



Occasional Paper Series

Number 44

Migrant Integration in Cities: Learning from Others

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ISSN: 1922-558X (online ISSN 1922-5598)

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Introduction

Cities are a magnet for migrants. Some arrive with a job offer. Others join one or more family members who immigrated some years earlier. Still others, sometimes after a long, risky journey, have claimed asylum. Many of these migrants will receive support from established residents of the same background. The migrants will also often benefit from the services of government agencies and other organizations that work to facilitate the integration of new arrivals.

Many countries have national integration policies or something similar. In some cases, restrictive measures, such as bans on certain forms of religious dress, are put forward—dubiously—as integration policies. Cities also have many different migrant integration initiatives, whether sponsored by local government or civil society organizations—or both. Moreover, the level of activity in many cities in North America and western Europe has risen in recent decades.

Following a discussion of cities as a key locus of migrant integration, this paper explores seven examples of innovative practices developed in the past decade or so. Two of the cases are of networks that promote learning among cities. I then profile five city-based initiatives—two from Canada and one each from Germany, Spain and the United States. The countries, all of which were among the 10 top destination countries for international migration in 2015, were chosen in part because they are federal or—in the case of Spain—quasi-federal. It seemed useful to consider city governments' role in this policy field within a multilevel context. Each of the seven cases draws on a semi-structured interview with the current head of the program or project, or one of the original leaders.¹ I conclude with a number of observations drawn from the cases and the academic and policy literature on this topic.

The meaning and scope of migrant integration

Almost a decade ago, the Forum of Federations completed a multi-author project—which I directed—on immigrant integration in seven federal countries. That project developed the following definition:

Immigrant integration is a process through which newcomers become capable of participating in the economic, social and civic/political life of the receiving country. Acquiring these capacities is not only the responsibility of newcomers: the receiving society and its governments must provide instruments and resources that will allow immigrants (and their families) to do so. (Seidle and Joppke 2012, 9)

We also took the position that newcomer integration is a broad government responsibility that should not fall solely to the department or agency responsible for admission; and that integration cannot be only the responsibility of national governments.²

In fact, national governments' integration policies and programs vary a good deal. In Germany an integration course with a strong emphasis on language training is administered by the Federal Office

¹ I am grateful to the persons I interviewed (see list in the References section) for their time and valuable insights. I would like to thank Rupak Chattopadhyay and Els de Graauw for their comments on the initial version of this paper; and Nuria Franco Guillen, Holger Kolb, Francesco Pasetti, Ramon Sanahuja and Ricard Zapata-Barrero for their assistance on particular points.

² For an analysis of the growing importance of intergovernmental relations on migrant integration, see Adam and Hepburn (2018). This special issue includes case studies of Belgium, Canada, Italy and Spain.

for Migration and Refugees.³ In Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) manages a major program for reception and integration (including language training) for the entire country except the province of Quebec. In Quebec, the corresponding services are administered by the provincial government, which receives an annual grant from the federal government.⁴ The United States has what has been described as a *laissez-faire* approach to migrant integration (Bloemraad and de Graauw, 2012). The US federal government has no program comparable to those in Canada and Germany but does administer a modest civic integration program. Although the Spanish government had a Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration, it expired in 2014 and has not been replaced by a similar measure. Further details about the four countries are provided in Table 1.

In the years since the book resulting from the Forum project was published, the political and other contexts related to migration have changed a good deal. One major factor has been the recent arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Europe and the United States. The flow of large numbers of migrants into the US began even a good deal earlier. In 2015, Germany became the prime destination for refugees fleeing war-torn Syria. That year it took in some 890,000 refugees and received 476,649 applications for political asylum (Trines 2017). Even Canada has, since mid-2017, experienced a considerable increase in asylum claimants, mostly arriving by land from the US (Schertzer and Paquet 2019).

In response to such flows, governments and civil society organizations in many countries are putting greater priority on services for refugees and asylum claimants. Those two migrant groups have needs that are often quite different from those of economic immigrants (see Doomernik and Ardon 2018). In light of these developments, this paper uses the broader term “migrant integration.”

Although the emphasis on a two-way process inherent in the definition quoted above remains valid, some policy experts maintain that, because of the harsher climate in a number of countries, the perspective needs to be enlarged. For example, a 2019 report on revamping integration policy in Europe called for greater attention to “multifaceted dynamics”:

Numerous social challenges intersect with—but extend much further than—integration. . . . Support for nativist populist movements and political polarization are on the rise at a time when governments are grappling with the impact of large-scale spontaneous migration for community cohesion as well as flagging public trust in politicians and the media. (Benton and Ahad 2019, 1)

This more polarized context is affecting the scope, parameters and targets of certain integration initiatives, as some of the case studies in this paper show.

Cities as a key locus of migrant integration

Although migration has long been a largely urban phenomenon, some cities are stronger magnets than others. For example, in 2015, 36% of the immigrants in Canada resided in the Toronto metropolitan area (Statistics Canada 2017). In the United States 65% of authorized immigrants were concentrated in 20 cities in 2014 (World Economic Forum 2017, 27).

