



Intercultural Integration Academy

18-19 February 2020

Marrakech

Introduction

An Intercultural Academy was held in Marrakech, Morocco 18-19 February 2020, for participants from Morocco, Jordan, Palestine* and Tunisia. The Academy was organised/held in the framework of the European Union/Council of Europe joint programme “Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean” (South Programme III), co-funded by the two organisations and implemented by the latter.

The South programme aims at helping to build a common democratic space based on shared values, legal safeguards, effective institutions and active networks across the Mediterranean. One of the challenges of a strong democracy and human rights protection is ensuring equality for all citizens, regardless of origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, confession/conviction and other characteristics. Equality can be achieved in part via good legal and institutional frameworks such as equality bodies, but also requires inclusive policies in all areas of life.

The Council of Europe, through its Intercultural cities programme, has developed a well-tested and proven policy concept for local policies for diversity and inclusion, which is now an international standard¹ and is embraced by 140 cities globally, including in Morocco.

The intercultural academies are a concept developed by the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC). Through the academies, participants are given a broad introduction of interculturalism on a wide range of topics presented by ICC experts. In Marrakech, the academy focused on policy-making and strategies for the intercultural city as well as the anti-rumours methodology. The academies are a good entry to the ICC and the tools available, as well as for the cities to meet and exchange experiences.

While the ICC already has a national network in Morocco, participants from Tunisia, Jordan and Palestine* met the ICC for the first time. The Academy also introduced the national networks and benefits of the Programme to the member cities. ICC academies are usually built around topics as requested by the participants. However, due to the large regional spread of the participants and that the ICC was new to

¹ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2015\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on intercultural integration](#)

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe and European Union member States on this issue.

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many of the participants, the programme was planned to give the broadest possible introduction to the topic. The event was the first ICC event implemented in the southern neighbourhood.

The participants in the event came from both national and local level, and included both elected officials and civil servants. In total 30 participants took part in the academy, representing 15 cities and three ministries. Representatives from the Council of Europe also participated in the event. The event was held in Arabic and English through simultaneous interpretation.

Opening remarks were given by Mr. Hassan El Mounadi, Vice-president for Culture, Sports and Youth in Marrakech, who extended a warm welcome to the city. Director of Migration Affairs, Ministry Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Skim, introduced the situation in Morocco as it relates to migration and integration. Finally, Ms. Irena Guidikova from the Council of Europe underlined the need for new integration and efficient models in today's world.

Day 1 - The concept of intercultural integration in local policies

In his presentation, ICC expert Phil Wood opened up the concept of interculturalism, addressing the diversity advantage and the background of the ICC programme. The presentation highlighted that



interculturalism focuses on identifying the resources of each individual, regardless of origin or identity, and enable them to contribute to the community. Through the presentation, the policy triangle developed by Carlos Jimenez was brought forward, as well as different policies and effects of the same when it comes to migrant integration. Here, assimilation, segregation, multiculturalism and interculturalism were

discussed as policy frameworks preceding interculturalism and achieving some results in terms of equality, recognition of diversity and access to rights, but falling short of building social trust in diverse societies. Social trust being the result of positive interaction and joint action towards shared goals, Mr. Wood pushed the cities to offer incentives for people to meet and to establish tools, spaces and processes for interaction.

A short introduction to the [ICC programme](#) was made, presenting the [ICC index](#) and [networks](#) across the globe. The ICC helps cities examine their policies through an intercultural lens, highlighting areas for improvement and excellence. Through this, the ICC index offers cities an opportunity to review their work and enter a network aimed at [sharing best practices](#) and shared learning.



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The discussion following the presentation focused on several core topics. Many cities expressed the need of interculturalism as a tool to offer better access to services to all residents on all levels. This requires political will and commitment. It was highlighted that several cities already have incorporated such policies and events, but that the field needs to be consolidated. Cities also highlighted the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism, and that the focus on interculturalism creates a feeling of cohesion and belonging. Several references were made to national legislation and restrictions cities face, as well as how interculturalism could work within existing frameworks. It was also indicated that cities should have a dialogue with all residents and that this could serve as an information channel up to the state level.

The discussion also touched on the host of international city networks which already exist, and tied back to the specific features of the ICC network. Participants underlined that all cities are working to improve local community and city services. For further improvement, the need for cooperation was highlighted by several participants. Some cities also highlighted existing local strategies, which while not fully intercultural, touch on the same subjects.

Finally, participants expressed challenges regarding the lack of resources and the need to find solutions which can be implemented within the frame of available funds. Technology was highlighted as a possible solution, as well as assessing current policies to learn from leading practice elsewhere and innovate. Additionally, it is important to move from policy to action, which is the final measure of achieving equality. The cities also highlighted that there is no one-size-fits-all, and that intercultural policies and implementations need to be localised to fit the context in order to ensure efficient implementation.

