COMMUNICATION FOR INTEGRATION AND DIVERSITY

How to Do Communication and Dialogue Campaigns

Based on the experience of seven European cities

SPARDA

SPARDA was launched and implemented by the **Council of Europe** with the support of the **European Commission**. In line with European Agenda for Integration (2011), SPARDA responds to the priority of **"more action at local level"** and its overall goal is to foster **successful integration of migrants** through local communication strategies. Seven partner cities were selected as pilot locations to implement communication campaigns: Coimbra/Portugal, Had-Dingli/Malta, Limassol/Cyprus, Patras/Greece, Reggio Emilia/Italy, Institut des Médias/ISCPA in Lyon/France, and the Consortium of PACTEM Nord in Valencia/Spain. The project began in January 2011 and will terminate in **June 2012**.

AT A GLANCE

The Council of Europe considers intercultural integration to be an essential element of the modernisation agenda for local governments. Intercultural integration is based on the notion of diversity advantage - an understanding of the benefits of a more diverse and integrated workforce and more responsive and flexible service delivery in combating social exclusion, building strong communities and fostering innovation and sustainable development.

With international migration likely to increase in scale and complexity over the next decades, local governments are expected to play a more active role in addressing the challenges of diversity and integration: Strengthening intercultural dialogue and cultural competence, building inclusive neighbourhoods, fostering participation of migrants in the community life, changing the discourse, attitudes and behaviour of public authorities to enable intercultural integration at the local level. The increased focus on local partnerships and community participation in the integration process highlight the importance of consultation, engagement and responsiveness.

WHY PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS MATTER

There are many different factors that come together to influence the policies of integration of migrants in the host society. Availability of jobs and services, knowledge of the host country language(s) and culture all have an impact on migrants' ability to fit and function in the local community. But what the public thinks about diversity and migration matters just as much, if not more, in determining integration policies and their outcomes. It is clearly more difficult to integrate in a society that does not accept the presence of, or is hostile towards, foreigners; conversely, integration becomes easier if the receiving society is more tolerant.

1 What the public thinks impacts integration

Collected evidence from the Intercultural Cities network[1] suggests that, beside the positive actions at institutional level, work on public perceptions is one of the most important objectives to ensure the long-lasting effect of integration actions. The roll out of integration strategies at the local level often meets community resistance or low engagement of different parts of the community when implementing different integration initiatives. In many cases, a climate of fear or uncertainty surrounds the issues of diversity and migration, which seems to create considerable barriers to integration.

2 There is a misalignment of perceptions against known realities

Several studies confirm that people in host communities have false ideas about the scale and nature of migration. Perceptions survey conducted by IPSOS (2011) in 7 European cities found that respondents were inclined to estimate that migration was increasing over the last years, although national statistics show that migration remained stable or even decreased in some cases. Overestimation of costs and ignorance of benefits of migration contribute to the confusion and influence perceptions. Lack of proper understanding of the issues of diversity, migration and integration, lack of credible and balanced information generate questions about the role of diversity within society. These questions, if left unanswered, result in misinformation and misperceptions and ultimately undermine integration efforts and community cohesion.

3 Public perceptions can change

As demonstrated by the *International Organisation for Migration*[2], public opinion and perceptions about migration vary between and within countries and over time. Such perceptions and opinions are not static, they are sensitive to demographic (age, level of education, type of employment and political inclinations) and contextual factors (political turmoil, economic recession). Although such factors are relatively constant in determining whether opinion is likely to be more positive or negative, the findings indicate that opinion can and does change over time, particularly following increased levels of interaction between migrants and hosting societies and an increased understanding of what a migrant is, and therefore is not.

1 Council of Europe and European Union joint action, launched in 2008, the Intercultural Cities (ICC) is a European network of cities promoting intercultural integration model.

2 Communicating Effectively about Migration, IOM Report 2011

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What surveys say?

Perception surveys conducted by the IPSOS MORI Social Research Institute within the SPARDA project show differences between the views held by respondents towards migrants and cultural diversity across seven European cities.
There are also some recurring demographic themes relating to respondents attitudes to immigration. There is a significantly more positive view held by better educated respondents and those with different ethnic backgrounds in their family. On balance, respondents have a mixed view towards the benefits of immigration, with the majority not realising the diversity advantage.

Immigration is good for the country economy — 33% 20% 18%
Immigrants make the country a more interesting place to live — 26% 21% 20%
Immigration has placed too much pressure on the infrastructure of the town/city — 50% 18% 20% 6%
Immigration in my area makes me more accepting of people with backgrounds different to mine — 32% 27% 20% 11%
Immigrants in the town/city have made it more difficult for the country nationality people to get jobs — 53% 16% 21% 8%
Immigration in my area has meant I feel more knowledgeable about people with different backgrounds to mine — 37% 22% 29% 10%

■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Not applicable

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN INTEGRATION

Communication may be this *missing link* that impacts public opinion and, consequently, integration. As SPARDA[3] and ICC experience suggests, awarness and understanding of diversity issues as well as the capacity of local leaderships to share their strategic vision with communities seems to be key to influencing integration.

1 Public communication and dialogue campaigns

Public communication and political discourse play a major role in shaping the image of migrants and perceptions of diversity in host societies. One of the biggest challenges in this regard is what and how governments communicate about diversity, migration and integration to the wider public. Conducting communication campaigns that aim at breaking stereotypes, dispelling myths about migration and increasing awareness about diversity benefits can constitute an important policy tool for cities grappling with migration. Investing in communication can be particularly beneficial, since managing diversity also involves managing how diversity is perceived.

2 Better understanding and knowledge of diversity

As a prerequisite for successful communication, local strategies need to be based on a comprehensive knowledge and well-researched understanding of what diversity and migration mean for a given city or a region. For communication to be effective, it needs to take into account demographic and socio-economic factors as well as the specific needs of local communities in terms of integration. A knowledge-based approach to communication is particularly important in the context of rapidly evolving urban policies and increasing mobility of populations.

3 Communication for Social Change approach

Communication for Social Change (CGSC) model, developed and tested by the United Nations agencies within the framework of development programmes, has proved to be particularly efficient in terms of social change and participation. The advantage of participatory communication is that it can take different forms according to needs, and that no blueprint model is necessary to integrate diversity of views and cultural interactions. This model of communication is particularly adapted to integration which is understood as a "two-way process" that involves both migrants and the host communities, but also public authorities and the public it-self.

According to the Social Change model, the objective of communication for integration would be to deliver top-down, high-quality information and motivational messages to mass audiences and to enhance bottom-up communication originated from participatory communication to enhance integration. The latter aims at expressing the needs and priorities of local communities to find a common solution for change. SPARDA experience show the complementary role of both top-down and bottom-up communication in engaging communities, in building on local ownership, in expanding horizontal communication and through increased access to media.

At the heart of the CFSC approach is a process of community dialogue and collective action through which the community itself identifies priorities, develops a vision and plan of action, and mobilises internal and external resources to carry it out. Every time a community goes through this process, changes in both individual outcomes (such as increased knowledge and better understanding of diversity) as well as social outcomes (such as strengthened community leadership, broader participation, and social cohesion) are expected to occur. The model can be used to describe and explain why previous integration projects were successful or unsuccessful, and it can also be used to increase the likelihood that community action will be successful in the future.

3 This includes reported experience from SPARDA partner cities, not the results of the opinion surveys.

HOW TO DO A COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE CAMPAIGN

Based on the lessons learned from seven European cities and the experience of "Social Change" campaigns around the world[4], SPARDA puts together this *"How to do Communication and Dialogue Campaigns"* guide[5].

Addressed to local authorities or not-for-profit organisations, this "How to Do" guide provides tips for campaign design described from setting focus to designing campaign contents to running the campaignand evaluating it afterwards.

PHASE 1 COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

STEPS FOR COMMUNITY DIALOGUE :

1 Recognition of the challenge to be addressed by the campaign
2 Identification and Involvement of Leaders and Stakeholders
3 Vision for the Future
4 Setting Objectives
6 Action Plan

PHASE 2 COLLECTIVE ACTION AND PARTICIPATION

STEPS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION :

1 Assignment of Responsibilities
2 Mobilisation of Organisations and Stakeholders
3 Execution of the Action plan and Monitoring
4 Evaluation (participatory)

4 Our guide was inspired by Butterfly Toolkit for Social Change Campaigns, developed after "Building Bridges" campaign (Netherlands)

5 This guide draws upon the project monitoring results and the reports from partners cities and does not solely draw on the good practice recommendations of the IPSOS report on the SPARDA opinion surveys, which are an additional resource to be found on the SPARDA website: www.coe.int/sparda

PHASE 1

STEP 1

RECOGNITION OF THE CHALLENGE

The first stage in the process of social change is the recognition by the larger community or by a smaller subset of the community that there is a problem that limits their current quality of life, constrains their aspirations for the future, or has the potential to hurt the community or members of the community. SPARDA identified negative perceptions of migrants as a key problem to intercultural integration.

STEP 2

IDENTIFICATION OF LEADRES AND STAKEHOLDERS – WHO HAS THE POWER TO AFFECT CHANGE?

To get an overview of the stakeholders involved you can make a map with to identify possible actors for your campaign. This map can include (a) leaders, community representatives, including those who are most affected by the problem (migrants and diversity groups), (c) media and other. You might consider including stakeholders who have been previousely involved in the preparation of your local integration strategies

Example: In Barcelona 2010/2011, the commitment of local stakeholders to participate in the local communication campaign against rumors about migrants was very high to ensure that false ideas about different ethno-cultural communities do not create barrier to implementation of the local intercultural integration strategy. The same stakeholders were actively involved in consultation on intercultural integration strategy development.

It is crucial to identify correctly your stakeholders. You may wish to involve grassroots or local activists, youth, children, or the whole community. Mapping intercultural integration/diversity initiatives and as such visualising what is happening on the ground is a strong way of exposure. Visualising the growing ´integration community´ can be of impact on several levels ´internally´ for the ´integration mapper´ group in your neighborhood /city as well as ´externally´ to other cities who might get inspired to follow your great action or who might consider to support you in this great initiative you are running there.

Example: In Reggio Emilia, special attention is paid to the participation of youth in the campaign activities, as well as intergenerational exchange between youth and seniors, keeping in mind the fact that older people are guardians of values and they play an important role in transmitting positive messages to younger generation.

STRONG LEADERSHIP

Strong ability and motivation to act and to engage is required from chief executives, seniour officials, political leaders, acting as champions for campaigns. Raising awareness to change attitudes is long term work but perhaps the most effective in the long run. Giving the voice to political leaders to provide a comprehensive and balanced discourse on diversity works top-down, creating political momentum for change.

MIGRANTS PARTICIPATION

Involvement of migrants and representatives of ethno-cultural groups can make an essential contribution to the campaign. Witnessing with personal stories of integration success or specific contribution to the community life can provide the campaign with a "human face" and make the project really participatory.

Example: In Limassol, Reggio Emilia, Patras and Valencia, campaigns included the participation of migrants in important number of activities, acknowledging the fact that migrants' empowerment is an important element of successful integration.

MEDIA

Research the media access and usage of the people you want to reach. Find out what media your audiences use and which media they use for which purposes. Every group has its own language, technologically accessible media and culturally intrinsic media channels. So you have to take all those aspects into account.
Think access, ease (cost) of use and culture of use.

What media can you consider: think about TV, radio, social media, community media, mobiles, internet, live gatherings.

In order to choose the right media channels to access and to actively engage your target groups, you need a good understanding of **what is accessible**, what is likely to be used by your target group and how they work from the perspectives of usability, cost and legality.

STEP 3

VISION FOR THE FUTURE - –WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPEN ?

Once dialogue has been established and stakeholders identified and involved, the community would be ready to plan where it wants to be in the future (three years from now, one year from now) and to figure out the ways for getting there. For example do you want to see your neighborhoods more inclusive, do you want a stronger participation of migrants in the life of the city, better understanding of the diversity advantage, breaking stereotypes, dispelling myths about migrants...

STEP 4

SETTING OBJECTIVES

A shared vision should allow the community to list the goals/objectives it wants to achieve. The community, together with the leaders and/or change agent, should evaluate how realistic the goals are and should try to set moderate goals in order to avoid either a sense of failure (if goals are unrealistic, too high), or lack of motivation (if goals are too low). Goals that are challenging but feasible should be preferred.

STEP 5

ACTION PLAN

A specific timetable for when each activity needs to be accomplished will help the community to have clear deadlines for effectively moving toward the solution of the problem. Your Action Plan needs to consider: responsibilities, resources, timelines, expected results.

BUDGET
• Identify all potentially upcoming costs and double check with your budget.
• Potentially rethink your planned activities if activities are becoming too expensive.

PHASE 2

PHASE 2

STEP 1

ASSIGNING THE RESPONSABILITIES

Specific people and groups should take responsibility for conducting each activity as defined in the action plan. In order to set up and run a successful campaign you need to have a strong organisation team. This team needs to include ideally:

PROJECT MANAGER

The person who will keep the team together, have a good overview of all ongoing activities, they are the central communication and information hub and can keep good track on timelines and finances. They can respond to unexpected situations and find solutions.

MEDIA OFFICER

The person is familiar with the media landscape of the country/region, ideally they have good contacts in the media scene and are a very good communicator, they can write good snappy texts and scripts that speak to the audience.

DESIGNER & PROGRAMMER & RADIO MAKER & PHOTOGRAPHER

Depending on what media you have chosen you will need people who have skills to create material for media, such a graphic designer if you need a website design, poster design, logo design, someone who can program websites on interactivity. Perhaps you need people who can make radio programmers or maybe you need a photographer.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

A person with strong relationship building skills, a communicator and connector — the mediator between the team and your target audiences (participants). Depending on your tools decision this person should also have the skills or get the according training to give direct support to people who might face any technical or different sort of constraints.

STEP 2

MOBILISATION OF ORGANISATIONS AND STAKEHODERS

Depending on the size and nature of the challenge, existing organisations inside and outside the community can be called upon to join the community-action effort. The extent of the participation by the different groups in the community should also influence the sense of ownership of the program and social cohesion

STEP 3

IMPLEMENTATION

This step refers to the actual execution of the action plan and its monitoring. Actions should be put in place for back-up activities so that the whole action plan does not get truncated if some activities do not work according to the original plan.
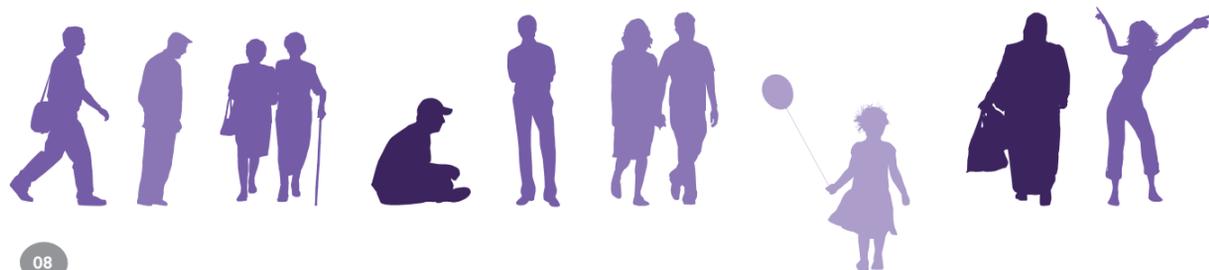
HOW TO BE MOST INCLUSIVE

You might consider to encourage people via your campaign platforms online:

Example: In Lyon (France), a communication campaign for diversity provided an online platform for voluntary participation of city residents for the creation of "The biggest Internet page in the world to say "Yes" to Diversity". The input from community required feeding the web page with individual photos of people witnessing in favour of diversity and expressing their refusal of ethnic and religious discrimination. The same brand *"Say "Yes" for Diversity"* was used for billboarding campaign in the metro of Lyon.

• However, there are more ways to create a platform. Platforms can be all kind of forms which offer people the space to gather, express themselves and exchange their ideas, experiences etc. Given this definition, a platform can also be created in the form of neighborhood gatherings or a call in community radio show.

• A further option to bridge the aforementioned gap could be, to initiate additional ´offline´- or ´on air´ platforms, brand them with your campaign identity (e.g. Diversity radio, Diversity Forum) and - most important - link them with each other!
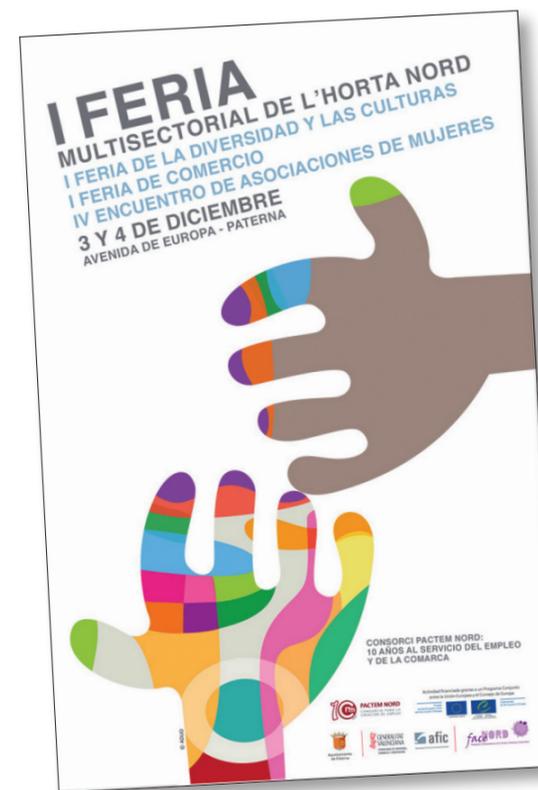
CREATE YOUR MESSAGE

You establish a clear aim and strong message for your campaign. This message needs to be short, credible and must refer to the issues that are important to the communities. Few tips:

• Design a coherent way to present your campaign, its name, and its goals. Always keep the audience in the foremost of your mind.

• Develop all your visual materials in the same way, so people can recognise the campaign in all materials and other promotions.

Example: if you decide to start a Diversity Advantage campaign, use the same name for your entire communication throughout all media channels. If you decide to create a further platform, like a radio platform, e.g. to reach out to rural communities, name it e.g. Diversity Radio or Diversity Advantage Radio Show.

WHAT CAN CONVINCE PEOPLE TO CHANGE?

There are as many strategies as there are people, you can empower migrants to tell their own stories through video or directly to the public, encourage musicians to incorporate your message, combine a radio show with an educational package for schools, put stickers on coins. As best practice guidance from the Ipsos study (2012) support, interactive strategies seem to work the best.

Example: In Limassol (Cyprus), the campaign included a Human 'Living' Library - telling migrants' life stories around a cup of coffee allowing participants, both 'books' and readers, to realize and appreciate the diversity advantage, and to develop an Intercultural awareness approach.

Quota: *"When people have prejudices or stereotypes, speaking to a' book' is so straight to the point, it can really break down barriers"*

MOBILISE YOUR OMMUNICATION CHANNELS

After you selected the right media, start to mobilise your channels and apply for potential licenses etc.
• Choose those communication channels your target group uses and can access.
• Contact those media houses you have chosen to work with and ask for their support for your initiative (potentially some of them are willing to support you free of charge). Depending on your budget, you can choose to aim at a partnership with certain media houses or ask for potential donation support.

MOBILISE YOUR NETWORK

Before you start to actively promote your campaign, make sure stakeholders are briefed sufficiently, make sure everyone is clear as to what their role and responsibilities are and how you will collaborate throughout the entire process.

NOTE regular communication is key.

STEP 4

EVALUATING THE CAMPAIGN

Once your campaign phase has reached an end, you may want to evaluate your choices in order to draw conclusions from it. It is crucial to evaluate the process, progress and effectiveness of campaigns and interventions undertaken so far. The achieved outcomes may or may not be what the community originally planned in their goal setting. The comparison of the outcomes versus the original objectives is an important self-evaluation process. For purposes of group motivation and reward, it is important that most of the community (especially the affected groups) participate in the evaluation process so that the lessons learned about what worked and why may be shared throughout the community.