



INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Policy Brief

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is Inclusive Communication?

“HANDLE THEM CAREFULLY, FOR WORDS HAVE MORE POWER THAN ATOM BOMBS”

PEARL STRACHEN HURD

Communication is everywhere. Wherever we go we receive information we have not intentionally sought - outdoors, on posters, on our phones and computers, in newsletters, newspapers, magazines, though TV, podcasts, and social media but to name a few. This information is then stored in our brains, even if we were not aware of the information in the first place. Therefore, as communicators, we must pay particular attention to what, when and how we communicate.

Communication is also highlighted in the [ICC INDEX](#) as one avenue to assist cities to develop effective intercultural strategies. All aspects of a municipality’s work should be viewed through an intercultural lens to achieve the goal of transforming the city into a fully inclusive place. This includes communication in words and images, where the information is shared and how. For it is often the wider context of the message and what lies underneath, that impacts how the message is understood and if the communication is truly inclusive.

Inclusive communication is simply reflecting on the way we build our communication (**HOW**), how far the communication reaches (**WHERE/WHEN**), what messages (besides the one we intend) the communication can bring forward (**WHAT**) and who are the direct and indirect targets of the communication (**WHO**).

Through reflecting on these aspects of your communication and crossing these insights with the city’s intercultural strategy, your city’s communication can gain an intercultural lens and a different intentionality. By enforcing these principles, it is possible to use the communication to promote peace, positive interaction, and intercultural awareness.

“THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RIGHT WORD AND THE ALMOST RIGHT WORD IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIGHTNING AND A LIGHTNING BUG”

MARK TWAIN

Our reflection therefore starts by asking ourselves several questions:

- **How** – Where did the news or message come from? Who decided what is to be communicated? How was the decision made to publish? What were the criteria?
- **Where/when** – Where is the message shared? How is the communication displayed? When was it displayed?
- **What** – What are the main messages? And the underlying messages? What kind of different interpretations can the communication allow?
- **Who** – For whom is the communication designed? Who does it portray? How are they portrayed?

With this short manual we aim to contribute to the important work within your city, of everyone responsible for creating and distributing any kind of communication support. We hope to be able to help you:

- Understand what is meant by inclusive communication
- Reflect on the importance and advantages of adopting an inclusive communication
- Gain awareness of strategies and ideas you can implement daily

1.2 Why do we need inclusive communication?

The aim of communication in the intercultural city is to inform on the actions of the city. By using inclusive communication, cities can make their communication more readable, engaging, and accessible to all residents. This way cities can ensure equal access to information, an increased feeling of belonging and more access to opportunities for the diverse residents across the city.

Stereotypes are formed by our brains to categorize reality, allowing us to save energy by dealing with the complex world in a simplified way. Prejudice on the other hand, usually indicates the presence of a feeling in the face of something. Prejudice is an attitude that involves a value judgment in relation to individuals or groups. There is a relationship between prejudice and stereotypes: stereotypes represent beliefs and are based in our cognition, while prejudice adds the affective component and is based on a feeling. By affective component we mean aspects such as fear, contempt, hatred, or admiration. Prejudice, hence, takes the stereotype and issues a decision on whether something is "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", "safe" or "dangerous". It is important to remember that these feelings are often not rational, but learned from biased stories we hear, brief experiences, or simply lack of information.

Prejudice and stereotypes, therefore, are often creations of little reflection and can lead to situations of discrimination. Discrimination is made of prejudice that can be carried out unconsciously and unintentionally and build on our prejudices and stereotypes. In most cases we do not want to discriminate on purpose, and this does not make us "bad" persons. To tackle discrimination, we must act along the discrimination chain: offer information to feed people's cognition (where stereotypes live) with disruptive data and promote emotional connection (and thus influence prejudice) with moving stories that they can relate to.

The way we communicate can naturally have a big impact on the prejudice and stereotypes among residents. Communication can either help reinforce these negative images or help create new and more realistic ones about people living in the city, thus favoring inclusive behaviours among the population. Further, residents who see themselves portrayed in the communication are more likely to engage actively with the city, participate in local initiatives, support associations, express their voice in local assemblies and vote.

When a city is communicating, given its role and responsibilities, it has the power to influence these perceptions of reality. Therefore, it should always avoid any type of bias or judgment in all its communication. At the same time, not all groups and communities have the same power, opportunities and even language knowledge to express their views and perspectives, or even to share their ideas about the city. When this happens, messages keep reflecting the majority's ways of thinking and the loop of false consensus can be tricky.

*"I DO NOT AGREE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY, BUT I WILL DEFEND TO
DEATH YOUR RIGHT TO SAY IT!"*

EVELYN BEATRICE HALL

An important aspect consider, is that your communication needs to be, first and always, honest. Communicate on what the city is doing and your values without overemphasizing it, even if the city is still taking its first steps on building an overall intercultural strategy. If the city's actions do not correspond to the messages communicated, they will lose credibility over time.

To turn our communication more inclusive we should, among other things:

- ensure access for everyone
- ensure representativity of all the city's communities
- promote the inclusive aspects of every project and activity



Description: The image shows several small children in a row, looking into the camera. A diverse group, one is covering her face while another covers her smile and two are smiling playfully.

“WORDS, ONCE THEY ARE PRINTED, HAVE A LIFE OF THEIR OWN”

CAROL BURNETT

1.3 When do we need inclusive communication?

The short answer is always. Inclusive communication is not only for situations when the city is reporting on intercultural events, practices, or policies. Intercultural cities should consider all communication as an opportunity to reinforce the intercultural message and the municipality's commitment towards the inclusion of all groups and communities.

