Intercultural Cities

Meeting of National Coordinators

Online

11 February 2021

Following the successful first Annual Meeting of National Coordinators in 2020, the ICC invited all National Coordinators to a second brainstorming meeting in February 2021. During the meeting, respective plans and common priorities for the upcoming year were discussed.

Participants included:

- Rosaria De Paoli, coordinator Città del Dialogo (Italy)
- Simone Pettorruso, coordinator Città del Dialogo (Italy)
- Toralv Moe, Oslo Municipality, coordinator of Norwegian Network of Intercultural Cities
- David Im, Klaksvik, facilitator of a Nordic thematic cluster
- Carla Calado, coordinator of the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI)
- Gemma Pinyol, coordinator of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI)
- Daniel de Torres, director of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI)
- Ksenya Rubicondo, coordinator of the Ukrainian Intercultural Cities Network (ICC-UA)
- Bob White, coordinator of the Network of Immigration and Intercultural Relations of Municipalities in Québec (REMIRI)

During the first part of the meeting, the national coordinators were asked to summarise the main actions taken and progress achieved during the previous year, as well as their national network's plans and challenges ahead.

Summary of presentations

Intercultural Cities Secretariat, Council of Europe - Ivana d'Alessandro

During the introduction of the meeting the benefits of early coordination were raised, including some very positive outcomes such as:

- Increased ability to align the national networks' priorities with ICC plans and vice-versa, and increased adaptation capacity, especially in light of unforeseen circumstances such as the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic.
- Increased capacity to mobilise the member cities of the national networks - particularly through the inter-city grants launched in April 2020, which also resulted in increased opportunities for participating cities to gain specialised knowledge in the chosen fields, thus becoming referents for the international network.

- Increased participation of the member cities of the national networks in ICC events, including in the joint communication campaigns, thanks to early planning and communication.
- A better-defined role for national coordinators thanks to discussions held on the legal structures of the national networks.

Ivana further presented the main conclusions of the 2020 ICC Survey, so to focus discussions on how to meet member cities' needs in 2021.

Among the outcomes of the survey, emphasis was put on the fact that an increasing number of cities are using the ICC Index for evaluation purposes, and many cities are using ICC Index reports of other fellows as a reference. The newly published ICC Charts also received positive feedback.

Overall, the annual survey also indicated a high degree of satisfaction towards the tools and guidance produced by the ICC programme, with the Step-by-step guide remaining the most used tool in daily work, together with the policy briefs.

Among the most recent resources, the Intercultural Citizenship Test also scored very highly. Additionally, while in the number of good practices collected in 2020 has increased, there is still room for improvement.

Concerning the top benefits of joining the Intercultural Cities Network, cities raised the following: the political support of an international organisation to the city's intercultural policies and actions; useful guidance, new methodologies, and opportunities for knowledge and good practice exchanges; opportunities for networking with peers worldwide; and contributions to the international outlook of the city; and the organisation of interesting events.

Supporting the above, member cities expressed that the most important actions organised by the ICC include study visits; "study clusters" for cities working on similar topics; webinars on specific topics and resulting in policy briefs and guidance; thematic events as well as joint awareness campaigns.

In terms of forthcoming priorities cities identified the following top five:

- Interculturalism as a factor for sustainable development
- Continue the work on developing intercultural competence (training, practice)
- Competence building on systemic discrimination
- Joint communication campaign on the values of interculturality for diverse societies
- Economic recovery through business and diversity

To close, the national coordinators were asked to consider the following:

- Are there any ICC documents they would need translated into their local language(s)?
- Is there interest in strategic development such as Policy Labs?
- Is there any specific expertise to groups of cities which the coordinators can offer?
- Are they ready to mobilise and the increase capacity on intercultural communication?
- Are there any areas of interest in new guidance and policy package?

The full report from the Annual ICC Survey can be found here.

National Networks: Plans and strategic priorities

Città del Dialogo - Rosaria De Paoli

The biggest achievement of the Italian National Network of the past year has been the successful applications of the ITACA and EDUCARE projects, which helped to secure funding for the work ahead

as well as to re-engage a number of cities which had been less active in the Italian National Network in the past months. The two projects involve seven cities each, and ten cities in total, as some cities have chosen to participate in both projects. They also raised the potential interest of an additional five cities for joining the Italian National Network. The projects will also offer an opportunity for engaging participating cities in the completion of the ICC index, something remains a challenge for the Italian network.

