

Arrival Cities Network

1 First I would like, on behalf of the Arrival Cities Network and the city of Amadora to express my gratitude to the European Association for Local Democracy and the Local Authorities involved in the project URGENT for the invitation and the opportunity to learn with you and share our Arrival Cities Project.

2 I also would like to congratulate for the organization of the Seminar and for the theme of the Seminar. The issues of interculturality and intercultural dialogue are not new in our **diverse world** but the recent dramatic migration situation has shown the urgent need for new solutions new perspectives for the old, the present and the coming challenges.

In fact, I would say that today as back in the Seventies the Dag Foundation¹ said in a report on development and international cooperation ²and in 2015 OECD report repeated a "shift is urgently needed". I would say "A Restart is urgently needed".

So I hope that the results of the Urban regeneration Project can contribute to rethink diversity, intercultural dialogue and tackle stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination.

Considering the thematic³ of the Conference and because it is about to a new beginning a new look on immigration and intercultural dialogue, before presenting the headlines of the Arrival Cities project, I would like to briefly share with you a critical perspective about the concept and practice of the interculturality.

3 As the term has been increasingly used in speeches and also in practices, in different contexts and with diverse socio-political interests, there are some authors⁴ that have been pointed out two main perspectives about interculturality: The functional perspective and the critical one.

The functional perspective, is based on the "(...) recognition of cultural diversity and difference, aiming to include the diversity within the established social structure.

From this perspective - which seeks to promote dialogue, coexistence and tolerance - interculturality is "functional" to the existing system, does not touch the causes of social and cultural asymmetry and inequality, nor does it "question the rules of the game" (...)"

According to these authors "In this sense, recognition and respect for cultural diversity become a new strategy of domination, which aims not to create more equitable and egalitarian societies, but to control ethnic conflict and the maintenance of established social model (...)"⁵

The Critical perspective Which Tubino proposes as "... an ethical-political project ... it is still to be built, it is a strategy that implies both changes in social relations and at the level of Structures and institutions of power. In this sense, "(...) interculturality is understood as a tool, as a process and project that is built from the people, "from bellow"- It requires the transformation of structures, institutions and social relations, and the construction of conditions of being, thinking,

knowing, learning, feeling and living different. (...) It is not simply to recognize, tolerate or incorporate the different within the established structures. On the contrary, (...); Is to re-conceptualize and re-found social, epistemic and existential structures (...). "

4 The "functional interculturality" "(...) can be understood as part of an institutional strategy that seeks to promote dialogue, tolerance, coexistence, and inclusion without necessarily addressing the causes of inequality; it makes diversity 'functional' to the system (Tubino 2005).

5 On the contrary the 'critical interculturality', entail a profound questioning of the established system and seeks major transformation in social, political, epistemic, and existential terms. That is, a new ordering of structures, institutions, and relations (Walsh, 2002, 2009)

6 - ABOUT THE ARRIVAL CITIES PROJECT

7 - WHAT IS ARRIVAL CITIES PROJECT?

Is a two year transnational project (2016 –2018) of exchange of experience and mutual learning between 10 cities focused on the themes of migration and integration and supported through the URBACT programme with funding from the European Commission.

8 - URBACT

Is an instrument of the Cohesion Policy, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

9 - WHY THE ARRIVAL CITIES? TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES CITIES ARE FACING

The last decade has seen a significant change in the nature and pattern of migration flows within the EU. As a result one can observe a rapid change in the population structure and interactions between individuals and social groups. Local authorities need to deal with how to manage this diversity and find the intersection between various areas in relation to the growing migrant population.

In particular, the partners of the project have identified the main concerns they are facing, such as:

- Strong concentration of migrants in certain communities/areas.
- Capacity of local reception and integration infrastructure.
- Increased pressure on local markets (housing, labour) and services (education, health, security).
- Co-ordination both within and across different levels of government.
- Taking public opinion on board.
- Building community cohesion and fighting xenophobia.
- Large numbers of unaccompanied minors.
- Large differences in the skills and qualifications of migrants.
- Ongoing issue of discrimination against settled and new migrants.
- Radicalization

10 - WHAT WILL ARRIVAL CITIES DO?

The aim will be to support the partner cities in reviewing their current practice and developing local action plans that take on board the lessons emerging from the transnational exchange programme.

11/12 - WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

- Amadora (PT) • Dresden (DE) • Messina (IT) • Oldenburg (DE) • Patras (GR) • Riga (LV)
- Thessaloniki (GR) • Val-de-Marne (FR) • Vantaa (FI) • Roquetas de Mar (ES)

13 - HOW? At the local level each city has set up an URBACT Local Group, that integrates local, regional and national organizations (public and private) and local people, Working Together to prepare or revise the respective Local Action Plan.

14 - HOW? At transnational level⁶ the European partners and their URBACT Local Groups have the opportunity to learn and share experiences and knowledge through thematic transnational workshops and **(15) online conferences** that will bring together local actors from different sectors aiming to share good practice that address one or more of the several challenges that cities face.

The partners have agreed about the **major themes they want to address in the transnational programme:**

1. Improving co-ordination of migrant support services⁷
2. Economic integration for new and settled migrants⁸
3. Developing community cohesion⁹

During our first workshop, focused on this last theme, “**Developing community cohesion**” the partners shared what they have been done in their cities. Some examples from three partner cities **Oldenburg, Dresden, Riga** and also from **Amadora**.

16/17 - The city of Oldenburg, has about 35,500 inhabitants with migration background (21,5 %) and approx. 2700 asylum seekers.

⁷ · Influencing the inclusion of migrant needs in all areas of city council policy and service delivery
· Empowering migrant communities to have a stronger voice/play a more active role in developing policy and delivering services.

