

Integrating Cities Toolkit

Engagement of migrant communities in local policy making processes and political participation

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About

The **Integrating Cities toolkits** offer practical, tested guidance and inspiration to help cities to reach European standards in key areas of migrant integration –as set out in the **EUROCITIES Integrating Cities Charter**.

Three Integrating Cities toolkits were developed in 2012 through the work of the transnational project **Making integration work in Europe's cities (MIXITIES)**, funded by the European Integration Fund. They covered:

- Introductory and language courses;
- Anti-discrimination policies; and
- Promoting cultural diversity.

Through the work of the new Integrating Cities project ImpleMentoring “City to City support for migrant integration”, four new toolkits were developed in 2014 and cover the themes of:

- Enhancing public perception on migration and diversity
- Managing diversity and promoting equality in cities' administration and service provision
- Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods
- Engagement of migrant communities in local policy-making processes and political participation

The toolkits are designed primarily for people working in local authorities in Europe's larger cities. But they may also be useful for smaller local administrations in Europe and beyond, and for the partners of local authorities such as NGOs. Whether your authority already works on these integration themes, or is starting out, the Integrating Cities toolkits can help.

How were the toolkits developed?

In each toolkit you will find an **Integrating Cities benchmark**, together with guidance and examples to help users to apply it.

The benchmark is drawn from a Europe-wide review of cities' experience in working on each of our three themes. In the **ImpleMentoring** project city practitioners, together with independent experts, identified key features of local policy, practice and governance which - for each theme - make the difference in enabling cities to reach the Integrating Cities standard.

Testing itself against the benchmark, a city can see how near it is to the standards of the Integrating Cities Charter. It can see what more it needs to do to meet those standards. And it can find inspiration to match the best, most effective practice among the cities of Europe.

A fuller explanation of benchmarks and ImpleMentoring method is provided by the methodology overview leaflet, separately in this folder.

In addition to these toolkits, monitoring of the implementation of the Charter is also done through the annual Integrating Cities survey of signatory cities.

Foreword

Facilitating engagement from migrant communities and removing barriers to participation for migrants is one of the commitments engrained in the EUROCIITIES Integrating Cities Charter. Signed by 33 European cities, the Charter identifies the duties and responsibilities of cities to embrace diversity and provide equal opportunities for all residents.

With Milan and eight other cities (Amsterdam, Athens, Dublin, Genoa, Ghent, Malmo, Oslo and Rotterdam) as well as experts from MigrationWork and EUROCIITIES, we have embarked on a process to identify ways in which we can involve our migrant populations in all aspects of public life. This commitment arises out of the imperative that involving citizens will advance social cohesion and improve quality of life.

Our focus in the past 18 months of the ImpleMentoring project has been to look at our role as local authorities in promoting two separate but interrelated dimensions of migrant participation: civic and political engagement. Although presented as two separate benchmarks, the toolkits on “Engagement of migrant communities in local policy making processes and political participation” and “Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods” can be seen as complimentary endeavours to offer formal and informal paths to promote participation of migrants and facilitate engagement which can elicit a sense of belonging.

We have come to recognize the critical role we can play as cities to encourage migrants to take part in public life and decision-making, even if in some cases these efforts may come in stark contradiction with those of national governments. In Milan we have even sought to address these national barriers by joining forces with the city of Genoa and launching a campaign in favour of more open citizenship laws and local voting rights for migrants.

This benchmark and its counterpart (Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods) have been developed with our involvement and put under scrutiny in our cities. We hope the resulting toolkits, with illustrative examples from cities across Europe, will serve as a source of inspiration and support to public authorities seeking to enhance engagement from migrant communities and remove barriers for their participation.

In Milan, we are on our way to reaching these benchmarks and thus building meaningful paths for participation of all citizens – irrespective of their origin or status. Nevertheless, to fulfill this goal, institutions at all levels need to play their part. Only then will we be able to advance on our objective of creating an inclusive urban citizenship for all.

Caterina Sarfatti,
City of Milan
Vice-chair, EUROCIITIES Working Group Migration & Integration

Engagement of migrant communities in local policy making processes and political participation

Integrating Cities standard

The city has structures in place that encourage and ensure engagement from migrant communities in policy making processes and remove barriers to political participation.