Day 1 - Intercultural competence – the Moroccan perspective

National Coordinator of the Moroccan ICC network Abderrahman Lamrani, presented the Moroccan perspective, focusing on the competences of local government assemblies in Morocco through law



114/13, as well as good practices carried out by the mayors and councilors on a daily basis. The multitude of identities of each individual was highlighted, underlining the competence, ability and skill of each person. With the migration landscape in Morocco having changed with more migrants staying in the country, new policies and forms of cooperation between the state and local levels are needed. Therefore, interculturalism is a must, Mr. Lamrani stated.



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This needs to go hand in hand with local policies and implementation at the local level. Local governments are on the frontline when it comes to managing migration. In this regard, the city of Tangier was highlighted as a good example for communicating with migrants and involving them in an integration programme which has been running for seven years.

The participants discussed the need for peer-to-peer learning, drawing from good examples and learning from mistakes. By sharing information all can develop and gain from each other. This includes learning how local authorities can work within national legislation and constraints to serve their residents. On this point the cities highlighted that a new way of thinking is needed to achieve more actions on local level within the field.

One city also brought forward the need for understanding the larger definition of culture and the multiple identities of the individual in order to fully implement interculturalism. One participant highlighted that there are three concepts which dominate in Morocco - migrants, foreigner, expatriate. These concepts create a stigma to different people. Another participant highlighted the need to capture the know-how, qualifications and work experience migrants bring to the city.

Further, the role of local government in the context of ongoing devolution of powers was discussed, with a focus on further enhancing local autonomy, additional resources from central government for cities, and clear responsibilities for all levels. To achieve success, a number of actors need to work together - states, NGOs and other actors, both on regional, local and international level. Participants highlighted that the Council of Europe's intercultural integration approach, as an internationally approved method to determine and define the higher outcome of integration/inclusion policies and the sustainability of coexistence in diversity, could be useful.

Upon closing the first two discussions, a basic understanding of the local context and ICC principles stand clear. The following presentations dwell deeper into particular subjects. Reflections on the basic concepts were made throughout the Academy, especially to the policy triangle by Carlos Jimenez and the legal framework in place.



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Day 1 - Intercultural competence and the anti-rumours methodology

ICC expert Daniel de Torres presented an introduction to [alternative narratives](#) and the [anti-rumours](#)

$$I = E_{rdo} + D_{rvv} \times Inter \times \frac{1}{D_{discr} + S_{egr}}$$

E_{rdo} = Equality of rights, duties and opportunities
 D_{rvv} = Recognition, value and visibility of Diversity
 $Inter$ = Positive interaction
 D_{discr} = Discrimination
 S_{egr} = Segregation

[methodology](#). Starting by introducing the formula of interculturalism and moving on to describe the elements of intercultural competence the participants were invited to reflect on the effect of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes when it comes to establishing an intercultural mindset among the general public.

The participants were then asked to discuss in small groups which rumours they had heard in their cities regarding minorities, and why they believe the rumour/prejudice have

persisted, as well as what could be done to fight them.

The groups identified rumours related to the labour market, health and security risks, as well as access to rights. In terms of solutions all groups identified information flows as important, as well as the role of the media.

Mr. de Torres then presented the anti-rumours methodology as a method to fight rumours. An anti-rumours strategy is a long-term process to create social change with the aim of preventing discrimination, promoting inclusion and positive interaction, as well as making the most of diversity for the benefit of the entire society. The strategy should be used to promote critical thinking, and caution should be exercised not to unintentionally spread the rumours by repeating them when myth-busting.

It was underlined that stereotypes, prejudice and rumours have a complex nature combining beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviours. These can lead to discrimination, when a person acts on the prejudice. As rumours work to confirm beliefs, simply data is not enough to fight them. Key areas to dismantle rumours are instead a combination of knowledge, empathy, positive interaction and reducing inequalities. As actions which can work to dismantle rumours, ten areas were identified: Communication, attracting new allies, promoting knowledge and critical thinking, participative awareness & empowerment, promoting positive interaction, direct confrontation, spaces free of rumours, anti-rumours creative labs, reaching new levels of influence as well as cooperation with other cities.



