

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR SHARED SOCIETIES



WORLD LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE
CLUB DE MADRID

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Preface



CASSAM UTEEM

*President of the Republic of Mauritius
(1992-1997, 1997-2002) and
Member of the Club de Madrid*

As co-chair of the Shared Societies Working Group of Members of the Club de Madrid, it is with much pleasure that I associate myself with this publication that introduces new materials relevant to those working to build Shared Societies.

The Club de Madrid is made up of over 100 former Presidents and Prime Ministers offering their experience to current leaders and societies with a view to enabling them to have a better insight into the problems they are faced with so that they may successfully find the best solutions to them. Like many other colleagues of the Club de Madrid, I was not only involved in national politics but also active in local government. As the former Lord Mayor of Port Louis, the capital city of Mauritius, I am therefore particularly delighted with the topic of this latest publication namely the role of local government in developing and maintaining Shared Societies.

I have fond memories of my time as councillor and then lord mayor of the city of Port Louis which was also a time of many challenges. Mauritius is a very diverse country with its inhabitants having their ancestors coming from different parts of the world. We have a reputation of having developed a peaceful society with all its components living harmoniously together but we have never been complacent about it, having realised very early that a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society like ours needs to be constantly nurtured. We must always be alert to any changes or decisions that could upset relationships and leave one group or the other with the feeling of being marginalized, disadvantaged or in any other way treated unfairly.

The Shared Societies Project is one of the initiatives of the Club de Madrid which is focused on the challenges of marginalization, exclusion and social divisions between identity groups, and sharing ideas on how to avoid and overcome such divisions. We define a Shared Society as one where everyone feels at home and accepted by the other, and has

a sense of belonging to that society, and, as part of it, has the opportunity to pursue his aspirations, provided these do not interfere with anyone else's. Such a society is inherently peaceful and prosperous because everyone simply pulls together.

Since the beginning of the Shared Societies Project we have always recognised that local government has an important role to play in ensuring that good relationships prevail and that Shared Societies are built and maintained and not damaged. The Global Forum on Leadership for Shared Societies was hosted by the city of Rotterdam and I am pleased that the mayor, Ahmed Aboutaleb, has contributed to this publication. In more and more of Club de Madrid's missions to various countries, we become involved with administrative structures at local levels. It is precisely there, in our day to day life experiences, that we feel our society either includes us or ignores and marginalizes us. That means that local authorities, whatever form they take, are directly concerned with this issue. How local government carries out its responsibilities will in a large measure determine how successful we are in building a Shared Society.

Very often we overlook another facet of the relationship of local government to Shared Societies. Whenever community relations break down, the community faces direct consequences. For example, if business confidence is lost and business leaves, then the local council is immediately faced with a loss of revenue and the bigger challenge of attracting new commercial activity into an unstable environment. If violent conflict arises it is local authority property that is damaged, whether it is council offices, social housing, transport or public facilities. And probably the local authority has to pick up the bill for policing and security. When communities become polarised and break down, the local council loses the good will and social capital, that has underpinned the well-being of the community, and without which the local authority cannot effectively carry out its duties.

Therefore it is in the interest of local decision makers to be sensitive about the impact of their decisions on local communities. Will they appear biased if they are building a new community facility in one area but leave other areas without adequate provision? What is the impact if they support the festivals of one religions community but not the celebrations of some other communities? How will people feel if a new public service is provided in an area which is inaccessible to many people? How will people from different communities meet and get to know each other and realise that many of their stereotypes and fears are unfounded? What will be the consequences if those relationships are not built up, and what can and should the local council do to increase that social interaction?

This publication will help to address some of these issues. It provides a framework for understanding what is needed to build and maintain a Shared Society and offers examples of some of the actions which have been taken in different parts of the world. There is much more about the Project and other examples of practice on our website¹. It should help us all to think about the issues in our communities and how to respond to them and it should particularly help those involved and concerned with providing services to

1 http://www.clubmadrid.org/en/programa/the_shared_societies_project



local communities. We also believe it will be useful for national leaders and administrators who have responsibility for local government. They can create the enabling conditions which make it easier for local authorities to respond to the challenges and create inclusive communities, where everyone feels for, understands and respects his neighbours.

I am grateful to all those who have contributed their thoughts and ideas – to the authors of the Reflections – to the communities that provided examples of good practice; to Club de Madrid staff in Madrid and most of all to Daniel de Torres who has been consultant to the process and shared with us his wide experience of working in local government on issues of social inclusion and Shared Societies.



1

Personal Reflections on local government for Shared Societies

FRAMING THE SHARED SOCIETIES MATERIALS FOR A LOCAL CONTEXT



DANIEL DE TORRES

Independent consultant on social inclusion policies in local government, former Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue at Barcelona City Administration

I first became aware of the Shared Societies Project of the Club de Madrid probably around 2009, when I was the Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue at the Barcelona City Administration. But I really became familiar with it in 2012 when I was involved with the Intercultural Cities (ICC) Project of the Council of Europe and their concept of the Intercultural City. ICC and the Shared Societies Project were planning a joint mission to Guatemala City and I was asked to participate. As a result I had the opportunity to get a deeper knowledge and realise how much in common it had with my own work and ideas.

I knew that the Members of the Club de Madrid had reaffirmed their commitment to promote social cohesion and inclusive Shared Societies as a key global priority at the Global Shared Societies Forum on 12-14 November 2008. Interestingly, they had partnered with the city of Rotterdam, and representatives of other local administrations also took part. So already they saw the relevance of the concept to local government and the local context.

Together with a vision and concrete principles, they identified 10 areas of policy and public life that complement one another and impact on the achievement of a Shared

Society – the Ten Commitments – and they called all leaders to commit themselves to positive action to support their realization.

They also called on all other sectors of society to make and implement these Commitments and leaders should create the enabling conditions that would support and encourage local communities in overcoming intergroup tension and building cohesive Shared Societies.

The Club of Madrid had always the conviction that cities and local governments play a key role in the process of building Shared Societies and, in the Global Shared Societies Forum, a working group on local government already pointed this out.

Over the years, there is a growing consensus on the equal importance and responsibility of cities and local governments regarding social cohesion and intercultural policies. In this context, I was pleased to be asked by Club de Madrid to conduct a review of the content of the Ten Commitments, to see how they might need to be adjusted for a local level perspective. The aim is to appeal directly to the responsibility of local leaders, while at the same time providing practical guidelines to help them define and implement active and effective policies for building Shared Societies.

When I looked at the Club de Madrid's materials on Shared Societies I could see that they fitted very well with concepts and ideas underlying the Intercultural Cities Project, with which I was already very familiar. I had assumed they were focused on different layers of governance. The focus of the Intercultural Cities Project is, as its name suggests, city administrations. It seemed natural that the Members of the Club de Madrid, as former national presidents and prime ministers elected to office in a democratic system, would focus their attention on current national leaders around the world, and the focus of the Commitments would be written from the perspective of state governments rather than local governments.

The relevance of the Shared Societies Approach to a local context became more evident as I analysed from a local perspective the Shared Societies' discourse and the content of the programme, including the Ten Commitments.

The main conclusion of my review has been very clear. There is no need to make any substantial change. There are clear differences regarding the political competencies of the state and local government and these can also vary greatly between countries around the world. But the main goal was to confirm that the content of the 10 Commitments was really relevant and useful for local governments and to keep the substance and spirit of the Shared Societies discourse in any revision.

In fact little revision was needed. I have merely adapted some concepts and references to state governance and replace them with its equivalent at local level. But the real meaning of each Commitment as well as the majority of the proposed examples for action is exactly the same.



The reason for this conclusion has to do with the fact that the policy commitments were defined, like the Intercultural Cities materials, in terms of the real and concrete priorities, pointing out what has to be done. That is, from the beginning, the Commitments comprise the elements of complex, transversal and necessary cooperation between governments, local administrations and communities so necessary for building Shared Societies. Since their first formulation, the Commitments recognised and addressed the involvement and responsibility of local governments, although they were not specifically stated in that way.

Vision and principles of Shared Societies

The basic principles of the Shared Societies, as defined by the Club de Madrid, is respect for the dignity of every individual and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

“Socially cohesive” or “Shared Societies” are stable, safe and just, and are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity and the dignity of each individual, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation for all disadvantaged and vulnerable people and groups.

It is clear that despite the differences in powers, this view applies both to the governments of countries and also at the local level, and thus the adjustment should focus on the specific details of the 10 Commitments.

The “adjustment” of the 10 Commitments

In a first reading of the Ten Commitments it becomes clear that the local dimension is present in a very direct and specific manner.

For example, commitment IX refers directly to the importance of work at the local level. This assessment is reinforced even more when you look at the proposed actions, many of which necessarily involve work at the local level:

- strengthen local communities
- build networks of organizations
- promote dialogue and interaction,
- generate processes of debate and reflection on identity and diversity
- promote diversity awareness strategies and cultural activities that facilitate these processes

It's obvious that these kinds of actions are mostly applicable at the local level and must be implemented their.

But regardless of these most explicit references to the local dimension, the whole set of Commitments apply to the local dimension and local responsibility. This is confirmed

most directly in Commitment VI, for example, which focuses on ensuring that the physical environment provides opportunities for social interaction. But actually it is the same with all the Commitments:

- identify clear responsibilities within government
- assess the impact of policies
- encourage the participation of minorities
- promote intercultural dialogue
- focus on education
- implement policies that facilitate equity, anti-discrimination and segregation

They all have to do with local government responsibilities, and these are the topics and challenges with which the Ten Commitments of the Shared Societies deal.

Thus, after the analysis of each policy commitment I was happy to conclude that there was no need to change any of the content and simply adjusted some details for the local policy level.

Conclusions

The main conclusion is that the discourse and Commitments of the Shared Societies Project are absolutely valid and useful at the local level.

They are not simply state responsibilities, slightly adapted to serve the local level. They are the main issues to be addressed, both at the state level and the local. If the Project would start defining the Commitments from a local perspective, they could be exactly the same.

I think this conclusion gives additional strength and power to the global discourse of Shared Societies and shows that these are the key issues to be addressed in order to respond to the main challenge of this century.

On the other hand, another conclusion that we highlight in this review is the need to emphasize the essential need for cooperation and collaboration between different levels of government. Without a stronger political culture based on collaboration and transversal vision, the road to Shared Societies will be slower and more complicated.

Finally, we believe this decision to focus on local government together with the key contribution of the Club de Madrid Members, former heads of state and heads of government, will facilitate connecting to a wider audience and engaging more worldwide leaders to join the Shared Societies Way.



