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The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion
Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment IV

Ensure the legal framework protects the rights of the individual and prohibits discrimination based on ethnic, religious, gender or cutural differences

Suggested Approach:

- Introduce programmes of affirmative action that include the equipping of members of groups, disadvantaged and discriminated against, with the skills necessary to function confidently in work and other social and economic contexts.

Commitment VIII

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

Suggested Approach:

- Introduce citizens to materials that encourage them to think about their society and their place in it and the place of other identity groups. Also invite them to consider how they would want to see society in the future and the place it offers for different identity 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 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.

CEPI – Centres for Participation and Integration of Immigrants

Country: Spain

Background

- Since 2000, the percentage of foreign immigrants in Spain has climbed from 2, 61% in 1999 to 17,01% in January of 2010.
- Madrid has been one of the main destination for immigrants and the local authorise have made a commitment through a series of integration plans to provide programmes and services to facilitate the smooth reception and integration of immigrants into the region.
- A key decision was that service delivery should be organised through the creation of centres which become the focal point where a range of activities can take place.

Goals

- To provide a physical location or “drop in” centre where people can come and meet other people, take part in social and cultural activities and obtain information and advice.
- To encourage the development of local networks that will provide mutual support and undertake activities for the benefit of the community.
- To facilitate the integration of migrants into the local community while at the same time helping them to maintain connection to their community of origin
- To provide opportunities for the host community to meet members of the immigrant community and learn about their culture and way of life.
- Promote awareness and dissemination of different cultures and become a cultural reference point.
- The centres are mainly intended to cater for more established immigrants rather than new arrivals

Method

- The regional authorities identified migrant groups that would benefit from a centre and identified a suitable location. Each CEPI caters mainly for one migrant group, but the activities are open to all - adults and children (including local school parties) and immigrant families and long term residents. Where possible they are located in areas where that group live.
- The authorities provide the premises and core funding but encourage the establishment of a group to manage the daily operation of he centre.
- The size of CEPIs vary but 7 staff would be typical.
- A variety of activities are promoted depending on local needs and interests. The centre also provides a location for a variety of information services, supported by the regional administration and for voluntary sector initiatives.
- Activities include courses, workshops, exhibitions, presentations, lectures, music, film and theatre, cultural activities, sport, language classes, interpretation services, legal advice, assistance with employment, information on services available, counselling and visits to places of interest.
- CEPIs are primarily intended for people who have already been in the country for some time. There are other centres which provide basic services for new arrivals
- Services provided are normally free of charge.

Impact

- In 2007, 186,000 people used CEPI's services and in 2008 more than 218,000.
- 30% of those visiting the centres were of Spanish origin and 70% were from outside Spain.
- Training workshops for employment were the most requested services with the participation of 36,000 people. Of these, 20,000 people were helped personally in their search for employment.

Enabling conditions

- The regional government was committed to establishing the centres. The implementation of CEPI was one of the actions envisaged within the Integration Plan 2006-2008. They endorsed the principles of the Integration Plan 2008-2012

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