Across the European Union, migrants still face many barriers to political participation. Voting rights are rare or tied to demanding conditions, in particular for third country nationals. Nevertheless, local authorities - complementing the formal processes of representative democracy - can establish participatory structures that enable the voice of this part of the population to be heard and respected in local policy making processes. The EUROCIITIES Integrating Cities Charter calls for cities to “facilitate engagement from migrant communities in policy making processes and remove barriers to participation”.

Evidence from Europe-wide reviews of experience in this field, plus feedback from ImpleMentoring partner cities, confirms that participation and representation can take on many forms. It would be too narrow a focus to concentrate on individual political rights within electoral processes, as there are many other channels to inform policy making. It would also be too limited to concentrate on consultative bodies only. Instead, the following benchmark will embrace the variety of approaches to migrant participation, identifying their rationale and modus operandi, and above all, indicating factors that can enhance their impact.



CITY STRATEGY FOR PARTICIPATION

The city council adopts an explicit city-wide strategy to promote participation by residents in public decision making, irrespective of their nationality and background, in which it commits itself:

- to make this a two way process of communication
- to respond through formal decision making processes to the voice of residents through participatory activity, provided this activity offers equality of access
- to promote democratic variety, giving a voice to informal, time limited or smaller scale participatory actions as well as longer term structures like specific consultative bodies and committees.

Whilst full political rights of migrants should be seen as an ultimate ambition, cities can establish additional structures that can be used by the migrant population to articulate its interests. This can take on many forms, such as granting access to public referenda or setting up specific consultative bodies. Adequate resources must be allocated by the city to maintain and implement the strategy.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- What structures for political and civic participants of the local migrant population have been established?
- Has the structure been changed over time? If so, why?
- How do political parties respond to the participation mechanism? Is there a general sense of support and respect or are they rather reserved towards this potential competition?
- Who leads work within the city to establish and support this? And is this lead at political or management level?
- Do adequate financial and organisational resources support the system?

EXAMPLES

●●● GENOA

In 2013, the mayor's cabinet issued a work plan for the next four years. A clear reference to citizen participation is included, with a strong focus on cultural diversity and migration. A dedicated office has been established in order to support citizen participation. Genoa's 'Ufficio Partecipazione' has been active at sub municipal level, especially in those areas where migrants are more represented.

One of Genoa's sub municipalities issued a call for ideas to select projects with the contribution and participation of citizens. The 'Partecip@' call is open to both citizens with residency papers and simply those living in the relevant city area. For the first time in Genoa, a migrant, without Italian citizenship, can take part in such a call.

●●● LEIPZIG

For many years, Leipzig has pursued projects to promote a positive local democratic culture, including a thorough reflection of public provisions ('Demokratiebilanz') in 2005, a local council resolution for reinforcing efforts towards a 'citizen's municipality' ('Bürgerkommune') and issuing participation guidelines in 2012. In 2012, Leipzig piloted a new initiative to promote citizen participation: 'Leipzig weiter denken' ('Thinking ahead for Leipzig'). The campaign put issues such as municipal finances, mobility, energy consumption and living together across generations up for discussion through workshops, events and surveys. In 2014, a coordination office for citizen participation was established to provide continuous support for citizen participation. In its first year, an emphasis is being put on the city's housing strategy. In parallel to this process, specific measures for the participation of migrants include establishing an immigrant advisory council in 2009 and issuing a specific set of municipal guidelines for the integration of migrants in 2011, followed by a framework programme for their implementation in 2012. The programme was developed in a participatory process, including input from 73 non-governmental associations and social initiatives.



LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The city gives clear political leadership in carrying out its strategy for participation, and makes arrangements with other public service providers to coordinate their responses to views of residents expressed through their participatory activity.

Participation is per se a political issue, and respective provisions need be legitimised by the political leadership. Effective participation will imply consequences for handling public affairs and services, and these consequences will only be accepted if the procedures leading to them have political backing.