When communicating about other projects and initiatives, this underlying message can, and should, always be present. This way, the city can effectively share the message of inclusivity throughout its communication, highlighting they are a city where everyone can belong. Further, inclusive communication is all about reaching all audiences, and through this the full range of residents. It gives the city an opportunity to underline the diversity and interaction as well as to push for more by highlighting who the project is for and how all residents can participate.

Another important aspect is to be attentive to the momentum:

- **Are there any hot topics at the moment (locally, nationally and internationally) that you might need to be aware of?**
For example the “Me Too” or “Black Lives Matter” movements created important social buzz and debate that communicators need to be attentive to in order to show support (and thus use the chance to show what the city is doing in respect) and also be careful not to add up to the arguments against these movements. These moments are key, and an intercultural city should not stay out of the debate but rather take special care of the communication to ensure the message is not misinterpreted. Inclusive communication becomes more important than ever.
- **Are there things happening in the city that can be sensitive?**
For example, does a new social neighbourhood under construction not have general support among the population or is the new garbage disposal system disruptive? These moments demand several actions from different departments, including hearing all different opinions and perspectives on the issue, and promoting active citizen participation. However, how the city communicates about these projects is crucial to ensure that it reaches everyone and tackles the sensitive topics in a clear and comprehensive way. The city can for example show people who changed their minds after debating and getting more information.

**2 How can we
ensure inclusive
communication?**

2.1 Accessibility

2.1.1 Introduction

We must ensure accessibility. **Accessibility** means every person has access to all the means, resources, or information needed in their daily lives, to be able to act independently. Simply put, your communication is accessible when everyone **has access to and understand the content** without needing the help of others.

The words and images used, the placement of our communication and the way we make it available for everyone are some of the most important of inclusive communication.

To start thinking about this issue, try to answer the following questions:

- Is your communication (online, multimedia and printed) accessible for persons who cannot see?
- And for persons who cannot hear?
- And can persons using wheelchairs or children reach it?
- How about persons who cannot read or write?
- How about for persons with lower education levels or persons who do not speak your language as a first language, can they understand what you mean?
- Is the communication placed in all parts of the city, to reach all groups?

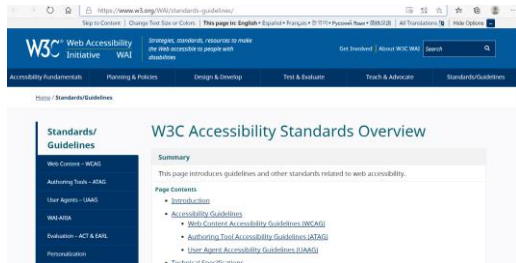
As an example, one city informed of the temporary displacement of the bus stop only through a written sign on the former stop. Consequently, a person with a seeing disability stood in the wrong place for more than an hour, waiting for the bus to arrive until a stranger could inform them of the new stop. Persons who cannot see, cannot read written signs unless they have BRAILLE translation. In an explanation such as this, it seems obvious, but many times we might not take the time to think about these details in our communication, and how they can be important for someone's day.

2.1.2 Advice:

- Use simple language. The simpler the language and message, the more it will come across and reach a larger audience.
- Use gender neutral language: avoid using male gender to describe a group of people, use "persons" or other words that do not change due to gender.
- Use plenty of images and icons in your communication. This will illustrate the messaging and assist with reaching those who do not read or write or do not speak the local language.
- Publish communication materials in different languages: look into which languages are the most spoken in your city and/or those that can be spoken by fewer but are important for target communities you wish to reach.
- Avoid using only flash videos or images to convey the message. This makes it impossible for persons without sight to grasp the message. Combine accessible text programs (word, pdf) with images and icons using audio-description for all pictures and videos.
- Add subtitles and sign language interpreters for videos and events.
- Test your communication material with target groups from the community. Do not forget that one person does not represent everyone from a community: culture, knowledge of the language, educational or socioeconomic background are only some of the factors which may affect how we understand the message. This can also help understand the best places to communicate with different groups.
- Research where to place the printed information and ask for advice from representatives from different groups and communities.

- Reflect where you will post online information: is it accessible? Does it reach all communities or just the majority groups?
- Ensure appropriate font size is used.
- Ensure images display the range of diversity of your city.

2.1.3 Resources



For accessible information online, you can for example, use the W3C Accessibility Search Overview.

This tool will allow you to assess the accessibility of your digital communication and learn how to make it available for everyone.

Description: The image shows the landing page of the W3C website.

There are many tools which are created to help assess the accessibility of the communication materials and some tools also have free features which can be added to the city's website to improve accessibility. Additionally, for example this [checklist](#) can help you improve the accessibility of your videos and will help you make better captions and subtitles. Further, the [Color ADD system](#) from Portugal, allows you to communicate about colours to colour blind persons. **Colours** are important in communication and it is known that individuals access information 70 per cent faster when colours are used in the communication. Finally, when adding subtitles to your videos, make sure they are accessible for persons who cannot hear, this means considering several questions, including the length and position of the sentences.

Sometimes, a partnership with a local university or NGO can be of use, not only to look into the best practices for effective communication with all your residents, but also to help with the audio description and sign language to ensure the materials are accessible. They can also help testing some of your materials with specific target groups.

Icon in Germany created a system using icons to facilitate the learning of the German language for refugees and migrants, but also to help the communication between public and NGO workers and these communities. They created both a book and an app so people can simply point at the images and, by doing so, can transmit and understand important information with others.



