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### Newsletter N° 4, September 2008

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#### Citizenship and participation in the intercultural city



migrants and host community is not managed in an adequate way.

Citizenship rights and traditional participation opportunities (trade unions, political parties, and migrant associations) are essential but insufficient for the governance system of the intercultural city. Taken on their own, they do not resolve the fundamental issue of community trust and engagement in cities with diverse populations. Even though foreign nationals might have the right to stand in local elections, they may never be elected if the local community regards them as a nuisance or a threat. Migrant associations could be very active but their demands and suggestions could be systematically ignored if the process of interaction between

The Intercultural approach is founded on the understanding that modern cities should be seen less as places of distinct communities marked by clear and fixed boundaries, but rather as local public spheres with multi-dimensional connections, which overlap and conflict. As such, citizens cannot easily be ascribed to one, homogeneous group, but may be part of several. How then can policymakers and planners try and understand what a community of this kind really thinks and wants? To be intercultural means being able to listen to and understand other cultural perspectives, and in the process of place-making, therefore, consultation cannot simply be a one-off and standardized exercise but a continuous process of informal discussion and engagement.

Some “rules of thumb” for an intercultural approach to local consultation and participation:

- Conducting more consultation in ‘intercultural spaces’ rather than ones which are mono-ethnic. These spaces might be found by using intermediaries such as health professionals, refugee organisations, civic associations and by exploiting internet networks;
- Framing intercultural questions which require the respondent to think beyond the needs of their co-ethnics in formulating answers;
- Building strong networks of continuous community engagement at a local level which are not defined by ethnicity;
- Identifying short-term interventions that can be made to show that the Council is listening and responding because without micro actions, engagement with macro issues will be unfulfilling and undermined by a lack of trust;

- Consulting creatively through a wider range of media, techniques, using artists and community workers as facilitators in a collaborative process which hands over ownership of the process to the intercultural grouping itself;
- Consulting in more informal contexts – such as on the street, in bars, at health centres, in schools, libraries, swimming pools and parks– i.e. in intercultural spaces and places;
- Encourage, through targeted funding, cross-ethnic or joint activities of ethnic community organisations.

Pilot intercultural cities will meet in Viarregio (Italy) on 20 September to share experience in the field of governance, and explore the structures and processes which could be put in place at local level to enhance intercultural relations and community capital.

**Background paper:**

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Policies/Cities/paperviarregio.pdf>

**Comments, examples and suggestions, from city professionals, experts or interested individuals, are most welcome and will help us deepen insights into governance and participation in the intercultural cities.**





Oslo is the latest city to be confirmed as a participant in the Intercultural cities programme.

Strong with its experience in the positive management of diversity, the open and assertive pro-diversity position of the city leadership, and the pragmatism, efficiency and collaborative spirit of the administration, Oslo is taking a jump start into the programme and looking forward to contributing to the joint exploration of the keys to intercultural urban policies.

OUR TEAM

Jagtar Singh

A former Board level public service senior manager and management consultant, Jagtar Singh is a founding Director of The Change Institute with over two decades experience in research, evaluation, and development consulting with public institutions, with particular expertise in the dynamics of discrimination and sociology of marginalised and excluded groups. Jagtar has substantive expertise in strategic advisory work with senior managers, facilitation and direct implementation of major change programmes to more effectively meet the needs of diverse users, including programmes independently evaluated as some of the most successful in the UK. His current work includes Expert Adviser to EC commissioned projects on violent radicalisation and strategic advisory work with Arts Council England on future directions for the diversity agenda.



public, private and civil society sectors in the UK, Europe and internationally. Our recent publications include Fighting racism and promoting equal rights in the field of education, for the European Network Against Racism, and Global Business Leadership: UK/Indian Business – what’s getting in the way?

The Change Institute web site be found at [www.changeinstitute.co.uk](http://www.changeinstitute.co.uk)

BERLIN NEUKÖLLN
Culture and communication as a key to the intercultural city



Berlin-Neukölln is a Borough with a high rate of migrants and people from more than 160 different nations living together. The actual rate of the inhabitants with migration background is 38,7 %, in some neighbourhoods 50 to 60 %.