A lack of knowledge and information is a barrier to participation. To ensure that migrants make use of their political opportunities, the city has to actively advertise and promote them. As an advocate for migrant rights, it should regularly and positively report on the difference the migrant representation makes.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- Do political and/or administrative representatives actively promote participation of residents irrespective of their nationality?
- What channels do political or administrative representatives use to make the case for participation?
- How does your city administration inform the public about the possibilities to participate?
- How does your city administration communicate the results of a consultation process and its responses to it?
- Who produces the information and in which languages is it provided?

EXAMPLES

●●● OSLO

Oslo's strategy for participation is part of the OXLO ('Oslo Extra Large') policy and was adopted by the city council in May 2013. All municipal districts and agencies are encouraged to increase the representation of minorities in schools and kindergarten boards and other user forums related to municipal services. To achieve this, they cooperate with migrant organisations. The Office for Diversity and Integration is responsible for advice and support.

●●● NANTES

Nantes established a Migrant Advisory Board (Conseil Nantais pur la Citoyenneté des Étrangers) in 2003, followed by a dedicated policy and action plan on the integration of foreigners in 2004. The strategy was renewed in 2010 and incorporates four pillars. It includes a welcome policy for new citizens, including access to entitlements and integration, an urban citizenship and intercultural dialogue programme based on a variety of participatory actions and consultative bodies, measures for preventing and combatting discrimination in public employment and services, and the allocation of resources to follow policy implementation, including training, research and evaluation.

●●● MILAN

Milan established the "Forum Città Mondo" in October, 2011 during the conference "Expo Milan calls the world" in order to give the foreigners living in Milan the possibility to become protagonists promoting their rights. Milan City Council informs and promotes participation through the Forum which has become in November 2013 an Association. This association is composed by 80 foreign associations which cooperates with the Municipal Directorates through a Steering Committee composed by 15 people representing all the continents of the world. Milan City Council provides the information in Italian and the Association translates it in 8 languages (Chinese, Arabic, French, Spanish, English, Bengali, Urdu, Portuguese).

EQUAL ACCESS



The city policy makes clear that if residents' participatory action is to feed into public decision making, access should be fair and transparent so that all residents have an equal chance to make their voices heard, and the activity is visible and known to communities of all backgrounds.

Just like general public elections, the basic principles of democracy must apply to participation exercises and structures. Access should be rights-based with opportunities to enforce this right and structures to guard it.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- Who has the right to participate and who hasn't? What are the preconditions to participation and why have these been established?
- Is access granted for representatives of associations or organisations only or are they open also to individuals?
- How does your city ensure that access is fair and transparent, also with regard to gender, age and disabilities?
- Is there a place where people can claim their right to participate?
- Is access granted to refugees and asylum seekers and are their specific concerns considered?

EXAMPLES

••• OSLO

The Board of Immigrant Organisations in Oslo has existed since 1985. The city government appoints the board's chair, and confirms the elected board.

Membership of the Board of Immigrant Organisations (RiO) is based on a democratic election process, balancing migrant background and gender, where the ten members (five men, five women) are elected by democratically governed migrant organisations representing five global world regions. In addition, there is a youth representative on the board.

Only organisations registered at the municipal Office of Diversity and Integration can nominate candidates, in accordance with the rule that the organisation must be democratic.

The election takes place at a public meeting every four years, where the candidates must present themselves and their agenda.

••• MILAN

The Immigrant Council (Consulta Comunale) has been established in 2004. The Consulta is a political institution: it is the advisory board of the legislative Council and executive Committee. The Consulta is a place for discussion and cooperation with the institutions and the members of the council are democratically elected and the citizens coming from the same country are elected if they represent at least 10% of the voting rights. The Consulta can take part in the discussion and approval of the Municipal and provincial multi-year programme on immigration but they can not vote.



INSTITUTIONAL LINKS AND RESPONSIVENESS

Where the city sets up formal participation structures for specific groups such as committees or consultative bodies, provisions are in place to ensure that the results of their work are fed into the mainstream policy process of relevant public authorities and get a considered and timely response.

