



TENERIFE

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS 2024



Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

**BUILDING BRIDGES,
BREAKING WALLS**



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TENERIFE
INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Cities is a Council of Europe flagship programme. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.

In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which was rich in content and detail. However, narrative reports alone were relatively weak as tools to monitor and communicate progress. Thus, an ‘Intercultural Cities Index’ has been designed as a benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the programme as well as for future participants.

While this report is being written (December 2024) more than 160 cities have embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 136 (including Tenerife) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found [here](#).

Among these cities, 30 cities (including Tenerife) have more than 500 000 inhabitants and 35 (including Tenerife) have more than 20% foreign-born residents.

This document presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Tenerife, Spain, in 2024, and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

INTERCULTURAL CITY DEFINITION

The intercultural city has people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/beliefs. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

METHODOLOGY

The Intercultural Cities Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 86 questions (73 of which are mandatory) grouped in 12 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general Intercultural Cities Index).

These indicators comprise the following (including the three new indicators in bold):

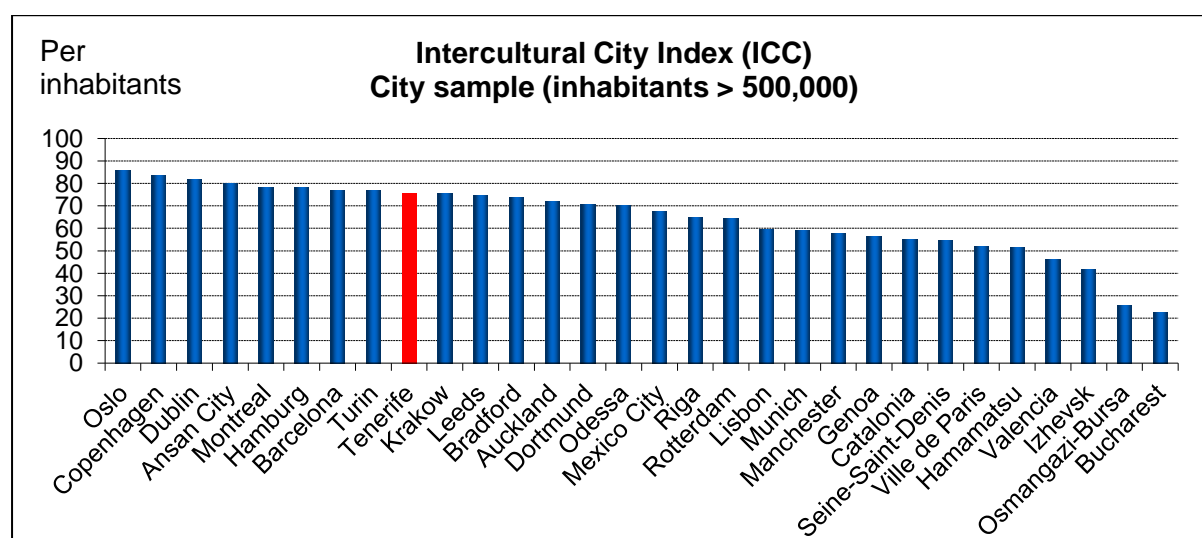
1. Commitment	
2. Intercultural lens	Education
3. Mediation and conflict resolution	Neighbourhoods
4. Language	Public services
5. Media and communication	Business and the labour market
6. International outlook	Cultural and social life
7. Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8. Welcoming newcomers	
9. Leadership and citizenship	
10. Anti-discrimination	
11. Participation	
12. Interaction	

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development, type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended **only as a tool for benchmarking/benchlearning**, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Taking into account the above-mentioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out so far: the size (below 100,000 inhabitants; between 100 000 and 200 000; between 200 000 and 500 000; and above 500 000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (lower than 10 per cent; between 10 and 15 per cent; between 15 and 20 per cent; and higher than 20 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

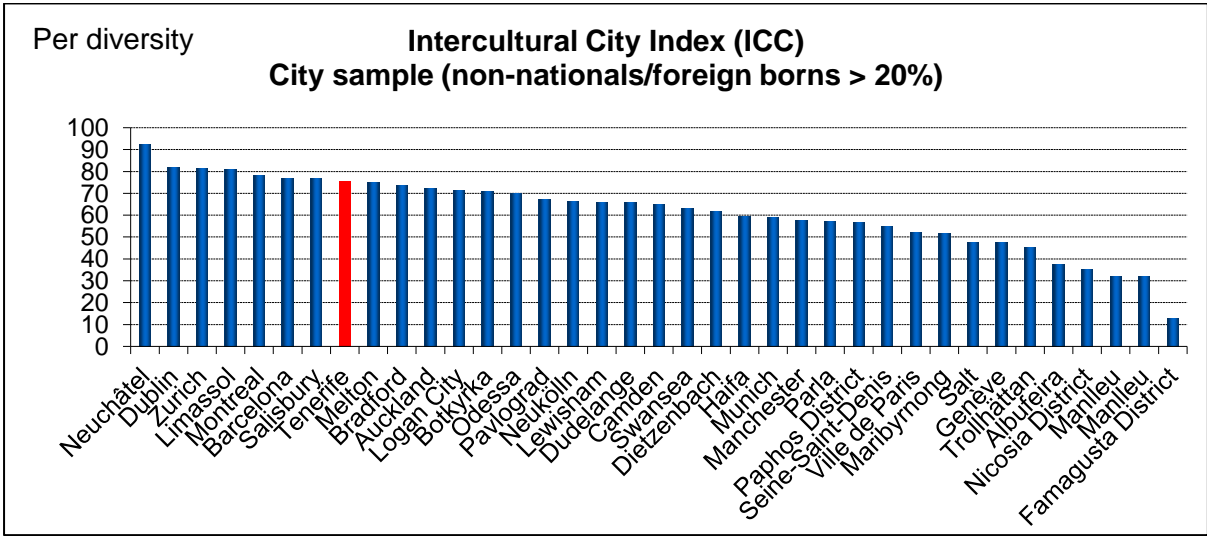
So far, 55 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Tenerife. Thus, the city will be compared with the entire sample for all the indicators, and to the new sample for the new indicators relating to anti-discrimination, participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, Tenerife has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 76 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.¹

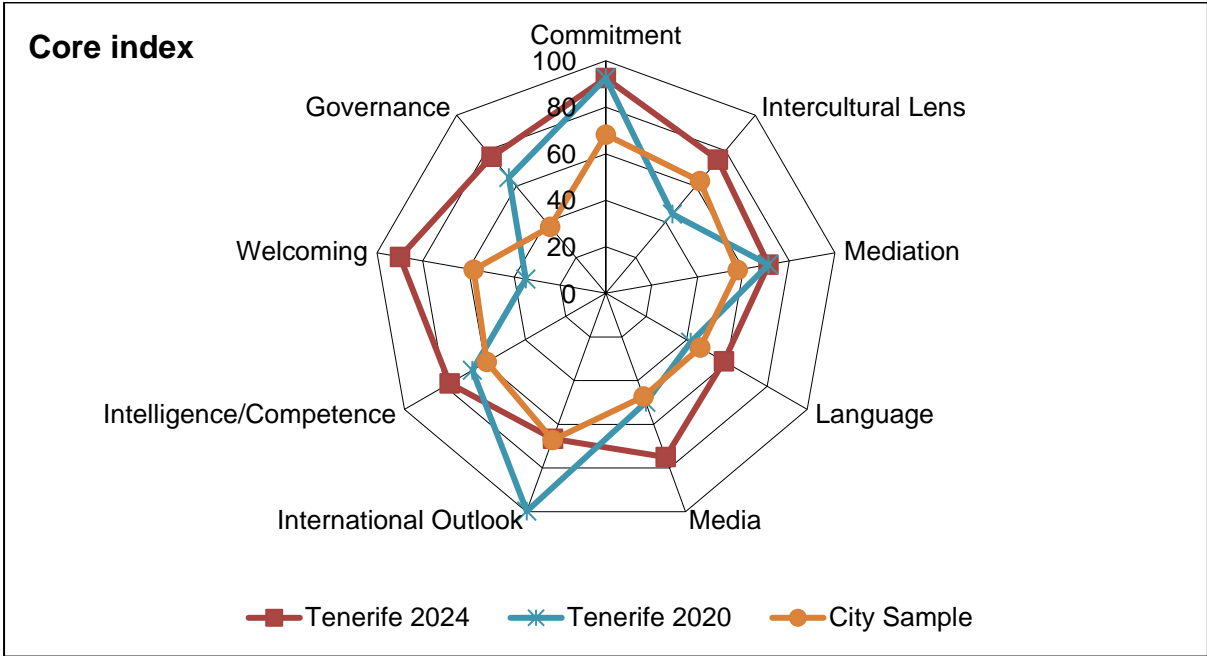


¹ The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended Intercultural Cities Index with 86 questions. As a main rule, the Intercultural Cities Index report applies the scoring from the original Intercultural Cities Index, to ensure the broadest possible comparison group in the global achievement rate.

In addition, the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index is provided in an explanatory footnote for all indicators where it is relevant. This scoring encompasses the assessment of the questions of the original Intercultural Cities Index as well as the new questions of the extended Intercultural Cities Index for each specific indicator. The scoring of the original Intercultural Cities Index and extended Intercultural Cities Index for the same indicator may hence differ based on the differing number of questions. Finally, the indicators which are completely new to the extended Intercultural Cities Index only include the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index. This scoring for these indicators hence shows directly in the text and not in a footnote.

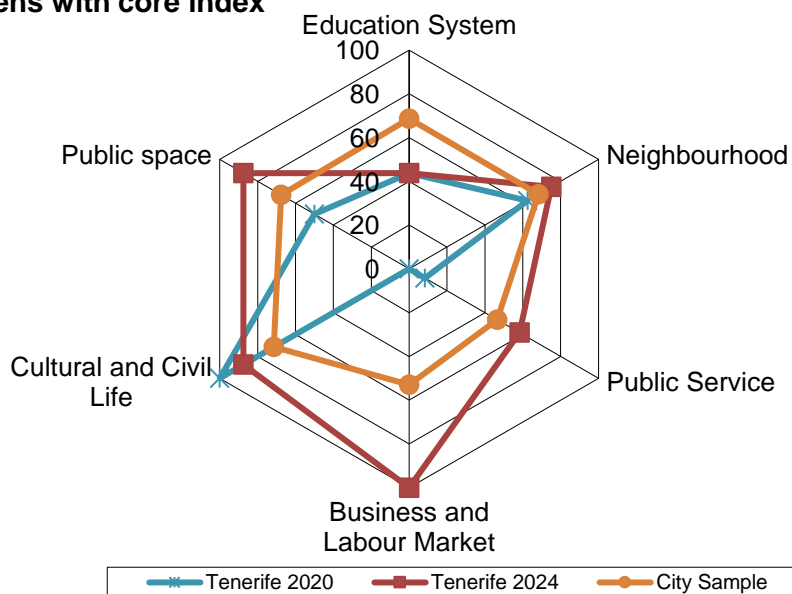


Core index



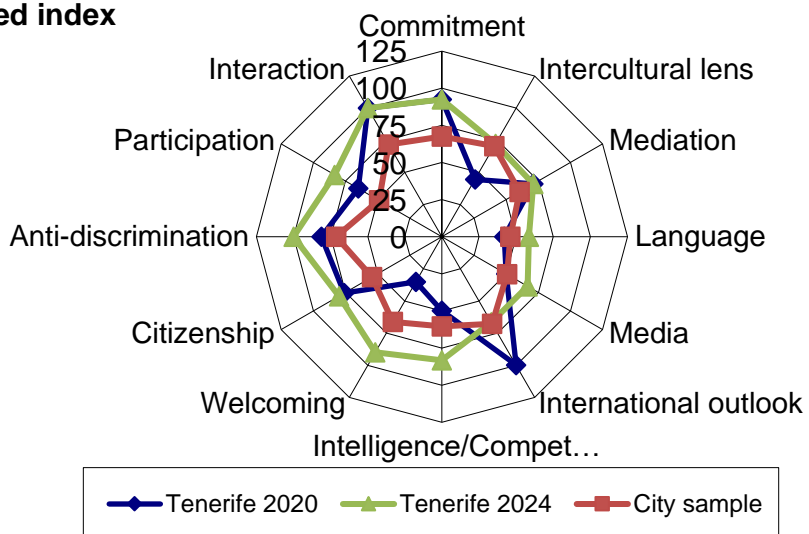
Intercultural lens with core index

Intercultural lens with core index

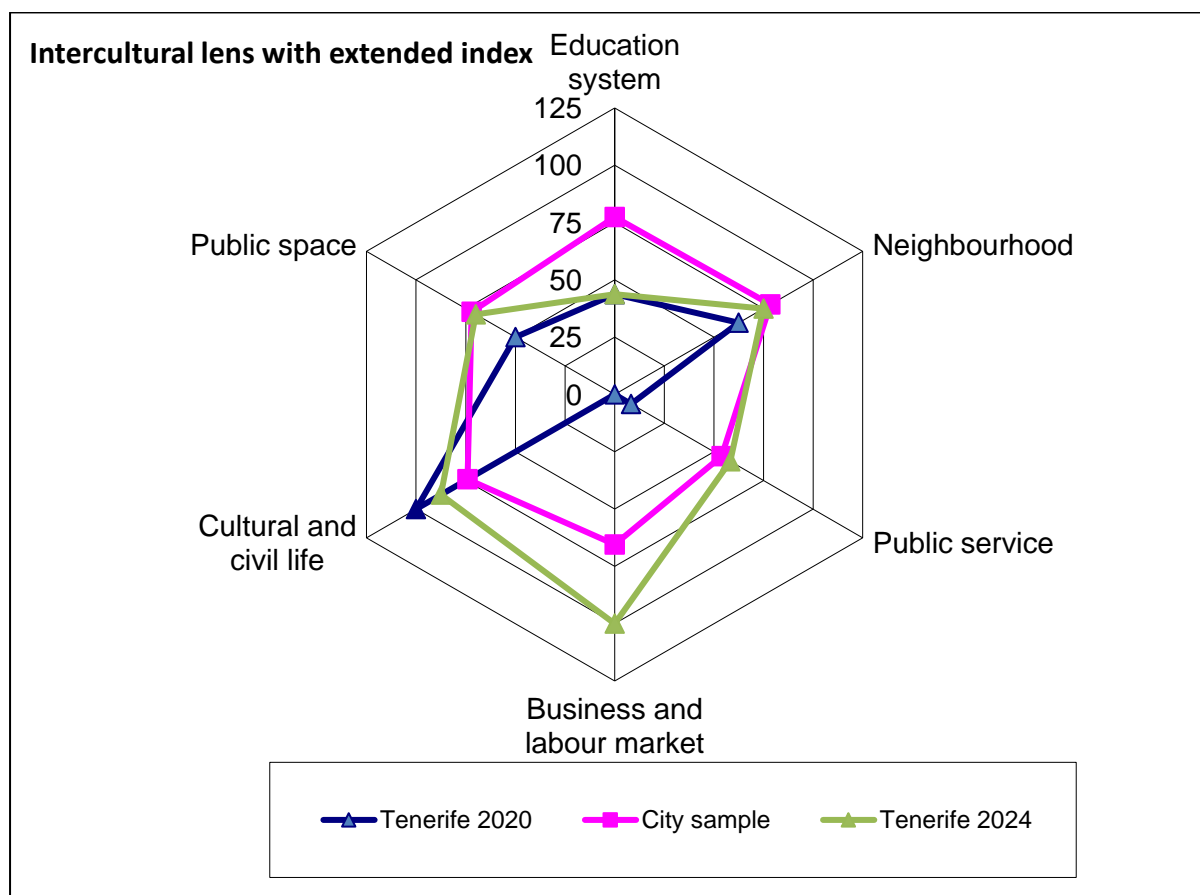


Extended index

Extended index



Intercultural lens with extended index



TENERIFE: AN OVERVIEW

At a little over 2 000 square kilometres, Tenerife is the largest and most populous island of the Canaries autonomous community of Spain, with 944 107 inhabitants (2023), 43% of the archipelago's population. It is poorer than the national average: gross domestic product per capita was €20 069 in 2021, against €26 103 for the country as a whole. Cabildo de Tenerife (the Island Council of Tenerife) is its governing body.

The Cabildo has a series of well-defined competencies, which do not always coincide with those enjoyed by the island's 31 municipalities. In some cases, this specificity renders difficult comparison with municipalities elsewhere – the core of the ICCs Index – because the Cabildo does not always directly provide public services. Nevertheless, it gives impetus to and co-ordinates the collaborative work with the municipalities in this arena via the Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife.

The island has experienced an extraordinary intensification and diversification of its migration flows in the last two decades. In 2001, less than one in ten of its population was foreign-born. Between 2012 and 2022 however, foreign-born residents accounted for nearly three-quarters of population growth of 24 177. By 2022, 22.7% of the population was born abroad, with the highest proportions from Venezuela (5.6%), Cuba (2.4%), Italy (2.1%), the United Kingdom (1.6%) and Germany (1.1%).

