CLUB DE MADRID

The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion

Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment I*

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 Approach

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.

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 Approaches

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 recognitions of special days and specific symbols that are meaningful to those communities.

* *The Ten Commitments for Shared Societies at the Local Level*

Programa de Fortalecimiento y Apoyo a Pueblos Originarios de la Ciudad de México

Country: 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 states[1], 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, identity and culture and educating future generations which can result in a loss of indigenous heritage and values.

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

- Secretariat establishes and operates the actions and institutional activities that aim to support, disseminate and preserve their ancient culture.

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

- 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 programs[2] 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.

Impact

- 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.

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/sspLOCAL002

[2] Further details at http://www.sederec.df.gob.mx/?q=programas/Equidad_Pueblos_Indigenas