SHARED SOCIETIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM



AHMED ABOUTALEB

*Burgemeester/Mayor of
Rotterdam, Netherlands*

Ahmed Aboutaleb is an old friend of the Shared Societies Project. Rotterdam City Council hosted the Global Forum on Leadership for Shared Societies in November 2008, which introduced the Project to the wider world and marked its growth and development. On 17 February 2015 shortly after the attack on the Parisian magazine "Charlie Hebdo", he was invited by the US Vice President to speak in Washington on the challenges of terrorism. His speech is very relevant to the topic of the contribution of cities to responding to terrorism through building Shared Societies and he has kindly agreed to include it in this publication.

More than ever, international tensions are having an impact on the local community. For that reason, there must be room for anger and grief. At the same time, we need to ensure that international conflicts do not degenerate into hostilities in our streets. How do we deal with this? That is the question that we are facing today.

It is now six weeks since the horrific attack in Paris. We have still not finished talking to each other about the meaning and consequences of this disgraceful act. If only we could guarantee that such an attack will never happen again. But even with a soldier on every street corner, you are never completely safe from people who are willing to die for their delusions.

However, we are certainly not powerless. I am convinced that we, as local governments, can play a powerful role here. As Mayor of Rotterdam, an international city where 175 nationalities live together, I am convinced that the following four points are crucial:

1. First of all: strong access to information. If you know what is going on in the city, you can respond quickly and appropriately to tensions in society and their effects, especially with respect to young people.

To accomplish this, you need the confidence of the residents, so that they share their concerns. In order to earn that confidence, you must be visible and approachable. Therefore, I frequently go into the city with the chief of police and the chief public prosecutor to talk to residents about the safety of their neighbourhoods. Residents make their own arrangements with the police, and the police keep them informed of their actions.

Many local police officers themselves organize consultation sessions on the streets, setting up a table and two chairs. Any resident with questions can take a seat and join in.

In addition, for ten years the city has a hotline for reporting radicalization. There is a network of contact persons at schools and at social and religious organizations. They quickly have youngsters vulnerable to radicalization in their sights and share that information with us. In this way, we can quickly move in and steer them in the right direction, if necessary.

Let me give you another example: When last year the conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territories flared up so severely, I invited representatives from the Jewish and Muslim communities to the city hall to examine the effects of the tensions in the Middle East on our society.

Fortunately, at that time no additional security measures were necessary. However, there was a need, especially among young people, to speak out. Therefore, I offered space in my city for pro-Gaza demonstrations, under strict conditions. Furthermore, mosques and synagogues opened their doors even wider to foster mutual encounters.

2. Secondly: offer prospects. I see it as the duty of the local government to provide the young people in the city with prospects so that they are less receptive to extremist ideas. Exclusion and discrimination make young people vulnerable to the messages of extremist recruiters. Good education, adequate trainee-ships and jobs will always be necessary. Because a good education is important for finding a good job, of course. Because a paid job is the best remedy against poverty and a life on the margins of society: the margins where malicious people will find their victims.

3. Thirdly: set boundaries and monitor them. No doubt it is my primary task to unite, as the first citizen of the city. But it is no less my responsibility to set boundaries: the boundaries that are written down in the Constitution.

When new citizens are granted Dutch nationality, I point out, during the naturalization ceremony, not only their rights but also the duties that the Dutch law imposes on them. To the newcomers in my city I say: you will soon have your passport. This is not simply a travel document, it is a mandate. It is mandates to not only take advantage of the rights and freedoms that the Constitution provides, but to actively observe and promote them.

If you're not willing to do that, then be honest enough to hand in your passport and leave.

4. My fourth and last point: call upon residents to seek each other out and enter into the dialogue. A day after the attack in Paris, in the middle of the city with a few thousand people, we expressed our solidarity with the victims and survivors in Paris. Many gatherings are organized where residents meet each other to share their anger, fear and doubts. We visit schools to talk with young people about the attack and what it means for us. As mayor and a practicing Muslim, I also call upon the Muslim community to take action and make their voices heard more loudly.



In my opinion, it is precisely that voice that is a valuable medicine: the 16 million Muslims in Europe and 2 million in the United States can show that their religious beliefs can be perfectly combined with our Western values.

It is they who can dispel the turmoil and doubt that lives within society. I am convinced that they play a key role in putting out this fire.

And finally, as I said earlier, in an open society like ours, we can not guarantee that an attack will never happen again. What we can do is to make society as strong as possible. The Government can do this by seeking common ground and setting limits, the citizens by investing in the “we society.” The more people we keep on board, the fewer will fall by the wayside and turn against society.

The problem of religious violence and extremism cannot be solved in Europe and the United States alone. We can, however, be a shining example, by remaining ourselves: a society where you can be who you are and can become whatever and whoever you want, as long as you respect other people's choices as well.



THE GOOD SOCIETY: THE RIGHT TO IDENTITY, RESPECT AND EQUAL LIVING CONDITIONS – THE LOCAL POLITICAL VIEW ON A SUSTAINABLE INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



JENS SJÖSTRÖM

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Stockholm County Council,
former Major of Botkyrka, Sweden,
President of UNESCO LUCS*

The man who was president of the local ethnic association threw out his arms and exclaimed: “Jens, look at these two young men,” he pointed to the two guys around 25 years of age. They sat at the end of the hall, “none of them have got a job or even an invitation to an interview, even though they both have university degrees and sought an infinite number of different jobs”. This happened in the mid- 90’s and I had just become chairman of the Culture and Leisure Committee in Botkyrka, a municipality in the south of Stockholm. I remember thinking - “Has the situation gone so far that those friends with an origin in another country, or perhaps even born and bred here in Botkyrka, do not see the sense to educate themselves? That people in general do not see through stereotypes about each other, and that the invisible structural exclusion and discrimination is so strong and even influences peoples’ dreams about their own future?”

Sweden has a long history of the quest for freedom for the individual. Through a democratic and unified social system it is possible, when used correctly, to reduce people’s differences in living conditions and strengthen the freedom of the individual to influence and control their own life choices. It requires a strong and conscious effort to eliminate the barriers of discrimination and the excluding structures which today sort out people because of their identity.

If we believe that “all people have an equal value” we must really taste the words, their depth, their meaning and their practical implications. How do we achieve an “equal value” and what are the ingredients for its practice everyday? Do “all” really mean “all” when it comes to questions about the distribution of political, economic and social power? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent conventions clarify this constant quest that must be carried in everyday life policy and conduct. The public administration in Sweden has, among other things, the important task of designing a welfare policy that equalizes differences, and form structures where access to power and influence are equal.

Seen in this perspective, we must all, as decision makers, daily ask ourselves, while we look ourselves in the mirror, if we do everything we can to create equal living conditions with every decision we must make during the day. For me as a Social Democrat, it has always been a matter of course to stand up for human equality, the right to democracy and an egalitarian society. In my role as Deputy Mayor in Botkyrka there was a strong possibility to visualize, and to teach myself to see all the factors that affect and control each individual's ability to live the good life and the ability to realize the best of their innermost longings.

Botkyrka is a great place to live in. The urban landscape and the more rural countryside meet within the municipal border. Botkyrka has the second youngest population out of 290 municipalities. In Botkyrka people from all corners of the world and cultures meet. The majority of the inhabitants have a sense of pride to live in Sweden's most diverse population regarding ethnicity, religion and language. The inhabitants have background in over 160 countries. In the schools in Botkyrka around 100 different languages are spoken and taught. The municipality has grown substantially in recent years, some years with over 2000 inhabitants, and today we are almost 89,000 inhabitants, making Botkyrka the fifth largest municipality in the Stockholm region. Rapid urbanization poses new challenges in the social structure and in the service supply, but not least in the ability to understand the way in which we build a society in which individuals, the inhabitants of Botkyrka, feel cohesion, trust each other and see each other as assets, and not with suspicion and as threats.

Botkyrka was one of the municipalities where, during the late 60s and early 70s the so-called million program areas were built. It was the Social Democratic Government's response to contemporary housing shortages and, not least, substandard housing standards contained in the city of Stockholm. Already soon after the war the major industries in Botkyrka - Alfa Laval (formerly Separator) and TumbaBruk - sought an international labour force to enable its expansion. Since the 70's and up until today, many arrived in Botkyrka fleeing persecution and poverty, but also to reunite with their relatives.

My own political involvement started back in the early 80s in the political youth movement and was based primarily on a local commitment in the fight against apartheid in South Africa, for democracy in Mozambique and Nicaragua. At the same time there was an intensified political climate in Sweden because of the growth of the neo-fascist movement. Because of these different happenings, the struggle for human equality, anti-discrimination and racism became apparent in Swedish everyday life. In my local political role, I got the possibility to weave together what were for me several important threads to a context: the struggle for a living democracy where everyone is given the right and opportunity to participate; the need for a change of perspective to enable more visibility of structural barriers and structures to achieve equal access to social, economic and political power, including the right to be able to maintain intact the integrity of our identity as human beings.

Within gender studies and gender debate, it is an accepted premise that perceptions, norms and ideas about gender are created in relation to others, and that perceptions, norms and ideas about gender are different depending on the time in history and



depending on the place where they happen. In other words, we create our images and values about ourselves and each other in the light of whether we know or do not know each other, and if we have a need to assert ourselves or not towards each other in a hierarchical struggle about power, influence or access to work, our positioning to accept or dare to challenge the established prejudices, etc.

Therefore it is crucial to demonstrate the strength of an equal society, where the right to your own identity is a prerequisite to be able to build the new joint Swedishness. The term “integration” has a built-in problem in the way it is used, because it can be interpreted as compromising the unique identity of each individual, culture, history and religion in order to “fit in”. The concept has also prevalence in the majority community who often equate it with assimilation, adaptation as a minority to ‘become Swedish’. Doing this, we lose the strength that Sweden may have in the future, when used correctly, with all the knowledge in language, culture, relationships and global networks that exist in a multicultural population, unique intercultural competence.

Interculturality is a relatively new concept in Sweden, introduced by Botkyrka at the municipal level. While the term “multicultural” describes a state, “interculturality” indicates an action, an interaction between people with different perspectives and frames of reference. The starting point is equal human dignity and rights, regardless of social, ethnic or religious background. It is about creating a level of common rules based on the recognition, participation, identity, self-reflection and the insight about the need of mutual capacity building. It’s about facing prejudice and discrimination, but also building on the joint agenda. It’s about the fact that your rights create my freedom and your freedom to create my future, the mutual need for each other’s success. Intercultural competence therefore requires both an attitude towards others that is characterized by openness and flexibility, and an awareness of different cultural expressions, including one’s own.

The concept holds expectations to create greater justice and equality between citizens, with the purpose of breaking the negative consequences of segregation. It is a necessary foundation for sustainable development of society.



