

Report

Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities

2025

Summary

During 2025 RPCI's work focused mostly on implementing the annual project and reporting of the EU projects, as well as preparing four new funding applications. The annual joint project "Intercultural Educators" started in May. The cooperative RPCI, created in 2021 to support the Network, maintains two associate cities (Oeiras and Loures), has started during this period one project funded by the European Commission ("STAND" – started in 1st January 2025) and continued to develop the "EPIC-IDEA" (started on 1 September 2024). In May, RPCI started as a formal implementation partner of the PMIM Loures – Municipal Migrant Integration Plan, a national funding line for cities. In total, nine different cities are actively engaged in these projects (Barcelos, Cascais, Loures, Oeiras, Porto, Paranhos, Santa Maria da Feira, Viseu and Vila Verde) two of them being engaged in more than one project (Barcelos and Loures). Several cities participated in International learning opportunities (Hate Speech week, study visit to Wroclaw and several webinars). One INDEX was presented and the visit occurred during this period (Oeiras) and 6 new best practices were sent to ICC.

Network coordination

RPCI's coordination was ensured based on **regular contact** with the member cities via email (around 15 emails were sent to all member cities) and bilateral phone calls, emails or meetings when needed. Connections were also established for Barcelos and Oeiras to participate in Intercity Grants with other ICC cities (one of these projects was approved – Rainbow Connections between Oeiras and Leeds).

As part of the coordination activities, messages with information on how to join RPCI were sent to new cities (Fundão, Odemira, Marco Canaveses, Póvoa Lanhoso). Support was provided on request, via phone calls or online meetings, including questions about filling in the INDEX, participating in projects managed by RPCI, information about the RPCI network and ICC programme (for ex. to Odemira, that waits formal confirmation of their membership since March 2025), events and seminars, and others.

RPCI advertised all the ICC initiatives and news, such as information on how to join the ICC Advisory Board, on the Event "Hate Speech Week" (Strasbourg), where 4 Portuguese cities have participated, the study visit to Wroclaw, the OIM webinar with Hamamatsu, the opening of the Intercity Grants, among others.

RPCI was also invited to participate in the annual reflection around the **Porto Municipal Migrant Integration plan**, which consisted of a focus group with several organisations to assess the activities of the plan and propose improvements.

A **strategic Plan** was presented to ICC, aligned with the RPCI's annual activities plan.

One INDEX was presented and the visit occurred during this period (Oeiras) and **6 new best practices** were sent to ICC: Bairro EnCENA (Oeiras); Intercultural Mediation (Oeiras); Building

The opinions expressed in this document are the responsibility of Carla Calado, Coordinator, Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

This document is published as it was submitted to the secretariat.

Bridges (Vila Verde); Intercultural Mediation (Barcelos); Inspiring People (Barcelos); Intercultural Club (Porto)

A **general assembly of the RPCI cooperative** was held in March, as per the law, and the activity report for 2024 was approved. **Elections** were in order also, as the first 4-year mandate finished. One new member of the cooperative was approved (Inês Granja, part of our staff). Apart from the entry of Inês Granja as the president of the General Assembly and the entering of Teresa Leitão as member of the board (Secretary), no other changes were made to the governing bodies. RPCI cooperative now has 8 members and 3 hired staff (2 full time and one part time), 4 mediators working in Loures and around 8 freelance consultants.

Between 10th and 11th February, **RPCI held an annual face-to-face meeting in Oeiras**. The meeting lasted two days accordingly to the suggestion of most cities in the evaluation meeting for 2024. The cities suggested a longer meeting that could allow for a better networking and visits to the host city projects and activities. Around 20 people from several cities were present (Barcelos, Braga, Cascais, Lisboa, Loures, Portimão, Porto, Vila Verde and Viseu).

The meeting in Oeiras on the 10th began at 2 pm with a guided tour of the area, including a tour guide and stops at various places of interest, including a walk through the Jardim dos Poetas (Poets' Garden) and the Marquês gardens, and a [wine tasting at the municipal](#) winery, culminating in a “cachupa” dinner (Cape Verdean traditional dish), made with the support of the local community and enlivened by a wonderful musical duo at the [Alto da Loba Community Centre](#). In between, the city's initiatives in the field of interculturalism were presented by the technical team of the Oeiras City Council and the Director of the Social Development Department, Luís Afonso.

