



Rethinking welcoming policies from an intercultural perspective



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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a tool for public administrations and other entities working with the reception and welcoming of migrants and refugees. It aims to facilitate discussion amongst those working within the field as well as to assist them in identifying challenges and in finding new ways of addressing them.

In Europe and globally, as humans we continue to move and migrate. As of 2021 there were an estimated 258 million international migrants in the world, including 135 million women; 40.9 million children; 26 million registered refugees; 164 million migrant workers; and 6 million international students.¹ Nearly two million people arrived in Europe in the European Union (EU) alone in 2020.

People migrate for different reasons. Most migrants in Europe at the end of 2020 were staying for family or work reasons while other significant groups of arrivals were refugees and students.² Larger groups of people have been forced to migrate in recent years because of conflicts such as those in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. Violence and economic problems have also led to migration from Venezuela and the climate crisis is increasingly meaning people have to move.

In this mobile world, how we welcome newcomers into our societies and cities is extremely important both for the individuals who arrive, but also for host communities. While work carried out so far must be acknowledged, the increasing demographic diversity and geopolitical changes call for rethinking and reformulating society's response. The intercultural approach has proved to be an effective tool for promoting human rights and equality in diverse societies and can be successfully incorporated in reception or 'welcoming' policies and actions.

This paper, therefore, reflects on why intercultural welcoming and reception is important and raises the principles and criteria that, as a minimum, should be reflected upon and considered when developing actions and instruments for effectively welcoming newcomers. The paper also features tools to help readers assess and improve existing policies or actions to be developed. The text is based on a paper produced by the working group on welcoming of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI), which collaborated with experts and technical staff from all member cities and territories in the network and has been further adapted by the Intercultural Cities programme for use by member cities of its international network.

2. OVERVIEW OF WELCOMING POLICIES

Welcoming, or reception, can be understood as the result of public policies, through which public administrations, together with other social agents, make decisions and implement actions that contribute to the construction of inclusive and diverse societies.

Welcoming is generally understood as the first phase of the integration and inclusion process. Welcoming measures can start before or upon arrival and should continue until the individual is sufficiently empowered to actively participate in the socio-economic life of their new society.

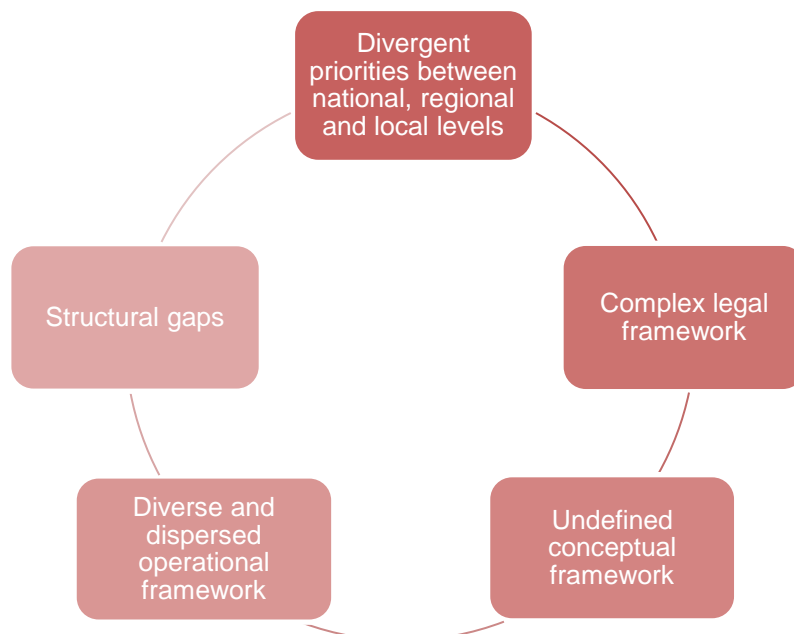
Nowadays, welcoming policies mainly fall under the remit of national governments, even though the responsibility for their implementation may be delegated to other levels of

¹ IOM Global Migration Indicators 2021, November 2021, page 11, available at: <https://publications.iom.int/books/global-migration-indicators-2021>.

² See European Commission website, Statistics on migration to Europe, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en.

government and, to some extent, to civil society. However, this often happens under a complex legal framework, through divergent priorities, with insufficient budgetary resources or structural deficits, and with lack of coordination and cooperation among the actors involved.

The main gaps are:



a. Divergent priorities between local, regional, national and supra-national levels

The Local Level

At the local city or municipal level, reception is generally understood as a matter of public responsibility that requires a response to the social demand of inclusion and well-being. In this sense, reception policies are designed to be applied at the moment of arrival of migrants and refugees in each local territory.

Local administrations are usually the public entities in charge of implementing welcoming programmes or actions. However, there is great disparity within and across countries in the way this is done. In general, local authorities adapt welcoming programmes to their own administrative, political, and societal contexts, with (or without) different levels of coordination with other public administrations.

Although the actions are diverse in content and scope, the main lines are as follows:

- First reception/information services, orientation: registration and basic information on norms and services, access to the health-care system, legal advice, information on labour market and job opportunities, language learning (sometimes multiple), access to education, information on services and entities present in the region, information on cultural life and opportunities. Most cities conceive these services as basic reception services to be provided by specific departments, even though sometimes there is an overlap with the mandate of more general public services.
- Programmes aimed at specific profiles: applicants for international protection, people with no fixed abode, women, young people, persons benefitting from family reunification, migrants in transit, unaccompanied minors, etc. may be offered specific assistance through dedicated programmes.

- Specific social services: To a lesser extent, specific social care services have been created, complementary or in parallel to the general services provided. Temporary accommodation is one example.
- Subsidies to migrant or refugee organisations or organisations that work with these groups: the subsidies may be awarded on a competitive or direct basis.
- Translation and interpretation of the main languages present in the city. The modality can be face-to-face or virtual.
- Tools to support various services and projects: one of the most widely used resources available are resource guides in different languages, as well as manuals or guidebooks for city officials.

