



DIVERSITY ADVANTAGE CHALLENGE

Selected
initiatives

Award ceremony:
24 March 2015

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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French edition:
Le défi « La diversité est un atout »

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The Council of Europe promotes a new approach to managing increasingly diverse societies based on the concept of diversity advantage.

What does this mean?

- ▶ Recognising that diversity is not a threat – it can bring competitive benefits for businesses, organisations and communities if managed competently and in the spirit of inclusion.
- ▶ Embracing diversity is not a gimmick for the branding of a business, organisation or city but a philosophy of governance, management and decision making.

the diversity advantage challenge

- ▶ is a means of raising awareness among the public and decision makers about the benefits of diversity and of providing a large number of examples of how organisations, businesses and cities have realised these benefits by creating innovative products, services, ideas and initiatives. The challenge will provide a better understanding of the conditions under which diversity generates innovation and the dos and don'ts of the process;
- ▶ is a competition to find the best real-life examples of the successful involvement of people from different cultural (ethnic, religious, linguistic) backgrounds in the design of innovative products, services, policies, projects and initiatives. The cases should illustrate how it is possible to harness cultural diversity for the benefit of businesses, organisations and communities.

On 27 November 2014, the Diversity Advantage Challenge jury short-listed 15 initiatives from the 63 applications received during its first deliberation. The 15 pre-finalists are presented below (in alphabetical order of countries). In January, the Jury has brought them down to 5 finalists.

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1. Diversity Media Week (Austria)

Objective

The Diversity Media Week is an event organised once a year in Austria. Its primary goal is to discuss the importance of diversity and inclusion in our society and above all in the mainstream media.

Method

The mainstream and non-mainstream media in Austria, journalists, media experts, students and those with and without diversity backgrounds are invited to take part in discussions, workshops, games, lectures and talks. During the week, both the mainstream and non-mainstream media report on a diversity topic of their choice, giving those with diverse backgrounds the opportunity to make the news themselves rather than be the ones that consume it, as is more often the case.

Results achieved

In Austria, those working in the field of diversity do so often in isolation. They operate in what one might call a “ghetto”, lobbying only for specific causes. The Diversity Media Week is the first event and platform to bring together all organisations, people and institutions working in different areas of the diversity field – with media as one common ground – and to pool their efforts to tackle diversity as a whole rather than in a fragmented way.



Challenges

The biggest challenge is to make people working within the field of diversity see and understand that there is more than just one dimension to the issue. All the different dimensions of diversity are equal and should be challenged equally and simultaneously.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

This project started as a platform for Migrants Media in Austria in 2008. In the course of our work we have realised that we were only working with one aspect of the diversity dimension: ethnic background. But people with different ethnic backgrounds can also be young people, elderly people, female people with disabilities, people with different sexual orientations or with different religions. As diverse as most of society is, integrating the different aspects of diversity was the key to our success.

Website

<http://www.m-media.or.at/diversitymediaweek/>

2. Ordinary Heroes (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Objective

To facilitate intercultural dialogue, understanding and co-operation that will contribute to reconciliation and sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the greater Balkans region.

Method

Ordinary Heroes is a multimedia peace-building project that uses stories of rescuers' behaviour from around the world to promote intercultural understanding. The project consists of several components, including: a documentary series highlighting the stories of rescuers and those they have saved; youth workshops designed to engage participants in activities around themes of transitional justice, discrimination and moral courage; a travelling photography exhibition consisting of the portraits and testimonies of rescuers from the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia; and a six-day regional event for 200 young people and activists that uses various forms of media to highlight heroic actions of people who acted on behalf of others in times of danger.

Results achieved

With Ordinary Heroes, the Post-Conflict Research Centre (PCRC) has engaged over 500 young people from across Bosnia and the Balkans. The project's documentaries will be broadcast on the Al Jazeera Balkans programme Regioscope, which reaches half a million viewers across the region. The project also won the 2014 Intercultural Innovation Award given by the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group.