The municipalities Santa Cruz de Tenerife and San Cristóbal de La Laguna comprise the urban metropole. They contain large numbers of those who are born abroad, although less than the average concentration. The highest concentrations are in Arona and Adeje – their populations each roughly half born abroad – on the coast, linked to the tourism industry there.

In 2021, the Cabildo established an Assistance Service for Migrants, offering advice and training. The following year an Island Table of Migrant Communities was [convened](#) as a sounding board for its proposals – a 'historic' initiative giving voice to migrants, according to the councillor for participation and diversity, Nauzet Gugliotta.

The share of UK- and German-born migrants has receded in recent times. By contrast, asylum has become a more prominent driver, with nearly 4 000 asylum applications registered in 2022. Significant numbers of people have

arrived in the Canary Islands via boats from neighbouring west-African states – in 2023 about 40 000 completed the hazardous journey, a negligible phenomenon five years earlier – with other routes into the European Union increasingly cut off. The political reverberations have been felt in Madrid.

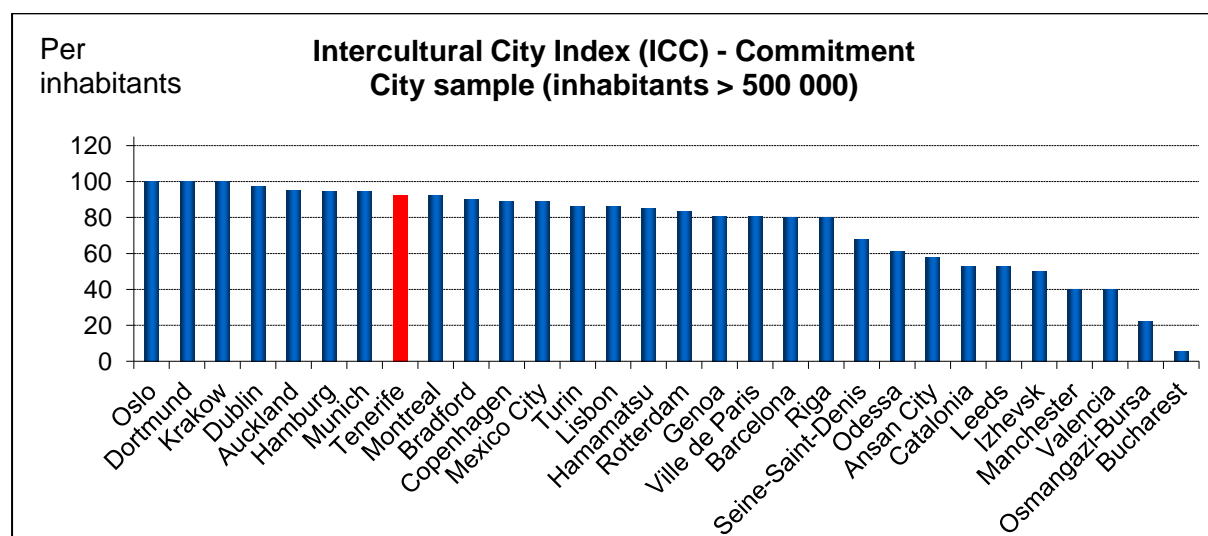
The main groups of asylum-seekers to Tenerife have however arrived less visibly, by air, from Venezuela and Colombia. Between 2021 and 2023 two in five of those of foreign origin engaged by the Cabildo's 'Together in the same direction' programme (see below) were from Venezuela.

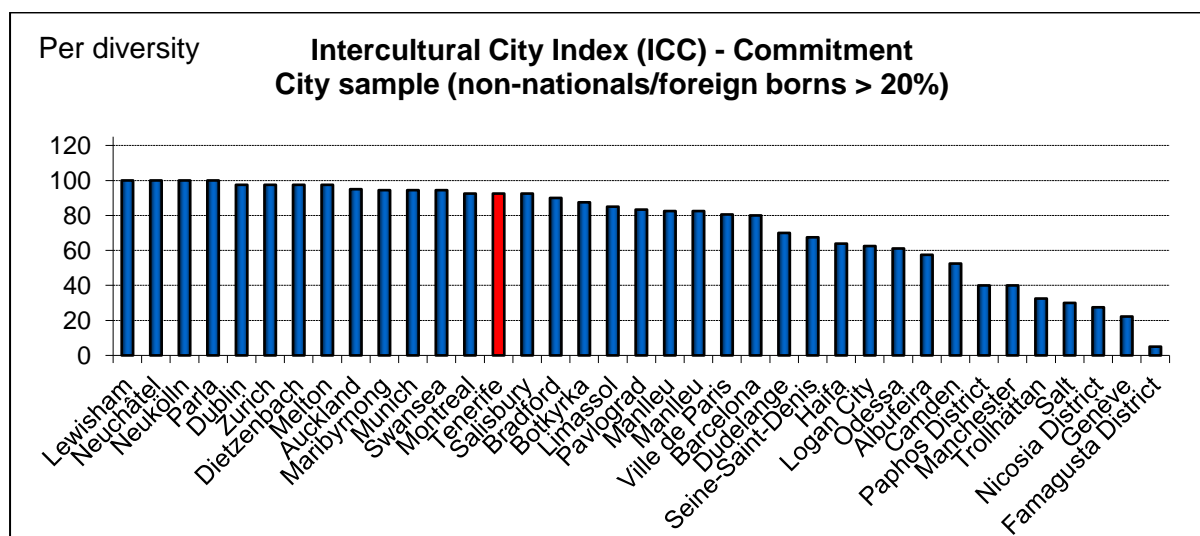
An enduring feature is the Roma community on the island. In 2022 the Cabildo [established](#) the Island Committee of the Roma People, with a specific focus on Roma women. In 2023 officials from the Cabildo presented a project to the committee to reduce the high level of unemployment among Roma citizens.

COMMITMENT

For intercultural inclusion to occur, city authorities need to send out a clear and well-publicised message emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality and interaction. Ideally, a majority of elected officials and senior policy officers will have a clear understanding of these core principles and their implications for policy-making. City authorities also need to initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions. Most importantly, an intercultural city actively seeks to include residents of all nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups in the policy-making process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.

Tenerife achieved a score of 93, which is considerably higher than the city sample's score of 68. Tenerife's performance was close to the current average in its index report in 2012 but it has since become one of the high performers, reflecting the Cabildo's increasing commitment over that time.





This evolving story goes back to the establishment in 2001 of the Immigration Observatory of Tenerife ([OBITen](#)), housed in the University of La Laguna and with the support of its foundation as well as the Cabildo. In 2009, this university / public-authority link saw the emergence of a project called 'En la misma direction' (in the same direction), which became the vehicle '[Juntas En la misma direction](#)' (Together in the same direction) for the promotion of interculturality on the island the following year.

This operates as a decentralised network, with nine working groups. At the end of each year, the individuals and entities involved come together around the Island Table for Intercultural Living Together in Tenerife, which has now been convened 17 times, to take stock of their work and set out the steps ahead. Mid-year, there is also a celebratory lunch.

In 2019 the Cabildo [agreed](#) a strategic framework, '[Estrategia para Vivir la Diversidad en Tenerife](#)' (Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife), encompassing Together in the same direction and other intercultural initiatives, including by municipalities. This has three objectives:

- promoting intercultural living together and human rights for social inclusion and peace, recognising that diversity is an asset for prosperity and sustainability;
- inspiring local authorities to develop measures to enhance rights and neighbourhood relations, and to share good practices in the management of cultural diversity, and
- supporting the rights and needs of ethnic minorities and of people in movement, as of other groups who might find themselves subject to hostility.

In addition to exploiting the link with the university, this document was elaborated over three years with widescale participation: more than 300 people and 50 organisations took part. And it has provided the platform for individual agreements with municipalities and educational centres on the island, through which the Cabildo can assist in supporting integration on the ground.

The Department of Socio-economic Development and External Action and the associated technical service of the Cabildo play a critical role in this work, not only in linking interculturality with material issues such as employment and training but also in supporting, via an interdepartmental commission, a transversal approach across the authority. Municipalities associated with the Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife are also encouraged to establish such interdepartmental arrangements.

An important testament to Tenerife's commitment is also the active role played by the councillor for participation and diversity, Señora Gugliotta, in representing the Cabildo at all key events. Otherwise, though, the authority recognises that it rarely refers clearly to its intercultural engagement in official communications. It has recently however sought to integrate interculturalism into the official narrative when it comes to social action, inclusion, volunteering and citizen participation.

Tenerife has engaged with the wider ICCs programme, not only in determining its index position five times but also in hosting a programme-wide event in 2018. It has also hosted the Spanish network of intercultural cities, RECI, in

2021 and 2023, seeing the network as another vehicle for reflection on its work. Tenerife has also contributed (as has the university) to the Canary Islands [Immigration and Intercultural Living Together Plan](#).

Tenerife's increasing engagement over time with interculturality has been reflected in the budget allocated to this work, which increased from €60 000 in 2012 to €376 893 in 2023. The Cabildo also provides €60 000 per year for OIBITen and immigration research.

Suggestions

Tenerife has built up a formidable body of work on interculturalism over the last decade and a half, for which all involved are to be congratulated. It may be that in one sense it has almost been too successful, however: the rarity of reference to this work in what the Cabildo says about its activities may indicate that what has become an accumulation of material is difficult to encapsulate. For example, the interested citizen might be confused among the three general objectives (plus 18 specific objectives) of the 2019 strategy and the five general objectives (plus six specific ones) of Together in the same direction, [as of 2023](#). While the strategy is accessible in three clicks from the Cabildo home page, it has to be actively sought out. "Together in the same direction" has a separate website linked to the University of La Laguna.

Tenerife might consider a rationalisation of this material, with a new iteration of the strategy identifying clearly its aim (singular) and consequent objectives. Together in the same direction would then be integrated into the strategy, under the programmes and projects to realise those objectives, while the partnerships with the municipalities would come under the structures for delivery of it. The Cabildo might draw in this regard on the ten-point [template](#) developed by the Council of Europe for intercultural-integration plans at the national level, which itself drew on existing municipal as well as national plans. In rendering the relationships with municipalities more systematic, It might also consider how [Barcelona](#) has promoted interculturalism in its ten districts by the latter developing specific district intercultural plans, consistent with the citywide strategy, and via biannual meetings with district representatives to discuss implementation.

Any strategy will be due for a refresh after five years in any event and this would be an opportunity to engage the whole breadth of the network Tenerife has developed, of individuals and associations, interested in and knowledgeable about this area. Agreeing through this process a single overarching aim – a core to any well-drafted strategy – would not only gel all the participants in the process. It would also, critically, then provide a clear and accessible message which the Cabildo could use in all its official public communications.

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

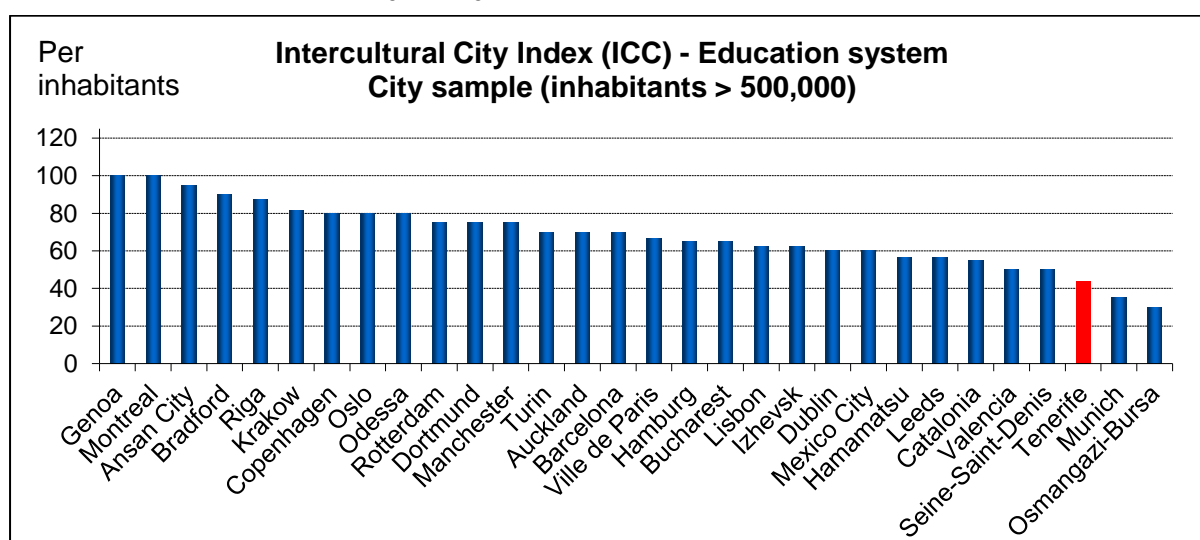
Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore be re-conceived and re-configured in order to assure they provide adequate service to all residents regardless of their nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientation and age group. This is most notably the case for policies concerning education, neighbourhoods, public services, business and the labour market, cultural and social life, and public space.

The overall score for the policies of Tenerife, assessed as a whole through an 'intercultural lens', is 75, which is higher than that, 63, for the city sample.² This represents a major improvement on its four previous index reports, when its performance was below average, relating to the Cabildo's increasing commitment.

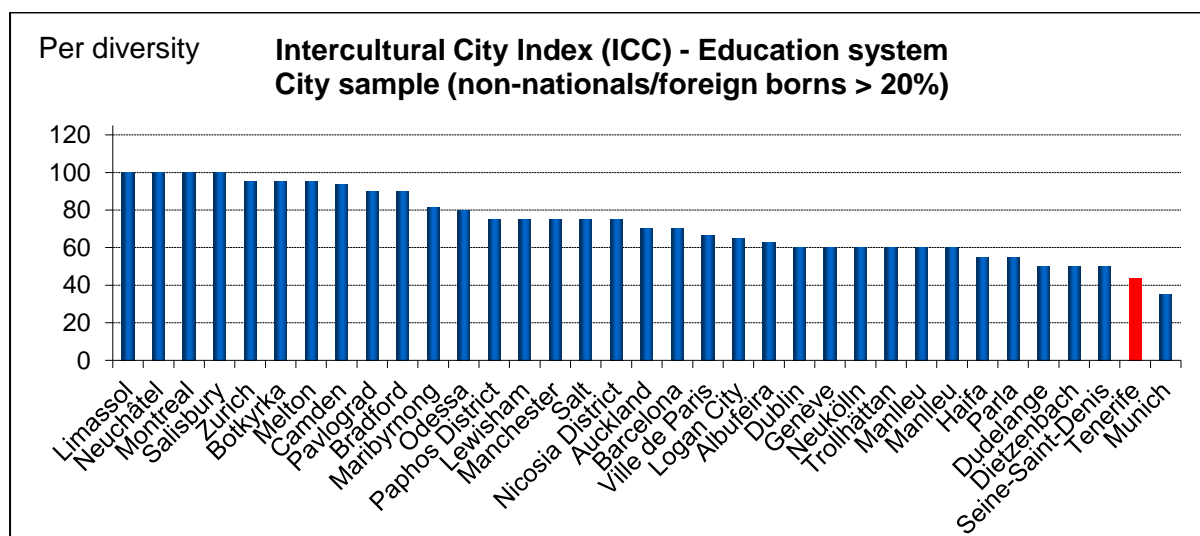
EDUCATION

Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Schools therefore have a strong potential to reinforce or, on the contrary, challenge prejudices and negative stereotyping. Although school programmes are defined primarily at the national or regional level, local schools can look at alternative and innovative ways of providing opportunities for children of different cultures to build trust and mutual respect, and create thereby favourable learning conditions for all pupils, irrespective of their nationalities, origins, languages, sexual orientation or gender identity, religions/beliefs. From the intercultural perspective, cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools also consider parents of pupils with migrant/minority backgrounds on an equal basis as other parents. They take steps to ensure that all parents overcome any reluctance they may have in engaging with the school and give them in this way the possibility of playing the educational role usually expected from parents.

Tenerife achieved a score of 44, which is considerably lower than the city sample's score of 69. Its performance in this field is thanks to teacher training via Together in the same direction and OBITen.



² Tenerife's score in this regard in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 72 (the city sample score is 70).



The Cabildo admits that in most schools are made up of pupils sharing the same background – although most go to their local school, so that ‘white flight’ is not an issue – and that very few make great efforts to involve the families of migrant children in school life. Within the framework of the Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife, however, individual schools have been engaged by the authority in support of the strategy.

For instance, an agreement with [El Médano](#) secondary includes developing tools to enhance the integration of new students and their families by involving the whole educational community (teachers, parents and students), broadening its knowledge about migratory processes and their causes, increasing understanding of Africa as a culturally diverse continent and reducing prejudices and stereotypes. [Magallanes](#) secondary has meanwhile organised a series of workshops, again including parents as well as teachers and pupils, to promote the idea of intercultural living together as a source of enrichment.