Communication is an area where the Italian National Network would be pleased to receive ICC assistance. The Italian National Network has been running a successful communication campaign which will end in March 2021. The Facebook page has reached 8,000 followers in February and is projected to reach 10,000 followers by the end of the campaign. Through the campaign the Italian National Network has managed to reach out to cities, civil society organisations and citizens alike, who are now willing take part in the actions of the network as well to motivate their cities to join. However, increased interest also means increased workload for the social media moderator. For the moment, the Italian network has launched a newsletter and promoted interactive tools, videos, and the Intercultural Citizenship Test. However, they may need to create a toolkit aimed at the citizens, including a simple glossary and basic guidance for the promotion of interculturality after the campaign ends. The Italian network would be happy to receive guidance and advice in this field.

Regarding the upcoming grants, the Italian National Network would like to encourage cities to work on consultation bodies: a law on this was adopted recently in Italy and cities could use the service design methodology and apply it to the field of consultation bodies. Other ideas which the cities have brought forward regarding potential projects include migrant entrepreneurship and the heritage connected with this, such as traditional Moroccan markets which are set up in some Italian cities, as well as filling the gaps brought forward by the digital divide. Finally, there is an idea relating to improving access health, focusing on work with associations to involve them in the vaccination campaigns targeting the migrant communities.

Further there is much interest in anti-rumours work. The Italian National Network will be looking at how to train anti-rumour agents.

Finally, as a general feedback for the year of 2020, the online meeting format received a lot of appreciation.

Norwegian National Network – Toralv Moe

The Norwegian National Network has met recently and all the cities are working on the Covid-19 emergency. Four out of five cities of the Norwegian National Network are also involved in devising measures to counter hate crime and hate speech; hence, they gathered to work on a policy document which will encompass all discrimination areas; in this respect, the network particularly appreciated the ICC policy package on systemic discrimination.

The network is considered as a useful resource by the member cities as it offers opportunities for cooperation and work on the political level, in areas where they are facing common challenges. However, the challenge is to keep it operational, especially when human and financial resources are limited. Moreover, as the ICC programme has grown in membership, it has also expanded its focus and diversified its offer. It is more difficult to follow everything; however, it offers “pick and choose” possibilities of which the Norwegian network is very pleased.

The Norwegian National Network has also discussed the possibility of being more active within the Nordic cluster promoted by Klaksvik, and while the member cities are positive to this idea in principle,

they regret the lack of ICC members in Denmark or Finland, and declare themselves already overloaded by their participation in similar thematic networks which focus on similar topics, such as the Nordic Safe Cities. This is a network launched five years ago by the Nordic Council of Ministers, focussing on hate crime and hate speech; Kristiansand and Stavanger are members. The Nordic Capital Forum is yet another network, gathering five times per year the Nordic capitals (including Oslo) to discuss policies related to issues such as integration, segregation and anti-discrimination. All this makes it difficult for the members of the ICC Norwegian network to also lead a thematic cluster, even though they are interested to join it.

The cities in the Norwegian National Network are looking to work on questions on how to rebuild the infrastructure of inclusion and how to reinvest in the civic organisations and learn from the connections which have been made between the cities and the communities as well as the lessons learned from the actions in the cities. The cities have also started a new council of multicultural minorities where the criteria for participation is competence within ten different areas. Finally, they have also worked on an entrepreneurship model to assist small businesses. They can share information on this work in the future.

Nordic Thematic Group – David Im, Klaksvik

The Nordic ICC members have been looking into the possibility of creating a Nordic Thematic Group but have so far not found the right focus for working together. There is however still interest in such a cluster, even though ambitions have been downsized and oriented towards piloting on particular topics. One of these topics could be the social trust barometer, in which Botkyrka is already involved as it ran an ICC short pilot project last year. The barometer could also be used as a monitoring tool in other projects.

Rede Portuguesa das Cidades Interculturais (RPCI) – Carla Calado

In 2020 the Portuguese National Network (RPCI) has devoted some efforts to increase its visibility by creating a website, as well as a Facebook page, and LinkedIn and Instagram accounts. Social media in particular have been chosen to expand outreach among professional communities and citizens alike. These tools were already in place at the time of the joint ICC campaign for the 2020 Migrants Day, which helped to attract a new audience.

In terms of areas of work, RPCI focussed this year on the migrant integration plans. These are developed by the local authorities and promoted by the central state government. All RPCI cities have plans, but these are in very different stages of implementation. Last year has given the occasion to promote joint work on the migrant integration plans, assessing the gaps jointly, and sharing good practices and experiences as a way to learn from and support each other. Among the tools which can be used to support a more coherent implementation of these plans, participating cities got for instance acquainted with community participatory diagnosis and assessments and community led projects. 2020 was a good year to focus on this topic as the country now has – for the first time – a State Secretary for Migration who is very committed to multi-level cooperation.

