



# Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence

## Part 1 – The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model



Committee of Experts on Intercultural  
Integration of Migrants (ADI-INT)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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**Committee of Experts on Intercultural  
Integration of Migrants (ADI-INT)**

French version:  
*Manuel sur la conception de formations à la  
compétence interculturelle –  
Partie 1 – Principes clés du modèle  
d'intégration interculturelle  
du Conseil de l'Europe*

ISBN 978-92-871-9389-6

ISBN 978-92-871-9390-2 (PDF)

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Cover design and layout:  
Documents and Publications Production  
Department (SPDP), Council of Europe  
Cover photos: Shutterstock

Council of Europe Publishing  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
<http://book.coe.int>  
ISBN 978-92-871-9393-3  
ISBN 978-92-871-9394-0 (PDF)

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Printed at the Council of Europe

# Contents

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<b>PREAMBLE</b>	<b>5</b>
The structure of the manual	7
<b>GETTING STARTED</b>	<b>9</b>
What is intercultural competence?	9
Why do we need intercultural competence training?	12
How to organise (large-scale) intercultural competence training	14
<b>CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INTERCULTURAL INTEGRATION MODEL</b>	<b>19</b>
Ensuring equality	20
Valuing diversity	24
Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction	30
Promoting active citizenship and participation	35
<b>PRACTICAL LEARNING</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>INTERCULTURAL GLOSSARY</b>	<b>61</b>
Other relevant definitions	63
<b>REFERENCES AND RESOURCES</b>	<b>67</b>
References	67
Further reading	71
Online resources	74





## Preamble

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**I**ntercultural competence refers to the set of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which enable both individuals and organisations to act in an interculturally competent manner. Therefore, intercultural competence is not a single concept, but a wide range of competences which, when put together, allow for proactive action to secure a healthy intercultural environment.

Public officials operating in an intercultural society should be able to detect and respond comprehensively to the challenges posed by cultural differences and to modulate their approach accordingly. For public institutions, having an interculturally competent staff becomes even more relevant in the current geopolitical, health and climate contexts which highlight the importance of strong and sustainable diversity management policies to be able to respond to critical situations and emergencies.

While intercultural competence is developed on an individual basis, organising intercultural competence training for decision makers, public officials and other relevant stakeholders enables the application of an intercultural lens to public policies and activities, promoting a more inclusive culture.



Intercultural competence should therefore be mainstreamed throughout any organisation.

This manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence has been developed by the Committee of Experts on Intercultural Integration of Migrants (ADI-INT) and was adopted on 29 November 2022 by the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI).

The manual is one of the tools produced to support the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration<sup>1</sup> by Council of Europe member states. In paragraph 29 of the appendix, the recommendation states that “institutions and organisations should develop intercultural competences and attitudes among their staff, encouraging them to acquire the skills to enable constructive exchanges, dialogue and co-design based on shared values and goals”.

The need for capacity building on intercultural competence is also addressed in the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level<sup>2</sup> (adopted by the CDADI in June 2021), which states (on page 38) that “encouraging participation also implies providing instruments and competence training to public officers who are in more direct contact with a diverse population”.

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1. Council of Europe (2022).

2. Council of Europe (2021).

The training course to be designed based on this manual should target mainly civil servants of public authorities at the national, regional and local levels. The course can be addressed either exclusively at those officers working in fields closely related to intercultural integration, or potentially also at those working in non-strictly related areas, thus allowing the intercultural principles to be mainstreamed into the general policy making. Paragraph 12 of the appendix to CM/Rec(2022)10 states that member states should:

adopt a holistic approach to integration by ensuring that public policies in all fields and at all levels, as well as civil society stakeholders, contribute to the goal of building inclusive societies. This approach would foster real equality and allow states to benefit from the positive potential of the diversity of their populations.

Similarly, paragraph 14 states that intercultural integration policies “should not be limited to a specific policy sector, but they should transcend all policy areas. All public policies should contribute to the integration of people of different socio-cultural backgrounds”. In addition, member states are further encouraged to also develop a specific shorter training course for directors and high-level officials, in order to train those who have a decisive role in how the policies and organisational culture of their areas are shaped.

## **The structure of the manual**

The manual takes inspiration from the work and experience gathered through the Intercultural Cities programme in fulfilment of Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 on intercultural integration<sup>3</sup> which states that “measures such as those outlined ... foster cohesive and inclusive diverse local communities. Such measures include ... intercultural competence of local officials and actors”. It further adapts the extensive set of guidance and materials originally produced for the local level to other levels of governments, thus allowing all public authorities to design their own tailor-made training courses with a view to acquiring the skills and competence necessary to implement the Council of Europe intercultural integration model in a coherent and multilevel manner.

The manual contains a description of the main features of intercultural competence, followed by seven concepts that are key for the successful implementation of intercultural integration strategies by public authorities. It is split into two publications for facilitated access. Part 1 outlines the core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model, including

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3. Council of Europe (2015).



information on real equality, valuing diversity, meaningful intercultural interaction and active citizenship and participation. And Part 2 details concepts related to the intercultural integration model, with information on prejudice, discrimination and inclusive communication.

Each topic of the manual includes the following elements, which can be used as they are or as sources of inspiration when designing the training course.

- ▶ **Definition:** a brief definition of the principle/concept.
- ▶ **Longer context:** a more in-depth presentation of the topic and context, including references for those who wish to learn more about the topic.
- ▶ **Examples of model exercises:** model exercises which can be used directly or inspire adapted exercises to support the learning. The exercises are designed to be especially useful in group settings where the participants can discuss their reflections.
- ▶ **Examples of model quizzes:** model quizzes which can be used directly or to inspire locally adapted quizzes which allow the participants to test their knowledge. The quizzes and feedback provided are based on the content to be found under the “Definition” and the “Longer context” sections of each principle/concept.
- ▶ **References:** each longer definition has a number of references directly referenced in the text as well as other inspirational resources which may be interesting.

In addition, the manual includes an intercultural glossary for practitioners which brings together all relevant definitions from across the manual.



# Manual for the design of a training course on intercultural competence

## Part 1 – The core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model

### Getting started

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#### **What is intercultural competence?**

In increasingly diverse societies, intercultural competence is key for public officials and the general public alike. The ability to understand each other across all types of barriers and in diverse situations is a fundamental prerequisite for making our diverse societies work. Effective intercultural competence needs to combine theoretical skills with action and includes a level of curiosity, interest in lifelong learning and an ability to cultivate a spirit of openness.

Intercultural competence refers to the set of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which enable both individuals and organisations to act in an intercultural competent manner. Intercultural competence is not a single concept, but a wide range of competences, which when put together allow for proactive action to ensure an intercultural environment, as well as for intercultural competent reactions to the variety of situations we all face daily. It further entails actively seeking meaningful intercultural interaction and taking action to fight prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. While the competence is developed on an individual basis, organising intercultural competence training for all the staff within an organisation can lead to an intercultural lens being applied to all activities and decision making, creating intercultural competent organisations and a more inclusive organisational culture.

Intercultural competence encompasses knowledge of intercultural principles and concepts and is linked with various fields ranging from anti-discrimination to communication or service design. To be effective, the set of competences also includes a range of soft skills such as empathy, critical thinking, the ability to listen and interact, respect, understanding of one's own background, influence and biases, and many more. Intercultural competence further entails an understanding of the difference between individuals and actions, and an ability to react appropriately to actions which do not respect the fundamental principles of human rights, without alienating the individual. Intercultural competence is therefore a growing skill set and not a one-off event – it is strengthened through daily practice and continuous lifelong learning.<sup>4</sup>

Training courses and tools in intercultural competence ultimately pursue a change of attitudes and behaviours, encouraging participants to critically review their basic assumptions, world views, cultures and knowledge, and to raise awareness about situations other than their own. The objective is increased openness through contact with others from different backgrounds. Being intercultural competent has been widely recognised as essential for peaceful coexistence in a diverse society. Numerous recent policy papers and recommendations of the Council of Europe, such as the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue,<sup>5</sup> the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level and Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration, have underlined its importance.

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4. Council of Europe (2008).

5. Ibid.

Intercultural competence is a way to address the root causes of some of the challenges in societies such as misunderstandings across cultural, socio-cultural, ethnic and other lines, including discrimination, racism and hate speech. Intercultural competence should be understood as a holistic approach combining values, understanding, attitudes and skills, based on the four principles of intercultural integration: ensuring equality, valuing diversity, fostering meaningful intercultural interaction, and promoting active citizenship and participation, as well as the Council of Europe human rights framework.