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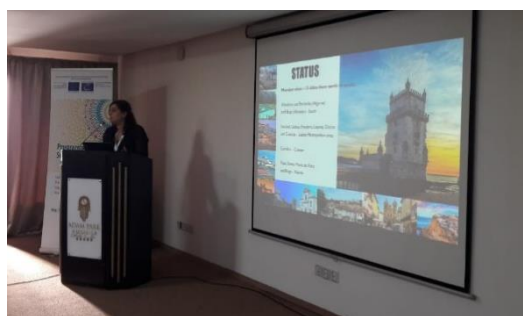


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Day 1 - National networks – goals, functioning and lessons learnt

Carla Calado, Coordinator for the Portuguese National ICC Network, presented on the role of the national networks. The presentation highlighted the benefits of the national network in creating visibility, benchmarking, development and learning opportunities. The Portuguese ICC Network holds meetings twice per year and also arrange joint projects, such as a policy lab in 2018. Joining forces means more resources and input. This means that the network has the opportunity to currently build and app to assist newcomers in Portugal, introducing them to the legal framework as well as social events.

The network works with challenges such as changes brought forward through elections, changing representatives and lack of resources from the cities. At this point the Moroccan participants were invited to reflect on their national network, which challenges they face and how to solve them. Participants



highlighted the need for a clear structure and a roadmap for the activity of the network. If the network is not active it is forgotten and no improvement is reached. Participants also highlighted that the goals and areas of work need to be clearly defined. As raised earlier during the day, there are many networks and resources are limited, so the benefit of the network for the cities needs to be clear, as do the frames within which the network functions.

Participants also highlighted the need for sustainability of the network to enable it to endure changes on the political level. It is important that the ideas of the network are rooted in the municipality administration, and that there are decision-makers from both the political and civil servant levels involved in the work of the network to ensure continuous support and impact. Additionally, the need for evaluation and follow-up was raised.

The topic of the national networks was returned to during the second day as participants shared their thoughts about the next steps. Results from the feedback survey also showed a majority of the participants would find a national network useful, even if funding is a concern. As noted during the discussion, several participants raised that the national network in its current form does not function well.



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Day 2 - The intercultural approach in public policies and services

Day two started with a deep-dive into public policies within the frames of interculturalism. ICC expert Phil Wood made a brief introduction and asked the participants to split into groups with the aim to design or redesign a local policy or action taking into account the intercultural principles.

The presentation also introduced the basics of intercultural communication and focus areas in ensuring the messaging in an intercultural context.

The groups presented ideas within many areas of society:

- A centre which highlights cultures from all continents, with a specific area of focus each month involving the local community and representatives of minority groups.
- Student Association introducing the members to the different cultures present within the association.
- Creation of sport centres which can be accessed by minorities and migrants to enhance positive interaction.
- Develop the library by equipping it with a multimedia centre, a play area for children to allow mothers to access the space, create workshops for the groups concerned, provide books in different languages and on the cultures present in the local community, cultural events as well as a lobby with multi-lingual staff who can greet those arriving at the library.
- Neighbourhood centres equipped with a garden and a multipurpose room, arranging activities for women, elderly and young persons. The multipurpose room could be made available for events organised by families, such as birthdays and weddings, as most residents do not have big apartments. By offering this service pro-bono or for a symbolic amount for those who need it would create a space for interaction.
- A common space for Islamic traditions, where each event has a representative from different countries to highlight the specificity of their culture.
- One example of a project was the usage of participatory methods to ask residents what is missing from their local centre. Based on the survey they learned a number of things - they decided to integrate more theatre and cinema and to take into account persons with mobility issues. Additionally, they increased public transportation to the area in order to create better accessibility, and are also thinking about establishing a sporting area and a language centre. They also wish to include the elderly, and create interaction between the generations by letting the



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elderly teach youth which have not been able to access the labour market and are in need of retraining.

The ideas presented by the groups were practical and most of the projects were ongoing. The discussion brought forward new ideas and directions and underlined many cities are facing similar problems and can benefit from common solutions. While the outcomes of the group discussions did not always focus explicitly on cultural diversity, they did help to flesh out the concept of diversity inclusiveness as a key principle of public service provision.

Day 2 - Political and social participation in a diverse society

Ideas for social participation were presented by Anne Bathily, ICC expert. Social participation was defined as both an indicator and the end-result of the integration process.



All cities were asked to present a challenge they face, the target audience and what measures they need to take in order to reach the goal. The participants identified the following areas, which displayed many similarities between cities.

- A problem faced by several cities is children leaving school early. While many cities have put in place measures such as vocational training, they face a problem in reaching the target audience and involving them in the alternative measures provided.
- Cities also face a problem in reaching the target groups when it comes to migrants, who have their own associations and get isolated from society at large.
- Providing services to vulnerable groups such as young persons, single mothers and young children through centres which can offer valuable past-times and potentially funding to the associations who support these groups.
- Some cities face problems with internal migration and being able to offer services to all. They have put measures in place to support rural areas to assist them in achieving sustainability.
- Other cities face a problem with identifying their target group. This was highlighted especially related to migration and transit migration, where the cities do not know the individuals and nor



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their needs. Not knowing the target group also means they are not involved in the participatory measures which are taken to involve the residents in the decision-making.