Challenges

As a consequence of the war in the 1990s, Bosnia's constituent ethnic groups (Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats) predominantly live in ethnically exclusive regions within the country, isolated from each other. The PCRC's primary challenge is to bring these divided groups together to work towards overcoming the mutual mistrust that is creating barriers to peaceful coexistence.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

The Ordinary Heroes project not only incorporates the stories of Bosnian rescuers, but also features stories from the Holocaust, Rwanda and Cambodia. The diversity of cultures from which this project's rescuers originate makes the project applicable in contexts throughout the world.

Website

<http://p-crc.org/ordinary-heroes/>

3. Diversity in action: inhabitants build a new dynamic in their own neighbourhood! (France)

Objective

VoisinMalin aims to foster a positive dynamic in underprivileged neighbourhoods and to foster interactions and bonding between people, as well as with local institutions and services.

Method

Empowering inhabitants in underprivileged neighbourhoods is at the heart of the VoisinMalin project and the measure of its success. In the communities where we operate, we identify natural leaders among local inhabitants. These charismatic inhabitants reflect the diverse population of the neighbourhood and its variety of cultures, origins, languages, and life situations. We hire, train and task them to generate a dialogue with other inhabitants (mostly through door-to-door visits). These teams of “smart neighbours” give people advice and offer solutions on the major issues affecting their daily lives (transport, access to social rights, health, education, energy, poverty, housing, etc.). This way, VoisinMalin encourages people’s capacity to improve their own environment, and it highlights the resourcefulness of communities that are often considered a burden by the rest of the society.

Results achieved

Over the past four years 50 “smart neighbours” have established contact and built trust with 30 000 inhabitants, some of whom are greatly isolated. In any given neighbourhood, they succeed in reaching out to 80% of inhabitants and help them gain the confidence they need



to take part in the community's dynamic. Through active listening, they enable people to take advantage of changes in the environment and invent new solutions.

Challenges

People who live in underprivileged neighbourhoods in France tend to feel forsaken and lose confidence. They become mistrustful of each other and of public authorities. They seldom take part in the changes that happen in the neighbourhood because new projects or services are difficult to comprehend. Finally, there is a lack of communication with institutions or companies, or they fail to connect with people's everyday issues and habits.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

The cultural diversity of "smart neighbours" and the peer-to-peer dialogue of this diversity helps them engage with other inhabitants, and makes it possible for VoisinMalin to reach out to nearly everyone in the neighbourhood. Inhabitants can thus identify with people who resemble them and realise that they too can make a difference.

Website

www.voisin-malin.fr

4. Un monde de cliché(s) (France)

Objective

To examine stereotypes through a collective reflection and give a voice to people from different cultures on various topics defined by «clichés».

Method

We organised a photographic competition in 25 languages on the Internet; the pictures had to refute a cliché and be accompanied by a short caption. It was about using the opportunities offered by the Internet as a tool for renewing social exchanges. We decided to leave the wording open and uncensored. We exhibited 250 copies of 10 winning photographs in over 50 locations.

Results achieved

Our website was visited by people from 54 different countries and we received 116 photos. Subsequently, the project took the form of an exhibition, a book called Un monde de cliché(s), a workshop for colleges from the Alsace region (21 high schools, 25 replies, 850 students) and a café linguistique three times a month (about 1 000 participants over 200 hours).



CLICHÉ !

Challenges

We learned a lot with this project; it allowed us to build relationships and show, through the responses to our survey, that stereotypes are the result of a social construction. We are preparing for the future with the creation of tools for reflection and commitment.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

We have observed the participants' willingness to continue reflecting on the themes of "living together" and "enriching difference". The ideas and strengths of each individual lead and carry along those of others; it is in this way that the idea of building relationships is embodied, and is the key philosophy behind the work of TEJE (Travailler ensemble Jeunes et en engage-e-s).

Website

<http://www.teje.fr>

5. Give Something Back to Berlin (Germany)

Objective

Give Something Back to Berlin is an urban integration platform aimed at strengthening social cohesion by creating new ways to enable young global migrants to participate in their city and local communities through volunteering opportunities, finding creative solutions to social problems and building networks of diversity and participation.