THE CASE OF TORONTO



DAVID MILLER

Chief Executive Officer, World Wildlife Fund, Canada, former Mayor of Toronto, Canada and Club de Madrid NetPLUSS Member

As the former Mayor of Toronto, Canada, I was delighted when asked to participate in the Club de Madrid's Shared Societies Project. The Club de Madrid has a unique ability to influence intercultural understanding and dialogue, and I was delighted to see that the group understood the opportunity that exists within the world's great cities to advance these issues of social justice and inclusion. I am also pleased, because on a personal basis, I am concerned about the rise of extreme forms of Nationalism, so often in the past associated with racism and hate. There is an urgent need for leadership to counter these trends, and the Club de Madrid is providing that leadership – leadership that is most effective, in my view, when Cities and their leaders are included.

Why? Both because issues of diversity and of immigration (which, although sometimes related, are not the same thing) play out in the world's great cities, and because it is often cities that have real and practical strategies to help foster inclusion and respect. Take the example of Toronto, my home. The cities motto is "Diversity our Strength." This was not always the case – in a Protestant run, British heritage city, signs before the war might have said "help wanted, No Irish or Jews need apply." That this is not the case today is a testament to both national policies that foster multiculturalism, and a respect for all cultures; and city level strategies and efforts.

Toronto is a City of nearly three million people, the heart of a region of six million people and the economic centre of Canada. The head offices of almost all major banks, insurance companies, law firms and accountants are in Toronto, and there is a vibrant and successful manufacturing belt around the city, including Canada's automobile manufacturing industry. It is a diverse city with people from virtually every possible culture, who live together in relative harmony. It is also a city of immigrants, with more than fifty percent of the population born outside Canada (including me) and another significant proportion having moved from within Canada. This has helped create less of a sense of us and them than perhaps in a city where there is less diversity and newcomers represent a distinctly different, easily identifiable ethnic group. In fact, of course, unless our heritage is aboriginal, we are all immigrants. But city policies have made a massive difference.

Why? Because it is in a City's great public institutions and public spaces that respect and inclusion are fostered, and in those same places that newcomers are welcomed. Basic

city services – Libraries, Transit, Recreation Programmes, Schools, Housing, and more are a great equalizer and are particularly important in respecting diversity and assisting newcomers. Take the public library system, for example.

Toronto is blessed with what is the world's best neighbourhood branch public library system, judged by attendance and circulation *per capita*. In those libraries, everyone has access to all of the world's information, on line or in a book. And they are always packed with visible diversity, including newcomers using the library to connect with jobs, housing and other community supports. Specific programmes fostered by the Library Board (appointed by the City Government) support intercultural understanding and the integration of newcomers. Take issues of respect for gays and lesbians, where the city funds specific community outreach, designed to help gays and lesbians from cultural backgrounds where coming out is exceptionally difficult because of historic prejudice, and also educates non-gays about inclusion in culturally sensitive and language appropriate ways. Schools have long had heritage language classes, so that a student will be educated in English but can take classes in her parent's language as well, or take recreation programmes, which are accessible (financially) for all, and include specific programmes to address cultural issues – like female only swims. Designed to respect the wishes of Muslim women, these swims are popular with women of a broad range of cultures who simply want to exercise solely in the company of other women.

This lesson – that respecting diversity and cultural differences leads to unexpected positive – results has been seen again and again in our city. An example exists in the direct integration of newcomers through not-for-profit community agencies. These are funded through the federal government, but work in close collaboration with the city and its agencies. COSTI is one such organization that has served the Italian Community in Toronto for decades, including the post war era when it was not necessarily easy to be a non-English Speaking newcomer to Toronto. When Somali refugees began to flee the civil war to come to Canada in the 1990's, COSTI assisted their community in setting up its own settlement agency within the organization due to the historic ties between Italy and Somalia: Italian Catholics assisting Somali Muslims adapt to their new life in Canada.

What has made Toronto a relative success at integration? I would argue three things:

1. Strong National programmes that respect multi-culturalism, show leadership on the integration of newcomers and include funding for a community based, grassroots effort to integrate newcomers;
2. Excellent social programmes – like health care, public libraries, and schools, that are inclusive and welcoming of differences;
3. Strong and innovative leadership at the city level. Toronto has a long history of both programmatic support of inclusion, and leadership and promotion of equality and anti racism– through events like Black History Month and numerous other efforts to support cultural diversity and prevent racism.

The Shared Societies Project must succeed, and it is more likely to do so if it builds on the world's best models of inclusion and respect. These are often found in the leadership in and by cities – like Toronto, whose variety of strategies to support diversity are an excellent example of what is possible.



2

Constructing Shared Societies from a local perspective

DANIEL DE TORRES

Independent consultant on social inclusion policies in local government, former Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue at Barcelona City Administration

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The construction of dynamic societies is without doubt a principal challenge of the 21st century. Such societies ensure equilibrium between social cohesion and respect towards diversity on the base of democratic values and intercultural coexistence. To build these Shared Societies, as defined by the Club de Madrid, represents a priority task for the majority of the countries and cities in the world.

Regardless of the apparent consensus on the relevance of this issue, it is not always easy to identify clearly these objectives within the prime political agenda of many governments and international bodies. The matter is not an easy task, obviously, and neither does this responsibility solely fall back on the national governments.

In a world that is as interconnected as never before, where many borders disappear while others are reinforced, there is more evidence of the growing relevance of its cities and the role of local governments.

The global key challenges impact and crystallize within the cities, where they mix with the specific local and unique factors of each city.

In this sense, it is very significant that an organisation like the Club de Madrid has taken the position to emphasize the role of local governments in the process of constructing Shared Societies. The aim of this article is to bring forward some ideas and reflections resulting from my fifteen years of experience in the field of local policies of social cohesion and diversity management.

Without doubt, the extension of socio-cultural diversity of many urban populations comes along with complexities, but it brings opportunities, too. Depending on how this reality is interpreted and managed, complications may be reinforced or opportunities can be taken advantage of, whether these are social, cultural or economic.

It is not easy to share results, priorities or recipes. But, out of experience, I not only consider the principles of the Shared Societies Project and its identified policy commitments to be perfectly applicable at the local level. Moreover, they are also the most relevant and needed strategies to advance towards such Shared Societies from a local perspective, too.

2.2. CITIES, COHESION AND DIVERSITY

Segregation and sense of belonging, democracy and exclusion, opportunities and discrimination, innovation and marginalisation, creativity and vulnerability, living together and hostility: all of that combines and gains substance in the daily life of millions of people that live in cities.

It is in the streets and squares of the cities, in the flats and schools, in shops, offices, cultural centres or hospitals, where abstract concepts like inclusion, cohesion and intercultural relations gain meaning and are put to the test.

If we analyse the description that the Club de Madrid gives for a shared society and if we think from a local level, it is obvious that the factors to achieve this objective are multiple, interconnected and of diverse origin and causes.

*"A **'Shared Society'** is a socially cohesive society. It is stable, safe. It is where all those living there feel at home. It respects everyone's dignity and human rights while providing every individual with equal opportunity. It is tolerant. It respects diversity. A Shared Society is constructed and nurtured through strong political leadership."*

In cities, the consequences of political and economic decisions are felt. These decisions stem from various centres of power that span from regional and national governments to supranational bodies and institutions or governments from other parts of the world. Changes in interest rates, the cost of a raw material or a financial crisis in a country thousands of kilometres away may have direct impact on the lives of thousands of people in any city. We may think of some global challenges like climate change, growing inequalities, terrorism, drug-, arms- or person trafficking that influence the lives of many and are interwoven with aspects related to poverty, social cohesion or coexistence in a city district.

But does this mean that the local governments cannot do much to contribute to constructing Shared Societies? By no means, and although it might seem contradictory, I believe that they play a fundamental part, as demonstrated by many examples. Cities within the same country, with similar 'external' conditions, may achieve different levels



of social inclusion, cohesion and development. Local governments can do much more than their competences seemingly determine.

Mayors might perhaps not have the necessary competences to modify the education system, but he or she can lead a political and social process in order to improve the quality of education in the city. They can initiate new incentives that compensate for some of the system's deficits. They may influence the environment of schools and the key issues of the schools' neighbourhood: interventions to improve the public space, public policies that do not favour urban segregation, improvement of cultural services like public libraries or investing in sport centres. They can promote programs for reception of newcomers and integration policies, family support, fight against discrimination or invoke multiple social actors to give value to education. In the end, local level policies can have an indirect, potentially important, impact on the education process and vital opportunities of many kids and families.

Cities are true laboratories of political and social innovation. Here, political leaders have a great responsibility to use this social transformation capacity to build Shared Societies. In the end, a big part of this depends on the priorities that are envisaged and the capacities to convert these priorities into concrete results.

But what elements can we identify for the path towards Shared Societies to be more or less successful from the local perspective? Even though no magical recipes exist, some considerations can be identified that I believe are fundamental to successfully igniting this process. Before focussing on these aspects however, I would like to emphasize the importance of the discourse.

2.3. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY... INTERACTION!

I already mentioned that factors interfering in the process of constructing Shared Societies at the local level are very complex. Beginning with a key question: What is the indication of the relevance of these factors and their relative weight in relation to each other? For example, there is no agreement on the links and weight that socio-economic factors have regarding tensions over identity and marginalisation compared to cultural diversity issues. For some culture has almost no relevance, as everything is explicable by unequal access to social, economic and political rights and resources. For others, factors relating to ethnic, religious and cultural diversities explain a large part of the complications in achieving Shared Societies. In my opinion, it is without doubt that in modern societies both dimensions are intensely interrelated. In many outskirts of some of the richest cities of the world we find high indicators for segregation, exclusion and vulnerability. Certainly, the sense of belonging to a society depends on factors like the level and reasons for inequality, poverty, segregation, or discrimination, and it is clear that these factors are also related to the origins and causes of socio-cultural diversities. Equal opportunities and social mobility depends on many factors. In this sense, the theoretical principles on which we choose to base the policies for Shared Societies must stem from a good knowledge and analysis of these factors.

At the local level, there is a tendency to underestimate the importance of principles and theoretical discourse. I think this is a mistake, and believe that strongly substantiating the principles of local policies is as important as on any other level of government.

When I visit a city and talk to different politicians or municipal officials, I usually ask them separately about the principles that guide their policies in favour of inclusion, social cohesion and intercultural coexistence. Often I obtain quite different responses.

Let us not fool ourselves, these concepts are not easy to explain. This is why, before defining plans and policies, it is important to dedicate some time to the elaboration and internalisation of the discourse that is needed to transmit them. There is nothing more difficult than evaluating whether you were successful in achieving something if you are not very certain of what it actually consists.

During my time as Barcelona Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (2007 – 2011), I could confirm the importance of this issue when I had to lead the process of evaluating the intercultural plan of the city.

After consulting responsible politicians, municipal officials, experts and representatives of civil society, we decided to define interculturality on the basis of three principles or key elements, very similar to the principles of the Shared Societies Project:

1. The equality of rights, duties and social opportunities

This first part stems from the idea that in order to advance toward a more cohesive and intercultural city, it is indispensable that there is an agreement to promote equality of rights, duties and social opportunities among the citizens. This principle demands the existence of active policies favouring equality and countering exclusion and discrimination.