³ The courses are mandatory for third-country nationals (those from outside the European Union) who have no or little knowledge of the German language and of Germany. See table 1 for additional details.

⁴ The grant is governed by a 1991 agreement with the federal government. See table 1 for further details.

However, even the largest cities often do not have sufficient policy autonomy or resources to play a major role in migrant integration. In Canada and the US, municipal governments are a constitutional responsibility of the provincial and state governments, respectively. In Canada, the municipalities' "formal autonomy has been highly circumscribed" (Good 2019, 217). In the US, state capitals do not always exercise such a heavy hand. For example, some states have authorized cities to adopt their own charter, which allows them additional leeway in certain areas.

As for their financial capacity, in Canada, transfers—mainly from provincial governments and often for specific purposes—represent 43% of municipal governments' total revenue (OECD 2016). Although local governments in the US receive transfers from the state and federal governments (the latter are usually earmarked), many US cities have a sales tax. Some cities—such as New York City—even levy an income tax. In Germany, more than 80% of local government tax revenues comes from a share of personal and corporate income taxes transferred from the federal and *Länder* governments (Slack 2016, 19). In Spain, local governments receive 50% of their revenue from their own sources and shared taxes (including income tax) and 37% from transfers, according to 2013 data reported in OECD 2016. As a rule, cities that rely more on own-source revenues and less on transfers have greater flexibility to develop their own programs.

Local-level migrant integration services seem to be more extensive in countries where city governments face fewer constitutional restraints or else are better resourced—or both. One clear example is Germany, where a number of cities were active providers of integration services well before the influx of Syrian refugees. In 2016, 43% of the €21.7 billion federal budget for refugees was transferred to the *Länder* and municipalities (Kroet 2017).⁵ Spain had a Strategic Plan on Citizenship and Integration (known as PECE) at the national level from 2007 to 2014. It was intended in part as a framework for cooperation with the other levels of government. However, according to a senior official in the city government of Barcelona, a pioneer in migrant integration, "PECE had zero impact on the framing of the policies of local and regional governments [those of the autonomous communities]."⁶ Since 2015, there has been a national strategy for the reception and integration of refugees and asylum seekers under the Ministry of Employment. To carry out the strategy, nongovernmental organizations receive funding from the ministry.

In the United States, the federal government's limited role has meant that "local communities . . . have found themselves, de facto, confronted with the challenges of integration, often without the resources or know-how to address them" (Bloemraad and de Graauw 2012, 206). However, many cities have developed programs or administrative structures, or both, to promote migrant integration. For example, there has been an increase in the number of American cities with immigrant affairs offices or the equivalent. Although their functions vary, de Graauw (2019) identifies a number of commonalities among the offices: developing and implementing programs, coordinating existing city programs to foster immigrant integration, sponsoring public education on the benefits of immigration and encouraging immigrant civic engagement.

⁵ Recent federal budgets for refugees have included financial aid to countries affected by the refugee flows, including Greece and Turkey, as well as humanitarian aid for preventive measures in crisis countries. Spending at the subnational level has been high. For example, in 2015 Hamburg (a city-state) spent €586.2 million on services delivered to refugees (Katz, Noring and Garrelts 2016, 16).

⁶ Private communication with the author, 7 May 2019.

Increasingly, integration initiatives in cities are being developed in collaboration with, and often partly financed by, partners such as foundations from the private sector or civil society, or both. Multi-sector initiatives bring a number of potential benefits. As de Graauw observes, organizations rooted in the community “have learned how best to provide an array of... services, allowing them to build trust with immigrants and refugees who often are reluctant or fearful to contact government about the help they need.” (de Graauw 2019, 174)

Programs for asylum seekers make up a large part of the increase in local migration integration initiatives. A report released after the post-2015 influx to Europe observed: “In most countries, cities do not have a legal competence to care for asylum seekers and refugees. Nevertheless, the high number of arrivals and the slow reactions by national authorities have often left cities at the forefront, forcing them to play a role without having a legal mandate [or] any specific budget to do so.” (Eurocities 2016, 13)

Cities also provide a range of services that do not specifically target migrants but often have significant impacts on integration—for example, social housing, job creation programs and zoning. The use of public space for parks and other facilities that are open to all residents is another important local government responsibility. Many city governments have begun to position migrant integration as a ‘horizontal’ concern to be addressed by the various city departments or local agencies whose work can affect migrant integration. However, this is not always the case even in cities with large migrant-background populations.

