

OPENCities

Best Practise Case Studies

Diversity, Integration and Inclusion



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OPENCities Integration and Inclusion Case Study

Contents

1.	URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council	
Title:	A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future.	2
2.	URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council	
Title:	Talk-IT	4
3.	URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council	
Title:	Bilingual Community Safety Advocacy	6
4.	URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council	
Title:	South Belfast Integration Project	8
5.	URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council	
Title:	Inter-cultural Social Mediation Service	10
6.	URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council	
Title:	Peoples of the World Festival	12
7.	URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council	
Title:	Programme on Women, Health and Violence - “Health Agents”	14
8.	URBACT II Partner City: Dublin City Council	
Title:	Migrant Voters Project	16
9.	URBACT II Partner City: Dusseldorf City Council	
Title:	Migrant Association Funding	18
10.	URBACT II Partner City: Dusseldorf City Council	
Title:	“Respect and Courage” – Intercultural Communication	21
11.	URBACT II Partner City: Poznan City Council	
Title:	Project Multicultural – Forum of Poznan’s Foreigners	23
12.	URBACT II Partner City: Sofia Municipality	
Title:	Refugees and public administration	25
13.	URBACT II Partner City: Vienna City Council	
Title:	“Start: Wien” integration Programme	27

1. **URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council**

Title: A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future.

Website:

<http://www.ictu.ie/projects/>

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/migrants/index.asp>

Contact person: Leish Dolan, BCC - DolanL@BelfastCity.gov.uk
Kevin Doherty, ICTU – kevin.doherty@ictuni.org

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief Description: 'A Shared Workplace, A Shared Future' is a programme developed by Belfast City Council in partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions which is designed as a unique and innovative response to the challenges laid down by the movement of people across and into the European Union countries. Given that most of the experience of migrant workers living in Belfast will be shaped by their experience within the workplace, the project aims to build positive relations and to move towards a more inclusive and stable society by addressing the exploitation and vulnerability experienced by many migrant workers in their place of employment. The project assists migrant workers in identifying and asserting their rights, ensuring migrant workers have the same access to employment protections and redress as other workers. The programme provides a comprehensive approach for developing and disseminating new ways of delivering integrated inclusive and representative mechanisms for migrant workers and their families rooted in the principles of equality and social justice. Through the development of strategic partnerships, accredited training, outreach programmes and research it aims to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers.

Objectives:

- Provision of employment advice and support for migrant workers
- Working to develop shared workplace and relationships
- Develop and delivery of accredited training programmes tackling racism and sectarianism
- Increased involvement of trade union in promoting migrant rights

Main Themes: Building shared workplace and relationships, challenging racist and sectarian attitudes and perceptions, promoting shared culture.

Needs/Issues and Problems:

Given the recent significant changes in labour migration there is an increased need to focus on demands for the protection of migrant workers. It is because of the identification of migrants with 'migrant workers' that trade unions have a particular concern and responsibility for addressing these issues directly. Unions are often the first 'welfare agency' that migrant workers come into contact with in new countries and unions are often central in the defence of their social and economic rights in the workplace and at a political level. Women workers are increasingly making up the majority of migrant workers and are often the chief sources of income for families and therefore those most at risk of exploitation in the workplace. Experience shows that in countries where the violation of migrant worker rights occurs, the rights of citizens are also further constrained and under threat. A modern European city cannot ignore entire populations of people and still fulfill its role in serving all the public and making effective policy decisions.

Further to research undertaken by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions aimed at providing advice and guidance to migrant workers, it became clear that there was a need to enhance the rights and representation of migrant workers in the workplace. ICTU research also provided evidence that without adequate representation migrant workers found it difficult to assert their rights in the workplace. The project is also focused on encouraging migrant workers to join trade unions for increased protection in their employment and to build positive relations with other workers which will also impact on attitudes and behaviours beyond the workplace.

The project has also worked through training interventions with trade union activists to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by migrant workers by building the capacity of the trade union movement to make informed decisions that ensure the inclusion and participation of migrant workers.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- A permanent Migrant Workers Support Clinic providing employment rights advice and representation services has been established. Floating clinics provided at locations and events identified by partner organisations for ethnic minority groups.
- Trade union officials accompany and represent migrant workers in their workplace at industrial relations meetings.
- Training for trade union activists, which seeks to create a greater understanding of employment and welfare rights of migrant workers.
- Trade union leadership training for trade union members from a migrant worker background.
- Production of a publication exposing the myths which fuel racism.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reduce exploitation of migrant workers through ensuring access to their statutory employment rights;
- Facilitate good relationships between migrant and indigenous workers by directly addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance;
- Highlight the interdependent relationship between migrant and indigenous workers helping to create more welcoming and diverse workplaces;
- Encourage the participation of migrant workers in the trade union structures;
- Dispel the myths that foster racist attitudes and better equip trade union activists and others to challenge racism wherever they encounter it;
- Make Belfast a more open, tolerant, shared, peaceful, stable, equitable and prosperous city.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: October 2009 –December 2010.
- 2) €86,000
- 3) EU Commission Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Good Relations Unit, Belfast City Council.

Decision Making/Delivery Actors: Project Board, Project Manager, Senior Supplier

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Ensuring that all migrant workers are aware of the service that the project provides.
- Dealing with cases that require representation can take considerable time and resources.
- Difficulties in helping migrant workers take disputes to Employment Tribunal.
- Securing long-term funding to continue this type of support service for migrant workers.

Lessons Learned:

- Seek additional funding to pursue cases through Employment Tribunals.
- Make the training available to more participants.
- Seek funding for a longer duration for the project because there is a core need for such public services.

2. **URBACT II Partner City:** Belfast City Council

Title: Talk-IT Diversity and Equality Programme (Allstate Northern Ireland)

Website: <http://www.allstate.com/about/Northern-Ireland/diversity.aspx>

Contact person: Joy Chambers Allstate NI - jch26@allstate.com

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief Description: Allstate Northern Ireland was established in Belfast in 1998 and provides high quality software development services and business process outsourcing solutions in support of its U.S parent's global operations. Currently, the company employs more than 1500 people in Northern Ireland. Allstate NI plays a strategic role in developing, transforming and maintaining the various technology platforms used within Allstate, to support it in its day to day business, looking after the different systems that you might expect one of the world's largest insurance giants to run. A significant factor in the success of Allstate NI's unprecedented growth in Northern Ireland has been the company's ability to attract, retain and develop a diverse workforce. This case study provides an insight into the tools and techniques which Allstate NI has put in place to support this diverse working environment, which not only meets the needs of migrant workers, but also encourages gender diversity and positive policies to enhance employment opportunities for disabled workers. Allstate NI's Diversity and Equality Programme has successfully integrated diversity into the organisational culture. It is not a singular programme but an ongoing, integrated corporate initiative that enhances the company's ability to attract, motivate and retain a diverse pool of high performing employees necessary for a successful business. Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society.

Objectives:

- Design a “Work-IT” programme which supports migrant workers to acquire the English language skills they need in the workplace
- Successful integration of overseas staff into the organisation
- Augment the cultural life at ANI
- Enhance the ANI & NI workforce by improving the employability skills of those who do not have English as their first language

Main Themes: Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Workplace, Welcoming Corporate Culture.