Participatory structures will only have impact if a mechanism is in place to ensure that public institutions respond and incorporate the migrant voice in their decision making processes. It is important though to avoid constructing an isolated parallel system that is boxing migrants into a corner of an assumed specific and limited interest instead of granting them access to mainstream institutions and processes.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- On which issues are migrants consulted? Can they set their own agenda or are the issues pre-selected by the local authority?
- Does the local council have to respond to the results of the consultation exercises?
- Is the mechanism for representation fully institutionalised with a long term perspective and a clear mandate or rather a loose and spontaneous exercise?

EXAMPLES

••• NANTES

Nantes Council for Foreigners' Citizenship (CNCE) is strongly linked to the work of the municipal council and works alongside ten city councillors and invited representatives of expert bodies specialised in integration and discrimination. The CNCE is awarded a 'participation mandate' on a given theme, with precise questions from the city council. The citizens' opinion is the end product of a CNCE thematic forum, providing feedback and recommendations, and is given a 'reasoned' response from the city council to demonstrate how it will adapt its actions in line with the points raised by the forum. In its formal response, the city addresses the concerns expressed by the CNCE and provides a summary of the feedback of the relevant departments, validated by the city councillors. The city also individually responds to all the priorities raised by a list of proposals for action with a timeframe that shows when the action will be carried out. www.nantes.fr/files/PDF/Publications/05-AVN/Dialogue-Citoyen/avis-citoyen-CNCE-13.pdf

••• DUBLIN

Dublin Integration Forum's annual work plan develops strategies for engaging with or seeking representation on council and other relevant local committees, as well as building working relationships with a wide variety of statutory agencies and public bodies to ensure the voice of migrants is heard in County Development Boards, partnership boards and local area initiatives and joint policy committees.

Integration forums organise information sessions linking new communities and statutory authorities and agencies as well as training sessions for group representatives towards these bodies. Councils ensure that community officers or social inclusion officers appointed to these forums have direct contact with strategic and corporate council management. The role of the New Communities Partnership underscores the need to engage at local grassroots level to link local authorities and target groups for participation and engagement, and the mutual trust needed for success when local authorities open up for collaboration to deliver participation and representation of distant and marginalised target groups in the city.

APPRECIATING AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SELF-ORGANISATION



As a key step towards participation, the city policy:

- supports the self-organisation of communities of interest, including migrant residents
- encourages such organisations to get involved in public decision making
- helps them to build their capacity to engage effectively with public institutions

The self-organisation of citizens is an important pillar of democracy. Associations are places where collective interests can be identified, formulated and pursued. And if grounded in democratic principles, they promote skills of deliberation, listening and mediation that are important for all areas of public life. As an advocate of a lively democracy, a city should actively support migrant communities in formulating their interest (through democratic associations but also through less formal networks and initiatives) and then actively seek exchange and debate with them.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- How does the city administration work together with migrant associations?
- How does the city support the self-organisation of migrant communities?
- Are there funds or other support for organisational capacity building?
- What is being done to engage intercultural dialogue and exchange between communities?

EXAMPLES

••• OSLO

Oslo supports migrant NGOs with annual grants of about €500,000 per year. Organisations that cooperate on joint projects have priority.

The Office of Diversity and Integration offers courses on how to run and set up organisations, set up democratic management rules, and access funding. The city council secretariat runs courses for members of the Board of Immigrant Organisations (RiO) on the democratic structures and processes of the municipality. All city districts and municipal agencies are encouraged to establish relationships with relevant associations to seek advice on the delivery of their services.

••• HELSINKI

The Helsinki Immigrant NGO forum ('Järjestöfoorumi maahanmuuttajajärjestöille') is organised two to three times per year by employees of Helsinki city council. Each meeting has a different, very concrete topic. The topics vary from immigrant employability to security issues in Helsinki's public spaces, to tailoring sports services to fit the needs of new groups. The main aim of the forum is to create a feedback loop and improve a dialogue between the officials developing services and policies and the migrant users of these services, represented by NGOs. It is used by migrant associations to advise on policies and services, but also for networking across diverse communities.