Method

Our easy-access online platform GSBTB enables people to connect with a wide range of local volunteering projects. We also initiate our own larger innovative social programmes through participatory co-creation with individuals, social organisations and diverse creative scenes in Berlin. By inspiring active participation and social engagement through enthusiastic online story-telling and raising the community's awareness of relevant social, cultural and political discourse, we are able to bridge the gaps between different communities in Berlin and in particular help integrate new migrants to the city in a unique manner. Through our method we transform online interest into active offline engagement; all of these result in the lifting of social barriers and helping different worlds meet.

Results achieved

Over the last year and a half we have placed around 400 new Berliners from 35 countries in over 50 social projects across the city. We have won a number of prizes and been frequently quoted in national and international media as an example of a new form of fostering community



integration and urban participation, thereby spreading the message that global migrants are a potential force for social good. We have also been approached about exporting our unique model to other cities.

Challenges

Due to the very high interest in the project, we are today unable to accommodate all of the requests for information. For instance several key players from the international start-up scene have approached us to roll out employee volunteer programmes. Berlin as a poor city has public funding structures that lack financing opportunities for initiatives such as ours, meaning that a huge amount of social impact is being lost.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

The clear advantage of diversity is the curiosity, energy and skills that people bring not only to the city and the new neighbourhoods but also to GSBTB. Their unique set of life experiences from all over the globe can be used to create new ideas for solving social issues as well as empowering and creating bonds within local communities.

Website

www.givesomethingbacktoberlin.com

6. Neue Deutsche Medienmacher – for more diversity in the media (Germany)

Objectives

- 1) To increase the number of journalists with diverse ethnic backgrounds in mainstream German media.
- 2) To raise awareness among the media of discriminatory wording and to offer alternatives.

Method

One method is our mentoring programme, launched in 2010, where we enlist established journalists and senior media professionals to act as mentors for young journalists with migrant backgrounds. The mentors guide their mentees for a year, offer insights into and advise them on important questions about a career in journalism. Other methods include our continued presence at national debates on topics related to our objectives; we publish comments, hold talks at podium discussions and offer workshops for different groups. We have just published a glossary that we will be distributing to all major media, which we plan to follow up with workshops in the coming year.

Results achieved

To name just a few: our mentoring programme has been praised by Angela Merkel; our newly published glossary is receiving a lot of media coverage and copies have already been requested by several institutions; and many journalists have registered for access to our Vielfaltfinder, a database listing experts (all with a migrant/ethnic diverse background) from various fields of expertise.



Challenges

To make our database secure so that it can only be accessed by registered journalists and help protect the identity of the experts listed in it. Both our group as a whole and our individual members regularly face criticism from some right-wing politicians. Currently, our glossary is under attack from some extreme conservative sectors. Our engagement is based on voluntary commitment, which is an additional challenge since we lack regular funding for projects.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

Being selected as one of the finalists has filled us with pride, showing us that our efforts are valued. Should we win the Diversity Advantage Challenge, the prize money will help us to organise workshops and to distribute our new glossary to the media in 2015.

Website

www.neuemedienmacher.de

7.Über den Tellerand kochen (Germany)

Objective

We are raising awareness of the diversity and cultural richness of our fellow human beings and we are helping to enable valuable encounters among local residents and refugees around the subject of food and cooking.

Method

We believe that it is important to offer opportunities for exchanges between refugees and locals who share an interest and work together on a common goal, in order to create sustainable personal relations and trust. With our cookbook Recipes for a better us we are reaching the broad masses and creating awareness of the relations between locals and newcomers and the challenges of living together. In our cooking classes every refugee is acknowledged for his or her cooking skills and local people enjoy immersing themselves in a new culture and its food. With our regular community meetings we are creating a platform for people to meet, identifying other cultures and creating mutually beneficial networks for refugees and native residents.

Results achieved

With our events and the sale of over 6 000 cookbooks, we are constantly raising awareness of the benefits of diversity within Germany. Through cooking classes and community projects we have created a huge network of partners, brought together hundreds of people from different cultures and created just as many encounters among locals and refugees throughout Germany.