Needs/Issues and Problems:

ANI recruited a significant number of overseas workers whose first language was not English and who they wanted to integrate successfully into the Allstate work culture and into NI society. Working in a large organisation with 1,500 staff across two different work sites, overseas workers appeared to be finding it difficult to integrate effectively in their work teams and there was a tendency for them to group together in their native language groups during work breaks and social events. This meant that their business communication was not sufficiently developed to enable them to participate in US team selection interviews, thereby limiting their career options. Without the successful integration of these workers ANI was also at risk of losing high value opportunities to other off-shore companies due to the skills shortage within the NI & UK IT sectors.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Allstate NI has developed a comprehensive programme to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into the company and into Northern Ireland society. Allstate NI's initial welcome pack for newly recruited migrant workers includes flight assistance, airport pick up, Allstate NI meet & greet, sourced rental accommodation with 1 month's free rent provision, assistance with setting up a local bank account and a

- 1 day accompanied tour of Belfast providing directions to the office, local shops and amenities, emergency services etc.
- 'Allstate NI Welcome to Northern Ireland' booklet, which reiterates much of this information and provides local maps, details of restaurants, reliable taxi firm numbers etc.
- Allstate NI engaged a local training organisation GEMS NI to support the development and delivery of "Language for Work" classes for all overseas workers

Key Results and Impacts:

- Increased confidence and improved communication skills for new workers feeling more valued and able to contribute more effectively to organisational goals
- Better integration into the corporate and social networks within the company
- Enhanced corporate profile and competence for Allstate NI within Allstate group as a result of commitment to Equality and Diversity
- Improved career prospects and opportunities for participants in the training programmes commensurate with their skills
- Higher levels of representation of migrant workers on internal committees and working groups
- Improved language skills through better grammar and more vocabulary specifically related to business environment

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: 4 times per year since 2005
- 2) €3,000 per programme which is 40 hour programme over 10 weeks
- 3) Allstate NI funding

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Allstate NI

Delivery Actors: GEMS Northern Ireland Programme Development and Training Provider

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The programme needed to be flexible to hold the training at the employer's premises over lunch period to be least disruptive to the workplace. The employer gave the staff one hour and they gave their lunch hour.
- Level testing was used to gauge individual strengths and weaknesses and make sure participants were not out of their depth and could get benefit from the programme. There was a lot of emphasis put on the wishes of the participants regarding times of classes, eating times to ensure full commitment and motivation for the class and avoid drop out.
- The training was tailored to meet the needs of each group and the individual needs including work to match the business need with the individual needs.
- Each group had mixed abilities which created its own challenges and the need for the Tutor to prepare additional material for different participants.
- The participant's actual ability did not always reflect their own perception of their ability.

Lessons Learned:

- Learning has been applied to everyday lives – dealing with personal affairs and promoting relationships at neighbourhood and community level.
- Value to the company from investing in the integration process – leading to increased billable days for staff and enhanced reputation within the Allstate group in terms of performance.

3. **URBACT II Partner City: Belfast City Council**

Title: Bilingual Community Safety Advocacy (Chinese and Polish)

Website:

www.cwa-ni.org

Contact person: Eileen Chan-Hu - Chinese Welfare Association
Maciek Bator – Polish Association for Northern Ireland

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description: This project is a bi-lingual advocate scheme which works towards developing trust and confidence in the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) principally within the Chinese and Polish Communities, but also with wider ethnic minority communities. The advocates facilitate information flows to local Police on any problems or perceived difficulties or criminal activities / behaviour within the communities and also encourage reporting of anti-social behaviour that may be occurring in the areas where various ethnic communities have settled. The channels of communication also help to provide an early insight into any perceived build up of tension in and between the communities. The Polish Advocate will support EU nationals and the Chinese Advocate will work with Non EU nationals of which over 60 countries are represented in UK.

Objectives:

- Develop role of community advocates to support improved linkages between migrant communities and policing and justice systems
- Participate through schools programmes in Citizenship and Safety Education Programme
- Work to develop information materials for ethnic communities to inform them of their role in promoting community safety
- Mapping exercise of minority ethnic communities in relation to Hate-Crime

Main Themes: Community Cohesion - building relationships between communities, Good Relations, Racial Reporting, Support to victims of racial harassment/ incidents

Needs/Issues and Problems:

In 2003/2004 the Police Service of Northern Ireland reported 453 racial incidents, but in 2009 more than 1,000 incidents of racial hate crime were recorded. The importance of the scheme arose from the fact that in particular Chinese and Polish communities in Belfast felt that they were not fully engaged with the police service in relation to the reporting of crime, anti-social behaviour and the providing information on issues associated with community safety. Community representatives believed that crime statistics did not represent the current facts on the ground where many people in ethnic communities did not feel they had the confidence to report anything to the police. This scheme will help to ensure trust is built up within these communities, and give a sense of equality with other communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Two Community Advocates working to enhance relationships between target ethnic communities and police and community safety representatives.
- A dedicated 'Welcome Pack' developed with particular reference to access to police services and community safety.
- Information materials to raise awareness of racism and hate crimes.
- Schools Citizenship and Safety Education Programme.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Project has helped the police deliver on their objectives to ensure equality, promote diversity contribute to bettering relations, between different groups in society and contributed to building trust between communities.

- There is much evidence that delivering public services in consultation and conjunction with the service receivers has a much better outcome for all parties.
- The Project benefits the minority ethnic communities by: preventing and reducing crime effectively and providing responsive local policing in partnership with the community.
- Reducing incidence of Anti Social Behaviour - Improved information flows will also enable the police to target their response in relation to anti – social behaviour as well as hate crimes thus giving these communities vital visible reassurance as well as reducing the level of these incidents in these communities.
- Improved Community Cohesion and increasing trust in PSNI is apparent in Chinese and Polish Communities is apparent within the focus area. A long term aim is to encourage all communities to see the police as their police service and to consider policing as a viable career option. A more diverse and reflective workforce in PSNI will improve service delivery and community confidence.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2010 – March 2011.
- 2) £55000 - 4 days a week x 2 bilingual advocates delivering services to EU and non EU nationals
- 3) Belfast City Council, Police Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Chinese Welfare Association and Polish Association for Northern Ireland
 Partners: Police Service of Northern Ireland, Housing Executive, Community Safety Partnership, Good Relations Unit - Belfast City Council, South Belfast Roundtable, Northern Ireland Policing Board Minority Ethnic Group

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Channels of gaining commitment for innovative inter-agency work.
- Challenges in developing improved channels of communication with key public agencies.
- Development of improved practices in service delivery by statutory agencies.
- Policy-making processes in the absence of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy which will pave commitment from political leadership towards the issue of racism.
- Service delivery in demand from users and from statutory agencies; resulting in the need to expand the Project.

Lessons Learned:

- There is a need for Bilingual Advocacy as a main link to minority ethnic communities and to work in partnership with statutory agencies for effective communication and this is vital to the issues of racism.
- Advocates received training in housing and policing such as critical incidents, conflict management and community safety and how these factors impact communities affected by racial harassment. The Advocates are trained to ensure a flow of communication between their users and the service providers.
- Project helps develops trust, goodwill and confidence for all sectors and this in turn is important in effective service delivery.

4. **URBACT II Partner City:** Belfast City Council

Title: South Belfast Integration Project

Website:

www.southbelfast.org

Contact person: Denise Wright – Race Relations Coordinator denise.wright@sbrtr.org.uk

Location: Belfast – Northern Ireland

Brief description: The South Belfast Integration Project is designed to develop a positive and inclusive response to the changing face of the city of Belfast. It recognizes the range of new migrant communities and individuals who, along with the indigenous communities and established minority ethnic communities, make up the population of South Belfast. The project involves interventions across 3 target groups - Level one – Individual level, Level two - Community Group Level – Community and Level three – Corporate.

Objectives:

- To run a “Belfast Friendship Club” which will provide a safe shared cultural space for a range of **individuals** from diverse backgrounds to meet others, socialise and build strong positive relationships.
- To hold a South Belfast Inclusion Festival which will bring together local communities, minority ethnic **communities** and local businesses to work in partnership to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- To recruit a team of South Belfast volunteers from the **corporate** sector to undertake Habitat for Humanity builds in NI and overseas.
- To introduce and embed both a local and global sense of interdependence to engender a sense of belonging and common purpose.
- To challenge and reduce sectarian and racist attitudes and behaviour in South Belfast at a range of levels, individual, community and corporate.
- To promote volunteering and provide opportunities for those who may feel excluded to participate and engage with wider society and to come into contact with those from other communities.