Table 1: Principal migrant integration programs – by level of government

	Canada	Germany	Spain	United States
Federal/ national	C\$1.8 billion (2017-2018): settlement programs including language training to 9 provinces and grant to Quebec. Programs are managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and delivered by nongovernmental organizations.	€859 million (2017) for integration courses, mainly language training, from Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; delivered by a range of providers. More than 40% of 2016 federal budget for refugees transferred to <i>Länder</i> and municipalities.	National strategy for the reception and integration of refugees and asylum seekers – Ministry of Employment (since 2015). Forum for the social integration of immigrants: 3 levels of government, migrant organizations, others; advisory role.	US\$9.4 million (2018): for permanent residents to prepare for naturalization; or learn English, US history and civics. A citizenship and Assimilation Grant Program funds organizations to do this. (No national integration policy.)
Provinces/ <i>Länder</i>/ autonomous communities (ACs)/states	C\$490 million (2017-2018) from federal government to Quebec for integration, including French courses. Other provinces: various programs, including Ontario's Newcomer Settlement program.	Most influential actors in integration – partly in areas such as education – that do not exclusively target migrants	ACs have programs within their areas of competence. Catalonia, Basque Country, Andalusia have been leaders. Catalonia: integration plan since 1993, National Pact for immigration since 2008.	At least 27 states fund integration programs to teach English or biliteracy (2017). At least 15 states added parts of US naturalization exam to high school civics or testing requirements (2017).
Local/ municipalities	Toronto the leader (with some programs on employment). Vancouver: Immigration Partnership and New Start Strategy (2016-25). Montreal: member of the Intercultural Cities Program.	Extensive involvement of large cities since 1970s. Have become bigger players in labour market and social policy – impacts on migrant integration. Faced significant pressures after 2015 refugee crisis.	Barcelona a leader with its 2010 Interculturality Plan (Anti-Rumour Strategy, reception guidelines). 19 cities in the Spanish Intercultural Cities Network (Intercultural Cities Program).	39 cities with offices for immigrant affairs (2016). Collaboration with community organizations is common, especially in cities such as New York, San Francisco.

Source: Prepared by author based on a range of sources.

City networks

Migration expert Tiziana Caponio (2019, 1) has observed that “since the early 2000s there has been a multiplication of initiatives aimed at establishing links between cities experiencing similar migration challenges in Europe and beyond.” Examples include the Migration and Integration Working Group at Eurocities, the European Coalition of Cities against Racism and Cities for Action. This section covers two city networks established a decade ago—Intercultural Cities and Welcoming America. The focus is on their origins, the challenges they have faced and their main achievements.

Intercultural Cities

Although a number of organizations, including the European Commission, have used the principle of interculturalism to guide their policy development, the Council of Europe has been the leading advocate. According to the Council: “. . . Interculturalism is about explicitly recognizing the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing and hybridization between cultural communities” (quoted in Baglai 2015, 10).

Interculturalism has been described as a “policy of proximity” (Zapata-Barrero and Cantle 2019, 201) and is sometimes linked to the contact hypothesis in social psychology. In research begun in the 1950s, Gordon Allport found evidence that, under certain conditions, contact between people of different backgrounds could reduce bias: “To be maximally effective, contact and acquaintance programs should lead to a sense of equality in social status, should occur in ordinary purposeful pursuits, avoid artificiality, and if possible enjoy the sanction of the community in which they occur” (Allport 1958, 454). Subsequent research has provided evidence that intergroup contact is effective at reducing intergroup biases. Yet questions nevertheless remain about what features of the contact situation are necessary to achieve a reduction of intergroup bias (Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami 2003).

The concept of the intercultural city originated with the British think tank Comedia. In 2004, it launched a two-year research program, “The Intercultural City: Making the Most of Diversity.” Among its aims were to “seek to understand the role of intercultural networks and intermediary change-agents, finding out who they are, how they work and what are the conditions which either encourage or hinder them.” The program was directed by Phil Wood, who has written extensively about intercultural cities (see, for example, Wood and Landry 2008).

The Council of Europe established its Intercultural Cities program (ICCP) in 2008.⁷ The ICCP considers the intercultural cities approach most suitable for cities of at least 30,000 with a diverse population (people of different nationalities and origins, and with different languages or religions/beliefs). This population criterion reflects the minimum capacity for actions and services that can be designed or redesigned through the intercultural lens. The following are the main steps for cities that want to become members:

⁷ Sources for the remainder of this section (unless otherwise indicated): Intercultural Cities website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/home>; Guidikova interview.

- To allow the assessment of its policies, a candidate city completes the Intercultural Cities Index questionnaire. If both parties are satisfied, they sign a statement of intent for participation in the program and a financial agreement.⁸
- An expert visit—of at least one expert and a Council of Europe representative—takes place to meet city officials and local stakeholders. The visitors confirm the Index results and make an in-depth assessment of the city’s achievements and needs in intercultural policies and governance. The visit results in an intercultural profile, which becomes the basis for subsequent work with the city.
- Following accession, member cities set up an intercultural support group and begin reviewing their policies from an intercultural perspective. The cities then revise these policies and integrate them into a comprehensive policy strategy. To support this process, the Council of Europe provides experts and facilitators for policy discussions within the city and organizes thematic workshops and study visits.

The ICCP also runs initiatives to test innovative approaches and methodologies in specific fields such as myth-busting (notably the anti-rumour strategy), diversity advantage in media, and business and entrepreneurship.