Image: Icon for kids: poster for children

Description: The image shows a child pointing at a poster which shows colourful images that illustrate objects and other items grouped into themes (living room, kitchen, food, drinks, colours).



Image: Icon for refugees, book and app

Description: The image shows an open leaflet with icons

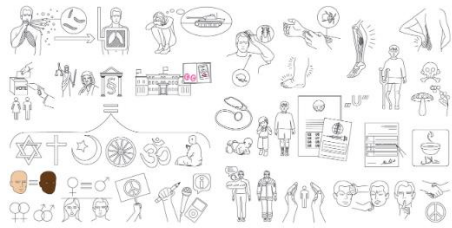


Image: Icon for refugees, book

Description: The image shows several icons that demonstrate specific situations (such as war scenarios or indicating a specific pain in the body), daily life situations (like taking a child by the hand in the street) and symbols (such as religious symbols).

2.1.4 Case Studies

The Portuguese Ministry of Health and the **City of Lisbon, Portugal** partnered with local NGOs and hospitals to create manuals about health in several languages. The leaflets were designed in partnership with local groups of migrants that were able to raise the most pressing topics to discuss including pregnancy, birth and STD control, diabetes, etc. as well as the images used to describe each subject. Mediators from the designated communities were hired to moderate conversations with local groups, develop the texts and translate them.

The VoisinMalin project in **Paris, France**, selects neighbours for their communication and language skills, trains and remunerates them. The communicators have different cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins, and many speak several languages, allowing them to easily approach recent migrants with limited knowledge of French. The communicators work by knocking on doors, trying to reach everyone in the neighbourhood to inform about various projects and services, and raise awareness about the residents' rights and opportunities. They provide information about housing, transport, recycling, access to education, social benefits, health, and cultural activities. At the same time, they enquire about people's needs and feed back to the different agencies and companies in order to help adapt the services to the needs.

2.2 Representation

2.2.1 Introduction

We also need to ensure there is enough **representation** of all the groups and communities living in the city.

The communication materials and news must proportionally inform on less typically covered events and projects. Giving **visibility to all communities and groups** and their activities helps create a diverse image of the city. Local inhabitants are many times unaware of the multiplicity of realities within their own city and the contributions they all make to local prosperity. Not only does this contribute to valuing all communities contributions, but it also helps to overcome prejudice and stereotypes: if the only news regarding immigrants I hear about are about radicalization, how can I have a realistic image of other realities within the migrant communities?

More sources of information and different messages about groups and communities is key to ensure we have **more and diverse information** which will help us become more inclusive in our actions. You can reach out to NGOs and representatives from various communities and ask them to offer alternative interpretations of an event, or even different perspectives on a subject.

Show the **top figures of the city stating the example**, by giving more visibility to their meetings and gatherings with religious leaders from different faiths, local leaders from communities and minorities, supporting and taking part in events and celebrations from all communities (and not only national traditional ones) and supporting local minorities NGOs and groups.

Another interesting way is to make your commitment clear, is to promote **public campaigns** that showcase the importance and valuing of Diversity.

In 2009, Frankfurt, Germany, decided it was time to review its 20-year old policies and its methods were equally forward-looking. The city launched its Diversity Moves Frankfurt (Vielfalt bewegt Frankfurt) campaign to canvas its citizenry about what integration meant to them. Recognizing that “every idea deserves a chance,” the campaign emphasized participation and welcomed a diversity of opinion as an expression of a healthy democracy that was essential to framing a common vision of the city’s future. The campaign was accompanied by a community participation process unprecedented in its scope.

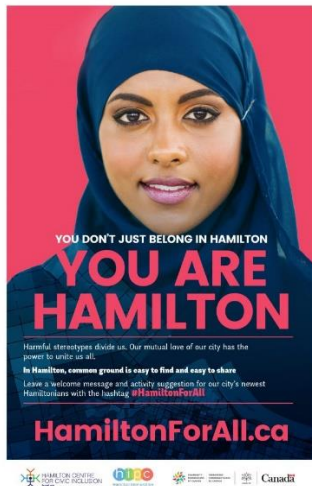
International Migrants Day and other important dates are excellent moments to commemorate though public campaigns to show the commitment of the city and the executive board. The Council of Europe usually celebrates the date though a large world-wide public media campaign that helps raising awareness for interculturality. In 2018, this campaign showed different mayors and their statements about the cities intercultural values, practices and policies.



Description: The picture shows two images - each image shows a mayor: Kostas Peletides from Patras in Greece and Valérie Plante from Montreal in Canada. Each image shows a quotation from each mayor.¹

¹ Kostas Peletides from Patras, Greece says “Patras designs and reveals cultural routes based on its intercultural character”

Valérie Plante from Montreal, Canada, says “The City of Montreal launched its first plan to integrate immigrants. Montreal will introduce more than 30 measures over the next three years aimed at making it easier for new immigrants to find jobs, housing, and get access to city services, regardless of their legal status.”



Description: The image shows a smiling woman wearing a blue veil (hijab). The text below reads “You don’t just belong in Hamilton, you are Hamilton” HamiltonForAll.ca

Hamilton Ontario, Canada, [continues to be ranked high in terms of proportion incidences of hate crime](#). The community decided to do something to give a more positive message to newcomers in the city. Based on this, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) connected with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) in Toronto. OCASI had run [#TorontoForAll](#) campaigns to combat Islamophobia and anti-Black racism in Toronto. Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) and HIPC therefore partnered with OCASI to create the campaign [#HamiltonForAll](#) which launched in November 2017. The campaign focused on celebrating the diversity in Hamilton’s. It further promoted Hamilton’s vision of becoming an inclusive and welcoming city.