The high point of this event was the important presence of local associations, such as the [Associação Moinho em Movimento](#), [Assomada](#), [Pombal XXI](#), [Associação de moradores dos Navegadores](#), [AAMA](#), [Associação Mundo Feliz](#), [Associação Lage em Movimento](#), [KMT](#) and [Amigos de Santa Cruz](#), which presented their projects and initiatives implemented in local communities and the role of the municipality in their sustainability. This connection and support for local community leadership puts into practice one of the most important pillars of the intercultural perspective: **participation** or, in other words, ‘Nothing about us without us’.

On the 11th, the work began in the morning, with a session dedicated to updates about RPCI’s work, after the welcome words from Ms Teresa Bacelar, Councillor for Social Development, Health and Social Responsibility. - Municipal programme ‘Oeiras Solidária’ (Solidarity Oeiras), which provided us with an overview of the importance of diversity and interculturalism for the territory, where multiple nationalities and identities coexist, and of the municipality's investments in creating a city where everyone can thrive.

At the [end-of-year meeting in 2024](#), most cities proposed that the priority for 2025 should be to continue the work of the previous year, so RPCI prepared an annual project proposal again focusing on intercultural education and work with schools. This proposal was presented and discussed at the meeting in Oeiras, and the cities present were asked to consider whether they would like to be part of the consortium for this project. Although the annual project covers all RPCI cities, it has been customary to welcome 3 to 4 cities as part of the partnership consortium, which participate more closely in its decision-making and host the project activities.

Finally, there was a moment of reflection and learning on the theme of Narratives and Alternative Narratives, led by Carla Calado, RPCI coordinator and president of the board of directors of the RPCI cooperative.

The meeting ended with a buffet lunch kindly offered by the municipality of Oeiras and was described as a success by most participants, with the two-half-day format being praised and recommended as the norm going forward.

A **practice-sharing meeting** was held within the scope of the “Intercultural Educators” project, on 3rd June 2025, with 19 people from 9 cities (Barcelos, Oeiras, JF Paranhos, Porto, Fundão, Loures, Odemira, Portimão and Vila Verde).

A **third meeting** was held on the 9th of December (online) with 12 people 10 cities (Porto, Vila Verde, Oeiras, Cascais, Lisboa, Loures, Portimão, Albufeira, Viseu, Odemira) to present the results of the year, receive feedback from cities and debate priorities for next year. The feedback of the cities was that the work and support of RPCI staff was very good, and more face-to-face meetings and joint campaigns were proposed. The priority decided for next year is: Fighting Hate Speech and Disinformation.

Activities

RPCI coordination led the activities of 4 projects. Besides, oversaw and had an active role in all the activities developed within the Network and the RPCI cooperative, and prepared new funding applications. In total, 9 different cities participated in the several projects, that reached over 400 people.

Annual project - Intercultural Educators

This project was built collaboratively, arising from the brainstorming meeting held in 2024 with RPCI cities, and has the goal to foster deeper intercultural competencies among school staff and strategic partners, as a continuation of the 2024 project. The project was submitted in April and approved in May, and started on 3th May 2025 and ended on the 30th November 2025, funded by ICC programme. All RPCI cities were invited to be part of the consortium to co-manage the Grant, and 4 cities have manifested their availability - Porto, Oeiras, Barcelos and Paranhos. These cities participated in monthly consortium meetings.

The project envisioned to promote a practice sharing event (June), a ToT to school staff (July), so that these can develop awareness raising activities within their schools (September – November), tree podcast episodes (July – September) and one final webinar (October). The partnerships established in 2024 between RPCI and the REEI - Network of Schools for Intercultural Education, managed by AIMA, Aga Khan Foundation and the Ministry of Education was deepened in this project, and REEI participated in the delivery of the ToT for school staff. They will also participate in one podcast episode (September) and in the Webinar (October).

A practice sharing session was held on 3rd June 2025, with 19 people from 9 cities (Barcelos, Oeiras, JF Paranhos, Porto, Fundão, Loures, Odemira, Portimão and Vila Verde). Several cities presented their practices: Barcelos, Oeiras and Porto.

The ToT - training of facilitators was held between 7th and 9th of July, with 26 professionals working in the education sector, including city staff, mediators, teachers, CSO's staff, psychologists and social workers from several cities (Viseu, Paranhos, Barcelos, Porto, Loures, Oeiras, Famalicão, Santa Maria da Feira).

Next, meetings were held with these professionals to set the dates for the awareness raising actions that occurred in the period from September to November. In total, 9 workshops were led by these professionals in their work settings reaching 107 children and young people and 70 education professionals.