RPCI coordination meetings have also been the occasion to share practices and experiences on the response to the Covid-19 situation. All cities have staff working on managing the emergency, who have been confronted with new tasks. In this context, it has been particularly important for RPCI to exchange on the topic of access to rights and opportunities, which has been a challenge throughout the year.

The RPCI coordinator also noted that there is now a very good relationship with the member cities, which are active, creative, and willing to work together.

Concerning the forthcoming ICC call for inter-city grants, RPCI members are considering to propose projects to continue work on the migrant integration plans, with the idea that some cities are more experienced in policy conception and making, while others have knowledge and expertise for working with specific groups, including Roma. By getting together in a joint project proposal they could reinforce each other. Another possible area of work is hate speech and hate crime, as currently far right discourse is increasing in the country. RPCI members are therefore considering actions to be implemented at the local level, including work with schools, teachers and NGOs, so to target the new generations using the anti-rumours methodology. They could also potentially look into how interculturalism and intercultural policies could be mainstreamed into higher education. Anti-rumours trainings of trainers could also be done on a national level.

On a more administrative note, RPCI has advanced in the analysis of possible models for establishing the Portuguese National Network as an entity with legal personality under Portuguese law. This would facilitate its contacts with the national level but also its cooperation with other civil society organisations, and possibly increase access to external funding.

Finally, it would be helpful for the Portuguese National Network to have more tools available in Portuguese, as the language barrier is still an issue. It would also be helpful to have the annual survey translated into Portuguese as well as Portuguese subtitles in the videos produced. Finally, there is a Council of Europe course on intercultural education which could be interesting to look into for the further network[1].

Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI) – Daniel de Torres Barderi

Last year the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities (RECI) set up working groups on a number of priority topics chosen by the members. This allowed to gather knowledge and expertise in the field of intercultural competence in the workplace, intercultural narratives, and welcoming policies. Another advantage of those groups is that they allowed Spanish cities to work in their language, overcoming the language barrier that they face when acceding to ICC resources. However, the efforts made by the ICC programme and RECI to increase the number of tools and guidance translated into Spanish has been much welcomed by the member cities. So as other national coordinators, the RECI Director asked this practice to be sustained. Another achievement of the past year is the launch of the Escape roomours, a board game designed by and for youth on dismantling prejudice and stereotypes. The next step is to adapt it to the online context, a process that should be completed by autumn. The set of anti-rumours tools has also been completed with a guide on anti-rumours dialogue, produced in the framework of the ICC Academy on Alternative Narratives. There are also plans to extend the Anti-rumours Youth Summit to countries other than Spain.

In terms of priorities for 2021, the RECI will deepen work on alternative narratives and intercultural communication, as well as on intercultural competence. In relation to the first topic, they plan to launch a communication campaign which will include a diary about an intercultural journey to member cities, produced by a renowned Spanish artist. The diary will be translated into English for further use by the ICC network. Regarding the second topic, they would like to address the issue raised by Covid-19 on barriers to providing quality services and promoting interaction, and prepare a sort of short intro guide on how the theory of interculturalism relates to policy implementation and actions within the city, to help new members get acquainted with the basics of the programme. Finally, as previous

[1] Link to the training course here.

speakers, RECI highlighted that although online meetings have allowed to continue exchanging despite the sanitary restrictions, it has been challenging to keep energy and creativity high within the network. Yet, the situation shared a light on the need to design more online tools, including proper online formats for training.

Ukrainian National Network – Ksenya Rubicondo

The Ukrainian National Network (ICC-UA) conveyed appreciation for the thanking letters sent by the ICC Head of Unit to participating Mayors. These are good testimonies of the political support that membership to the ICC programme brings to participating cities. The ICC-UA also thanked the ICC Programme for the advice, studies produced, support, and for maintaining the energy in the network throughout a challenging year.

In particular, the inter-cities grants have allowed cities of the ICC-UA to work with fellows within the Australasian network on a manual on intercultural competence trainings. The process of producing the manual was in itself a learning opportunity, as it included two global surveys, trainings, and webinars. In addition, two more member cities have adopted their own intercultural strategies and another one is expected to do so this year. The ICC Index and the new ICC charts have been very useful to this end, as they provide sound evidence for strategic discussions.

In terms of priorities, the ICC-UA has prepared a workplan for 2021 which includes work on devising an anti-rumours strategy to be integrated within the wider effort to counter hate speech. Besides, they plan to continue working on the topic of intercultural competence based on the outcomes of the inter-cities project developed in 2020. The latter pointed to many areas where capacity building on intercultural competence could be useful, relating for instance to the police but also to the media, so to empower them to create anti-discrimination narratives especially in hotspots, to counter fake news, false reporting and hate speech. This becomes even more a priority in the Covid-19 crises, as it has created an alarming environment of inequalities.