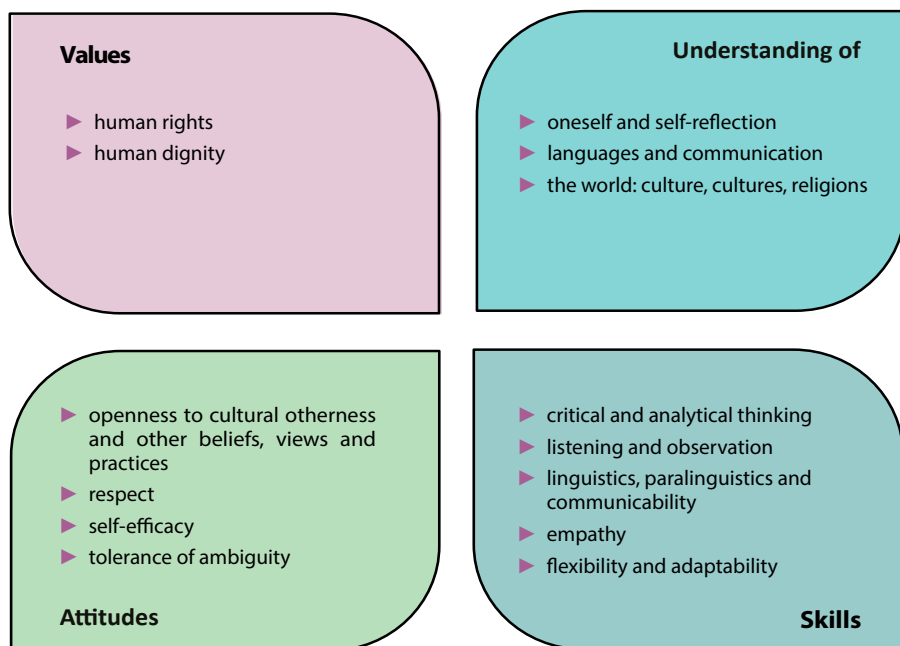


Figure 1 – The areas of intercultural competence



## Why do we need intercultural competence training?

Our societies are constantly changing and adapting, and it is increasingly important that communities and also public authorities and management structures at all levels of government welcome diversity and adapt to it.

A study carried out by the Migration Policy Group on how the intercultural integration approach leads to a better quality of life in diverse cities<sup>6</sup> underlines that cities which adopt inclusive integration policies show better results in residents' perception of cohesion, confidence

in the administration, security, quality of services, well-being, good governance and economic growth. Indeed, research has also found that inclusive integration policies at the national, regional and institutional levels contribute to reduced anti-immigration prejudice among the native population in areas with high levels of immigration.<sup>7</sup>

Intercultural integration is both an approach and a process. It implies a way of making and developing public policies that seek to guarantee equality and equity, value diversity, foster meaningful intercultural interaction, and promote active citizenship and participation; it involves all areas of the administrations and a multilevel governance approach. This logic of internal action requires "structural" or institutional elements such as political commitment or the promotion of transversality, as well as the development of intercultural competence.

More particularly, the acquisition and development of intercultural competences is essential for all individuals working in public administration, including elected officials, to ensure they can respond to the challenges of an increasingly diverse population and are equipped to address relationships and communication with people from diverse backgrounds and contexts. To some extent, intercultural competence is the precondition for the design and implementation of intercultural strategies and policies at the local, regional and national levels, and a critical dimension of the mindset which makes

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6. Joki et al. (2017).

7. Kende et al. (2022).

the intercultural policy shift possible. It involves skills that allow the promotion of structural change in institutions and an addressing of the causes of inequality, discrimination, exclusion, the lack of recognition and respect for diversity and the lack of spaces for meaningful intercultural interaction.

In this sense, intercultural competence helps officials and other stakeholders to:

- ▶ interact and communicate in a more inclusive way:
  - with the public, in which unequal relationships are recognised and potential conflicts and divergences could be better understood and managed;
  - with colleagues, by managing relations in diverse work environments;
- ▶ build a new, more inclusive narrative about society, by transforming both the internal and external discourse of the administration;
- ▶ design, implement and evaluate more inclusive policies to:
  - provide better services adapted to the socio-cultural reality of each territory;
  - foster the potential of diversity;
  - empower the population to participate in public life.

These competences will be necessary for each and every phase of the public policy cycle: the diagnosis of the context; the design of the policy, its implementation and its subsequent evaluation.

Advancing in the learning and improvement of intercultural competences also implies knowing what limitations and barriers to learning and development exist. Administrators may not always be prepared to meet the demands and needs generated by a diverse population and there may be a lack of technical and, above all, political training. This may also be impacted by a lack of knowledge about the socio-cultural diversity, and, in some instances, also resistance to change at a staff level. This may be linked to the notion that topics not directly related to their specific field of work are perceived as unnecessary, thus contradicting the cross-cutting nature of the intercultural integration model.

This phenomenon of resistance to change at staff level could be related to a weak political will and a lack of consensus on the implementation of integration policies. If the government endorses intercultural integration in the development of public policies, it may be easier to demand this responsibility from all public officials. At the same time, the lack of socio-cultural heterogeneity in the public administration's staff affects the design of policies and programmes, as heterogeneous teams favour distinct visions of diversity and

get closer to the reality of the territory. Thus, the homogeneity of some teams may also explain why in some instances there is perception that improving intercultural competence is not relevant.

## How to organise (large-scale) intercultural competence training

There is very little research on the development of intercultural competence in public administrations. This means that the design of training programmes must take inspiration from other fields such as education, leadership theory and psychology while ensuring the intercultural competence training responds to the specific needs of policy makers and professionals.

When organising intercultural competence training, it is therefore important to ensure that it includes a rationale as to why such training is important across the organisation and ensuring there is sufficient political support to implement it effectively. Before launching the training programme, the organisers must further verify that the programme is inclusive, enabling all participants to fully take part in the training and maximising the learning outcomes.

Trainers may therefore wish to address the following questions.



- **Is the training organised in a manner that allows everyone to take part and fully access all content?**
- **Is the trainer prepared to deliver this type of training?**
- **Have special conditions or needs of participants been taken into account during the preparation?**

It is also important that the training environment contributes to building trust through meaningful intercultural interaction. Fostering an environment of mutual trust and sharing will ideally create a culture of openness and a setting for meaningful exchanges. Ensuring that the training course is participatory and that all participants are treated as equals will allow them to have more ownership of the learning process, which increases the opportunity for sustained learning. Trainers may therefore wish to consider the following.

- ▶ Creating a judgment-free environment: all opinions are valid and important.
- ▶ Validating feelings and experiences, not stereotypes, prejudice, judgments or opinions.
- ▶ Engaging the participants in interactive and immersive exercises and debates: let the participants discover and feel rather than explain what inclusion or exclusion are.
- ▶ Promoting dialogue and mutual listening, ensuring everyone has room to speak if they wish to do so.
- ▶ Provoking reflection and self-questioning with open questions and generosity.
- ▶ Using and stimulating the sharing of examples and short stories and avoiding sharing the trainer's opinion or devaluing the participants' opinions.
- ▶ Avoiding one-on-one debates, ensuring to engage the whole group during discussions.

Ensuring that the programme corresponds to the real needs of the organisation and of the officials engaged in the training process is important to increase the buy-in from the participants. To further create sustained action within the organisation, it is important to have the support of the political level and leadership, extending the training to these target groups can be beneficial, to encourage learning throughout the whole organisation. Training the decision makers can help reduce negative attitudes towards training within the organisation. It is therefore important to clearly state the goals of the training and to set out a clear methodology. It may be useful to address the following areas.

- ▶ Survey in advance of the training course: conduct a survey to understand the participants' needs, attitudes and previous knowledge. This survey can also work as an *ex ante* assessment to be compared with a *post ante* survey to evaluate the impact of the training after three to six months.
- ▶ Evaluate the impact of the training: impact evaluation is crucial to ensure buy-in from leadership and make the business case for continued training development. It can also help restructure the training course as needed to ensure maximum impact.
- ▶ Optional training may have advantages at first: keep in mind that optional training courses will attract mostly participants already sensitive to the issue. To reach those who are less interested in the topic, it may be useful to adopt a mandatory strategy. If well communicated, such a strategy can reduce potential resistance within the organisation. This is one of the reasons to invest in a judgment-free environment.



- ▶ Prepare internal trainers: a train-the-trainer approach will ensure knowledge stays in-house and that the training can be reproduced later on if needed. With more trainers, it is also possible to train more staff in less time. The trainers can also work as internal champions for intercultural integration, a mutual support group or an advisory group to help create and develop intercultural plans or even internal diversity and inclusion plans. This can be done for internal staff but also for strategic partners. A facilitation guide can also be developed to describe best practice and recommendations for delivering intercultural competence training.
- ▶ Teams of two trainers are recommended: this enables trainers to better deal with any confrontations and sensitive issues. If trainers are delivering online or blended training, this is also useful to manage the different platforms which may be used to interact with the participants during and in between sessions. During in-person sessions, one trainer can prepare activities or take notes while the other is talking, etc. Two trainers also have better capacity to give each other feedback, reflect together on the training sessions and continuously improve their performance.
- ▶ Gather suggestions during the sessions: training sessions are excellent opportunities to hear and note concerns, suggestions and ideas. These, together with listening to the public, will provide useful input for the development of intercultural plans and strategies.
- ▶ Choose the most convenient training format for the participants: a mixed option combining online and in-person training, or independent and in-group training (blended learning) can be a solution as it combines the best of two options.

To ensure the training course is effective and efficient, it is important to consider the various options available in terms of training format and spaces, and to mitigate any potential risks and challenges which may arise due to the chosen format.