2. The recognition of diversity

This is not a simple celebration or passive tolerance of diversity, but the necessity to acknowledge it and to value it, while emphasizing common and shared elements on the basis of fundamental values.

3. Positive interaction among citizens in the context of greater socio-cultural diversity

Building upon the acknowledgement of diversity, it is necessary to give emphasis to the common and shared aspects that unite the citizens. Living together is an aspect of daily life, and this is why parallel to policies promoting equality, it is necessary to strengthen positive interaction and mutual knowledge in order to reinforce the commonalities and a certain sense of belonging to guarantee social cohesion. Positive interaction between persons depends on many variables and to eliminate the barriers that complicate it, it is necessary to initiate and adopt public policies to foster interaction on an equal basis.

The definition of concrete principles is considered a fundamental aspect if we are to understand, share and better explain the concept of interculturality and cohesion. On



the basis of these concepts, a plan is constructed, not only for municipal politicians and experts, but also for the citizenship.

From these three principles derives the idea that interculturality does not avoid conflicts, as the effort to stimulate interaction precisely generates conflicts in daily life. However it is important to acknowledge this reality and to tackle conflicts in a proactive manner on a day-by-day basis. In contrast, a more passive option that avoids approaching complex topics might result in a false cohesion, but when a real problem emerges, its dimension will be much more intense and relevant than the basic conflicts that are addressed daily as part of the permanent dialogue, mediation and resolution strategies for proximity-based conflicts. Further, those involved will not have learnt the social skills and techniques which allow them to handle conflicts.

I want to put emphasis on this principle because without interaction, there is no mutual recognition, interchange, identification and backing of common elements. And thus, there will be neither a sense of belonging, a cultural enrichment, nor consolidation of shared civil values.

When I think about the fundamental challenges to Shared Societies, I always end up with the importance of interaction. Interaction depends on many factors, not only social, but also cultural, economic, urban or even psychological. It depends, for example, on whether true equality of rights and opportunities exists, whether the social safety net functions, whether there is a common language, whether public spaces promote encounters and whether discrimination or segregation processes exist.

If the government, the administration, the media or business organisations do not reflect the diverse socio-cultural reality, then positive interaction is not being created and it will be difficult to produce a shared sense of belonging. If I live in a district with 30% of the neighbours being from diverse origins and on Election Day this diversity is not reflected in the participants (both candidates and electors) then there is no true interaction.

Although we cannot interfere with electoral law, we can create an environment in the cities that favours such interaction. With this end in mind, the municipal political bodies need to be aware of these factors, from urbanism and housing policies to education, culture, economic promotion or citizen participation.

Without interaction, not only urban, but also social or even mental segregation will possibly be very strong and within the same environment parallel “worlds” might coexist. Without interaction, neither the opportunities that diversity offers can be turned to good account, whether those be social, cultural or economic. We should not forget that more dynamic and innovative societies are those that make better “use” of their diversity.

After having talked about the importance of the principles, the municipal political bodies need to focus on compliance with them. But what determines if specific policies, when implemented, translate the theoretic principles into more equal rights and opportunities, recognition of diversity and greater positive interaction? In the following I present some key elements to advance towards this goal. They can, in fact, all be found in the theoretical framework of the Shared Societies project promoted by the Club de Madrid.

2.4. SOME KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROCESS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHARED SOCIETIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

There are no magic recipes and every city is unique. Nevertheless I think that some important requirements to advance toward Shared Societies can be described with regard to the internal process of local governments.

Political leadership and consensus

We start with an issue that is very obvious, but nevertheless important to raise: without agreement and political leadership, it is very complicated to progress towards Shared Societies. Far from being sufficient, it is absolutely essential. And this is, as we have described, due to the complex nature of the issue that requires vision and a solid and long-term compromise. The complexity of the challenge might discourage some, and there are no electoral benefits from it in the short-run. In the face of this complexity, leaders may choose from various attitudes: they can look away and adopt a passive or reactive attitude. This is a very risky option, as lack of leadership of the debate and agenda allows others to lead it. This is when populist discourses, often biased by xenophobic tendencies, appear. They seize the moment to foster a discourse of fear in order to obtain an electoral advantage. The leadership that is needed is proactive, solid and collaborative. It is aware of the importance and the complexity of the topic and accordingly places it high on the political agenda. Also, it must be understood that without cooperation with other actors, both from government and the civil society, it is difficult to get the desired results. Courage is required to tackle complications and to generate consensus and synergy among a great number of actors (again, political as well as from the civil society). All of this does not only apply to the local, but also to the national and international level.

Knowledge and monitoring

One of the weaknesses that I usually identify in many cities is the lack of instruments to obtain a complete knowledge of the reality of the challenge of inclusion and interculturality. Where do we start? Where do we want to reach? How do we analyse and evaluate the level of present inclusion and its future evolution? Without the necessary instruments it would be impossible to know if the policies implemented have any impact or if the impact that we observe can be traced back to them. The aid of external experts and the contribution of stable and rigorous observatories that allow us to obtain the necessary information are essential, but often not given adequate attention. It is fundamental to establish agreements with universities and incorporate experts into the staff who can provide applied and solid knowledge. While on the contrary, there are obvious risks in continuing and dedicating resources to policies that we cannot be sure are effective, regardless of much intuition and good intentions. This would not be good for the maintenance of the political compromise and to be able to justify the necessary investments. To be capable



of demonstrating that these policies are not only necessary, but also beneficial and profitable, is a further key objective.

Strategic planning, cooperation and transversality

Assuming that we can count on an understandable and coherent discourse, a dedicated political leadership and a good knowledge and diagnosis of the reality, in addition, a global vision which is mainstreamed and cross-departmental is another factor that will be crucial to assess the real level of ambition and commitment to the goal of Shared Societies in cities. Promoting a strategy of this nature does not mean to centralize one set of policies and concrete actions in a single department and with an enclosed budget.

The challenges and opportunities that Shared Societies at the local level inherit are equally related to urban planning as to culture, education, public space, economy, sports, security or mobility. In other words, it is widely linked to the values of equality and liberty, equality of opportunities and social mobility, rights and duties, discrimination and democratic values, identity pluralism and a shared sense of belonging. This means that the principles of the discourse of shared and intercultural societies need to incorporate themselves into the body of public policies, because only then it is possible to truly advance toward the compliance of these objectives.

Strategic planning and transversal action require political leadership that understands the importance of all departments taking on their responsibility. To achieve this, it is not sufficient to create a transversal coordination table. The process needs to be accompanied by a real mentality change in politicians and officials. I think that at the moment, it is exactly this that remains the principal challenge in the majority of governments and administrations.

As noted already, improving education is not only a task of the education department. Inclusion depends on many policies, linked with each other, which should be defined and managed on the basis of this premise, or the results will always be partial and limited. Clear leadership, good selection of staff, training and internal awareness processes are very necessary in this context.

Creativity and flexibility

Beyond the evident necessity of strategic planning, I am a keen defender of the importance of fostering creativity in politics and administrations. It is at the local level where this value shows most fundamentally. Unfortunately, in my experience with many cities, in some excessively bureaucratic organizations there are great difficulties militating against the release of the creative capacity of municipal workers. Nonetheless, there is a multitude of examples of how the most valuable best practices do not arise from very detailed plans and methodologies but from the adaptation to circumstances and the finding of original solutions, stretching criteria and opening new ways for more efficient and innovative action. There is a multitude of difficult situations, and without space for reflection and

internal debate from a multidisciplinary and transversal perspective, it is not easy to find solutions for complex situations. This is related to the change of mentality and culture of local administrations. Furthermore, it is linked to the cooperation and networking with a multitude of civil society actors.

We often find apparently very competent people with great working skills, who are nevertheless incapable of cooperating, innovating, persuading and adapting to complex working environments where in many cases a short sighted and protectionist attitude predominates.

New forms of participation and creation of collaborative networks

Related to the previous section, another big question is how local governments innovate and find new ways to communicate and interact with the citizens, creating participative spaces which incorporate diverse profiles and do not solely rely on formal or institutionalized processes. There are big steps being taken in this direction but there is still a long way to go. Appealing to the joint responsibility of citizens is very important, but also it is necessary to facilitate spaces and instruments for discussion and participation that are useful, flexible and stimulating.

In NGOs, like neighbourhood, merchant, and sports associations, immigrant bodies, together with trade-unions, employer associations, universities and private foundations and many more – all those are part of the process. They are not only destined to enrich it but also to give it the best possible legitimation and level of consensus. But the idea is not only to relate with officials of formal associations and entities, but also to establish spaces in order to give many citizens the feeling that they can and must contribute in a more active manner to decision making, beyond electoral contests.

In this sense, much work remains when we consider the necessary evolution and innovation of the participation systems that are promoted by administrations, which in many cases have become quite obsolete. However, some provide experiences which have very interesting results.

In any case, the creation of engagement, collaborative spaces and networks with civil society and citizens in general, does not only constitute an important value per se, but also fosters civil and participative values in the construction of a socially collective project.

Perceptions, communication and the role of the media

Lastly, I must make reference to a topic that is repeated in the majority of conversations with municipal politicians or experts all over the world: the importance of the ‘management’ of perceptions and the role of the media.

Without doubt, when it comes to topics related to social cohesion and diversity management, citizens’ perceptions play a very important role. Often, the relevance that is given to conflictive or polemic occurrences is much higher in the media, even though they are not the norm, but exceptions to situations of much more normalized and positive



coexistence. The constant and silent work of many local governments and social actors in supporting cohesion and coexistence does not find sufficient echo in the media, which is more interested in highlighting more negative or conflictive situations. This reality can influence the perceptions of many citizens, who then see their prejudices and stereotypical views reinforced. Without neglecting the impact of this fact, I think that behind the common complaint “always bad news, never good news,” we should apply some self-criticism. We are not really recognising the relevance that communication has in this field nor its responsibility and real capacity to influence, and consequently taking seriously the need to improve.

In the world of today, if we want to defend and spread ideas and arguments, if we want to be proactive and purposeful in the public debate, we need to be aware that communication plays a fundamental role. To throw in the towel here, whether by neglect, lack of capacity or by pretending to “take advantage” of the media to pursue exclusively party or personal interest, means giving up an important part of the responsibility that is entailed in the management of public policies.

2.5. CONCLUSIONS

In this article I wanted to lay down some thoughts on the importance of local governments today in the process of constructing shared and intercultural societies.

I think that beyond the competences of local governments and based on the complex reality that is determined by a multitude of factors outside its sphere of influence, their responsibility and capacity to influence is very relevant. Additionally, cities are social laboratories where innovations and solutions are brought forward that need to be taken into account by other government levels, in order to reinforce them by essential cooperation and collaboration.

