What conclusions can we draw from the strengths and weaknesses of the participatory process, to improve it next time?
- Have events and communication channels been planned to feed back the results of the participatory process and ensure that they reach everyone?

Finally, in The Intercultural City Step by Step a number of principles that guide effective approaches are offered to the public authorities at the local level. The following recommendations from the manual may be useful for all levels of government:

- Recognition that there may, in minority communities, be a perceived history of ineffective consultation and scepticism about the changes that can result from such consultation. Often this is best confronted frankly at the outset.
- Results should include not only what has been agreed but also where there is disagreement, or areas that require further work to achieve resolution.

The same guide also emphasises that participatory processes are, by their nature, uncertain. Organisers, and those who promise implementation, need to be prepared for this.

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

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

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

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