And schools do often carry out intercultural projects. For example, children at [El Fraile](#) infants’ and primary school produced a mural about how they saw the future of the neighbourhood, focusing on its intercultural conviviality.

Recommendations

Tenerife could seek to involve the families of migrants and refugees more systematically, to ‘gel’ the whole educational community around the school, by drawing on the experience of [Salisbury](#) in Australia. There ‘community hubs’ help families, especially mothers of young children, to make connections with each other and the wider community, including schools. Most schools in turn seek to involve parents from minority backgrounds, including via outreach to appropriate settings with interpretation on hand.

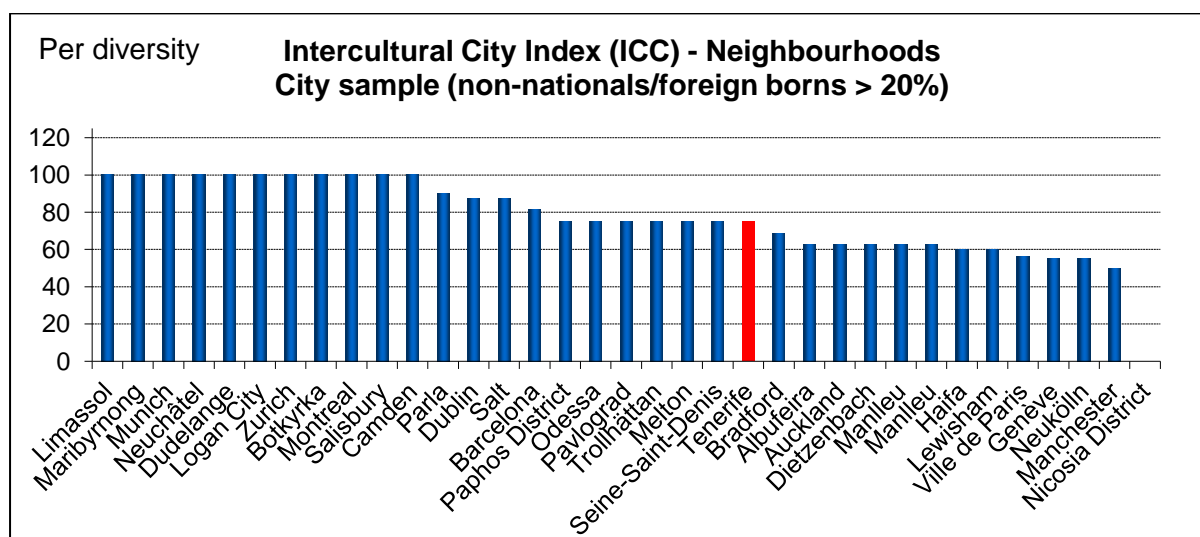
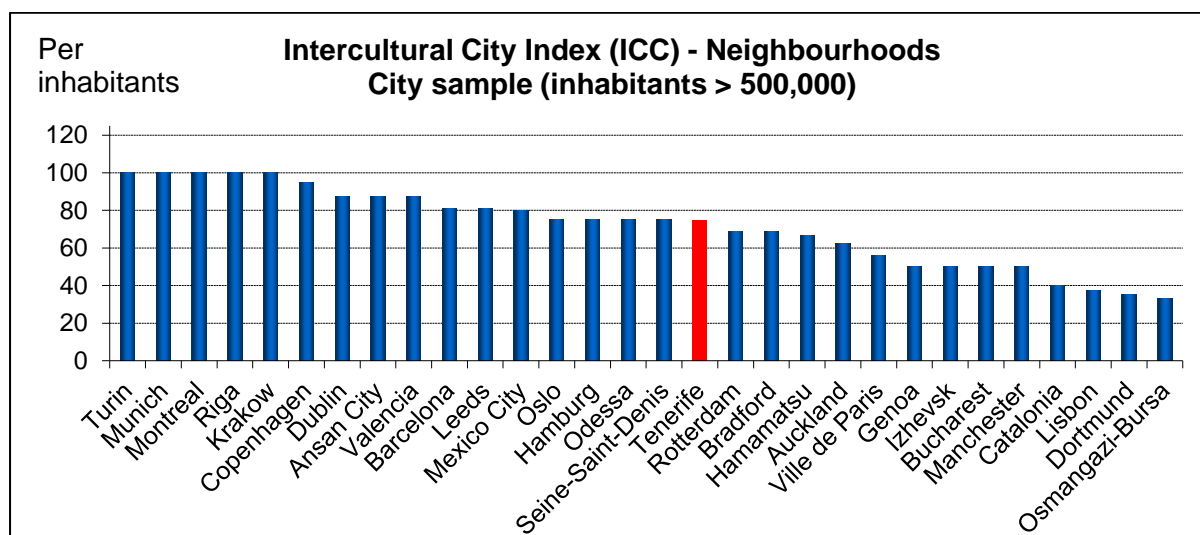
In Iceland, [Reykjavik](#)’s broader approach to effective multilingualism might also be of interest. Pursued through the Centre of Language and Literacy in the city, this is characterised by support for language pluralism and involvement of parents (and non-teaching staff), including in pre-school and after-school settings. Reykjavik also supports a Mother Tongue Teaching Association and a bilingual association, as well as ‘Café Lingua’ events in places such as the city library.

While the Cabildo does not employ teachers, it could also seek to make interculturalism more integral to all schools’ activities, including non-formal education, looking to the experience of [Sabadell](#), also in Spain, with its City and School Programme. In this the authority acts as a broker, offering teachers a menu of nearly 400 propositions – for instance, storytelling around the Roma population – engaging almost 80 entities in their delivery.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within a city, districts, neighbourhoods, or other territorial sub-units, can be more or less culturally/ethnically diverse. People are indeed free to move and settle in the neighbourhood of their choice. To be intercultural, a city does not require a ‘perfect’ statistical mix of people in all neighbourhoods. It will however make sure that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood does not convert into socio-cultural segregation, and does not act as a barrier to the inward and outward flow of people, ideas and opportunities. In particular, the intercultural city ensures the same quality of public service delivery in all the neighbourhoods and plans public space, infrastructures, social, cultural and sport activities to encourage intercultural and socio-economic mixing and interaction.

Tenerife achieved a score of 75, which is slightly higher than the city sample's score of 68. Good practices have been developed at neighbourhood level, with the next step being perhaps to generalise them.



The Cabildo lacks data on demographic breakdown below the municipal level and so on the degree of integration or segregation at neighbourhood level. It can however help to ease any pressures on housing associated with people movement, as its budget includes allocations to municipalities to buy land or properties for additional social housing, in a context where affordable housing is a major issue on the island.

In Arona the El Fraile neighbourhood, its more than 12 000 inhabitants of 80 different origins – many drawn by employment in the tourism sector nearby – provides an innovative exemplar of intercultural living together. Within the framework of Together in the same direction, the project Citizen Participation El Fraile [provides](#) an open space in which its participants can exploit the benefits diversity can engender in their common commitment to neighbourhood development. For example, it has [produced](#) videos with the title “El Fraile: territory of welcome” to destigmatise perceptions of the neighbourhood.

Similarly, in the highly diverse metropolitan neighbourhood of Taco, ‘Taco for Everyone’ [seeks](#) to strengthen the social fabric and sense of belonging and improve the image of the locality. A project called ‘Community’ [pursues](#) fine-grained community development in the barrios of Taco through collaboration between the municipality of San Cristóbal de La Laguna, the University of La Laguna and the local entities and associations. In the public square, ‘PARTYcipating: for a sustainable Taco’ is an annual event – attending it in 2023 the Cabildo’s councillor for employment, socioeconomic development and external action [stressed](#) that interculturalism was a ‘generative element’ in striving to realise the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

[Suggestions](#)

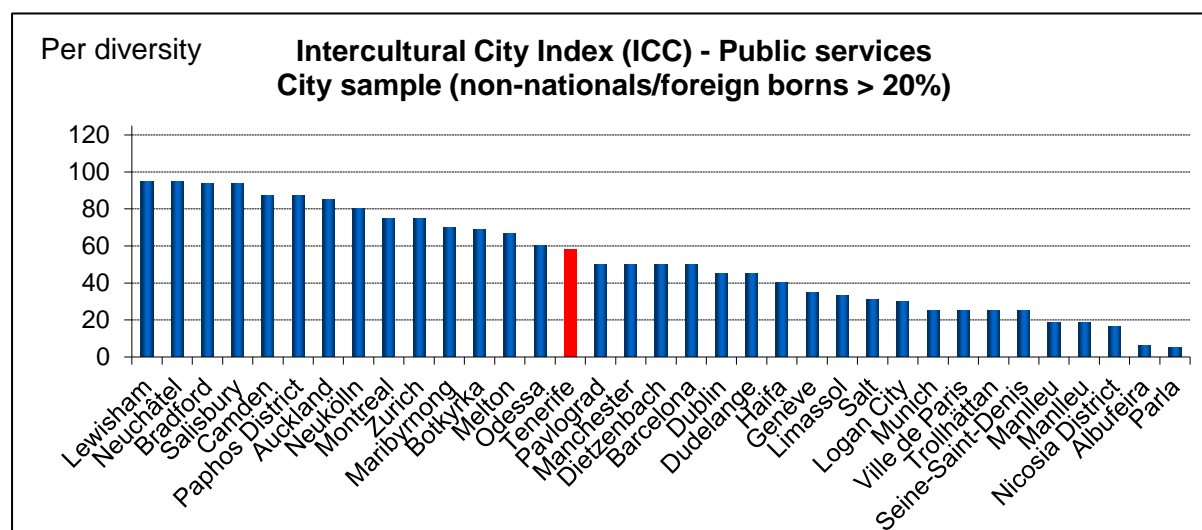
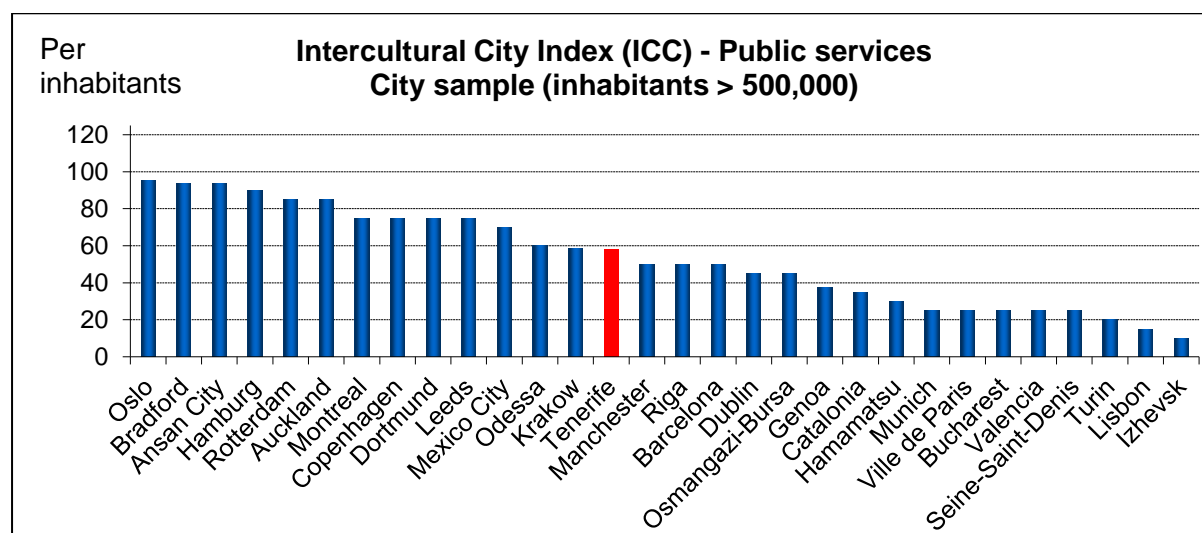
Tenerife could aim to generalise these good practices, as in El Fraile and Taco, to other neighbourhoods across the island, starting with the most diverse. It could draw on how [Barcelona](#) has drilled down not just to the district (see above) but also to the neighbourhood level, by weaving the city's Interculturalism Plan into its Neighbourhoods Plan. This can dovetail intercultural integration with the specific demographic make-up and challenges of particular neighbourhoods, engendering solutions with full citizen and civil-society participation while making the 'diversity advantage' real on the ground.

Bearing in mind the participatory ethos of Together in the same direction, Tenerife might also find informative a three-year project run by [Braga](#) in Portugal, '(Re)Writing our Neighbourhood'. Focused on neighbourhoods with significant Roma populations, this promoted intercultural cohesion and individual agency in the localities, addressing their particular problems and potentialities.

PUBLIC SERVICES

As their very name implies, public services work for the benefit of the public as a whole. If the population is diverse, public services will be more efficient in delivering adequate benefits and information if city officers, at all levels of seniority, are as diverse as the population in general. This requires much more than simply ensuring equal opportunities to access public service employment. When taking action to encourage a diverse municipal workforce, an intercultural city acknowledges that a 'one size fits all' approach to public services and actions does not guarantee equal access to public benefits. The city also recognises that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds should never be treated as passive consumers of public benefits but can contribute actively by suggesting new ideas and innovative solutions to public problems.

Tenerife achieved a score of 58, which is higher than the city sample's score of 47. Cultural sensitivities are shown to users of public services but the Cabildo might give more attention to diversifying its workforce composition.



The Cabildo does not have data on the make-up of its workforce and does not have any initiatives to promote more diversity among its employees. It does however support those NGOs working with migrants in terms of training and capacity-building.

As indicated above, Tenerife links the pursuit of interculturalism to socioeconomic development, to demonstrate the diversity advantage. So for instance, within its Neighbourhoods for Employment: Stronger Together programme there is a project called 'Come closer', which has [offered](#) tailored advice and orientation to several hundred individuals of foreign origin to promote their activation in Tenerife – some have needed basic help with asylum claims or administrative irregularity.

As regards service delivery, Tenerife does address cultural sensitivities when it comes to funerals and school meals. Its gender-violence unit has [engaged](#) with a high proportion of women born abroad, offering counselling and legal support. Many of these are in an irregular situation administratively, so the service navigates bureaucratic barriers to ensure safe accommodation and provides individualised attention until the end of proceedings.

Suggestions

Tenerife already routinely refers to the diversity advantage in its intercultural work. It would be an easy next step to apply this to the Cabildo's own workforce composition, drawing for example on the [evidence](#) that greater diversity fosters more creativity.

Some local authorities in the United Kingdom have developed sophisticated approaches to enhancing diversity in their workforces. These begin with collecting data associated with recruitment in such a way as to indicate where under-representation is taking place and how it can be rectified. Employee surveys can also be of value, especially initially to identify the baselines.

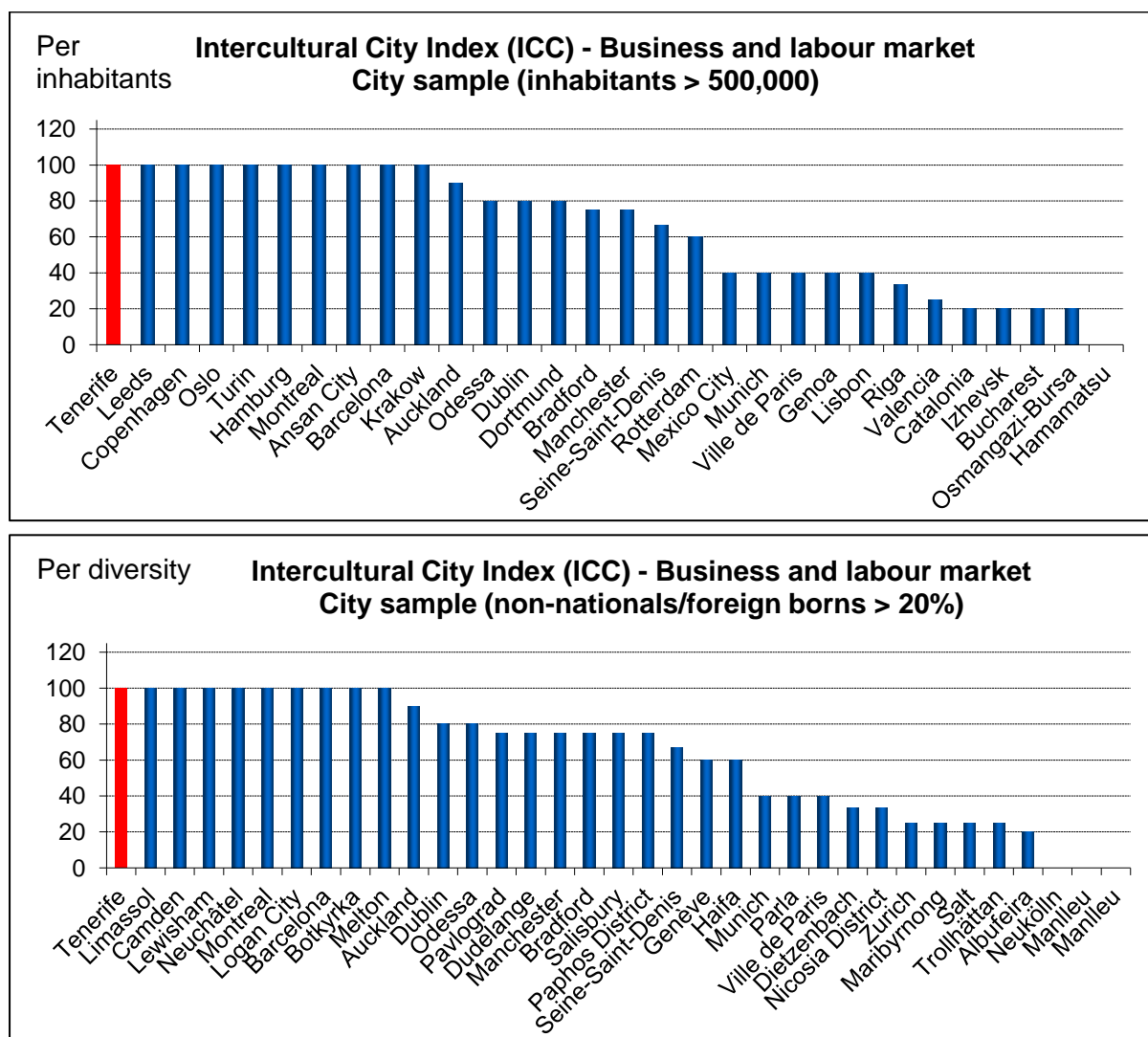
A particular challenge is representation at senior levels, rather than in more routine and menial tasks, of individuals from minority backgrounds. [Camden](#) Council in London, for example, has worked with specialist NGOs in this area and developed an action plan to tackle the challenge, for instance via blind recruitment. In Norway, [Bergen](#) has also encouraged recruitment of staff from minority backgrounds, including through a Bergen Opportunity programme focused on mentoring and leadership.

