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VOICITYS – VOICES OF DIVERSITY

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND POLICIES FOR MORE INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Edited by Krisztina Keresztély, Martin Barthel, James W. Scott



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TABLE OF CONTENT



Chapter I. Introduction (<i>Maria-Grazia Pirina, Roberto Solinas, Krisztina Keresztély</i>)	6
1. The main objectives and steps of VOICITYS	7
2. The VOICITYS neighbourhoods.....	8
2.1. Wedding in Berlin, Germany	8
2.2. Charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK), in Salford, United Kingdom.....	8
2.3. The Old Town of Sassari, Italy.....	10
2.4. Józsefváros in Budapest, Hungary.....	11
Chapter II. The Voicitys Conceptual background (<i>Krisztina Keresztély</i>).....	13
1. From super to hyper diversity – adapting a wide concept on diversity	13
2. Perceptions and voices of citizens – the VOICITYS approach.....	18
Chapter III. Mapping Diversity in our Neighbourhoods: Crossing of two Research Methods (<i>Judit Keller, Tünde Virág, Hayley Trowbridge</i>).....	20
1. Methodology	20
1.1. Bringing up citizens' voices on Diversity: the Community Reporting Method.....	20
1.2. Diversity as seen by stakeholders: The social science approach	28
2. Diversity in Neighbourhoods – Conclusions of the results	32
2.1. From Perceptions to Lived Experiences: Life in diverse communities. Conclusions of the Community Reporting.....	32
2.2. Conclusions of the stakeholder interviews.....	36
3. Crossing the results	41
Chapter IV. Co-Creating policy recommendations in the Neighbourhoods – Voicitys Participatory Events and Policy Recommendations (<i>Krisztina Keresztély</i>)	43
1. Methodology – a complex participatory process	43
1.1. Step 1: Local Conversation of Change events.....	44
1.2. Step 2: Crossing the recommendations with the research results.....	49
1.3. Step 3: The Local Consensus events.....	51
2. The results: policy recommendations in the four neighbourhoods	53
2.1. Wedding in Berlin: sustaining diversity faced with the threat of gentrification.....	53
2.2. Old Town of Sassari: reinforcing the social, participatory and cultural dimensions of urban revitalization	56
2.3. CHALK in Salford – Reducing Social Gaps and Improving Connectivity for a More Inclusive Society.....	58
2.4. Józsefváros in Budapest: Dealing With a Highly Politicised and Fragmented Local Society.....	61

TABLE OF CONTENT



3. Conclusions: crossing challenges and recommendations	64
3.1. Similarities and Differences in Diversity: the Common Challenges and Assets in the Four Neighbourhoods	64
3.2. Similarities and Differences in the Recommendations	65
3.3. Entry points for diverse neighbourhoods: the most relevant policy fields for managing neighbourhoods through diversity.....	67
Chapter V. Living Diversity in European Neighbourhoods – Pan European Considerations and Recommendations (Krisztina Keresztély)	69
1. Managing Diversity in European Neighbourhoods – establishing pan European recommendations for cities and localities	70
1.1. General recommendations for cities	73
1.2. The Main Policy fields	74
2. Unity, integration and dialogue – some dilemmas and ideas on European policies on Diversity	77
Conclusions (Krisztina Keresztély, James W. Scott)	81
Authors, Editors and Contributors	83
Summaries	85
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Annex 1. The Neighbourhoods	89
Annex 2. Diversity in Neighbourhoods	92
1. Life in Diverse Neighbourhoods: Stories of lived experience from residents of Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari	92
1.1. Exploring diversity in Charlestown and Lower Kersal: Rebuilding social structures, rebuilding a community	93
1.2. Exploring diversity in Józsefváros: How privilege and social position impacts on perceptions and experiences of diverse communities.....	99
1.3. Exploring diversity in the historic centre of Sassari: Stories about the past, life experiences in the present and future visions of the old town.....	105
1.4. Exploring diversity in Wedding: Cultivating a community of difference, combating external threats	110
2. Life in diverse neighbourhoods: Stakeholder interviews in Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari	116
2.1. “A Diverse Salford is nothing new”: stakeholder interviews in Charlestown and Lower Kersal, Salford.....	116
2.2. “Conflict of living together”: Stakeholder views in the historic centre of Sassari.....	124
2.3. “We came from ‘Nyócker’ and arrived in Józsefváros”: demographic transformations in Budapest	132
2.4. “Gentrification is the biggest threat to the social peace”: Wedding, Berlin.....	136
References	145



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Maria-Grazia Pirina, Roberto Solinas (MVNGO), Krisztina Keresztély (CRN)

1.The main objectives and steps of VOICITYS

VOICITYS was implemented between January 2018 and June 2019 as a pilot project supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. VOICITYS' aims were to improve social integration through the strengthening of social dialogue in European neighbourhoods characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity, through improving sustainable communication and integration between different social groups, and through deepening dialogue between policy-makers, stakeholders and citizens as a means of promoting more efficient diversity management. Our activities focused on four diverse neighbourhoods in four European countries with different histories, political cultures, traditions and experiences with diversity and migration. Our specific objectives have been:

- Mapping diversity in four different urban areas in four different European countries by using a double approach based on citizens' voices and stakeholders' voices;
- Identifying the challenges and opportunities of diversity in the four areas;
- Formulating policy recommendations for local policy makers and local stakeholders on improving the management of diverse neighbourhoods;
- Formulating policy recommendations on the European level for integrating diversity management in urban policies;
- Creation of a concept methodology based on the interaction between bottom up investigation (citizen's voice, community reporting) and top down research (semi conducted interviews with stakeholders and policy makers).



The consortium was composed of four partners: the lead partner, [Comparative Research Network](#) (CRN) from Germany, [People's Voice Media](#) (PVM) from the United Kingdom, [Mine Vaganti NGO](#) (MVNGO) from Italy, and the [Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences](#) (CERSHAS) from Hungary.

The VOICITYS project has been based on a complex methodology that highlights the voices of people, stakeholders and decision makers through a dual research process, and permitting to enhance the dialogue and communication between them through participatory events and discussions.

During the first part of the project, from January 2018 till December 2018, **research on local diversity was carried out through two different but parallel approaches:**

- The collection of citizens' voices by using the Community Reporting method, led by People Voices Media;

- The collection of stakeholder's insights and opinion by using semi structured interviews and desk research led by CERSHAS.

The comparison of the results of these two research processes gave the basis for the following step of the project, realised between January and May 2019, which was the **formulation of policy recommendations through a participative process realised in each city**. The compilation of local recommendations, supported by parallel research and participatory events, permitted us to elaborate some general European-level considerations and recommendations related to diversity management in neighbourhoods.

The following handbook, summarizing the results of our project is also accompanied by a DVD which contains videos presenting our project and summarizing our main research results. These short films can also be downloaded from the [VOICITYS website](#) and the [VOICITYS You Tube Channel](#).

2. The VOICITYS neighbourhoods

VOICITYS project has been running parallel in four diverse neighbourhoods of four European cities with entirely different socio-economic, geo-political and historical backgrounds. This diversity of our study areas permitted to the VOICITYS consortium to provide a comparative overview on diversity in very different conditions. In the following, the four neighbourhoods are briefly presented, whereas more detailed data is provided in the Annexe of this handbook.

2.1. Wedding in Berlin, Germany

Wedding is a sub-district of Berlin, north of the city centre. In 2016, the area had a little more than 84,000 inhabitants. It is traditionally a working-class area, and before World War Two it was an industrial centre in the city. However, the area experienced a period of decline in the post-war period. In 1961, Wedding was surrounded on two sides by the Berlin Wall, and as a result, industry and its workers left this neighbourhood and former industrial epicentre.