It is suggested to periodically ask colleagues from all departments to share their agenda and main events and activities with a short summary in a common database. This way, you can have access a **larger span of activities and projects**. Also, make sure all these opportunities are captured with good photos that portrait the diversity of the local community. If you cannot be present at all events, ensure someone from the department in charge has someone with basic skills for photography and is instructed on the images you are looking for. A small workshop on the issue may be needed.

The city members and staff, including staff in the communications department, should, as much as possible, **reflect the existing local diversity**. This inclusion ensures that news to a larger extent reflect the interests and needs of all groups present in the city and helps reduce potentially sensitive or offensive content.

The **City of Birmingham, United Kingdom**, developed a project to engage all those interested in playing a leading role in her local community: the [West Midlands Civic Leadership Program](#) that offers a fast-track education to become a local leader. The project was set up against the background that in the United Kingdom, only 4% of the national Members of Parliament (MPs) and local councillors originate from an ethnic minority background, despite minorities making up 14% of the wider population. The absence of ethnic minority leaders also exists across other areas of public life, including in local policing, education, and the voluntary sector.

In **Chicago, USA**, the mayor signed the [Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011](#) in 2017. The Act focuses on how Congressional and state legislative districts are drawn with emphasis on racial and language minority communities. “Communities that have been divided into multiple districts will now be more united and thus better able to elect candidates who represent their interests,” says Lawrence Benito, Deputy Director of the [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights \(ICIRR\)](#).

Cities are also invited to reflect on if there is **diversity among the spokespeople and experts** used for media interviews. Ultimately, it’s important to avoid stereotypes. Work with your team to create a culture that embraces not only diversity of people, but also diversity of thought in your city’s strategy and execution.

The main message is that we want to portray **diversity as the norm, not the exception**. This can also mean that, even when the news or other communication materials do not concern a specific community, the images used should show diversity (for example a person with a disability taking out the garbage in the communication material about garbage collection, coming from the supermarket or carrying out a daily task unrelated to their background). This way, our brains will slowly associate normality with different images and people.

Adapt your message to the audience, meaning, your local communities and groups. Do not target only the majority, instead try to include minorities in your scope.

The **words** used are of the utmost importance. The use of words has evolved given the ongoing reflection around these topics. As a society, we are constantly evolving and becoming more inclusive. We have to be aware to keep up! Studies and several opinion makers from minorities and other groups have started to raise awareness of how certain words can reinforce stereotypes, while other words can help understand realities different than our own and the barriers faced.

The Council of Europe has created a [glossary of terms](#) that can be helpful when considering the best terms to use.

Another important aspect is **focus on what people share** and what brings us together, hence moving the focus from our differences into what we have in common without excluding diversity. The message should be “we are all different, but all the same”, in the sense that difference should be acknowledged and celebrated together with our similarities, shared rights and responsibilities. To do so, diversity must be visible and portrayed commonly. Differences should not be turned into a spectacle or something eccentric or dramatic: we are all the same, we are all human, we are all citizens who should have equal rights and responsibilities. Our brains need to feel close to others to overcome feelings of strangeness, pity, and fear that difference might provoke. So, if we see different people doing the same things we do - going to the doctor, riding a bicycle, going to the grocery store, playing with the kids, going to school - we realize we are not that different in what matters.

In **Jerusalem, Israel**, MiniActive was launched in 2012, with the support and partnership of the JICC and the [Jerusalem Foundation](#) with the dual objective of effecting real change and empowering community action. The goals are to advance human rights in East Jerusalem by creating sustainable grassroots advocacy and empowerment mechanisms; to empower women as agents of change; and to help all residents, but mainly women, take practical steps to improve the everyday lives of East Jerusalem residents.

MiniActive workshops consist of small group meetings in which each participant is invited to choose an issue to work on that is both doable and requires working with, or convincing others to do something. This can be neighbours, local agencies, or the municipality, as learning to work with others is critical to developing organizational capacity. Examples can be repairing a streetlight, improving garbage collection at a specific location, fixing a pothole, replacing a safety fence, initiating an event at school, or simply connecting neighbours to meet over an issue. This project has allowed people from different communities to gather, volunteer and engage in common issues to improve daily lives of everyone.

An example from TV Denmark also illustrates how a commercial can be very clear on showing what “being Danish” means for the company, and that they value Diversity.



Description: The image links to a video. The image shows nine persons facing the camera: one woman and eight men, of different ages and sizes, with different hair, on a black floor against a grey background.

Look at the materials about storytelling and alternative narratives to get more tips on how to tell intercultural stories as human stories that can promote empathy.

2.2.2 Advice

Words

Make sure your communication makes it very clear that the projects and initiatives you are promoting are for everyone in the city and avoid stigmatizing terms or overemphasizing certain life experiences and situations though the use of dramatic words.

For example, social aid programs can often refer to their beneficiaries in terms which aim to raise awareness and call for the attention of the media, focusing on the needs of the individuals or groups. However, the beneficiaries do not necessarily identify with the words used to describe them in this type of communication. This can provoke serious damage to the relationship: an NGO working with families once referred to the women's group they worked with as "families at risk" and "mothers from broken families". The women stopped participating in the NGOs activities after a few months when they realized that these sentences meant to describe them, and not other families as they had initially thought. The organization hired local mediators, rewrote their communication materials with input from those with lived experience and invested a lot of time in retrieving the trust of the community by conducting focus groups and a participatory diagnosis.