[Auckland](#) in New Zealand might also inspire. It is committed to the idea of being an 'inclusive workplace'. From that flows a proactive approach to diversity across the municipality, for example through divisional diversity and inclusion plans and association of the authority with high-profile external events such as Pride.

BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to the public sector labour markets is often restricted by national or regional legislation. When this is the case, the private sector may provide an easier route for people with migrant or diverse backgrounds to engage in economic activity. As a result, private companies and activities tend to offer much more diverse working environments than the public sector. Research has also proved that it is cultural diversity in private companies, and not homogeneity, which fosters creativity and innovation. By constantly highlighting the diversity advantage in business, and partnering with their chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, cities can influence how diversity is perceived in the private sector in such diverse sectors as shops, clubs, restaurants, industry, technical services and science.

Tenerife achieved a score of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's score of 53. It has a strong commitment, with partners, to promoting diversity in the enterprise world, on which it is to be congratulated.



The Tenerife section of the main Spanish employers' organisation, CEOE, the island's Association for Migrant Entrepreneurs, the Cabildo and the University of La Laguna [came together](#) in 2023 to review information on and analysis of migrant enterprise, with a view to enhancing its significance. In addition to mapping and understanding these gaps and challenges, Tenerife publicly recognises the role of migrants as entrepreneurs and highlights their contribution to the local economy through invitations to business events, facilitating inclusion in business and professional networks and removing barriers to bidding for contracts. The wider regulatory framework does not however permit the Cabildo to make interculturalism a criterion of public procurement.

The Santa Cruz de Tenerife Chamber of Commerce also has a support programme in this area.

Suggestions

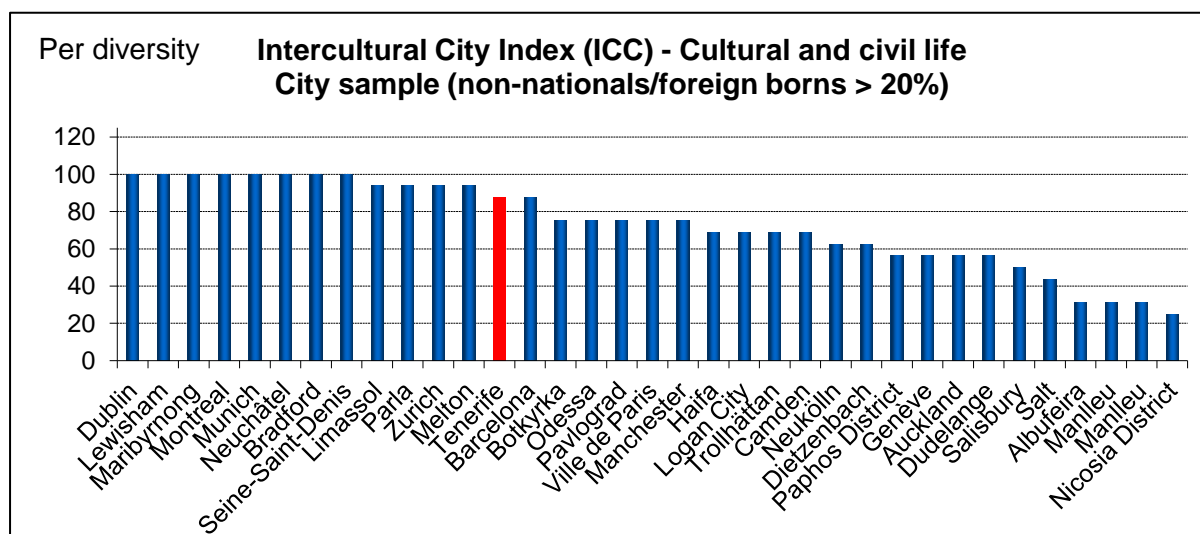
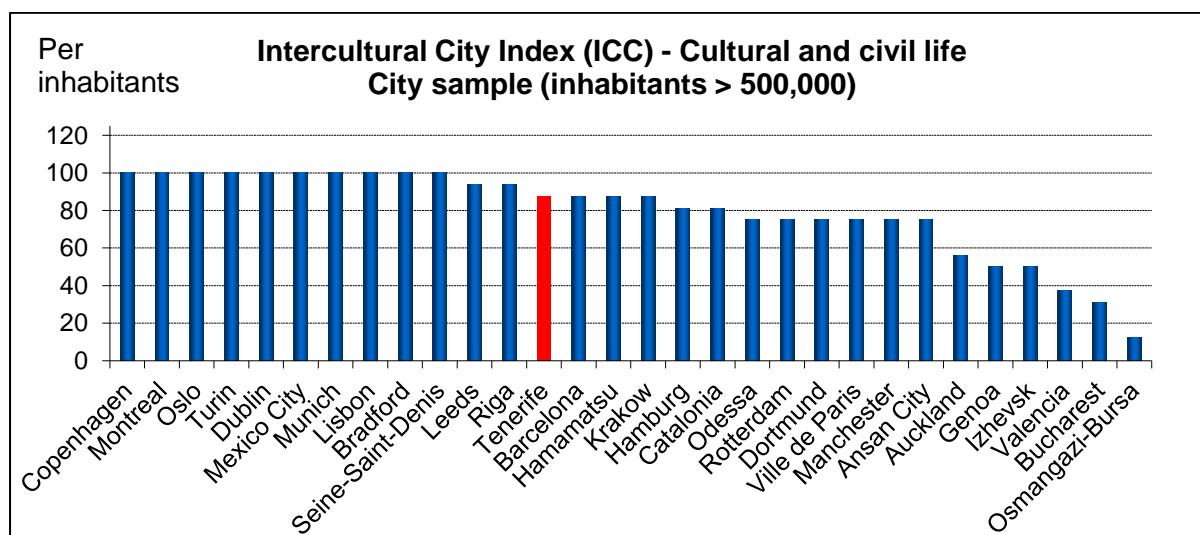
Though somewhat dated now, Tenerife might still glean some ideas from the ICCs [policy brief](#) on migrant enterprise. It already has relationships with the Chinese Trade and Tourism Association in the Canary Islands, involved in the Together in the same direction network, and might find of interest the Xeix project in [Barcelona](#). Established in the wake of Chinese (and Pakistani) entrepreneurs taking over closing businesses in the Fort Pienc neighbourhood, this has progressively integrated the newcomers into its associational life.

Intercultural policies in this arena also seek to stimulate a wider appreciation of the competitive advantage of diversity among all businesses, such as in harvesting fresh ideas and developing supply networks, utilising links migrant workers provide to their countries of origin. Tenerife might learn from how, via the associated think-tank Mondinsieme, [Reggio-Emilia](#) in Italy has established a 'Diversity Lab' which, among other things, accompanies companies operating in the city in creating inclusive working environments favourable to the expression of diversity, supporting them with diversity-management policies and practices as required. Copenhagen and [Oslo](#) have pioneered charters of diversity which they encourage local businesses to endorse.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Whereas people living in a city may have different migrant/minority or other backgrounds, they very often share the same interests and satisfaction when engaging in leisure activities, especially in the fields of arts, culture and sports. Such activities are sometimes structured along ethnic lines. That is quite understandable when they aim to preserve folklore traditions or the language and history of countries of origin. What is problematic is when cross-cultural leisure activities are organised along ethnic lines, for example when a football team only accepts players from one ethnic group. The intercultural city can encourage cultural openness through its own activities and by introducing intercultural criteria when allocating resources to artistic, cultural and sports organisations.

Tenerife achieved a score of 88, which is higher than the city sample's of 71. There are numerous instances of interculturalism being woven into the cultural life of the island.



Since 2023, the Cabildo has earmarked funding for non-governmental organisations working to promote interculturalism and the social inclusion of migrants.

Within the framework of Together in the same direction, Tenerife has [recognised](#) the specific capacity of the arts, in all their forms, to foster intercultural comprehension and empathy, including the role 'artists' (activist artists) can play as individuals in enhancing the reception of newcomers. As part of this 'artist reception' project, for example, a collaborative mural was presented in San Cristóbal de La Laguna to [encourage](#) a more sympathetic and hospitable response to those arriving on the island and reflect the difficulties as well as the contribution of the migratory process.

Every summer the island's Museum of Nature and Archaeology hosts a festival dedicated to a particular geographical cultural reference point – last time this was [Cape Verde](#), itself a location blending European and African cultural elements – highlighting exchanges with Tenerife through art. Other events on the intercultural calendar include a Tricontinental [Crafts Fair](#) and a [festival](#) exploring cultural links between Africa and Latin America.

Via OBITen Tenerife is involved, with three other members of the Spanish RECI network, in the European Commission's [SCORE](#) project. This seeks to combat racism and xenophobia and all forms of intolerance through sport. The University of La Laguna has also been involved in a [project](#) to integrate through football unaccompanied minors who arrived on the island from Africa.

[Suggestions](#)

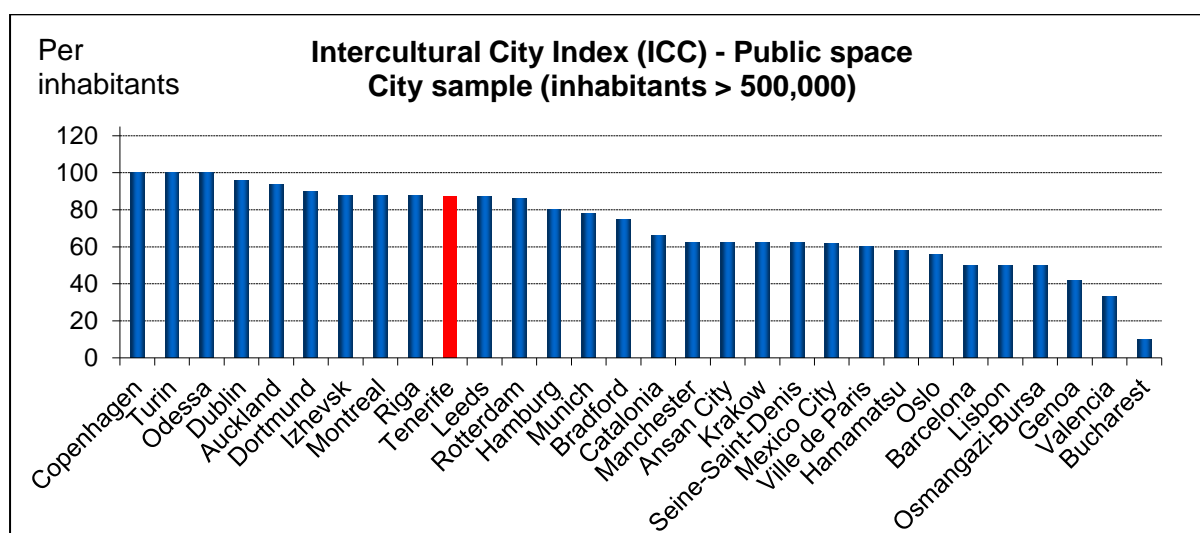
To consolidate the embedding of interculturalism into cultural and social practices, beyond discrete events and projects, Tenerife might consider the approach [adopted](#) by the Danish Centre for Arts and Interculture. It has sought to change the tone of the cultural scene as a whole by giving voice to migrants from the suburbs while encouraging the cultural institutions to widen their repertoire and broaden their audiences. In [Donostia – San Sebastian](#) in Spain, when an old tobacco factory was converted into a cultural centre, unwittingly the centre became attractive to young, male migrants. Its programme evolved accordingly in relation to this group. Given the number of unaccompanied minors who have arrived in Tenerife in recent years, this could also be of interest to the Cabildo.

Sport can reach audiences – especially among youth at the bottom of the social hierarchy – beyond those the arts world can more readily engage. Tenerife, as an island, might take on board the way Limassol (Cyprus), Haifa (Israel), and Ioannina (Greece) [explored](#) water sports as a vehicle for intercultural integration in an ICC-supported project.

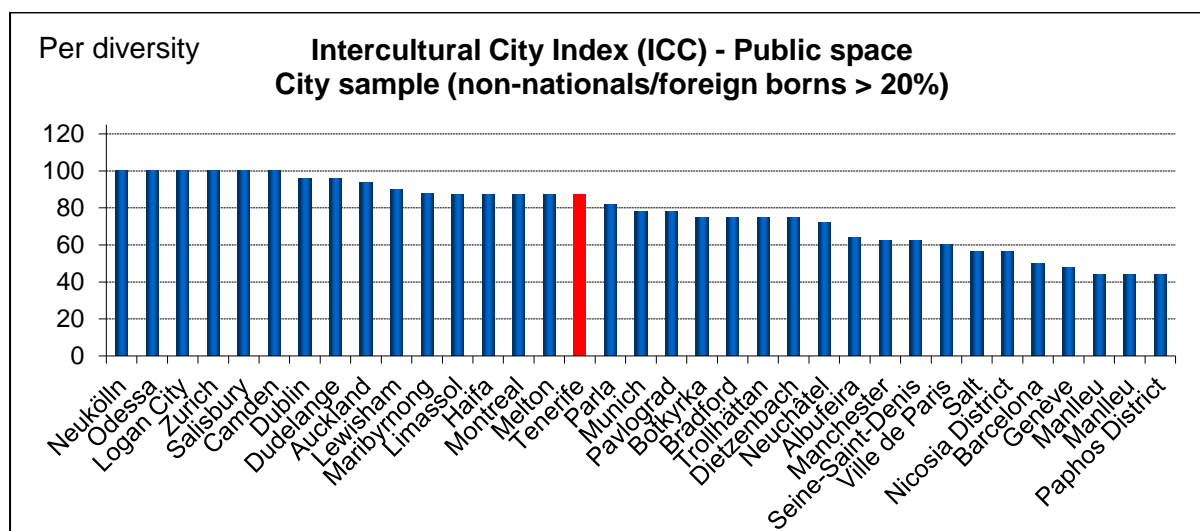
PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) and facilities (public buildings, day centres, schools, health centres, etc.) are places which most citizens are obliged to use. They offer the possibility of meeting people of different nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups. For encounters between diverse people to actually occur, such spaces and facilities should be designed and animated in a way that all residents feel comfortable when using them. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the “other”. When this is the case, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions largely support by them.

Tenerife achieved a score of 88, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 68.³



³ Tenerife's score in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 70 (the average for the city sample is 72).



Museums and libraries are always public spaces of high value for the promotion of intercultural interaction and understanding. The Cabildo has recognised this, for instance in [collaborating](#) with Museums of Tenerife on an event celebrating Africa Day in 2022 with a percussionist and a mural painter presenting their work. Similarly, in 2021 the municipal library in Adeje [launched](#) a book called *Stories of Resilience: Human Libraries*, promoting this concept of challenging stigmas and stereotypes through amicable conversation around real-life stories.

As for outdoor public space, Tenerife has developed the idea of ‘intercultural walks’. For instance, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2023, within the ambit of the SCORE sports project (see above), one such multi-ethnic (and multi-age) walk to promote conviviality was organised between Tegueste and Laguna with the support of the University of La Laguna. And to facilitate movement around the island, the Cabildo [guarantees](#) free travel for migrants in vulnerable situations on buses and trams.