I have highlighted the significance of the theoretical discourse by providing the example of principles that we used in Barcelona with the creation of the Interculturality Plan for the city, which coincides fully with the principles of the Shared Societies Project of the Club de Madrid. From my point of view a crucial principle at the local level is the need to foster positive interaction between citizens. It is within the cities where we can focus easily on the nature of human relations. In particular, I have underlined the importance of prioritizing the elimination of barriers of all kinds that make such positive interaction difficult. Without equality of rights, without an inclusive urban environment that favours interaction, without education that promotes equality and fosters values of intercultural coexistence, such interaction will not be facilitated easily. Then, neither common nor shared interests will be stressed, nor prejudices or stereotypes, toxic for inclusion and coexistence, will be broken. We want to tackle the complications and to take advantage of the opportunities that the extension of diversity brings along. To do so, interaction is needed, based on equality and respect and recognition of diversity, based on fundamental democratic values.

Political leadership, strategic planning with a global vision and being absolutely transversal, cooperation and collaboration between different levels of government, creativity, or new forms of governance that require a change of mind set and which relate to the citizens, those are some of the aspects of the “process” from the local level towards Shared Societies which I described. Actually, I described in other words the principles underlying the discourse of Shared Societies by the Club de Madrid. I think that the adequacy and consistency of the Ten Commitments proposed by this project serves as a very useful roadmap for local governments.

I am convinced that the effort of the Club de Madrid to emphasize the relevance of the local level for the construction of Shared Societies will allow the strengthening of the global discourse. I also hope that it will bolster its capacity of influence and reach out to thousands of politicians and leaders in cities around the world in order to help and at the same time remind them of the responsibility of their leadership regarding this issue. Constructing Shared Societies that strengthen the equilibrium between cohesion, diversity and sustainable development of our society is not an option, but the only way towards progress, based on respect for human dignity and human rights, democracy, social cohesion and intercultural coexistence. Neither is it an easy task, nor do magic recipes exist, but the Club de Madrid and its members can and should continue to put into effect this fundamental contribution.



3

The Ten Commitments for Shared Societies at the Local Level

The Ten Commitments were one of the first aspects of the Shared Societies Project to be formulated and have been a central elements of the Project ever since². They set out 10 areas of policy and social life that need to be addressed if a truly Shared Society is to be achieved, and suggested options for action. The intention was not to be prescriptive and leaving individual decision-makers to adopt whatever option suited local conditions.

They have been used continuously in the activities of the Shared Societies Project and Members of the Club de Madrid have referred to them in high level missions to inter-governmental for a and to individual countries in order to present the areas which may need attention

They also provide a check list or framework for identifying the areas where there has been progress and those areas that still need more work. A format for this was later developed - the Shared Societies Audit³.

No country has been totally successful in relation to all the Commitments but at the same time every country has made some progress on some of them. There is no single Commitment which will be sufficient in itself to lead to a Shared Society. Societies need to work on all of them. They are a total package and some are needed to provide balance to others.

The Commitments have been well received and found very useful, so they have not needed adjustment since they were first formulated and disseminated. While they have been used widely in many different contexts, including local government, and the Project was confident the same framework was relevant at all levels, the Project was concerned that they might need some variations in language to speak to politicians, officials and civil society at local government level.

2 The original version of the commitments can be accessed at: <http://www.clubmadrid.org/sspguide>

3 <http://www.clubmadrid.org/en/ssp/publications>

Daniel de Torres was asked to review them and consider if they needed some rewriting so that they would relate more closely to those involved in local government. As Daniel explains in the chapter on “Framing the Shared Societies Materials for a Local Context”, the policy commitments were defined in terms of the real and concrete priorities, pointing out what has to be done and that remains true at all levels of society. He felt that no significant changes were needed apart from adjusting the designation of specific structures and office holders at national level to their equivalent at local level.

This revised set of commitments follow.



COMMITMENT I

Locating responsibility to ensure the promotion of social cohesion clearly within government structures.

Suggested options for action:

- Create a department with a deputy mayor within the administration
- Create a unit within a central government department such as the mayor's office reporting directly to the mayor
- Create an independent body such as a community relations council to act as a link between government and the people and to encourage and facilitate civil society involvement in enhancing community relations.



COMMITMENT II

Create opportunities for minorities and marginalised groups and communities to be consulted about their needs and their perception of the responsiveness of local government and community structures to meet those needs.

Suggested options for action:

- Establish consultative councils on which all identity groups are represented and with the statutory right to be consulted on the impact of the administration's policies.
- Encourage and facilitate identity groups to create representative bodies with which the local government and other identity groups can dialogue to explore and understand issues and concerns that affect those groups.
- Create systems of community meetings that allow community members to express their views and air their grievances
- Create the statutory duty for public bodies to include representatives of smaller identity groups in their boards and other decision-making bodies.



COMMITMENT III

Ensure that social cohesion is considered in devising governance structures, policy formation and policy implementation and establish procedures and mechanisms to ensure this is achieved and to reconcile divergent positions between sectional interests.

Suggested options for action:

- Enact statutory provisions that require all public bodies to take account of the impact of their policies and decisions on social cohesion.
- Create rigorous monitoring and reporting systems to identify policies and activities that will hinder social cohesion and ensure that steps are taken to avoid those effects.
- Establish protocols and procedures to carry out a "social cohesion audit" of proposed policies and initiatives to test their potential for promoting or damaging social cohesion.
- Create a unit within the local government to ensure that proposed policies, where relevant, include measures designed to encourage greater social cohesion.
- Create neutral, independent bodies to reconcile divergent positions and overcome competing interests through a participatory, consultative process.



COMMITMENT IV

Contribute to ensuring the legal framework protects the rights of the individual and prohibits discrimination based on ethnic, religious, gender or cultural difference and guarantee its efficient implementation at local level.

Suggested options for action:

- Create local bodies and tools to guarantee the effective inclusion and implementation of anti-discrimination laws at city level and to provide support and legal advice to citizens who suffer discrimination.
- Design and implement a local plan for equal opportunities and against discrimination, building a strong partnership with local associations and key stakeholders.
- Create a human rights local commission independent from the government to monitor situations of possible human rights abuse.
- Create an anti-discrimination unit to monitor possible sources of discrimination and with authority to redress cases of discrimination.
- Establish a fair employment body to establish standards and procedures to ensure fair treatment in the workplace, including in public services and local police, which should become models for other employment sectors.
- Introduce programmes of affirmative action that include providing those who are discriminated against, as well as members of disadvantaged groups, with the necessary skills to function confidently in work and other social and economic contexts.
- Use awareness campaigns and materials to inform citizens about their rights and obligations, including available resources and mechanisms to redress discrimination and human rights abuses.
- Facilitate identity groups to create institutions and structures which are necessary for the individual to be able to exercise those rights, such as use of their own language and religious practices, which can only be expressed fully in the context of interaction with others who share that identity.



COMMITMENT V

Take steps to deal with economic disadvantages faced by sections of society who are discriminated against, and ensure equal access to opportunities and resources.

Suggested options for action:

- Introduce affirmative action schemes to ensure that individuals from disadvantaged groups, -as a result of discrimination,- develop the capacities and confidence, and are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to initiate business opportunities.
- Create a small business development unit to help individuals and groups to initiate small scale enterprises and support them in the initial stages.
- In coordination with other levels of government, provide small credit schemes to make credit available to those from disadvantaged and marginalised communities to initiate new or improve existing business enterprises.
- In coordination with other levels of government, establish co-operative bodies to enable small scale producers to work together to market their products more effectively while reducing their reliance on external, intermediary buyers.
- Carry out audits of local resources, capacities, opportunities and markets to identify potential economic projects and the obstacles for those from different identity groups to take advantage of them.



COMMITMENT VI

Ensure that physical environments create opportunities for, rather than discourage, social interaction.

Suggested options for action:

- Work with local planners, architects and academics to identify how physical environment impacts on social cohesion and raise awareness about their findings.
- Require from local authorities and planning bodies a review of the existing environment, identifying obstacles to social cohesion and take steps to remove those obstacles or minimise their negative impact.
- Establish a system to audit all future local planning decisions to ensure that they include assessments of the impact of proposed plans on social cohesion and change proposals whose execution would be harmful to Shared Societies.
- Establish housing policies that encourage mixed communities, including equitable policies in respect to obtaining housing.



COMMITMENT VII

Ensure an education system that offers equal opportunity for developing the knowledge, skills, capacities and networks necessary for children to become productive, engaged members of society and that demonstrates a commitment to a Shared Society and educates children to understand and respect others.

Suggested options for action:

- Evaluate educational establishments to assess to what extent they give a message of respect for difference and diversity and to what extent they encourage division and prejudice.
- Where schools do not reflect the range of identities in the community, create local programmes of exchange between schools to create opportunities for young people to meet and learn about each other.
- Introduce, in coordination with all levels of government, a curriculum on pluralism, diversity and mutual understanding to be implemented in all schools as full subject, including assessment. This would include developing an understanding of the benefits of social cohesion as part of a vision for the city or locality and awareness of how individuals' behaviour can promote or damage good community relations.



COMMITMENT VIII

Initiate a process to encourage the creation of a shared vision of society at local level.

Suggested options for action:

- Familiarise citizens with materials that encourage them to think about their society, their place in it and the role they play, and the place of other identity groups. Also invite them to consider how they would want to see their community, municipality and region in the future and the place it offers for different identity groups.
- Promote a project in schools and others institutions for young people to think about their society and the role they play in it and the place of other identity groups and also invite them to reflect on a question such as "What my city means to me". This could use mediums such as art, drama, music, poetry, film, photography and story-telling.
- Implement a city dialogue to exchange views on the nature of the society at present and how it could be changed to satisfy the interests of all sections of society.
- The local administration as a whole and local elected representatives give undertakings to consider all ideas which emerge from exercises to envisage a future shared society and, where appropriate, incorporate them in local legislation and policy. If the local government decides not to so incorporate them, it should also be required to give a clear rationale and explanation of this decision within 3 months.



COMMITMENT IX

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and support local communities in exploring their identity, sharing their experiences with other identity groups and working together with those groups on common concerns.

Suggested options for action:

- Provide resources for the creation of local community organisations and for their activities to promote self awareness within communities and engagement with other communities.
- Create or ensure the creation of networks of local community organisations to engage with each other and encourage wider involvement in inter-community activities.
- Provide resources for the development of local cultural infrastructure and activities which reflect and respect the different cultural backgrounds of members of the community.
- Encourage cultural activities that explore issues of concern about relationships between different identity groups.
- Create opportunities for the expression of the diversity of communities in society including the recognition of special days and specific symbols that are meaningful to those communities.
- Initiate awareness programmes to encourage respect for difference. It should highlight the positive features of pluralism and diversity and the obligations of living in a shared society and building a shared future
- Develop and promote the implementation of awareness programmes on the nature of racism and sectarianism and how they can be combated at an individual and group level throughout all levels of society.