Main Themes: Building Good Community Relations, Integration, Community Cohesion and Global Perspective

Needs/Issues and Problems:

South Belfast Roundtable, formed in 2004, is a partnership of over 80 community, voluntary, minority ethnic, statutory, political and faith groups who work to promote diversity and tackle racism. The group recognised the need for sustained good relations work within South Belfast in order to build a cohesive community and that this need increases as society becomes more diverse. Racism and the racist harassment of minority ethnic communities became publicly acknowledged as a problem in Northern Ireland in the mid 1990s. There is also a need to challenge and reduce racist attitudes and behaviour through a strategic educational process. The partnership approach helps to deliver on the above and to share good practice within and between organisations in South Belfast. South Belfast Roundtable members identified the need to move beyond merely engaging with other communities to developing meaningful ongoing relationships, between such communities and to begin to set a global context for the change in demographics in order to promote greater respect and understanding and thus improve relationships at local level.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Level one – Individual level - Belfast Friendship Club meets informally one evening each week at Common Grounds Café and, while open to individuals from all communities, aims to have a particular welcome for newcomers.
- Level two - Community Group Level - Annual Inclusion Festival with a global dimension involving minority ethnic communities and local businesses work in

partnership and a range of activities are planned to promote trust and mutual understanding and to develop and or strengthen relationships.

- Level three – Corporate - Individuals from a range of backgrounds working in private sector take part in Habitat for Humanity builds both within Belfast and overseas to alleviate poverty housing. Team building initiatives will be undertaken prior to the trip where participants will explore the theme of good relations and community cohesion.

Key Results and Impacts:

- Reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.
- Helping to enable all communities, both those established and newly arrived, to work, integrate and better understand one another.
- This project offers participants safe forums to address conflict in the context of identity and affiliation alongside issues of belonging, trust, majority and minority relationships and dealing with difference.
- Helps newcomers to discover their rich contribution to civic society, to listen to experiences of being a minority and overcoming racism to make a life in a new land, and to discover customs of dress, food and religious practice.
- The Inclusion Community Festival and its link with Belfast Carnival help to further develop both shared cultural space and shared city space.
- The project provides the opportunity to engage at a range of levels in order to mainstream good relations and can be further built upon within participating groups to build shared organisational space.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: April 2009 – Dec 2010.
- 2) €29,000
- 3) Belfast City Council, Peace III Programme (ERDF)

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: South Belfast Roundtable

Partners: Common Grounds Café Belfast Friendship Club, Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland Community of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (NICRAS), Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland, Centre for Global Education

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Concerns about lack of buy in from individuals and groups, this risk was minimised by using our existing good relationships across groups in South Belfast.
- Difficulty in recruiting from the private sector for the overseas Habitat for Humanity Build due to the required commitment for individuals to fund raise costs of the trip at a time of economic down turn.

Lessons Learned:

- Need for a dedicated project officer to co-ordinate the various integration activities. The project officer provides a continuous link, is known to everyone and is thus able to make introductions, welcome new members, provide signposting to services as necessary and carry out the background organisation needed for events.
- The informal nature of the Belfast Friendship Club helps to welcome newcomers and to make first steps in engagement process.
- Local community is willing to engage when a safe vehicle for engagement is provided. There are many “indigenous to Belfast” attending to get to know those who are new to the city.
- Equality is a key component for integration
- Social contact can facilitate people in being signposted to other services not only by the project officer but by other members who support and take an interest in each other.
- Coordination and making involvement easy is key to groups engaging. Groups were able to identify local needs and hold events that were appropriate to their constituencies. The coordinator was able to facilitate contact between local and minority ethnic groups.

5. URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council

Title: Inter-cultural Social Mediation Service

Website:

http://www.bilbao.net/nuevobilbao/jsp/bilbao/pwegb010.jsp?idioma=c&color=rojo&padre=*VD&tema=950&padresub=952&subtema=10&textarea=952

Contact person: Claudia Emmanuel claudia.emmanuel@ayto.bilbao.net

Location: Bilbao – Spain

Brief description: The service operates free of charge in co-ordination with other organisations and players in performing intercultural social mediation work. It is intended to help achieve adaptation and intercultural coexistence through joint efforts to construct new forms of social relationships in rich, multicultural contexts, pursuing social cohesion and the integration of all citizens on an equal footing. It is based on a broad concept of mediation that goes beyond conflicts to become a methodology for improving human relations and communication. The service acts within and in connection with the municipal services provided by Bilbao City Council. Its application within the network of resources and services provided in the city through social and institutional initiatives is being considered. The target groups include residents of the municipality of Bilbao, including both foreign immigrants and locals. However, the programme potentially reaches out to everyone who lives in the municipality: intercultural coexistence is something that must be constructed by society as a whole, so supporting instruments such as this service are needed by the whole community.

Objectives:

- To promote coexistence within diversity through mediation instruments.
- To encourage dialogue and communication between cultures that live side by side in the municipality.
- To prevent conflicts and deal with any that may arise.

Main Themes: Intercultural Social Mediation, Conflict Resolution

Needs/Issues and Problems:

The growing number of people from immigrant backgrounds who are settling in Bilbao is resulting in an increase in the related socio-cultural challenges: demand for aid in various forms; language, culture and judicial barriers; establishment of relations between the population of local origin and foreign immigrants, between social intervention specialists and users of the service of foreign origins in workplaces, schools, healthcare, etc.; situations of rejection and exclusion, conflicts of coexistence, etc. To tackle these situations and facilitate intercultural coexistence, it was considered fundamental for the Equality, Co-operation and Citizenship Office of Bilbao City Council to develop this intercultural social mediation service, consistent with its strategic lines. The need for intervention of this type was also highlighted in the Diagnosis of Foreign Immigration in Bilbao conducted in June 2006 by the Immigration Section and in diagnostic studies conducted by Biltzen in July 2007 on the use of public spaces in the municipality for sports

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Mediation between cultures: promoting understanding and closeness between individuals and groups from different cultures residing in the municipality.
- Social/intercultural accompaniment: providing information and guidance for foreign immigrants concerning access to resources and the structure of public sector systems.
- Translation and interpretation services: providing interpreters to help communication face-to-face and translations of non official documents.
- Training and advice for professionals and players in society concerning cultural codes and Interculturality.

- Community-based projects and initiatives: organisation of and co-operation with community programmes and projects, promotional activities, co-ordination with associations of foreign immigrants and other organisations linked to immigration in the municipality.
- Assessment of specialist and general resources for dealing with immigrants, and any gaps that may exist.
- Co-operation with the Immigration Section of the Municipal Equality, Co-operation and Citizenship Office in designing, drawing up and implementing plans, programmes, activities and campaigns when requested

Key Results and Impacts:

- Promoting level of coexistence between different communities helping to overcome cultural and language barriers.
- Prevents situations of rejection and exclusion and helps overcome problems of coexistence.
- Integration and promotion of young immigrants (especially when unaccompanied).
- Management of the social use of public spaces, particularly for informal leisure and sports purposes, in coordination with the Gureaisia programme.
- Intervention in priority neighbourhoods with the largest number of immigrant residents.
- N° of mediation interventions: 3 rehabilitation interventions and 34 preventive interventions.
- N° of documents translated and interpreting services provided: 23.
- N° of training and advisory actions: 36.
- N° of persons dealt with by the Service: 126 (55 women and 71 men).