Challenges

Raising awareness among people who are not yet socially engaged with the abstract issues surrounding the positive perception of “refugees” and “asylum” can have a great impact but is not an easy task. Moreover, despite huge positive feedback, upscaling and increasing resources are persistent challenges. All members have been working pro bono until now.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

Cooking is culture and cultures are diverse. We use this premise to promote the integration of refugees into society. The act of cooking helps to bring people together on an equal footing and makes strangers become friends.

Website

www.ueberdentellerrandkochen.de

8. Lublin Regional Immigrant Support Network III (Poland)

Objective

Making diversity an accepted and appreciated feature of the local community. Raising understanding of the interdependence of all residents, regardless of their backgrounds, and of the distinct and indispensable contribution of each and every one to the common well-being.

Method

The selection of a multinational team from different cultural, continental and religious backgrounds demonstrates the great potential of diversity. Through our project, we involve foreigners, who live, work or study in Lublin, in our cultural, musical, social, linguistic, athletic and charitable functions. We conduct a practical approach thereby allowing local people (who have not had the chance to meet foreigners beforehand) to interact on a first-hand level with others from around the world. Moreover, foreigners are given free shopping cards, following contracts with local businesses, which provide discounts or special offers – an example of the bridging mechanism we follow, with both parties keen to develop mutual interaction.

Results achieved

First, we proved that diversity is not a disadvantage: a multicultural team functions more creatively. Second, we broke the isolation of hundreds (if not thousands) of foreigners who live here and allowed them to express their uniqueness and differences. Third, we observed a reverse in attitude from local residents towards the presence of foreigners and their traditions: enriching and self-discovering.



Challenges

We encountered some individuals who rigidly clung to their traditions, yet these incidences did not become problems. A big obstacle was to get commercial partners involved in the project. From the outset all partners thought we expected financial support from them. It sometimes took a long time to explain our intentions. Still, we think we have handled it quite well.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

We present ourselves as a living example of prosperity through diversity. We are the only project in the city (and moreover in Poland) which conducts such activities with Ukrainian, Syrian and Polish members, who all work closely and with care; we have become a contagious phenomenon!

Website

www.loginlublin.pl

9. Community Policing Safer Ameixoeira (Portugal)

Objective

The project aims to prevent and tackle local insecurity problems in close collaboration with local partners, community mediators, local residents and representatives of all cultural backgrounds in the community.

Method

The Community Policing Team in Ameixoeira works closely with community mediators, who participated in the early phase of the police officers' training, and later introduced the police team and their mission to the population. This contributes to raising police officers' awareness of the diverse cultural identities within the territory, and, therefore, their self-confidence in coping with and managing conflicts. This allows them to be better prepared to manage, but also prevent, such situations. This work in the field enhances police communication skills, makes it easier to develop a trusting relationship with the population on their daily foot patrols and become more capable of dealing positively with diversity.

Results achieved

An improvement of the relationship between the police and the residents and an increased sharing of knowledge among partners, which in turn allows for a more effective response to the population's concerns. The close work with community mediators gives the police a better knowledge of the main insecurities felt by sections of the community that do not usually communicate with the police.



Challenges

The main challenges are related to the police being able to include all the diverse points of view of the population while assessing security problems, since the fear of reprisals is still felt by the most vulnerable groups of the community. The sustainability of the community mediators' project and the capacity of the police organisation to continue developing training on intercultural competences also remain a challenge.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

The community policing in diverse cultural contexts benefits from the close relationship with community mediators, facilitates the process of raising the awareness of police officers about cultural differences and helps to positively address them by improving police–citizen relationships.

Website

<http://pm.cm-lisboa.pt>

10. Festival O Bairro i o Mundo – Loures (Portugal)

Objective

To change the image of neighbourhoods as devalued areas, end prejudice and stigma, increase the sense of belonging and promote these changes, through (mainly street) art and by allowing the municipality to work closely with the neighbourhoods.