The wording can contribute to the connection with the identities of people, thus reinforcing stereotypes and imprisoning people into fixed boxes.

Use terms starting with "persons" and which highlight their context, not turning their "diversity" into the context (for example instead of saying "disabled persons", use "persons with a disability"; do not use "poor persons", but "persons facing economic hardship"; avoid "marginalized persons" and replace with "persons facing exclusion"). This way you focus on the situation faced, and do not place the persons into a group you created (there are many ways to face exclusion, there is no "excluded" club) or mix their identity with the characteristics you are trying to highlight.

- Avoid using multiculturalism and replace it with interculturalism. Multiculturalism is about different groups living what seems to be harmonious but somewhat separated lives. Interculturalism focus on the positive relation, mutual learning and interaction between cultures and persons.

- Use simple and not very “technical” terms, so that everyone can understand and avoid patronizing sentences.
- Use positive statements: associate interculturalism with positive images, words, and events.

People can and should be portrayed also in unhappy situations, but in a community climate of mutual support and friendship. Learning must be evident.

Images

Another aspect to take into consideration is the **images** used. Do they portrait all groups?

“IT’S ONE THING TO MAKE A PICTURE OF WHAT A PERSON LOOKS LIKE, IT’S ANOTHER THING TO MAKE A PORTRAIT OF WHO THEY ARE”

PAUL CAPONIGRO

One of the most powerful ways to convey the intercultural message is to portrait diverse people and groups in daily tasks and city regular activities, thus normalizing diversity. Pictures used for communication must hence portrait the several realities, groups, and communities present in the city. Though this, all individuals will feel portrayed in the municipality communication, increasing their feeling of acknowledgement and being valued, thus building their feeling of belonging to the city. This will also allow residents to connect diverse images to feelings of safety, peace, and harmony.

Diverse individuals should be portrayed in positive interaction, for example showing many different individuals from all groups of society as protagonists on a poster about a new bicycle path. These images should show diverse persons in daily life situations and in interaction with persons different from themselves in a positive environment. This way we send a message that “diversity is normal” and without over-emphasizing it as something eccentric. Further, it sends a message that these are positive interactions, which in turn promotes peace and happiness and are an asset to the city and their inhabitants.

At the same time, we should avoid using images of minorities and other groups that may reinforce prejudice and stereotypes and instead prioritise images which can overcome them. It should be remembered that many do not identify with the stereotypes of their communities and using communication underlining these can be offensive.

Finally - do not forget **intersectionality**. A person can be simultaneously for example a woman, from African origin and have a disability. Persons belonging to a group do not all feel and act the same way. Our identities might vary a lot and overlap within groups, and we can feel we belong to several groups at the same time without that necessarily representing a conflict.

- Can you think of stereotyped images of communities within your city?
- What are they and what images could you use to provide a representative image of the diversity portrayed?
- Who could you speak with within your city to ensure the images chosen for your communication are representative?

Promote the inclusive aspects of every project and activity

It is important that those communicating on projects and actions are well informed of all aspects of the action before creating the communication material. It is recommended the communicator receives specific information of the inclusive aspects of the project prior to communication, including information on target groups and hard to reach groups, languages you may need to

communicate in, appropriate images which can be used, equality aspects, interaction, participation and all other aspects which portray the diversity within the project.

In order to highlight the inclusive aspects of each activity and project, it is important not only to have a critical eye and to search for these aspects, but also to be prepared to enhance them on every occasion and to know how to best use them for your communication purposes. This might indicate a need to have a high level of intercultural awareness within the staff of the city, but also within the city's partner organizations.

It is always advisable the intercultural city includes intercultural aspects in all projects and actions, assessing the impact during and after on diversity, equality, and interaction. However, even if a project is not intercultural from the get-go, these aspects should always be reflected in the communication – in any diverse city the end-users will be diverse and should be reflected equally in the communication material.

For example, if building a new local bio market, the city can:

- Involve different communities and groups in focus groups to study their needs and interests and how the market would meet all needs (and household budgets).
- Advertise it in every neighbourhood of the city (not only the targeted ones).
- Study the best market location so that it is easy to reach for everyone (it can also be a good opportunity to bring people to less trendy or more peripheral and marginalized neighbourhoods).
- Make sure that everyone gets invited to the launching (and can make it), portraying the existing diversity and with that show that the market is for everyone.
- Publish the news about the launching choosing photos and sentences that highlight the diverse environment.

Techfugees Belgrade, Serbia wanted to contribute to the refugee situation back in 2015: "We kept one thing in front of our eyes at all times: The crisis is understood only by the ones involved in it." Using a refugee-centric approach, In Belgrade, Serbia, in 2015, their solution was building on an "almost forgotten technology," the team is currently developing InfoHelp, a "fully offline, USSD communication project for refugees that works on any kind of a mobile phone- providing info *without the need for the internet.*"

As Techfugees Belgrade learned, echoed in a recent UNHCR report, infrastructure and collaboration are necessary for success. In Belgrade's case, the largest national telecom operator came on board, offering free access to the technology needed for their solution.

What can you do if there isn't much to go on?

- Where you communicate and how can still be done interculturally and inclusively.
- Pick up all the intercultural aspects of the project possible, including the team working with it, the work of the unit responsible, and the persons participating in the process.
- Highlight the end use of the project and the interaction, equality, and diversity advantage it brings.