Good practice inspiration: Welcoming app

The Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI) has developed an app called Portugal Incoming. The app launched in 2019 is a major practical contribution to the integration of migrants in Portugal, bringing all relevant information on how to navigate the Portuguese services and bureaucracy, as well as access to information about cultural and social events into one place. The app is constantly updated and is available in a number of languages. The information has also been gathered into a guide. In addition, a guide for practitioners on how to conduct welcoming sessions has been developed, together with a matrix for the creation of municipal integration plans and strategies.³

Regional level

In some countries, regional authorities have an autonomous role in designing reception programmes, and even in migration decision-making. The regional level is close to the local level in that both can be said to be 'first responders' to migration, but regional entities deal with more than one locality. The localities they deal with can be diverse including urban as well as more rural areas, with differing levels and types of migration, and with different levels of attractiveness amongst migrant groups themselves. There can be competing needs within regions for resources, including funding, and specific regional norms affecting integration such as knowledge of regional languages can also impact, as well as regional limitations, for example, on freedom of movement for asylum seekers, such as in Germany.⁴

National level

National level priorities are not always aligned with the local or even regional levels. Since 2015, for example, several national governments in Europe have adopted restrictive legislative reforms on reception conditions, integration and the status of beneficiary on international protection.⁵ There can be policies to discourage migrants from coming to a particular country or region or to discourage them from staying including restricting access to social assistance or proscribing that accommodation needs to be in particular places, further out of the city. This can lead to people living in an irregular

³ See the report "Welcome guide" available at: <https://rm.coe.int/rpci-welcome-guide-portugal-incoming/1680a10dab>.

⁴ Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik Paula, ECRE AIDA Report, Germany 2021, Reception Conditions, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/reception-conditions/access-and-forms-reception-conditions/freedom-movement/>.

⁵ Eurocities, *Cities and Migrants, Implementing the Integrating Cities Charter*, October 2018, available at: [https://hws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/3rd Integrating Cities Report October 2018 FINAL.pdf](https://hws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/3rd%20Integrating%20Cities%20Report%20October%202018%20FINAL.pdf), page 15.

situation in cities and regions. At the same time the national level often coordinates important areas of work for reception and distributes funding for reception services to cities based on different criteria.

Role of the European Union (EU) - The supra national level

For European countries who are also in the EU there is an additional supranational level that affects policies and implementation in the field of integration and reception. Although EU Member States are primarily responsible for integration, the EU supports national and local authorities with policy coordination, exchange of knowledge and financial resources. The main priorities are inclusive education and training, the recognition of qualifications and language learning, improving employment opportunities, labour market integration, access to health services, as well as access to adequate and affordable housing.⁶ EU funding can be a major source of funding for reception and integration programmes at the national, regional and local levels in some countries. This means that the priorities of EU funding programming can directly influence the programmes that are able to be run in cities. The EU also has a role in initiating legislation and coordinating in the field of asylum and migration, including on the reception of asylum seekers. Although there is a European Committee of the Regions⁷ at EU level and different fora for cities to connect with the EU on migration issues,⁸ the main relationship for the EU is Member States at national level.

Divergent priorities

From the brief look above, it is clear that priorities at the local, regional, national and supranational levels often do not align. In fact, in some ways these diverging agendas on migration have led to a “decoupling” of national and local migration and integration policies.⁹

This means that cities are now coming together nationally, regionally, and transnationally, to share good practice and explore practices and solutions to overcome the challenges of migration and convert diversity into a collective advantage.¹⁰ At the same time, a strong case can be made in favour of co-ordinating national and local policies and aligning them towards a more inclusive approach (See Multilevel governance).

Good practice inspiration: Welcoming cities and Cities of sanctuary

The National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA) in France is a national network of local authorities and groupings at different levels (local, inter-municipal, departmental and regional) as well as individual elected representatives committed to work towards unconditional reception policies for all. As of March 2022, there were 66 local authority members and 55 elected officials. The network provides

⁶ EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en.

⁷ EU Committee of the Regions, available at: <https://cor.europa.eu/en>.

⁸ For example, the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees of the Urban Agenda for the EU, available at: <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees>.

⁹ OECD, *Towards 2035 Making Migration and Integration Policies Future Ready*, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/migration-strategic-foresight.pdf>, Page 22.

¹⁰ Examples include the Intercultural Cities network of the Council of Europe, but also Eurocities, Sanctuary Cities and Human Rights Cities. There is also a Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development and a Charter of Integrating Cities.

resources including good practice guides and the promotion of inclusive local citizenship ideas such as local identity cards to access services and support.

Swansea Council (United Kingdom) has pledged its commitment to supporting its status as a City of Sanctuary¹¹ – welcoming those fleeing from war/persecution. This includes the ‘Better Welcome to Swansea’ project, which is a mentoring scheme. Local volunteer mentors are recruited and trained to support people seeking sanctuary (primarily newly arrived asylum seekers), to feel welcome. The aim of the scheme is to promote integration between asylum seekers and refugees and people in local Swansea communities. The project provides support both in groups and individually to increase sanctuary seekers’ knowledge of the Swansea area whilst encouraging active participation in day-to-day activities. Swansea has also taken part in the Vulnerable Person’s Resettlement scheme. It resettles families who have fled from Syria to neighbouring countries and works with partners to help families settle into life in Swansea – including housing, healthcare, education, English classes, English support in schools, training and assistance with employment and general orientation. **Leeds** (United Kingdom) is also a City of Sanctuary, with some schools acting as Schools of Sanctuary as part of the initiative.¹²

b. Complex legal frameworks

Too often the legal frameworks in which reception policies and programmes operate are ambiguous and complex. This may concern the authority responsible for the design of the policy, the one in charge of the implementation, as well as the structures and sources of funding to be put in place for that purpose.

There are often different legal frameworks, for different types of newcomers, which can be confusing for service providers and users. These differences can also mean different treatment which is not always justified and may lead to discrimination.

An example of a specific framework is the reception of people who seek international protection. In most EU countries¹³ this is regulated by the Reception Conditions Directive,¹⁴ which has to be transposed into national legislation and that ensures access to housing, food, clothing, health care, education for minors and access to employment (within a maximum period of nine months). It also provides safeguards for vulnerable persons, especially unaccompanied minors and victims of torture.

There can also be legislation or programmes within specific groups, as in the UK where there are independent welcoming programmes for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas),¹⁵ the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme,¹⁶ the Ukraine family scheme¹⁷

¹¹ See a list of all Cities of Sanctuary in the United Kingdom here. Several ICC member cities are also members of this initiative. [List of City of Sanctuary groups | City of Sanctuary](#).

¹² See more information on the schools in Leeds here: <https://leeds.cityofsanctuary.org/schools-of-sanctuary>.

¹³ There are exceptions for Ireland and Denmark.

¹⁴ Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast).

¹⁵ See UK government, Guidance Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) welcome programme – information for local authorities, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hong-kong-uk-welcome-programme-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

¹⁶ See UK government, Afghan citizens’ resettlement scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>.