Following the construction of the Berlin wall, Wedding's original population of industrial workers abandoned the area en masse. The population gap was then largely filled by an influx of "guest workers" from Turkey and Yugoslavia arriving in the area, attracted by low rents and many available social dwellings. The structural result of this process has, over time, been the association of Wedding with both poverty and migration. The negative effects of industrial decline and outbound population flows concerning the neighbourhood's place within Berlin's urban geography were largely mitigated by its gradual establishment as a vibrant area of exchange between different identities with further influxes of migrants from other European countries and regions of the world like Africa and Asia.

Migrants established in the area contributed to its revitalization by opening cafes, shops and small businesses. Simultaneously, the area became a place for students, artists and creative businesses to establish themselves, further adding to local diversity.

This vividness and vibrancy, enabled by the fall of the Berlin Wall, has allowed the area to acquire a new, diversely shaped centrality in the life of Berlin. However, multi-layered change led to concerns over the closing of old businesses and the outflux of long-term residents linked with the process of gentrification.



2.2. charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK), in Salford, United Kingdom

Charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK) is a neighbourhood in Salford, a city and metropolitan borough in the north-west of England (United Kingdom). Official city statistics (2016 Salford City Council report on the area) quantify the population of CHALK at around 13,000 residents.

CHALK was one of 39 neighbourhoods selected for the UK Government's New Deal for Communities (NDC) regeneration scheme, which ran from 1998 to 2011. As outlined by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the programme's aim was to "reduce the gaps between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country". As part of the NDC programme, new services were brought to the area as part of the regeneration, including a sports village and local community centres and Healthy Living Centres. Impact evaluations of such regeneration efforts have shown mixed results: assessments from the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (1999) indicate that the positive impact of reduced crime rates in the area was accompanied by a negligible impact on reducing the number of workless households. Despite public-sponsored regeneration schemes, both areas are within the 1-3% most deprived areas in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

According to official reporting by the Salford City Council, the neighbourhood faces a number of challenges linked with the high proportion of residents lacking basic qualifications (28.6%), a rate higher than the Salford average and in the UK as a whole. Other challenges include high unemployment rates, particularly affecting marginal



groups like single parents (which are predominantly women in CHALK). Furthermore, chronic health conditions are also an issue in the area, exasperated by some behaviours such as high levels of smoking.

Despite the diffused social and economic challenges, a high standard of public services prevails in CHALK, to help mitigate the issues that the community face and support the community to address their challenges.

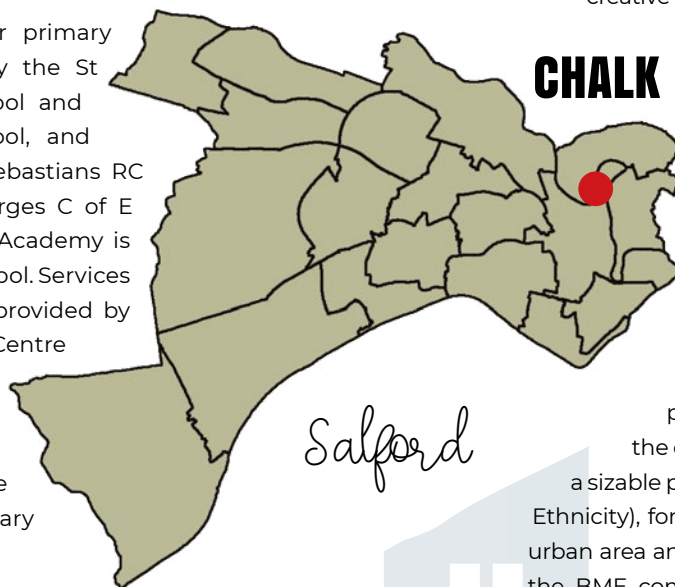
The area is served by four primary schools: in Lower Kersal by the St Paul's C of E Primary School and Lower Kersal Primary School, and in Charlestown by the St Sebastians RC Primary School and St Georges C of E Primary School. The Albion Academy is the area's only secondary school. Services for children under five are provided by the East Central Children's Centre in nearby Broughton. This is located outside of the neighbourhood but does offer some limited service delivery at Lower Kersal Primary School.

The council-run Beacon centre, the result of an NDC project, hosts event space and offices and is home to services for young people including regular youth clubs. Salford Sports Village, another NDC project located in Lower Kersal, is a £4.7 million multi sports centre with Astroturf pitches, grass pitches, fitness suites & studios.

The area has two NHS GP surgery facilities open to local residents, both located inside Healthy Living Centres which offer a variety of health and wellbeing services in addition to primary care. Both of these facilities were built as part of NDC developments in recognition of the area's high health needs and previous lack of primary care facilities (Big Life Group 2011, p. 3). The centres house pharmacies and host events and services run by partner agencies and local residents, including support groups for those with chronic conditions, physical activity groups and programmes, creative outlets, complementary therapies, nutrition advice, baby

clinics, and training and employment support. There is one library located within the Salford Sports Village which is open over 40 hours a week Monday through Saturday. Other services in the area include two post offices and the St Sebastian Community Centre. The nearest police station is Pendleton Police Station and the nearest fire station is Broughton Fire Station on Bury New Road.

CHALK



Diversity in Salford has changed in terms of the increasingly composite ethnic background of its resident population. According to a 2016 report of the Salford Council, the ethnicity most represented in CHALK is White British while a sizable percentage of residents identify as BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity), forming a higher percentage than in the rest of the Salford urban area and than the national UK average. The largest group within the BME component is represented by White Other (25%), followed by smaller ethnic components of African and Pakistani residents. A sizable percentage of the BME component speaks English as a second language. According to a statement released by the head teacher of Lower Kersal Primary School in 2014, "there are 14 languages spoken by children at the school and 22% speak English as an additional language".



2.3. The Old Town of Sassari, Italy

The Old Town of Sassari encompasses the entire area of the city of Sassari, capital of the province of the same name in North Sardinia. It is located within an area circumscribed by the former ancient walls of the city, which are today mostly destroyed. The area went through a period of major urban upheaval in the 19th century, resulting in the demolition of nearly all of the city walls to make room for urban expansion. According to the latest available data (December 2016), the total urban population of Sassari totals 127,533 inhabitants. Around 13,000 students live in the city (UNISS, 2018), and it contains approximately 3,800 foreign inhabitants (Servizio statistica del Comune di Sassari, 2018). The Old Town of the city is home to approximately 12,000 inhabitants, mainly composed of lower middle-class families who have lived there for generations and increasingly by migrants (Servizio statistica del Comune di Sassari, 2018).

The Old Town is characterized by urban decay and socioeconomic issues, with high rates of unemployment affecting young people in particular: 27.6% of them are unemployed, according to official ISTAT data. A high percentage of local housing is presently uninhabited, with the resulting market depreciation linked with the lack of upkeep. The same condition is suffered by many of the local retail shops, which have been a distinguishing feature of the Old Town but are now largely closed.