The forum meeting that was held on the safety of public space had an unexpectedly high turnout. As Finland is one of the safest countries in the world, the organisers were puzzled by the heightened interest. Visible minority representatives stressed that the groups that stand out from the crowd receive much more harassment and abuse. As the result of visible minorities' feedback, new chapters were added to the city's security programme. The issue of public safety of visible minorities is now taken very seriously.

IMPROVING QUALITY THROUGH REFLECTION



The city works with residents to improve activities promoted by its participation strategy at all levels, and to make it more effective, by:

- regular monitoring
- evaluating processes and outcomes
- publicising the results of monitoring and evaluation, and feeding them back into the process

Provisions for effective participation must respond to local circumstances that can change over time. To ensure impact and maintain legitimacy, it is important to be able to adapt to change and improve the provisions. This can best be achieved when a culture of institutional learning is established and promoted.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- What mechanism is in place to check the procedures and impact of participation schemes on a regular basis?
- How are changes to the participation schemes being decided?

EXAMPLES

••• OSLO

The Oslo Board of Immigrant Organisations was established in 1985. In the late 2000s, its mandate was being questioned and reviewed. In 2010, minor changes were introduced to extend its scope of action. In 2012, the status of the board was revised to strengthen its role as an advisory body, extending its scope of action to advise on the provision of municipal services so that the diverse needs of users are better reflected. The board also promotes the representation of minorities on municipal boards and user forums in general. In a guide for equal municipal services developed in early 2014, city districts and municipal agencies are encouraged to invite relevant associations to meetings and workshops, so that they can give advice on equality issues. City districts and municipal agencies are obliged to report annually on diversity and discrimination measures, including on the involvement of customers and local community NGOs in consultative bodies and feedback on service satisfaction.

••• GENOA AND MILAN

Genoa and Milan had experimented with advisory boards for immigrants in the 1990s. In both cities, the experience was rather ambiguous, mainly due to a lack of a clear mandate of these bodies. Local migrant organisations criticised that there was no real impact on political decision making structures.

In 2011, both cities joined the EUROCITIES ImpleMentoring project to get ideas and inspiration for a new approach to promoting political participation. Local migrant organisations and representatives were consulted and action plans produced that built on existing processes and experiences. The schemes now aim at broad and varied opportunity structures for participation that have a clear impact on decision making instead of time consuming but powerless talk shops.

RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPATION



The city authority with its partner agencies recognises the value of participation in public decision making by all communities, by:

- budgeting for adequate staff time to support and facilitate the process of residents' participation, with training for these roles
- using its grant programmes to support residents in creating stable, inclusive activities and structures that can strengthen civic and political participation for the long term

Participation does not come for free. Participants will invest time and engagement, and it is a matter of respect to appreciate this in an adequate form. Participation also has to be learned: formulating positions, negotiating and listening are skills that can be trained, and such training should be provided as a matter of course.

At the same time, there are support activities that can hardly be carried out on a volunteer basis, in particular when budgets are involved, and need professional backing.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- Which resources does the city invest in provisions for participation?
- Are training opportunities for participants in place?
- Is there a secretariat or a similar support structure to support participants?

EXAMPLES

••• OSLO

The Board of Immigrant Organisations is a statutory consultative body financed by the municipality. The members receive remuneration, and a full time secretary is provided by the city to assist the council. Members also receive training through courses on democracy and how the city decision making process functions.

••• DUBLIN

The 'Practical Guide to assisting integration' (published in 2013 and drafted by New Communities Partnership with support from the four councils of the Dublin Region) specifies that the costs of running a consultative forum are modest but "must be adequate to cover basic expenses" and that "the forum should be provided with council premises for its meetings". The local authority officer mandated by Dublin city council provides minimal cost and technical support. These resources should be allocated to prevent barriers to participation and cover travel expenses for participants and costs of forum meetings.

Finally, councils in Dublin appoint direct support staff to work with the forum and establish links with the relevant agencies. In Dublin, the secretarial backup is provided by the implementing partner, 'New Communities Partnership', also responsible for establishing links with community leaders.

COMMITMENT TO FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR ALL RESIDENTS



The city is actively lobbying for granting full local voting rights to their migrant population.