¹⁷ UK government, Ukraine family scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>.

and the Ukraine sponsorship scheme¹⁸: all with different criteria, funding and guidelines for local authorities.

The level of centralisation differs between countries and also impacts on how services are provided. Too much centralisation may mean cities do not have the flexibility or resources they need. A lack of centralised coordination may in turn lead to inequality between regions within the country. Furthermore, the interpretation of the legal framework may differ from one administration to another, meaning that in practice, the implementation of the legal framework is not necessarily the same across the country.

Examples of models

Spain

It is through a model of multilevel governance that all phases of integration are managed in Spain. The model involves multiple stakeholders and includes the public administration, regional governments (autonomous communities), town and city councils and civil society (trade unions, employers' organisations, NGOs and migrant associations), while three bodies are in charge of coordinating these different levels. There is an Inter-Ministerial Commission on Aliens which coordinates different government departments while the Sectoral Conference on Immigration in turn coordinates the general administration and regional governments. Lastly, the participation of NGOs and associations is ensured through the Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants coordinates. Each autonomous community has its own integration plan which specifies the integration policies.¹⁹

Germany

The Federal Office for Migration and Integration (BAMF) is responsible for the nationwide promotion of integration. As such it provides integration courses, migration counselling for adults, vocational language courses and promotes projects to improve integration. The BAMF in addition has a regional coordination role. Further to the federal level, integration policies are also carried out by the Länder and the municipalities. At the regional level all Länder have their own integration plan and/or guidelines. At least three—Berlin, North Rhine Westphalia and Baden Württemberg – have adopted their own integration laws, while several municipalities have adopted specific integration approaches of their own.²⁰

Italy

In Italy a new decree on migration and security (Immigration Decree no. 130/2020) came into force in October 2020 to reform the reception system. It introduced a new special protection permit for asylum seekers to register with the city registry and created a new system of reception and integration. Initial assistance activities are carried out in ordinary and special government centres. The system then divides into two levels of service, one for people seeking international protection, and the second for those who are already international protection holders, with added services aimed at integration.²¹

The United Kingdom

¹⁸ UK government, Ukraine sponsorship scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme>.

¹⁹ European Commission, 'European Website on Integration', Governance of migrant integration in Spain at https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-spain_en.

²⁰ The Federal Office for Migration and Integration (BAMF) and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung at: [Integration and Integration Policies in Germany | bpb.de](https://www.bpb.de/infomigranten/141434/integration-and-integration-policies-in-germany).

²¹ Infomigrants and European Commission, 'European Website on Integration' at: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-italy_en.

Although the UK is a more centralised model, there is no national UK level policy on integration. The Home Office works with refugee integration, settlement and citizenship matters. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the other hand, works with community cohesion. There are in addition several other departments which work with their own policy areas, including for example adult skills and education. Integration is a devolved matter which means that each of the four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) has its own policies but overall responsibility for migration policy stays with the Home Office.²²

c. Undefined conceptual frameworks

The conceptualisation of welcoming newcomers has traditionally been included into discussions and policies on integration. Yet, there is ever more awareness that the first stages of welcoming newcomers, sometimes called 'reception' particularly in the case of refugees, is an important stage in its own right. Although the concepts and policies of 'welcoming', 'reception' and 'integration' overlap and influence each other, welcoming or reception are generally accepted as the initial phase of arrival and settling down in a new place, whilst integration is a longer term, ongoing process. There is, however, no clear guidance on how to link the concepts together, or indeed separate them.

More recently, the idea of 'reception' has come to incorporate the notion of emergency or crisis response or even security. This has been exacerbated since the COVID-19 pandemic. One example is in the EU. For example, in the New Pact on Asylum and Migration from 2021²³ the European Commission introduced the Crisis Regulation to support EU Member States where there are larger numbers of people arriving. The Commission's proposal for the Screening Regulation includes a short procedure for identification, vulnerability, health and security checks and fingerprinting. Meanwhile, the new Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint aims to help EU Member States anticipate migratory movements and be ready for them. The initiatives may improve reception provisions by providing information on those arriving and identifying the most obvious vulnerabilities, but there have also been serious concerns about migrants' human rights at the EU's borders.²⁴ In the United States of America too, there has been a declared crisis at the southern border since 2014 due to high numbers of unaccompanied minors and women trying to cross. The Federal Emergency Management Agency was deployed to the Mexican border in 2021 to help care for unaccompanied migrant teens and children who were arriving in large numbers and being held in detention cells or housed in tent shelters.²⁵ At the same time, efforts to assist large numbers of refugees from Ukraine, for example, in Moldova, have shown how countries, cities, civil society and local people can work together to provide support quickly in emergencies.²⁶

²² The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, Integration Policy in the UK at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/primers/policy-primer-integration/>.

²³ European Commission, 'New Pact on Asylum and Migration', available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en#documents.

²⁴ For example, see Euromed Rights, *Analysis of the New Pact on Asylum and Migration, a "fresh start" on human rights violations*. October 2020. Available at: https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Analysis-of-Asylum-and-Migration-Pact_Final_Clickable.pdf.

²⁵ The Washington Post, 'Biden will deploy FEMA to care for teenagers and children crossing border in record numbers', 13 March 2021. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/fema-border-unaccompanied-minors/2021/03/13/738366a4-8455-11eb-bb5a-ad9a91faa4ef_story.html.

²⁶ UNHCR, 'Ukrainian refugees find warm welcome in neighbouring Moldova', 18 May 2022, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/stories/2022/5/6284d6bc4/ukrainian-refugees-find-warm-welcome-neighbouring-moldova.html>.

'Reception' in this context can also involve the relocation of people seeking international protection to different parts of a particular country, or even to another country, which can take weeks or even months and delay reception and integration services.

Thus, although debates on emergency response in some ways broaden the discussion of welcoming and reception to emphasise pre-arrival and differing situations such as crises, in other ways they can restrict the concept to a bureaucratic model of registration, identification and even 'distribution' or 'dispersal' before 'real' reception can take place.

It is important to underline that any intercultural reception model needs to be grounded in the four principles of real equality; the recognition of diversity to make it a collective advantage; meaningful interaction; and active citizenship and participation (see section Principles).

d. Diverse and dispersed operational frameworks

In practice, the lack of a clear conceptual framework for welcoming or reception and diverse operational actors and frameworks, leads to the implementation of a wide variety of actions, ranging from subsidies and assistance to more thorough intercultural integration programmes. However, follow-up and impact evaluation mechanisms are often lacking or done on a project-by-project approach. This disparate approach is reflected in and reinforced by the funding mechanisms for welcoming newcomers.