A partial revitalization of the area's business infrastructure has been led by the growing presence of migrants, who now make up the majority of shop owners. Local retailers, now representing a minority, run most bars and restaurants. The Old Town suffers from more urgent urban security challenges than the rest of Sassari, due particularly to the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency. Many local and migrant youngsters, many with poor job prospects and educational records, tend to gather in "Baby Gangs" which engage in debauchery and petty criminality. From a civil society perspective, a noticeable degree of local participation is present in the area, with concerned groups of citizens organizing themselves in local committees and NGOs with the purpose of tending to general concerns. The Old Town hosts some key institutional buildings, including a Youth Centre (Centro Giovani Santa Caterina) which offers educational and recreational activities to a youth audience, including disadvantaged categories such as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The area also hosts the central headquarters of the University of Sassari. It hosts a burgeoning community of foreign students who come under the framework of the Erasmus programme for a period of study at the University of Sassari.

2.4. Józsefváros in Budapest, Hungary

Józsefváros, the 8th district of Budapest, is part of the historical inner city that had been mainly formed during the urban boom of the late 19th



century. It saw a mild population during the 1990s and has since seen a rise in population in the last decade as part of city-wide gentrification processes (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2015). Within Józsefváros, there are 11 neighbourhoods split between three sections: Inner Józsefváros (Palace Quarter), Middle Józsefváros and Outer Józsefváros. Within Inner Józsefváros there are high-quality residential buildings and some national institutions such as the National Museum. By contrast, housing in Middle Józsefváros is more run-down and includes socialist-era prefabricated housing estates. The area is traditionally working class, rather poor, and ethnically heterogeneous, and has long experienced a lot of migration and a high fluctuation in the population. This is the district's most complex area, and it can be further segmented into smaller neighbourhoods. In Outer Józsefváros, the landscape changes again, featuring many more brown-field and industrial sites and a mixture of elegant low-rise residential areas not seen in the other sections. The neighbourhood has a total 76,000 inhabitants, encompassing a relatively small but socially and culturally diverse urban landscape.

The area is characterized by a unique mix of vibrancy, nostalgia and deep-rooted social issues such as poverty and a reputation for crime (Czirfusz et al, 2015).

In the latest strategic urban plan (Integrated Urban Development Strategy - ITS 2015), the municipality positions the district

“at the edge of downtown Budapest”, underlining its centrality and the high number of institutions with national relevance (ITS 2015, p6). In this document, the district's central location and good transport connections within the urban fabric of Budapest, its human diversity and diversity of functions, the local strengthening of the presence of institutions of tertiary education, and its social services are presented as the district's main strengths. The main challenges identified are the high concentration of social problems, spatial inequalities within the district and the poor quality of the housing stock (particularly publicly-owned housing).

The area of poorer and more ethnically diverse Middle Józsefváros has garnered a negative reputation based on increasing social issues over recent decades. Many of those displaced due to urban regeneration projects in other parts of the district have found housing here. Currently, the district municipality plans to implement an urban regeneration programme in this area as well, which will surely result in the displacement of many families.

In the past decade, Józsefváros, and particularly the middle part of the neighbourhood, has become the focal point of gentrification in Budapest. This means that the position of the neighbourhood has changed in countless ways. From a more material perspective, the number of public housing units has declined and the possibility for privatising a large segment of the remaining housing stock has also been opened. Housing and rental prices have risen the most drastically here compared to the rest of the city. Spaces of consumption have also changed, with a number of bars, cultural and





commercial entities catering to the needs of higher status social groups. Public spaces have been rebuilt, partially connected to the stations of the new metro line which opened in 2015, and partially connected to urban regeneration projects. Beside the public housing stock, there is also a relatively high share of privately rented flats in the district (although the majority of these private rentals are on the grey and black market and therefore do not appear in statistics).

The main question relating to physical renewal pertains to its social consequences. Investment in an area can rarely (if ever) occur without displacing previous residents who are unable to keep up with rising housing prices and a changing commercial landscape. This is also what has been happening in Middle Józsefváros.

Józsefváros has historically had a role of accommodating new arrivals to the city, partly due to its high share of public housing. The role of the district as a mixing/transition zone is particularly important in Middle Józsefváros. The district, and particularly its middle section, was an important point of entry for Roma and poor people driven out of ramshackle settlements on the outskirts of Budapest over the decades. Between 1971 and 1986, the share of Roma pupils in Budapest schools doubled (from 1.2% to 2.4%), and in all inner-city districts combined, this ratio reached 8.3% by 1986. By the same year, the share of Roma pupils in certain parts of Middle Józsefváros reached 25, and

the share of Roma students at one highly segregated elementary school was around 50% (Ladányi 1991). This phenomenon is partly due to the large number of both public and private rental flats in the area (compared to a higher share of owner-occupied housing in other parts of the city) which allows for easier fluctuation of the population. The share of public flats in the area was extremely high at the end of the 1980s (nearly 100%, much higher than the Budapest average of around 50%), and privatisation happened at a slower pace than in many other districts.

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The following handbook will present the main findings of VOICITYS. In **Chapter II**, the conceptual background and the main specific approach of VOICITYS will be described. **Chapter III** is dedicated to the presentation of the methodology and the main results of our bottom up and top down research processes, and the crossing of these results in each neighbourhood. **Chapter IV** will describe the VOICITYS participatory process and the main recommendations formulated on the level of the neighbourhoods. Last but not least, **Chapter V** will provide a summary of our pan European findings, reflections and recommendations.



CHAPTER II.

THE VOICITYS CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Krisztina Keresztély (CRN)

1. From super to hyper diversity – adapting a wide concept on diversity

Reinforcing social dialogue and inclusion in diverse urban areas first needs a general consideration of what we mean by the term “diversity”. What makes a neighbourhood “diverse”? How can we describe this phenomenon? What makes the difference between a “diverse” and “not diverse” neighbourhood? And furthermore, are there any neighbourhoods that are “not diverse”? During the past decades, the understanding of “diversity” has gone through a deep transformation strongly influenced by

general changes in societies – especially in Western countries – and the perceptions of the role of individuals within those societies. The conceptualization of diversity reflects the changing context of migration trends, the increasing complexity of urban societies and the need for public policies to deal with these changes. The reflection

on the different approaches to diversity has also been motivated by increasing tensions within urban societies where the fear of “otherness” has been reinforced as a result of violent events in several European cities.

Until very recently, diversity was considered a term clearly linked to ethnicity. According to this “traditional” understanding, ethnic diversity describes a society where different ethnic groups are living side by side, one constituting the “majority” society and the others composing ethnic minorities. The cultural and political approaches in Europe regarding ethnic diversity have of course always been subjects of debate, ranging from policies of assimilation towards the more liberal approach of integration and acceptance. Multiculturalism, considered during the 1990s to be a very positive way of living in mutual respect with diverse ethnic and cultural groups, was increasingly questioned during the 2000s by several politicians¹ and scholars partly in reaction to the violent events and attacks that took place in Europe and



¹ <https://euroalter.com/2013/multiculturalism-vs-assimilation>, also see Angela Merkel's 2010 statement about the “end of multiculturalism”



elsewhere. These tendencies became even stronger due to the sudden increase in the number of refugees and third country nationals in certain European cities in the mid-2010s, changing the vision of diversity and multiculturalism in Europe. The strengthening of discriminatory voices

all over the continent which considered multiculturalism and the acceptance of “otherness” as threats to the integrity of European societies and cultures is only one – negative – reaction to this situation. One positive reaction has been the terms of diversity, multiculturalism and integration being taken under constructive reconsideration in order to respond to the new societal challenges and opportunities linked to diversity.