Providing access to political rights is a matter of a state's national legislation. But cities can use their political networks to initiate a discussion at national level about easing access to voting rights.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- Do political and/or administrative representatives of the city actively lobby for extending local voting rights?
- What channels do political or administrative representatives use to make the case for extended political rights?

EXAMPLES

••• ITALY

Various Italian cities joined a national campaign to extend voting rights "Italia, anch' io" (Italy, me too) and "18 anni in Comune" (turning 18 at the City-hall). These 2 campaigns are designed to support national law changes that extend voting rights to migrants living in Italy and make it easier to obtain Italian citizenship. The cities of Genoa and Milan included these campaigns in their ImpleMentoring action plans to improve provisions for the political participation of immigrants. Genoa's roadmap on promotion of migrants' political participation and voting rights was presented to the national minister for integration. Genoa was then invited to represent other Italian cities to meetings and initiatives of the central government authorities on anti-discrimination policies.

••• OSLO

In Norway, migrants have the right to vote and to be elected in local elections after three years of legal residence. In Oslo, some 28% of city council members have migrant backgrounds (17 out of 59). Political parties across the spectrum have welcomed migrants as members and supported their nomination to positions in elected bodies (city government and city council and sub committees, city district councils). National agencies such as the Norwegian Directorate of Diversity and Integration, the local Board of Immigrant Organisations and a range of NGOs support and conduct campaigns to mobilise migrants to use their right to vote.

CONTEXT FACTORS

The following are a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the benchmark. You can refer to these when using the toolkit to explain a particular context in which the city operates in reaching the European standard.

CONTEXT FACTOR	EXAMPLES OF WHAT THIS FACTOR MAY INVOLVE
• National legislation and policy	Division of competences between central and city administrations; rules limiting city's power to provide services to migrants, or ways of delivering them.
• Data availability	Limits on sources of quantitative data - or qualitative information where relevant.
• Migrant population	History of migration including recent changes; make-up of current migrant population (eg. language requirements, diversity, links with previous settlement).
• Labour market and other economic conditions	Rates of unemployment and skills requirements of local employers, opportunities for self-employment.
• City resources	Availability of financial resources for integration actions; changes in budget.
• City's political situation	Political control within city administration; its policies on migration and integration; electoral outlook.
• Civil society in the city	Degree of development of civil society in the city – both migrant-run organisations and others; extent of engagement in municipal decision-making.

About the ImpleMentoring project

ImpleMentoring was a city-to-city support project running from November 2012 to May 2014, introducing to the field of mutual learning between cities the concept of mentoring.

Led by EUROCITIES, the ImpleMentoring project promoted mutual learning between cities in four thematic areas of integration, to enable them to improve their practice. In this way it helped them to get closer to European standards of best practice and - in particular - to realise the principles of EUROCITIES' Integrating Cities Charter. It built on the experience and success of EUROCITIES projects (MIXITIES, DIVE and INTI-Cities) by shifting the focus from peer reviews and standard-setting towards policy implementation guided by standards and evaluation.

ImpleMentoring was realised by a consortium coordinated by EUROCITIES, 15 local authorities from 11 member states and Migration Work CIC as a facilitator and expert leader.

How do the Integrating Cities Toolkits relate to the broader EU context?

ImpleMentoring introduces an innovative learning method. Its strength lies in the interaction between two levels:

- **Specific and local:** It supports partner cities in carrying out concrete changes to local practice - where goals and standards are set by a benchmark based on EU-wide experience, and each city undertaking these actions is mentored through the process of change by a mentor city.

- **General and EU-wide:** By applying its thematic benchmarks in these 'real-life' city actions, ImpleMentoring develops, tests and validates them so they can be delivered to Europe's cities and the European Commission as tools for improving policy and practice EU-wide in future years.

These four toolkits and benchmarks on migrant integration follow the three toolkits already published in the framework of the MIXITIES project in 2012 which are still available on www.integratingcities.eu. They show the ongoing commitment of many public authorities and NGOs to learn from each other, assessing and improving policies for the integration of migrants in Europe.



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