

RECI CHALLENGE

2018 - 2019

INSPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES
THAT REFLECT THE DIVERSITY
ADVANTAGE



RECI CHALLENGE 2018-19

The Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI), following the experience of the Council of Europe in 2015 and with the support of the Foundation La Caixa, launches the second edition of the "RECI Diversity Advantage Challenge". This challenge is held in order to identify concrete examples of initiatives that have proven to make a better use of the diversity advantages.

The challenge is presented in the form of a contest in which the important thing is the motivation, the learning process and awareness raising. This competition is about changing the mental paradigm about diversity and disassociate its perception with concepts related to problems, conflicts or threats by strengthening its association with concepts such as opportunity, resource and advantage.

Below we will present the **4 finalists** out of a total of 26 projects received in this challenge. They represent a wide variety of initiatives from different fields such as education, community intervention, labour integration and business management.



The diversity advantage is a fundamental concept of the intercultural approach promoted by the Council of Europe through the Intercultural Cities programme and it is based on the premise that **diversity is a key opportunity and resource for the overall development of society** at all levels.

The idea is that diversity, if approached and managed following the intercultural principles (equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, positive interaction, etc.) can be an advantage in achieving **more positive results** (social, economic, educational, cultural, welfare, etc.). The positive results could not be obtained without the existence of this diversity or without a particular way of managing it

It has been shown that diverse work teams, whether in a business, governmental or associative context have greater potential in terms of productivity and creativity, conflict resolution and innovation. But to achieve this and other benefits of diversity, societies have to ensure not only equal rights but also equal opportunities for all people. Local governments can collaborate in bringing this potential to light through **innovative and inclusive policies**.

Taking advantage of diversity is a **philosophy of governance, management and decision making**.



SELECTED INITIATIVES

- 1** A-PORTA, SUPPORTING
DOOR TO DOOR
- 2** EMPATHY SITE
- 3** GOURMET ANAUACO
- 4** PURPURINA

A-PORTA, supporting door-to-door

CONFAVC, Confederació d'Associacions Veïnals de Catalunya

The A- porta project is inspired by the Voisin Malin project, presented in Barcelona in 2015 within the framework of an Intercultural Cities Workshop. A- porta allows breaking the isolation of vulnerable population and of those who are not reached by public administrations, supply companies or neighbourhood associations. The innovation of the project is that **a neighbour knocks on another neighbour's door to offer help where it is needed.**

The innovation is carried out by people from the neighbourhood. They are the Picaportas which can be translated to "Doorknobs". In order to be able to interview all neighbours, the selection of Picaportas is carried out jointly with the third sector organisations and associations of the neighbourhood. Teams are **reflecting the cultural diversity** from their own neighbourhoods, which is translated in a high degree of success as it helps to establish relationships between people and to identify specific needs of the different cultures living in the neighbourhood. In addition, this is a way to **break down prejudices** towards other communities. It is also a way of **making the diversity of neighbourhoods visible**, it contributes to and strengthens the dynamics of the project and most importantly allows them to value and highlights the capabilities of the Picaportas.



The doorknobs visit each and every one of the residents in the intervention zone, ensuring that everyone has access to useful information and services available in the neighbourhood. Teams are made up of about 10 people and they work an average of 25 hours per month, which are remunerated.

Since the beginning in 2016 they have launched missions within their project. The different missions were about fighting poverty, the impact of the remodelled neighbourhoods, knowledge of the employment situation and integration into a workplace. The project A-porta has collaborated with Barcelona City Council, the regional government, Obra Social La Caixa, Aguas de Barcelona and Barcelona Activa.



EMPATHY SITE

La Salle, Bilbao

This project is based on two principles:

- First, it is a **welcoming network** where the education centre offers socio-educational support to newcomers. This network is led by a group of students, alumni, parents and educators who receive students and immigrant families at the social enterprise premises every week. There are also outings and meetings of leisure and coexistence several times a month.

-Secondly it is a living and free software platform: Empathy Site (or **Empathy bank** as it is called in Spanish) is a project of service exchange. Within this project the participants (which include families) do not exchange money, their exchange unit is measured in time (one hour). The time of each participant is valued equally and this is a tool used to revitalize the life of the community where they enhance values such as commitment, participation and solidarity.

The project, originally designed and launched by Secondary students, has been remarkably successful in **inclusiveness and community building**. Participants range from primary school students to retired elderly. It is a project that builds on the committed and cohesive community.



Part of the success lies in the collaboration and support of external agents such as:

- Basque Immigration Observatory.
- Ikea's social work
- Vizcaya Department of Education
- Bitzen (Public Ownership Service, Department of Employment and Social Policies).
- Bilbao City Council: social action; youth area; Bilbao ekintza, department of economy and entrepreneurship.

Empathy Site is scalable to other educational communities because:

- It is a social need to which high efficiency solutions are not provided.
- The software is free and its maintenance is not expensive.
- A large part of the solutions lies in volunteering, which only needs time to intervene.
- Includes free advice and training



GOURMET ANAUCO

Burger restaurants

Gourmet Anauco is about diversity work within restaurants. Currently there are four Gourmet Anauco restaurants, two in Madrid and two in Barcelona. Within this project, the owners' migratory experience is of value. Their experiences make them sensitive to social reality and the diversity work started off the fact that the company had to apply inclusive policies. That is why they wanted to facilitate access to employment for people with fewer opportunities through their collaboration with the **Incorpora programme** of the Obra Social de La Caixa.

The diversity advantage:

Facilitating access to employment for people with fewer opportunities was a simple decision for the owners. They have had the opportunity to live in many parts of the world and this has allowed them to have a broad vision and an open mind about other cultures. They are **open minded** when it comes to acceptance and understanding and they want to **take advantage of the positive parts of diversity and of the potential that they see in their employees.**



The Anauco brothers are committed to converting multicultural spaces into intercultural spaces that favour encounter:

- They eat as a team to promote cohesion.
- They generate conversation and they show respect for different cultures and customs through their exchange and openness.
- They incorporate gestures that generate commitment, such as adapting their meals to the Muslim people of the team or preparing specific dishes.

In addition, they point out that their own migratory experience has given them the capacity to reinvent themselves and to improve themselves as well as their knowledge and their experiences.

They consider that cultural diversity in the company is relevant because it widens the possibilities. For them, something called 'Fusion' in the kitchen should be applied to all possible areas as it enriches the company, society and the people who work in it. In addition, **diverse work teams create an inclusive, energetic and interesting atmosphere.** Their premise in team management is **not to stigmatize.**



PURPURINA

ARPA, Autism Association, La Rioja

The working group of this initiative is made up of professionals, families and people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The goal or the aim is to find a work site that brings the talents of the participants together. In addition, ARPA aims at 'establishing' the project within the population so that it becomes a company with an alternative design.

The project has graphic arts workshops and an online store of screen-printed and sublimated products with designs of people with ASD. The simple and different way of seeing the world of people with ASD is the fundamental advantage of the designs.



Among the main results, the Purpurina project has an **online store** and in just 8 months they have had sales worth more than € 10,000.

In addition, people with ASD have acquired positive habits and responsibilities, have raised their self-esteem, are visible and valued and have the opportunity to get a job tailored to their talents and interests.

Among the lessons learned from ARPA, it is worth highlighting that people with ASD should be trusted, that they have amazing skills and that many desire to **assume responsibilities, be visible and feel integrated.**