- Establish and support training programmes to train skilled community facilitators to work with local communities in establishing local groups and organisations and in exploring issues of cultural identity and diversity
- Where there is a legacy of bitter conflict within the community or city, consideration should be given to how best to address the feelings and concerns of different sections of society including the contribution that a truth and reconciliation commission might make to build social cohesion.
- Create synergies between programmes in schools and colleges to promote awareness of the value of mutual understanding and respect and activities at the community level, and involve leaders and representatives of local ethnic communities in school programmes.



COMMITMENT X

Take steps to reduce tensions and hostility between communities and ensure members of all communities are protected from abuse, intimidation and violence.

Suggested options for action:

- Promote public awareness of the damage to individuals and the whole society as a result of intercommunity conflict and encourage the community to be vigilant in identifying and challenging situations that might lead to tension.
- Establish mechanisms at local community levels to improve communication among leaders from each community and provide them with the resources and skills to be able to neutralize and resolve critical situations before they escalate.
- Ensure the police service is equipped with the necessary powers to deal with those who promote, exacerbate or manipulate racial or ethnic tensions.
- Ensure officers of the police service are trained to police divided communities sensitively taking account of the customs and values of minority groups, and to recognise the value of working with local community leaders
- Develop early warning systems to monitor inter-community relations and identify where preventive action is required.



4

Examples of Good Practice by Local Administrations in Building Shared Societies

COMMITMENT I

Locating responsibility to ensure the promotion of social cohesion clearly within government structures.

Suggested options for action

Create an independent body such as a community relations council to act as a link between government and the people and to encourage and facilitate civil society involvement in enhancing community relations.

The Mayor's Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Background

- In recent years, Barcelona has tackled one of its most important social transitions: the new social composition of the city due to the migratory fluctuations has permanently changed the city, and has impacted both conceptually and in practical tools and instruments to confront the challenges of a diverse city.
- In order to respond to this challenge, in 2008, the municipality created the position of a special representative to deal with intercultural issues.

Goals

- To co-ordinate immigration policies and intercultural dialogue at the city level.

- To co-ordinate the municipal migration council chaired by the Mayor which is instrumental in developing political consensus and preparing municipal immigration plans.
- To lead the development, adoption and implementation of the local immigration plan. In 2009, Barcelona approved the Municipal Intercultural Plan, following the first one approved in 2002.

Method

- The Commissioner has broad transversal responsibility and relates to all departments of the municipality.
- The Mayor's Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue relates directly to the Mayor, and the creation of the position was a key element to demonstrate the municipality's commitment to respond positively to diversity, migration and intercultural issues in the city.

Impacts

- The position has highlighted the importance of intercultural dialogue and diversity issues from the highest level of the municipality, embracing different areas.
- The Commissioner has ensured that the Barcelona Municipal Intercultural Plan has three principles which reflect the intercultural/Shared Societies approach:
 - > Principle of equality (promoting true equality of the rights, obligations and social opportunities of all our citizens);
 - > Principle of recognition of diversity (to recognize, value and respect diversity) and;
 - > Principle of positive interaction (emphasis must be placed on the common, shared aspects that unite us all as citizens).

Enabling conditions

The political leadership of the Mayor in putting intercultural policy high on the agenda is essential for effective function of the Commissioner.

References

<http://bit.ly/sspLOCAL01>



COMMITMENT II

Create opportunities for minorities and marginalized groups and communities to be consulted about their needs and their perception of the responsiveness of state and community structures to meet those needs.

Suggested Options for action

Encourage and facilitate identity groups to create representative bodies with which the local government and other identity groups can dialogue to explore and understand issues and concerns that affect those groups.

Strengthening and supporting Program to indigenous peoples of Mexico City

Location: Mexico City, Mexico

Background

- Mexico has one of the largest and most diverse indigenous populations in Latin America.
- Although the country had recognized the existence of and contributions made by indigenous peoples in the construction of the country, it was only with the 1992 revision of the Constitution that the nation was deemed pluri-cultural.
- Mexico's indigenous population numbers 12.7 million people representing 13 per cent of the national population, speaking 62 languages between them.
- Official statistics had traditionally defined the indigenous population using criteria based on language, which many have argued largely underestimated this increasingly urban population.
- The majority of the indigenous population is concentrated in the southern and south-central region of Mexico. Almost 80 per cent of those who speak an indigenous language live in eight of Mexico's 31 states; in rank order these are Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Puebla, Yucatán, Guerrero, Hidalgo and Mexico City.
- As the United Nations states⁴, indigenous peoples that migrate to urban areas face particular and often additional challenges, most prominently unemployment, limited access to services and inadequate housing. In addition, indigenous peoples in urban areas may experience discrimination and have difficulties in sustaining their language,

4 Sixth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sixth.html

identity and culture and educating future generations which can result in a loss of indigenous heritage and values.

Goals

- To support, disseminate and preserve the ancient culture of indigenous communities.
- To contribute to the visibility of indigenous people's cultural identity in Mexico City, by supporting projects that help indigenous peoples and their neighbourhoods in the preservation of their social, community and cultural identity.

Method

- The Programme for Strengthening and Supporting Indigenous People of Mexico City (*Programa de Fortalecimiento y Apoyo a Pueblos Originarios de la Ciudad de México*) is run by the Secretary of Rural Development and Equality among Communities of the Mexican Federal District (SEDEREC).
- It recognizes the historical heritage of indigenous population and their claim of the right to preserve their cultural identities, forms of organization and institutions.
- The Secretariat establishes and operates the actions and institutional activities that aim to support, disseminate and preserve their ancient culture.
- The programme provides financial support for projects encouraging and disseminating cultural and historical identity of indigenous people, in their neighbourhoods.
- Along with this programme, the Secretariat has developed numerous programs⁵ as "Equity for the indigenous people, communities and different national origins" (*Equidad para los Pueblos Indígenas, Originarios y Comunidades de Distinto Origen Nacional de la Ciudad de México*).
- This is the outcome of a two-years-long process of mutual understanding and discussions about needs and problems felt by the indigenous communities and the foreign population.

Impacts

- In 2013, the Programme for Strengthening and Supporting Indigenous People of Mexico City supported around 30 projects related to indigenous people and their neighbourhoods. The programme served around 800 people in Mexico City.
- Furthermore, the programme promotes initiative to share and disseminate information on the contribution of indigenous people in Mexico City.

5 Further details at http://www.sedrec.df.gob.mx/?q=programas/Equidad_Pueblos_Indigenas



References

<http://bit.ly/ssplLOCAL002>

Note: This example is also related to Commitment IX.

Commitment IX

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and support local communities in exploring their identity, sharing their experiences with other identity groups and working together with those groups on common concerns.

Suggested Options for action

- Provide resources for the creation of local community organisations and for their activities to promote self awareness within communities and engagement with other communities.
- Create or ensure the creation of networks of local community organisations to engage with each other and encourage wider involvement in inter-community activities.
- Provide resources for the development of local cultural infrastructure and activities which reflect and respect the different cultural backgrounds of members of the community.
- Encourage cultural activities that explore issues of concern about relationships between different identity groups.
- Create opportunities for the expression of the diversity of communities in society including the recognition of special days and specific symbols that are meaningful to those communities.

COMMITMENT III

Ensure that social cohesion is considered in devising governance structures, policy formation and policy implementation and establish procedures and mechanisms to ensure this is achieved and to reconcile divergent positions between sectional interests.

Suggested options for action

Create a unit within the local government to ensure that proposed policies, where relevant, include measures designed to encourage greater social cohesion.

OXLO

Location: Oslo, Norway

Background

- In spite of the fact that Oslo is not an historic recipient of migration it has become recently an important receiving centre for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Today, approximately 600.000 people live in the city, and over 26% of the inhabitants –and 50% of the children– have minority background.
- Considering new population trends, and especially after a racially motivated murder in 2001, the city of Oslo started a municipal initiative, OXLO – Oslo Extra Large.
- This is a planned to be a long-term initiative.

Goals

- To tackle racism and intolerance and promote cultural diversity.
- To raise awareness.
- To prepare the next generations in intercultural values through activities organised by both the municipality and citizen groups.

Method

- The programme was originally focused on youth activities include subsidized kindergartens, school-based activities, immigrant recognition awards and cultural newsletters, among others.
- City-wide measures were taken to increase cultural diversity through active city governance, such as addressing city government recruitment criteria, emphasizing political participation through active citizenship and supporting increased co-operation among agencies, local government and other service providers.
- The establishment in 2005 of the Office of Diversity and Integration (EMI) provides oversight to the OXLO Campaign and supports consultations with minority groups and NGO service providers.



- The City established a Council of Immigrant Organisations (RiO), a consultative body, the 300 members of which are elected by migrant-serving organisations. Since 2004 all municipal agencies, city districts and the city government itself are obligated to consult the city's Council of Immigrant Organisations (RiO) in all matters regarding the development of public services to ensure the needs of users with minority backgrounds are met.
- Non-citizens who have resided legally in Norway for three years have the right to vote in local elections.
- Tools were created such as the "Diversity Mirror", a benchmarking device used by public services to develop a culture and profile for organizations which reflect a diverse society. The Diversity Mirror is used to monitor and improve attitudes and non-written codes of action and plan how to make services better suited for users from minority backgrounds.
- The "OXLO Bulletin" was created that highlights OXLO campaign successes and a city website for "Cultural diversity in the media" that features concerts, exhibitions and festivals organized by artists with minority backgrounds.

Impacts

- A proactive approach to city-wide intercultural competence.
- Consistent municipal efforts to recognize monitor and celebrate diversity.

References

<https://www.oslo.kommune.no/>

Note: This example is also related to Commitment VII.

Commitment VII

Ensure an education system that offers equal opportunity for developing the knowledge, skills, capacities and networks necessary for children to become productive, engaged members of society and that demonstrates a commitment to a Shared Society and educates children to understand and respect others.

Suggested options for action

- Introduce, in coordination with all levels of government, a curriculum on pluralism, diversity and mutual understanding to be implemented in all schools as full subject, including assessment. This would include developing an understanding of the benefits of social cohesion as part of a vision for the city or locality and awareness of how individual's behaviour can promote or damage good community relations.

COMMITMENT IV

Contribute to ensuring the legal framework protects the rights of the individual and prohibits discrimination based on ethnic, religious, gender or cultural difference and guarantee its efficient implementation at local level.

Suggested options for action

Create local bodies and tools to guarantee the effective inclusion and implementation of anti-discrimination laws at city level and to provide support and legal advice to citizens who suffer discrimination.

Charter of Rights and Responsibilities

Location: Montreal, Canada

Background

- In Canada, citizens and non-citizens have their rights protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- In Montreal, a fully bilingual city is one of the largest urban centres of the country and the economic and cultural centre of Quebec.
- The city introduced a Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for local residents in January 1, 2006.