While the intercultural approach often includes participatory tools, this is not the case for the assistance measures which – in addition – often lack an "empowerment" or capacity building component.

As the scope of welcoming is not defined, overlap between actions or programmes carried out by different departments or services at the local level may be created.

Finally, the difference between specific and general services also raises questions as to whether it would not be more efficient (and indeed more intercultural) to empower general services to act in an intercultural way, so to be able to serve newly arrived residents and locals alike. Intercultural competence is an important factor to develop among staff and service providers to this end.²⁷

e. Structural gaps

Among the structural deficits detected in local administrations, the following areas stand out:

- **Transversality:** the lack of a welcoming framework favours the creation of isolated actions unrelated to the basic axes of the city vision. This makes it difficult to mainstream diversity and inclusion policies, and to adapt general programmes and services to a diverse population.
- **Training:** the lack of basic, continuous and comprehensive training on migration and refugee issues but also on intercultural competence, intercultural mediation, psychological assistance, etc., makes it difficult for city officials and services to respond efficiently to the need of newly arrived residents in diverse societies.

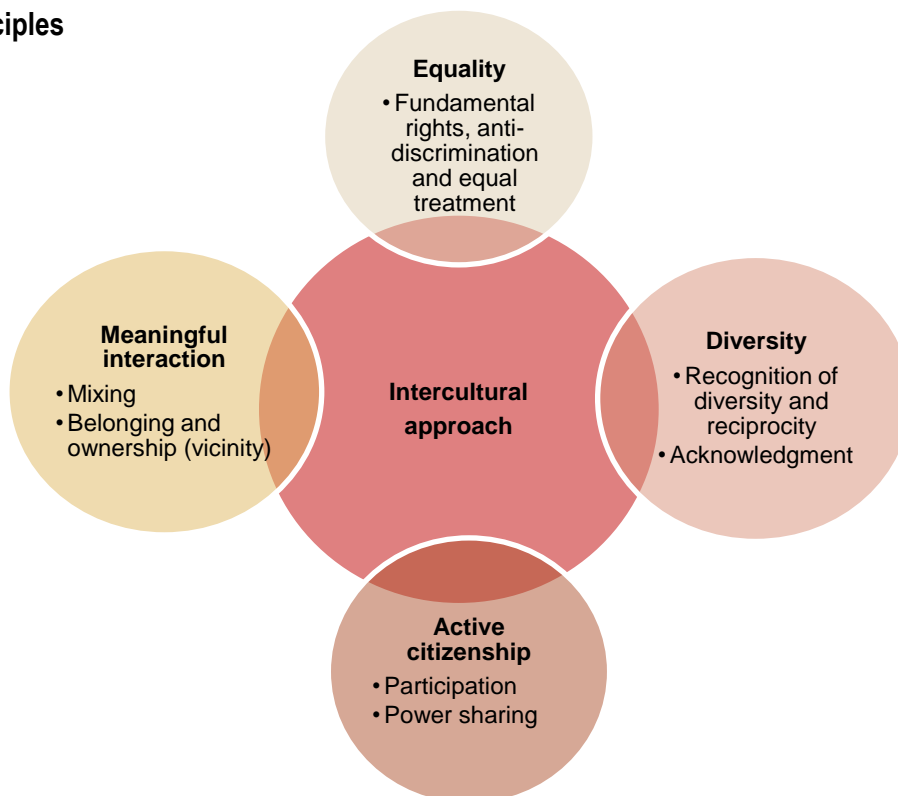
²⁷ See the Council of Europe's Intercultural checklists available here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/intercultural-checklist>; also the guide to intercultural competences: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/intercultural-competence>.

- **Evaluation:** many of the reception actions implemented have not incorporated evaluation and monitoring mechanisms that would allow for readjusting projects and actions and, at the same time, promote participation of the target group.

3. INTERCULTURAL RECEPTION

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on multilevel policies and governance of intercultural integration defines intercultural integration as *“the outcome of a set of policies aiming to help society benefit from the potential of diversity and manage its complexities, to take into account social, economic, and demographic situations alongside the overall goals of cohesion, stability and prosperity, and to create the conditions to ensure equal access to opportunities for migrants to integrate to the legal, social, economic and cultural contexts in their country of residence. The intercultural integration model requires a holistic approach which can guide co-ordinated and long-term policies in all fields and levels of governance in order to promote and ensure equality for all members of society, to foster a common pluralistic sense of belonging through valuing diversity and building social trust, community cohesion and meaningful interaction between people across their different socio-cultural backgrounds, and to facilitate their equal participation in and contribution to society”*.

a. Principles



Equality: real and effective equality of rights, duties and opportunities assumes that the responsibility for equality lies not only with the newly arrived but also with society as a whole. The Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy for the National Level also states that an equality approach to intercultural integration also means combating *“all forms of discrimination and intolerance, especially hate crime, not just by judicial and non-judicial redress, awareness raising and public education, but also by*

promoting the “diversity advantage” and ensuring that the talents of all members of society – including those who may otherwise find themselves at the margins – are fully tapped.”

Good practice inspiration: The connector project

In July 2019, Leeds (United Kingdom) started a 15-month Community Connector project²⁸, aiming to support new migrants to connect with local services and existing community networks through building bridges that encourage participation and independence. This project also adds value to wider programs of work by providing a better understanding of culture of place and community cohesion. The project successfully recruited five community connectors who have lived experience, they added value to the wider team by providing skills, knowledge, experience and a range of languages to support vulnerable migrant households. The project exceeded the target of 100 households and reached 250. This engagement was the result of such an initiative being able to bridge the gap and overcome barriers for those households. This has also resulted in savings to the council through effectively responding to the needs of vulnerable migrant households during the pandemic. Many enquiries related to housing, employment and skills and learning English and more complex issues in relation to change of immigration status. For many, issues were ongoing, and this initiative was able to resolve those ongoing challenges through language support, triage and advocacy. Building positive and trusting relationships takes time and through the understanding of experiences and overcoming language support, the community connectors were able to work with local services to provide holistic support. There are many examples of where families have not reported or made complaints as they fear the response and feel that nothing will be done. Basic concerns being resolved have seen positive impact on health and wellbeing for example, being able to support asylum seeking children to access support at school, free school meals, transport and transferring to another school to feel safe.