Method

We organised a three-day festival starting with an open call for street artists, mainly graffiti artists, who visited the neighbourhoods and chose the walls they wished to paint. We organised a cultural event mixing local and migrant groups through dance, music, theatre, etc. During the festival the visitors could experience the ambience of the real neighbourhood, appreciate the street artists painting their big walls and attend music concerts. We have captured the involvement of residents, appealed to the social responsibility of companies, organisations and associations and had positive media attention. We brought the world to the neighbourhood and showed it to the world.

Results achieved

We have enhanced the area and promoted social inclusion, succeeded in changing attitudes to respect more the heritage and public spaces, involved residents in a change project and fostered feelings of security, self-esteem and community belonging. Outsiders are not afraid anymore to come and visit, and above all they restore the hope of the population.



Challenges

Understand how to change the public image of a stigmatised area by working directly «with» the resident population rather than «for» the population; capturing the attention of urban artists and the traditional media were the main challenges.

How the diversity advantage has contributed to the success of your project?

Diversity is the key to the project. DJs, dancers, singers and graffiti artists from different backgrounds united to make this event a true success; residents, producers of the festival and visitors were touched by this melting pot that showed that together we can build a better world.

Website

www.cm-loures.pt/

11. Ateneu in the street (Spain)

Objective

The project aims to promote social cohesion by involving people of different cultural backgrounds in games, music, sport and reading, in different outdoor spaces in the district of Sant Roc.

Method

Every two or three weeks, different kinds of activities are organised in different parts of the district. A team of 22 volunteers chooses the place and banners calling for more public investment in the neighbourhood are put up in the play area. Then volunteers use music to encourage the participation of children, young people and adults. More than 2 400 people from different backgrounds participate every year: from Pakistan, Morocco, Romania, India, and South America, as well as the native population which contains a high percentage of Roma. Since 2013, 10 young immigrant students from another of our organisation's projects (Youth project) have joined the organising team, which has so far been made up of native local residents.

Results achieved

- ▶ Increasing the number and the diversity of immigrant neighbours joining street activities aimed at promoting intercultural interaction and achieving a better coexistence between people of different cultural backgrounds in the neighbourhood.
- ▶ Encouraging native local residents to become more open-minded towards newcomers.



Challenges

- ▶ To maintain and increase both the number and the cultural diversity of young immigrant student volunteers on the organising team and to attract a greater number of culturally diverse neighbours participating in the activities.
- ▶ To work for a greater involvement of other civic organisations in the neighbourhood.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

The inclusion of young immigrant students as volunteers in the organising team has promoted a bigger social cohesion between people of different cultures in the neighbourhood. Making the most of their different cultural backgrounds has also enriched and diversified the activities offered.

Website

www.fundacioateneusantroc.org

12. XEIX, Fostering intercultural relations around local businesses (Spain)

Objective

The project aims to promote social cohesion through local retail (“0 km” or next-door retail) organising retail merchants’ association into small cores of social and economic promotion.

Method

The drawing up of a local strategic plan to develop a neighbourhood with culturally diverse retail led to the implementation of the intercultural project XEIX in collaboration with Barcelona City Council and the Retail Merchants’ Association ACEFP. The inclusion of intercultural mediators contributed to building a relationship of mutual trust and to generating activities and fruitful collaborations with different partners: fairs, commercial and cultural promotions, training and empowerment. The team works in a transversal and collaborative atmosphere making the project more versatile, inclusive and generating synergies. The participation of local and foreign media in this process is essential and adds to the project.

Results achieved

- ▶ Participation of diversity in the management team and activities of ACEFP included standardised and adapted training programmes that facilitated empowerment.
- ▶ Diversification of synergies and partners (individuals, organisations and institutions), generating a new image of diversity and interacting with the city through the local media (Catalan and Asian).



Challenges

Retail is suffering due to changes in consumer habits and new commercial models. The presence of diversity in retail contributes to the revival of the neighbourhood as well as challenging existing stereotypes. Training and the opportunity for encounters both in public and private spaces facilitate positive interactions. Time, humour and tolerance are pivotal to overcoming difficulties.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

Diversity has facilitated a creative work environment where new ideas and synergies not experienced before and which were previously assumed to be impossible materialised. Diversity is the driving force behind participation and the types of encounters that are essential for adopting an intercultural perspective.