Provide training opportunities

Providing training opportunities is crucial to promote debate and reflection as well as to raise awareness. Often city staff, local newspapers, companies, local influencers, and newsletters show lack of knowledge in this field, and most have never had the opportunity to reflect deeply on the subject, nor acknowledge their role and responsibility in conveying intercultural messages. By offering training we can increase the number of projects that take interculturality into account as well as the number of persons with a critical eye able to spot opportunities to engage different communities and highlight the existing diversity. Further, promoting joint

events, workshops and trainings can also help the city reinforce the relationship with the local media and influencers and start developing joint projects.

Awareness raising activities aiming to increase the level of inclusive behaviour from the general population can also play an important role. The Council of Europe created the [Intercultural Citizenship Test](#) that can be used for that purpose. Finally, intercultural awareness and sensitivity, sensitive storytelling, [anti-rumours methodologies](#) as well as alternative narratives are important tools to work towards more inclusive communication professionals and citizens.

*“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN COMMUNICATION IS HEARING
WHAT ISN’T SAID”*

PETER DRUCKER

Connect with local press

It is recommended to connect with local partners and press and not to forget local youth – local influencers can help spread the message to specific groups and new generations in a more effective way. Bring them in as partners and invite them to be part of the trainings and projects you may promote.



Description: The image shows a young man, with a black baseball cap and glasses, talking against a white background. The subtitles show “Leroy Kenton”.

- ① This influencer created a fact-checking channel and has several episodes that speak about minorities and the myths commonly associated with them. He is famous with many followers who also check facts about celebrities and other famous personalities. This type of action can be very powerful to foster local debates within younger groups of citizens. Here you can find an example of an episode about Islam.

Partnering with influencers can help bring more young persons into the debate and help spread facts and reliable information, contradict fake news, and ultimately help overcome bias and prejudice. At the same time, it gives visibility to several realities and helps spread the view that the city is made of diverse people and that it is proud of its diversity.

Finally, it can be an idea to launch media contests and awards to foster more inclusive news in local media.

Partner with local NGOs and groups

It is suggested to carry out focus groups with different local communities before launching a campaign, slogan, or communication materials. Local and national NGOs that work with migrant groups and minorities can be a helpful resource. Make sure you engage with persons of different ages and backgrounds.

In the past, some potentially offensive slogans were created simply because whoever made them was not aware of their double meaning or hidden message.

In conversation with local groups, you can get to know the most common mistakes made in communication, words, and sentences to avoid but also ask for help finding alternatives.



Description: The image shows a diverse group of young persons in the street. One is using headphones, another using sunglasses. Four of them have their arms around each other. They are all smiling and facing the camera.



Description: The image shows a print from a social media post. The image has two children in a clothing add. One wearing a green hoodie with the text "Coolest monkey in the jungle". The other boy is wearing an orange hoodie with the text "Mangroove jungle, survival expert" with a tiger print. The comment says ".hm this is inappropriate, offensive and racist. Why is the white kid "a jungle survivor" and the black kid the "coolest monkey in the jungle"? How do you think this is ok? REMOVE this and the clothing piece. This is completely distasteful! #racist #hm www2.hm.com/en_gb/product..."

2.2.4 Resources

The Council of Europe has also developed several other tools that can be helpful to build more inclusive communication. For example:

- [Intercultural Checklist](#)
- [Gender Sensitive Communication Checklist](#)
- [Language Support for Adult Refugees: A Council of Europe Toolkit](#)
- [Intercultural Citizenship Test](#)

Now let's try some exercises!

1. When looking at the following pictures, which ones:
 - Can help overcome stereotypes and prejudice?
 - Show or promote positive interaction between groups?
 - Represent different groups and communities?
 - Promote identification and empathy, instead of pity or fear?
 - Better show the city commitment and positive attitude towards diversity?



[Kansas City Trolley Run, USA](#)

Description: The image shows a man using a sports wheelchair giving a high-five to a woman running in the opposite direction. In the background there are many people in sports clothes.



Description: the image shows a man pushing a wheelchair with a person sitting in it. They pass a closed door in the street.



Iviv, Ukraine - Easter Fair

Description: The image shows an open-air market. People pass by several stands with food and drinks. There are colourful ribbons and a sign above.



Exhibition activities at Natexpo 2015. © Kai Kreuzer

Natexpo - Paris, France

Description: The image shows an in-door fair with several stands. A man and a woman, wearing similar white shirts and name tags are talking to a woman and offer her leaflets. Both women are smiling.



Texas City, USA

Description: The image to women smiling holding a rainbow flag.



Harmony Day/week, Australia

Description: The image shows several adults and children painting on a large white canvas. They are drawing persons in several colours. A woman wearing a hijab is looking at the camera.



October 29, 2014. REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann

Zurich, Switzerland

Description: The image shows several children in a square, playing with big soap bubbles that a man is making.



Copyright © 2009 Dean J. William
Sydney, Australia, 2020

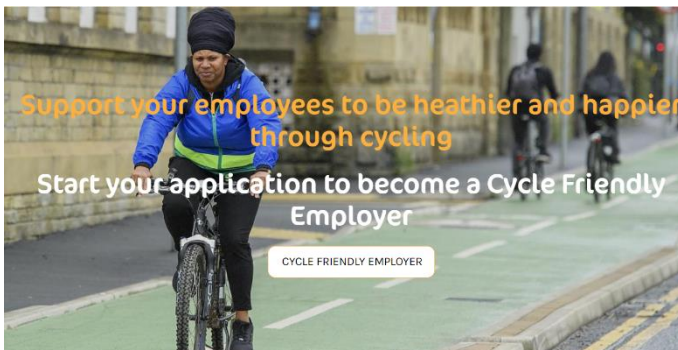
Description: The image shows a park. People are walking in both directions and several people are cycling in the direction of the camera.