This second approach, mainly introduced by social scientists analysing the situation in the UK, underlines the fact that, as with almost all societal elements, diversity has also become more complex and diverse so that today we might talk about a “diversity of diversities”. Based on this consideration, Steven Vertovec identified the term “*Super Diversity*” in 2007 (Vertovec, 2007). According to Vertovec, the analysis of diversity cannot be limited to the differentiation of ethnic groups as these groups themselves do not form homogeneous units. One ethnic group might be strongly divided

according to their constituent parts’ immigration status, gender and age profile, labour market experiences, economic situation, religious background, etc. The concept of super diversity is in fact rooted in the theoretical approach of intersectionality, which draws attention to the fact that the interplay of these factors might entirely change the social and cultural behaviour and capacities of people belonging to the same ethnic group. (Wessendorf, 2014)

The super diversity theory of Vertovec brought a very important message to local and national policy makers: it is “...a call, or at least a reminder, to social scientists and policy makers to take more sufficient account of the conjunction of ethnicity with a range of other variables when considering the nature of various ‘communities’, their composition, trajectories, interactions and public service needs” (Vertovec, 2007: 1025).

Super diversity is therefore also a strong criticism of policies based on multiculturalism, which highlights the need to create bridges and dialogue between people instead of identifying the needs of ethnic groups from a top-down approach. “While multiculturalism policies were blamed for enhancing (...) parallel lives and widening the gaps between different ethnic groups, the new cohesion discourse emphasised the need to facilitate more interaction between different ethnic and religious minority and majority groups, and create a shared sense of belonging and civic pride” (quote by Wessendorf, 2014 :4).





Super diversity has been analysed on the neighbourhood level by Susan Wessendorf, based on the consideration that this is the level where the inter-ethnic, inter-faith and intercultural relationships are the easiest to observe and relevant policies are the easiest to identify. Super diversity as a concept is not only the criticism of multiculturalism; it is also an interesting approach for mapping and understanding the positive and negative elements of diversity through the functioning of and the main conflicts within complex and diverse communities (Wessendorf, 2014). Many of the author's findings in the London neighbourhood of Hackney were used as the base of our research, and were also confirmed by our results achieved during the VOICITYS project. Wessendorf pointed out the fact that in super diverse neighbourhoods, ethnicity is not considered a condition of belonging by the people: a person from Italy or Bangladesh, living in his/her neighbourhood in the UK for a long time, can be considered more "local" than a middle class newcomer born in the country by English parents but having never lived in the area before. Wessendorf's research also reconsidered the reasons for the main social conflicts with these "newcomers". These conflicts had been traditionally explained by ethnic or religious

**In super diverse
neighbourhoods,
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differences, whereas according to her conclusions, they are most often the result of resentments linked to the competition for social benefits (i.e. allocation of social housing or other support) or for economic opportunities. This fact will be clearly illustrated in our interviews and reports conducted with some citizens in Berlin.

The widening of the approach to diversity was not only a revolutionary step towards understanding our current complex societies and the political tensions related to them, but it also was contributing to a better formulation of the needs and opportunities of policy making willing to generate real social change in diverse cities and areas.

The concept of super diversity also has some limitations.

First, born in the UK, the concept was created as a reaction to the specificities of diversity there, whereas diversity has very different traditions and historical and social contexts in other European countries. It is therefore insufficient to apply the findings and solutions proposed by the authors in the other European countries or cities on an individual basis. As a second limitation, the concept accepts that diversity of diversities can be regarded as the intersection of ethnicity, gender, age, religion, administrative status, job profile, etc., but that the intersectionality of these profiles is mainly used for the differentiation of people based on socio-economic and ethnic considerations. Thus, although the concept represents a huge step towards widening the notion of diversity, it remains essentially based on the traditional socio-ethnic categories.



As described by Wessendorf, belonging to a place – being a “local” – is not necessarily linked to ethnic or socio-demographic characteristics; it might be more a question of the length of time spent in the area or of the behaviour of someone *vis-à-vis* local people or his/her interests *vis-à-vis* local problems and events. This assumption also shows that diversity as a concept often goes beyond the socio-demographic aspects, and might be linked to many other factors such as cultural interest, behaviour, hobbies, approach to others, etc. As observed by a research group in the framework of the recently finalised FP7 programme “*Divercities*”, “... cities are not only diverse in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but many differences exist with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities” (Tasan Kok et al., 2014: 5). Due to the changing parameters of urban mobility and of the connection between space and society linked to the emergence of ICT, social media networks and the growing importance of internationalism, the traditionally acknowledged strong relationship between territory and communities is also being questioned. Policies dealing with diversity must also take into account the effect of mobility on people. Based on these multiple considerations, the *Divercities* team set their new concept of “*hyper diversity*”.

The hyper diversity concept is based on three main dimensions. 1) it goes beyond ethnicity and socio-economic characteristics; 2) it is rooted in the acknowledgement that society is based on the mutual interactions of its different dimensions (i.e. the concept of

The hyper diversity concept has opened up a new path to understanding and modeling complex urban societies.

intersectionality); 3) it takes into consideration the action space of the people – not only the place where they live, but also where they work, have leisure activities, etc.

Through this broad vision, the hyper diversity concept has opened up a new path to understanding and modeling complex urban societies by describing a structure that relies on several societal phenomena that earlier had been regarded as independent from each other. Through the hyper diversity concept, it is possible to link ethnic diversity, gender and social inequalities; to understand the complex interactions and social polarisations within mixed local communities; and to understand the conflicts and strengths linked to the opening of local communities towards external influences as a result of the increasing mobility of their members. “The implications of this view are immense. They change the way we have to look at cities, their neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. They will have to lead to new policies and governance arrangements in order to cope with these diversities and its effects” (Tasan Kok et al., 2014:13).

The *Divercities* project set as its main task the analysis of urban diversity and the identification of policy recommendations for how to use this knowledge in local urban policies and governance for stimulating social cohesion and integrated urban development. During the project, 147 initiatives were studied in 14 cities in Europe and beyond, offering a large variety of techniques and solutions for supporting diversity in



urban neighbourhoods. As a basic statement of the final report of this project, local policies have to find a way to use diversity as an asset and not as a challenge. The objective of Divercities was not to understand the good or bad sides of diversity, but “to find out which arrangements are needed and are successful in order to realise positive developments of diversity for specific urban groups, for areas within cities and for cities and metropolitan areas as a whole” (Taşan Kok et al., 2017).

The Divercities project can be considered a forerunner of the VOICITYS project on many points. For example, VOICITYS also identified as a main objective the use of diversity as a point of entrance for enhancing social dialogue and, based on the assumptions linking diversity and intersectionality, for identifying policy recommendations on social cohesion in urban neighbourhoods. Through the concept of hyper diversity, a large number of policy fields related to local development can be re-visited and recommendations can be reconsidered, such as spatial/urban development and place making (local strategies, urban renewal, etc.), housing/social housing, cultural policies, cultural amenities, public services, policies concerning civil society like participatory actions, support of local initiatives, etc., policies for stimulating local economies, support of local enterprises, policies supporting employment and job creation, environmental policies, and so on. **Therefore, the VOICITYS consortium has opted unanimously for the use of the hyper diversity concept as the main approach of the project.**

Some recommendations by the Divercities project for local and European policy making (Divercities Handbook, Taşan Kok et al., 2017).

Diversity awareness should be embedded in the formulation of welfare and planning policies. Policies on diversity have to be re-thought in an era when societies increasingly tend to feel the challenges related to hyper diversity as a result of changing lifestyles, diversification of self-expression, new types of conflicts between ethnic and social groups, new forms of racism, new migration trends, etc. Strategies should be formulated to articulate the positive social and economic effects of diversity in the form of improved economic performance, new cultural and social knowledge and experiences, etc.