As of April 2019, there were 135 member cities—mainly in Europe, but also in Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Morocco and the United States. A number of other cities participate less formally—for example, through involvement in one of six national Intercultural Cities networks.

Irena Guidikova has been part of the ICCP team since the program began in 2008. Asked about challenges they faced, she mentioned (Interview C) that officials often perceive integration as a process of granting rights; once that is done, the job is finished. For Guidikova, this is only the beginning: “Integration is about creating community connections and a sense of belonging.”

Guidikova identified the achievements of the ICCP as the growth in the number of member cities and the Intercultural Cities Index. The Index is used not only to assess city applications but also as a research tool. For example, an in-depth study that used 14 indicators from the Index found that “cities with stronger intercultural policies are significantly more likely to have populations that think foreigners are good for the city, services are trustworthy and efficient, and the city is safe and good for finding jobs” (Joki and Wolffhart 2017, 5).

The ICCP itself is conscious of the importance of trying to assess impacts. For example, its 2016-19 medium-term strategy states that “. . . it is important to consolidate the evidence base of the programme by collecting data to demonstrate that cities which have adopted the intercultural integration approach are successful in terms of other outcomes such as improved safety, better educational outcomes, higher rates of employment and entrepreneurship, lower level[s] of discrimination, etc.”

Looking forward, Guidikova mentioned that one goal is to add more cities to the network, while noting that there are capacity limits (the ICCP has only four fulltime staff). She would also like to influence national and regional governments: “Their competences need to be seen through an intercultural lens.”

⁸ **Member cities contribute €5,000 a year** toward the administrative costs of the program. For European cities, expenses for index analysis, expertise, international meetings and visits are generally covered by the Council of Europe. For non-European cities, the costs of expert visits and travel for network events are to be covered by the city.

The challenge of fostering inclusion and positive community relations in smaller centres is also on the agenda.

The ICCPP's growth has been impressive: the program embraces and shares innovative practices, and the Intercultural Cities Index is a useful achievement. The extensive network of cities constitutes what the ICCP—quite rightly—describes as a learning community. There is good reason to expect that the program will continue to demonstrate the relevance of interculturalism as an approach to migrant integration.

Welcoming America

Welcoming America, a nonprofit organization, is another well-established city network.⁹ The “Who We Are” section of Welcoming America's website reflects a commitment to inclusion:

A growing number of places recognize that being welcoming leads to prosperity. Welcoming America provides the roadmap and support they need to become more inclusive toward immigrants and all residents.

Our unique local approach goes beyond a single program or service to work with institutions across the community to reduce the barriers that immigrants face to fully participating and build bridges between newcomers and long-time residents.

Welcoming America is the fruit of a grassroots movement that began in Nashville, Tennessee (a newer migrant destination). As with many such movements, the ideas and dedication of a local leader are key to the story. David Lubell founded the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition in Nashville in 2001 and was a leader in the fight against anti-migrant legislation at the city and state levels. There had been a significant increase in migrants to the Nashville area, and tensions with migrants rose considerably in the 2000s.¹⁰

In 2005, Lubell founded Welcoming Tennessee and began to implement a novel approach which he described as follows:

If we had come in and told people they should start liking immigrants, it wouldn't have worked. We needed to identify people within the local community who could reach out to the receiving community, long-time Tennesseans, and have empathy for them, to connect with their concerns, not call them racists. (Quoted in Bornstein 2014)

With financial support from foundations, Welcoming Tennessee organized community dinners, meetings at churches and talks to Rotary clubs. It trained hundreds of “community ambassadors” to help build bridges across racial and ethnocultural lines. Nashville's Metro Council launched initiatives with similar objectives. Between 2006 and 2008, according to a regularly conducted statewide survey, attitudes towards migrants became less negative.

⁹ Sources for this section (unless otherwise indicated): Welcoming America website: <https://www.welcomingamerica.org/>; Lubell interview; Bornstein (2014).

¹⁰ Communities that have seen recent influxes of migrants at relatively high rates tend to be more susceptible to negative rhetoric (Downs-Karkos and Peric 2019, 3).

A number of migrant advocacy groups from other parts of the US indicated interest in the Welcoming Tennessee model. Lubell tapped into this and led the creation of Welcoming America in 2009. Ten years after its founding, Welcoming America includes 98 local governments and 122 nonprofit organizations. Its headquarters are in Decatur, Georgia, and as of April 2019 there were 16 staff.

Welcoming America has a number of projects and resources, including:

- The Welcoming Economies Global Network, a project in partnership with Global Detroit, is a regional network of more than 20 initiatives across the Rust Belt that tap into the economic development opportunities created by migrants.
- The Welcoming Institute delivers customized online and in-person training, as well as individualized technical assistance and consulting, to local governments, non-profit organizations, schools, businesses and others. Such services have been provided to more than 2,000 organizations and 10,000 individuals since 2009.
- The Welcoming Refugees Resource Library is a repository of resources developed since 2012. It includes a guide for organizing contact-building events based in part on activities sponsored by Welcoming Michigan (Welcoming America n.d.)