Both the local public administration and a large number of community welfare institutions and NGO’s in the borough contribute to a positive development of the borough’s intercultural

orientation by their self-conception, their objectives and their daily work.



In 2002 the position of a Representative for Migration and Integration was established in Neukölln. A clear message in this respect was also given by the foundation of the **Migration Advisory Committee** involving important representatives of migrant organisations as members to institutionalize the integration work in the borough.

The City Council of Neukölln made an application to the German Federal Government for the title **“Place of Diversity”** and with this sends a message against right-wing extremism and for diversity and tolerance. The place-name sign “Neukölln – Place of Diversity” will be set up visibly on the square in front of the underground station “Britz-Süd” in late summer 2008 and will be inaugurated by the Mayor and the City Councillors of Neukölln.

The **culture work in Neukölln**, decentrally organized and focused on cultural education, the support for artists and the encouragement of civil society participation, communicates an intercultural approach with a basically intercultural orientated programme through the following priorities:

- Active involvement of the potentials of migrants, e.g. through participation of migrants in committees;
- appropriate presentation of artists of non-German origin and from various culture areas; (about 50 %) in galleries, concerts and theatre programmes (e.g. “Summer in the Park”);
- consistent consideration of migrant history and people with migration

background in projects of the Museum Neukölln;

- Employment of people with migration background as “frontmen” (e.g. guards in galleries);
- Initiation and residence of an “Intercultural Meeting Point” in the local community centre;
- Gemeinschaftshaus” in Gropiusstadt (a part of Neukölln);
- Long term and consistent programme offers for inhabitant groups with migration background (for 10 years: Russian-Germans and Russians in Gropiusstadt);
- Setup of a language study centre in the Library of Neukölln;
- Presentation of the Treasure of Cultures, a multi-language children’s literature stock;
- Realisation of major culture projects working with young people with migration background (“Good daughters, good sons”, “19 Freedoms”, “Recup”);
- Implementation of temporary projects with an intercultural dimension sponsored by funding resources;
- Consistent involvement of the several communities and presentation of their work (Afghan Culture Centre, Arabic Culture Centre, Polish Social Committee, Russian Community, To Spiti – Greek Culture Centre etc.).



[www.tekstilprojekt.net](http://www.tekstilprojekt.net)

The **Civic Foundation Neukölln** is based on the idea of interculturalism as it acquired various founders out of different migrant groups. The purpose of the foundation is to show and fructify potentials of the multiethnic borough and to advocate equal opportunities.

In **publications** (promotion and presentation material) the City Council takes care to reflect on interculturalism and to give a representative mapping of the population, but also to clearly name integration problems and demand answers on the political level.

### **Festival “Neighbourhood International” and “Moved Worlds”**

The oldest intercultural flagship trial project of Neukölln and the oldest intercultural festival of Berlin is the two day festival “Neighborhood International”, which is implemented by the Department of Culture and Arts of Neukölln and the intercultural work group of the Protestant Church of Neukölln and is complemented in the meantime by the dance festival “Moved Worlds”. Migrant associations and their cooperation partners present themselves and form a considerable stage programme, a vivid cultural diversity with people from more than 160 nations is shown.

But in addition to a strong emphasis on communicating the positive value of diversity and encouraging inter-ethnic interaction in the context of cultural events, **Neukölln has many other policies and projects in the field of education, integration, participatory neighborhood management, mediation, ethnic entrepreneurship, urbanism and other areas.**

Find out more about Intercultural Neukölln: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Policies/Cities/neukollnprojects.pdf>



## **INTEGRATION IN NEUCHÂTEL – AN INNOVATIVE TRADITION**

### **Interview with Thomas Facchinetti, Commissioner for Foreign Nationals of the Canton of Neuchâtel**



**In 1990, the Canton of Neuchâtel decided to promote the integration of foreigners by appointing a Commissioner for Foreign Nationals. What was the historical background to this step?**

The Canton of Neuchâtel has always been a land of exchange and openness, lying at the crossroads between several trunk routes crossing Europe. In the Age of the Enlightenment, industrial activities developed, including watch-making, and this caused people from Neuchâtel to travel the world in order to sell their goods. Since then, our canton’s wealth has always closely depended on our exchanges with other countries, involving both the export of our products and the arrival of foreign workers to boost our capacity for production and innovation. As a result of this long-standing tradition of openness to Europe and the rest of the world, Neuchâtel was also influenced by the major trends in European thought, which led in particular to the peaceful revolution of 1848, the founding event of the Republic of Neuchâtel.