It is also important to note that diversity might also have a direct influence on policy making **by introducing a new culture into political and public institutions.**

Policies should use intercultural dialogue and interaction to foster social integration: Instead of building their own strategies based on discourses of integration, assimilation or inclusion, public policies should cooperate with local civil initiatives and support intercultural dialogue in various ways such as place making (providing spaces of encounter adequate for intercultural activities), financial funding, etc. **In this context, an intercultural dialogue approach substitutes the otherwise (over)patronizing approach of inclusion and integration.**

Local initiatives and organizations have to be flexible enough to be able to enter into partnership with other organisations and with public authorities. It is not always easy as local initiatives are based on personal commitment and are often lacking in professionalism and complex vision.

The visibility of local policies should be improved to make information of these policies more accessible for local inhabitants and potential entrepreneurs. For this, local authorities should emphasize closer cooperation with local organizations.

Innovative forms of space making should be encouraged on the neighbourhood level



2. Perceptions and voices of citizens – the VOICITYS approach

**...to bring
policy making
closer to the
citizens' lived
experiences
and needs.**

The increasingly widening concept of diversity inspired us to follow the line of this reflection. When speaking with people on the topic, it is noticeable that diversity appears in very diverse forms in their discourses, attached to positive and negative values at the same time. Based on the concept of intersectionality, we concluded that the perception of diversity might also change according to the social, economic and cultural conditions of the people providing a narrative on it. As people's subjective feelings are the strongest elements that influence their values and actions, it seems relevant to conclude that different perceptions of diversity constitute the local diversity itself.

This reflection is echoing the theory of Piekut and Valentine (2016), claiming that diversity can be also classified by perceptions. Perceived diversity is the degree to which people subjectively recognize that an area or a group is composed of different social categories and of people who are different from themselves. Perceived diversity is related to feelings generated by day by day interactions, experiences that positively or negatively impact attitudes towards an ethnic minority. These perceptions are affected by socio-historical background, the social and ethnic structure of the neighbourhood, the changing position of the neighbourhood within the city, and the stigmatization and changing physical environment of the city.

People's perceptions of diversity and the narratives they provide about their feelings might also strongly influence the way diversity can and should be seen and governed by local policies in a neighbourhood. People's narratives concerning their everyday, positive and negative experiences of diversity and the main needs and fears they identify are all basic indicators of the specific features of local diversity. **The main objectives of VOICITYS has been to identify and test a methodology which allows us to make heard all these local voices linked to diversity and to bring policy making closer to the citizens' lived experiences and needs.** Using our complex methodology and bottom-up, community-based research approach, we were able to elevate the voices of citizens, while our top-down social research method elevated the voices of stakeholders. VOICITYS has been an attempt to merge the voices on perceived diversity expressed by everyday people with the voices linked to institutionalised diversity expressed by stakeholders and policy makers. Setting up a dialogue between these two perceptions was one of the main objectives of our project.

Dialogue needs mutual understanding and a common language. VOICITYS was started with the co-creation of a common language, a common concept on diversity. According to our presumption, diversity has different meanings and connotations in different languages according to cultural traditions, the political, historical and



economic experiences linked to diversity, the current situation of the country/city regarding diversity, and many other local elements. A first crossing of the linguistic barriers in the four participating countries clearly proved this presumption. Later on, this was further nuanced by the narratives of the local citizens in each city. Diversity has entirely different meanings and connotation in Italy, Hungary, Germany and the UK.

In UK English, the term “*diversity*” is strongly linked to communities and is used primarily to identify different identities of people. The term permits the creation of “boxes” of identities, not for reinforcing discrimination but rather to show the complexity of societies and to permit the linkage between these groups. The term has a strong connotation with “conviviality”.

In Italian, the word “*diverso*” is also a term designating groups with different identities; however, contrary to the British term, the Italian highlights otherness, suggesting groups that are “outside” the majority and that are different from the “locals”.

In Hungarian, the word “*sokszínűség*” has a double connotation, strongly determined by political approaches. According to the “liberal” meaning, it is seen as a symbol of openness and dynamism; according to the “traditionalist” one, the term is seen as negative, a kind of threat for the unity of the local (and national) communities.

In Germany, there is a broad definition of “*diversität*”, meaning inclusivity, conviviality, the melting of variety and togetherness.²

² The above definitions were co-defined at the VOICITYS kick-off meeting by the partners.

In order to find our common language, VOICITYS partners tried to find out **how the term “hyper diversity” should be understood within the project. What would be the meaning that fits best with the main objectives of our project?** What is the process that VOICITYS partners imagine is behind the term? As VOICITYS' main aims are to create dialogue and interaction between the different stakeholders and citizens living in diverse areas, it seemed evident that in our approach, hyper diversity must mean a social situation where *diversity, dialogue, interaction and social integration* are in casual contact with each other. To put it differently: **hyper diversity is seen as a positive way of interaction and dialogue within and between communities.**

This *diversity of the meaning of diversity* is yet another layer to be added to the concept of hyper diversity. The differences in the terminology also highlight the importance of language, dialogue and communication in the formulation of policies of diversity. These elements have been in the core of the VOICITYS model: in the first part of the project, by using bottom-up research we intended to elevate local voices by following the people's own terminology; in the second part, by establishing participatory processes we intended to bring the voices together to create a common terminology based on dialogue. Chapter III will present the methodology and the results of the first part of the project aiming at the crossing of two research methods for mapping diversity in neighbourhoods. Chapter IV will describe the results of the participatory events organised during the second part of the project.

**VOICITYS partners
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the project.**



CHAPTER III.

CROSSING TWO RESEARCH APPROACHES

Judit Keller, Tünde Virág (CERSHAS), Hayley Trowbridge (PVM)

1. Methodology

VOICITYS project was based on two different research methods aiming at mapping the perceptions on diversity by the different segments of the local societies. The first was dedicated to mobilise voices of citizens living in the area by using a special method called “Community Reporting”; the second was dedicated to understand how stakeholders, civil organisations and policy makers see diversity and diversity management issues in the neighbourhoods. The two methods were run parallel to each other in the four neighbourhoods during the first year of the project. The summaries of each method and the crossing of their results were discussed at a project meeting, and finalised by the leaders of the research in a summary table. In the following chapter, first, the two methods will be described, and second, the summaries of the results of the two research will be presented. (The detailed description city by city of the results of the two method can be found in the Annex of this Handbook: 89-144 pages)

1.1. Bringing up citizens’ voices on Diversity: the Community Reporting Method

1.1.1. What is Community Reporting?

Community Reporting is a storytelling movement that was started in 2007 by People’s Voice Media, and it uses digital tools such as portable and pocket technologies to support people in telling their own stories in their

own ways. Using the Internet to share these stories with others, we are able to connect them with the people, groups and organisations who are in a position to make positive social change.



Central to Community Reporting is the belief that people telling authentic stories about their own lived experience offers a valuable understanding of their lives. Through creating spaces in which people can describe their own realities, Community Reporting provides opportunities in which people can use storytelling to:

1. Find their voice
2. Challenge perceptions
3. Be catalysts of change

The Institute of Community Reporters (the ICR) was founded by People's Voice Media in 2012 and is the overarching entity that supports the Community Reporter movement. The movement currently spans mainly across the UK and Europe. The ICR's functions include:

- Acknowledging the achievements of our members via a badging system (i.e. bronze, silver, gold, platinum depending on scope of your Community Reporter activities and training activities accessed);
- Quality assuring Community Reporting practices (i.e. overseeing our Responsible Storytelling methodology and continually developing relevant training materials);
- Engaging with the network via communications, events and Community Reporting activities (e.g. social media, emailers, annual conferences, network training sessions).