Format	Advantages	Risks	Mitigation
Fully online (independent learning or group sessions)	<p>Useful for dispersed or busy groups.</p> <p>Cheaper and less time-consuming: more participants trained in less time with fewer resources.</p> <p>More inclusive for individuals with certain disabilities – adjustment also possible depending on learning preferences.</p>	<p>Less inclusive for individuals with no or bad internet access or no access to technology/with fewer IT skills.</p> <p>More distractions.</p> <p>Lack of contact with other participants, minimising meaningful intercultural interaction and opportunities to meet and learn from each other.</p>	<p>Combine synchronous (online interactive sessions with the trainer and participants present at the same time) and asynchronous (videos to watch, tasks to complete, etc.) training as a way to provide fully online blended learning.</p> <p>Promote collaborative group tasks.</p>
	<p>More inclusive for individuals with chronic illnesses, carers, individuals living in remote areas.</p>	<p>Feelings of isolation, lack of comfort in expressing questions/doubts.</p>	<p>Create online open forums in real time and “how to” guides.</p> <p>Offer optional extra synchronous sessions or one-on-one meetings for questions.</p>
	<p>Allows for autonomy and easier adjustments to each individual learning rhythm.</p> <p>Use of diversified learning tools.</p>	<p>Problems with internet connection – participants may not be able to fully participate.</p>	<p>Develop IT skills in extra lessons.</p> <p>Make IT rooms with good internet access and local IT staff available to support or offer computers or tablets.</p>

Format	Advantages	Risks	Mitigation
In-person	Better for groups living in the same area or groups which are easy to bring together.	Time-consuming – may lead to more dropouts.	Combine in-person sessions with asynchronous sessions (videos to watch, tasks to complete, etc.) – transform it into blended learning.  Plan sessions together with the target groups to ensure they are meaningful and useful.
	Increased impact on meaningful interaction.  Fewer distractions.	Greater expense for organisers and/or participants: travelling to and from the training, providing food, etc.	Offer support for travel and meals.
	Possibility to organise visits, group activities, etc.	Can be less inclusive for individuals with certain disabilities, chronic illnesses, carers, individuals living in remote areas, etc.	Provide sign language or audio descriptions; adjust games and materials to all participants.
	More inclusive for groups with no internet access, computer or IT skills or with lower literacy levels.		Ensure the meeting spaces are accessible and welcoming for all participants.

# Core principles of the Council of Europe intercultural integration model

Intercultural integration is a policy model based on the ideas and practice of interculturalism as outlined in the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 on intercultural integration and CM/Rec(2022)10 on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration. The policy model is guided by four main principles: ensuring equality, valuing diversity, fostering meaningful intercultural interaction, and promoting active citizenship and participation.

Thorough theoretical and practical knowledge of these principles forms an essential and integral part of the intercultural competence toolkit for all policy makers and public officials and lays the foundation for applying the intercultural lens to policy making. In the following chapters of this manual these four principles will be defined and discussed in detail with accompanying exercises, quizzes and additional resources.

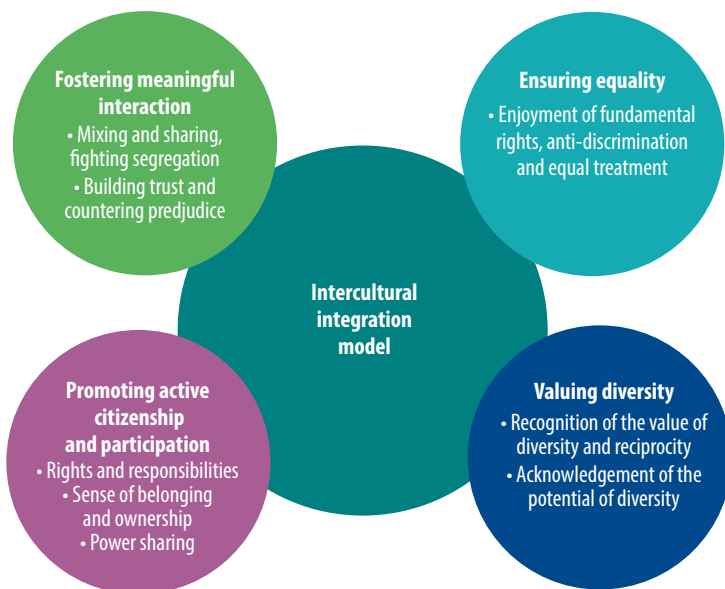


Figure 2 – The core principles of the intercultural integration model



## Ensuring equality

### Definition

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Equality (in this context) refers to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights, and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or “access”) can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equitable outcome.

### Longer context

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Equality has a long and venerable basis in human rights law and constitutional law on every continent and is referenced in the recent UN Sustainable Development Goals, which urge states to “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard” (SDG 10.3).

The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 refers to equality as one of the four core principles of intercultural integration. It states that integration policies should result in the equality of treatment and of opportunity for all members of society, including through an approach taking into account all forms of direct and indirect discrimination (paragraph 17 of the recommendation's appendix).

Equality does not mean all individuals are the same. It is instead a way to ensure all actions follow the principle of shared humanity. Equality therefore points to a form of similarity that does not exclude differences.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, recognising the individuality of human beings does not mean treating everyone uniformly in every aspect or context but rather doing so where there is a clear moral claim to be treated alike.<sup>9</sup>

Today there is a widespread belief in expressive individualism or the ideal of authenticity.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the interdependence of people and their dependence on the community is accepted. In this sense, interculturalism recognises the balance or interplay between individuals (to express and realise their potential) and groups (to empower and support). Society must therefore not only guarantee legal equality, meaning that laws are the same for all (whether to protect or punish), sharing the same obligations and enjoying the same rights,<sup>11</sup> but also guarantee political equality, meaning all citizens (and, in some instances, residents) regardless of characteristics such as ethnicity, class or background, can participate in public life and elected positions and contribute to the making of laws.

Nevertheless, equality does not necessarily result in equity. For example, a measure that might seem fair, like all students having the same amount of time to complete an exam, could also be experienced as unequal by a person who needs extra time to compensate for the effects of a health condition.

The question of how to guarantee equality of treatment (of law, of opportunities, but also of recognition) and equal access to resources therefore remains important. A constant and contextual evaluation of situations is necessary to guarantee equitable treatment, and decision makers must modulate rights according to people's situations and needs, with the help of mechanisms which allow everyone to exercise their rights.<sup>12</sup> This is close

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8. Hansen-Löve (2021).

9. Gosepath (2021).

10. Taylor (1989).

11. Baraquin et al. (2000).

12. ICC (2017).

to John Rawls' conception of "social justice" as "the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation".<sup>13</sup>

## Systemic barriers to equality

Institutions can create systemic barriers that have serious and long-lasting impacts on the lives of those affected. Equality laws will not resolve everything on their own, especially those which are not fully enforced because their remedies are difficult for everyone to access. Many laws are also framed in terms of victim/perpetrator, which individualises fault and downplays structural causes.<sup>14</sup> In countries like Canada, laws promote the adoption of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in order to tackle, among other things, indirect and direct discrimination: for example, refusing to offer a job because of the religious beliefs of the candidate (direct discrimination) or the absence of affordable childcare services which prevents many women from advancing their careers (indirect discrimination). This does not, of course, always prevent discrimination from arising, but it provides a framework for assessing the nature of equal treatment.

It can be difficult for everyone to access different support methods offered by a public administration due to unequal levels of knowledge about the programmes themselves or about the eligibility requirements set by the administration.<sup>15</sup> This may suggest that information distribution channels are often neither clear nor well resourced, or that those who have framed the process have not given sufficient thought, at an early enough stage, to accessibility and non-discrimination considerations.

Similarly, access to civil servant jobs is difficult for some community members because of the cultural codes implicit in the job requirements and recruitment processes. Implicit and unconscious bias among hiring committee members can also form a barrier. Mandatory intercultural training, and equality auditing of recruitment processes, are likely good first steps in these situations.

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13. Rawls (1999).

14. Spade (2015).

15. ICC (2021b).

## Partnering with other levels of government: the role of regional and local authorities in promoting equality

There has been quantifiable progress toward greater political and social egalitarianism, if not economic equality, since at least the end of the eighteenth century. Many elements have played a role in this progress, including political struggles, power dynamics and institutions, as well as ideas and ideologies. Through their policies and practices, and thanks to closer contact with the residents, regions and cities are important to help guarantee formal equality as well as greater social and economic equality (fair distribution of resources) within their jurisdictions. Guaranteeing all individuals access to services, but also facilitating the fair distribution of these services, permits those who are disadvantaged for various reasons to contribute more fully to society and better enjoy their lives. Interculturalism therefore insists on the importance of achieving real equality as one of its pillars, in order to prevent discrimination, to adapt services to the local needs of populations and to realise the diversity advantage.<sup>16</sup> The intercultural integration model<sup>17</sup> also notes that equality “enables relationships of reciprocity, respect and solidarity between individuals of diverse backgrounds”. It suggests that equality principles should be applied to every administration’s own workforce, partners, suppliers and consumers/beneficiaries. Such fairness, which takes account of individual strengths, needs and circumstances, makes it harder for harmful political narratives that scapegoat particular groups to find fuel.

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16. ICC (2021).

17. Ibid.





## Valuing diversity

### Definition

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**Diversity** (in this context) is the range of human features which make individuals differ from one another in various ways, some but not all of which are characteristics protected by human rights law. Aspects of identity such as age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, social class, education, economic background, religion, work experience, language, geographic location, political opinion or family status, are among the sources of diversity.

**Valuing diversity** is the idea that diversity can bring benefits for organisations, communities and businesses, making societies more resilient and successful, when managed with competence and in the spirit of inclusion. This can happen when diversity is considered an asset to be promoted and included in all decision-making processes. Promotion of diversity is not a singular action but represents a vision and a philosophy of governance. Further, potential drawbacks and disadvantages of mismanaged migration and ineffective integration policies should be noted in order to underline the need for a proactive approach to diversity management.<sup>18</sup>

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18. Edo et al. (2018).

## Longer context

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Valuing diversity is one of the four core principles of the Council of Europe's intercultural integration model. The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 states that:

public policies at all levels should take into account the potential of diversity and inclusion in institutions, organisations, living environments and the public space ... and that they should focus on maximising the value of diversity for society as a whole.

The same recommendation speaks of valorising the diversity of migrant languages as an asset to society (paragraphs 20, 21 and 31 of the recommendation's appendix).