**The Canton of Neuchâtel is called a republic. Is this a sign of its open-mindedness?**

Yes. Including all the inhabitants in the democratic political process is a distinctive feature of Neuchâtel’s policy of integration, which relies heavily on all its inhabitants’ citizenship, participation and civic responsibility. Likewise, we attach great importance to migrants’ associations and civil society. Neuchâtel is in fact the Swiss

canton that offers foreigners who have settled there the most extensive civic rights.



### Are there tensions around your activity?

Of course there are conflicts, but they are a part of the democratic process and balanced solutions are worked out. There has been some opposition to the extension of civic rights to migrants and to the

government's role in promoting the integration of foreigners and fighting racism. However, neither the parliament nor the majority of the population, voting in referenda, has accepted these political protests.

Another example: about ten years ago, a girl went to school wearing the Islamic headscarf; the school denied her access to the classroom because of its secular policy. The government and the cantonal court firmly opposed this municipal decision and set it aside, reinstating the girls with the headscarf in her classroom on the basis of a liberal conception of secularism which respects individuals' religious freedom.

The government and its civil servants are required to observe secular principles and their freedom of religious expression is restricted in the performance of their public duties. They are not allowed to wear the Islamic headscarf or any other visible religious symbols. On the other hand, the citizens are free to publicly express their faith and pupils can wear religious symbols such as the Islamic headscarf, the kippa or the cross in state schools.

Overall, the general climate in relations between indigenous and migrant population groups remains satisfactory. However, vague anxieties linked to the risk of an economic downturn, to the increase in migration flows, to the fear of Islamic political extremism and to perceptions of crime in Switzerland have adversely affected community relations. But these negative trends are offset by practical steps taken to resolve the problems that arise and by the best possible public

communication. As a result, the population itself is on a whole fairly confident about opening up to others, which means that the tensions are being handled sensibly.

### What is the canton's policy on managing diversity?

Under the Swiss federal system, immigration policy is a national function and the integration of foreigners is first and foremost a task for the cantons and municipalities. Integration in the sense of mutual adjustment between population groups is already being achieved in many areas, but there are also forms of segregation and discrimination that need to be countered. The key components of the canton's policy in this area are respect for the democratic and legal system, helping people to adapt to one another and come closer together, increasing opportunities for participation and preventing forms of segregation.

Neuchâtel has created effective tools for managing diversity by setting up a special government department headed by the Commissioner for Foreign Nationals, with a staff of about 15, by establishing a close partnership with all the migrants' communities and the main public and private institutions, by running a network of interpreters and socio-cultural mediators who can be swiftly brought into play, by introducing arrangements for the reception and integration of immigrants as soon as they settle here and by developing work-related communication which conveys a positive view of migrants' presence and contribution to society.



### What are the main results?

Social cohesion is coping fairly well with the various forms of fragmentation confronting it and the population supports the current policy, since it regularly shows a tendency towards openness in

referenda, whether on European integration issues, granting civic rights to foreigners or refusing to toughen national migration policy. At national level, one of the prime challenges at the moment is to restore the balance in Switzerland's migration policy so that objectives geared to supervising and controlling foreigners no longer, as they do today, take precedence over objectives geared to integration in the sense of "living together".

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**In the context of Strand Two of the Intercultural Cities programme,** Bologna, a member of the EUROCIITIES network (<http://www.eurocities.org/>) visited another member, Nottingham to learn about their intercultural projects.