Recognition of diversity to make it a collective advantage: the diversity advantage needs to be acknowledged and sought through public policies that promote inclusion, and the value of the structural diversity of the city needs to be recognised (origins and languages, religions, sexual choice, age...). At the same time there should be a focus on individual rights rather than allocating rights to a group, so to cross-sect and synergise with policies focusing on all diversity issues for the purposes of building a shared vision of an inclusive society.

Good practice inspiration: Refugee reception and integration policies

Botkyrka (Sweden) is a place with a long tradition of being a home to people from all over the world. Today, more than half of all residents have their roots in countries other than Sweden and hundreds of languages are spoken within the municipal borders. In 2019, Botkyrka concluded a pilot project for refugee reception that offers answers to questions about how intercultural integration and reception should be handled in the city to promote sustainable development, social unity and a sense of community. The lens applied to project’s implementation was a fundamentally positive view of the individual and their willingness and ability to contribute to and shape the society in which

²⁸ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/community-connector-project>.

they live. The results derived from the pilot project show that intercultural reception is created in both interaction with refugees and newcomers, and on a structural organisational level. This entails looking at individuals as resources, affirming everyone's intrinsic dignity, providing the right information at the right time, encouraging awareness about standards and reasons behind social mobility, cooperating with civil society and NGOs and empowering newcomers in their self-organisation.²⁹

Meaningful interaction: Interaction, on the basis of equality, is a defining feature of the intercultural approach to integration. Some models assume that newcomers will assimilate into a prevailing ethos or keep apart from the host community – neither of which fosters inclusion or cohesion. Supported by contact theory, interaction is about creating the conditions for meaningful and constructive everyday encounters across people of different backgrounds and lifestyles in a climate of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation. To be meaningful, intercultural integration plans must therefore function in neighbourhoods and in the workplace, in schools and so on, everywhere where individuals engage in daily encounters. Meaningful interaction on an equal footing fosters mutual trust, a sense of belonging and social cohesion. Interaction and participation in reception programmes, projects and/or actions are the basis for the empowerment of diverse societies.

Good practice inspiration: Meeting the practical, social and emotional needs of foreign workers and their accompanying family

Newcomers relocating to Norway often leave behind a familiar and trusted network. Therefore, a project was set up with the aim to help migrants create a new network in Norway. However, a good job is often not enough. To help the assignees build this network, INN (the International Network of Norway) in association with the Bergen Chamber of Commerce, organised a variety of social and professional events.

The goal was to ease local employers' efforts at recruiting foreign employees and getting foreign residents to feel at home in Bergen. There was a great need to recruit qualified employees to the region, according to a survey done by Bergen Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Some of what INN Club membership offered included:

- A meeting place for socialisation and networking
- Consultation for individual concerns and on-going support for the duration of the assignment
- Information sessions and excursions
- Career support for the accompanying spouse/partner
- Spouse club – a social network for accompanying spouse/partner
- Courses in Norwegian culture and customs and the Bergen region
- Activities - leisure and adventure
- Monthly newsletter for all members

In addition, the University of Bergen, the Bergen University College and other higher education institutions in the city have their own programs welcoming foreign students, and the city cooperates with these institutions.³⁰

Active citizenship and participation: “An inclusive society depends on a sense of individual citizenship, based on a clear framework of rights and responsibilities, and on a personal sense of belonging to a whole community, so that individuals feel they are

²⁹ See project description: <https://lucs.se/project/interkulturellt-flyktingmottagande/>.

³⁰ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/inn-bergen>.

fellow citizens with shared values”³¹. Such a sense can be fostered by facilitating newcomers’ access to nationality. However, not all migrants have the same opportunity or wish to obtain the nationality of their country of residence. In those cases, there are still other ways and means to enlarge the participation rights that traditionally come with nationality, starting from the right to participation in political and social life for foreign residents as well as for nationals.³² The local level can also explore and test alternative forms of participation that would enable foreign residents and – more broadly non-citizens – to be involved in shaping at least the local policies that affect the life of the community in which they live. Welcoming policies should be complemented by a horizontal process of public participation, in the design, delivery and evaluation of intercultural plans. Such participation, by individuals and through non-governmental organisations, is essential to match the complexity of the “diversity of diversity”, to engender a sense of participation and ownership, especially on the part of individuals and organisations of minority backgrounds, and to gain widespread public buy-in to the wider intercultural strategy of the city.

b. Intercultural elements for reception policies

An intercultural and inclusive perspective of reception enables the public authorities to strengthen people’s autonomy while reinforcing social cohesion. It should take into account the following guiding principles: multilevel governance; a comprehensive vision and public responsibility; process vision; adaptability and pragmatism; administrative cooperation; mainstreaming reception policies; gender perspective and intersectionality; evaluation and monitoring; cooperation with different actors; visibility of diversities; training and awareness raising; and participation.

Multilevel governance: intercultural integration, reception policies and actions overall benefit from a coordinated multilevel approach, embracing not only one level of government but all of them. They should have a bottom-up element and imply the setting up of participatory processes that allow for policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities and with all relevant stakeholders. This would ensure policy consistency, knowledge and resource sharing, best-practice exchange and mutual learning.

Good practice inspiration: The welcoming communities initiative

A joint central and local government programme implemented by councils across New Zealand to welcome newcomers. Auckland Council, ATEED and Immigration New Zealand (a central government agency responsible for bringing people to New Zealand to enhance New Zealand’s social and economic outcomes) have signed a partnership agreement to leverage collective skills and resources to maximise the contribution that migrant skills and investment make to Auckland. This agreement works across the broad spectrum of attracting and retaining migrant skills and talent in the Auckland region. It focuses on supporting industry, migrants and their families and in addressing gaps and starting to roll out the joint central and local government Welcoming Communities Programme also in Auckland. It emphasises the importance of participation and connecting newcomers with locals. Aligning perfectly with the Intercultural Cities main concepts of diversity, equality, interaction and participation,

³¹ Council of Europe, Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level, Intercultural integration strategies: managing diversity as an opportunity, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-093421-gbr-2555-intercultural-integration-strategies-cdadi-web-a/1680a476bd>.

³² For examples of good practice, see ANVITA, Municipal ID Card, Towards inclusive urban citizenship, December 2021, available at: <https://cloud.anvita.fr/index.php/s/H7m8twY2ydkAB4Y>.

the programme is based on a standard with eight outcomes: inclusive leadership; welcoming communications; equitable access; connected and inclusive communities; economic development, business and employment; civic engagement and participation; welcoming public spaces; culture and identity.³³

Comprehensive vision and public responsibility: reception policies should be framed within the local context and relevant sectors, with an emphasis on respect for human rights and peaceful intercultural coexistence. Reception policies should aim at including newly arrived residents in building the fabric of the city.