One member also expressed strong interest in working on minority rights, as there is a law proposal presented to the parliament at the moment. Relating to these issues, the network will be put in touch with other units within the Council of Europe. There are ongoing discussions on how to present a united front to be able to communicate together as a network to create a stronger voice, as this would be very helpful. Finally, the network would also like to have additional documents translated into Ukrainian.

Network of Immigration and Intercultural Relations of Municipalities in Québec (REMIRI) - Bob White

Sherbrooke has recently joined the ICC programme, thus becoming the second city from Québec to integrate in the ICC network. So as Montréal, Sherbrook is also a member of REMIRI, an informal network that is considering to join the ICC programme as a Regional network. Plans and talks in this sense have advanced quite a lot in 2020, with discussions on a possible structure and on working methods. In this endeavour, the exchanges with and advice from other national networks' coordinators has been precious. For the moment, they plan to create a committee composed of councillors that would act as ambassadors of the Québec network; they would then set up a structure for work with the strategic partners such as the government or universities; and thirdly, they seek formal recognition as a Regional network from the Intercultural Cities Programme.

In terms of working methods, they are looking to create working groups based on the model of the Spanish Network of Intercultural Cities. Additionally, they are currently in the process of producing the second edited volume of a book about Intercultural Cities. Two new cities who have joined the

REMIRI network have also contributed with text and the book will be available for free in French during the fall.

In terms of priorities, intercultural competence is important for the network. They would like to look into the best way to speak about this with cities, as it has to be very practical.

REMIRI also raised that it could be interesting to have a working group focusing on the national networks of the Intercultural Cities Programme to see how they work and look into the work on multilevel governance.

A challenge is related to explaining the intercultural model. There is a lot of work related to hate speech and racial profiling, but the anti-racism and the intercultural movements are for the moment working apart. REMIRI will thus work on mobilising elected officials; this will be done through a research project which will be bilingual. They would, if possible, like to create a two-day event on the topic on how to mobilise the political level.

Planning and priorities for the year ahead

It was concluded that the presentations of the national networks are very aligned with the priorities of the ICC network as highlighted in the annual survey.

The main topic of interest for 2021 relate to communication and intercultural and alternative narratives, especially related to anti-rumours and hate speech. The ICC was happy to conclude that the majority of the requests in this area will be addressed through the upcoming Academy on Intercultural Communication and Alternative Narratives in April 2021. The Academy will however not address the traditional aspect of anti-rumours; this will need to be looked into on how it can be solved, where one option may be training the trainers.

A second topic of interest is systemic discrimination and anti-discrimination work. In relation to this it was raised that systemic design is a useful approach to all work related to anti-discrimination and organisational competence. The ICC programme is about to launch a call for tenders to set up a pool of service providers that could help cities using systemic design in this field. It was also raised that the course by the Aga Khan foundation on Diversity and Inclusion could be useful for many of the topics, as it is online and also works as training the trainers[2]. Further, it was highlighted that the ITACA project implemented by the Italian national network focuses on systemic discrimination and includes a thematic working group and the preparation of a training course that could be shared with the ICC Network.

The third topic of interest was business and economic recovery though the intercultural lens, linking it to the inclusion of migrants. For this topic, it was concluded that a policy package and webinar would be a suitable format, based on the same format as the ICC policy research carried out in 2020. The ICC will make a proposal.

The fourth topic of interest is the ecological transition and sustainability. Here the ICC is also looking to produce a webinar and policy package and asked the network to consider experts for the topic.

Finally, the area of intercultural competence has been raised strongly. It was noticed that the ICC programme has already made available a quite complete set of tools. There is now probably scope for a training module and/or a policy package to be developed to help cities get more practical and

[2] Link to online course here.

targeted support. The need of training of trainers at the local level was highlighted. It could also be beneficial to focus on how to make the service delivery more intercultural and to customise that to the local context, to cover for the fact that structures and models vary from city to city and country to country. Bob White offered to set up a small working group with the other national coordinators to brainstorm on this topic and make proposals.

A general question was asked on how often the Index questionnaire exercise should be repeated by the cities. It was concluded that it makes sense to repeat it when cities reach a milestone, otherwise every three to four years is the best to be able to see progress. When repeating the exercise more often, it can be tricky to see progress, however it can help the cites to keep the intercultural approach and cooperation in mind and forces the cities to refocus, however, this can also be done focusing on certain areas. An idea was raised for cities to use the index to appraise themselves on a regular basis, this is something which should be looked into.

Finally, it was highlighted that the Intercultural Cities Programme needs high quality images from the cities for social media.