Asked about challenges that Welcoming America faced, Lubell noted that although city governments do not have a lot of money, people who are willing to invest come together and help build multi-sector collaborations. Lubell added (Interview E): “There is more room to grow, innovate and create a welcoming ecosystem at the local compared to the national level.”

In a paper released for Welcoming America’s tenth anniversary, the authors observe that one of the greatest current concerns is the “the potential mainstreaming of hate and prejudice” (Downs-Karkos and Peric 2019, 3). In this regard, the lack of significant interaction between people of different backgrounds needs to be addressed. But there is no easy recipe:

Well-designed dialogues and contact-building activities that bring people together across race, ethnicity, and immigration background continue to hold promise, though making sure these groups truly reflect the diversity of the community takes serious intentionality and extra time. (Downs-Karkos and Peric 2019, 5).

In 2015, Lubell took another big step by establishing Welcoming International. Along with founding partners, the organization is supporting work in Germany, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Lubell’s vision and dedication, along with the collaboration of dedicated city officials and partner organizations, have taken the welcoming model well beyond Nashville. Including smaller centres with growing migrant populations is a noteworthy achievement. The merits of being attuned to local conditions, community leadership and learning from experience in other cities have been clearly evident as Welcoming America extended its reach.

In addition to city networks such as the two profiled above, other initiatives contribute to shared learning among city governments, community groups and others. Examples include the annual International Metropolis conferences and the National Immigrant Integration Conferences in the US.

Academic research groups, which increasingly bring together scholars from different universities and countries, also contribute to the diffusion and evaluation of innovative practices.

Promising practices in selected cities

This section contains five case studies of migrant integration initiatives from Spain, Germany, the United States and Canada. Additional details about each of the initiatives are provided in Table 2.

Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona, with a population of 1.6 million, is Spain's second-largest city (the metropolitan area has some 3.2 million residents). In 2018, 21% of Barcelona's population was foreign-born (Council of Europe 2018).

Barcelona city council released its first Interculturality Plan in 2010—the result of more than a decade's work. Its overall goal was to transform the city into an “intercultural Barcelona,” which was described as follows: “The intercultural city does not consist of different cultures, but of people of different cultures. These people meet, discuss, know each other and work together on a common project for the city.” (Ajuntament de Barcelona n.d., 6)

In response to a question in the survey conducted during the consultation process leading to the Interculturality Plan, some 48% of respondents replied that there were four main factors making it difficult for Barcelona's culturally diverse residents to live together. These factors were a “lack of knowledge of the other, as well as current rumours, stereotypes and prejudices about the other unknown person” (Baglai 2015, 10). To address this, the Interculturality Plan included an Anti-Rumour Strategy. According to Daniel de Torres, then the Immigration Commissioner for Barcelona city council, counteracting the “rumour phenomenon” had to be done “directly without euphemisms. That is, through a strategy that talks openly about ‘rumours.’ ” (Carr 2014, 13). As for the target audience, de Torres (Interview B) explains that “we have to accept that lots of people have prejudices and stereotypes.” Because these hamper interactions between people from different backgrounds, he added, it is important to address the views of the majority.

Developing the Anti-Rumour Strategy entailed the following steps:

- identifying major rumours
- collecting data and developing arguments to address false rumours
- creating a network of local actors from civil society
- empowering and training “anti-rumour agents”
- designing and implementing anti-rumour campaigns

One anti-rumour campaign created and disseminated new tools and resources such as the highly successful comic book series “Blanca Rosita Barcelona.”

Asked about challenges, de Torres noted that rumours are complex and there was a risk of adopting an overly superficial approach. Training those involved in countering rumours, notably the anti-rumour agents, was important (thousands of people have been trained). The agents' role is to dispel myths and spread the campaign through local organizations and Barcelona's neighbourhoods. This includes contradicting uninformed ideas about migrants as they carry out their daily activities.

On achievements, de Torres recounted that the initiative received considerable positive media attention. Political parties from across the spectrum publicly supported it. A detailed evaluation of the Anti-Rumour Strategy gave it a generally positive rating, while highlighting a number of specific areas for improvement (Carr 2014). A decade later, following changes of government in Barcelona, the program continues. As underlined in a detailed report prepared for the Council of Europe, it is a notable example of innovation:

The Barcelona Anti-Rumour Strategy has had a significant impact both locally and internationally, and is held up as an example of best practice due to its innovative approach to the challenge of dealing with prejudices and preventing discrimination and racism. The strategy proved to have the innovative ingredients needed to bring a “breath of fresh air” to the “traditional” awareness-raising strategies by engaging a broad variety of actors. (Baglai 2015, 11)

Erlangen, Germany

Erlangen is a city of 114,000 residents (2018) in the state of Bavaria. It has a long history of welcoming migrants: in 1686, some 1,500 Huguenots who had fled France settled in Erlangen.