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Jan 2009 - Present
- 2) €71,480
- 3) Bilbao City Council 34.5%, Basque Government 65.50%

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Immigration Section of the Equality, Co-Operation and Citizenship Office of Bilbao City Council

Partners: Biltzen (The Centre for the Coordination of Community Initiatives for Intercultural Mediation and Education), Suspergintza Elkarte. Co-ordination with other offices and sections of the municipal authorities

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Trends in the various areas covered have confirmed that the areas being prioritised in terms of the need for intercultural social mediation in Bilbao are the right ones, but not the only ones.
- Limitations on workload that can be taken on by the two people who staff the Service means that the most significant issues must be prioritised

Lessons Learned:

- This project has resulted in the establishment of an Intercultural Social Mediation Service which has consolidated itself as a municipal benchmark by meeting the needs encountered in the municipality.
- It is now considered as an essential instrument in municipal policies to ensure peaceful coexistence in a context of diversity, resolve intercultural conflicts and, above all, strive to prevent such conflicts from arising.

6. URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council

Title: Peoples of the World Festival

Website:

http://www.bilbao.net/nuevobilbao/jsp/bilbao/pwegb010.jsp?idioma=C&color=rojo&padre=*VD&ema=950&padresub=957&subtema=10&textarea=957
www.gentesdelmundo.org

Contact person: Claudia Emmanuel claudia.emmanuel@ayto.bilbao.net

Location: Bilbao – Spain

Brief description: The Peoples of the World Festival is a social awareness project, intended to promote cultural understanding and interaction between Basque society and groups of immigrants living in Bilbao. It aspires to encourage mutual appreciation, respect and dialogue as well as friendship and professional ties. Creating these meeting spaces helps improve the quality of life of local people and promote the creation of intercultural coexistence.

The Peoples of the World Festival is a social initiative started by immigrants' associations with support from public institutions: Bilbao City Council, the Provincial Government of Bizkaia and the Basque Government. The festival lasts one week and the activities are staged in strategic venues around the City, such as the Municipal District Centres, Municipal Libraries, Bilbao Metro and public open-air venues such as the El Arenal area.

Objectives:

- To favour contact, dialogue and understanding among different people living in Bilbao
- To improve relations and coexistence in diversity
- To capitalise on the contribution made to the city by people from other countries who have decided to move to Bilbao.

Main Themes: Awareness Enhancing Coexistence, Inter-Institutional and Inter-Association Coordination, Festival for all Citizens.

Needs/Issues and Problems:

The influx of people from abroad into the municipal area of Bilbao has generated a process of social transformation. Measures and actions are needed to ensure that this transformation occurs smoothly, respecting coexistence and favouring social cohesion. The project comes about as a result of the need to help people understand that immigration is a positive and necessary structural phenomenon in modern societies. The importance of achieving true integration, viewed as a dynamic process of reciprocal adaptation between the immigrant and host populations is facilitated through joint community programmes. There is a need through community festivals to affirm the idea that integration of immigrants must be accepted with social responsibility, which requires a shared commitment. One of the aspects requiring further work is the development and extension of sensitivities and skills that help people appreciate complex and culturally different situations. If these circumstances are properly handled, the result can enrich the lives of “incomers” and “receivers” alike. By encouraging the dialogue, knowledge and interaction better communication can be achieved and a multicultural coexistence can be developed as a beneficial element.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- One week programme of activities during June period
- Competitions and events related to festival posters and short films on intercultural issues.
- Lectures and round table discussions
- Exhibitions (painting, sculpture, photography)
- Cuisine

Key Results and Impacts:

- Around 35,000 people are estimated to have visited the Festival during the weekend.
- In 2009 70 associations participated directly in the organisation of the festival. Most are immigrants' associations, but others are also involved, including cultural, recreational and leisure-time organisations.

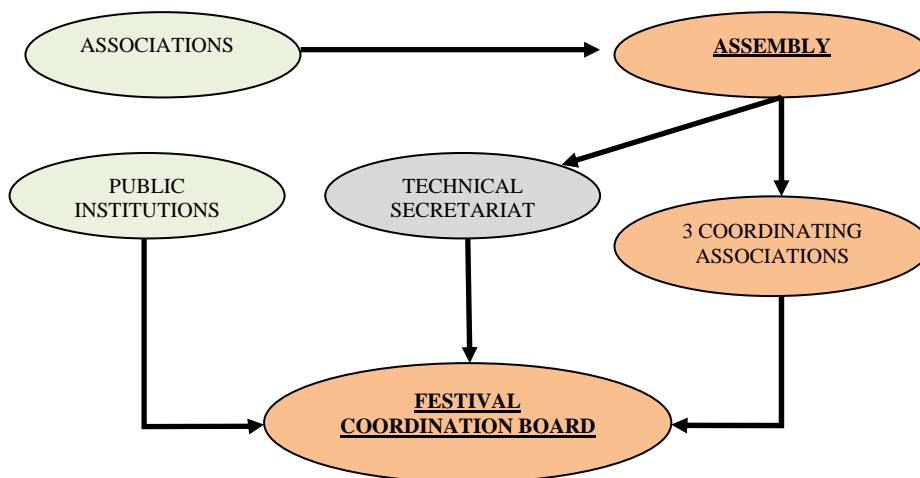
Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Annual Event
- 2) €100,000
- 3) Bilbao City Council €35,500, Provincial Government €35,000, Basque Government €24,000, Private Companies €5,000

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators : Bilbao City Council

Partners:



Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Given the number of players involved in the design and execution of the project one of the greatest difficulties is coordination – and establishment of the right mechanisms to allow such coordination.
- The organisation also includes immigrants' associations from different places which means that the communication must be adapted and suited to the different types of recipients in the organisation. Organisation and design of the Festival itself is an area for intercultural dialogue and meeting and of shared work between associations and public institutions.
- Because this is an awareness-enhancing project, it is difficult to measure to what extent the initial objectives have been met, since the intended results are not visible in the short term.

Lessons Learned:

- Success of the project is undoubtedly the management structure created, where direct participation by immigrants in designing the Festival is crucial, as well as their autonomy in making decisions on programming activities.

7. URBACT II Partner City: Bilbao City Council

Title: Programme on Women, Health and Violence - "Health Agents"

Website: <http://www.bilbao.net/inmigracion/gestion.asp?codges=14&i=en>

Contact person: Claudia Emmanuel claudia.emmanuel@ayto.bilbao.net

Location: Bilbao – Spain

Brief description: The general objective of this awareness programme is to improve the health of women, where it relates to both health and well being. The intention is to foster empowerment by creating spaces for communication and relations between women, preventing gender violence within couples, preventing unwanted pregnancies and providing information and guidelines for the healthy development of sexuality. The programme consists of training a group of young women so that they can act as «health agents» or reference points in their own local areas, groups and social environments, disseminating and multiplying the knowledge acquired in their training and generating forums for debate and meeting points with others to tackle issues concerned with health, violence, sexuality, cultural and sexual identity, maternity and others that may be of interest to young women. Each «health agent» organises and plans meetings to fulfil the general objectives of the programme, encouraging participation in group discussions. The meetings act as small-scale health observatories organised on an informal basis, which are just as valuable as more formal programmes.

Objectives:

- Improving the health of women in the municipality.
- Preventing violence within couples
- Preventing unwanted pregnancies
- Encouraging the empowerment of women
- Providing guidelines for the development of healthy sexuality

Main Themes: Access to Services, Engagement with Vulnerable Groups, Health and Wellbeing

Needs/Issues and Problems:

The need for action in this area was detected following reporting of a specific case (the death of a woman following an abortion) by the Municipal Association for Women's Issues. This case created significant concern and associations in the municipality considered that it was not an isolated case. There was some evidence that there were other cases of women, especially of foreign origin, whose reproductive and sexual health habits constituted a danger to their health or even their physical safety. The need was confirmed by studies and data in the relevant field, and it was decided to take action by setting up an awareness programme in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of violence, in the belief that the two areas were closely related.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- PHASE I - Dissemination of the awareness programme among social organisations.
- PHASE II - Information and training for a group of 35 women to turn them into "health agents". Organisation of an appropriate TRAINING COURSE (identity, sexuality, contraception and prevention of violence)
- PHASE III - This group subsequently organises meetings on the topic of women and health in their areas of influence, and at social organisations in the municipality.
- The Equality, Co-operation and Citizenship Office of the city council helped to co-ordinate meetings.