Diversity is indeed an intrinsic feature of human communities, and, if managed in a respectful and competent way, it can become a source of resilience, vitality and innovation.

Under the individualised approach that is central to the intercultural integration model, the concept of diversity is wide, encompassing the full range of identities, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability status, socio-economic status and more. This means that there are as many sources of diversity as there are individuals. International law, however, speaks mostly about "cultural diversity" rather than other varieties. The notion of cultural diversity is supported by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in Article 27 states that "everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits".

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity states that the term "cultural diversity" refers to the diverse forms of culture across time and space, and that diversity is represented in the "uniqueness and plurality of the identities of groups and societies". The declaration's introduction also states that cultural diversity should be considered "as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature". This declaration promotes the positive value of cultural diversity, encouraging linguistic diversity, creativity and dialogue among cultures, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of self-expression, including artistic creation and dissemination.

The successful promotion of diversity in our societies facilitates the process of integration and inclusion of migrants and minorities in general, through their active and positive participation in social, cultural, economic and political life.

The intercultural integration model also recognises the value of diversity for increasing societies' resilience to crises, their dynamism and capacity for

progress, and includes actions and resources for the preservation of cultural diversity in all its forms.

## Diversity's evolution

Historically in Europe, diversity was first discussed in relation to longstanding communities such as Jews or Roma and Travellers,<sup>19</sup> who are protected under Council of Europe and United Nations conventions as “persons belonging to” distinct communities. This was overlaid by post-war cross-border migration and, thanks to the exponential growth of globalisation and global urbanisation, by more recent “superdiversity”<sup>20</sup> or “hyperdiversity”, where communities are not so distinct or easy to define. In this context, the strength of the intercultural integration model is that it focuses more on the individual level than the group.

According to the International Organization for Migration,<sup>21</sup> the number of international migrants increased from 153 million in 1990 to 281 million in 2020, bringing major changes to the ethnic composition of many societies around the world and having an impact on several sectors, including the labour market, educational systems and urban development. However, migration is not the only source of cultural diversity: 7 139 languages, for instance, are currently spoken worldwide.<sup>22</sup>

Today, support for diversity focuses on inclusion and meaningful intercultural interaction, with solutions adapted to specific cultural contexts and covering a wide range of “diversities”. The intercultural integration model aims at recognising diversity (of individuals and groups) as an asset for personal, social and economic development, and at developing positive actions to preserve and promote it. Unlike the “multicultural” approach, which tends to emphasise the peaceful coexistence of separate groups, the intercultural integration model focuses on building bridges between diverse communities and individuals in order to create the conditions for meaningful intercultural interaction, mutual enrichment and inclusivity.

The UNESCO Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005),

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19. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/ Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

20. Vertovec (2007).

21. IOM (2020).

22. Ethnologue (n.d.).

the EU Platform of Diversity Charters (2017) and European Diversity Month (launched on 4 May 2021) are other important initiatives providing policy frameworks and concrete actions to promote the management of diversity.

## Valuing diversity through realising the diversity advantage

The concept of diversity advantage starts from the thesis that diversity is not a threat and, when managed well, can bring enrichment to all sides and in the widest sense. In this sense the benefits of diversity are very much intertwined with those of inclusion.

Realising the diversity advantage is, however, not automatic. It requires that diversity be accompanied by specific inclusion policies and strategies that enable diverse contributions to shape the cultural, economic and social fabric, making society truly inclusive and managing conflicts that may threaten group and community cohesion.

Individuals, organisations, businesses and communities must develop the capacity to listen to diverse voices and integrate the perspective of others in the processes of policy development and when designing new initiatives, services and products. Doing so will allow them to unlock potential benefits and identify potential pitfalls that people of only one background might not have identified. More obviously, aspects of diversity such as multilingualism can be valuable socio-economic resources.

## Some examples of the benefits of diversity

Several studies have found that ethnic and religious diversity are in fact associated with increased economic and social well-being. One study demonstrated that groups with a high level of homogeneity are more vulnerable to negative external crises than more diverse groups, since the latter are better able to access a wide range of solutions to problems and challenges.<sup>23</sup>

Many other studies have analysed the relationship between diversity and business productivity or financial performance, showing that there is a direct, positive correlation between them. In one study,<sup>24</sup> it was demonstrated that companies with diverse teams have better results, including an operating profit margin up to 12.6% higher than companies with less diverse teams. In another,<sup>25</sup> which focused on venture capital firms, researchers found that

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23. Page (2008).

24. Andersen and Andersen (2016).

25. Gompers and Kovvali (2018).

diversity significantly improved financial performance at the individual portfolio and company level, as well as overall fund returns.

Findings from such research could be generalised and applied to many other sectors and human interactions. The diversity advantage is also visible at the national level, with a consistent positive correlation, on balance, between immigration and economic growth. A recent analysis of highly skilled occupations in fields such as law, medicine, science, academia and management<sup>26</sup> shows a positive relationship between diversity and the value of goods and services produced in the United States of America since 1960. There is similar evidence of a “diversity dividend” in Europe<sup>27</sup> and also in relation to non-economic factors such as general well-being<sup>28</sup> and safer local neighbourhoods.<sup>29</sup>

Researchers similarly find that cities featuring more diverse urban workforces have higher levels of wages and productivity, suggesting positive spillovers from urban immigrant diversity. Specifically, a large number of immigrant source countries tends to improve the economic well-being of both firms and workers.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, diversity acts as a public good that makes workers more productive and communities more resilient by enlarging the pool of knowledge available to them, as well as by fostering opportunities for them to cross-pollinate ideas and generate innovations. Similarly, members of the Intercultural Cities programme have found that vocal promotion of the concept of diversity advantage has contributed to an improvement in social cohesion, particularly with regard to neighbourhood relations and openness towards migrants and minorities.<sup>31</sup>

## Diversity management

The concept of “diversity management” is based on the belief that managing diversity is more effective (and more cost-effective) than simply ignoring its challenges. Since the 1990s, the concept has been used in the field of the labour market and organisational management.<sup>32</sup> However, it is crucial to extend the topic of “diversity management”, and its benefits, to other fields, promoting policies and actions that value diversity as a resource in public

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26. Hsieh et al. (2019).

27. d’Albis, Boubtane and Coulibaly (2018).

28. Singh, Hedge and Atreay (2017).

29. Males (2017).

30. Kemeny and Cooke (2015).

31. Joki et al. (2017).

32. Prasad and Mills (1997).

institutions, urban spaces, social and cultural activities and political life. For instance, the effective management of diversity in the education sector will improve social cohesion and will, in turn, create more competent young citizens equipped to contribute to more inclusive societies.

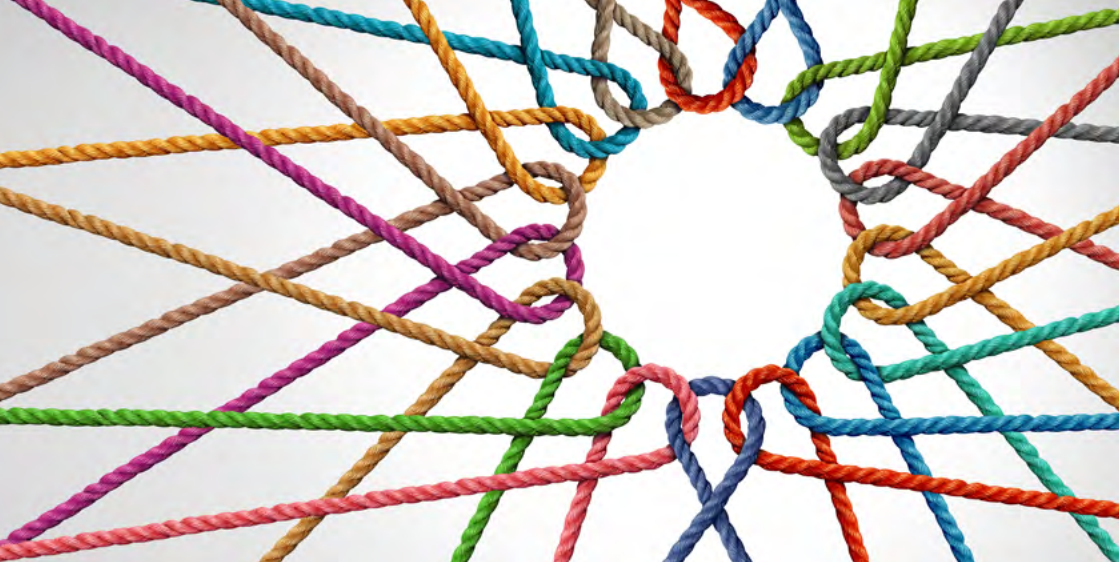
In addition, effective management of the tensions that may arise from a rapid or unprecedented increase in localised diversity is key to avoiding conflict escalation.

For this reason, this concept should be considered and applied as a comprehensive approach in public and private governance and decision making, including affirmative actions to facilitate group participation in numerous sectors.

Recommendations for managers in every field, to increase representation of diverse characteristics within groups in a well-managed way, include the following.

- ▶ Start early. It is important to encode diversity in an organisation's or company's "DNA" at the earliest stages; it is far easier to build a diverse organisation from the ground up than to diversify a large, complex but homogeneous bureaucracy.
- ▶ Recognise that subtle, intentional shifts can create ripple effects. Public procurement can privilege companies which are clearly committed to diversity, giving them a competitive boost, for example.
- ▶ It is not necessary to explicitly favour a particular group when hiring. Often simple adjustments in the selection process can increase diversity. One example is using blind evaluations of prospective candidates; auditioning musicians behind screens has dramatically increased the percentage of women who make the cut for symphony orchestras.
- ▶ Diversify beyond the workplace. "Homophily" is the tendency – often a harmless and legitimate desire – to interact with people who are like us. But social interaction across difference tends to reduce prejudice and will help increase intercultural competence in the professional and other spheres.