In 2014, Erlangen was selected, with nine other cities, to participate in the 18-month C4i project, Communication for Integration, sponsored by the Council of Europe with financial support from the European Commission. One of C4i’s goals was to explore whether an anti-rumour approach (along the lines of Barcelona’s) could improve perceptions of diversity in other European cities.

As part of the C4i project, the City of Erlangen sponsored a “picnic banquet of diversity,” which was attended by about 1,000 residents and asylum seekers. At one point, participants were invited to ask any of 10 asylum seekers who had been designated as a ‘living book’ about their skills, experiences and dreams. The objective was “to pose questions one would not normally dare to, thus overcoming rumours and getting to know each other.” (Heintze 2015a, 63)

Another C4i initiative was a pilot for an internship for skilled asylum seekers at Siemens AG. At that time, Siemens employed about 25% of Erlangen’s workforce. In addition to encouraging the workplace integration and professional development of the asylum seekers, the project was intended “to reduce the number of rumours about refugees by demonstrating their potential within Siemens AG” (Heintze 2015b, 67). Following the pilot, Siemens continued to sponsor internships in Erlangen and instituted similar programs in its plants in other parts of Germany.

Led by its Unit for Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the City of Erlangen has continued to adapt its communication and other activities. For example, it holds an annual conference focused on integration and social cohesion issues. During the International Week against Racism, high school students are a particular target group. According to the Unit’s head, Silvia Klein (Interview D), one challenge is reaching the “silent majority, “who may have prejudices and racist views. The city now sponsors advertisements in buses and shopping centres. Efforts are also being made to attract others besides “the same 200 people” to lectures and other events.

To measure the impact of its programs, the Unit benefits from feedback from the surveys the city carries out. Erlangen has been assessed twice using the Intercultural Cities Index. Its welcoming policy

received a rating of 70% in 2016—a considerable increase from 2011 (the average for all cities where the index had been applied was 54% at the time of the 2016 assessment).

Unlike comparable units elsewhere, the one in Erlangen has not struggled financially. Its ongoing funding from the city government is sufficient,” according to Klein. In addition, over the past two years they have received funding from the federal government’s Live Democracy program, which has been applied in particular to youth activities.

Erlangen is a good example of how a smaller city can foster migrant integration and social cohesion through ongoing collaboration involving the city government, the private sector and community organizations. In light of German’s changing demographics, the willingness to adapt its programs and communications activities is a valuable quality.

Nebraska, United States

Nebraska Appleseed, which is part of the Welcoming America network, is based in Lincoln (the second-largest city in the State of Nebraska).¹¹ It describes itself as follows:

Nebraska Appleseed is a nonprofit organization that fights for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans. We take a systemic approach to complex issues—such as child welfare, immigration policy, affordable health care and poverty—and we take our work wherever we believe we can do the most good, whether that’s in the courthouse, at the Capitol, or in the community.

Founded in 1996, Nebraska Appleseed addresses various law and public policy questions from a social justice perspective. From the outset, this included migration issues. It has been particularly active in campaigns for federal legislation to allow “Dreamers” (undocumented migrants brought to the United States as children) and other undocumented residents to apply for American citizenship and obtain other rights.

As Nebraska Appleseed evolved, it added a major focus on multi-strategy community education and organizing. According to Darcy Tromanhauser (Interview F), who directs its Immigrants and Communities program, “getting to policy change requires community understanding and support as well as a whole-community approach to migration issues.” To this end, Nebraska Appleseed has encouraged the formation of “welcoming teams” in a number of towns. The teams, which include representatives from multi-ethnic schools as well as city, business and faith leaders, plan initiatives (such as potluck meals and learning events) to bring together community members from all backgrounds and develop other practices to support strong, inclusive communities.

Asked about challenges, Tromanhauser mentioned that misunderstanding about migration issues has been a major concern; the climate remains difficult. A large immigration raid by federal authorities in 2018 created a great deal of fear that extended beyond migrant communities to business people and the general population.

On achievements, Tromanhauser mentioned that Nebraska Appleseed promoted state legislation (adopted in 2015 and 2016) to allow Dreamer youth to obtain driver’s licences and professional licences.

¹¹ Sources for this section: Nebraska Appleseed website: <https://neappleseed.org/>; Tromanhauser interview; Nebraska Appleseed 2017 annual report (accessed from the About section on its website).

She described the welcoming teams as a key way to build long-term relationships, communication and understanding among diverse community members and leaders. A 2018 evaluation found that bringing together people from different backgrounds was making a significant difference. Nebraska Appleseed is definitely responding to a need within the state's smaller centres, and its focus on improving public understanding to build support for its policy campaigns seems to be bringing results.

Toronto, Canada

In 2016, 46% of the population of the Toronto census metropolitan area, which extends well beyond the City of Toronto, was foreign-born. A study of six highly diverse Canadian cities described Toronto as “the pioneer and lone practitioner of the full multicultural model of settlement and diversity.” (Tossutti 2012, 627; see also Biles, Tolley, Esses, Andrew and Burstein 2012). This section covers two initiatives of Toronto-based nongovernmental organizations.