Website

www.eixfortpienc.com/ca/

13. LärOlika (Sweden)

Objective

LärOlika aims to break down the invisible walls between different groups in society (professional, social, cultural, ethnic) by holding meetings where leaders meet and learn from each other.

Method

LärOlika gives people who live, work and have an impact in different parts of a city's society the opportunity to learn and grow through meetings with people who are not like themselves (different ages, professions, backgrounds, living conditions). Through a programme of six meetings over a two-month period, a highly diverse group of 50 leaders gather for facilitated conversations on different topics in different types of locations across one city. In the first year (2014), three programmes were run in Stockholm. During 2015, seven programmes in three cities will be organised.

Results achieved

Rather than talking about the need for integration in society, we achieve interaction across groups, through the participating individuals. As a result, new friendships and collaborations have started. New ideas have been developed and insights have emerged. And all 150 participants (so far) have broadened – and not just expanded – their networks.

Challenges

The main challenge is to reach the people who are not already active in diversity management or integration initiatives. It is these people who are likely to benefit the most from participation – those who disapprove of multicultural meetings, those who believe integration is not an important question for them, or those who feel left out in society.



How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

It is the diversity of people in the meetings that makes the programme successful. Thus, diversity is not just an advantage; it is the core of success. As one participant described LärOlika: "Prestige-free meetings and open conversations with people I normally do not exchange ideas with".

Website

www.larolika.se

14. Equalisters (Sweden)

Objective

Equalisters is a Swedish non-profit organisation aiming to correct the imbalances of representation and challenge inequalities in the media, culture, business and other contexts.

Method

We provide a social service, which uses the powerful dynamics of crowdsourcing to contribute to a more democratic, fair, and equal society. Our vision is a society where people are not defined and constrained by their gender, origin, ethnicity, physical ability, age or any other categories that tend to wrongly define who we are and what we obtain to take part in society. Through our network on social media we help organisations, companies, and journalists to find people who will contribute to more equal representation in any given context.

Results achieved

The excuse that competent people with atypical, diverse backgrounds do not exist is proven wrong through our many lists of individuals with high levels of experience and expertise. Since the organisation was initiated in 2010, we have made more than 800 searches and received over 30 000 suggestions from people with various competences.

Challenges

One general barrier is that Equalisters is a pioneer in its work and often there is a knowledge barrier between Equalisters and other organisations when it comes to the work we do, regarding our questioning of inequalities and norms. We often have to educate organisations and people about the importance of diversity, representation and equality.



How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

Every person maintains her/his own network. By combining the networks of over 70 000 people with different gender, age, cultural and national backgrounds, etc. we succeed in finding people that challenge the existing norms within different contexts.

Website

<http://www.rattviseformedlingen.se/>

15. Places of Welcome network (United Kingdom)

Objective

Places of Welcome is a growing network of local, volunteer-led, hospitable places designed to address loneliness and isolation by offering a friendly face, free refreshment, conversation and a gateway to participation.

Method

Developed out of the Birmingham Social Inclusion process “Giving Hope Changing Lives”, Places of Welcome responds to the challenge to make our city and its neighbourhoods more welcoming. We are aware that people are increasingly isolated and lonely and believe that the solution to this may lie in connecting people within the neighbourhoods in which they live. Therefore Places of Welcome is a branded network of small community organisations, including faith groups, who offer an unconditional welcome to any local people for a few hours a week. Together we have explored what welcome looks like and developed universal guiding principles. Places of Welcome is not owned by any single organisation but operates as a mutual partnership where decision making is shared.

Results achieved

28 Places of Welcome are now open in Birmingham and about 20 more are due to start in 2015. We deliberately do not monitor numbers of visitors, preferring to judge success on the emerging stories of the impact that different Places of Welcome are making on individual’s lives. We are gently raising the profile of Places of Welcome through a website www.placesofwelcome.org which identifies each Place of Welcome on a map with their address and opening times and this is attracting interest in the wider West Midlands and beyond.