When it comes to design of the public realm, the [Centre for Participation and Living Together](#) in Adeje involved citizens in the design of its façades, classrooms and common spaces. This was organised in the framework of the project ‘Let us construct participation’ and expressed themes visually or verbally centred on the public and intercultural dialogue.

[Suggestions](#)

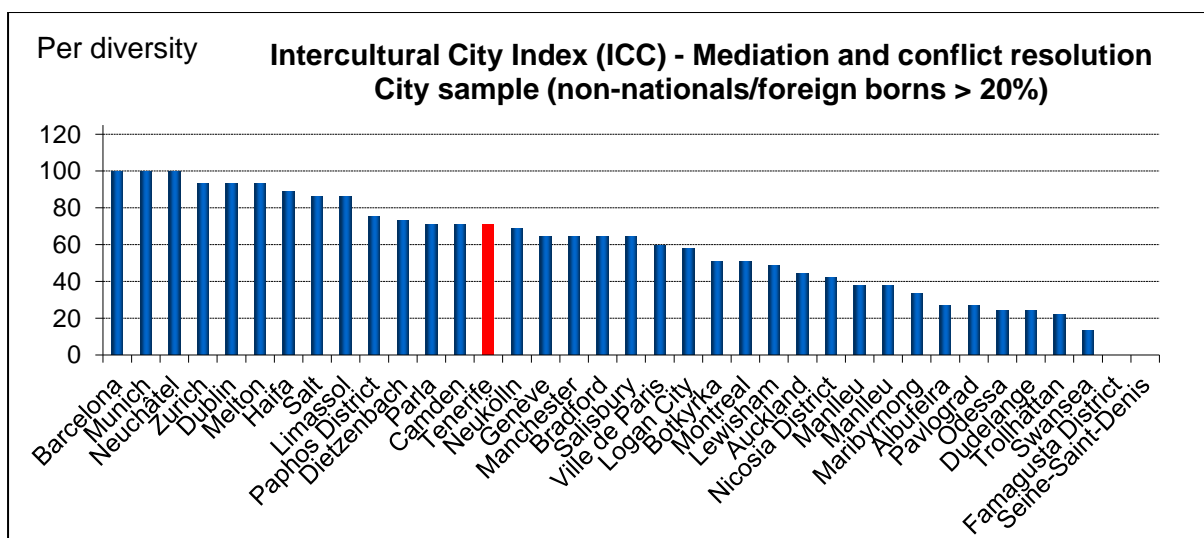
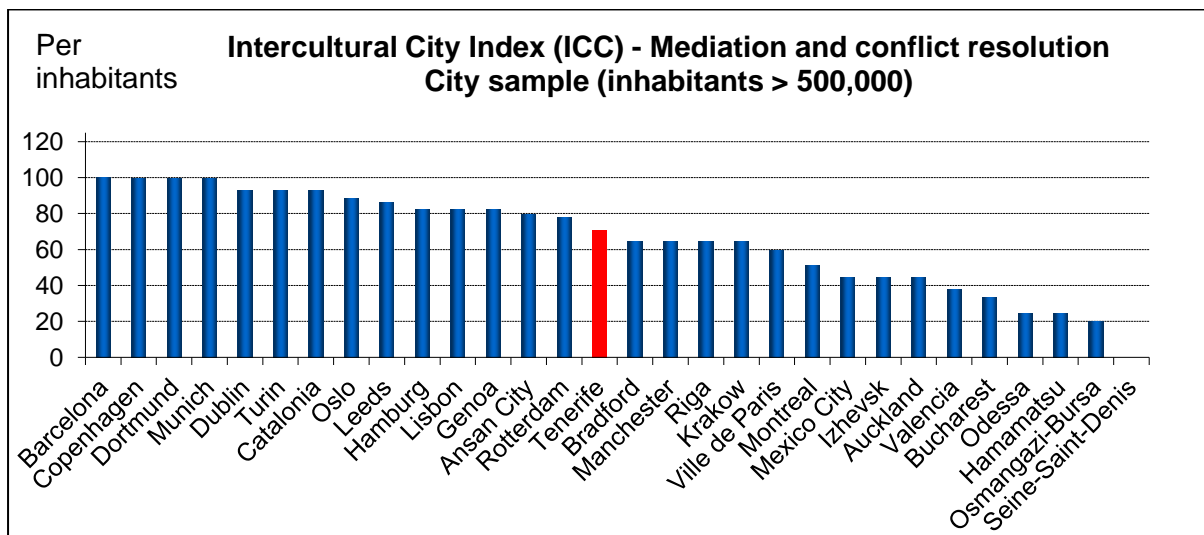
[Barcelona](#) has a strong focus on public spaces, understood as ‘spaces for relations’. Within the framework of its Intercultural Plan it has involved public professionals, such as architects and planners, in designing elements of public space which may stimulate spontaneous interaction – children’s play areas, for instance. This might be inspiring for Tenerife, particularly with regard to the island’s metropolitan zone.

Also perhaps of value in embedding interculturalism in the public realm, [Leeds](#) in the United Kingdom has a strategy for public spaces which identifies them as cultural assets and has inclusivity and diversity as one of its principles. Where improvement work is to be conducted, it maps the stakeholders in the neighbourhood to invite their participation.

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In diverse societies there is always the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over values, behaviour or resources. In cities, where people with different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses live together in close proximity, such tensions are natural and indeed part of everyday life. Instead of denying, ignoring, or repressing conflict, the intercultural city seeks to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction of all protagonists without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The intercultural city views conflict as a normal feature of free, dynamic and communicative communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

Tenerife achieved a score of 71, which is higher than the city-sample average of 58.



The University of La Laguna runs a [Mediation and Advice Unit for Living Together](#). The municipality of Arona has also established a [mediation service](#). On the ground, Together in the same direction has a team trained in mediation and facilitation. The Cabildo does not however have its own mediation service as such.

Interreligious Dialogue Tenerife has [sought](#) to foster spirituality across faiths on the island since 2017, with a disposition towards learning and harmony. Its participants include the Canarian Islamic Federation, the Catholic community, the Hare Krishna movement and the Hindu community in the southern zone.

[Suggestions](#)

In the absence of a municipal mediation service, Tenerife could look at the service provided by [Valladolid](#) in Spain, in the context of the city's Plan for Intercultural Living Together. Its professional team are specialists in intercultural conflicts and not only address these when they take place but also seek to prevent them, through training staff in relevant public services (such as the police) and the third sector.

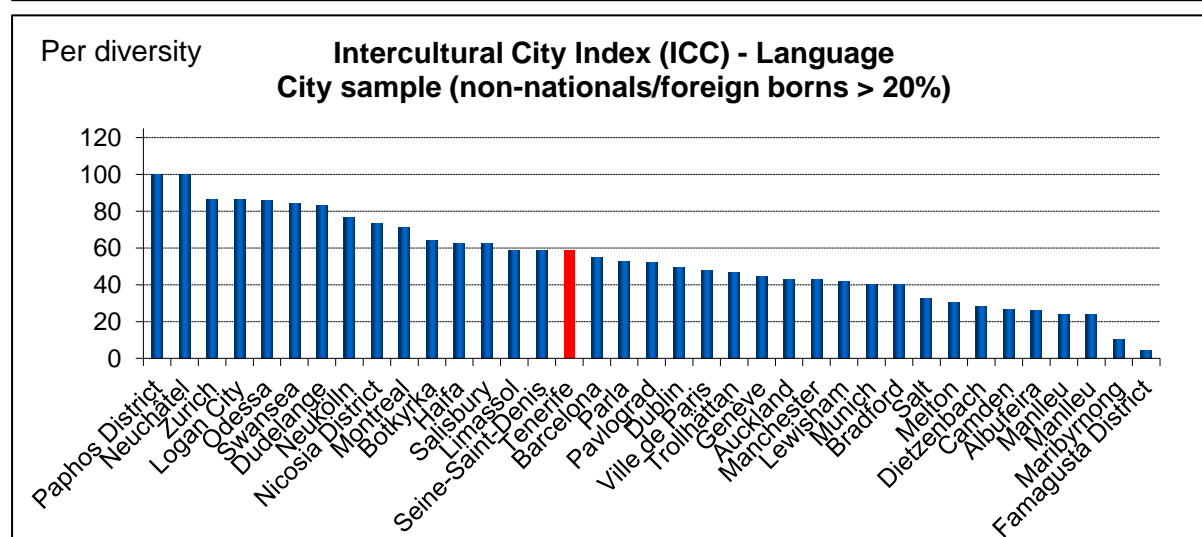
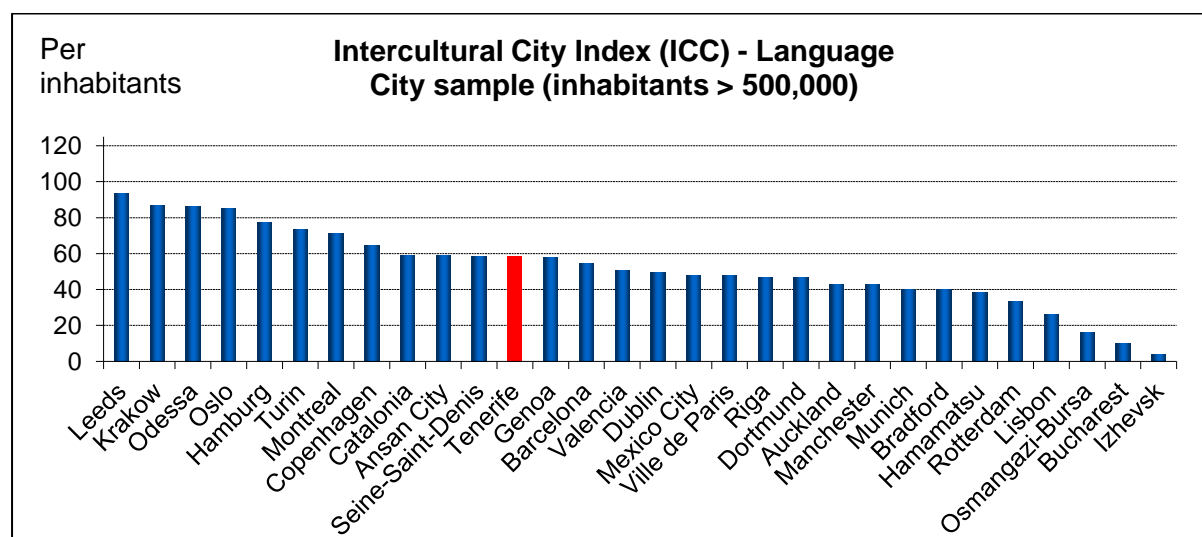
[Barcelona](#) also has a mediation service worth considering, again in the context of its Intercultural Plan. It not only works at neighbourhood level but, among other things, deals with conflicts where discrimination (such as by gender or religion) is alleged. It is also accessible in specialist institutions, such as hospitals or youth clubs.

LANGUAGE

The provision of courses and other facilities for people with migrant backgrounds to learn the receiving country's language(s) is important to ensure social and economic integration. It does however need to be supplemented with activities which highlight the value of other languages, and enable people with migrant origins not only to preserve

and transmit their languages to their children and other members of the community, but also to take pride in them as a heritage enriching the local community. An intercultural city promotes multilingualism as a resource for education, business, tourism, cultural life, etc. It underlines the value of all languages present in the city, for instance by giving opportunities to diverse language speakers to express themselves in their mother tongue in public and at cultural events and by promoting all events that offer opportunities for linguistic exchanges and mixing.

Tenerife achieved a score of 59, which is higher than the city sample's average of 47.



The Cabildo's Assistance Service for Migrants offers Spanish-language classes, as do the Official School of Languages in the south of the island and the University of La Laguna. Adeje does likewise at the municipal level. Many of the population of Tenerife born abroad – those from Latin America – are of course Spanish speakers. While supporting internationally significant festivals on the island, the Cabildo does not support minority-language media as such.

As to the African dimension, the university also provides classes in Moroccan Arabic. Africa House, based on the neighbouring island of Las Palmas, provides introductory courses in [Wolof](#) – widely spoken across west Africa and so important for humanitarian workers attending to those arriving by sea – online as well as physically, as does the Fündec Foundation on Tenerife from time to time. Non-governmental organisations are also involved in exchange workshops, such as the 'Language Café' initiative.

Suggestions

Tenerife might explore the experience of [Sabadell](#) in Spain in developing language programmes addressed to participants' needs and sensitivities. Its Women's Space Programme, oriented to newcomer and Roma women primarily, combines language-learning for those unfamiliar with the official languages (Spanish, Catalan) with events such as workshops on themes relevant to women (such as health or gender violence). 'Hey youngster,

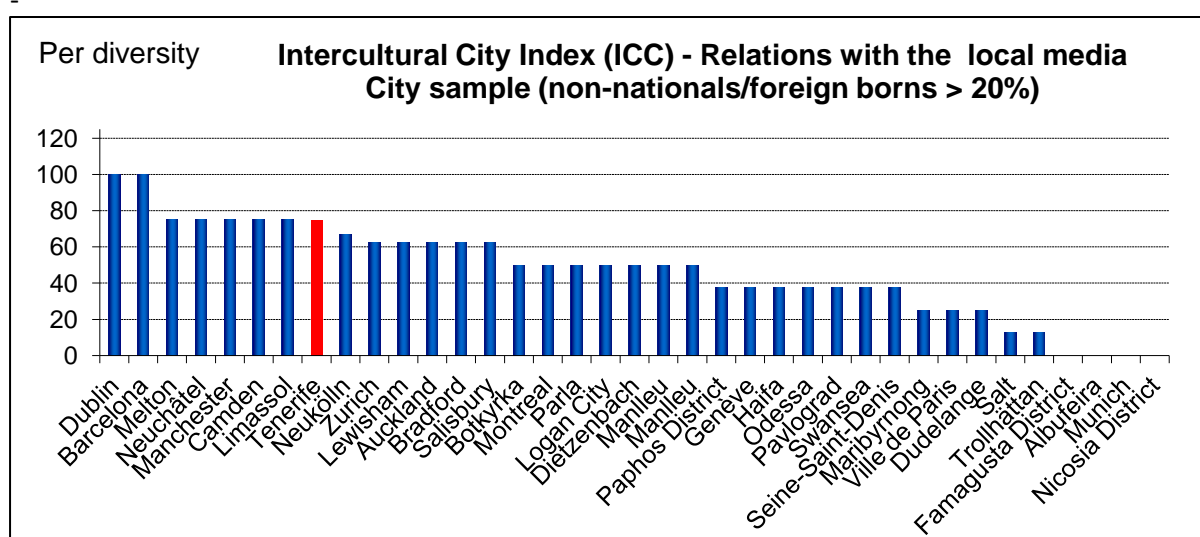
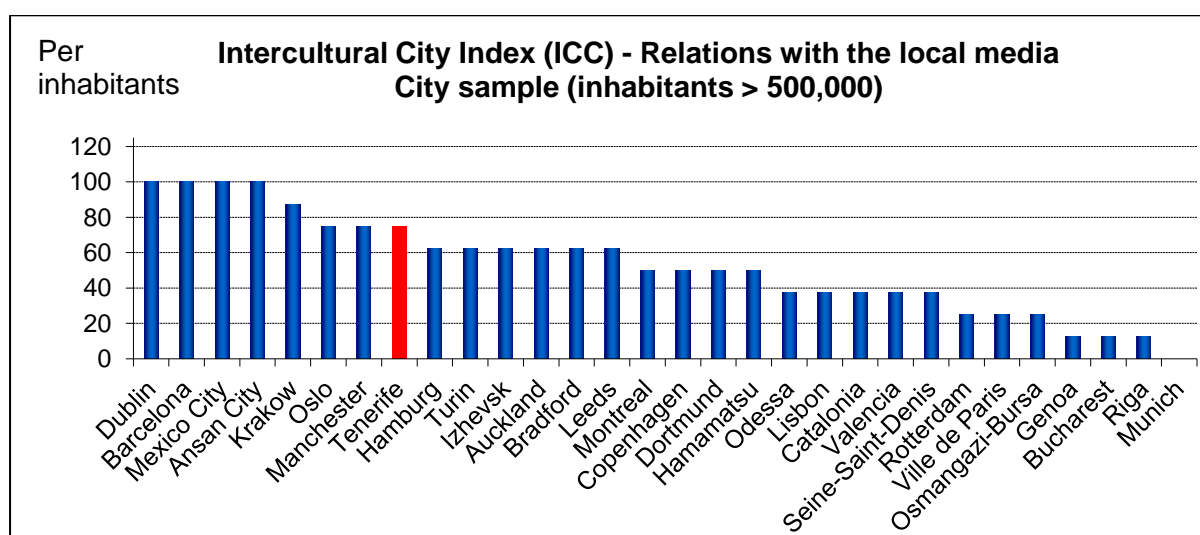
Sabadell welcomes you' meanwhile targets young people arriving largely via family reunification, combining (in this case Catalan) language-learning with outings by the group to develop their cohesion.