Cities of Migration

Cities of Migration was launched by the Maytree Foundation at the 2008 International Metropolis conference. It built on the pioneering migrant integration work led by Ratna Omidvar (then Maytree's president) and championed by Alan Broadbent (Maytree founder and chairman). The project's founding partners included the Barrow Cadbury Trust (UK), the Tindall Foundation (New Zealand) and the Bertelsmann Foundation (Germany), with support from Open Society Foundations.

As for its mission:

Cities of Migration identifies and showcases successful local practices and policy innovation from global cities that promote immigrant integration, inclusive communities and shared urban prosperity. . . . By increasing the effectiveness of local integration practices and the policy frameworks that support them, and helping urban and migration networks develop stronger ties, we hope to advance the place of cities in migration policy internationally.

Cities of Migration has been described as an online platform and “knowledge hub” for sharing good practices. Its principal activities include:

- A multilingual website that includes more than 300 case studies of “Good Ideas in Integration” from 25 countries organized by city, country and theme. Special program areas include the Refugee Portal, Municipal Leadership, Living Together, the Building Inclusive Cities project and the My City of Migration diagnostic tool.
- A monthly newsletter shares innovative practices, news and opinion from international thought leaders, and recent developments from the field, with some 17,000 recipients.
- Webinars have been held bimonthly since 2009—see, for example, “Why an Anti-Rumour Strategy?” (Cities of Migration, 2015) with presenters from Barcelona and Erlangen. More than 14,000 people have registered for the webinars since they began.

A key objective of the project has been to link migration to a pragmatic agenda for shared urban prosperity; its multi-stakeholder approach includes a major role for the private sector, particularly employers.

Kim Turner, the project's founding manager, recounted (Interview G) that an initial challenge was how “to reach beyond our borders to capture people's interest in a small project out of a small foundation

in Canada.” Working with partners and others in western Europe, North America and Australasia, the project chose a storytelling approach and a focus on innovation to identify good practices that “could help people think differently.” Promoting what Broadbent calls the “politics of optimism” in a frequently difficult environment has been a signature of the project.

In 2014, Cities of Migration became part of the new Global Diversity Exchange at Ryerson University in Toronto. Adapting to a large institutional environment presented some challenges, but, according to Turner, the project has benefited from the university’s openness to community-based research and social innovation. Although it is not a formal city network as defined above, Cities of Migration continues to engage local stakeholders around the world on a shared agenda and thus to advance the role of cities in migration policy and governance internationally.

Syrian Refugee Professional Internship Program (COSTI Immigrant Services)

COSTI Immigrant Services is one of the largest (by client volume) and most longstanding of Canada’s many settlement agencies (for details on its services, number of clients and other information, see COSTI 2018a).

From 4 November 2015 to 28 February 2019, 44,550 Syrian refugees were resettled in Canada (Government of Canada 2019). Between the first arrivals and the end of 2016, COSTI processed some 2,200 refugees at its reception centre and five temporary hotel sites. COSTI had to adapt its services quickly in order to receive twice as many people as expected and to respond to their needs. Refugees coming through COSTI included many large families, less than 10% of whom spoke any English (COSTI 2018b).

In 2016, *La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso* approached COSTI with a proposal to fund internships for professional Syrian refugees, which led COSTI to establish its Syrian Refugee Professional Internship Program. Following screening for English skills and professional backgrounds, 27 refugees were accepted. They began with a two-week workshop focused on the job application and interview process and soft skills. According to participant Mahmoud Bakkar: “COSTI training was really unique. . . . It hit on workplace communications, culture and work ethics specific to a Canadian context.” (Quoted in Cities of Migration 2017)

The response from employers to host the 10-week internships was very positive. Of the 27 candidates selected, 20 completed their internship; 18 went on to fulltime employment, the majority in the companies where they had interned. Commenting on the experience, Bakkar observed: “Having internships paid is a win-win situation. It encourages the employer to hire newcomers and immigrants, and helps the employee to practice in the new work culture and gain the required soft skills while earning an income.”

According to Mario Calla, COSTI’s Executive Director (Interview A), such internships also help lower employers’ potential biases about migrants’ qualifications and work ethic. The internships can thus be seen as a managed contact experience that can help build understanding and trust.

Table 2: Selected migrant integration initiatives

	Spain Barcelona Anti-Rumour Strategy	Germany Erlangen Equal Opportunity and Diversity	United States Nebraska Appleseed	Canada Toronto Cities of Migration	Canada Toronto Syrian Refugee Professional Internship Program
Category	Ongoing program, Immigration and Interculturality division (Barcelona city government)	Ongoing program: Unit for Equality Opportunity and Diversity (in mayor's office)	Nonprofit organization; works on various law and public policy issues, including migration	Ongoing program within Global Diversity Exchange (Ryerson University)	One-time project of COSTI Immigration Services – paid salaries of refugee interns
Date established/ project dates	2010	2015**	1996	2008	2016-2017
Sources of funds	City of Barcelona	City of Erlangen	Grants (private and public community foundations), contributions	Ryerson University, partners in Canada and Germany, government project funding	Foundation Emmanuelle Gattuso – COSTI provided in-kind support, staff time
Annual budget/ project cost	€245,000	€200,000 for activities (not personnel cost)	US\$2.2 million (2017)	n/a	C\$50,000
Full-time staff*	2	8	37	2.5	Part-time support from 2 COSTI staff

Source: Information provided by interviewees (see list in Reference); organizations' websites.