The webinar for teachers and other education professionals, was held 9th October, with the presence of REEI and at three invited schools. Around 180 people took part of this webinar.

Three podcast episodes were recorded and published within the scope of the project:

- Ep. 1 – [Intercultural Club \(Porto\) 19th September 2025](#) - Cristina Costa & Bruno Prudêncio. This episode focuses on the practice shared by the city of Porto at the practice-sharing event. The «Interculturalism Club» is a project that aims to create moments for dialogue and mutual learning where young people from different backgrounds and cultures can share experiences and collectively build new meanings for school life.
- Ep. 2 – [Linguistic Mediation \(Oeiras & Porto\) 24th September 2025](#) - Inês Antunes & Rosário Ribeiro. This episode focuses on how to ensure inclusion in the school community when the language barrier seems insurmountable, among other issues specific to the work of language mediators, who are key professionals in building intercultural schools.
- Ep. 3 – [Intercultural Competences in Schools \(in partnership with REEI\) 29th October 2025](#) – Mónica Mascarenhas & Joana Inácio. The episode highlights REEI, a program uniting schools nationwide to develop intercultural competences and support educational success for new generations.

STAND project

The project "STAND – Strengthening Towns' Activation for new Narratives on Diversity" builds on the experience of the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe and of the initiative NET-IDEA Network of European Towns for Interculturalism, Diversity, Equality and Anti-discrimination (CERV-2021-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT). The Action is based on a transnational partnership of LAs and CSOs in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland, and involve a total of 14 cities in these countries: Cities of Lublin and Wroclaw in Poland, Cities of Parma, Montesilvano, Reggio Emilia, Modena and Olbia in Italy, Cities of Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Castellò de la Plana and Bilbao in Spain, Cities of Barcelos, Vila Verde, Viseu and Loures in Portugal. Moreover other 2 cities will be involved in the exchange of experiences: the Cities of Riga (Latvia) and Neumarkt (Germany) and 2 transnational organizations: Monash University and German Marshall Fund. The objective of the Action is to strengthen the capacity of LAs and their cooperation with local stakeholders in promoting new effective narratives to foster awareness and recognition of diversity. Many European cities promote policies in favour of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, however they encounter difficulties in accompanying these intercultural policies with narratives that reinforce them and are capable of clearly explaining their importance to citizens. For this, the project STAND has 3 main goals: 1. To support European cities in building narratives that highlight the value of living together in diversity and the contribution of minorities to the social and cultural development of cities and Europe as a whole; 2. To involve and empower Civil society organisations, in particular those working in the field of youth, from different European cities to actively participate in the process of building and disseminating alternative narratives; 3. To increase exchange and cooperation between European cities on the target topics.

The project started on the 1st January 2025 and will end in December 2026. In Portugal, four cities are engaged: Barcelos, Loures, Viseu and Vila Verde. Between January and May, the assessment was held with focus groups being held in the cities engaged. In March, a kick off meeting was held in Parma. During the months of June and July the training on Alternative Narratives was prepared and delivered in 3 cities, engaging more than 50 people. A session for more than 50 young people in Loures and another for more than 60 young people in Barcelos were held to listen to the perspectives of young people regarding oppressive and alternative narratives. Currently, each city is hosting meetings with target groups chosen (Viseu and Barcelos – Roma people; Loures and Vila Verde – people with migrant background) to gather common negative and oppressive narratives and collect ideas for alternative narratives. Together with partners engaged in the trainings, each city is now working on the data collected to go back to the target groups and test the narratives. One international meeting was held in October in Spain.

[EPIC_IDEA project](#)

EPIC_IDEA is a European-funded project, coordinated by ICEI in partnership with RPCI, RECI, and UNITED (Hungary), started in September 2024 and will end in August 2026. Several cities from Portugal are engaged in this project: Cascais, Vila Verde and Santa Maria da Feira. Additionally, Clube intercultural Europeu is also a non-financial partner. The project aims to foster youth participation and engagement for the future of EU.

During this period the National youth workers event was held (Santa Maria da Feira) with 27 participants, a National Youth Camp was held with more than 25 young people from the 3 cities gathered in Cascais (September 2025) to learn about Anti-Rumours and discuss ideas for awareness raising actions. In November, young people from these 3 cities organised and managed several activities in their territories to kickstart conversations with other young people, such as: short movies, a podcast and tote bags with anti-rumours messages. Also in November, an International Youth Summit occurred in Budapest, with 6 young people from Portugal taking part. [One Podcast episode](#) was produced with interviews to the young people present.