Description: The image shows a woman adjusting a man's tie. They are in a kitchen with a wooden countertop.

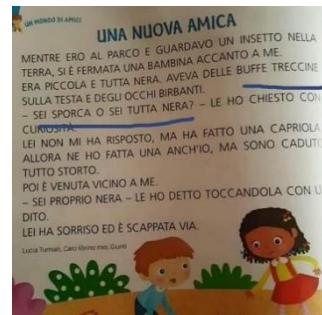


Description: The image shows a man washing dishes in a white kitchen



[We are cycling UK](#)

Description: The image shows a woman on a green bicycle biking in the direction of the camera on a bicycle road. The letters say "Support your employees to be healthier and happier through cycling. Start your application to become a Cycle Friendly Employer. Cycle Friendly Employer".



School Book, Italy

Translation "I saw the black girl with strange braids and asked: are you dirty or just black?"

Description: The image shows drawings of a boy on his knees playing and a girl approaching him.

Now please read these statements. Which ones:

- Show the use of positive and non-discriminatory language to describe specific neighbourhoods, groups, and communities?
- Use gender neutral language?
- Have been stated by spokespeople or experts that represent different groups and communities that are not the majority?
- Show commitment to interculturality from the city, or even from top city management?
- Stimulate the participation of everyone in the initiatives, clearly showing they are meant to be used by all groups?
- Show different perspectives on the same subject?

“Libraries that offer tools or a wider range of products for lending seem to have a remarkable cultural function,” says Najine Ameli, a researcher at Bichum University of Applied Sciences in Germany, who is doing her thesis on Libraries of Things. “They present a deviation from the standard, a viable alternative to the previous use-own standard” - Article on Libraries of Things (LoTs), Shareable, 2020



Description: The image shows a man, with a black jacket and a baseball cap opening a box in a wall full of similar boxes. A sign reads “Library of Things”.

“People are seeing that libraries are evolving as unique community spaces”, says Hancock. “They are safe spaces that provide access to information and ideas that are neutral. The reality is that more people are going to libraries than ever before.” Quotation from Shareable (article about LoTs), 2020

“Dr. Scheepers explained that the Knysna Municipality had committed itself through the already approved key dimensions and programmes, such as – An approved HIS Strategic Plan – 2019; Restructuring Zones (RZs) – 2010; IDP with the beginnings of a Housing Chapter which requires further enhancements. Draft Policy Guidelines – 2020 (under consideration) and towards a typology driven housing model in which Social Housing is a component part to ignite strategic use of its land and properties – medium to high density products developed and managed by partnering social housing institutions that meet the municipal set criteria. “Through the above, the Municipality has committed itself to plan and act given the levels of demand and socio-economic needs from its communities” Concluded Dr. Scheepers - Quotation from “Social Housing Programme Proposal”, 2020, Knysna

“I note the issues in the judgment regarding bias that can be inherent in facial recognition algorithms. Use of this technology will not and should not get out of the gate if the police cannot demonstrate its use is fair and non-discriminatory. I will consider how I can amend my guidance to ensure police forces are aware for the potential bias in systems and also consider what more can be done with manufacturers of the technology to eliminate it.”- Quotation from Speech “Surveillance Camera Commissioner's statement: Court of Appeal judgment (R) Bridges v South Wales Police – Automated Facial Recognition” UK Government

“How do people feel about the new law? There's been extensive media coverage explaining the changes as they approached and on the Sina Weibo microblog, a lot of people have been saying they're happy about the positive environmental impact. But many still worry they might get it wrong by mistake.” - Quotation from Shanghai, BBC, 2019 “Shanghai rubbish rules: New law sends Chinese city into frenzy”

“The past six months of lockdowns have sparked many discussions about our cities and lifestyles. And the importance of local parks has come to the fore. There are issues of equity in access to parks, walkability, housing, and the measured health and well-being effects of being outdoors.” - Quotation from Melbourne, The Conversation, 2020 “Our cities are full of parks, so why are we looking to golf courses for more open space?”

2.2.4 Case Studies

The website **Shareable** launched a campaign to gather stories of disaster recovery. The images and text used is a good example of how we can ensure representativity and promote positive interaction between groups, also in crises situations.

Description: The image shows a poster where three persons are repairing a house. One is on the roof using a tool to repair the draining system, with the help of a woman who is standing on a ladder holding a hammer. A woman is painting the walls yellow. The text says, "Share your stories about disaster recovery projects".



Description: The image shows a drawing of a street with tall buildings and cars. Two women watch the street from a balcony.

Inclusive communication is also something to keep in mind when the city develops a specific communication, e.g. a children's book or the story of the city: the characters we choose to tell the story, the illustrations, the stories we tell and how you tell them all can be a powerful means to an end. **THE DRIN (INSIDE) PROJECT** is a good example.

Cascais, Portugal created an award to recognize news that promote intercultural dialogue, not only for media organizations, but for all local NGOs and companies that take into account intercultural aspects in their communication ([Tornar Claro](#)).

The High Commission for Migration, Portugal, annually develops a contest to award journalists, scriptwriters and producers whose work helps foster the value of cultural diversity and fight discrimination.

The City of **Sabadell, Spain**, has a welcoming programme and a communication campaign associated that includes images, posters, press releases and social networks. In addition, the communication department is instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage. The city also reaches out to other press and communication partners. When local media portray persons with migrant/minority backgrounds through negative stereotypes, the communication department contacted the concerned media to explain the City Council's communication policy.