Good practice inspiration: A global welcoming vision³⁴

In Sabadell (Spain) the first reception service is offered in coordination with grassroots organisations and includes a comprehensive package of information on how to enrol in the municipal register, monthly sessions about the different services offered by the council, language training, workshops about how to access the labour market and insights to better understand the host society. The welcome sessions are held in five spaces across the city to cover the whole territory and have a translation service. General information is provided in Catalan and Spanish, and in addition the Council has welcoming material in English, French, Arabic, Chinese and Romanian. Specific programmes are implemented for particular groups, namely women and youth. Other services which are offered to residents with a migrant background include voluntary return, family reunification and nationality procedures. Sabadell also supports the Refugees Welcome project aimed at putting refugees in contact with people from Sabadell who want to share their home under conditions of equality and mutual respect. It also offers local residents the possibility of collaborating through volunteering. In the case of people interested in sharing their home, it is necessary to have a free furnished room and to agree on a minimum period of co-habiting of six months with the refugee, and to agree on a social rent. With its project, this non-profit organisation, with presence in 14 countries, wants to go one step further in the involvement of residents in the reception of displaced people. The City Council also annually organises an event to recognise individuals and organisations involved in the reception programmes.

The Tenderol programme (Spain)³⁵ is coordinated by the Catalan Commission for Refugees with the support of the City Council. It arises from the need to respond to people who have received a negative decision on their application for international protection or who have remained outside the state programme. The programme also works with individuals who have completed the state programme but who have not yet reached full autonomy. In these situations, where there is a risk of social exclusion, interdisciplinary intervention teams are required, and the municipalities are the closest administration managing the needs of the individuals who live there. Finally, the city also organises a recognition ceremony for newcomers in which political representatives are represented.

³³ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/the-welcoming-communities-initiative>.

³⁴ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: [A global welcoming vision - Intercultural cities: good practice examples \(coe.int\)](#).

³⁵ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: [Tenderol Project - Intercultural cities: good practice examples \(coe.int\)](#).

Process vision: reception policies should be an integral part of the wider process of building inclusive societies; therefore actions, programmes and projects should be conceived as a first, non-final step in pursuing that goal.

Good practice inspiration: The Canadian newcomer support service (SANC)³⁶

The Canadian newcomer support service (SANC) offers comprehensive support to newcomers, promoting integration and intercultural understanding.

SANC, supported by the city of Sherbrooke, offers a comprehensive range of services to immigrants, from the reception upon arrival, to the installation and settlement, including in the job search process. Some examples of these services include:

- Reception and integration: technical service to find day-care and to accompany parents towards this service (0-5 years). The Sherbrooke region school board (CSRS) registers children (6-17 years old) for school at the organisation's premises.
- Service to access to work from the age of 18.
- Networking.
- Assistance in obtaining citizenship.
- Intercultural bridge-building activities.
- Temporary accommodation.

A pool of interpreters managed by SANC is available and accessible to all, offering translation services in more than 30 languages. The tool is designed to improve access to health and other essential services for immigrants who do not speak English or French.

Adaptability and pragmatism: reception should be framed and coordinated so to bring coherence and synergies to the work of the different departments involved. At the same time, there should be a certain degree of flexibility to allow adaptations of policies to the specificity of each geographical context.

Administrative cooperation: at the local level, sectoral and inter-administrative cooperation and coordination should guide the management and implementation of reception policies in each region taking into account all sectors (legal, labour, education, health, housing, welfare, social cohesion, etc.), as well as the different profiles (immigrants regardless of status, applicants for international protection, people in transit, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, refugees, families...).

Mainstreaming reception policies: reception actions should be linked to policies and services foreseen for the general population.

Gender perspective and intersectionality: reception policies should avoid homogenising minority communities and ignoring their internal diversity. It should be emphasised that intercultural integration does not consider communities themselves as targets of policies: it rather targets societies as actors of integration and seeks to empower individuals with their multifaceted and evolving identities to actively participate in all spheres of society. It is equally important that reception policies also recognise that the migration experience is different according to gender and gender identities. The gender perspective improves the lives of individuals, reduces inequalities, but also of societies, because it strengthens development and social cohesion.

³⁶ See the Intercultural Cities good practice database: [The Canadian newcomer support service \(SANC\), offering comprehensive support to newcomers and herewith promoting integration and intercultural understanding - Intercultural cities: good practice examples \(coe.int\)](#).

Evaluation and monitoring: qualitative and quantitative indicators should generally be incorporated into reception policies, and appropriate tools for participatory monitoring should be put in place.

Cooperation with different actors (private sector, social sector, etc.): reception policies would benefit from the design of projects or new models of public/private/social collaboration able to respond to the realities of migration and the city, such as: care for asylum seekers waiting to enter the state reception programme, job placement with job offers for people in an irregular situation, homologation and validation of university and non-university degrees, psychosocial support, etc.

Good practice inspiration: Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria (CAS): Extraordinary Reception Centres³⁷

The municipality of Ravenna (Italy) subscribed an agreement with the Prefecture (provincial representative office of the Government) in order to manage the Extraordinary Reception Centres (CASs) for those who are seeking international protection. In accordance with this agreement, the municipality launched a bid to select private managing suppliers (social cooperatives), who provide hosting facilities spread throughout the territory. The municipality's management of the CASs aims at improving the quality of reception beyond the core services (accommodation and board). Further activities are offered by the private contractor to improve the general standard of the services provided including Italian language courses, professional counselling, activation of internships/vocational training for people hosted in the CASs; social secretariat, training and psychological supervision to support the social workers of each centre. The action is implemented in collaboration with private suppliers (social cooperatives), local associations, volunteers and civil society organisations.

Visibility of diversities: the visibility and valorisation of diversities, as well as equality in diversity, are important aspects, not only for the reception, but also for the consolidation of plural societies. Different and complementary actions should be promoted, including those aimed at the recruitment of people with different profiles that mirror the diversity of the society.

Training and awareness-raising: basic and continuous training for policymakers, technical staff and civil society on issues related to reception and welcoming policies, interculturality, combating prejudice, racism and discrimination should be part not only of specific trainings but also of cross-cutting training curricula.

Participation: it is essential to promote spaces for dialogue and encounters, to foster spaces for interaction that adhere to the intercultural principles, and which incorporate the greatest diversity of voices, on equal terms, in the decision-making process.