The Community Reporter network consists of 4 different types of members, that are:

- **Community Reporters:** People who have accessed an ICR approved Community Reporting training programme and have been badged accordingly. They contribute to the network by



sharing stories on www.communityreporter.net and engaging in the ICR's activities;

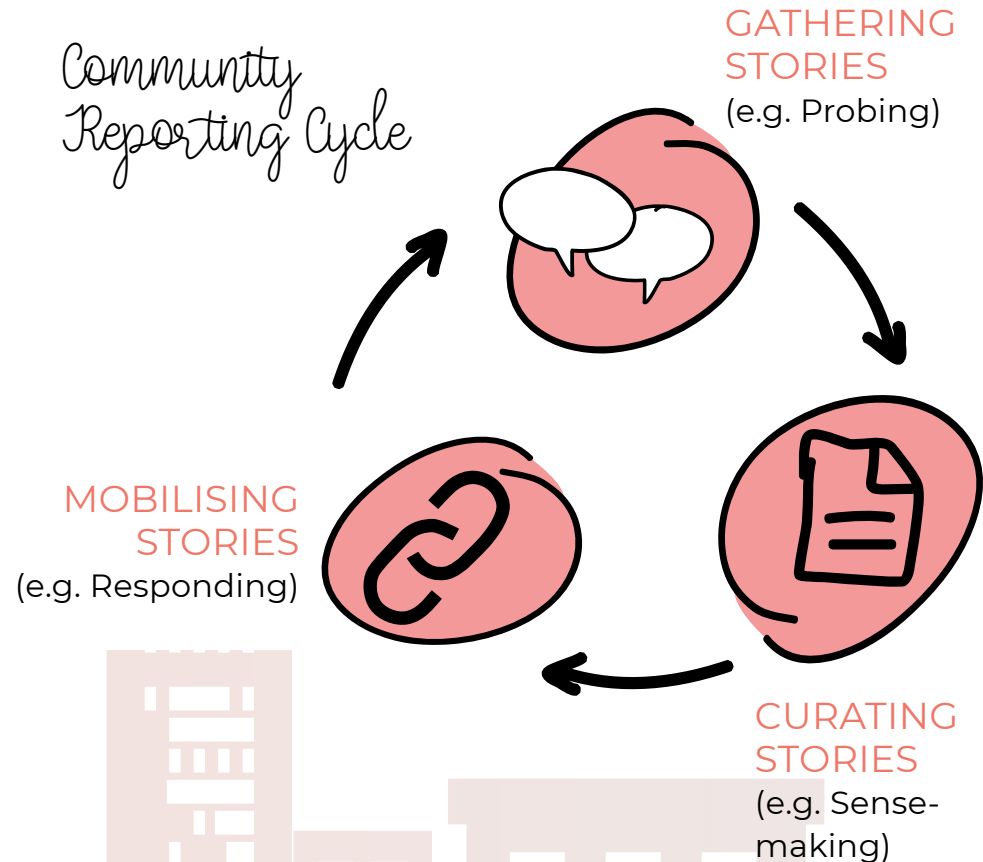
- **Trainers and Digital Curators:** People who the ICR has approved and contracts to deliver Community Reporting training programmes and story curation activities. They contribute to the



network by sharing their expertise with trainee Community Reporters and developing their skills;

- **Social Licensees:** Individuals, groups and organisations who have a license agreement in place for them to conduct Community Reporting activities outside of People's Voice Media's scope of work. They contribute to the network by supporting the development of Community Reporters, developing the usage of Community Reporting in different sectors and providing connections to people, places and organisations for our network;
- **Partners:** Individuals, groups and organisations who we work with to deliver collaborative projects, share knowledge and develop new practices, methodologies and training materials. They contribute by writing funding applications, providing links and connections to people, places and organisations to the network and by supporting us to develop the Community Reporting practices in a multitude of ways.

We believe in achieving positive change for communities by bringing peoples' portrayals of lived experiences together to influence change from the ground up via Community Reporting methodologies. Community Reporting has three distinct components – story gathering, story curation and story mobilisation – based around the Cynefin decision-making framework for complex environments (David Snowden, 1999), as depicted in the diagram below.



Through gathering, curating and mobilising stories from our growing network of Community Reporters, we seek to inform policy, processes and practice.



Models of Community Reporting

COMMUNITY REPORTING FOR STORYTELLING



COMMUNITY REPORTING FOR CO-PRODUCTION

COMMUNITY REPORTING FOR INSIGHT

1.1.2. Story Gathering

To gather stories, we have three interlinked models of Community Reporting – Storytelling, Co-Production and Insight. Community Reporting for Storytelling provides people with the knowledge and skills to become responsible storytellers and to have their say on the issues and topics that are pertinent to them. Community Reporting for Co-Production uses different forms of digital media to present a range of perspectives on a subject matter, creating a dialogue between various points of view on a topic. Community Reporting for Insight uses people's experiences to provide rich qualitative data to projects, taking the insights from their stories to identify themes, inform findings of wider studies and positively impact on local agendas, policies and service design.

The approach we take to supporting people in telling and sharing stories of their lived experience is fundamental to all of our Community Reporting programmes. We don't have a defined way in which people tell their stories, as we believe that the person telling the story knows the best way to tell it. Instead, we have a range of activities through which people are introduced to different storytelling tools. Using some or none of these, people create their own structures for their stories and tell them in the way that they want to.



Removing hierarchy is at the core of this practice

1.1.3. Responsible Storytelling

In order to ensure that we have a degree of consistency within our practice of Community Reporting, techniques and discussions around responsible storytelling are embedded into all of our programmes. This core module explores the ethics and values of Community Reporting, the type of content that people's stories should and shouldn't include, an exploration of permissions and consent, and how people can keep both themselves and others safe in online and offline environments.

Following the delivery of a carousel-style activity that provides opportunities for people to think about the aforementioned topics, our ICR Trainers facilitate a reflective discussion with the Community Reporter group. During this reflective discussion, a Community Reporting Best Practice Guide is produced that outlines a 'code of conduct' for that specific group of Community Reporters. This Best Practice Guide will have the core principles and values of Community Reporting within it, but it will also be nuanced enough to be inclusive and accommodating for the local context in which the Community Reporters will operate. In essence, each new group of Community Reporters produce their own Best Practice Guide that takes into consideration cultural factors (i.e. what is respectful within their communities), the legalities of their country (i.e. issues of consent) and who they are and how they will be using Community Reporting (i.e. what is 'safe' to them).

1.1.4. Supportive Learning Environments

It is really important that the learning environments of our Community Reporting programmes are tailored to the needs of our participants so that people can be confident enough to try new things and be empowered to share their ideas and opinions. The ICR Trainers create these environments through a range of facilitation techniques.

Removing hierarchy is at the core of this practice. Within our Community Reporting programmes there are no experts, only people with a range of capacities. Rather than starting with the areas that people need to develop (i.e. digital skills such as how to edit a video), we start with what people already know and build their learning from there. We encourage people to share their knowledge, skills and experience with others and as such, advocate peer-to-peer learning and support. It is important that our ICR Trainers are part of the storytelling movement themselves and that they share their own stories. Our ICR Trainers regularly participate in the storytelling activities in the Community Reporting programmes so that the conversations that take place are more peer-to-peer than trainer-to-trainee. Furthermore, it is important that we provide opportunities for everyone to have their say. This involves listening to people and ensuring that people feel that their lived experience is a valid and valued story to share. Through constructing these supportive learning environments, we create storytelling spaces in which people feel secure enough to share their authentic stories within a group setting and also with others online.