Key Results and Impacts:

- N° of women interested in taking part in the programme
- N° of women directly involved
- N° of awareness actions implemented
- N° of associations involved
- Areas affected by the programme (work, education, health, etc)
- N° of people reached with awareness actions
- Different groups reached (older women, Muslims, the disabled, young women, etc)
- Different situations detected by participants in this area
- Place of origin and nationality of participants
- Radio commercials, Press articles, Programme presentation press conference
- Publication of a guide for women in 8 languages

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Nov 2008 – April 2010 (two programmes)
- 2) €20,000
- 3) Ministry of Labour and Immigration

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Bilbao City Council - Equality, Co-operation and Citizenship Office

Partners: Ministry of Labour and Immigration

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Problems reconciling family and personal life. Childcare services at workshops must be provided to encourage women to take part.
- The women at whom the project is aimed first and foremost in particularly vulnerable situations, which means that it is often difficult to ensure their participation, and a great deal of co-ordination is required.
- Participation in workshops is influenced by the drawing power of each health agent.
- Broader, more comprehensive training on the relevant issues was requested.

Lessons Learned:

- Would be advisable to consider extending the areas where awareness campaigns are staged, seeking to conduct them in areas where people of local and foreign origin come together. We also wish in the future to have men and women in the same forums so that we can continue working for equality.

8. URBACT II Partner City: Dublin City Council

Title: Migrant Voters Project

Website: www.dublin.ie/integration

Contact Person: Cormac O'Donnell, Office for Integration - cormaco'donnell@dublincity.ie

Location: Dublin - Ireland

Brief description: The Migrant Voters Campaign was led by the Office for Integration Dublin City Council. The main objective of this innovative project was to raise awareness within the immigrant community on their right to vote, the need to register to vote and the how the voting process worked on Election Day in context of local elections 2009. The right of immigrants resident in the city to vote was quite unique in a European context where such a right is not immediately available to new arrivals in many city administrations. With over 15% of city population from a non national background and with a majority immigrant population in several inner city wards in Dublin, the opportunity was there for the immigrant voice to be heard in the future decision making of the city. The initiative was consistent with the City Councils commitment to be a key driver for integration in the city in partnership with migrant networks as part of it's commitment to "Towards Integration a City Framework." Facilitating participation in the political life of the city is a key element in promoting and supporting the integration of ethnic minorities in the life of the city.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness in the immigrant communities in the city on their entitlement to vote in the local city elections in Dublin in 2009
- To encourage people to register to vote for the elections
- To highlight the reasons why people should vote
- To develop stronger relations between the city council and the immigrant community

Main Themes: Leadership and Governance. Networking with immigrant groups, Political inclusion, Social inclusion and Community Development

Needs/Issues and Problems:

Dublin City Development Board led by Dublin City Council produced an integration framework plan for the city "Towards Integration" in May 2008. Research was carried out with a number of migrant focus groups across the city and through this work it was established that the majority of migrants would not know they had an automatic right to vote in the local elections regardless of their status e.g. asylum seeker. The aim of the project was to fill this information deficit and to encourage migrants to participate in the political life of the city.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- A steering committee of 16 migrants from 12 countries was formed to advise and support the development and implementation of the campaign.
- 75 migrants from across the city were trained to deliver voter information workshops in venues of their choice e.g. Russian School, Polish Centre, Islam centre etc. These 75 trainers then set out on a programme of delivering voters education sessions across the city in local community centres, libraries and places of worship used by migrants.
- A registration drive was carried out to get people registered across the city.
- A poster campaign was translated into 25 languages and was available on city council website to download.

Key Results and Impacts:

- City Council has opened its door fully to the migrant communities in the city to be represented at the table where decisions on project operation, policy and practice are agreed. This positive atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect based on principles of equality and social inclusion underpins all the work.

- The vehicle for driving the process was a steering committee of 16 migrants from 12 countries representing community, religious, cultural and business interests. All decisions made were democratic and based on discussion and consultation.
- Collaboration between the city council and the migrant community was very successful.
- Strong relationships were formed between the city and migrant representatives.
- The mobilisation of migrant community leaders around a shared project proved possible and quite easy to establish once trust and mutual respect were established.
- The profile of the work carried out by the Office for Integration was greatly enhanced within the migrant community and within the council.
- The inter-group contact between representatives from the different countries was a major positive feature of the process as the this wasn't intercultural dialogue for the sake of it, this was intercultural intergroup dialogue that was required to deliver a project.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: July 2008 – June 2009
- 2) €45,000
- 3) Dublin City Council

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Integration Department, Dublin City Council

Partners: Forum Polonia...Islamic Foundation of Ireland...Integrating Ireland...Chinese business Assoc.....Ireland India Council.....North West Inner city Partnership...Russian Gazetta.....Czech Reps.....Base Youth Project....New Communities Partnership....SIPTU trade union.....AKIDWA.....Migrants Rights Centre....Immigrant Council of Ireland Vincentian partnership

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Problems reconciling family and personal life the main challenge was at the beginning - nothing like this had been done before. It was important that the approach was correct so that groups felt included and at ease with the Council and its plans.
- Some groups were more experienced at campaigns and projects so it was important that I was sensitive to the needs of the less developed groups.
- It was clear from the outset that the City Council would not be prescriptive around how the project would develop. Migrant groups would lead and influence the campaign in a way that suited each group and was sensitive to their culture.

Lessons Learned:

- Core principle of the project was that this programme was migrant led as these are the people best placed to reach effectively into the target communities.
- The training provided for migrants to deliver information workshops would need to be improved. Some migrants felt that they were not competent enough after the training to do what was expected of them.
- The police force need to be included in the project from the start as they play a critical role in stamping registration forms after the 1st registration deadline has passed.
- Elected members of the City Council should engage with the participants in the programme to acknowledge the immigrant community and demonstrate a commitment to their inclusion within the decision making process of the city.

9. URBACT II Partner City: Dusseldorf City Council

Title: Migrant Association Funding

Website: www.duesseldorf.de/sozialamt.de/integration

Contact Person: Dorothea Radler, Head of Office for Integration - fachstelle.integration@duesseldorf.de

Location: Dusseldorf - Germany

Brief description: The Practice and Policy in the City of Düsseldorf conceives migrant associations as partners in municipal integration (frame) work. This includes a funding scheme for small scale projects to promote integration and civic participation which is accompanied by workshops for migrant associations in order to build a network and qualify participating organisations for their role in integration work.

Objectives:

- Create and react to an organizational setting of OPENCities
- Network creation in order to improve openness among different migrant groups and facilitate cooperation rather than competition
- Improve outreach of integration work
- Capacity building of participating organisations and individuals
- Promote civic and political participation of migrants
- Foster a common concern and understanding of what “integration” implies for all communities

Main Themes: Meeting Migrant Development Needs, City Leadership, Partnerships and Collaboration assessment

Needs/Issues and Problems:

The city of Düsseldorf is convinced that integration policies can only be efficient if migrants themselves are included and play a role in setting integration targets and defining their needs in dialogue with the Office for Integration and with the city commission for integration. Many migrant associations easily identify needs of their own communities, but rely mostly on inexperienced volunteers. Therefore the Office for Integration started in 2007 to set in place parallel workshops to support the capacity building interventions with partner groups to meet the needs of migrant groups. Besides professional experiences many organisation also lacked social capital /network partners to create integrating bridges from their ethnic communities.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- A funding scheme for accredited migrant associations has been set in place since 2007.
- Projects that enhance migrant potential and smooth their access to the labour market, the education system and their efforts to learn the new language.
- Projects that cooperate with multiple partners (welfare agencies, integration courses, city services, other local associations or self-help groups etc)
- Projects that raise awareness among the Düsseldorf population of migrants needs and reduce negative stereotypes and discrimination (creating a more OPENCity)
- Projects that target particularly disadvantaged groups or promote gender equality
- Project that operates on a low threshold and inform migrants about or lead them to regular municipal services.
- Projects that are open to non-members of the associations and/or include the local neighbourhood.
- Projects that increase self-awareness of their target group and enhance their capacity to interact in mainstream society

Key Results and Impacts:

- In 2009 23 migrant organisations were granted funding. Projects submitted for funding were as diverse as a pre-school reading course for parents and the children, Counselling Workshops for women seeking employment, lecture cycle on health prevention issues, a language course for elderly migrant citizens etc.
- Series of projects funded as part of a programme to promote openness towards different communities (mainstream migrants, different migrant communities in relation to

each other and migrants' integration to mainstream Düsseldorf) as essential for successful integration work.