Good practice inspiration: Inclusive welcoming and participation actions

The "Welcome to Salisbury Information Booklet" and the "Community Engagement Framework" improves the intercultural profile of Salisbury (Australia). The comprehensive city-specific package of information and support, called "Welcome to Salisbury Information Booklet", is available in 18 languages (English, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Dari, Hindi, Khmer, Malayalam, Nepalese, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Vietnamese and Spanish and others) and improves the life of almost every newcomer in the City of Salisbury.

Additionally, the "Community Engagement Framework" has a checklist for engaging minority groups including the culturally and linguistically diverse, single parents/carers,

³⁷ See the Intercultural Cities good practices database: [Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria \(CAS\): Extraordinary Reception Centres - Intercultural cities: good practice examples \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/intercultural-cities/good-practice-examples).

and people with disabilities. The guidelines for culturally and linguistically diverse engagement covers interpreters and key community leaders which hold separate sessions tailored to the specific cultural sensitivities of the minority group. For example, the Bhutanese community was recently consulted for the Ability Inclusion Strategic Plan which was successful due to tailored planning and due to the cooperation with interpreters and key staff well known to the community. Other methods include in-person surveys in public places which have been effective in capturing commonly unengaged residents.³⁸

³⁸ See the Intercultural Cities Index database: <https://rm.coe.int/salisbury-australia-results-of-the-intercultural-cities-index-july-202/1680a1e40d>.

4. HOW INTERCULTURAL IS YOUR RECEPTION POLICY?

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expatriates, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. There can also be language barriers that take time to overcome. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions newcomers' capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined in cultural silos. This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city's population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat.

Measuring the intercultural nature of a policy, activity or project means understanding to what extent it:

1. positively addresses **diversity**;
2. promotes **real equality**;
3. fosters meaningful intercultural **interaction**; and
4. promotes active citizenship and **participation**.

The Intercultural Cities programme has developed a full checklist³⁹ to assess how intercultural a city's policy or project is. This paper includes a summary below with several indicators for each section and short comments to help you think about the reception of newcomers to your city.

DIVERSITY - INDICATORS

1. Planning for positive impact

Does the policy take account of the diversity advantage from the planning stage?

If an evaluation of the policy or project is planned, will it help improve how the city values diversity in future?

In the context of welcoming newcomers, when considering reception policies, it can be useful to identify the main political, technical, civil society and private sector actors and spaces to be involved. It is also important to consider participatory preparation of a diagnosis of the demands, needs and resources for reception on the territory through a 'bottom up' approach. Further, it is valuable to involve people who have been newcomers to the city as well civil society in the design, adaptation, monitoring and evaluation of your work.

2. Diversifying decision-making

Is the policy or project team diverse?

If your policy involves external partners, have you engaged with a range of diverse external partners from different sectors and communities?

Apart from wider recruitment policies to ensure the city's team is diverse, for reception policies it is important to include people and partners with different languages and socio-cultural backgrounds. Training on intercultural values can be held with all stakeholders.

³⁹ Council of Europe website, How Intercultural is Your Project? Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/how-intercultural-is-your-project->.

3. Encouraging others to maximise the diversity advantage

Have you thought about how to encourage others to value diversity in your policy partnerships?

Do you have a strategy for your policy to promote the benefits of valuing diversity for all?

A communication strategy can help all city residents better understand the benefits of valuing diversity. There may need to be information meetings for local residents to discuss any issues and the monitoring of public opinion in the city as well as social media.

4. International outlook

Does your policy engage with the diaspora links in your city?

Does the policy promote equal rights to celebrations and cultural features and norms and see this as an opportunity and advantage as a true cosmopolitan city?

Information about the city and international events, celebrations, diaspora associations and cultural features can make people feel at home.

EQUALITY - INDICATORS

1. Human rights and equality measures are reflected in policies and undertaken in practice

Have you considered how the broader concepts of human rights and equality are reflected in this specific policy or action?

Has there been a policy specific impact assessment of how it will affect different groups or localities in the city?

Sometimes national or other policies can limit the rights of newcomers to a city, such as limiting irregular migrants' access to health, housing or services. Cities may need to be creative to think how to support all individuals residing in the city to access the rights and services needed and to mitigate exclusionary policies.

2. Active non-discrimination measures

Have you looked at the policy or project to ensure that non-discrimination is a central component of all its features, including assessing any systemic discrimination?

Will you work in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims where relevant as part of this initiative?

Evaluations of services by users are useful as well as training for staff. This is important to mainstream and implement across all city services. Discriminatory treatment e.g., in the allocation of housing, become mechanisms that reinforce or create social exclusion.

3. Communicating and promoting human rights and equality

Is there a communication plan for the policy to ensure that information reaches all members of the community, and that communication is done in as inclusive a way as possible?

Does the city strive to ensure that diverse groups can help develop and share the communication strategy including through amplifying minority and migrant and other diverse voices?

There could be a specific reception point for new arrivals and information translated into the main languages of origin. Information on the city could be adapted to the main profiles of those arriving with input from communities on what is important to them.

Newcomers can be informed about their main rights: education legal advice, the labour market, recognition of diplomas etc.

4. Positive measures to address inequalities

Have you assessed your policy for structural or other inequalities that will restrict participation in its development, delivery, use, or evaluation and how these may be mitigated?

Have you assessed if it would be useful to work with a range of community and other civil society groups on this policy?

Information could be provided. Depending on the profile and number of migrants and refugees, there could be group reception sessions with diverse participants (not only migrants or refugees).

Protocols of attention could be drawn up for the main profiles of people arriving (people in a regular or irregular situation, unaccompanied children) with referral protocols to specialised or general services.

INTERACTION - INDICATORS

1. Increasing meaningful every-day encounters across difference

Does this policy have the potential to increase positive everyday intercultural interactions between residents in the city?

If the policy involves public space, has maximising intercultural interaction been an integral part of its planning, design, renovation, and use?

Consider where newcomers will be living and what services they will need to access, as well as their personal situation. Try and think how your welcoming policies and actions can maximise interaction with different people, groups and neighbourhoods. This could include where you hold reception sessions, welcome packs with maps and discounts for different events or information on libraries and groups for children. Interpersonal encounters with shared encounters could be encouraged, for example language pairs.

2. Interaction and working in partnership

Is your city working in partnership with others to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups in this policy?

Has the city considered intercultural interaction as a criterium for funding, events, partnerships, or other elements of this particular policy?

Most cities work in partnership on elements of their reception strategy or policies. Talk to your partners about how they maximise mixing and interaction between diverse groups any support needs or good practice they can share.