[Limassol](#) in Cyprus has meanwhile sought to promote a broader multilingualism to which Tenerife could aspire. On the one hand a range of language courses is available through its adult education centres, using interactive methodologies and multi-media resources. On the other, the municipality gives logistical and financial assistance to various minority-language media.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Traditional and social media have a very powerful influence on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities. Much of the information people access is generated by international newsgroups, national media, or by private persons in the case of social media. Nevertheless, there is still much the city authorities can do to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an intercultural city constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. More importantly, the city partners with local media agencies so that they purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

Tenerife achieved a score of 75, which is considerably higher than the city sample's average of 47. This reflects the commitment of the Cabildo in this arena.⁴



⁴ Tenerife's score in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 67 (the average for the city sample is 51).

The Data Bank and Documentation Centre of the Cabildo analyses regional and national press coverage of Tenerife and the Canary Islands. A '[clippings](#)' collection collates material from various sources addressing intercultural issues.

Together in the same direction sends out a weekly email [bulletin](#) to subscribers and has published nearly 40 issues of a [magazine](#). There are series of [videos](#) and [podcasts](#) and there is a monthly [slot](#) on the island's main radio station. This reflects the allocation of a post to a professional in this arena while training is also made available to others in intercultural communication.

Tenerife is [committed](#) to 'anti-rumours' work, with its [strategy](#) now over a decade old, but especially in the context of the tensions associated with the once-more enhanced people flows by boat from west Africa. A guide has been produced for journalists to support their work in this arena. The city does not however provide support/mentoring for journalists/startups from a minority background.

Workshops organised in the framework of Together in the same direction to challenge stereotypes and prejudices are mainly targeted at young people, as prime consumers of online material beyond the professional media. And the 'social media' outlets of Together in the same direction are used to promote directly a Migrants, Humanity, Rumours campaign highlighting the value of cultural diversity and emphasising its many benefits.

[Suggestions](#)

Given the challenging context of media coverage of the 'migration crisis', the next step for the Cabildo, beyond monitoring this and other coverage, might be to organise one or more round-table discussions with local media employers and journalists and their trade-union organisations to raise awareness, while not impinging on media freedom. Tenerife could draw on the lessons of the [Mediane project](#) on the media and cultural diversity run in the last decade by the Council of Europe. One of these was the need for media organisations to monitor the diversity among their journalistic staff and among the networks of contacts of the latter, if they are to report and analyse associated issues adequately. It could also in this context engage the [Ethical Journalism Network](#), which seeks to promote journalism characterised by truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity and accountability – all principles germane to reporting on intercultural issues and the movement of people in particular.

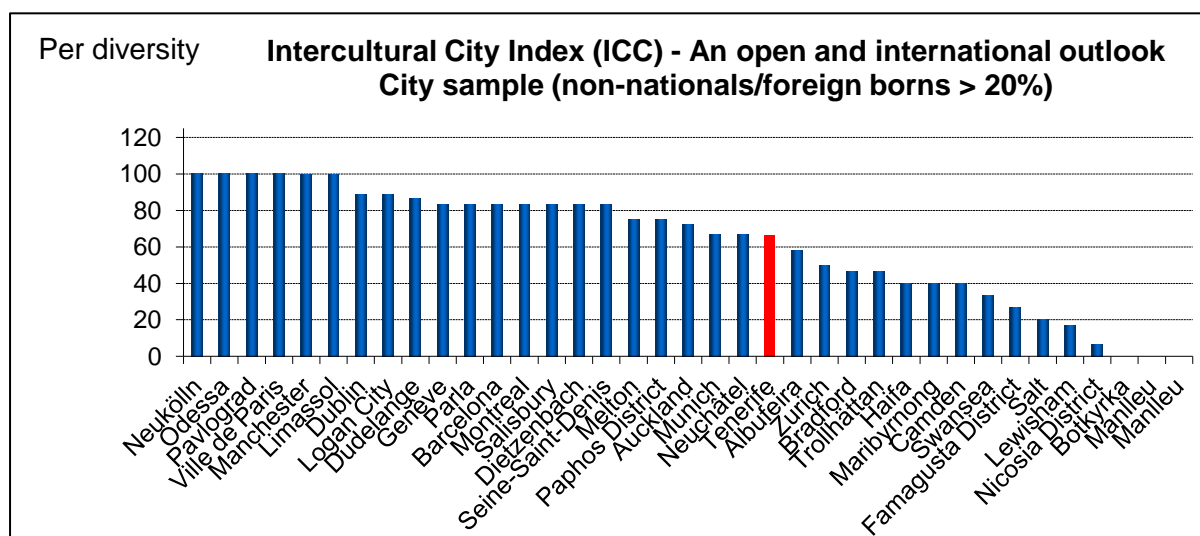
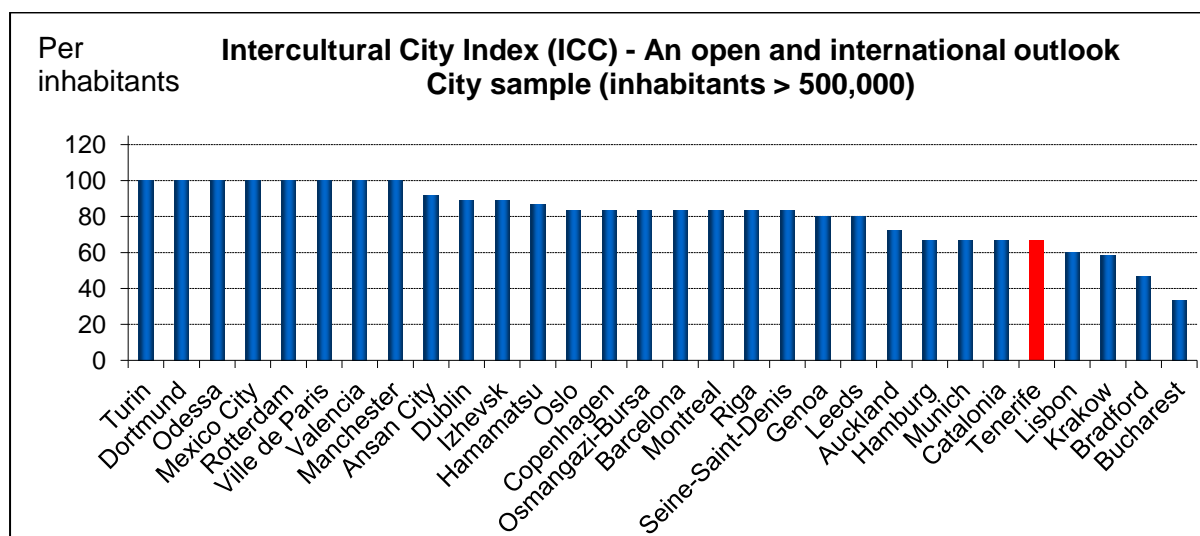
Botkyrka, Sweden, has instituted a dialogue between young people of diverse backgrounds and national and local media editorial staff, including managing editors, through local media house Fanzingo's "Reversed Townhall" methodology. This allowed young people to put their concerns and views about media coverage of the municipality directly to those in positions of responsibility, contributing to fostering better understanding on the part of those editors about the impact of particular headlines. It also empowers young people to take action and speak up. Botkyrka has in addition developed a programme of "Young Reporters", who are employed by the municipality and given their own editorial decision-making power through social networks, notably TikTok, to set the agenda and curate their own stories [see Botkyrka Intercultural Profile, 2025, forthcoming].

Were the Cabildo to consider the strategic rationalisation suggested above, it could also think through how its central strategic goal – however so (re)defined – should be publicly communicated. Here it might draw inspiration from the 'OXLO' (Oslo extra-large) campaign developed by [Oslo](#) in Norway, as a positive take on being the fastest-growing city in Europe due to its increasingly diverse population. This would chime with the Cabildo's commitment to presenting diversity as an advantage while providing a common golden thread running through all its related communications.

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Although cities have little or no competence in foreign policy, they can actively seek to make connections in other countries to develop business relations, exchange knowledge and know-how, encourage tourism, or simply acknowledge the ties the city may have elsewhere. An intercultural city actively encourages interactions with the outside world and in particular with the cities, regions or countries of origin of its inhabitants.

Tenerife achieved a score of 67, which is the same as the city sample average.



As an island dependent on the tourism industry, on top of its Latin American and west-African migration connections, Tenerife clearly has an interest in openness to the world. It has a councillor whose responsibility is external action – including a [plan](#) to boost trade with west Africa – and it has held meetings on tourism with representatives of Senegal and the Inter-American Development Bank. It has allocated more than EUR 1 million to grants for international co-operation projects over the last three years, mainly in Africa and Latin America.

The University of La Laguna provides another entrée to international networks, including in Europe via the Erasmus+ programme. The university has a vice-rector devoted to internationalisation and co-operation, it has organised awareness-raising days on migration to the Canaries (among other things) and it has mounted recurrent 'Campus Africa' and 'Campus America' events, to address the challenges facing Africa in a globalised world and strengthen transatlantic links respectively. The Cabildo hosted a forum on international co-operation as part of Campus Africa in 2022.

Given its geographical location, Tenerife also has a clear interest in renewable energy. In 1990, it provided the impulse for the establishment of the Institute of Technology and Renewable Energies ([ITER](#)). The institute has developed African links, including with Senegal and Mauritania. MetroTenerife, the Cabildo's tram company, which has accumulated expertise in sustainable transport, has meanwhile conducted consultancies in Morocco and Senegal and Bolivia.

Suggestions

To build on the various links between Tenerife and West Africa, the Cabildo might seek a more systematic approach. It could find inspiration in the co-operation agreement signed in 2016 between [Reggio-Emilia](#) and Morocco, given the significant Moroccan presence in the Italian city, with the assistance of its intercultural centre, Mondinsieme. It promotes experience of Morocco, such as through cultural and student visits, for young people of

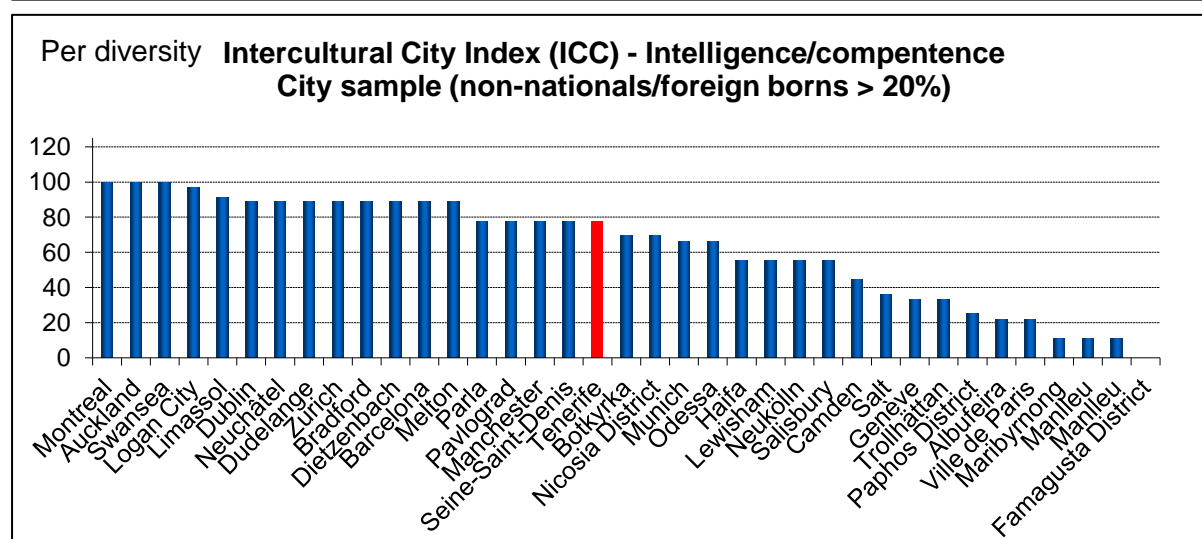
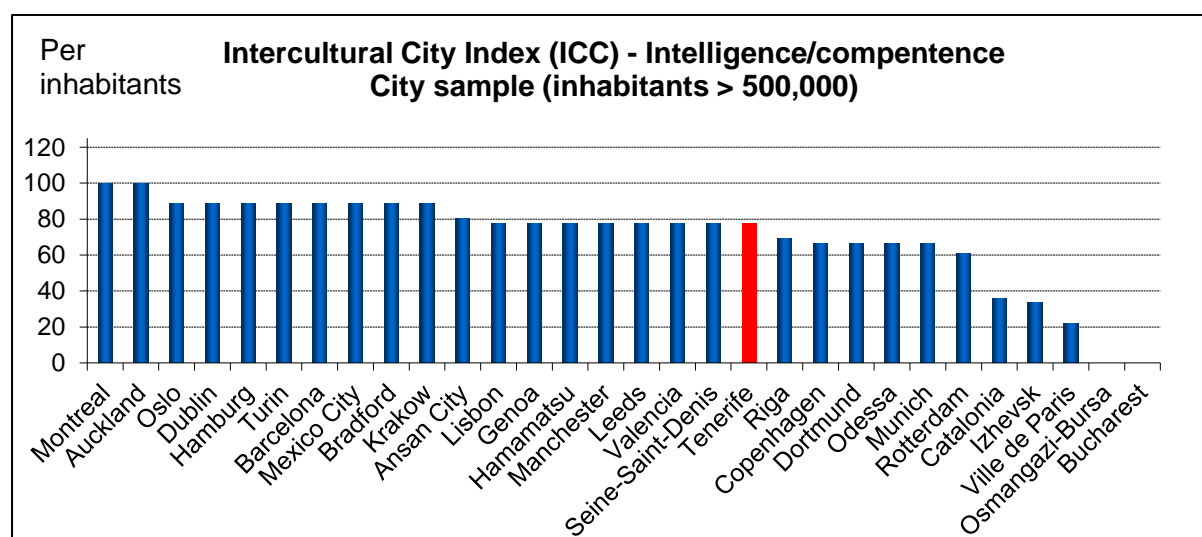
all origins in the city, plus opportunities for participation in cultural activities and sports for young Moroccans in Reggio.

Tenerife could also learn more broadly from the approach adopted in the English city of [Leeds](#), another local authority keen to be an international actor. Leeds has a dedicated international-relations team (and budget), working alongside officers promoting tourism and inward investment in the council's economic department. It exploits diaspora connections to enhance international business links with countries of origin. And again it reaches out to foreign students and exchange-scheme visitors.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Nobody can be an expert in all the languages and cultures that coexist in contemporary cities. Yet, in an intercultural city, officials have an intercultural "mind-set" which enables them to detect cultural differences and modulate their responses accordingly. Intercultural intelligence and competence require a specific know-how when dealing with unfamiliar situations and not an in-depth and often elusive knowledge of all cultures. Such sensitivity and self-confidence is not commonly-seen. It is a technical skill which can be acquired through training and practice. In an intercultural city, the authorities view such skills as equally important and essential to the good functioning of the city as the other professional and technical skills usually expected from public employees.

Tenerife achieved a score of 78, which is considerably higher than the city sample's average of 59. This is an area to which it has given concrete attention.⁵



⁵ Tenerife's score in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 83 (the city sample's is 60).

Tenerife, including through its relationship with OBITen, has been able to build a good evidence base on the issues to which its officials need to be sensitive. In particular, OBITen publications have addressed how migrant communities are to varying degrees [dehumanised](#) and subject to [discrimination](#). As context, however, it is worth repeating that a 2021 survey found that only 3.9 per cent of respondents in Tenerife believed immigration to be the most urgent problem for the Canaries, as compared to 44.1 per cent who said unemployment.

Via the University of La Laguna, the Cabildo [collaborated](#) with other members of RECI, the Spanish intercultural cities network, on production of a manual on the intercultural competences required in public administration to develop related projects. Interestingly, this research revealed a lack of confidence among key staff surveyed as to the adequacy of their existing competences, as well as the need for strong political commitment for such projects to be carried through successfully.

Data are routinely collected by the Cabildo on participation in activities under the ambit of Together in the same direction. Training in intercultural competences is also organised within this framework, including for staff working with young people and 'anti-rumour agents'.