In summary, it is important to be willing to openly recognise and tackle bias: when people choose to ignore bias or deny that it exists, they keep seeking out business partners, team members and employees who share their traits, and they miss out on the many quantifiable benefits of diversity.



## Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction

### Definition

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**Meaningful intercultural interaction** is any constructive encounter in a social setting between individuals or groups from different cultures and lifestyles in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation. Intercultural policy speaks of “meaningful interactions” between different cultural or ethnic groups, which recognise both the differences and similarities between such groups/individuals, promote the atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation and counter the tendency towards self-segregation. Meaningful intercultural interactions are those that take place on equal terms, be they challenging or positive, and which should ultimately be fulfilling for all involved, advancing common goals.

### Longer context

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The Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 on multi-level policies and governance for intercultural integration contains a whole section devoted to fostering meaningful interaction and states that public policies at all levels should seek to create spaces and opportunities for meaningful and positive interaction between members of society from a wide range of backgrounds as a precondition for building trust and living together, as well as for realising the advantages diversity brings. It further encourages public authorities and other organisations to support intercultural activities

and projects that bring individuals of diverse origins together, build social networks and foster reciprocal understanding (paragraphs 27 and 30 of the recommendation's appendix).

Based on "contact theory",<sup>33</sup> the methodology of meaningful intercultural interaction is about creating conditions for constructive everyday encounters across not only cultural divides but also other types of difference (gender, age, socio-economic status, etc.). Many studies have provided evidence that contact with members of a group considered "other" reduces tendencies to negatively stereotype that group. For example, one study<sup>34</sup> demonstrated that making friendships with individuals who are part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community reduces prejudice relating to sexual orientation or gender identity, while another study found that white participants' friendships with individuals with a Latino or African American background reduced their implicit biases toward those groups.<sup>35</sup>

Meaningful intercultural interaction, as a form of active intervention by public authorities to de-marginalise communities (or to prevent marginalisation), is a cornerstone of the intercultural integration model.<sup>36</sup> This model advises that sustained and effective effort should be made to bring a diversity of residents into contact with one another on a regular basis. Especially when it comes to housing, schools, employment, businesses, social services and urban planning, it is "critical to promote mixing and meaningful intercultural interaction in the public space rather than let segregation happen unwittingly through a *laissez-faire* approach". Specifically, this means, for example, equal opportunity for all children to attend a good local public school, with teachers recruited from diverse groups,<sup>37</sup> or social housing that is not concentrated in stigmatised neighbourhoods.<sup>38</sup> It also means supporting sport, arts and cultural initiatives that consciously aim to maximise meaningful intercultural interaction and processes of co-creation that will unlock the diversity advantage wherever possible. Every policy, programme and project can be examined with an eye to whether or not they will foster such mixing and trust-building, while wider public (media) communications can amplify local stories of constructive interaction. Such an approach builds, as the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level puts it, a "shared, not segregated, public sphere".

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33. Allport (1954).

34. Hodson, Harry and Mitchell (2009).

35. Aberson, Shoemaker and Tomolillo (2004).

36. Council of Europe (2021).

37. European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2019).

38. ICC (2015).



Meaningful intercultural interaction mainly happens at the local level. However, regional and national policies can play a crucial role in encouraging local policies able to create a healthy environment for meaningful intercultural contacts. Cultural events and centres play an especially important role in building the common public space, where most intercultural interactions will occur, by encouraging people to explore the plurality of identities through the diversity of their heritage, as well as through contemporary cultural expressions.

## Meaningful interaction in practice at the individual or group level

While meaningful intercultural interaction is about creating conditions for fruitful everyday encounters across cultural and other differences, achieving such interaction in diverse societies, mixed neighbourhoods, schools, public spaces, organisations or communities is a challenging task. Without conscious and focused measures to build a sense of equality, mutual understanding and collaboration, both at the individual and communal level, meaningful intercultural interaction is rarely achievable.<sup>39</sup>

Accepted patterns of social behaviour and communication are often referred to as “social codes” or “cultural norms”.<sup>40</sup> These are “rules and standards that are understood by members of a group that guide or constrain social behaviours without the force of law”.<sup>41</sup> They often relate to a perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in specific behaviours<sup>42</sup> and, while often unspoken or subconscious, these norms are highly influential upon interactions with others.

Intercultural competence entails knowledge of accepted patterns of social behaviour and communication of a given individual or group, and a certain mastery in dealing with new, diverse, non-routine situations, and the mobilisation of people’s attitudes, skills and sentiments in order to achieve a meaningful outcome.<sup>43</sup> All environments have their own accepted patterns of behaviour. Intercultural environments and interactions are often complex as they are usually semi-spontaneous, characterised by a greater diversity of participants, and the rules of such interactions are often implicit or ambiguous. Nevertheless, the better everyone (administrators, residents, newcomers,

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39. ICC (2017).

40. Dulebohn (2020).

41. Cialdini and Trost (1998).

42. Ajzen (1991).

43. Khovanova-Rubicondo (2021).

migrants, minorities) understands the environment or the context in which the meaningful intercultural interaction occurs, the greater the chances of adapting to achieve a meaningful outcome. Subtle elements that play a key role in determining the nature – and often the outcome – of a social interaction include the following.



- ▶ Communication/speech – Explicit or implicit communication, the language/ words used, the volume of voices, the ways in which messages are conveyed in the context of a given situation.
- ▶ Non-verbal behaviour – Use or occupation of space, gestures, facial expressions.
- ▶ Appearance (dress code) – This is a main vector of non-verbal communication. It immediately communicates a person's image to others in ways that are culturally determined, particularly in relation to social status and gender.
- ▶ Rules of etiquette – What may be polite in one culture may be considered offensive in another.

The mirroring or partial mirroring of an interaction partner's social codes may convey several and very diverse messages, depending on the situation in which they are expressed. They may for instance announce openness: "I am part of your group", "I am ready to communicate with you according to your rules", "I am ready to share something with you" or "I would like to be part of your group".

Conversely, when they are not adapted to a group or environment, they may be perceived as "rejectionist behaviour", which can be interpreted as:

- ▶ a willingness to impose our own style ("I do not want to adapt", "I dress the way I want without conforming to any dress code", "I do not want to be like you", etc.);
- ▶ disrespecting the cultural norms of the interlocutor(s) or believing that it is entirely one party's job to adapt to the norms of the other;
- ▶ seeking to subdue someone through social difference;
- ▶ imposing judgment without seeking to understand another's perspective or culture.

The consequences of such behaviour will be manifested socially (victimisation, alienation and isolation, exploitation and oppression) or psychologically

(emotional suffering, low self-esteem, guilt, fear of others, mistrust, suspicion). Interculturally competent individuals, organisations and institutions shall therefore be aware of the dangers of behaviour that may be perceived as rejectionist and seek out patterns of conduct to avoid it.

Adapting to behaviour patterns accepted in a different group from your own does not mean forfeiting your identity. It means searching for ways to communicate more meaningfully and more effectively; to establish a positive connection with your interlocutor. It involves:

- ▶ being conscious of your own culturally determined behaviour patterns and social codes as much as knowing those of the people with whom you may be interacting;
- ▶ being respectful of your interlocutor regardless of their social status;
- ▶ adapting your behaviour in a way that facilitates communication;
- ▶ considering adjustments (in how you dress, for example) with which you feel comfortable, but which also signal respect towards your interlocutor's culture.

The goal is to share information, identify common ground, exchange signs of mutual understanding and find ways to obtain a meaningful outcome for all involved.

Accommodation is a two-way street. To meaningfully interact, effort has to be made by everyone involved. In the local environment, this means that all those involved in an intercultural interaction – administrators, public servants, minority and majority population representatives, migrants, newcomers – must make this effort in order to create an inclusive and cohesive community. At the same time, individuals coming into a group may have to make a greater effort to understand certain norms and values of the group. The role of the group, meanwhile, is to help the newcomer integrate and feel at ease. Therefore, it is natural for newcomers to be accompanied in this process, perhaps receiving relevant advice, guidance, explanations, clarifications of the norms and appropriate assistance. A good example of such an accompanying strategy is the “welcome policy”<sup>44</sup> that the member cities of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities programme implement in pursuing their intercultural model to immigrant and refugee integration.

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44. ICC (2021d).



## Promoting active citizenship and participation

### Definition

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

### Longer context

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

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 reaffirms that:

meaningful economic, social, cultural and, where appropriate, political participation by all members of society, including migrants and persons with a migrant background, should be encouraged and supported, with special efforts made to empower marginalised, socially excluded and vulnerable people. (Paragraph 32 of the recommendation's appendix)

Participation is understood not only as the exercise of the right to vote but also as actions of advocacy, deliberation, co-production and monitoring of policies by a population. Indeed, the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level specifies that voting rights alone do not guarantee active citizenship and participation for foreign residents and that alternative forms of participation to enable them to at least contribute to local-level policies should be explored.