3. Understanding fears and barriers to interaction

Has the city taken measures to understand if there are any fears and barriers to interaction in a particular location or with regards to this policy?

Communication can be a particular barrier to interaction, does your policy have a clear plan to ensure that these barriers are minimised as much as possible?

Closely monitoring participation, evaluation and working with cultural mediators or partners such as migrant-led communities can help cities understand if there are particular barriers to participation in a reception context. This can be particularly true for people seeking international protection who may have a fear of the authorities, or even others from their country, if they have fled a situation of violence followed by a potentially traumatic journey.

4. Proactively facing challenges and conflicts

Has your city conducted a risk analysis of any potential conflicts that may occur because of, or as part of this policy?

Have you considered developing an anti-rumour strategy, plan, and activities in relation to this policy to challenge stereotypes and prejudices that can limit positive interaction?

Understood as a public policy, an Antirumour strategy, is composed of a number of elements: identifying major rumours existing in a city; collecting objective data and also emotional arguments to dismantle false rumours; creating an antirumour network of local actors from civil society; empowering and training “antirumour agents”; and designing and implementing antirumour campaigns to raise awareness, including by creating and disseminating new tools and resources.⁴⁰

5. Maximising sustained intercultural interaction

Does the policy have elements which may encourage a sense of ownership among residents or specific groups?

How can you ensure that more positive interactions take place but also that the effects are long-lasting? Will the policy outcomes lead to more interaction?

Consulting and communicating with residents and other specific groups in the city can encourage a sense of ownership, as well as encourage joint welcoming events, show that newcomers are valued and showcase the diversity advantage in official communications.

PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS

1. Promoting diverse participation

Is your policy designed to maximise the participation of diverse city residents?

Have you considered what barriers there may be for different groups to participate in your policy and how to overcome them?

Cities can seek out a wide range of views on policies, including of migrant-led organisations before adoption.

Think about where newcomers live and if there are any particular neighbourhoods where reception accommodation is situated or where particular communities are based. Think of any language, cultural or physical barriers from participation such as public transport, ensuring welcoming communication, translation and gender.

2. Working together: Nurturing an understanding of shared fundamental values in communities

Does the city ground all of its work and activities in a sense of a shared understanding of fundamental values?

Has the city actively sought out allies to promote shared fundamental values in this policy?

Schools, businesses, trade unions, migrant communities, women’s groups can all play a role in welcoming societies and sharing fundamental values.

⁴⁰ Intercultural Cities, ‘Anti-Rumours’, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/anti-rumours>.

5. ACTION POINTS

This matrix presents possible action points when developing or examining welcoming policies based on the principles of intercultural reception. For each principle, necessary elements and possible steps are defined, together with useful resources for further reading.

Principles of interculturality	What is needed	Action Points	Resources
Cross-cutting themes	Pre-planning	<p>Identification of the main political, technical, civil society and private sector actors and spaces to be involved.</p> <p>Participatory preparation of a diagnosis of the demands, needs and resources for reception in the territory.</p> <p>Proposal for a reception strategy.</p>	<p>Migrant representation & participation bodies in the intercultural city: key considerations & principles</p> <p>Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Strategies for the Intercultural City</p>
	Training	<p>Basic and continuous training throughout the organisation.</p> <p>Psychosocial support of professionals.</p>	<p>Model framework : Managing diversity as an opportunity.</p> <p>Intercultural competences for technical and political positions in local governments</p> <p>Challenges of Interculturalism: Guidelines for a training module</p> <p>Online trainings</p>
	Evaluation and monitoring	<p>Evaluation and monitoring by professional users and entities (surveys, focus groups or mailbox).</p> <p>Civil society participation in the design/adaptation and evaluation and monitoring.</p>	<p>Intercultural Cities Index</p> <p>The Intercultural City Step-By-Step</p>
Equality	Information	<p>Documents with information adapted to the main profiles of newcomers in the city.</p> <p>A specific reception point for new arrivals.</p> <p>Translation service in the main languages of origin.</p>	<p>Checklist, real equality.</p>

		People informed on main topics: registering, education system, legal advice, language learning, labour insertion, recognition of diplomas, new demands identified, etc.	
	Care and support	<p>Identification and prevention of discrimination.</p> <p>Procedures to identify and support the main profiles of arrivals (people in a regular or irregular situation, unaccompanied minors, applicants for international protection, people in transit...).</p> <p>Referral protocols to specialised or general services (specialised social care, housing, job placement, victims of gender violence, etc.).</p>	<p><u>Identifying and preventing systemic discrimination at the local level.</u></p> <p><u>Preventing the potential discriminatory effects of the use of artificial intelligence in public services.</u></p> <p><u>LGBTI inclusion and equality initiatives for the intercultural city.</u></p>
Diversity	A diverse team	<p>Encourage the recruitment of people of origin and/or with language capital present in the city.</p> <p>Working with a wide, diverse group of partners.</p>	<p>Checklist, <u>valuing diversity</u></p> <p><u>Business and diversity</u></p>
	Social and cultural recognition	<p>Incorporation of people with different languages and socio-cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Sessions with migrant organisations.</p> <p>Sessions led or with the participation of migrant organisations on social and cultural codes of the host society.</p>	<p><u>Facilitators' guide for welcoming session</u></p> <p><u>Intercultural citizenship test</u></p>
Interaction	Promotion of group actions and meeting and exchange spaces	<p>Welcome group activities</p> <p>Interpersonal encounters with shared objectives (language pairs, etc.).</p> <p>Fighting myths: Antirumour strategy.</p>	<p><u>Antirumour resources</u></p> <p>Manual, <u>Together against hate speech</u></p> <p><u>Youth, sports, inclusion</u></p>

	Networking	<p>Creation of a working space with immigration entities, or to generate spaces for exchange.</p> <p>Participation in municipal spaces that allow the provision of information and services from other administrations.</p>	<p>Checklist, <u>meaningful intercultural interaction</u>.</p>
Participation	Creating space for inclusive participation	<p>Encouraging participation in associations or civic life.</p> <p>Participation of diverse individuals or groups (not only migrants or refugees) in welcoming activities.</p> <p>Seeking out allies such as schools, trade unions, women's groups etc.</p>	<p><u>Urban citizenship and undocumented migration</u></p>
	Linguistic adequacy	<p>Incorporation of non-official languages in general city services that require it.</p> <p>Services, programmes, or dissemination mechanisms aimed at residents in non-official languages.</p>	<p><u>Language policies for the intercultural city</u></p>

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.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