[Suggestions](#)

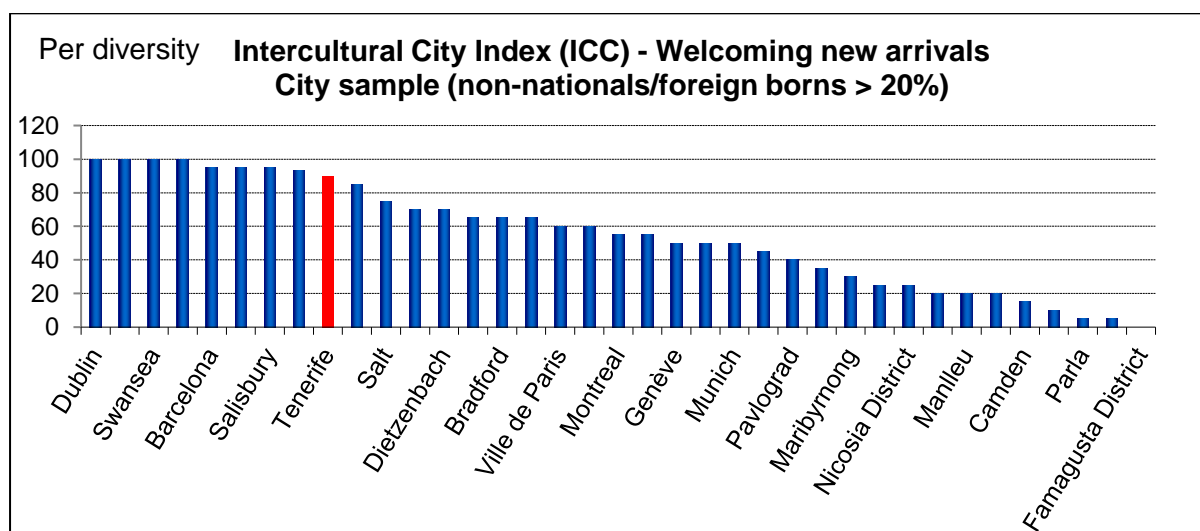
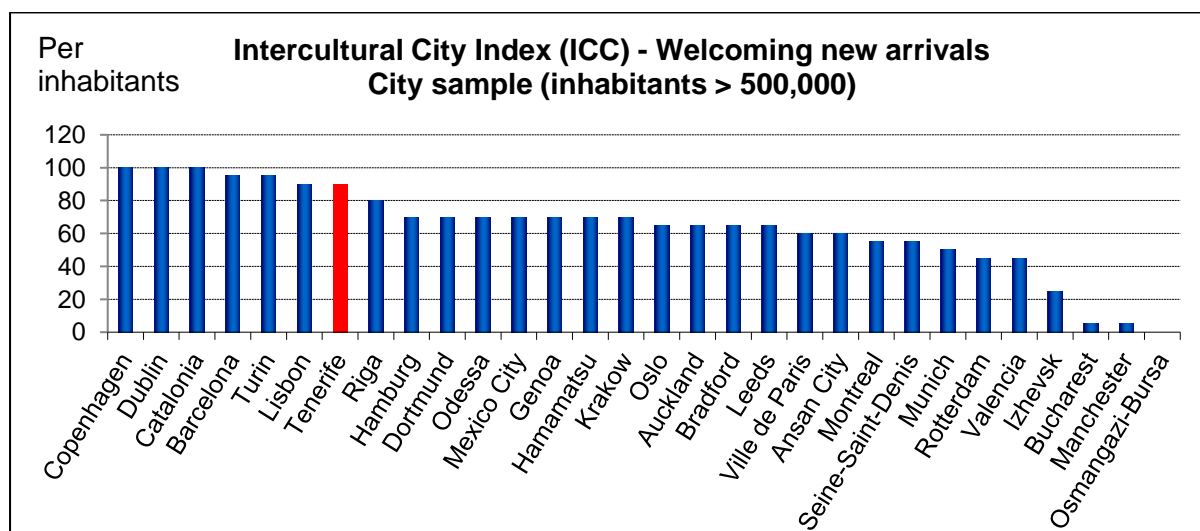
Cyprus is also an island affected by conflict-driven movements of people and [Limassol](#) developed its intercultural strategy in that context. Tenerife might usefully consider how it weaves developing intercultural competences among public officials into that strategy, as this makes clear what substantively individual staff need to know about the intercultural work of the authority and indicates the political commitment to it. Within that, Limassol provides training on process issues, so that all frontline staff can be sensitive to the diverse needs of individual users, who in turn find services appropriate and accessible.

As to more senior staff, developing intercultural programmes and projects (in the context of the overall strategy), the earlier discussion of monitoring recruitment to, and diversifying employment in, senior positions becomes relevant. Also deserving of consideration is that there will be professional staff who may deem their work merely 'technical' for whom an intercultural envelope may need to be provided – such as planners and architects working on public space as in the earlier discussion of Barcelona – if they are to maximise their contribution.

[WELCOMING NEWCOMERS](#)

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expats, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions their capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined to a cultural "ghetto". This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city's population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat. Again, it is the message the authorities convey on diversity, in communication or through concrete actions, that determines to a certain degree attitudes towards newcomers.

Tenerife achieved a score of 90, which is considerably higher than the city sample's average of 58, reflecting a range of positive interventions.



Highlighting once more the value of the link to the University of La Laguna as a source of ideas for the Cabildo, in response to the new wave of movement to the Canaries of recent times OBITen published in 2021 a [factsheet](#) calling for an adequate reception strategy, based on interculturalism and engagement of all the actors involved. It also organised a conference and a seminar, and ran a course, on this theme.

The 'artist reception' initiative referred to earlier has sought to humanise those arriving on Tenerife's shores. Under the banner of Together in the same direction, the Cabildo takes part in the annual Canaries [Day of Migrations](#) and the world Welcoming Week. As a partner in the 'Tenerife Lives Diversity' strategy, Adeje is preparing its own welcome guide, including an English version.

As regards specific groups, while foster care is a competence of the Canaries autonomous community, Tenerife provides residential care for unaccompanied minors, via third-sector deliverers, and has produced a foster-care [guide](#) available in five languages. The Cabildo funds migrant and refugee associations which themselves assist integration of newcomers, for instance that catering to [Venezuelans](#). And the University of La Laguna organises a welcome day for Erasmus+ students.

Suggestions

One of the problems new arrivals often face is that when they make contact with officials, they receive a response which fails to address the totality of their complex needs. A solution to this developed in Portugal is 'one-stop shops' in the main urban settings, such as in [Setúbal](#) with its open office, Setúbal, Ethnicities and Immigration. The office is multilingual and is able to provide information on a wide range of issues, steering users to the right agency(ies) as appropriate. Botkyrka, Sweden, has also set up a "one-stop-shop" in Alby under the responsibility of the Director of Communications. The Cabildo might consider whether such initiatives might serve as a useful model for its relatively young Assistance Service for Migrants to enhance its work, drawing on the information,

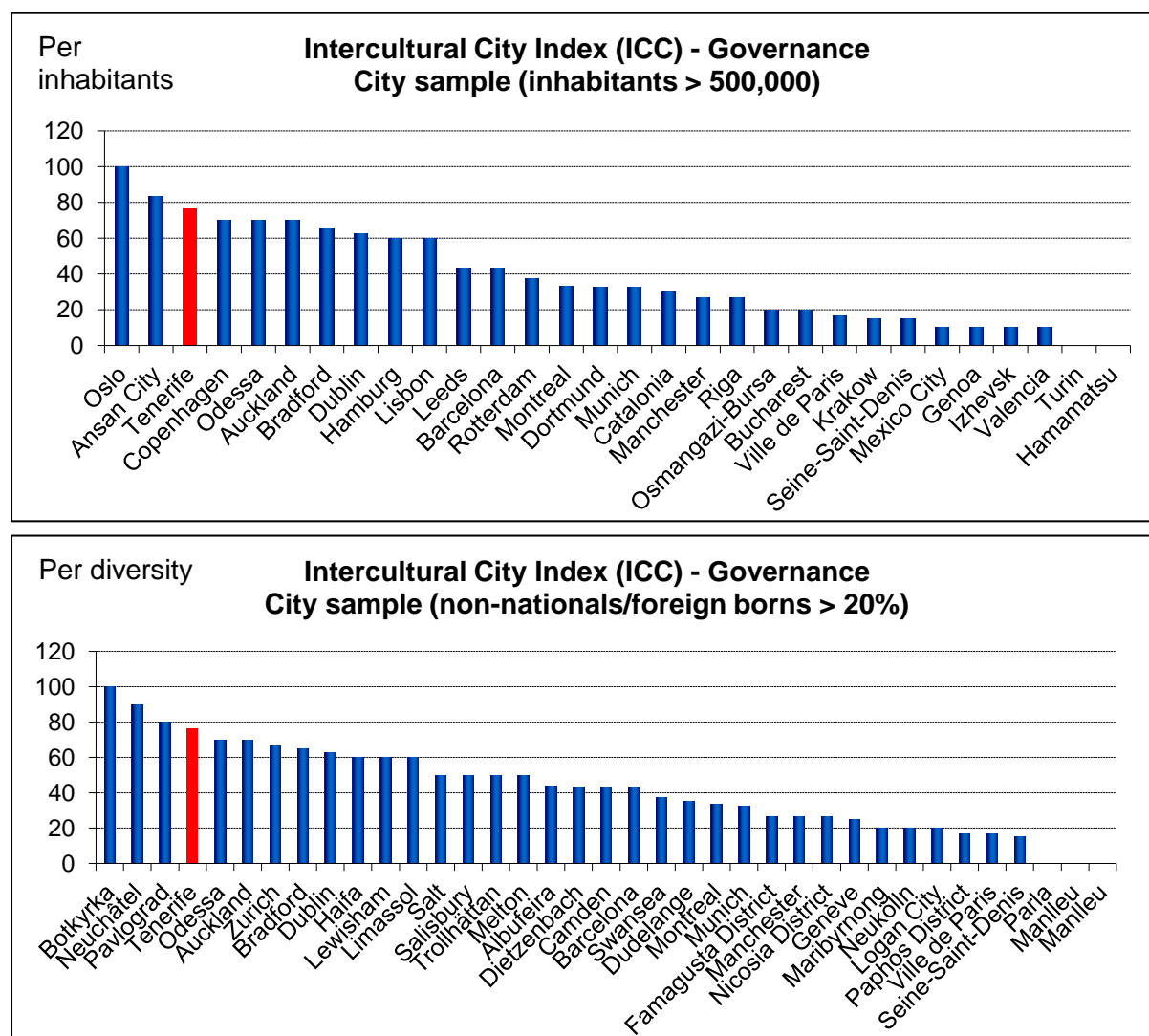
advice and orientation practices already developed by the organisation [Tenerife Solidary Island](#) which the Cabildo supports.

When it comes to asylum-seekers, [Reggio-Emilia](#) has developed an individually sensitised reception system to smooth the transition to refugee status. After the preliminary stages of identification, first-aid and so on, a personalised pathway is developed for the individual concerned, depending on their needs and existing language and professional skills. It will include language and vocational training and/or an internship while they are placed in a flat, supported by an associated NGO, and receive any trauma or other necessary treatment. Tenerife might find this approach also of interest.

LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The most powerful and far-reaching action a city can take to be more intercultural is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents of the city irrespective of their origin, nationality or residence status. Formal political rights at the local level are determined nationally or at the regional level in some federal states. Nonetheless, there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. An intercultural city strives to include all residents in the policy-making process and ensures thereby that public services are provided according to their diverse needs and not according to their cultural or political proximity to public decision-makers.

Tenerife achieved a score of 77, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 37. The Cabildo now has an elaborate system of negotiated governance in this arena.⁶



⁶ Tenerife's score in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 76 (the city sample's is 54).

In 2022 the Cabildo set up two further bodies to provide dialogue with civil society on its intercultural work. In addition to the annual convocation through the Island Table for Intercultural Living Together of those engaged under the Together in the same direction umbrella, the Island Table of Migrant Communities was established (see above), as a consultative body to the new Assistance Service for Migrants, and the Governing Council of the Cabildo [agreed](#) to the formation of an Island Council of Good Practices in External Action and on Migrants. The latter not only has a broad brief, combining international co-operation and intercultural living together, but also a wide membership, including representatives of the public administration, the third sector, migrant/refugee associations and technical experts. (At local level, meanwhile, San Cristóbal de La Laguna has set up as a [vehicle](#) for dialogue a Municipal Table for the Reception of Migrants and Refugees.)

Two of the 31 members of the Cabildo came to Tenerife from Venezuela. Standing for election to the Cabildo and voting for its members are however restricted to EU nationals by Spanish electoral law.

Suggestions

The various avenues that have emerged through which dialogue can take place between representatives of migrants and refugees and the public administration – and members of the ‘host’ community – are very welcome and well-intended. Yet, as with Tenerife’s overlapping intercultural strategies, there is a question as to whether some consolidation might not now be in order and there are models to which the Cabildo might look.

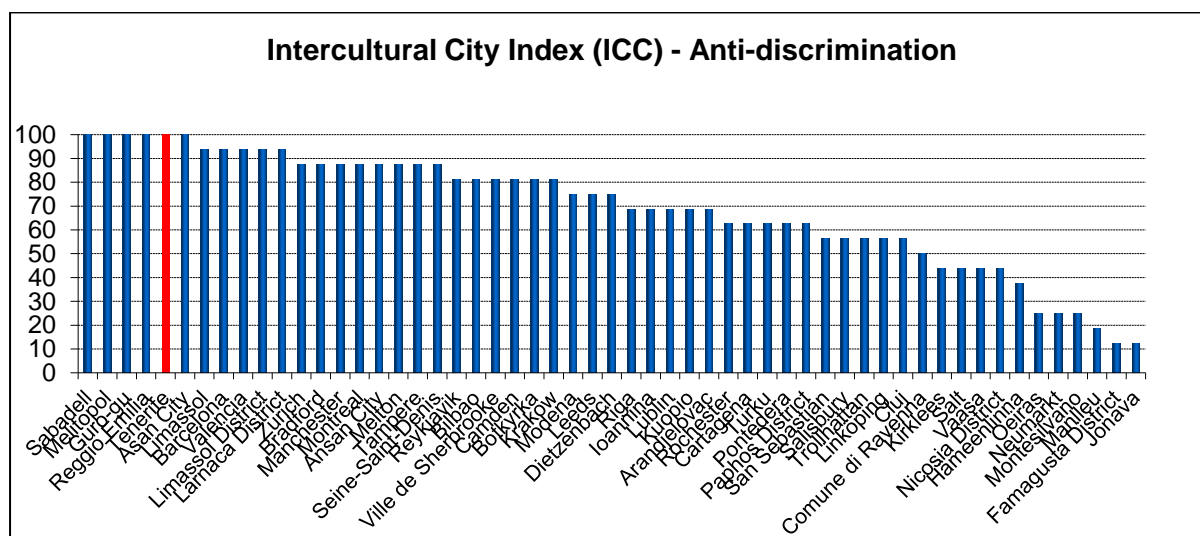
Ideally, if one were starting from a *tabula rasa*, an authority’s intercultural strategy is subject to iterative dialogue, from inception to implementation to evaluation to revision, in a roundtable environment. The Intercultural Council in [Limassol](#) (interestingly including the trade unions as well as the associations) shows how productive such continuing dialogue can be.

Structurally, best practice is to bring together officials and representatives of the associations and independent experts, with a senior political figure (the mayor or his or her representative) in the chair to show commitment. Such a body would set up sub-committees and working groups as required, to do the concrete, problem-solving work between plenary meetings. [Bilbao](#) has set up this model. Its Immigration Council is chaired by a councillor nominated by the mayor, with representatives of the political parties and 24 migrant associations around the table. It agrees an annual workplan and meets in plenary twice a year, with six working groups meeting in between.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Racism, xenophobia, homophobia, intolerance against certain religious groups, gender discrimination, prejudice and ethnocentrism, are all conducive to discriminatory attitudes and practices. They often subsist in people’s minds despite laws proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation. An intercultural city assures every effort is made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its policies, programmes and activities. The city works in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims. It also communicates widely on the risks discrimination presents for social cohesion, quality of life and the local economy.

Indicators on anti-discrimination have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far are not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 55 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Tenerife’s score on anti-discrimination is 100. It has the evidence and the commitment and has embarked on an anti-racist campaign.



Through its Department of Social Action, Citizen Participation, Volunteering and Inclusion, the Cabildo is financially supporting and developing a campaign, [Tenerife Against Racism](#), which will pursue training and awareness-raising through workshops, courses, seminars and walks. This stemmed from a wider call from the department for anti-racist projects which it might support within a budget envelop of €300 000.

As on other aspects of the Cabildo's intercultural work, OBITen has provided the necessary evidence base, with a 2022 [factsheet](#) on experiences of racism on the island. It found that discrimination was a common experience for many migrants, especially those of African origin. A primary area identified there was the labour market and the anti-rumours strategy implemented through Together in the same direction has addressed [this arena](#) as well as more general [stereotypes](#) about migrants.

Tenerife is the seat of the Parliament of the Canary Islands, which in 2020 endorsed [a call for unity](#) among all the parliamentary forces against racism and xenophobia. This institutional declaration traced the values of tolerance and conviviality it espoused to the historical background of migration to the islands, as a common heritage for the inhabitants of today. Tenerife is also implicated, as indicated above, in the Spanish ICCs network, RECI – and so its anti-rumours network – as well as the wider European SCORE project tackling racism and xenophobia through sport.

Suggestions

The OBITen factsheet concluded with the suggestion that there should be more support for members of ethnic minorities to have agency themselves in tackling racism. Tenerife might find of interest the initiative by [Maribyrnong](#) in Australia, whereby individuals who experience racism can report this to the municipality. Apart from any particular actions arising, this would add a qualitative dimension to the evidence on the character of racism in Tenerife.