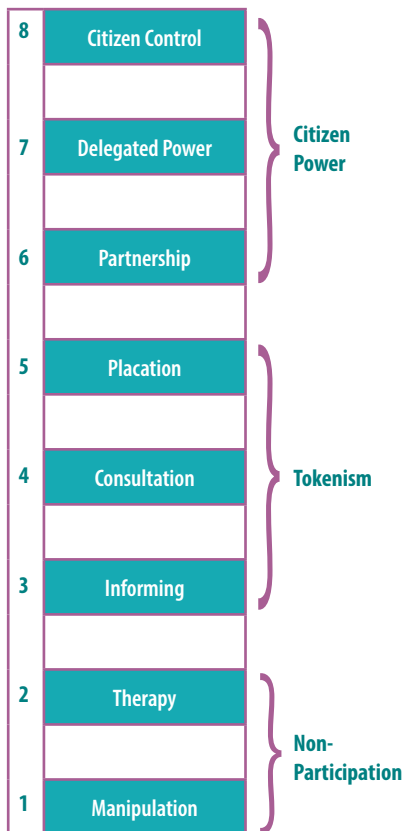


Figure 3 – Ladder of Citizen Participation by Sherry Arnstein

Participation implies power-sharing. It means involving people of diverse origins and characteristics in the decision making in institutions, be they political, educational, social, economic or cultural. As Sherry Arnstein’s “ladder of participation” (image on the left) indicates, participatory policies allow for varying degrees of participation: from mere information or even manipulation, to a real ceding of power to residents. The degree of participation that is allowed is not only decisive for the relevance of a participatory process but also for its potential to foster meaningful intercultural interaction within a population; if participants can only answer “yes” or “no” in a questionnaire, there is no room for sharing arguments and perspectives, getting to know the “other” and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. However, less intensive participatory processes such as consultations can also be useful to gradually start engaging and empowering groups that may not think public policy decision making is a space for them. While digital technology’s newer forms of consultation and participation (such as social networks, online community forums, petitioning and crowdsourcing) certainly expand the quantity of participation,

they sometimes risk reducing the quality of civic engagement. The key point is that any level of participation should be consequential; if people do not feel that their contribution has the potential to really influence the process then they will become demotivated and cynical about participation.

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

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

The Council of Europe has long been concerned with promoting participation as an element of building higher quality democracy. Addressing the state level, the Committee of Ministers adopted a set of Guidelines for civil participation in political decision making,<sup>45</sup> pointing out that collaboration in a decision-making process reinforces the strength of the institution and leads to a better quality of decision. In 2018, they adopted the far-reaching Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 to member states on the participation of citizens in local public life,<sup>46</sup> which includes principles on local democratic participation policy (Appendix A) as well as steps and measures to encourage and reinforce the participation of citizens in local public life (Appendix B). The recommendation explicitly includes foreign residents within the definition of citizen, where this is appropriate.

Other international bodies have likewise expressed the importance of full, diverse and meaningful participation at the local level – see, for example, the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City<sup>47</sup> and the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City of United Cities and Local Governments<sup>48</sup> with more than 400 signatory cities. In Article 4 of the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, cities

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45. Council of Europe (2017).

46. Council of Europe (2018).

47. UCLG (2000).

48. UCLG (2011).



commit to adopting active policies to support the population in vulnerable situations, guaranteeing each person the right to citizenship and participation. Through Article 8, on the right to political participation, the charter recognises that cities

must promote the extension of the right to vote and to stand for election at the municipal level to all non-national citizens of legal age after a period of two years of residence in the city.

The New Urban Agenda of the United Nations Habitat III Programme<sup>49</sup> calls on cities to encourage participation, generate a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants and to create public spaces that contribute to improving political participation. In line with the intercultural model, the agenda commits to the promotion of respect for diversity and equality as a key element of the humanisation of cities and to the establishment of institutional, political, legal and financial mechanisms to broaden inclusive platforms for meaningful participation in decision making, planning and universal monitoring processes.

## Why do we need active citizenship and participation?

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

- ▶ **Representativeness:** Participation (in elections and less formalised processes) is a mechanism to guarantee representation. However, if certain groups are systematically under-represented, what is seen as “participation” can become an additional instrument of exclusion and a threat to democracy.
- ▶ **Accommodating diversity:** The concept of “superdiversity”<sup>50</sup> teaches us that we should no longer think about how to “integrate” migrants, but rather how to organise participation in a society to reflect its diversity. Socio-cultural diversity goes well beyond migration (elderly people, religious

49. Habitat III (2016).

50. Vertovec (2007).

minorities, people with disabilities, people belonging to a minority ethnic group, people with non-normative sexual orientations, etc).

- ▶ Improving effectiveness: Considering the needs of the population will make public services more effective and cost-efficient. When organising a participatory process, if the results do not consider the needs of an important part of the population, resources will be allocated to partial solutions. By increasing the support for public policies, their credibility and sustainability increase as well.
- ▶ Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction: A participatory process that manages to involve all types of people in problem identification and decision making will not only produce more inclusive results, creating spaces and services for all, but will also encourage meaningful intercultural interaction and show people they can work together in meaningful, constructive ways. An ideal participatory process resembles a deliberative process – that is, a thought-provoking dialogue about preferences, values and interests in a non-coercive way between different groups and individuals.<sup>51</sup> Within a deliberative model, a decision is made based on the best arguments rather than power, and the exchange of arguments also leads to a better understanding of the other’s perspective. Furthermore, this effect is reinforced by the “contact hypothesis”, according to which interaction between people from different backgrounds helps to combat stereotypes and foster a common identity, as long as the participants are on an equal footing and are solving a common problem.<sup>52</sup>
- ▶ Empowerment: Participatory processes are a laboratory of democracy where we learn to express opinions and ideas, accept other people’s opinions and reach compromises, adhering to communicative and democratic “rules of the game”. They can become a tool for the empowerment of people who are under-represented or without any direct political spokesperson in institutions.
- ▶ Building trust: Participation can establish or strengthen the links between the public administration and different groups that feel neither represented nor heard, building bonds of trust and mutual understanding that are then useful in future, especially during crises.

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51. Dryzek (2000).

52. Gaertner et al. (2016).





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

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

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

Ideally, an appropriate budget and logistical support should be provided by the relevant public authority.

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

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

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

## Designing an intercultural participatory process

There are several key elements that need to be taken into account when designing a participatory process from an intercultural perspective, as shown by the following figure.

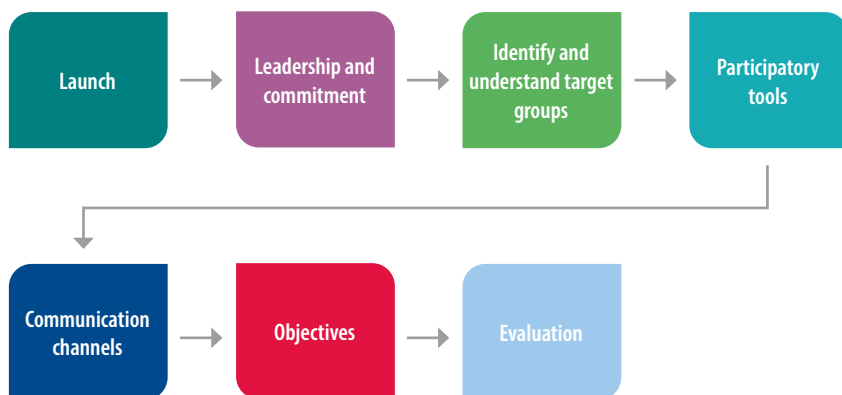


Figure 4 – Steps in designing an intercultural participatory process

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

The logistics also need to be considered with intercultural sensitivity. This may mean holding events at times which are convenient for the participants rather than the officials, the choice of a venue in the community or in a public authority building, the availability of culturally appropriate refreshments and places/times for prayer and recognition of specific needs such as free childcare arrangements.



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

Finally, in “The intercultural city step by step”,<sup>53</sup> a number of principles that guide effective approaches are offered to public authorities at the local level. The following recommendations from the manual may be useful for all levels of government.

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

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

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53. ICC (2021c).







## Practical learning

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Intercultural competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours. To build knowledge and enhance skills, it is important to combine theoretical training with practical exercises to ensure that what is learned can be effectively applied in real-life situations. This practical approach to training helps enforce behavioural change and a change in attitudes within an organisation and has an impact on how the intercultural lens is reflected in policy making and service provision. It is therefore strongly suggested that the theoretical approach in this brief is combined with practical exercises to challenge attitudes and reflect on behaviours.

The following are a few model exercises and quizzes for inspiration.



## Examples of model exercises

### Core principles of the intercultural integration model

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#### Ensuring equality

1. Compare areas of unearned advantage with those of unearned disadvantage in your own life, using – but not necessarily limited to – the following prompts: social class, education, employment, ethnicity, family, financial inheritance, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, housing, language, mental/physical ability, health, national/ethnic origin, social networks, region, religion. Make a list of 10 privileges/advantages that you take for granted but which others around you may not have at all. In what ways do you think our world views teach us not to emphasise unearned advantages?<sup>54</sup>

2. Choosing one item from the above, list the various ways in which you know the city/region/state is already trying to “close the gap” of that inequality through policy and practice, and then brainstorm around further ways that it might do so. Try to be as extensive as possible, thinking about all the different areas of public policy and intervention that may have an influence

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54. McIntosh (1989).

and whether they have been previously engaged on the issue. If you get stuck, it is probably because you are working alone and therefore lack diversity advantage. Note down, or start to research, who would have the life experience (of the discrimination or exclusion) needed to help co-design more effective solutions.

## Valuing diversity

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1. When did your organisation/administration last conduct a diversity survey? If you do not already have recent data relating to your workplace's diversity, think about how this might best be gathered and whether the survey could also pose the following questions to its respondents.

