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

Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

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 Approach

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.

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

Charter of Rights and Responsabilities

Country: 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.

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 Montreal 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