- Migrant associations are given creative freedom to design their own projects based on perceived community needs, the city policy focuses primarily on desired outcomes. Projects need to be conducted either in German language or bilingually increasing their openness towards external partners.
- The Workshops were prepared through a process of dialogue and consultation with migrant associations. The main issues included organizational development (PR-strategies in order to raise interest for the association in different public audiences, clarifying leadership roles in migrant organisations, programme planning and management of projects, fundraising and sponsoring). Additionally the office for integration included networking aspects in the overall workshop curricula. Therefore migrant associations became acquainted with potential partners for their projects.
- Apart from workshops migrant associations were offered individual internal (by the office for integration itself) and external counselling (by experienced trainers with a migration background).

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Annual Grant Programme operating since 2007
- 2) €130,000 per year
- 3) Dusseldorf City Council, Office for Integration

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Office for Integration, Dusseldorf City Council

Partners: 23 migrant associations, network of independent migrant trainers

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- The main issues included organizational development (PR-strategies to raise interest for the association in different public audiences, clarifying leadership roles in migrant organisations, programme planning and management of projects, fundraising/sponsoring).
- Office for Integration included networking aspects in the workshop curricula. Therefore migrant associations became acquainted with potential partners for their projects.
- Apart from workshops migrant associations were offered individual internal (by the office for integration) and external counselling (by trainers with a migration background).
- Not all migrant communities are equally well organized with associations. For example new Polish migrants (a community that consists of 6.400 persons) lack the support of any migrant associations. Due to the imbalance of economic integration and cultural integration many expatriate migrant communities (such as Chinese, Japanese, and American) do not participate in the overall network. Appears that the funding scheme is only attractive for unprivileged migrant groups.
- The activities of migrant associations can only supplement professional integration services of the city but certainly not substitute them. Much effort has been made to improve cooperation among competing groups.
- Many migrant associations have difficulties to translate such an abstract political ideal as "Integration" into practical projects. The workshops helped to clarify what this includes and to activate a creative process.
- Additionally takes time to clarify that the funding scheme does not cover spare time activities (such as excursions to interesting tourist spots in Europe, music classes etc.) but is used exclusively for integration purposes.

Lessons Learned:

- The above described project entails a policy of small scale funding. Some migrant associations are on threshold of moving to more professional delivery of their activities. They require additional sources of funding such as in the cultural area or in the youth promotion and the city council needs to consider their future role in this area.
- An evaluation of this policy was carried out in 2008 by students of the University of Applied Science. The evaluation encouraged the city to continue with this policy. Particular attention should be paid to questions of how to provide suitable rooms for migrant associations without centralising them in the city. The Office for Integration prefers migrant associations to integrate into different neighbourhoods and constitute local contact persons.

10. URBACT II Partner City: Dusseldorf City Council

Title: "Respect and Courage" – Intercultural Communication

Website: www.respekt-und-mut.de

Contact Person:

Volker Neupert (Düsseldorf Appeal/Respect and Courage)-Volker.neupert@jugendring-duesseldorf.de

Location: Dusseldorf - Germany

Brief description: The "Düsseldorf Appeal" is a project run by Düsseldorf's "Jugendring" (youth association), which is being sponsored by Düsseldorf City. It manages the coordination and development of the program. Every year in August, a booklet entitled "Respect and Courage - Düsseldorf's contributions to intercultural communication" is published in Düsseldorf. The programme was initiated in 2001 at a time when numerous far-right acts of violence were taking place. The booklet has been published by the organisers of the „Düsseldorf Appeal“, Over the years, 40 different institutions and organisations, from church organisations and municipal authorities to welfare associations, cultural institutions to migrant associations have become involved in the initiative. Through music, lectures and excursions, as well as informational and educational events, the co-operation partners are advocating a peaceful and respectful cohabitation of cultures in Düsseldorf. At more than 60 events, they bring together people from different backgrounds and show the opportunities and prospects for our ethnically diverse society without concealing the problems. In May 2009, the state capital was awarded the name of "Place of Diversity" by the Federal Government with the work done by "Respect and Courage" specifically mentioned as a reason.

Objectives:

- Respect and Courage was founded with the aim of bringing previously unconnected institutions and organisations with locally existing resources together and utilising them for common and complementary inter-cultural programme activities.
- The programme aims to make a contribution to inter-cultural communication and to represent diversity in Düsseldorf

Main Themes: Prevention of violence/extremism/racism, immigration, integration, democracy education and inter-cultural and –religious dialogue.

Needs/Issues and Problems:

In the beginning, it was difficult to get cooperating partners for "Respect and Courage" on board, because of the somewhat vague themes and objectives. After a while, more municipal institutions and welfare associations began to participate, partly also because the topic of immigration became more important throughout society. This positively influenced the institutional standing of the programme. As a result, the programme managed to get more and more interested organisations on board. Each year the group faces a challenge in generating the interest required to retain the initiative.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- The programme contains, amongst other things, anti-aggression training, exhibitions, tours to memorial places, museum excursions, informational events about right-wing extremism, Islamic fundamentalism and anti-Semitism, intercultural encounters, international evenings, workshops, panel discussions, intercultural neighbourhood tours, historical talks, cabaret, lectures and musical events.

Key Results and Impacts:

- The wide spectrum of cooperation partners and program contributions has proved itself to be very effective, as institutions which at first sight seemed rather unsuited for each other can, from their own particular perspective, often conceptually enrich and complement each other.
- This has an influence on the almost continuously high quality of content and the sometimes experimental, but always consolidating character of the events. Through the neutral worldview, project also helps to reach those who are only indirectly affected by selection of topics.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Annual Programme August - December
- 2) Unknown
- 3) Dusseldorf City Council, Office for Integration

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: Office for Integration, Dusseldorf City Council

Partners : In 2009 partners included Aidshilfe Düsseldorf (Aids support Düsseldorf), Ausländerbeirat (The Advisory Board for Foreigners), AWO Integrationsagentur (AWO Agency for Integration), Binational in Düsseldorf e.V., Caritas Integrationsagentur (Caritas Agency for Integration), Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (German Red Cross), Diakonie-ZIBB, DIFI e.V., Düsseldorf Appell (Düsseldorf Appeal), Düsseldorf Filmkunstkinos (Art Cinemas in Düsseldorf), Eine Welt Forum (One World Forum), evangelisch in Düsseldorf Kirchenkreisverband, Evangelische Stadtakademie, Evangelische Flüchtlingsberatung (Protestant Refugee Advice), Fachstelle für Gewaltprävention (Institute for the Prevention of Violence), Fachstelle Integration, IG Metall/DGB (Industrial Union of Metal Workers/Federation of German Trade Unions), Interkulturelles Migrantinnenzentrum (Intercultural Centre for Female Migrants), Jugendamt - Sozialdienst (Youth Welfare Office - Social Services), Jugendamt - Jugendschutz (Youth Welfare Office - Child Welfare), Junges Schauspielhaus, Katholische Fachstelle für Jugendpastoral und Jugendhilfe (Catholic Institute for Youth Ministry and Welfare), Kriminalpräventiver Rat (Crime Prevention Counselors), Literaturbüro NRW e.V., Mahn- und Gedenkstätte, Mosaik e.V., museum kunst palast, Polizei (Police), Schulverwaltungsamt (school administration department) - RAA, Rheinbahn AG, Volkshaus der Einwanderer aus der Türkei e.V. (association of Turkish immigrants), Raduga e.V., Restaurant Grenzenlos, Stadtteilladen Flöngern/ Diakonie, Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma NRW (association of German Romany people), Volkshochschule (adult education centre) and Zakk