*As of May 2019. **Migrant integration activities within the mayor's office began in 2008.

The five initiatives reviewed in this section emerged in cities that vary in size, ethnocultural composition and other characteristics. The cases are illustrative and do not permit firm generalizations. They all nevertheless reflect a spirit of innovation, a commitment to working with community partners and a belief that, through structured activities (including employment), people from different backgrounds can learn from each other.

Concluding Observations

The innovations in migrant integration covered in this paper can be instructive, but there are limits to the lessons they provide. However, by taking into account the rich academic and policy literature in this

field, it is possible to conclude with a few observations about current and emerging approaches to migrant integration in cities.

Cities as a locus of innovation. In his interview for this project, David Lubell referred to the local as “a welcoming ecosystem.” In many cases, this seems to be true. City governments are often seen as closer to people than senior levels of government, perhaps because cities often have a more open approach to governance. But the local ecosystem extends well beyond city hall. As we have seen in this paper, community organizations, foundations and businesses are the source of creative ideas, financial support and volunteer effort.

Relative detachment from other levels of government. A five-country study of the local dimension of migration policymaking observed that “the relevance of the local dimension does not seem to be strictly dependent on the . . . countries’ state structures” (Caponio 2010, 188). This also seems broadly true for migrant integration activities. In Germany and Canada, the federal government alone funds and administers each country’s largest integration program (in both cases, language training is a major component). Local organizations are involved as delivery agents, but there are no formal connections with city governments. Cities often have their own programs and services, although they may struggle to finance them. In this context, Peter Scholten (2019, 157) has observed that “local and national migrant integration policies increasingly seem to ‘live separate lives’ as two worlds apart.” This may be broadly true, but further research is needed about the relationship between local and senior levels of government. Among other things, we need to know the degree to which transfers from subnational governments (states, provinces, etc.) enable or constrain city governments’ policy and program choices.

Vision and leadership. Although good ideas on migrant integration originate in different places, they are more likely to come to fruition if they are championed by a highly motivated change agent. Barcelona’s Anti-Rumour Strategy was developed with leadership from the city’s Immigration Commissioner. Welcoming Nashville was the brainchild of a local activist in the fight against anti-migrant legislation; its success led to the formation of Welcoming America. Whatever the roots of an initiative, it is important to have a vision: a clear-sighted, even somewhat ambitious, plan for how to achieve results. Implementing the vision requires not only sustained leadership but willingness to adapt to feedback, changing circumstances and other factors.

Partnership and collaboration. Local government seems better suited than senior governments to collaborate with community partners in developing and implementing migrant integration activities. In some cases, this is a necessity: city governments may lack the funds to sponsor even modest integration programs, but NGOs can often deliver services at lower cost than the public sector. Some European cities are less strapped financially than those in Canada and the US because they receive a share of sales and even income taxes; they may also benefit from special-purpose transfers—as for asylum seekers in Germany. However, the rationale for relying on partnerships is broader. Community organizations bring local intelligence to the table when initiatives are being conceived or adapted. Their members can also encourage migrants to take advantage of integration services and to participate in intercultural and other activities.

The relevance of interculturalism. Zapata-Barrero and Cantle (2019) describe interculturalism as a “local policy paradigm.” It has indeed become influential. Even organizations that use other language, such as Welcoming America, employ intercultural techniques. Research suggests that intercultural approaches are having a positive impact on, among other indicators, residents’ views about migrants’ contribution to their city. Paying greater attention to the concerns of the so-called “silent majority”

requires adjusting intercultural approaches (as the Barcelona and Erlangen cases illustrate). Interculturalism nevertheless has limitations. Advancing integration objectives such as reducing the socio-economic and spatial marginalization of migrants requires other tools. Some of these are in the hands of local government, but action by higher levels of government is usually required.

Diffusion of innovative practices. It is not an overstatement to describe migrant integration as increasingly a shared priority—within governments, between governments, and between governments and other sectors. City governments, often in partnership with others, are an important part of this dynamic. They are innovating and adapting in an environment that is always changing and often quite polarized. In the process, thanks in part to city networks and similar organizations, government officials and community leaders are learning from others who are working to advance migrant integration.

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Cover design by Olakunle Adeniran

Cover page picture by Brian Merrill (Pixabay)

ISSN: 1922-558X (online ISSN 1922-5598)



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The Occasional Paper Series is financed in part by the following countries: Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, India, and Switzerland