- ▶ Does our diversity fail to reflect the diversity of the city/region/state/area and, if so, why do you think this is the case? How can we gather the views of various under-represented people about the reasons for their under-representation?
- ▶ What other types of diversity were not captured by the survey and how do you think these can be relevant to your work? (For example, educational, economic or experiential diversity such as experience of parenthood, of migration or of using welfare services.)
- ▶ How do you think your recruitment and other workplace policies or adjustments (regarding flexible hours or shared roles, for instance) could better attract, retain and promote those who are under-represented?
- ▶ Until more representative internal diversity can be achieved, what participation strategies could we be using to bring that diversity into our planning and decision making? Do you think there is enough institutional support (on a budgetary level, for example) for such strategies?

## Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction

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1. Think about a recent meeting or gathering with a diverse group of participants (spanning different backgrounds, genders, age, field of work, etc.) in which you were either a participant, guest, facilitator or convener and make a list of what sorts of challenges to meaningful intercultural interaction arose (such as varying expectations about roles, levels of participation or objectives; language inequality). In hindsight, evaluate what you think could have been done to improve: a. the agenda (including the representativity of speakers) and methodology; b. the scope and intersectional diversity of the participants; or c. the supporting facilities, accessibility features and/or meeting space that might have made the intercultural interaction more equitable and otherwise meaningful.

2. Think about your current place of work – make a list of where meaningful intercultural interactions have occurred. You can also take into consideration diverse interactions which include members from teams or departments very different from your own and with individuals from different backgrounds to yourself. Consider what made you think of these specific interactions and what made them meaningful to you. Are there lessons to be learned from these interactions that you, your team, department or organisation could use to promote more meaningful intercultural interactions in your place of work and in the policies you implement?

3. Thinking about a current or potential intercultural conflict relevant to your area of work, research relevant cross-cutting identities shared by individuals of the groups involved and how these backgrounds might be used to open up constructive dialogue. You may need the assistance of data, research or contacts from an entirely different administrative department with which you normally have little direct “interaction” yourself.

### **Promoting active citizenship and participation**

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1. Imagine an area (geographical or topical) where 30% of the population are recent newcomers. Within this area a participatory process has been promoted for finding solutions to a commonly occurring challenge. The participatory process consisted of meetings with the population concerned, the organising of events and an online questionnaire advertised through your channels. At the end of the process, you find that only 2% of the newcomer residents had participated. You therefore decide to promote a new participatory process in which a higher percentage of the diverse population will be engaged. What would you do to promote a higher level of participation? Try to design a step-by-step strategy for achieving this objective.

2. Familiarise yourself with your organisation’s standard evaluation procedures. Assess how these could be applied to participatory processes and critically review if there are missing aspects. Would the evaluation fully assess how successful the process has been? Who would be included in the evaluation process? Which aspects and lessons learned may not be identified through the process as it stands at the moment? Aim to draw up additional aspects which could ensure the evaluation covers the full spectrum of the intercultural participatory process.



## Examples of model quizzes

### Core principles of the intercultural integration model

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#### Ensuring equality

1. Equality is a core principle of all the following, except what?

- a. inclusion and non-discrimination;
- b. the intercultural integration model;
- c. cultural globalisation (correct response).

**Feedback:** Equality refers to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights, and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or “access”) can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid

to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equitable outcome.

## 2. Equity, an important goal, differs from equality because...

a. it treats citizens more uniformly;

**b. it takes account of individual circumstances and needs before deciding what is fair (correct response);**

c. it enables relationships of reciprocity, respect and solidarity.

**Feedback:** Equity means modulating rights according to people's situations and needs in order to achieve true fairness. Equality does not mean all individuals are the same. Accordingly, recognising the individuality of human beings does not mean treating everyone uniformly in every aspect or context but rather doing so where there is a clear moral claim to be treated alike. Equality does not necessarily automatically result in equity. For example, a measure that might seem fair, like all students having the same amount of time to complete an exam, could also be experienced as unequal by a person who needs extra time to compensate for the effects of a health condition.

## 3. Equality laws are more effective if...

**a. they are paired with policy and practice to prevent inequalities and discrimination arising (correct response);**

b. they are not enforced too often;

c. they are distinguished from the right to non-discrimination.

**Feedback:** An important element of interculturalism is the proactive prevention and reduction of inequalities through policy and practice. Institutions can create systemic barriers that have serious and long-lasting impacts on the lives of those affected. Equality laws will not resolve everything on their own, especially those which are not fully enforced because their remedies are difficult for everyone to access. Therefore it is important there is a legal framework combined with effective policies and practices as well as intercultural competence and anti-discrimination training of the implementing bodies.

## Valuing diversity

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### 1. The official promotion of cultural diversity is important because...

a. it is a way of preserving cultural heritage from any change;

**b. it facilitates the inclusion of newcomers, marginalised groups and minorities (correct response);**

c. it is a unique value for the cultural sector.

**Feedback:** Promoting cultural diversity at an official level is important to clearly signal that everyone, including newcomers, marginalised groups and minorities, all belong and have a right to express their own cultures. Indeed, no culture is static – rather, all cultures evolve and change over time. Learning from each other and finding new ways of doing is always valuable. This also relates to the diversity advantage, which highlights that all individuals irrespective of background, when given an effective policy and human rights framework, can contribute to society in a meaningful way. Understanding and official promotion of diversity should therefore not be limited to a single sector or team. Diversity is a component of today's social fabric, a fact which concerns each and every one of us. All sectors of government should mainstream communication about diversity into their work with the view to mirroring the diverse composition of society.

## **2. What is the diversity advantage?**

a. The “diversity advantage” indicates that diversity will always bring positive effects to organisations and societies, irrespective of the policy framework;

**b. The “diversity advantage” is the idea that diversity can bring competitive benefits for organisations, communities and businesses, making them more resilient and successful, if diversity is managed in a competent and skilful way (correct response);**

c. The “diversity advantage” focuses on how only private organisations can take advantage of diversity.

**Feedback:** The “diversity advantage” is the result of policies that value diversity. These are based on the idea that diversity can bring competitive benefits for organisations, communities and businesses, making them more resilient and successful if managed in a competent way and with a spirit of inclusion. This can happen when diversity is considered an asset to be promoted and included in all decision-making processes. The diversity advantage is, however, not automatic. It requires that diversity be accompanied by specific inclusion policies and strategies that enable diverse contributions to shape the cultural, economic and social fabric, making society truly inclusive and managing conflicts that may threaten group and community cohesion. Individuals, organisations, businesses and communities must develop the capacity to listen to diverse voices and integrate the perspective of others in the processes of policy development and when designing new initiatives,



services and products. Doing so will allow them to unlock potential benefits and identify potential pitfalls that people of only one background might not have identified.

### 3. When trying to bring diversity to a (real or virtual) workplace, it is...

a. better to focus first and foremost on reforming entry-level recruitment procedures;

b. essential, before beginning, to conduct up-to-date, in-depth research on the proportions of ethnic and other groups in the area you serve;

c. good to start as early as possible in the evolution of your organisation or administration (correct response).

**Feedback:** Whenever possible, it is wise to embed diversity into the “DNA” of the organisation as early as possible. It is important that diversity is addressed at every level and in the organisational culture to help further the diversity advantage throughout the organisation. While demographic research can be beneficial for further action and to understand the current status, it is not an essential prerequisite before starting on the work of increasing workplace diversity – taking action and changing behaviours and attitudes while building knowledge and skills are the steps which ultimately will lead to a more inclusive and interculturally competent workplace.

## Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction

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1. In the intercultural model, “meaningful intercultural interaction” requires that a social interaction involve...

a. a basis of equality and mutual respect (correct response);

b. more than two people;

c. an encounter across cultural differences but not across other kinds of differences.

**Feedback:** Meaningful intercultural interaction requires a basis of equality and respect. It also should identify and ultimately advance common goals. A meaningful intercultural interaction can involve any number of individuals or groups, even just two. Sometimes these smaller interactions are indeed the most powerful. Similarly, while intercultural interaction is often understood in the context of cultural differences, it can be used in the context of any kind of difference and – when meaningful – it takes account of the complex, multiple and intersecting identities of those who interact.

## 2. The understanding of social norms is important...

a. because you will be expected to account for your social norms in an intercultural interaction;

**b. as they are often unspoken or subconscious but are highly influential upon our interactions with others (correct response);**

c. because knowledge of social norms is the main skill when considering intercultural competence.

**Feedback:** Accepted patterns of social behaviour and communication are often referred to as “social codes” or “cultural norms”. These are “rules and standards that are understood by members of a group that guide or constrain social behaviours without the force of law”. They often relate to a perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in specific behaviours, and, while often unspoken or subconscious, these norms are highly influential upon interactions with others. Intercultural competence entails knowledge of accepted patterns of social behaviour and communication of a given individual or group, and a certain mastery in dealing with new, diverse, non-routine situations, as well as the mobilisation of people’s attitudes, skills and sentiments in order to achieve a meaningful outcome.

## 3. In meaningful intercultural interaction it is essential...

a. to make sure the venue contains no symbols of culture or religion;

b. to know what attitudes about dress code are typically part of the culture of those with whom you are interacting and to dress and behave according to those norms to show cultural respect;

**c. to be conscious of one’s own values, social norms and behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) (correct response).**

**Feedback:** In meaningful intercultural interactions, self-awareness is just as important as knowledge about those with whom one is interacting. Intercultural environments and interactions are often complex as they are semi-spontaneous, characterised by a greater diversity of participants, and the rules of such interactions are often implicit or ambiguous. Nevertheless, the better everyone (administrators, residents, newcomers, migrants, minorities) understands the environment or the context in which the intercultural interaction occurs, as well as how their own values and behaviours are reflected in the situation, the greater the chances of achieving a meaningful outcome. Adapting to behavioural patterns accepted in a group different from your own should not mean forfeiting your identity. It means searching for ways

to communicate more meaningfully and more effectively and to establish a positive connection with your interlocutor.