11. URBACT II Partner City: Poznan City Council

Title: Project Multicultural – Forum of Poznan’s Foreigners

Website: www.multicultural.pl

Contact Persons:

Wojciech Bauer, Poznań City Hall - wojciech_bauer@um.poznan.pl

Katarzyna Gondek, Association Cultures Forum – kasia@multicultural.pl

Location: Poznan - Poland

Brief description: Estimates show that about 1% of all Poznan citizens (600 000) are foreigners. The nationalities of immigrants are very diverse, they represent 91 different countries. Poznan has only started in recent times to develop an integration offering. Nevertheless the city of Poznan realizes that integration and inclusion is an extremely important part of openness and a necessary aspect to increase foreigners and residents satisfaction. This is why the City, in cooperation with other public and non public institutions – especially with NGO’s, offers integration events. Several times a year there are festivals of international populations in Poznan, covering Jewish, Russian and Spanish cultures. These events consist of presentations, cuisine demonstrations, lectures about history, culture, exhibitions concerts and theatre performances. Everything is prepared by cultural institutions, NGOs, public institutions and sponsored by the private and public sector including foreign embassies and the city. On the back of this work the NGO Cultural Forum, Poznan City and The British Council started a project named Forum of Poznan’s Foreigners. The project Multicultural is aimed at immigrants from different countries living in Poznan and its main objective is to integrate them with the city and to provide immigrants with help and information.

Objectives:

- To support the integration of migrant communities into the city.
- Foster culture which respects different cultures and diversity.
- Establish mechanisms to promote migrants discussion forum.
- Facilitate intercultural dialog with the residents and creating cooperation network between institutions

Main Themes: Networking and Integration, Advice and Information, Role of NGOs, Enhanced Interaction between Immigrants and Residents

Needs/Issues and Problems:

The biggest problems are small number of foreigners in the city and no external organisations, nor NGO’s in Poznań working in the field of immigrants and migration. So there has historically been a lack of information and no institutional framework in place to address the needs of foreign migrants. Working on the basis that Poznan wants to become a more open and welcoming city, felt it would be important to begin to develop some solutions to address lack of information and resources.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Media campaign and website created by foreign migrants with Poznan residents’ support.
- Integration events, discussions, workshops
- Preparation for an info point for foreigners with legal advice and city information

Key Results and Impacts:

- Improved integration between foreigners and Poznan residents
- Creating atmosphere of tolerance and cultural dialogue
- Creating info point and meeting place
- Developing partnerships and creating institutional network to support openness

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: June 2009 – Dec 2010
- 2) Funding in kind – media liaison, meeting & personal support provided by Poznan City Council. NGO led group secured financial support from British Council estimate €2-3000
- 3) British Council

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: NGO – Association the Cultures Forum

Partners: City of Poznań (Poznań City Hall), British Council Poland:

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Cooperation between institutions
- Foreigners attitude
- Questions about the future of the project and sustaining the results
- External finances

Lessons Learned:

- Will be evaluated at the end of 2010

12. URBACT II Partner City: Sofia City Council

Title: Project of CERMES “Refugees and public administration” supported by the MATRA program of the Embassy of the Netherlands, Anna Krasteva, project leader and CERMES director.

Website: www.cermes.info/

Contact Person: Anna Krasteva

Location: Sofia, Bulgaria.

Brief Description: Publication of a book portraying refugees in Sofia.

Objectives:

- Raising the intercultural competence of representative of public administration and media;
- Linking academics and practitioners dealing with minorities and refugees;
- Prevention of racist and xenophobic attitudes by raising the public sensitivity to the rights of the refugees, as well as of minorities

Main themes: Experience of refugees living in Sofia.

Needs/Issues and Problems: Experience of refugees living in Sofia.

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy: Two workshops and a roundtable meeting to discuss issues and agree content of publication.

Sofia Workshop (29 – 30.11.04)

- High interest – the participants were almost the double of the planned figure (more than 50 instead of 30);
- 2 excellent foreign lecturers – Peter van Krieken from the Ministry of justice of the Netherlands and Susette Schuster (Germany), pre-accession adviser to the Supreme administrative court;
- Intensive exchange of positive experiences and critical analysis of the lacks and weaknesses of the system of refugees integration – the sessions were much more a debate “round table style” than lectures and questions;
- Excellent collaboration with the UNHCR and State Agency for refugees.

Haskovo workshop (10-11.03.05)

- High interest of regional media - journals, radios, TV - and local correspondents of national media;
- Active involvement of representatives of local administration and intellectuals;
- Focus on EU funds;
- Interesting debate between the security and the human rights approaches;
- Excellent collaboration with Red Cross - Haskovo and UNHCR;
- One touching moment – reading of the essay on refugees (awarded as the best essay at the national competition organized every year from UNHCR) from a schoolboy from Haskovo and discussion with the teacher – president of the European club in the town, local promoter of intercultural issues.

Round table Sofia

- Organized in the Red House which allowed the combination of the large and motivated public of this intellectual centre with the people more particularly interested in refugee issues;
- Transformation of the role of refugees from object of policies and analysis to subject of personal discourses. Six refugees took part in the round table – two Palestinians, one Iraqi, one Kurd, one Ethiopian, and one Afghan. The gender equality was perfect – three women, three men;
- Large and diverse audience – journalists, including the editor in chief of “Maraya” – the

magazine of the Arab community published both in Arab and Bulgarian, students, scholars, refugees and immigrants, general public;

- Very open and vivid discussion. The public appreciated very much the possibility to discuss not only on the refugees, but also *with* the refugees;
- The refugees appreciated very much the book “From ethnicity to migration” which was offered to them;
- One touching moment – the essay “The lonely refugee” by Asma Bourgi, Palestinian refugee from Lebanon, read by the author in Arab and by the Iraqi refugee – in Bulgarian

Publication of the book: Krasteva A. (ed) Portraits of refugees. Sofia, 2006.



Key Results and Impacts: Production and dissemination of a seminal publication.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds: 5040 euro

Project Partners/Implementation: Agencies listed above.

Fruitful partnership during the implementation of the project

- Active participation of immigrants in the debates, exchange of good practices. Most of the participants presented their experiences in refugees' integration;
- Large representation of institutions – Ministry of health, Ministry of justice, Ministry of foreign affairs, Ministry of education, Ministry of interior, Ministry of labor and social policy, Minister F. Husmenova' office, Supreme Administrative Court, Sofia city court, National Security Institute, National Agency for Child Protection, Sofia municipality, Transport hospital, Information Centre of the European Delegation; Universities of Sofia, Shoumen, Bourgas, Plovdiv, New Bulgarian University; ICMPD, IMIR;
- Good representation of local institutions and of local representatives of central institutions – Municipality of Haskovo – International department, PR department; regional coordinator of the department “European funds, international programs”, MLSP; Regional employment service; Regional migration unit; Association “Chance and protection”; Regional direction “Social assistance”, Red Cross- Haskovo;
- Participation of refugees organizations – Council for Refugee Women and Association of Ethiopians in Bulgaria;
- NGOs – Bulgarian Helsinki committee, Red Cross, Caritas; Association for integration of refugees and migrants, Nauman foundation;
- Journalists from national and regional media –Bulgarian National radio, RFI, Darik radio, Vesselina radio, Journals - “Capital”, “24 hours”, “Haskovska Maritza”, “Novinar South”, TV “Recording”, “Vsekiden”, etc.