[PMIM project](#)

PMIM – Municipal Plan for Migrant Integration of Loures started in February 2025 and will end in March 2027. The project envisions a set of actions to improve the integration of migrants, in several fields such as education, health, housing, culture, language, digital citizenship, documentation and public services.

RPCI role is to hire and manage a set of 4 intercultural mediators, as well as Portuguese teachers and set up digital literacy classes. A set of cultural activities, training for public services and awareness raising actions to prevent racism and xenophobia is also envisioned.

So far, RPCI has performed a participatory assessment that provided information to feed the action plan. Together with the elements gathered during the participatory assessment and assemblies of the DiverCities project, more than 100 people were engaged. A recruitment process was conducted to choose 4 mediators that started to work in August, covering the 4 main areas of the city. These mediators are 3 women and one man from diverse origins and ethnic backgrounds and aim to represent the diversity in the city (Guinea, Bangladesh, Roma and Angola). So far, these mediators have mobilised people for the 1st Portuguese as Additional Language course (October to November), started a Bollywood intercultural dancing class, provided support to several local migrant CSOs in their daily work to support integration, participated and helped the work of the Migrant Support Offices from the municipality and mobilised people for other activities, such as the Concert with Coffee hosted on the 15th December in celebration of the International Migrants Day.

Communication

During this quarter, 20 posts were written and promoted, such as:

- One [original article about Hate Speech](#)
- One [original article on International Cultural Diversity Day](#)
- One [original article about Alternative Narratives](#)
- Three articles about RPCI activities, such as the news about the [joining of Vila Nova de Gaia, annual meeting in Oeiras](#) and the [summary of achievements for 2024](#).
- Articles about events where RPCI participated, such as the [Religious Diversity Event](#) and the [Intercultural Mediation event](#).
- Several news and updates on the **EPIC_IDEA** project:
 - News about the [Youth Workers event](#)
 - Update and [call to action](#) on the project
- Several news and updates on the **STAND** project:
 - News to [advertise the start of the project](#)
 - News about the [event with young people in Loures](#)
 - News about the [event with young people in Barcelos](#)
- Several news and updates on the **Intercultural Educators project**:
 - 3 News to advertise each of the PODCAST episodes: [epi. 1](#); [epi. 2](#) and [epi. 3](#)
 - Article with [results and learnings from the project](#)
 - News with the results of the [Facilitators training](#), and about the [Practice-sharing meeting](#)
 - News to [advertise the webinar](#)

A new page was created on RPCI's website for each new member city that joined the Portuguese network in the past year.

Regarding social media, RPCI maintained the existing Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram pages with regular posts. Below is a summary of the main activities and reach of each channel, for the relevant period (2025):

- **[Facebook](#)**
Reach (average): 45
Visits: 1.300
Publications: 62
Followers: 774
- **[Instagram](#)**
Reach: 2.000
Visits: 459
Publications: 37
Followers: 729
- **[Linkedin](#)**
Page Visits: 172
Followers: 629, most from Great Lisbon and Porto regions
Average impressions: 2,636
Reach: 1.405
Total Posts: 22
- **[Website](#) "Cidades Interculturais"**
Views (total): 10.800 (2024: 7.200)
Visitors (average): 5.000
Subscribers: 15
Articles/ posts: 20 posts (4 original)

- **Podcast Channel “Portugal Plural”**
New episodes: 4
Average play per episode: 1
Followers: 70
Total reproductions: 320 (mostly women from Portugal and Brazil)
- **YOUTUBE channel:**
All time: 32 subscribers | 13 videos | 1600 views
1 new video - [Project STAND](#) (41 views)

Other activities

RPCI, together with partners, prepared two **new funding applications** to CERV funding line (FAIR and SPIRIT), one to and ERASMUS + funding (YOUR TURN+) and as non-financial partners in a Italian government funding line to exchange with Italian cities (Through ICEI – SPACE). Another application was submitted to PREVENT: Proactive Response and European Voices Engaging Narratives for Tolerance project, led by Associació Verificat (Spain) and another one led by CHORUS (Greece), called UN/Exotic Bodies. In total, 6 applications were submitted. So far, 3 projects have been approved: Intercultural Educators, SPIRIT and FAIR.