Goals

- To describe the city's common principles, such as human dignity, tolerance, equality and social inclusion, which must be respected and promoted among all citizens.
- To assert that diversity requires trust and a common sense of belonging to the city, which only can be achieved with an active and engaged citizenship, and a sustained effort to foster the inclusion of all communities and individuals regardless their origin.
- To delineate the rights and responsibilities in the main sectors of municipal activity: democracy, economic and social life, cultural life, recreation, physical activities and sports, environment and sustainable development, security and municipal services.

Method

- A municipal task force on democracy was established.
- An extensive public consultation process was undertaken to define the roles and responsibilities of citizens.



- The Charter empowers an independent ombudsman to investigate and take action in cases when the municipal rights contained in the declaration might have been violated.

Impacts

- The Montreal Charter has received broad international attention.
- In 2006, at the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum III held in Vancouver, UNESCO and UN-HABITAT highlighted the merits of the Montréal Charter within the framework of their work on urban policies, inclusion, right to the City and local democracy.
- It is also one of the reference documents for the Global Charter Agenda for Human Rights in the City Project.
- In October 2011, the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Project ranked Montréal 5th out of 40 cities.

Comment

Following the example of some European cities, Montreal's charter was the first one of its kind to be adopted in North America.

References

<http://bit.ly/sspLOCAL005>

COMMITMENT V

Take steps to deal with economic disadvantages faced by sections of society who are discriminated against, and ensure equal access to opportunities and resources.

Suggested options for action

Introduce affirmative action schemes to ensure that individuals from groups disadvantaged groups, as a result of discrimination, develop the capacities and confidence, and are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to initiate business opportunities.

Engaging in Copenhagen

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Background

- In 2010, Copenhagen updated its local planning documents and policies for immigrant integration.
- In the process, the municipality was aware that policies and planning alone were not having much impact on the city's diversity agenda.
- The percentage of Copenhagners with an immigrant background doubled in the previous decade, jumping from 11.5% to 22.2%.
- As an employer, the City of Copenhagen appeared to have been successful in matching the diversity of its workforce to that of the city's population.
- However, a deeper analysis showed a troubling reality. The majority of these public employees were working in low skill jobs such as cleaning.
- Diversity without equity was not the commitment to inclusion that the City was looking for.
- The city challenged itself to ensure that its future work force would reflect the city's diversity across all area and levels of work. In that sense, the new plan intended to be more comprehensive, and include important sectors such as education, employment and housing, but also include the participation of non- municipal actors, such as major companies, educational institutions and cultural organizations.

Goals

- To focus on the idea that citizenship is for everyone (*I'm not a Dane, but I am a Copenhagener*);



- To engage all Copenhaggers, to develop the Diversity Charter, an innovative city's roadmap for engaging business and institutional leaders.
- to strengthen the role of cities, as employers and buyers of goods and services, in being sensitive to the opportunity to model a positive approach to diversity and to provide leadership through good recruitment and diversity management practices in its own offices.
- To emphasizes the diversity advantage in business

Method

- Copenhagen's new Integration Policy (2011-2014) includes an action plan for engaging all sectors and stakeholders.
- A key component of this program is a Diversity Charter and Board that actively invites business and institutional leaders outside the local government to assist the city in its ambitious goal of becoming "the warmest and most welcoming major city in the world." In fact, the **Engage in CPH** plan stated that *"Living in Copenhagen must be easy, and Copenhagen wants to be the most inclusive city in Europe. An actively engaged city is a better city"*.
- The municipality instituted the insertion of mandatory "social clauses" in any municipal contract with suppliers of goods and services that exceed the value of half a million Danish Kroner.
- Signatories to the Diversity Charter 'affirm' the three guiding principles than inform the Copenhagen approach:
 - > Diversity is a strength.
 - > Everyone should have the chance to participate.
 - > Being an involved citizen is everybody's concern.
- INNOGROWTH via Diversity offers innovation consultants to assist companies and organizations in transforming existing diversity within the work place to innovation and efficiency.
- The OPEN ARMS concept provides education workshops for service workers in principles for inclusion, equal treatment and anti-discrimination.
- Diversity in Small and Medium Organizations (SMOs) offers a series of meetings for SMOs on how to convert diversity in to growth and competitive advantages via recruitment.
- Host programme and business mentors matches newly-arrived foreigners with voluntary social hosts for a more welcoming Copenhagen, in cooperation with the

Danish Refugee Council and the Association for Integration of New Danes in the Labour Market.

- The M+ project is a development project analyzing selected companies' potential for growth through diversity and counselling private enterprises on a one-to-one basis.

Impact

- As of October 2011, the local Diversity Charter signatories include CEOs from Microsoft (Denmark), Copenhagen Airports, the Confederation of Danish Industry, Save the Children Denmark, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Enabling Conditions

- The city council is committed to building new partnerships across the city.
- As the country's largest employer, the City of Copenhagen models a positive approach to diversity at home and nationally, providing leadership through good recruitment and diversity management practices in its own offices. As an employer, the municipality has been proactive about recruiting diversity into its organization and supports its workforce with training and development opportunities.

References

<http://www.blanddigibyen.dk/>



COMMITMENT VI

Ensure that physical environments create opportunities for, rather than discourage social interaction.

Suggested options for action

Require from local authorities and planning bodies to review of the existing environment, identifying obstacles to social cohesion and take steps to remove those obstacles or minimize their negative impact.

Local Framework Pact

Location: Reggio Emilia, Italy

Background

- The renewal of the Railway Station area was originally designed as an upper- middle class residential area, covering 3 districts, around 30 streets and 4000 inhabitants. Now, the building firm has gone bankrupt and the area has declined.
- It has also been impacted, like other railway station zone, by an influx of migrants as part of the migration wave experienced by the city during the 2000s.
- 59% of the population of the area are migrants, while the city average is around 18%.
- It has become an enclave excluded from the city dynamics and few possibilities for the integration of newcomers.
- The municipal government in 2007 developed a strategic plan for the Station area.

Goals

- Change the way the area is represented by the press.
- Transmit a positive image of the area.

Method

- The strategic plan was made with the participation of more than 180 people, including NGOs, local administrations, unions and citizens.
- The working team in charge of designing and managing the project was composed by: 5 members of the Department of policy planning for integration, inclusion and cohabiting, 9 external consultants, 70 inhabitants of the area, other public bodies, police headquarters and 5 associations.

- Monitoring of progress has been done by the working team meeting two groups of 10 people each, every 3 months, and in addition a meeting with 88 people working on 6 different topics, surveys and press analysis.
- The strategic plan is divided into various lines of intervention such as urban regeneration, education, public services or the identification of a set of tools to monitor and control the situation of the area.
- The city administration facilitated the "Local Framework Pact for cohabiting, following rules and taking responsibilities", which includes four areas of intervention in the area: role and actions of the security force, urban design, development and redefinition of services' network and social prevention projects and activities.

Impacts

- The press analysis has shown a rate of 48.6% positive articles in the two years after the signing of the pact.
- Citizens' opinion has been moderately positive: 5.3 out of 10 in the evaluation, and 85% of the population agreeing on the need for the project to go on.

References

<http://bit.ly/sspLOCAL006>



COMMITMENT VII

Ensure an education system that offers equal opportunity for developing the knowledge, skills, capacities and networks necessary for children to become productive, engaged members of society and that demonstrates a commitment to a Shared Society and educates children to understand and respect others.

Suggested options for action

Evaluate educational establishments to assess to what extent they give a message of respect for difference and diversity and to what extent they encourage division and prejudice.

Escuelas Abiertas (Open Schools)

Location: Brazil

Background

- In 2000, within the framework of the International Year for a Culture of Peace, the UNESCO Brasilia Office launched the Open Schools (*Escuelas Abiertas*): education and culture for peace programme.
- It was a response to data from a survey carried out by the Social and Human Sciences Sector of the UNESCO Brasilia Office.
- The survey identified young people as being one of the most vulnerable social groups of the country.
- Brazil's youth population, 35 million people, makes up 20% of the total Brazilian population.
- It shows a high school drop-out rate with an average of only seven years of schooling.
- The cycle that begins with low schooling levels leads to under-employment or unemployment.

Goals

- to promoting human development, citizenship and the social inclusion of youngsters and their communities;
- to foster an improvement in the quality of the country's education by increasing opportunities for access to educational, cultural, sports, leisure and income-generating activities;

- to improving the quality of relations and foster interaction among teachers, students and family members;
- to bring the community and its youngsters together in the school spaces;
- to construct spaces for dialogue and living together;
- to offer sports, cultural, arts and leisure activities and initial work training for youngsters;
- to reduce the cycle of violence in the community and in the school environment;
- to broaden the horizons of the community and its young people;
- to strengthen the school so that it can become a cohesive centre and a centre for the diffusion of knowledge;
- to build a culture of peace.

Method

- The Open Schools Programme was created by a team from the Social and Human Sciences Sector of the UNESCO Brasilia Office
- Known as *Abrindo Espaços* in the state of Pernambuco and *Escola da Família* in the state of Sao Paulo, this Open Schools programme provides a range of academic, athletic, cultural and work related activities for young people after school and on weekends.
- This initiative opens public schools on weekends to offer artistic, cultural, leisure and sports activities, as well as initial work training, to young people and their communities.
- It is based on a culture of peace and nonviolence to promote the citizenship of adolescents, youngsters and the school community as a whole.
- Activities are open to the entire community
- The talents that exist in the community are mapped and those with talents are invited to coordinate workshops in the school;

Impacts

- Over the course of the past years, the programme has solidified;
- It is the first UNESCO Brazil action to have become public policy;
- They have developed a methodology as a basis for the Open School Programme;
- Between 2000 and 2006, in partnership with municipal and state education secretariats, around 10 thousand schools have been involved in the project, which has served approximately 10 million people in the first five states where it was implemented – Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia and São Paulo;



- The programme has been implemented in almost all of São Paulo's state education network (titled Family School), reaching 5,306 out of 6,000 schools;
- Evaluations of the Open Schools Programme carried out over the last six years by the UNESCO Brasilia Office and its partners have proved its success in relation to a reduction in the levels of violence registered in schools and their surroundings;
- The data show a reduction in crimes committed against persons (e.g. murder and bodily harm) and against property (e.g. school equipment.);
- There has also been a reduction in disciplinary problems that can be solved within the school environment;
- According to UNESCO, in Pernambuco, schools participating in the Open School programme experienced a 60 percent reduction of violence, as well as reduced rates of sexual aggression, suicide, substance abuse, theft and armed robbery.