⁸ · Preparing new arrivals through education and training.

· Engaging employers in design and delivery of employment support programmes.

⁹ · Challenging negative perceptions of new arrivals.

· Developing community cohesion through intercultural activities (including sports and cultural activities).

· Promoting rights and responsibilities.

Oldenburg presented an example of how developing community cohesion through theater. The city has developed an action called „**My story, your story, our story, exodus, exclusion, Shoah**“. The project goes on the assumption that some arabic youths due to a variety of influences such as school, parental home and because of the Middle East Conflict come into contact with anti-Semitic ideas and which they assume frequently.

During the work the participants could improve their power of judgement, the ability to reveal and reflect their own prejudices.

To summarize, **the target people are the young and the aim of the project** is to contribute to intercultural dialogue and to the promotion of diversity as tool for social cohesion, cooperation and inclusion, supporting artistic exchanges and cultural creativity, also through community mobilization and participation, to strengthen citizenship and rights. It aims also to fight stereotypes on migrants in public opinion; to promote dissemination of theatre culture and art as working tools to foster intercultural dialogue.

18 -The City of Dresden is a medium sized city in the East of Germany in the region of Saxony with a population of 549 487 inhabitants. As of the 31st of December 2015, there were 53 999 people with a migration background living in Dresden, corresponding to approximately 9, 83 % of the city's population¹⁰.

Since January 2015, the federal government allocated around 6500 people from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Kosovo. Not surprisingly, the refugee crisis revealed tensions within the local population. The refugee crisis has divided Dresden's society into those that were willing to help and those that were not willing to accept what was happening. So, when tensions between anti-refugee groups and refugee supports became very high in autumn 2015, a general citizens' dialogue has been set up. The initiative "**citizens'dialogue**" was already part of Dresden's general democratic system but since 2015 include the refugees and immigrant issues.

The project Target group is the Local citizens of the City of Dresden and the initiative aims to:

Provide a platform for exchange and getting to know each other

Anticipate and de-escalate the tensions between local society and refugee community

Increase the level of information about actual numbers and circumstances of refugees

19 - The project is implemented by Two Formats

Holy Cross Church Dialogues

Central large - scale events with about two hours long and involving up to 700 participants. These events include Impulse speeches, on-stage discussions, Q&A sessions

¹⁰ 6.16 % of all Dresden citizens are foreigners; some just stay for a limited period of time while others choose to make the Saxon capital their new home. Most of these migrants originate from the Russian Federation, China, Poland, Vietnam and Ukraine and to a lesser extent from Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey, and India.

City Ward Dialogues – decentral city ward activities with about 3 hours long involving small focused groups about 30...40 people.

20 – Riga Promoting anti discrimination and equality principles According to the most recent official data available there were about 88 500 foreigners living in Latvia at the beginning of 2016. Statistical information also shows that the number of immigrants in Latvia is growing each year. The results of the opinion polls conducted during the last years show that the number of the inhabitants with the negative attitude towards existing and potential immigrants is growing. In order to inform the inhabitants of Latvia about the benefits of diversity and tackle the issue of non-discrimination, two projects were implemented within the years 2013-2015: **“Different people. Different experience. One Latvia” I and II**. The aim of both projects was identification of innovative approaches and dissemination of good practice to promote anti-discrimination and equality principles in Latvia.

Campaign I

The campaign activities included: outdoor advertisement campaign; publications on national, regional and internet media; TV broadcasts; thematic days; creative and interactive events in schools; Ambassadors of Good Will and Diversity award.

Campaign II

The campaign activities included the production of 7 video stories on 6 grounds of discrimination by giving a voice to the representatives of discriminated groups. Video stories were broadcasted in social media, internet media, televisions, cinemas and had initiated intensive public discussions.

21/22/23/24/25 – Amadora “Do not feed the rumor! campaign

The city of has one of the largest migrant populations in Portugal. Around 31,000 people born outside Portugal live in Amadora, making up 18% of the population. About 10% of the population has a different nationality and 14.4% of children in Amadora schools also have a different nationality (of which 72% are African). The main migrant populations are from: African countries and Brazil.

The perception about the existing rumors upon immigrants and the City of Amadora was confirmed by a survey conducted in the municipality. The survey allowed the identification of the main spread rumors and we came to realize that they are not different from the rumors upon immigrants across the other partner cities: Immigrants do not want or like to work; Immigrants live off of grants and other support from the state; Immigrants are linked to crime; The foreign children only bring problems to the schools; Immigrants steal the work of the Portuguese people

Drawing on the mapping of the “rumours” (i.e. stereotypes, social representations) the Municipality, within the C4I (Communication for Integration – Networks for diversity, lead by the Council of Europe and 11 European cities) developed a communication strategy, aiming to **fight against misconceptions, prejudices, rumors and stereotypes about immigrants and the city of Amadora**. The campaign It was built upon two pillars: measures directed to the population living and/or working in the City (local mapping, training anti-rumours agents and performing workshops with the Social Network of Amadora); measures of broader scope, so intended for residents in the city and outside population (creation of an image campaign, graphic materials, website, facebook, videos, contests, such as “Give wings to the Interculturality” and “Cultural Diversity” within the Comics International Festival of Amadora, exhibitions, theatre, workshops, two “Solidarity Walks” and a run called “Aqueduct Run - for Diversity”).

26 - HOW GET INVOLVED?

Webpage <http://urbact.eu/arrival-cities>

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Blog: <https://arrivalcities.wordpress.com> / Twitter: @arrivalcities /
Facebook: @arrivalcities / Newsletters: ARRIVAL CITIES will also produce regular newsletters that can be subscribed at the project webpage and be updated about the online events.

28 – THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION