MC²CM

MEDITERRANEAN CITY-TO-CITY MIGRATION

COMMUNICATION ON MIGRATION: AN ISSUE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The benefits and challenges of promoting a realistic narrative on migration and fostering intercultural dialogue in cities

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narrative on migration and fostering intercultural dialogue in cities

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International Centre for
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UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

ABOUT MC2CM

Migration is a defining feature of urbanisation. Cities are places where people come together to live, work and find opportunities. It is also in the city where the reality of social and economic accommodation of newcomers and their interaction with host community takes place.

In this context, the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) contributes to improved rights-based migration governance in cities. Through dialogue, knowledge and action, MC2CM anchors migration governance to a process of urban planning.

DIALOGUE

Nurturing dialogue between cities and relevant stakeholders through peer-to-peer learning and exchanges

KNOWLEDGE

Supporting knowledge generation and development of evidence-based approaches

ACTION

Providing sustainable solutions and testing tools to address migration-related challenges and opportunities

Developed in the framework of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM), MC2CM is anchored in a network of Euro-Mediterranean cities. It is funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency and is implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Following a successful first phase (2015–2018), MC2CM aims in its second phase (2018–2021) to build upon its lessons and achievements towards concrete action on local migration governance and promoting a realistic and fair narrative on migration.

More information at:
🌐 icmpd.org/mc2cm
🐦 urban_migration

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS & THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

The Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) aligns its objectives with those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Sustainable Development Goal number 11 of making "cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." Specifically, MC2CM pursues Target 11.1 of setting out to ensure access to adequate housing (including access to basic services) and participatory planning for all citizens, including migrants.

Furthermore, MC2CM ensues the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted by United Nations Member States at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in October 2016. NUA recognises the universal and indivisible nature of human rights for all people, «regardless of their migratory status».

ABOUT THE REPORT

This Thematic Learning Report draws on the results of the sub-regional event of the MC2CM project held under the auspices of the Municipality of Tunis on 18–19 September 2018. The event convened 47 participants from 9 city administrations, experts, as well as representatives of international and regional organisations, including the European Union and Swiss Embassy in Tunisia[1]. The event was held in the framework of the flagship Migration Media Award Ceremony[2] and related events on communication. It served as a first step in identifying challenges and opportunities in the field of communication on migration at local level, a work that will be carried forward in the implementation of MC2CM project.

Over the course of its second implementation phase (2018–2021) MC2CM produces 6 Thematic Learning Reports, which not only capture but also ensure a broader dissemination of the learnings of thematic peer-learning events, providing durable learning solutions within and beyond the project. Thematic Learning Reports cite the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the dialogue and include relevant examples and tools for local actors to draw upon in considering action on the selected theme.

[1] The programme, background document and list of participants to the event are available online: https://bit.ly/2CGJthd

[2] The Migration Media Award (MMA) is a DG Near-funded initiative organised in the framework of the EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) programme. It rewards and encourages journalistic excellence on Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. For more information, refer to: www.migration-media-award.eu

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to their size, economic might, and proximity to citizens, cities are in a unique position to foster a pragmatic, evidence-based debate on migration. Moreover, given that migration will continue to be a reality, an opportunity, and a challenge faced by cities, communicating on migration becomes imperative to sensitising local communities and enacting effective local policies.

Cities are also in a privileged position to emphasise the place-based right to belonging of their residents, regardless of origin, and to therefore foster greater social cohesion. A 2018 British Future study shows that people "view immigration, positively and negatively, through its impact on the place where they live"[3]. In this sense, contact theory suggests that people who are in touch with migrants tend to hold less prejudice towards them. Cities, which are inherently diverse spaces, thus constitute appropriate grounds for building social cohesion and mutual understanding. If cities can trigger a process of improving the realities and experiences of migration and diversity at the local level, they can, in effect, create a more inclusive experience for all residents.

[3] http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/national-conversation-interim-report

At the local level, migration is often conceived of as underpinning diversity, with diversity seen by many as an opportunity and asset for cities. While national governments retreat from the question of integration, in the face of the heated debate on migration, cities take the lead. City leaders are well-aware of the fact that in the local context, diversity can represent a tool for growth.

But migration is not a panacea. The fact that migration represents an opportunity for cities does not exclude the fact that it can also represent a hurdle for social cohesion - in particular when the nature of this migration is forced, unregulated, or sudden and/or to a concentrated territory[4].

[4] For more information on social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, refer to https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/20_social_cohesion_and_dialogue_lisboa_june2016.pdf

In this context, misguided and ill-informed public perceptions can become a barrier for cities to address and capitalise on migration. These can result in anti-immigrant and thus anti-diversity sentiments and attitudes, which are difficult to address and hard to overcome. Such attitudes among local populations can create tension and pose a threat to social cohesion and, if left unattended, escalate and negatively impact local communities and their integration.

This Thematic Learning Report seeks to shed light on the problematics Mediterranean cities face in communicating on migration at their level, as well as bring forward the learnings drawn from their experiences. The main conclusions are:

- Communication range from stand-alone events to long-term strategies. Understanding the full spectrum of communication options at local level can help move from ad hoc responses towards longer term strategic approaches.

- Cities face numerous challenges in their work on communication. The lack of capacity and data on local migration, the spread of misinformation, and local or national politics hinder the constitution of effective and coherent communication strategies.

- Cities need to take action to dispel myths on migration as to unlock its full potential for migrant and host communities.

- Cities are increasingly aware of the role they play in migration governance. Communication provide a tool to empower cities to further strengthen their position as agents of migration, in the reception of newcomers, the prevention of discrimination and the sharing of successful policies from their context.

- Cities are not alone in this process. In partnering with local, national and international relevant stakeholders, cities can act as an interface for coordination, benefit from expertise and communication channels, and ultimately empower these other stakeholders as actors of local migration.

- As inherently diverse spaces, cities can draw resources from their local cultural diversity to address migration and inclusion. Not only does diversity represent a lever for local growth and development, but it can also serve the purpose of the search for a common ground and shared identity.

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

1. KEY COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

Communication and information are connected, but not analogous, concepts (see below figure 1). Information constitutes a one-way process in which a targeted message reaches the receiver through specific communication channels to serve defined results.

Communication on the other hand imply a dynamic two-way process between the sender and the target audience/s whereby the message is produced, disseminated and interpreted. Through the messaging development process, the sender develops a targeted message directed at its identified target audience/s. This coding process uses specific verbal or non-verbal symbols that are assumed to be understood by the targeted receiver. Both the form and the content of the message are designed to serve a specific interpretation, or decoding of the message, feeding off the receiver's set of values and beliefs. The decoding refers to the way in which the receiver interprets the message and reconstructs the coded information by giving meaning to symbols. Effective communication imply that the message is interpreted in the intended way.

INFORMATION

Who?	What?	Throug which channel?	To whom?	To which aim?
Font	Message	Medium	Receiver	Expected result

COMMUNICATION

Codification Interpretation Decoding — Message — Codification Interpretation Decoding — Message
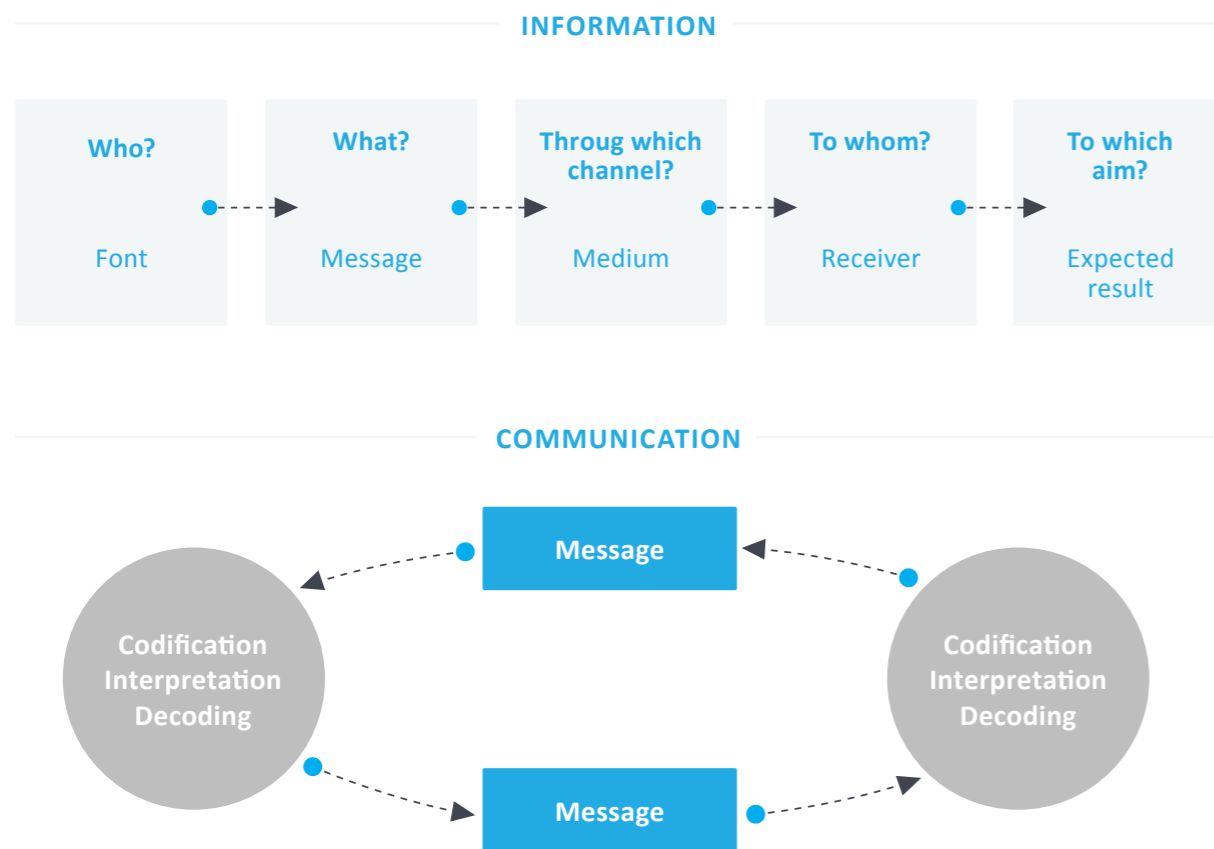
Figure 1: Information and communication processes visualised.

Whilst information triggers different reactions, rational or emotional, according to people and contexts, strategic communication can be used as a means to influence specific behaviours in a given target audience. The use of evidence-based or emotional language and imagery therefore plays a crucial role in the way information is conveyed and interpreted.

a. APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATION

There is no one-size-fits-all or blueprint of how a city should organise its communication. Communication activities are framed to answer specific goals and reach a given target audience. Local contexts vary greatly in terms of cities' capacities and resources to communicate. The "Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership" (AMICALL)[5] project proposed a useful typology of communication activities of local authorities, which places these into three main groupings:

1. Communication campaigns including awareness-raising activities, media engagement and other public relations activities. They range in aims from increasing tolerance, preventing discrimination, to promoting positive attitudes towards diversity and migrants.

The #farbebekennen ('seeing colour') campaign by the Berlin City government challenged notions of a homogeneous German society by displaying a series of posters of people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities with the caption 'typical German' (see below figure 2).

[5] EU-funded project concluded in 2012 and led by the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/project/attitudes-to-migrants-communiction-and-local-leadership-amicall/

Figure 2: Posters of the Berlin City-led campaign #farbebekennen

2. Intercultural communication activities seek to celebrate different cultures in one community through sportive, cultural and artistic events, and thus improving acceptance. They can consist in stand-alone initiatives, repeated events or designed as permanent elements of the local community.

The Migrants Arts Festival (Festival des Arts des Migrants) organised in 2017 by the local association Tadamon with the support of the Tangier city administration through the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum, offered public space and a platform for migrants to showcase their art to the wider community, in order to promote social and cultural cohesion between migrant and host communities in Tangier[6].

3. Face-to-face communication activities aim to bring together different sectors of the community in an effort to improve attitudes, raise awareness and foster the creation of long-term relationships. This can be done through public fora, informal and formal dialogue, classes or mediation.

The Anti-Rumour Network is an initiative of the Barcelona City Council to fight negative perceptions of migrants. Volunteers are trained to spread information and dispel myths and stereotypes about migrants among their own networks through face-to-face interactions[7].

b. TOWARDS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

A strategic approach is an essential element of successful and impactful communication. The following are some considerations for cities setting out to develop a strategic approach to address communication on migration:

- Wherever possible, the development of a communication strategy – preferably involving various stakeholder groups – should form part of the approach of a wider city development, branding or communication strategy.

- Communication include both internal (within the administration and among different levels of government) and external (vis-à-vis wider public and target groups) dimensions and must be adapted according to the audiences; typically, a communication strategy proposes a variety of activities geared towards engaging and addressing different target audiences. Examples of target audiences for communication on migration include:

  - migrant groups
  - non-migrant populations
  - local public service providers
  - media and opinion leaders

- Knowledge of the local context (including history, attitudes, and perceptions) helps set out an informed communication strategy and predict potential hurdles, and how to overcome/address them.

[6] For more information see https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/MC2CM/MC2M_case_studies/EN/CaseStudies_Tangier_Print.pdf

[7] For more information see http://interculturalitat.bcn.cat/bcnacciointercultural/en/the-anti-rumor-network. Find also the Anti-Rumour Handbook in the section on tools and resources for cities p.19

2. THE NARRATIVE ON MIGRATION

Migration is often treated through the sole prism of immigration. Political discourses have long fuelled popular discontent over immigration and integration. Public opinion, international debates and, to some extent, research, therefore tend to refer to migration to describe issues linked to incoming migration. This in turn overlooks other aspects of migration such as transit migration, emigration, asylum and protection, and trafficking. Migration is thus seen as a contentious and polarising question, while it remains a highly complex and multi-faceted issue. Public attitudes and the general discourse on migration tend to be dominated by emotions, which overlooks the benefits of migration in its different aspects. Due to their proximity to citizens and voters, local officials might be tempted to avoid communicating on such heated issues. However, **communication is unavoidable** and understanding perceptions and ways to address these, can help avoid conflict and unlock the full potential of migration at local level.

MIGRANTS: B7AL B7AL – DEBUNKING PREJUDICES ABOUT MIGRANTS IN MOROCCO

The media campaign titled "Migrants: B7al b7al" (all equal) launched in 2017 brought forward migrants' voices with the aim of tackling misconceptions and prejudices towards migrants in Morocco. The campaign took mainly place on social media, and particularly on Facebook through the page #B7alB7al. Short video messages showcased migrants depicting daily experiences of discrimination, as well as famous personalities, music artists and athletes raising awareness on interculturality and social cohesion. The initiative forms part of the project "Opération Al Wassit" which aims at reinforcing migrants' rights through training, awareness-raising and advocacy. Funded by the European Union, the project was implemented by the NGO CEFA, in partnership with the foundation Orient-Occident, the association ASTICUDE, and the NGO Soleterre, in the cities of Rabat, Salé, Casablanca, Tangier, Tetouan, Nador and Oujda.

a. CONTEXT AND LOCAL ATTITUDES TO MIGRATION

A study[8] developed for ICMPD under the EU funded programme EU-ROMED Migration IV by the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute's Observatory to Public Attitudes on Migration (OPAM) sheds light on public attitudes on migration in the Mediterranean region. The study shows how the perceived importance of the issue of immigration has risen across the Euro-Mediterranean region and favoured the rise of anti-immigration votes and parties. In spite of this, research highlights the fact that attitudes to migration in the Euro-Mediterranean regionremain stable in recent years. While the

[8] ICMPD, 2018, Public Attitudes on Migration: rethinking how people perceive migration. An analysis of existing opinion polls in the Euro-Mediterranean region: www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/IC-MPD-Website/Public_attitudes_on_migration_study.pdf

perceived importance of the question of immigration is volatile, attitudes to immigration are not becoming more negative.

Though the study found large sets of data that dealt with immigration, especially in Europe, what is striking is the degree to which prevailing attitudes to emigration are scarce, in comparison to immigration and irregular migration. This highlights just how distorted the narrative has become, and how this distortion has impacted the focus on the topic.

This imbalance is also reflected in public debates in Europe and the Mediterranean. While evidence demonstrates the potential of migration for receiving countries, the negative portrayal of migration in media and popular culture can have an impact on the public perception of the topic and henceforth hinder a rational, evidence-based understanding of the issue.

Furthermore, the study looks into factors influencing attitudes to migration (see figure 3). Attitudes are made up of psychological, sociological, attitudinal and contextual factors. All factors affect the development of attitudes to migration in different ways and to various extents. While sociological factors have a steady impact on people's attitudes to migration, contextual factors tend to have unstable effects on attitudes. This means that factors such as education, social background and lifestyle greatly impact people's views on migration, but that news and the media have a lesser influence.

THE FUNNEL OF CAUSALITY OF ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

Human Values	Early life norm acquisition (parents, schooling, community)	Political attitudes	Contact (empathy/threat)	
Personality Values	Tertiary education	Ideology (right-wing, fiscal/ social conservatism)	Neighbourhood (safety/crime)	Attitudes to immigration
			Politician and media influence	
Moral foundation	Lifestyle (family, children, living abroad, attachment to place)	Political alienation	Economic competition	

Distal effects
(strong and stable)

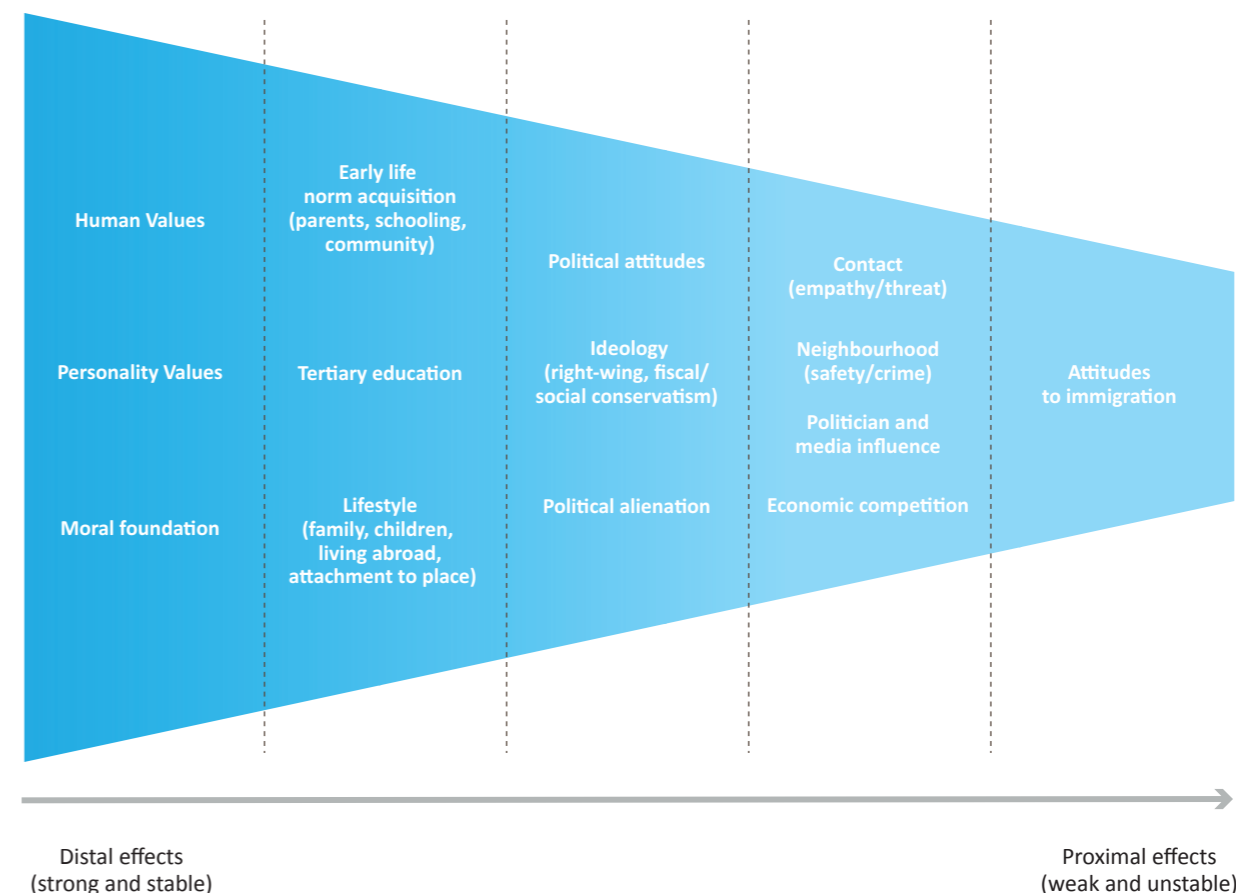Proximal effects
(weak and unstable)

Figure 3: The funnel of causality of attitudes to migration. Image source: ICMPD, 2018, Public Attitudes on Migration: rethinking how people perceive migration. An analysis of existing opinion polls in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Available at: https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Public_attitudes_on_migration_study.pdf

Values and beliefs are also crucial factors when it comes to explaining attitudes to migration. People with opposing values, such as universalism and conservatism, might have conflicting opinions on migration. However, the study suggests that balanced arguments and language, as opposed to striking facts and images, can positively influence these opinions and bring them closer to each other. The search for common ground is therefore key to addressing people's concerns and opinions on migration.

b. CHALLENGES IN COMMUNICATING ON MIGRATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

Due to its sensitive and emotive nature, migration is not an easy topic to address and communicate about, particularly when resources and capacity to do so are limited. The most common challenges faced by local authorities in communicating on migration are:

LIMITED CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE

- Working on communication on migration is a very specific field that requires specialised knowledge and skills set that city authorities do not always have access to

- Limited resources and capacities can hinder the development of communication strategies, which entail a lengthy and arduous process

- Adequate tools and capacity are also required to collect the necessary data and information to have an accurate picture of the local migration context and develop effective tailored communication to address opportunities and gaps

LACK OF ACCESS

- Migrants and in particular newcomers do not always have access to information necessary to adapt to or access their host communities – this is sometimes triggered by language barriers and special vulnerability of some migrant groups, for example those in transit or with irregular status

- People working in in the public service also do not always have access to adequate and timely information regarding diversity and migration which can negatively impact the efficiency in providing access to a range of services

MISINFORMATION

- Public perception on migration is heavily influenced by rhetoric and emotions singling out issues of immigration and irregular migration

- Confirmation bias (see figure 4) describes the phenomenon in which we believe facts or statements that confirm what our social and institutional circles, personal experiences, beliefs and opinions have taught us to consider as true. Information is filtered by several social layers that confirm or counteract it. In other words, 'what is said is not always what is heard'[9]

- Convolution of terms such as refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking create confusion over the debate on migration in the media, but also amongst politicians, practitioners and service providers

[9] https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk//wp-content/uploads/Building-an-inclusive-city-narrative-briefing-note-final.pdf
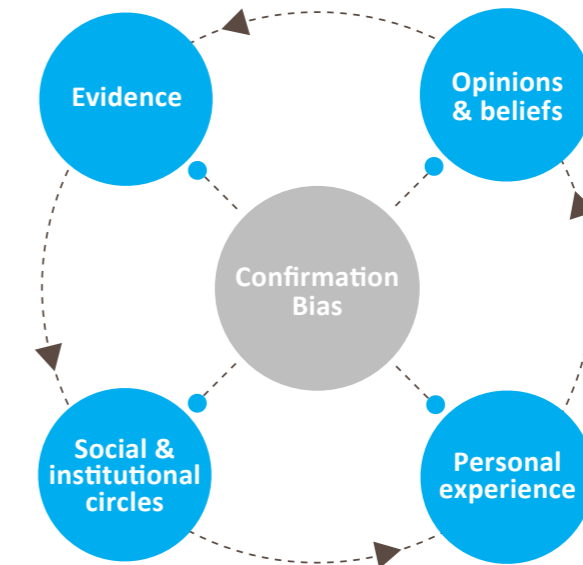

Figure 4: The confirmation biais. Image source: MigrationMatters.

COMPETING PRIORITIES

- Cities are diverse spaces and urban dwellers tend to be considered open to diversity. Yet, segments of the population may entertain radically different political positions, following concepts such as the 'halo effect' or Nimbyism[10] – not in my backyard

- Communication is a field that requires investment of resources. Provided that local funds are finite, communication might not constitute a priority for local officials and cities who may choose to invest limited resources and capacity in other local needs

[10] The 'halo effect' describes segments of an urban population at the city limits which often express more fears of immigration and newcomers than their inner-city neighbours, while Nimbyism reflects local opposition to the implementation of social services and facilities.

POLITICS

- In some contexts, populist ideologies appropriate the debate and contribute to the spread of misinformation and the negative perception on migration for electoral gains in detriment of longer-term strategies

- The interplay between local and national politics and media, as well as electoral pressure, might create tensions over local decisions and push for short-term gains, in detriment of longer-term strategies

- Participation gaps, which often reflect a lack of trust in public institutions, tend to favour more radical political postures vis-à-vis migration issues

KEY LEARNINGS

Despite the inherent challenges, cities have at their disposal a range of tools that can be used to achieve communication objectives. These are diverse and include a wide spectrum of instruments ranging from public discourse (political speeches and policy documents), front-line service provision (including housing, transport, preschool education, language courses, among others), training opportunities (for citizens, migrants and city officials), and education and information activities and campaigns (on a wide variety of themes). Furthermore, as the government closest to citizens, cities possess the unique advantage of being able to implement structured dialogue with citizens which can become a particularly critical tool in building trust and creating a sense of community and belonging.

1. EMPOWERING CITIES TO ACT AS AGENTS OF MIGRATION

As the government level closest to citizens, cities have a concrete role to play on migration, even if this is not always acknowledged in policy contexts. Communication can support cities in asserting their role as agents of migration and integration at their level. With impactful communication, cities can build trust with local and migrant communities, showcase good practices and advance social cohesion.

In this context, communication can be used as a tool to support and improve access to rights and services, promoting successful policies, fostering intercultural dialogue and protecting against discrimination.

a. A TOOL TO FOSTER SUCCESSFUL MIGRANT INTEGRATION

Newcomers' access to key information relating to their installation and stay in a city is often limited. Effectively communicating with newly arrived migrants, through migrant associations or the provision of welcome instruments, can be crucial in fostering integration into the local context.

START WIEN – VIENNESE INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR A SMOOTH START FOR NEWCOMERS

The Viennese integration programme "Start Wien" implemented since 2008 by the Municipal Department 17 for Integration and Diversity (MA17) has offered a smooth integration process to a large number of participants. Detailed information sessions are organised twice a month for newcomers to understand the options and opportunities the city has to offer. The integration programme is divided into several information modules, where specific groups such as youth and adult groups as well as families are targeted. These modules involve basic topics such as education, healthcare, housing, living together and more specific issues on discrimination, gender roles and leisure activities, among others. Further to the information modules, language classes are offered, as well as vocational training at a later stage for qualified applicants to strengthen their field of expertise.

b. DEVELOPING AND TIMING IMPACTFUL COMMUNICATION

Success stories provide a great basis for communication. Highlighting successful local policies – economic, social or cultural – can reinforce trust between local politicians and citizens, strengthen stakeholder engagement and support a wider city-branding strategy at a national or global level. For instance, in an effort to harness their attractiveness at the international level, several cities have increasingly communicated on their stance on migration in contrast to national rhetoric[11].

[11] See also p.9 of: https://solidarity-cities.eu/images/RefugeeReport_final.pdf

#LONDONISOPEN – A WELCOMING MESSAGE IN THE FACE OF BREXIT

Launched and endorsed by the Mayor of London in the wake of the Brexit referendum, which voted the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the campaign #LondonIsOpen sends a message of openness to foreign, and particularly EU, nationals residing in London. Through social media and short videos featuring EU Londoners, the campaign aims to shed light on the contribution of the estimated 1 million EU citizens of London, depicting the City as open-minded and forward looking. The campaign was launched simultaneously with the online EU Londoners Hub which serves as a reference for information and guidance on Brexit-related questions.

Yet, **non-communication or selective communication** can also represent an important component of a communication strategy: knowing when to divulge certain sensitive information and when it is best not to draw too much attention to it. While transparent and evidence-based communication can help defuse tensions and dismiss misinformation, it is important to address sensitive or polarising issues at the appropriate time and place. In certain cases, local politicians and communicators might prioritise taking action, and relegate communication to a later stage.

c. ENHANCING SOCIAL COHESION IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Contact theory supports the tenet that people who are in touch with migrants tend to hold less prejudice towards them. Local governments have the capacity and tools to promote this contact and thus enhance social cohesion[12]. This can be achieved through communication campaigns, awareness-raising, intercultural activities and citizen dialogues. Furthermore, providing training for local staff and other service providers, and developing actions against hate speech are also ways to minimise risks of discrimination.

[12] For more information on social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, refer to https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/20_social_cohesion_and_dialogue_lisboa_june2016.pdf

On the other hand, ensuring diversity amongst municipal staff can represent a lever for eased communication with migrant groups and should be considered as part of a recruitment strategy[13].

[13] See also: http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Managingand-promotingdiversity.pdf

CUIDAMOS CENTRO – MADRID CARES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION

"Cuidamos Centro" is a programme launched in 2017 by the Municipality of Madrid, under the coordination of the Madrid Municipal Employment Agency and District Board, with the aim of raising awareness of environmental issues. Taking advantage of the diversity of the central district of Madrid, the programme simultaneously tackles issues of unemployment and social inclusion: "Cuidamos Centro" employs people in situations of long-term unemployment with a wide majority of backgrounds. As municipal workers, people engaged in the programme work to raise awareness on environmental and waste-management issues. Through this role, as well as being in direct contact with locals, workers contribute to debunking misconceptions and strengthening social cohesion in the city.

2. COOPERATING WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

Working with relevant stakeholders is the way forward for successful communication. Whilst cities alone cannot cover all fronts relevant partnerships at local, national and global levels can support cities' efforts to achieving efficient communication and overall migration-related policies. Cities can therefore act as coordinators at local level, convening and actively engaging other stakeholders, and make use of global processes to their own benefit.

a. COMMUNICATION FOR ADVANCING INTERINSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

Communication without policy coherence can result futile. It is therefore essential to work both on horizontal and vertical communication, on a multi-governance and inter-institutional level.

In this sense, cities have the possibility to act as interfaces for coordination with a wide range of stakeholders: municipal departments, national and regional governments, local associations, private sector and the media, as well as international organisations, on issues that are locally relevant.

THE AMSTERDAM APPROACH TO REFUGEES – COMMUNICATING WITH BENEFICIARIES

The Amsterdam Approach to Refugees seeks to ensure the good reception and successful integration of refugees to the city. This is done by using innovative communication channels with beneficiaries and by coordinating activities related to refugee reception across the city's administrations. The initiative benefits all refugees whose asylum applications have been accepted since 2016. The City makes sure information is available in refugees' main languages. Beneficiaries are put in touch with a unique case manager who acts as a contact point as well as oversees the job search process. During the welcome session, beneficiaries can find out about their rights and duties and are given generic information about the city. A mobile application is also being developed, with information related to access to housing, health, education and other services. In order to facilitate contact with refugees, WhatsApp is used to inform them of their next meetings. The Amsterdam Approach to Refugees also communicates on its success with a documentary movie following refugees' experience in Amsterdam.

b. CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AS GATEWAYS

Civil society organisations are strong partners in the governance of migration at local level. They provide added expertise, act as implementing partners, subcontractors, and fill the gaps of municipal action. Working with a strong network of civil society organisations also ensures a larger outreach for communication strategies encompassing a broader spectrum of communication channels, including grassroots organisations and community media. When faced with budget cuts, municipalities wishing to implement new policy ideas can consider the potential knock-off effect of partnering up with civil society[14].

[14] AMICALL Project, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, p.24: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/project/attitudes-to-migrants-communication-and-local-leadership-amicall/

TUNIS CITY STAKEHOLDER GROUP – PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In the framework of the MC2CM project, the creation of a City Stakeholder Group (CSG) involved civil society actors and migrant associations in actions to deliberate on local governance issues – enabling them to become key agents of local migration governance. The CSG served as a platform to discuss the preliminary findings of the City Migration Profile, as well as the resulting City Priorities. In Tunis, the CSG enabled actors from migrant and student associations to join the discussion and act as a catalyst in the full recognition and appreciation of these actors by the city administration, leading to further synergies.

Civil society and migrant organisations can act as gateways to reach the most vulnerable and harder-to-reach migrant populations, such as undocumented migrants, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors.

c. CAPITALISING ON INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

Regional and international organisations and processes can offer a global platform for cities to share their successes and to ensure the representation of local voices. They can support cities both technically and financially, and comprise platforms and organisms developed in the context of the European Union (EU), such as the European Migration Forum, the Committee of the Regions and the EU Urban Agenda, as well as UN and global processes including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees.

City twinnings and exchanges can also serve the purpose of building bridges within and across national borders, supporting knowledge and experience sharing and mutual learning.

> ### UCLG AFRICA – SUPPORTING THE VOICE OF CITIES AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL
>
> Representatives of African local authorities gathered on the occasion of the 8th Africities Summit in Marrakesh to shape a pan-African contribution in view of the Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development. Acknowledging the key and growing role played by African local authorities in the field of migration, UCLG Africa, with support from MC2CM, brought forward the voices of local actors at a global level on the occasion of the Africities Migration Day. In this context, the past Africities Summit in Johannesburg saw the adoption of the Charter of African Local Authorities for Migrants, which brings forward the role of local authorities in fostering rights-based local migration governance. It recommends rethinking migration policies by avoiding criminalising international migration, integrating migrants in formal and informal economic sectors, and engaging in dialogues with migrant associations and communities. In addition, the Charter aims to foster the emergence of a network of local African authorities hosting migrants in order to operationalise local capacities on migration.

3. LEVERAGING THE POWER OF CULTURE

The unique cultural richness of the Mediterranean context can serve as a solid ground for cities to develop effective communication strategies vis-à-vis migration. Historical regional population movements, rural-urban mobility, and integration successes, can be cited to enact inclusion in the long term.

Emigration here can also play an important role in grounding the history of cities in a global migration context, across time and space. Cities can, through cultural institutions, set out concerted strategies to bring people together, create a space of living together and co-existence, creating a sense of belonging that values diversity brought on by other cultures.

a. DIVERSITY AS A LEVER FOR GROWTH

In the local context, diversity can represent a tool for growth. Inclusive societies are better positioned to achieve the gains in productivity required to sustain economic growth for a growing population. According to findings from McKinsey & Co.'s Global Infrastructure Initiative, the cities in which residents interact the most with each other on a social and economic level are the places that experience the highest levels of productivity and the highest levels of more equally distributed economic growth[15].

[15] https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/our-insights/inclusive-cities-are-productive-cities

Diverse cities, with efficient city-branding strategies, have higher chances to attract and retain international talents which contribute to the local economy and place cities on the global map. By nature of attracting migrants, cities can address skills shortages and harness the particular skills, innovation and global connections that these populations bring to city economies. This can translate into a comparative advantage in trade and attraction of investment in an era of global economic competition.

b. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND AMIDST DIVERSITY

Welcoming newcomers with their cultures and differences can seem threatening for host communities. Bringing people together requires searching for common ground beyond cultural differences. In this regard, cities can draw resources from their local migration history, working with schools on social cohesion, developing art and cultural festivals, promoting shared values, instigating a sense of belonging, mediating conflicts and developing activities at district-level with neighbourhood and local associations.

WELCOMING BOLOGNA – A SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME AIMING AT CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF MIGRANTS

The project Welcoming Bologna[16] was established in 2014, on the basis of the model of Welcoming America, to encourage intercultural dialogue across the city's various communities. Amongst other initiatives, the project has developed effective communication tools to combat the climate of fear and distrust towards newcomers. "Positive storytelling", a method that counters hate speech, is set out to change perspectives on immigration. Emotions are targeted in order to create empathy and understanding, and inclusive language is used, excluding distinctions of "us" and "them". Secondly, pictures and videos are shared through social media platforms and made available to a wider audience. Both tools shed light on the positive aspects and opportunities brought by newcomers, in enriching the city culturally, socially and economically. In addition, the project has a strong visual identity, is active on social media platforms and centralises external communication with stakeholders and local media through a press office.

[16] To learn more about the Welcoming Bologna project, refer to the section on tools and resources for cities p.28

Targeted communication campaigns promoting cultural diversity are not only a tool for combatting discrimination (see p. 18), but also for anchoring diversity within the contours of the city. As outlined in the EU Common Basic Principles, integration requires the participation of all residents, including migrant and non-migrant communities. Communication on migration should therefore be be implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner, to provide an open space for social encounter and dialogue, and foster the establishment of a common ground for all.

THE "SCHOOL OF LIVING TOGETHER" IN MOROCCO – PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND THE BENEFITS OF MIGRATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL

The "School of Living Together" (in French, L'Ecole du Vivre-Ensemble) is an initiative supporting schools to reinforce the notion of living together harmoniously and deconstruct prejudices within the school environment. The activities, mainly aimed at children between 9 and 12 years of age, were successfully implemented in the region of Casablanca in 2014, where the project has given rise to 20 activities in 25 schools. Overall, 659 children (of which 311 girls) took part in the activities. The results show an evolution in behaviour and attitudes, with major advances in the realm of gender (boy-girl), origin, self-affirmation and relations between different groups over exclusion. Following this initial positive experience, the project was replicated in 32 schools of the eastern region (Oriental), benefiting from the support of a series of institutions: Regional Council of Oriental, the Wilaya (province) of Oriental, the Development Agency of Oriental, United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLG Africa), the Regional Academy of Education and Training of Oriental, the National Federation of Parents' Associations of Morocco, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the National Commission of Human Rights, and the Belgian NGO Echos Communication. This experience highlights how investing in education is essential to promote diversity and interculturality as a vector of cohesion and wealth for society.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication on migration in cities represents an important lever to support local development and social inclusion policies. It is a complex task for cities that warrants a transversal approach, whereby all relevant municipal departments and external actors should be mobilised. Developing a communication strategy can indeed entail a range of activities and actions; from city-branding, intercultural activities, to municipal staff recruitment.

Cities around the Mediterranean show great differences in contexts. They nonetheless share a common understanding that communicating on migration is unavoidable and that countering the prevailing negative discourse narrative on migration is necessary to effectively work with migrant communities. Communicating openly on migration by involving citizens and addressing their concerns is necessary for sensitising various audiences of any city; without it, the danger of misunderstandings and social conflict is likely to increase.

In order to fulfil the potential for diversity as a lever for social capital and economic development, as well as to address issues of social cohesion, cities need to take on the challenge of communication. Only then can this diversity serve to boost social transformation, innovation, local development and long-term prosperity. Actions taken by cities and influencing day-to-day experiences of residents can further pave the way for the development of informed and evidence-based migration and integration policies at the local level.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. Know and address your audience

Communication is about developing targeted messages for specific audiences. Consider bespoke voices to tailor messages to the need of specific groups. This also includes addressing fears and concerns of citizens. Migration is a complex issue that is often misunderstood. It is important to attend to social cohesion and inclusion and contribute to the public debate to ensure more accuracy and depth on issues of integration, and migration, to better reflect experiences on the ground. Ultimately, a public debate and continuous dialogue that are set out in a respectful manner, even if controversial, can do more for social cohesion than avoiding open communication or ignoring concerns altogether.

2. Base action on evidence (before and after communicating)

The use of communication varies according to the policy relevance attributed to migration. Being able to understand the local context, despite the lack of evidence or data, thus represents a resource for communication and migration governance as a whole. Local

migration history and precedents can help build a communication strategy that aligns with the local identity and which people are more prone to concur with. Furthermore, monitoring and impact assessment are crucial to evaluating the results of communication activities.

3. Join forces

Civil society organisations represent important implementing partners whose expertise and knowledge of the field can transcend and complement municipal action. Their community networks and communication channels can have a multiplier effect and provide crucial entry points to vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups.

4. Use communication to the benefit of your city

Cities find themselves at the crossroads of horizontal communication, across municipal departments and other cities, and vertical communication, encompassing multilevel coordination with local, regional, national and international actors. These multiple channels provide cities with an ideal platform for coordination that can be used to showcase successful policies, reach out for support, learn, exchange and grow.

5. Search for common ground

While there are individuals who are very pro- and very anti-migration, most individuals are in the middle. Polemic language forces them to pick a side. Nuanced and balanced communication can help avoid polarisation. Cities should therefore aim in their communication to foster the establishment of open spaces and shared values to ensure the participation of all. This can be achieved through intercultural activities, citizens dialogues or neighbourhood-level actions.

6. Think strategically

Moving from ad-hoc activities towards long-term communication strategy involves dedicating resources or ear-marking funds to develop a sound and coherent plan. This can also include training staff, practitioners and the media on issues of migration, recruiting experts or attracting more diversity within municipal staff. However this should be seen as a long-lasting investment from which, even in the case of unsuccessful implementation, lessons learnt and experiences can be drawn.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR CITIES

This section provides a non-exhaustive selection of additional resources (handbooks, guidelines, webinars and others) to further learn about what works in other cities, to inspire cities to take action and support local policy development.

LOCAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

🖥 Listen Up! Media Strategies for Diverse Cities

To shed light on successful media strategies used by local radio broadcasters to improve audience ratings and share immigrants' experience

🌐 http://citiesofmigration.ca/webinar/webinar-listen-up-media-strategies-for-diverse-cities/

CREATING WELCOMING CITIES

🖥 Welcoming Cities: Municipal Leadership in Immigrant Integration

To learn about city-led public service campaigns creating safe, welcoming communities by challenging myths and changing misconceptions about immigrants and refugees

🌐 http://citiesofmigration.ca/webinar/webinar-welcoming-cities-municipal-leadership-on-immigrant-integration/

✂ Welcoming Bologna: a Methodological Toolkit

To learn about the experience of Bologna in developing policies for the reception and integration of refugees with the support of local stakeholders

🌐 http://www.welcomingbologna.eu/fr/resources/du-montage-de-projets-a-la-communication-notre-manuel-methodologique/

✂ Integrating Cities Toolkit: Enhancing public perception on migration and diversity

To support the work of cities and help improve perception of their population on migration and diversity

🌐 http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Enhancing%20public%20perception%20of%20migrants.pdf

TACKLING RUMOURS AT CITY-LEVEL

🌐 Do not feed the Rumour: Enhance diversity by deconstructing stereotypes and prejudices about immigrants

To present the experience of an anti-rumour strategy that has proved to have positive outcomes on locals' opinions of migrants

🌐 http://urbact.eu/do-not-feed-rumour

✂ Cities Free of Rumours: How to build an anti-rumour strategy in my city

To provide useful step-by-step guidelines to inspire any city interested in designing and implementing an anti-rumour strategy to build a more inclusive, open and intercultural city

🌐 https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/6374912/0/Prems+079615+GBRFinal+2587+CitiesFreeRumours+WEB+21x21.pdf/c01ea15a-0195-494f-820f-00ada611f01f

🗒 Anti-Rumour Handbook

To provide a systematised approach and methodology of the antirumours strategy (ARS) and practical examples to help cities, and other stakeholders to put it into practice

🌐 https://rm.coe.int/anti-rumours-handbook-a-standardised-methodology-for-cities-2018-/168077351c (english)

🌐 https://rm.coe.int/manuel-anti-rumeurs/16808a4545 (french)

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صعوبة التواصل
مشاكل في
لغة

MONEY – FINANCIAL
RESSOURCES
FOR COMMUNICATION

* COST of
COMMUNICATION

* CHOOSING WORDS to
COMMUNICATE

ليس لدي المعلومات
l'absence d'information
LACK OF INFORMATION