Comments

- It is an initiative in which several areas of the UNESCO mandate come together - action for social inclusion that stimulates improvements in schools, cultural participation, increased awareness in regard to STD and AIDS prevention and care for the environment.
- These programs are cost effective as they maximize the use of existing public spaces and are largely staffed by volunteers and older young people who, in exchange for their commitment to the programs, receive tuition waivers at private universities throughout the states.
- One of the main features of the Programme is the simplicity with which it can be replicated in other countries. Argentina was the first country to implement a pilot version of the Programme. In Central America, Honduras and El Salvador have also begun discussing how to implement it.
- The design of the Open Schools Programme favours local management autonomy which can adapt it according to the social capital that exists in the communities and the financial resources available, in order to ensure its sustainability.

References

<http://bit.ly/ssplLOCAL007>

COMMITMENT VIII

Initiate a process to encourage the creation of a shared vision of society at local level.

Suggested options for action

Implement a city dialogue to exchange views on the nature of the society at present and how it could be changed to satisfy the interest of all sections of society.

Lublin for All

Location: Lublin, Poland

Background

- Lublin, capital of Lublin Voivodeship, with 350.000 inhabitants is the largest city in eastern Poland.
- It is the regional centre for education, culture and business, with 5 public universities and other higher education institutions.
- The vast majority of residents are Poles, and there are several small ethnic communities such Ukrainians, Roma and Jews, which used to be large communities before the Second World War.
- There is an increasing influx of migrants and refugees from Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the MENA region.
- There are 100.000 students, some of them coming from abroad, 2000 according to official figures from 2012.
- Current challenges to inter group relations are the lack of precise or relevant statistics regarding migration, insufficient integration programmes and measures, low levels of intercultural awareness among citizens and in public services, a lack of intercultural education or measures preventing prejudices and intolerance, and language barriers

Goals

- To develop an inclusive diversity management system for Lublin.
- To place cultural openness and diversity as central elements in intergroup relations.

Method

- The project "Lublin for All" pursues the introduction of an inclusive diversity governance system with an active contribution by migrant communities, ethnic minority organisations, NGOs and civil society in the formulation, decision- making



process, and implementation of an intercultural strategy using Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities methodology.

- It has been presented at conferences in 10 major Polish cities.
- The program focuses on main lines of action on:
 - > shaping attitudes of tolerance towards cultural diversity and mutual understanding based on citizens' daily interaction, both informal and institutional
 - > the creation and implementation an overall system for diversity management
 - > building up good relationships and cooperation with minority communities
 - > the development of international youth exchange programmes.
- The working group, which consists of representatives of different stakeholders and civil society, has been set up as the main consultative body. The working group will consult and moderate at every stage of the realization of the project.
- Programme initiatives include the creation of a website of the project, Media and social networking campaign to communicate the positives effects of an intercultural society, intercultural training courses for different groups of the society (youth, media, teachers, police, civil servants), and other promotional events (conferences and intercultural festivals).

Note: This example is also related to Commitment II.

Commitment II

Create opportunities for minorities and marginalized groups and communities to be consulted about their needs and their perception of the responsiveness of local government and community structures to meet those needs.

Suggested options for action

Create systems of community meetings that allow community members to express their views and air their grievances.

COMMITMENT IX

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and support local communities in exploring their identity, sharing their experiences with other identity groups and working together with those groups on common concerns.

Suggested options for action

- Create or ensure the creation of networks of local community organizations to engage with each other and encourage wider involvement in inter-community activities.
- Develop and promote the implementation of awareness programmes on the nature of racism and sectarianism and how they can be combated at an individual and group level throughout all levels of society.
- Establish and support training programmes to train skilled community facilitators to work with local communities in establishing local groups and organisations and in exploring issues of cultural identity and diversity.

■ Anti-rumours

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Background

- In many European countries, populist and extremist political parties with racist discourses are rising.
- The economic crisis has added fuel to these attitudes.
- The traditional integration models like multiculturalism and assimilation seem unable to explain diversity in positive and collaborative ways.
- Not only are these parties fostering clear racist attitudes, but also other parties are adopting some of these discourses “against” migrants for electoral reasons.
- Flirting with racist’s messages doesn’t really stop extremist parties growing but encourages and seems to legitimise them, and the consequences are that negative perceptions and hostile attitudes are increasing.
- They have a special impact in the local level, as it is in the city where ‘living together’ really happens.
- Cities are the closest “areas” to the citizen.
- Perceptions are an important element in forming attitudes and many cities have detected how negative stereotypes have been spread through false rumours relating



to migrants, and how these stereotypes and prejudices, based on a lack of knowledge, a misinterpretation of reality or a manipulation of information, degenerate into discrimination and racism.

- In 2010, the city of Barcelona starts to research the false rumours many citizens were spreading as if they were true.
- As a result the municipality decided to develop an antirumour strategy

Goals

- The objective of “Anti-rumours” has been to identify the main existing rumours regarding the migrant population and diversity, and check their veracity with data and factual information.
- To build effective community support for integration policies based on the mutual respect of rights, obligations and cultural diversity.

Method

- An Anti-rumours network was created to include different social actors.
- People are trained to act as anti-rumours agents.
- These volunteers undertake close and respectful dialogues with people that repeat and spread rumours in order to raise awareness about their lack of factual basis.
- A wide range of materials and activities has been design to help volunteers in their efforts.
- The antirumour strategy has grown rapidly building a network of more than 300 associations and people working together to counter those false rumours and to send positive messages about cultural diversity.
- The strategy has set up alliances with several civil society organisations, public institutions, municipal leaders, famous people, civil servants, etc. to include them in the campaigns as anti-rumours agents.

Impacts

- Anti-rumours strategy is an innovative way to tackle discrimination and racist attitudes insofar that it targets the whole body of citizens in the effort of producing a public reasoned reflection on migration and diversity.
- By promoting integration policies and instruments, usually with lack of resources, but in a more creative and collaborative way, due to partnerships with local associations and NGOs, false rumours can be challenged and attitudes can change.

Comments

- The Anti-rumours program, because of its format, is replicable. Today, other cities around the world are starting to build their own projects from Barcelona's example.
- In 2013, a pilot project to 'export' the anti-rumours strategy was developed in four other Spanish cities, confirming the anti-rumours strategy as a good practice (www.antirumores.com).
- In 2014, the anti-rumours project spread in Europe. The C4i-Communication for Integration project, co-funded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, targets prejudices, rumours and stereotypes by using viral information techniques to provide evidence-based answers to common misconceptions. Active participation from citizens as "anti-rumour agents" is a key feature of C4i. The project is based on a partnership network of 11 cities, working together to implement an innovative public policy to promote life – peace, diversity and social cohesion.

References

<http://www.bcnantirumors.cat/>

<http://www.antirumores.com/>

<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/c4i/home>



COMMITMENT X

Take steps to reduce tensions and hostility between communities and ensure members of all communities are protected from abuse, intimidation and violence.

Suggested options for action

Ensure the police service is equipped with the necessary powers to deal with those who promote, exacerbate or manipulate racial or ethnic tensions.

Ensure officers of the police service are trained to police divided communities sensitively taking account of the customs and values of minority groups, and to recognise the value of working with local community leaders.

STEPSS and beyond: Policía y Diversidad

Location: Fuenlabrada, Spain.

Background

- Located just 20 km south of Madrid, Fuenlabrada has a young population of 205,000 that is reflective of the rapid demographic change in the area.
- Over 30.4% of the population is under 25 and over 16% of the population is made up of non-Spanish nationals.
- The largest groups of immigrants come from Morocco, Ecuador and Romania.
- Between 2000 and 2005 the population of newcomers to the region more than tripled. City leaders realized that to create a positive environment for immigrant integration and to reduce discrimination, more needed to be done.
- The Madrid City Council launched a master Plan for Social and Intercultural Co-Existence.
- Members of municipal staff and local police have been involved in the Plan, defining their own goals to deal with diversity.
- Furthermore, in 2005, Fuenlabrada police was involved in a European project called Stepss consisted on improving the relations of police with the immigrant communities and ethnic minorities.
- That project focuses on one of the most repeated police actions that is the recurrent cause of disagreement with the police and local young people: the police stopping and searching young people on the street, apparently at random.

- Stepss encouraged police forces to systematically analyse such actions to know if they are efficient strategies to prevent a crime or, if on the contrary, they are frequently done based on discriminatory prejudices and behaviours.
- As a consequence of such analysis, better procedures are adopted to govern the practice of stopping and searching young people in the street, together with improved training for police with the participation of representatives of immigrants and ethnic minorities. As a result there is higher protection for the citizenship, and improved communication channels between police and citizens.
- After the experience of the project, which ended in November 2008, Fuenlabrada's local police have decided to keep those forms of analysis and procedures they started developing with Stepss, and increase the police work on managing diversity.

Goals

To increase community trust and build relations with diverse communities

Method

- The Fuenlabrada Police have developed a proactive approach that works internally to increase diversity, and externally to build community relations.
- Building on existing initiatives to recruit women, the force now offers free training to minorities and the children of minorities who are interested in joining the Fuenlabrada Police services (and who meet the basic eligibility requirements).
- Internally, the force supports this outreach by offering cultural awareness and diversity training to all its officers.
- The Fuenlabrada Police provide information sessions on understanding Spanish law and legal process to help newcomers appreciate both their rights and obligations.
- To ensure that their approach would be both effective and meaningful, the Fuenlabrada Police also created a community forum convened with representation from rights organizations, religious groups and diverse communities.
- This evolved into a monthly consultative forum that allows the police to check regularly with the community to identify emerging issues and discuss ongoing concerns such as how to standardize community policing procedures to minimize discrimination.
- To increase awareness of these efforts, the police have also made this information available in Romanian, Arabic, English and Spanish, and rolled it into a larger multi-language public information campaign aimed at helping citizens understand their rights.
- Enriching the concept of diversity, Fuenlabrada police forces also provide special attention to people with disabilities (establishing new channels, for instance, to



deaf and blind people to make emergency calls), and special vulnerable groups, as homosexual young people suffering bullying in schools.

Impacts

- Following the Stepss project, there was an important decrease in the number of police stops and searches in the street and, at the same time those that were carried out were better targeted.
- Thanks to the project, Fuenlabrada police has also achieved a notable improvement in relations with the immigrant communities existing in the area.
- Furthermore, all the agents involved in the development of the project have given a positive assessment of its impact.

Comment

In public recognition of the work on Stepss, at the first national meeting of local security chiefs in Toledo, Spain, the Platform for Police Diversity Management gave awards for “Management of the Diverse Society” and Fuenlabrada police received an awarded for recognition of Good Practices in Police Management of the Diverse Society, for the set of measures and actions adopted by the Local Police in Fuenlabrada since 2007.

References

<http://bit.ly/sspLOCAL009>

Note: This example is also related to Commitment II.

Commitment II

Create opportunities for minorities and marginalized groups and communities to be consulted about their needs and their perception of the responsiveness of local government and community structures to meet those needs.

Suggested options for action

Create systems of community meetings that allow community members to express their views and air their grievances.



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