Also, RPCI was invited for a Podcast episode by Forum DEMOS, held interviews with one investigator and established a partnership with TEACH for Future – a CSO that works in the education field. Within the scope of this new partnership, an internship for one teacher was provided in the Intercultural Educators project between July and August. **RPCI confuse its partnership with the Post Graduation Diversity, Equity and Inclusion from the Polytechnic University of Porto for the 2nd edition started in November 2025 and presented the work of the network in one of the classes.**

Within the scope of RPCI being approved as part if the consultants pool for the [“Upholding equality and non-discrimination by Equality bodies regarding the use of artificial intelligence \(AI\) in public administrations”](#) project of the *Hate Speech, Hate Crime and Artificial Intelligence Unit, Anti-discrimination Cooperation Unit, Anti-discrimination Department, Council of Europe*, a consultation was requested to review an online course on this topic, as well as to participate in the launch event for the course as speakers.

Vila Verde municipality also requested a quote to deliver **consultation services in the field of communication** to implement a public campaign within the Migrant Integration Plan of the city.

Several **partnerships were maintained and new ones established** with the following entities: REEI – Network of Schools for Intercultural Education (AKF, AIMA e DGE); Aga Khan Foundation Portugal; Porto Polytechnic University, PEA, Post Graduation Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (10% discount for RPCI cities); Batoto Yetu; Clube Intercultural Europeu; Stone Soup Consulting; Holly House of Mercy Sabugal; Jerónimo Martins Agro alimentar; Cidade de Leeds; Chorus, Grécia; Education and Transformation 2026; Alcaldía Local de San Cristóbal, Bogotá, Colômbia; Mãos para o Mundo Project (Barcelos); MEERU.

RPCI was also invited and **participated in the following events:**

- Caring + Journeys (Vale do Sousa Nursing School CESPU, June 5, 2025): Presentation of the network and lecture on Interculturalism in Health Care.
- The Participation of Women in the Management of Religious Diversity at the Local Level (Univ. Coimbra, 29 October 2025): Lecture on the importance of Religious Freedom and practices of RPCI cities.
- Dialogue Without Borders: the role of intercultural mediation (Porto City Council, November 19, 2025): RPCI did the mediation of one of the discussion tables
- Master's Degree in Communication and Public Relations (Polytechnic Institute of Guarda, November 25, 2025): RPCI has been invited every year to host a lecture to students.
- Meeting: Human Rights and Employability (CM Loures, December 10, 2025) - Café Concerto Loures Inclusiva (CM Loures, December 15, 2025): RPCI hosted a 1h hour workshop for employers.
- Café Concerto Loures Inclusivo (CM Loures, 15 dezembro 2025): RPCI did the mediation of the discussion table.

Next steps

During the next year RPCI will submit a new proposal for the annual project, accordingly to the priorities set in RPCI annual meeting held on the 9th December: Fighting Hate Speech and Disinformation.

RPCI will hire **2 new staff**: one part time one full time to support the growing demand due to the new projects approved, raising the hired team number to 5 people. A 3rd new staff may be hired, mainly a Roma officer, considering that the FAIR project targets the Roma communities.

FAIR and SPIRIT projects will start and Kick off meetings will be held in Bilbao (January - SPIRIT) and Italy (March - FAIR). Five cities will be engaged in these projects: Oeiras, Barcelos and Viseu (FAIR) and Loures, Oeiras and Cascais (SPIRIT).

Regarding **"EPIC_IDEA"**, the next activities will be implemented, such as the National Policy Lab in Vila Verde, a public campaign and the final international event of the project in Strasbourg.

Regarding **"STAND"**, in the first trimester of 2026, an action plan will be designed for each city to spread the new narratives. A communication campaign and awareness raising actions will be in place to spread the new narratives and a final international event will be held in Loures.

Regarding the **PMIM in Loures**, a new Portuguese course will start, the mediators will continue mobilising learners for the Portuguese Classes and supporting the migrant associations in their daily work for Migrant integration and the digital literacy classes should begin. Citizen assemblies will be held in several locations, and training on intercultural competencies for public officers will be implemented, as well as a set of activities led by migrant associations and financed by the project's budget.

As for our institutional **Communication**, RPCI envisions to continue producing original articles and new podcast episodes, as well as a new page on RPCI's website, advertising RPCI's training and consultancy offers (these were already presented at the last RPCI meeting). Several campaigns will be made, within the scope of our projects.

RPCI also envisions to start **providing training and consultancy services** on demand, to raise funds. Holly House of Mercy Sabugal and the company Jerónimo Martins Agro alimentar have already requested quotations for the Intercultural Competence trainings.