1.1.5. Story Curation

The stories gathered form the basis of our curation activities. This process involves the layered analysis of individual and groups of stories, accompanied by a series of packaging activities (i.e. feature article writing, edited films, word clouds, etc.). Once stories have been curated, we seek to mobilise the knowledge in them by connecting the packaged content with the people, groups and organisations with the power to make positive social change.

Within the context of the Internet and the digital age, the term 'content curation' is broadly used to describe the process for gathering, organising and presenting information in relation to a specific subject. Similarly, when we use the expression "curated stories", we are using it as an umbrella term that accounts for a layered analysis process that is accompanied by a series of packaging activities in order to present back the key findings across a collection of individual stories. We do this in order to better understand similar or sometimes seemingly incongruent stories within the wider context that they are told, and to find ways of exhibiting this understanding via digital and online tools that make it easier for people to share and use.

Whilst the specific analytical activities we undertake and the ways in which we present back the understandings from the stories is variable, our practice of story curation is underpinned by a core

aim of maintaining the authenticity and voice evident within the individual stories being curated. To do this we have adopted a 2-step review process that seeks to verify the authenticity of the findings and their representation during the curation process. This 2-step review process involves:

Community Reporter/ICR Trainer Review – A Community Reporter who contributed a story to the set of stories being curated or an ICR Trainer who was present when the stories were being told, assesses the curated findings to see if they are in-line with what they felt themselves and/or others were trying to communicate.

Independent Review – An individual who has no immediate connection to the stories being curated (i.e. they did not contribute a story themselves and/or were not present when the stories were being told), assesses the curated findings to see if they are in-line with what they feel the individual stories communicated upon viewing them.

These validated findings can then be used to create social change by informing service design and delivery, research findings and reports, and policy papers and reforms.





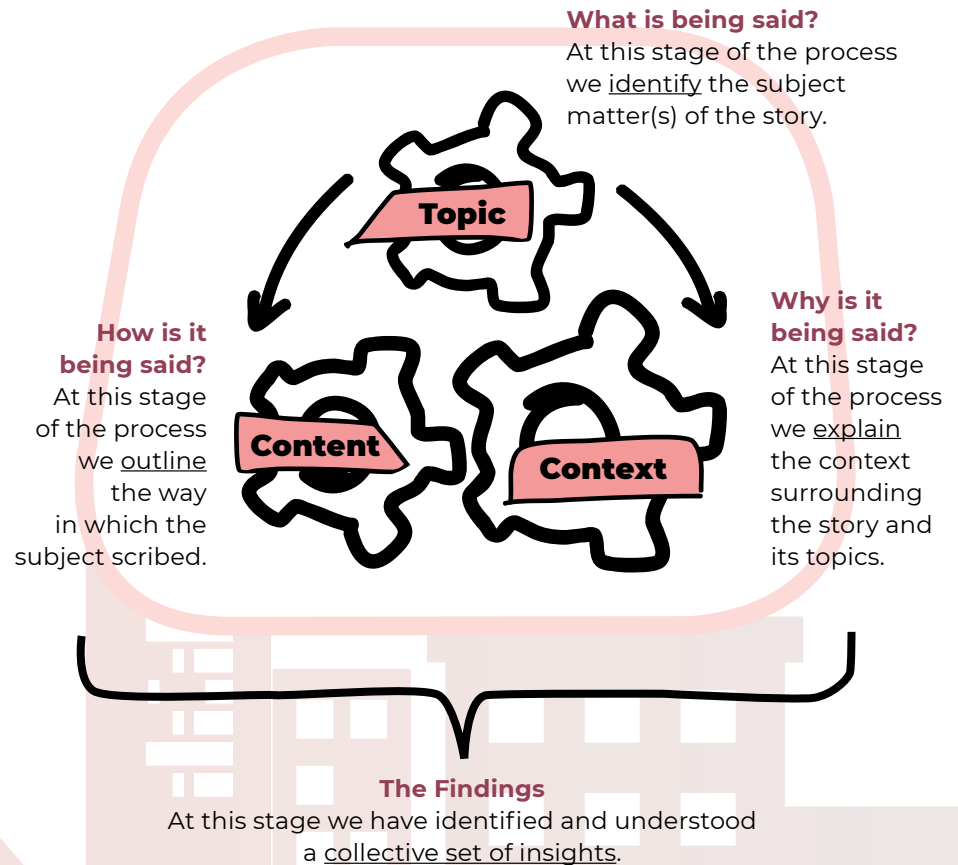
1.1.6. The analysis process

There are three stages in the analysis process through which a set of findings emerged. The first stage of the process is the 'Topic' level and this stage is concerned with identifying the subject matter(s) in a story. This primary analysis phase is based on a basic textual analysis process in which the metadata such as the categories and tags attached to a story are used to identify what it is about (i.e. work, etc.). Through looking at the subject matters evident within a set of stories the broad themes across them begin to emerge.

The second stage of the process is the 'Content' level, and this stage is concerned with outlining the way in which the subject matters are being described. This secondary analysis phase uses a more interpretative textual analysis approach to situate the subject matters within the perspective they were told through looking at them in more detail (i.e. listening to the stories and enunciations, reading their descriptions, observing body language, etc.). Through this, an understanding of the emergent themes is gained and trends can begin to be deciphered (i.e. many of the stories are about the lack of work in a village).

The third stage of the process is the 'Context' level, and this stage of analysis is concerned with explaining the wider context in which the story is being told. This final analysis phase relates the trends to the wider circumstances that surround the story and places them

The ICR Analysis Process





within the environments in which they were told (i.e. in the stories, people living in the village are talking about their experiences of unemployment since the local factory where many of them were employed closed last year). Within this stage, the understandings gauged from the stories can be related to (where relevant) existing evaluation and/or conceptual frameworks.

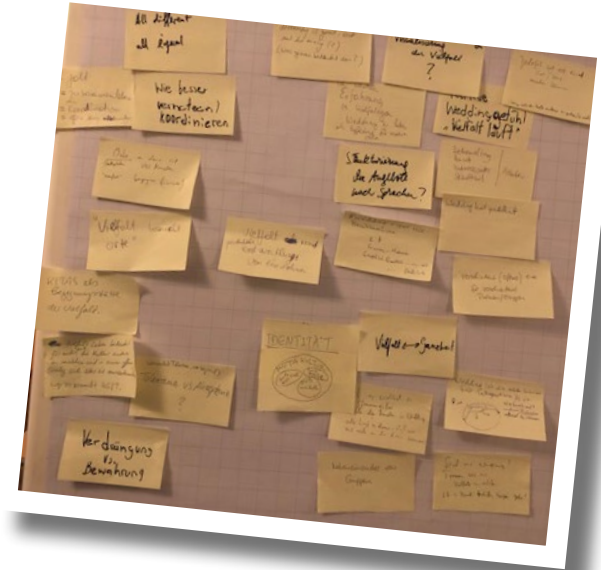
As depicted in the diagram below, this process results in the identification and understanding of a key set of themes and trends from a collection of stories that can be synthesised into a collective set of insights. These insights are not a set of judgements or a critical evaluation of the stories, but rather an objective presentation of the findings that emerge from the stories during the analysis process. From these insights, we produce packaged content such as thematic overview films, presentations, reports and more, in order to mobilise the knowledge from within the stories and connect them to decision makers at various levels.