Here are some of the delegate's impressions:

- Arts and culture are considered as main vehicles to facilitate the development of a sense of community;
  - Young people are key actors of Intercultural Dialogue;
  - Overcoming inter-religious tension and facilitating intercultural exchange helps to tackle racism, xenophobia, extremism;
  - promotion of intercultural dialogue are important in working contexts, in entertainment, in learning;
  - In Bologna the "welcome spirit" of integration is well presented in flyers, posters, street banners, within the logo "Proud to present". Nottingham City is proud to be intercultural.
  - The Central Library is an important information centre for migrants and it assures the full and correct access to all the services for helping cohesion and integration. Moreover, it provides languages courses and conversations sessions to implement the quality of life.
  - Nottingham Inter Faith Council, established in 1983, brings together members of different religions. Among the significant experiences of Group: a room of prayers at Capital One.
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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Interacció 2008 : Intercultural Dialogue Policies at a Local Level

Representatives of pilot cities will participate in the 2008 Interacció conference in Barcelona on 28-31 October. The conference will bring together cultural and city practitioners, policy-makers and academics from Spain, Europe and beyond to reopen the debate on diversity and interculturality, convinced that the new dimension of the phenomenon demands a response from local authorities. To this end, Interacció 2008 proposes the following objectives:

- Show a theoretical and practical panorama of the state of local cultural policies on interculturality.
- Reflect on the need for the municipal departments and services of culture and citizen participation to respond to the challenges of diversity with their own programmes and policies.
- Observe the evolution of the cultural policies of diversity, as well as good practices, and propose new future paths and objectives from a municipal perspective.
- Create a space of understanding, meeting and exchange between culture officers and professionals."

Information at:

<http://www.diba.cat/cjs/jornada.asp?id=187>

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### ENCATC Annual conference in Lyon 16-18 October



The European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) will hold a major event in Lyon on 16 and 17 October, organised in partnership with the Faculty of Anthropology and Sociology of Lyon2, the city of Lyon and the Rhone Alpes Region. The event will focus on the International UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of

Cultural expressions and its relation to major international and local developments in the field of cultural development.

Jan Figel' (European Commission), Robert Palmer (Council of Europe), Katérina Stenou (UNESCO) and many other speakers will address new challenges and concepts in intercultural dialogue. The debate addresses not only public authorities but also artistic and cultural producers : opinions are asserted, professional activities are evolving throughout Europe, and even if they stem from a variety of cultural policies, they are all questioned by these new perspectives.

Moreover, in the framework of the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue, this meeting aims at occupying a central position on the question of training. This international conference will therefore examine the current transformations at work and consider how expertise, skills and know-how should be adapted to fulfill these new requirements; will try to understand the didactic and pedagogical implications these changes will lead to and will exchange on the curricula that should be established and will contribute to the sharing of experiences on training programmes that develop new methodology.

Information :

<http://www.encatc.org/pages/index.php?id=75>

## RECOMMENDED READING



**Reconciling migrants' well-being and the public interest – Welfare state, firms and citizenship in transition (Trends in social cohesion No. 19) (2008)**

This volume looks at why migrant welfare is not always acknowledged as forming part of the general well-being of host countries. In addition, by suggesting alternative approaches, it sets out to help bring about a “just, multicultural society”, in which rights and mobility are realities for everyone.

<http://book.coe.int>

<p><b>Can cities learn to perceive cultural diversity not as a threat but as an opportunity? How can they make diversity work to their advantage? Can the city become the focus of collective identity bridging ethnic and religious identities?</b></p> <p><b>In the context of the Intercultural Cities programme several pilot cities will review their policies through the “intercultural lens” and develop intercultural strategies in order to meet the challenges of a world in motion.</b></p>	<p><b>Cities participating in the pilot phase</b></p> <p><b>Berlin Neukölln (Germany), Craiova (Romania), Izhevsk (Russian Federation), Lublin (Poland), Lyon (France), Melitopol (Ukraine), Neuchâtel (Switzerland), Oslo (Norway); Patras (Greece), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Subotica (Serbia)</b></p>
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[www.coe.int/interculturalcities](http://www.coe.int/interculturalcities)