## Promoting active citizenship and participation

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**1. Which situation below is NOT an example of “participation” in the intercultural context?**

- a. asking a critical question at a meeting of a neighbourhood association;
- b. voting or exercising any other political right;
- c. going to a (diverse) neighbourhood street party (correct response);**
- d. commenting anonymously on a survey about policing shared via a social media group dedicated to countering hate speech;
- e. signing a petition against a public property being sold to a property developer;
- f. volunteering on a school board.

**Feedback:** Going to a neighbourhood street party can be a great example of intercultural interaction but is not “participation” as defined here – unless someone attending wants to interview you, on the record, about an issue of public concern while you eat your cake! Participation and active citizenship occur when stakeholders have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support to freely express their opinions and influence decision making on matters that affect them.

**2. ...is the engagement of individuals, non-governmental organisations and civil society at large in decision-making processes by public authorities.**

**a. Civic participation (correct response)**

- b. Voting
- c. Intercultural participation
- d. Advocacy

**Feedback:** Intercultural participation is a more refined concept within civic and political participation, in which everyone in a diverse environment has an equal opportunity to contribute to and influence decisions on matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural

participation requires an equal and respectful basis, in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain stakeholders' active participation.

**3. Imagine you are supporting the design of a participatory process about the refurbishment and use of an old building. To reach a wide diversity of stakeholders, you could...**

- a. map the spaces where different target groups tend to gather nearby, and plan to hold meetings or conduct surveys there;
- b. provide interpretation during the sessions for the most relevant local languages;
- c. offer evening as well as daytime sessions or ask people whether this would be helpful;
- d. publish the process, and how to get involved, on a website in all official languages, then further publicise the opportunity via local radio stations popular with local ethnic communities;

**e. do all of the above (correct response).**

**Feedback:** All of these would indeed be good strategies to increase diverse participation. The different strategies would help increase ethnic, gender, socio-economic or educational diversity, for example. When it comes to participation, the more diversity, methods and points of view that can be successfully included in the planning and implementation of the process, the more likely it is to attract diverse participation and input.



## vocabulary

- The stock of words used by or known to a particular people or group of persons.
- A list or collection of the words or phrases of a language, technical field, etc., usually arranged in alphabetical order and defined.
- The words of a language.
- Any collection of signs or symbols constituting a means or system of nonverbal communication.

## Intercultural glossary

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**T**his glossary aims at fostering a shared and consistent understanding of the principles and concepts linked to intercultural integration. Definitions come from key resources produced by the Council of Europe, whether it be by the Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme, the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) or other Council of Europe entities. These resources include in particular the Model framework for an intercultural integration strategy at the national level, adopted by the CDADI in June 2021, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 6 April 2022, and various ICC thematic papers.<sup>55</sup> Unless specified otherwise, the definitions included below are taken from one or several of these Council of Europe resources. They are not meant to build a normative basis and are shared for the purpose of common understanding.

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55. Council of Europe (n.d.).

**Intercultural integration:** Intercultural integration is a two-way process involving individuals, communities of individuals and society as a whole. It consists of effective, positive and sustainable diversity management policies that aim to help society benefit from the potential of diversity and manage its complexities, on the basis of reciprocal and symmetrical recognition, under an overarching human rights framework. 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 intercultural interaction between people across their different socio-cultural backgrounds, and to facilitate their equal participation in and contribution to society (see Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10). As a model, intercultural integration is based on four fundamental components: **ensuring equality, valuing diversity, fostering meaningful intercultural interaction, and promoting active citizenship and participation.**

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

**Diversity** (in this context) is a range of human features which make individuals differ from one another in various ways, some but not all of which are characteristics protected by human rights law. Aspects of identity – such as age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, social class, education, economic background, religion, work experience, language, geographic location, political opinion or family status – are among the sources of diversity.

**Equality** refers to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or “access”) can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within

interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equitable outcome.

**Intercultural competence:** the ability to understand and respect each other across all types of barriers. Intercultural competences refer to the set of knowledge and skills necessary for people and organisations to act in an intercultural way in diverse societies.

**Meaningful intercultural interaction (fostering)** is any constructive encounter in a social setting between individuals or groups from different cultures and lifestyles in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation. Intercultural policy speaks of “meaningful interactions” between different cultural or ethnic groups, which recognise both the differences and similarities between such groups/individuals, promote the atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation, and counter the tendency towards self-segregation. Meaningful intercultural interactions are those that take place on equal terms, be they challenging or positive, and which should ultimately be fulfilling for all involved, advancing common goals. Fostering meaningful intercultural interaction through public policies is about creating conditions for positive and constructive everyday encounters across people of different backgrounds and lifestyles in a climate of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation.<sup>56</sup>

**Valuing diversity/diversity advantage** is the idea that diversity can bring benefits for organisations, communities and businesses, making societies more resilient and successful, when managed with competence and in the spirit of inclusion. This can happen when diversity is considered an asset to be promoted and included in all decision-making processes. Promotion of diversity is not a singular action but represents a vision and a philosophy of governance.

## Other relevant definitions

**Alternative narratives:** the communication of facts and commentary in relation to phenomena which may be subject to prejudice, stereotypes and hate speech, as an alternative to prejudice-based discourses. Alternative narratives are a form of constructive and inclusive communication, promoting critical thinking while avoiding a paternalistic or morally superior attitude.

**Anti-rumours strategy:** a long-term process of social change that seeks to prevent discrimination, improve coexistence and harness the potential of

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56. Council of Europe (2021).



diversity by countering diversity-related prejudices and rumours. Its ultimate goal is to trigger a change in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours among the general population and specific target groups.<sup>57</sup>

**Discrimination** (in this context) is unjustifiably different (distinctive, exclusionary, restrictive, preferential) behaviour towards and/or treatment of certain persons or groups, based on traits of the person or on particular characteristics of the group. Discrimination is generally understood as differentiation which causes harm and is distinguished from prejudice and stereotyping by being an action or outcome of those attitudes.

**Intercultural society:** a community of people with diverse backgrounds that values diversity as a collective advantage and aims to afford equal rights and opportunities for everyone by creating the conditions for full and active participation based on a common set of values, a shared sense of belonging and a pluralist collective identity. Public authorities actively combat prejudice and discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all by adapting their governance structures, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population, without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They adopt participatory approaches and multilevel governance to develop a range of policies and actions to encourage mixing and meaningful interaction across differences and to stimulate the participation of all residents in social life and decisions that affect their everyday life and environment. The high level of trust and social cohesion helps to prevent conflicts and violence, increases policy effectiveness and makes the territories attractive for people and investors alike.

**Intercultural mediation:** a process whereby an interculturally competent third person or institution helps anticipate, prevent or settle intercultural conflicts by promoting a respectful and empathic discussion about differences, using culturally specific narratives and building trust.

**Intersectionality:** the concept of intersectionality recognises that each individual has a complex identity which makes them unique. It is highly unlikely, therefore, that they will think of themselves as defined entirely by one aspect of their make-up. An individual from a minority background may experience exclusion or stigmatisation because of their ethnicity, their gender, their perceived sexual orientation or some combination of these. More positively, this complexity of identity allows identifications to be made with other individuals, for example on gender grounds, which cross social dividing lines.<sup>58</sup>

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57. Council of Europe (2018).

58. Council of Europe (2021).

**Multilevel governance:** multilevel governance is a model of governance which embraces central, regional and local governments, as well as civil society organisations. The ways in which it is organised may vary greatly from one country to another. Ideally, it includes a bottom-up element and implies the setting up of participatory processes for policy co-creation, co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant public authorities, at all levels of governance, and with all relevant stakeholders, in areas of shared competence or common interest.<sup>59</sup>

**Participation in decision making:** the vertical process of multilevel governance must be complemented by a horizontal process of public participation, in the design, delivery and evaluation of intercultural integration 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 being a stakeholder, especially on the part of individuals and organisations of minority backgrounds, and to gain widespread public buy-in to intercultural integration plans.<sup>60</sup>

**Prejudices:** preconceived attitudes towards a group or its members, untested and therefore unjustified by evidence. While there are both positive or negative biases, the term “prejudice” has a generally negative connotation since prejudices do harm and injury. Very often they are closely related to a sense of belonging (or not) to groups and the roles individuals are supposed to have within them, thus altering the ability of the target group to self-identification. They are associated with emotions such as dislike, mistrust, fear or even hatred. They do not allow us to see others as individuals, nor to recognise diversity among the members of a stereotyped group.

**Systemic discrimination** occurs where the procedures, routines and organisational culture of any organisation contribute to unequal outcomes for minority groups compared to the general population.

**Urban citizenship:** a locally based contemporary alternative to the legal notion of citizenship, deriving directly from residence as a fact, and founded on relationship-building processes that develop and acknowledge strong links and a sense of belonging to a given urban territory. Urban citizenship allows for the effective participation and representation of all groups in the life of a city, as well as for building trust between the communities and in the public authorities.

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59. Council of Europe (2022).

60. Council of Europe (2021).





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This manual aims to support public authorities to design their own tailor-made training courses with a view to spreading the skills and competence necessary to implement the Council of Europe intercultural integration model in a coherent and multilevel manner. It contains a description of the main features of intercultural competence, followed by seven concepts that are key for the successful implementation of intercultural integration strategies by public authorities. It is split into two publications for ease of access.

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