Challenges

It has been reasonably easy to attract hosts to open local Places of Welcome as the vision is easily captured and participant groups understand the notion of equitable partnership. But often this is not the case for bigger organisations who want structures, accountability and clarity about which organisation owns the project. A challenge will be to respond to the issues that arise in Places of Welcome such as responding better to people with mental health issues.

How has the diversity advantage contributed to the success of your project?

This project has definitely benefited from the understanding and friendships that have grown from the work of the Near Neighbours programme which seeks to build connections between people of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds. We have been able to use this platform of new relationships to enable broader participation.

Website

www.facebook.com/PlacesOfWelcomeBirmingham

Assessment criteria and award ceremony

The jury assessed the applications on the basis of the criteria outlined below.

Relevance is understood as the degree to which the project or action corresponds to the objective of the challenge – to demonstrate that its success is due to a large extent to the participation of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in its conception and implementation.

Degree of social innovation is understood as the innovativeness, in a given context, of the project or action; the proposed product, service or process implied by this solution; or the business, implementation, organisation or social models underpinning this solution. The application should clearly demonstrate that the innovation is due in large part to the contribution of people from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds.

Impact is assessed as the realised potential of the project or action to deliver intended positive results for individuals or communities. Impact should be demonstrated through some form of measurement or evaluation, preferably by independent sources.

Sustainability is understood as the capacity of the project or action to continue delivering results over time and have significant, long-lasting and increasing impact.

Scalability is assessed as the likelihood of the project or action having the capacity to be inspirational for others in the same community, country and beyond and/or whether it has already been replicated elsewhere.



The award ceremony will be held on 24 March 2015 during the Plenary Session of The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (23-25 March 2015).

The winner will receive a prize to the value of 10 000 euros presented by Jean-Claude Frécon, President of The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The ceremony is open to all participants. Register at the following address: www.coe.int/congress

The jury



Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković,

Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe

President of the Jury

Snežana Samardžić-Marković was Minister of Youth and Sports in the Government of Serbia. She graduated from the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Philology. Between 2005 and 2007 she was Assistant Minister of Defence and was in charge of strategic planning, international military co-operation and the Verification Centre, as well as being Co-President of the Serbia–NATO Defence Reform Group. From 2001 to 2005, she worked in the bilateral department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Deputy Director for Neighbouring Countries, Deputy Head of Mission and Adviser at Serbia and Montenegro's Embassy in Oslo and Adviser at the Directorate for Europe. In February 2012, Snežana Samardžić-Marković resigned as Minister of Youth and Sports in Government of Serbia further to her appointment as Council of Europe's Director General for Democracy.



Mr Leen Verbeek,

Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe

Leen Verbeek is a locally elected representative and manager from the Netherlands. Formerly mayor of Purmerend (2003-08) and alderman for the municipality of Houten (1990-94), he has been King's Commissioner for the province of Flevoland since 2008. He chairs the provincial parliament of the province of Flevoland and advises the home secretary on the appointment of mayors. An experienced manager, he has contributed for over 34 years to the public administration at local, regional, national and international levels. He has been a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Socialist Group) since 2010 and is currently

Congress Vice-President. He has also chaired the Committee of Recommendation of Amnesty International (department Almere) and is the co-founder and chair of the International Tree Fund (rural projects in Latin America).



Mr Jaime Lanasp Gatnau,
President of La Caixa Foundation

Jaime Lanasp Gatnau serves as the President, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of “la Caixa” Foundation at CaixaBank, S.A. Mr Lanasp Gatnau has been an Executive Vice-President of Welfare Projects at Caja de Ahorros y Pensiones de Barcelona (la Caixa Group) since 1 March 2008 and served as its Executive Vice President of Human Resources. He serves as Director of Autopistas, Concesionaria Española, S.A.U. He serves as a Board Member for Invercaixa and Autopistas. He has served as a Director of Boursorama since May 16, 2006. He has also served as a Director of Abertis Infraestructuras S.A.