Racism has clearly migrated online in recent years, polluting the public sphere for young people in particular. In developing its own anti-racist campaign, Tenerife might find some inspiration in the Council of Europe [campaign](#) against hate speech online, which ran from 2012 to 2017 at the behest of the organisation's consultative youth NGOs.

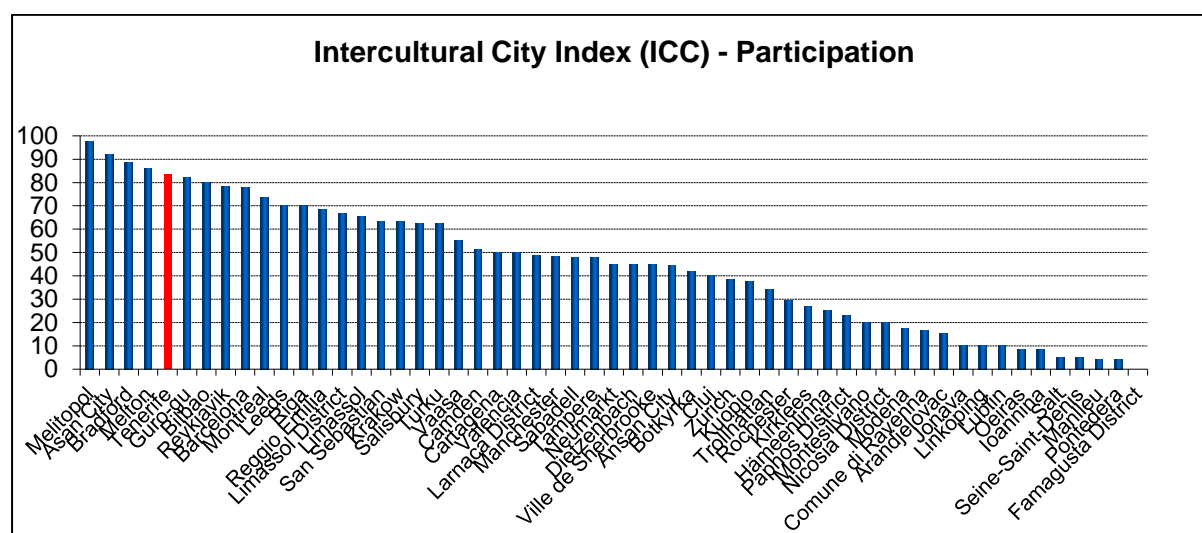
Along with a host of [other initiatives](#) on anti-discrimination, the French [Department of Seine-Saint-Denis](#), a new member of the ICC Programme, collaborates with specialised institutions to provide support services to victims of discrimination. These services include listening platforms, legal advice, and mechanisms to report and effectively address discriminatory incidents. Such infrastructure ensures that victims are not left alone to face these injustices and that concrete solutions are provided to prevent their recurrence (see Index Report on Seine St Denis, 2025, forthcoming [in French only]).

PARTICIPATION

Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policy-making. A range of studies have demonstrated that inclusive integration policies produce better outcomes in terms of social cohesion, trust in

the administration, safety, quality of services, welfare, good governance and economic growth. People with different backgrounds and experiences can bring innovative solutions to common challenges, as well as anticipate problems that might arise. Conversely, when people encounter barriers to participation, or otherwise choose intentionally not to participate, they may, passively, withdraw from social and public life or choose, actively, to live outside prevailing social customs and law. An intercultural city actively seeks the participation of all residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support, and thereby the sustainability of local policies, while at the same significantly reducing the economic costs of social exclusion and instability.

Indicators on participation have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far are not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 55 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Tenerife's score on participation is 83, a product of its extensive commitment to civic participation.



As indicated above, there is now a plethora of means for participation in Tenerife, when it comes to its intercultural work. The Island Table for Intercultural Living Together monitors the output of Together in the same direction, the Island Table of Migrant Communities acts as a consultative body to the Assistance Service for Migrants and the Island Council of Good Practices in External Action and on Migrants has a wide brief. There are also specific roundtables for dialogue with [Roma](#) individuals and those from the [western Sahara](#).

As also noted earlier, the Strategy so Tenerife Lives Diversity was itself the product of widescale participation. The Cabildo's transversal [gender-equality strategy](#) has a strongly participatory ethos and the Group Against Gender Violence operating within Together in the same direction [seeks to bring](#) a feminist and intercultural lens to bear on the construction of spaces that are equal and free of male violence.

Suggestions

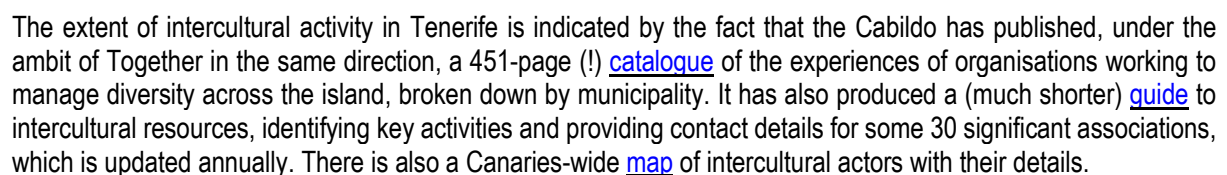
Given the legal constraints on non-citizen members of minority communities being able to vote in, and stand for, election to the Cabildo and the municipalities, other avenues of civic participation are even more important to generate a sense of belonging and identification. Tenerife might find of interest how this problem has been tackled in [Barcelona](#) – under the same Spanish legislation – by introduction of a measure explicitly enshrining the right of all denizens of the city over 16 to such participation, including those who would be electorally disenfranchised.

When it comes to revising/renewing its strategy, the Cabildo might look to the methodology of [Bradford](#) in the UK in developing its Together for Stronger Communities strategy, especially given the assistance it can draw on from researchers at the University of La Laguna. Bradford adopted a largely qualitative and pluralist approach, including roundtables, commissions, focus groups, online surveys, recorded interviews and 'vox pops'. Pursuing different sources using different methods in this way – what social scientists call ['triangulation'](#) – gives more validity to the evidence emerging if it proves to be consistent.

INTERACTION

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. Identity is not 'given'

Indicators on interaction have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far are not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 55 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Tenerife's score on interaction is 100, reflecting the very strong fabric of intercultural associational life on the island.




















One way to encourage interaction in a very tangible way is using the recent notion of the 'human library', as in the one-off event in Adeje in 2021 referred to above. Tenerife might consider this as a project, as in [Bradford](#), where it provides a continuing vehicle for diverse individuals to exchange their stories, thus humanising and individualising those who might otherwise be reduced to stigmatising stereotypes.

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OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Tenerife has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 76. The table below lists the strengths and weaknesses.

COMMITMENT	 	<p>Tenerife has pursued an intercultural programme, Together in the same direction, since 2010. It has participated in the Intercultural Cities programme since 2012. The Cabildo approved a Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife, in 2019. An interdepartmental committee achieves co-ordination across the authority.</p> <p>The city rarely refers to its intercultural engagement in its official narratives.</p>
EDUCATION	 	<p>Within the framework of the Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife, individual schools have been engaged by the authority in support of the strategy, embodied in agreements. Most schools engage in intercultural projects.</p> <p>It is rare for schools to make great efforts to involve parents of children from migrant or refugee backgrounds.</p>
NEIGHBOURHOODS	 	<p>Together in the same direction has provided a framework within which individual neighbourhoods have developed good intercultural practices.</p> <p>The Cabildo lacks data on demographic breakdown below the municipal level and so on the degree of integration or segregation at neighbourhood level.</p>
PUBLIC SERVICES	 	<p>Tenerife addresses cultural sensitivities when it comes to funerals and school meals. Its gender-violence unit has engaged with a high proportion of foreign-born women, offering counselling and legal support.</p> <p>The Cabildo does not have data on the make-up of its workforce and does not have any initiatives to promote more diversity among its employees.</p>
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	 	<p>Tenerife recognises the role of migrants as entrepreneurs, highlighting their contribution via business events, inclusion in professional networks and removing barriers to bidding for contracts.</p> <p>The wider regulatory framework does not permit the Cabildo to make interculturalism a criterion of public procurement.</p>
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE		<p>Tenerife has recognised the specific capacity of the arts, in all their forms, to foster intercultural comprehension and empathy, supporting many festivals and other events, as well as the ability of sport to reach out to diverse audiences.</p>
PUBLIC SPACE		<p>The Cabildo has recognised that museums and libraries are always public spaces of high value for the promotion of intercultural interaction and understanding. As for outdoor public space, Tenerife has also developed the idea of 'intercultural walks'.</p>
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	 	<p>The University of La Laguna runs a Mediation and Advice Unit for Living Together. The municipality of Arona has also established a mediation service. On the ground, Together in the same direction has a team trained in mediation and facilitation.</p> <p>The Cabildo does not have its own mediation service as such.</p>
LANGUAGE	 	<p>The Cabildo, the University of La Laguna and the municipality of Adeje all offer Spanish-language classes. The university also offers Moroccan Arabic. Introductory courses in Wolof, widely spoken in west Africa, are available too.</p> <p>The Cabildo does not support minority-language media.</p>
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION		<p>The Cabildo analyses regional and national press coverage and collects relevant 'clippings'. Together in the same direction publishes a wide array of bulletins, magazines, videos and podcasts on this theme.</p>

	✗	It does not support/mentor journalists/startups from a minority background.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓	Tenerife has a councillor whose responsibility is external action, including a plan to boost trade with west Africa. It has allocated more than EUR 1 million to international co-operation projects over the last three years, mainly in Africa and Latin America.
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	✓	Tenerife, through its relationship with OBITen, has developed the evidence base on the issues to which its officials need to be sensitive. Training in intercultural competences is organised within the framework of Together in the same direction.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	Via Together in the same direction, the Cabildo takes part in the annual Canaries Day of Migrations and the world Welcoming Week while a 'Confraternization Lunch' provides a symbolic expression of hospitality to newcomers.
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓	Tenerife has three avenues for dialogue with civil society: the Island Table for Intercultural Living Together, the Island Table of Migrant Communities and the Island Council of Good Practices in External Action and on Migrants.
	✗	Rights to vote and to stand for election are limited by Spanish law to EU nationals.
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	✓	The Cabildo is developing a campaign, Tenerife Against Racism, which will pursue training and awareness-raising through workshops, courses, seminars and walks. It has been conducting anti-rumours work for over a decade.
PARTICIPATION	✓	There are now a plethora of means for participation in Tenerife's intercultural work. The Strategy so Diversity Lives in Tenerife was preceded by much participation. There are specific roundtables for Roma individuals and the Saharawi.
INTERACTION	✓	There is a dense associational fabric for interaction in Tenerife, as evidenced by the huge catalogue published by Together in the same direction of organisations across the island working in this arena.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate Tenerife for the efforts taken and we are confident that if the city follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

The Intercultural Cities Programme stands ready to support Tenerife in implementing the recommendations made here.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When it comes to the intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, Tenerife could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

Commitment: Tenerife has built up a formidable body of work on interculturalism. The Cabildo might consider a rationalisation, with a new iteration of the strategy identifying a single aim and consequent objectives. Together in the same direction would be woven into the programmes and projects, while the partnerships with the municipalities would come under delivery. This could draw on the Council of Europe [template](#) for intercultural-integration plans.

Education: Tenerife could aim to involve the families of migrants and refugees more systematically in schools, using the experience of [Salisbury](#), including outreach to appropriate settings with interpretation. [Reykjavik](#)'s broader approach to effective multilingualism might also be of interest. This is characterised by support for language pluralism and involvement of parents (and non-teaching staff), including in pre- and after-school settings.

Neighbourhoods: Tenerife could seek to generalise good practices developed in particular neighbourhoods across the island, starting with the most diverse. It could draw on how [Barcelona](#) has drilled down to the

neighbourhood level, weaving the city's Interculturalism Plan into its Neighbourhoods Plan. This can dovetail intercultural integration with the specific demographic make-up and challenges of particular neighbourhoods.

Public services: Tenerife could explore how [Camden](#) Council has developed an action plan to tackle ethnic under-representation in its employment, working with specialist NGOs in this area. [Auckland](#) might also inspire. It is committed to the idea of being an 'inclusive workplace'. From that flows a proactive approach to diversity across the municipality, including divisional diversity and inclusion plans.

Business and the labour market: Tenerife has relationships with the Chinese Trade and Tourism Association and might find of interest the Xeix project in [Barcelona](#) integrating Chinese entrepreneurs into its associational life. Vis-à-vis diversifying the mainstream, [Reggio-Emilia](#) has established a 'Diversity Lab' which accompanies companies in the city in creating inclusive working environments; this could provide a model.

Cultural and social life: Tenerife might consider the approach [adopted](#) by the Danish Centre for Arts and Interculture, seeking to change the tone of the cultural scene by giving voice to migrants while encouraging the cultural institutions to broaden their repertoires and audiences. As an island, it might take on board the way Limassol, Haifa and Ioannina [explored](#) water sports as a vehicle for intercultural integration in an ICCs project.

Public space: Tenerife might learn from how [Barcelona](#) involves public professionals, such as architects and planners, in designing public spaces to stimulate spontaneous interaction – particularly with regard to the island's metropolitan zone – and from [Leeds](#)' strategy for public spaces, which has inclusivity and diversity as one of its principles and systematically engages local stakeholders.

Mediation and conflict resolution: Tenerife could look at the mediation services of [Valladolid](#) and [Barcelona](#). The former comprises specialists in intercultural conflicts who seek to prevent conflicts as well as mediating them, training staff in public services and the third sector. The latter not only works at neighbourhood level but deals with conflicts where discrimination is alleged and is accessible in specialist institutions, such as hospitals.

Language: Tenerife might explore the experience of [Sabadell](#) in tailoring language programmes to participants' needs and sensitivities: its Women's Space Programme and 'Hey youngster, Sabadell welcomes you' link language learning to other relevant activities. [Limassol](#) meanwhile promotes a broader multilingualism, which could also be of interest, by making a range of language courses available while supporting minority-language media.

Media and communication: Given the challenging context of media coverage of the 'migration crisis', the Cabildo might organise one or more roundtable discussions with local media employers and journalists and their trade-union organisations to raise awareness of intercultural issues, taking inspiration notably from Botkyrka. It might also draw inspiration from the 'OXLO' (Oslo extra-large) campaign developed by [Oslo](#), as a golden thread running through all its related communications.

International outlook: To build on the links to west Africa, the Cabildo might find inspiration in the co-operation agreement between [Reggio-Emilia](#) and Morocco, given the significant Moroccan presence in the city. Tenerife could also learn from the approach adopted in [Leeds](#), which has a dedicated international-relations team (and budget), working alongside officers promoting tourism and inward investment, and exploits diaspora connections.

Intercultural intelligence and competence: Tenerife might consider how [Limassol](#) weaves developing intercultural competences among public officials into its overall strategy, as this makes clear what substantively individual staff need to know as well as receiving training on process issues, so they can be sensitive to diverse users.

Welcoming newcomers: The Cabildo might consider whether the 'one-stop shop' approach in [Setúbal](#) is a useful model. Its multilingual office can provide information on a wide range of issues, steering users to the right agency(ies). When it comes to asylum-seekers, [Reggio-Emilia](#) has developed an individually sensitised reception system to smooth the transition to refugee status, with an identified personalised pathway, which could also inspire.

Leadership and citizenship: As with Tenerife's overlapping intercultural strategies, there is a question as to whether some consolidation of its governance might not now be in order. Best practice, as in [Bilbao](#), is to bring together officials and representatives of the associations and independent experts around one table for iterative dialogue, with a senior political figure in the chair and with sub-committees and working groups as required.

Anti-discrimination: Tenerife might find of interest the initiative by [Maribymong](#), whereby individuals who experience racism can report this to the municipality, adding a qualitative dimension to the evidence on racism on

the island. In developing its anti-racist campaign, Tenerife might find inspiration in the Council of Europe [campaign](#) against hate speech online, which ran in 2012-17 at the behest of the organisation's consultative youth NGOs.

Participation: Tenerife might find of interest how [Barcelona](#) has tackled the disenfranchisement of many migrants by enshrining the right of all denizens of the city over 16 to civic participation. When it comes to revising/renewing its strategy, the Cabildo might look to the methodology of [Bradford](#), which adopted a largely qualitative and pluralist approach, including roundtables, commissions, focus groups, online surveys, recorded interviews and 'vox pops'.

Interaction: [Bradford](#)'s 'human library' project allows diverse individuals to exchange their stories, undermining communal stereotypes; this could for Tenerife build on a one-off event in Adeje in 2021. On a larger scale, a colourful and engaging way to show interaction on the streets as normal and natural comes from the annual parade in [Patras](#), which has taken on an increasingly intercultural tone and from which Tenerife could draw inspiration.

Tenerife may wish to consider further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided above for each sector as well as in the Intercultural cities [database](#).

Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. Almost two decades after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