- Some cities face problems with providing liveable spaces for the residents and had resolved it by reserving plots of land for parks.
- One city highlighted unemployment and the volume of the problem. They have created new employment opportunities, but it is not sufficient.
- Overall an area which was highlighted was the need to create spaces for positive interaction between groups with the idea to break down stereotypes. This also related to ensuring all residents feel part of the city. This has been worked with through ambassador's programmes to create bridges between communities.

The presentation provided participants with examples of how participation can be fostered and measured in different areas (economic, social, civic/political, health, and cultural). These areas are also covered by the ICC index and offers and understanding into how the city is performing within the same areas. The session continued with a discussion and presentation of [good practices](#), including from within the ICC network. One concrete example which has been implemented in a number of cities globally, is the residence card, giving all residents of the cities access to the city services, irrespective of their legal status in the country. Other good practices shared were cooperation with the private sector to enhance migrant-led businesses, projects working to involve parents in schools as well as elements from different cultures, using urban planning to create multi-purpose spaces and using participatory methods.

The discussion around the topic was lively and benefited from the very participatory design. Once again, common areas of work could be found.

Day 2 - Development of intercultural strategies

The day ended with a presentation of development of intercultural strategies by ICC experts Anne Bathily, Daniel de Torres and Phil Wood.

The presentation focused on the methodology for creating a local intercultural strategy. Each city which calls itself an intercultural must have a strategy which is specific to them and fits their local context, although the strategy does not need to necessarily take the form on a single document. There are a set of questions which can be used to kick-start the work, both for city officials and for residents of the city. By asking the right questions the city can gain an understanding both into which areas are important to the residents, but also which areas are in need of development. This can help the city outline their priorities in the policy-making. The [Step-by-step guide](#) offers concrete steps to focus on when creating the policies.



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Further it was stressed during the presentation that a strategy is a living document which must evolve together with the city.

Day 2 - Take-aways

The Academy ended with a summary session where all participants highlighted the main ideas they take away from the event. The main take-aways included:

- Interculturalism is more than principles, it is a value which needs to be internalised. This value must be spread within the organisations and structures to ensure an overarching approach.
- Need for a new strategy to make everyone feel welcome in a changing world where problems need to be overcome together. Municipalities have a lot to do in this regard.
- The need for cooperation between cities on a national and international level is needed. Cooperation is also needed with the national level as well as with all relevant stakeholders. We need to learn from good practices and mistakes made. We are stronger together.
- In the creation of intercultural strategies there have been useful tools presented such as the [Step-by-step guide](#) and the foundations of interculturalism. Strategies should be interactive and serve the needs of the residents.
- Addressing the diversity advantage and the richness diversity brings. This involves a need from the authorities' side to work to include all, to create jobs and offer opportunities. Coexistence is valuable and there are many lessons to learn from the cities present.
- Local authorities must work within the existing legal framework, but can strive to go beyond the traditional role of the municipality and take initiative in areas where they have not traditionally been very active in the past.
- We need to learn how to translate fear of difference to something positive.
- One should not underestimate the strength of belonging/citizenship.
- The future of the world will hinge on smart cities which rely not only on technology but harness the knowledge, energy and experience of all their diverse residents for economic and social advancement.





Conclusions and feedback

The first intercultural academy in Morocco raised many new ideas and inspiration for the future. In collecting feedback from the participants, the vast majority demonstrated a deep and genuine understanding of interculturalism as a principle of public policy and the added value it has in relation to dealing positively with migrant and refugee inclusion. Most participants also expressed interest and need for an ICC network, and the need for a more active roles in the networks which already exist.

Key learnings were focused on the softer side of interculturalism, which is a set of principles that needs to be implemented and accounted for in all actions within the city. By introducing the principles in policies and strategies and ensuring all areas of the city have an understanding of the principles, more cohesion and interaction can be created.

Areas of improvement are to have fewer focus areas to ensure a deeper understanding of the areas of the Academy. Many of the participants responding to the survey also requested a more participatory approach with more opportunities for the cities to speak with each other to find common problems and solutions.

The Academy was also an opportunity to speak about the national intercultural cities networks and their potential benefits for the cities in the region. These discussions will be followed up separately with each city and network. The ICC was happy to see several cities interested in joining the ICC programme and entering into a network to continue working with the area of interculturalism.

The organisers thank all participants for the participation and feedback.

News on the event have can be found on the [ICC web](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) as well as on the web of the [South Programme III](#) and on [Facebook](#).