Ms Kinga Göncz,
Representative of the Club of Madrid, Chair of the Roma Advisory Board of the Open Society Institute

Kinga Göncz (Hungary) has recently been appointed as Chair of the Roma Advisory Board of the Open Society Institute. She was a member of the European Parliament between 2009 and 2014, the Vice-Chairwoman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. She was also part of the Delegation for Relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo¹ and a substitute member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. Before joining Parliament, Ms Göncz was Minister of Foreign Affairs in Hungary from 2006 to 2009 and Minister of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities from 2004 to 2006. She was nomi-

1. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

nated as Minister without portfolio of Equal Opportunities in 2004, and was appointed as Political State Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs in 2002.



Ms Anita Bhalla,

Journalist

Ms Bhalla's 26-year media career with the BBC has been varied; from being one of the first regionally based bi-media correspondents to being Head of the BBC's Public Space Broadcasting. She has also presented Channel 4's Eastern Eye and other national programmes. She is currently Chair of the Creative City Partnership and MAC (Midlands Arts Centre) and Chair of Performances Birmingham (Town Hall and Symphony Hall). Ms Bhalla has a strong commitment to public service and her portfolio in this area ranges from being a member of Birmingham's recent Social Inclusion Commission to being a past chair of Grestone Junior and Infant School, past member of the governing body of Birmingham City University to currently being a trustee of the Children's University. Ms Bhalla is the Chair of the Creative City Partnership.

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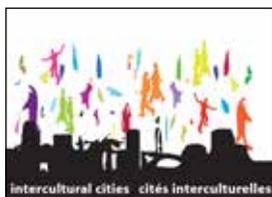
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is a pan-European assembly of territorial authorities. It is the only European body tasked with monitoring the state of local and regional

democracy and the development of local and regional self-government throughout Europe. It has 636 members who hold elective office in the 47 member States. It pays particular attention to the application of the principles laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (the first internationally binding treaty that guarantees the rights of communities and their elected authorities) which has been in force since 1985. It encourages the devolution and regionalisation processes as well as transfrontier co-operation between cities and regions.

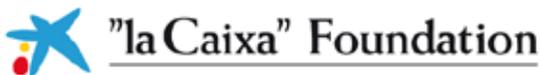
www.coe.int/congress



Cities can gain enormously from the entrepreneurship, variety of skills and creativity associated with cultural diversity, provided they adopt policies and practices that facilitate intercultural interaction and inclusion. The Intercultural cities programme supports cities in reviewing their policies through an

intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage. The programme proposes a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of the process.

www.coe.int/interculturalcities



Fundación Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona, "la Caixa", From the start, the main activity of "la Caixa" was its dedication to family savings, and offering all its clients a pension insurance when this kind of benefit was not yet available in Spain. Thus, from the beginning "la Caixa" was characterised by a solid social commitment and a willingness to work for the common interest, both through their financial activities and through its Welfare Projects, which fund and maintain activities of social, educational, cultural and scientific nature. This vocation for service has been maintained throughout the years, and is strengthened by the creation of the Fundación Bancaria Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions de Barcelona, "la Caixa".

www.fundacionbancarialacaixa.org



The Club de Madrid is the world's largest independent group of democratic political leaders, committed to addressing the challenges of democratic transition and consolidation where they can make a difference. The principal added value of the Club de Madrid is a unique membership of nearly 100 democratically elected former presidents and prime ministers, from over 60 countries, willing and able to share their diverse expertise, experience and networks in support of democratic values and leadership worldwide. As former presidents and prime ministers no longer in public office, Club de Madrid Members are not politically constrained and are thus more free to share their experience and offer strategic advice.

www.clubmadrid.org/

The Diversity Advantage Challenge is a competition to find the best real-life examples of the successful involvement of people from different cultural backgrounds in the design of innovative products, services, policies, projects and initiatives.

- ▶ About the Challenge
- ▶ The 15 shortlisted initiatives
- ▶ Assessment criteria and award ceremony
- ▶ The jury
- ▶ Partners

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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