Lessons learned:

- Need of more research on various aspects of refugees and immigrants integration;
- Impossibility of the civil sector for raising all the funds needed for developing intercultural competence of the public administration;
- Willingness of immigrants of raising their voice and of participating in discussions on the forms and directions of integration;
- More satisfactory results when all actors involved in integration – academics, civil servants, NGOs, immigrants and their associations - cooperate closely.

13. URBACT II Partner City: Vienna City Council

Title: Integration Oriented Diversity Policy of the City of Vienna “Start: Wien”

Website: www.startwien.at/ma17.php?en
www.multicultural.plwww.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/index.html
www.wien.gv.at/english/social/immigrant.htm

Contact Person: Karin König, Department Integration and Diversity - karin.koenig@wien.gv.at

Location: Vienna - Austria

Brief description: Vienna’s integration policy follows a clear concept based on transparent rules for immigration and integration. It focuses on a set of tailor-made integration measures for newly arrived immigrants and specific target groups such as women and youngsters. The four pillars of the concept are

- Language learning PLUS (education and labour market orientation measures)
- Education, training and employment
- Promoting a respectful climate of living together in the city
- Measuring and evaluating progress in the field (Vienna Integration and Diversity Monitor)

The roof of the concept which can be displayed as a house is a broad coalition for integration and against racism and xenophobia. The integration measures of the MA 17 aim at providing migrants with a good start in their new hometown and include language courses, information about everyday life (e.g. schools and health system) as well as support in finding work in Austria (e.g. recognition of diplomas). The MA 17 is the department of the Vienna City Administration in charge of initiating measures and projects to improve equality and provide equal opportunities for migrants. The department helps all residents of Vienna to find the best way of living together as good neighbours. In addition to promoting language acquisition and diversity measures, MA 17 supports projects that provide advice, counselling, support and empowerment for migrants, strengthen their participation in society, and promote intercultural sensitivity and competence. A special focus of the department is on maintaining close ties and regular communication with immigrant organisations and associations. ‘Start Wien’ is one of the key integration initiatives which has been in place since October 2008 covering welcome policies, including welcome and information packages as well as mother–tongue orientation meetings focused on the labour market with special offers for immigrant women.

Objectives:

- Vienna’ s integration and diversity policies are geared towards guaranteeing equal rights and chances to everyone regardless of his/her ethnic background and including people as equals into society as well as into all spheres of life such as economic maintenance and social security, education, cultural and political participation, health and housing.
- Policies focus on assisting migrants with integration and taking up residence such as language acquisition measures, education, training and orientation, counselling in specific legal matters such as residence, employment and citizenship

- Support measures to enable migrants to participate in social and political life as well as the labour market and helping associations and initiatives to help themselves
- Work to promote intercultural sensibility and competence through promoting the peaceful coexistence of people from different backgrounds, cooperation between different groups and raising awareness in the fields of migration/integration/diversity

Main Themes: Networking and Integration, Labour Market Measures, Language Programmes

Needs/Issues and Problems:

Issue addressed:

- Difficulties in starting new life after immigrating to Austria, respectively Vienna,
- Lack of or insufficient information and orientation for the start of living in a new country/ city ,
- Legal obligation to fulfil the “Integration Agreement” (obligation to learn German within a certain period of time),
- Problems of access to the labour market, no use of qualifications acquired abroad

Starting situation and context of the practice:

- Numerous services available for newcomers, but no central place to deliver a comprehensive overview and direction for an effective start and quick access to the services in place,
- Heterogenous composition of target groups (age, educational and social background) and therefore individual coaching necessary

Activities of Project/Programme/Policy:

- Welcome policies, including welcome and information packages as well as mother–tongue orientation meetings focused on the labour market with special offers for immigrant women: start-coaching ‘Start Wien’ since October 2008
- Start Coaching – getting a head start in Vienna. Start coaching is a service offered by Municipal Department 17 - Integration and Diversity (MA 17) for all new inhabitants of Vienna who received their first-time permission to stay in Austria on or after 1 October 2008.
- Education booklet. This is a booklet where all the language courses, information events, counselling services, education and further training programmes that immigrants attend are recorded. The education booklet contains vouchers from the City of Vienna for German Integration Courses worth € 300. It also allows immigrants to attend information events on various useful topics.
- Start Wien – Profession. Career counselling for newly arrived immigrants is offered by the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund (waff) which gives information on how to gain access to the labour market in a number of languages. The employees of waff ask for the qualifications that immigrants have, where they worked before and discuss career plans and expectations. This information will be documented for use at the subsequent appointment with the Public Employment Service (AMS).
- Start Wien – Recognition of qualifications. For immigrants with school or university degrees, vocational trainings or work experience in the country of origin this module provides information on how to get qualifications and degrees recognised in Austria. Individual advice and counselling on all relevant issues is delivered at the Recognition and continuing education counselling centre.
- Start Wien – Residence law matters. This module discusses legal matters concerning residence in Austria (e.g. renewing residence permits, types of residence permits, etc.) and provides information on acquiring the Austrian citizenship.
- Start Wien – Living together. This module offers the opportunity to meet someone who is an immigrant him/herself and has lived in Vienna for a long time and to discuss the first experiences in Vienna in the native language and talk about first impressions of the city and the people who live here. It offers information on how to deal with everyday life in Vienna in order to help start life in Vienna with less stress and more self-confidence.
- Start Wien – Health care. This module answers important questions concerning health care such as: What health care services are there in Vienna? How to get insurance?

What is an E-Card? Are there physicians available who speak the language a person feels comfortable with? Which emergency numbers are crucial? Which medical treatments are not covered by the health insurance?

Key Results and Impacts:

- Third-country nationals who settle in Vienna can enjoy strategies aimed at providing migrants with a good start in their new hometown that include language courses as well as support in finding work in Austria.
- Municipal institutions continuously work on the task of improving the accessibility and quality of their services for immigrants. The city's commitment to the diversity approach has become structurally anchored in a public administration that employs more than 60,000 people.
- Benefits are widely spread and migrants can take advantage of the municipal efforts whether they e.g. access public/subsidized housing, undergo medical treatment, get support for cultural activities, enrol in institutions of further education, have their needs reflected in neighbourhood development and urban renewal or want to start a business.

Timescale, Funds and Source of Funds:

- 1) Duration: Ongoing Programme Started in 2008 Open ended commitment
- 2) €640,000 per year for programmes plus costs of staff of integration unit
- 3) Vienna City Council

Project Partners/Implementation:

Initiators: MA 17 Department Vienna City Council

Partners: Municipal Department 35 – Immigration, Citizenship and Registry, Vienna Employment Promotion Fund, Counselling centre for migrants, Public Employment Service Austria (AMS), Vienna Chamber of Labour, Vienna Economic Chamber

Challenges or Difficulties Encountered:

- Co-operation between institutions. Since the individual mother tongue coaching takes place only once or at most 2 times the demand for more and in depth information had to be met in a different form; so Start Coaching – 2nd level was developed and implemented in 2009 which is a group information event moderated by MA 17 for further exchange of information and also feedback to the service that is delivered in phase 1 of the Start coaching.
- On the whole the programme is accepted very well; some 80% of the newly arrived immigrants make use of it.

Lessons Learned:

- A big challenge is to make cooperation with the many institutions work smoothly and efficiently especially with regard to the big stakeholders in the area of labour market and immigration services since these are under a lot of work load and pressure in terms of resources.
- Another big challenge is the legal conditions for immigration that are in the competence of the federal state and can thus hardly be influenced by the province of Vienna.
- The importance of the recognition of qualifications and a professional education once the person arrives in Vienna will most likely only be achieved over a long period of time and under the conditions that the institutional and legal framework and its implementation is being improved and access to procedures facilitated.



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*Eastern energy, Western style



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