Donostia/San Sebastian, Spain, partnered with SOS Racismo to develop several educational projects and awareness-raising activities that engage civil society in monitoring how media portray diversity. The activities include a project to develop media literacy and an observatory for discrimination in the media.

Paris, France, supported the creation of a "safe house" for international journalists that aims to support journalists to be able to work in the country and express themselves freely. Most journalists have a background of persecution and oppression and the house offers a temporary place of residence and it is a landmark of defence and promotion of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of speech, or of the press. In addition to legal and administrative support, French language courses are organized to enable refugee journalists to adapt their

skills and achieve a French diploma. This way, it also ensures the variety of perspectives in local and national press.

Lisbon, Portugal, developed a public campaign (“Somos os Direitos que temos” –We are our rights) targeting more awareness towards diversity, human rights, and inclusion. It meant to “re-write” what it means to be a Lisbon Citizen, to include all different identities and show the city acknowledges and is proud of its Diversity, and at the same time tackle discrimination. This campaign is part of a larger project that entailed moments to listen to the needs and daily fights of different citizens, engage them in the project and training and awareness raising sessions for several groups. The posters were distributed all over the city, at bus stops, kiosks and other public spaces.



Description: Three posters, each one showing a person. All posters start with “Every day I fight discrimination” with each character stating (from left to right): “I was judged for being a lesbian, but today I do not hide”; “I grew up in a social neighbourhood” and “I was discriminated for being Roma”.

Description: The image shows a poster with a black and white picture of people sitting with their legs crossed. A sign says “MUGAK – Centro de Estudios y Documentacion sobre inmigración, racismo y xenofobia. SOS RacismoARRAZAKERIA.



3 Checklist for Inclusive Communication

Inclusive Communication Checklist

This checklist was made to help summarize the advice and can be used when preparing campaigns, newss, media posts or press releases.

	YES	NO
Is your language simple and easy to understand for all groups?		
Is your language gender neutral?		
Is the text big enough for everyone to read?		
Do you use images and icons with text to help illustrate the content?		
Are all images described with additional text for persons who cannot see?		
Is the communication available in all the main languages spoken within the migrant communities and minorities?		
Are your videos and digital content accessible to persons who cannot see?		
Are all written materials (for example posters) accessible for persons who cannot see?		
Do the videos have an audio description?		
Do the videos have sign language interpretation?		
Are the places where posters are placed too high?		
Did you spread the information in all neighbourhoods?		
Did you share the information in all locations needed to reach out to all communities (for example different religious minorities)?		
Did you plan alternative strategies to reach people that cannot read or write?		
Did the activities that you communicated about have participants from other than majority groups?		
Is the communication reaching all groups and communities equally?		
Are images representing different groups and communities?		
Do these images help overcome stereotypes?		
Are daily news from different communities and groups equally reported on?		
Are these communication materials showing positive interaction?		
Did you reach out to local NGOs, associations and groups which represent diverse communities gather news, ask for feedback and advice, test news and communication campaigns, offer another perspective on the subject, etc.?		
Do you collaborate regularly with other departments to collect news and proofread the communication materials?		
Does the city promote and support free press and intercultural news among local press and journalists?		
Does the city collaborate with local/national influencers and young media content writers to collaborate, ask for advice or help disseminate messages to different audiences?		

Does the city have representatives from different groups and communities within the communications team or that can be its advisors?		
Does the staff that develop news and campaigns reflect the composition of the city?		
Does the city provide training and awareness raising for communication staff?		

4 Inspiration for an article

Fictional example article to draw inspiration from. The city and facts are not real examples.

BlueBird goes Green!

Yesterday, the municipality of BlueBird inaugurated the first miles of the new bicycle path connecting the two main areas of the city. Together with the path, a municipal bicycle sharing and repair service was launched, as well as an educational program in schools, led by local associations and sponsored by the city.

The road was the result of a participatory process, gathering opinions from more than 200 persons from all communities in the municipality. Representatives of these communities and groups gathered with municipal engineers and architects to decide about the route and to launch the needed services to ensure the increase of use of bicycles in the city by everyone. Questions around accessibility, affordability of bicycles, education, air quality, safety for bikers and walkers, parking, the best places to place the road and cultural habits of different groups were debated to achieve decisions and consensus.



Example image 1: Meeting of local communities and city officials

Description: The image shows a meeting of a large diverse group. A woman is raising her hand to speak.

The inauguration was held during a festival organised by local communities, and the Mayor remarked on the impressive levels of civic engagement in this venture in the speech:

“We have showed that together is how we build a community! It took more than a year, but the result is far more impressive than if we would have done it alone. It is amazing to see this many bikers, waiting to use our new bicycle path! Thank you to all citizens from different groups and communities that gladly have given, and will continue to give, their time and expertise to this project. This is more than a road - it is a bridge that connects us!”

Our newspaper interviewed one of the thousands of enthusiastic bikers present at the inauguration event:

“I never used to travel by bicycle to work or to pick up my kids, but now I can! Also, because of the pandemic, I really did not feel safe using public transport with the kids every day. With this bike sharing project I don’t even need to buy my own bike and we all get to do more exercise. Since I am currently unemployed this is great! Bluebird is a really great place to live and I am proud to be a Bluebirder!”



Example image 2: Tibebe leads the cyclists out of Central Park for the start of their ride to D.C. for the March on Washington. (Michael Noble Jr./for The Washington Post)

Description: The image shows several cyclists on the road. A woman leads the group.

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