1.1.7. Story Mobilisation

Story Mobilisation processes connect the learning from stories to people, groups and organisations who are in a position to use this knowledge to create positive change. There are many ways in which we mobilise the findings from our stories and curated content, both online and offline, such as

- Sharing on social media;
- Posting on websites;
- Using email;
- Organising events;
- Facilitating workshops and discussions;
- Adopting grassroots techniques.

A key aspect of our story
mobilisation processes are
Conversation of Change
events. Conversation
of Change events use
Community Reporter
stories and other stimuli to
prompt a dialogue between
various stakeholders
that seeks to catalyze change. When we talk about
dialogue, we mean the
sharing of understandings,
learning and ideas.
Essentially, we are talking
about a knowledge
exchange process that
can create new ways of
thinking and doing things.
These events can be run
offline and online.





The change that these events seek to make can happen at three distinct yet interconnected levels:

- Individual (ideologies and behaviours): e.g. a person could change their perception on a topic, a professional could change their practice, etc.;
- Organisational (delivery and spaces): e.g. an organisation may change the ways it does things, a service or space could be re-designed, re-purposed or co-created from scratch, etc.;

- Systemic (society and culture): e.g. a policy could change or be written, practice could change across a whole sector, social norms may change.

The technique of Conversation of Change events was used on the second part of VOICITYS as a first step of the community dialogue, aiming at identifying the main issues and recommendations for managing diversity in neighbourhoods.

Józsefváros
BUDAPEST
(Hungary)

Old Town
SASSARI
(Italy)

CHALK
SALFORD
(UK)

Wedding
BERLIN
(Germany)

1.2. Diversity as seen by stakeholders: The social science approach

The policies and governance of local diversities in the four cities were studied by using social science research methods. The goal of social science research is “to discover goals and postulate theories that can explain (...) social phenomena, or in other words, build scientific knowledge” (Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices, 2012). Theories and observations are integral to social science research, thus “scientific research involves continually moving back and forth between theory and observations” (Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices, 2012). This process, that is, the acquisition of knowledge about phenomena, takes place through particular methods, i.e. standardized sets of techniques that enable the researcher “to independently and impartially test preexisting theories and prior findings, and subject them to open debate, modifications, or enhancements” (Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices, 2012).



1.2.1. The research design

Based on the literature review sampled above, in the VOICITYS project a research design was developed for guiding the local teams to collect data about the four neighbourhoods and conduct semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders. Following this research design, in the preparation phase of the social science research a document analysis was also implemented for analysing the way diversity appears in the local and national discourse over time. Teams described local history and social changes, the existence and disappearance of different socio-economic and ethnic groups from the neighbourhood as well as the changing economic role of the neighbourhood and its current status. Documents used in this part of the research included:

- The social history of the neighbourhood relying on existing analyses, previous research;
- Spatial planning and development documents (strategic papers, reports);
- Policy documents directly addressing diversity and/or social inclusion, social cohesion, social mobility, public service delivery;
- Local/National regulations addressing social inclusion, social cohesion, social mobility, public service delivery and, if relevant directly, diversity;
- Development project documents from the last ten years related to public spaces and social institutions.

Parallel with the document analysis, some data have been collected on the socio-economic conditions of neighbourhoods. Types of data gathered by local research teams were:

- Territory, number of inhabitants, population change during the past 20 years;
- Socio-demographic data: age groups, education, unemployment rate;
- Number of SMEs and, if possible, change of the number;
- Number of NGOs, non-profit organisations;
- Housing: general state of housing, share of social housing;
- Data on available public services maintained by local and/or national governments;
- Identification of the main socio-economic and ethnic groups living in the area, their countries of origin, and, if existing, some data on their share in the local population and their socio-demographic composition.





**The overall goal
of the stakeholder
interviews was
to collect
perceptions and
visions on local
manifestations
of spatial
inequalities...**

As the result of the preparatory phase of the research, a background study was produced by all local teams permitting the contextualization of the interviews for the next phase of the research.

As a preparatory phase of fieldwork, each team identified and studied the mental and physical spaces of interaction of diverse people in the neighbourhoods. They studied the appearance of different socio-economic and ethnic groups in public institutions, public spaces, at public hearings and at local events. Teams also identified the main spaces frequented by different socio-economic and ethnic groups and described spaces of interaction of hyper-diverse communities. The background study and the participatory observation of the neighbourhoods helped provide solid background knowledge for the preparation of the interviews.

For the interviews, local teams first identified and mapped the network of stakeholders, defined as organisations or individuals who have “a stake” or an interest in the issue through local policy initiatives. In this vein, all teams interviewed the following types of stakeholders:

- Members of national governments/ministries/public agencies;
- Members of local councils/different decision making bodies of the local councils;
- Formal/informal, state or non-state organisations representing different groups of various levels of socio-economic vulnerability, of socio-economic and ethnic background, of cultural and religious orientation, etc... ;

- Formal/informal, state or non-state organisations specifically linked to the chosen group (e.g. families with children);
- Spaces and mechanisms of interaction between stakeholders (channels and forms of communication, of feedback, of integrating a diversity of views in decision-making processes, etc.);
- Institutions regulating their encounters at the local level.

The overall goal of the stakeholder interviews was to collect perceptions and visions on local manifestations of spatial inequalities, i.e. segregated or even dangerous places within the neighbourhood reflecting social and spatial positions of the local stakeholders. We also collected explanations of how local stakeholders explain and evaluate the overall development trajectory of the neighbourhood. We compared, horizontally at the local level and across various levels of governance, the different perceptions and explanations of the stakeholders regarding their positions in decision making processes. Local teams were expected to study the presence or lack of representatives of vulnerable socio-economic and ethnic groups within different decision making bodies, as well as the appearance of diverse views in policy decisions and methods for inclusion in decision making processes. The interviews focused on four main subject areas: perception of diversity, places of diversity, the governance of diversity and policies of diversity.



Interview guide

The overall goal of the interviews was to be able to compare, horizontally at the local level and across various levels of governance, the different positions of stakeholders in decision making processes. Also to study the presence/lack of representatives of vulnerable socio-economic and ethnic groups in different decision making bodies, the appearance of a diversity of views in policy decisions and methods of their inclusion.

1. Perception of diversity

Describe the society of the neighbourhood?

Most important socio-economic and ethnic groups in the neighbourhood?

Main changes in the local society in the last ten years?

What kind of challenges does the diversity of the neighbourhood generate?

Differences between people with different backgrounds?

Evaluate these differences?

2. Places of diversity

Identify and describe the different parts of the locality from different (historical, social, economic) perspectives.

Draw and explain the boundaries between them.

Identify conflict zones/problem areas.

Identify common spaces used by people.

3. Governance of diversity

Governance: governance is the formulation and implementation of public policies, programmes and projects through coordinating the actions of actors and institutions, integrating policy sectors, mobilising stakeholder participation, being adaptive to changing contexts and, finally, realising the place-based/territorial specificities and impacts. Relations between the different stakeholders/institutions. Organizations' relationships to local government and to each other.

Formal and informal mechanism of interaction/cooperation.

Mechanism/channels of participation in decision making processes.

4. Policies of diversity

Policy elements, features, emphases and the way they shape institutions.

The implementation of policy decisions: everyday practices and decisions.

Formal institutional background vs. enactment of institutions with a view to social change (formal, informal changes).





1.2.2. Methodological issues

The collection and analysis of data gathered from stakeholder interviews in the four neighbourhoods called attention to some limitations of the social science methodology as applied in the VOICITYS pilot project. These limits were primarily due to structural and time-related issues, such as the different knowledge of social science methods in the local/national teams, and the lack of time and capacities to control the data collection and data analysis done in each city. Short descriptions of local and national governance structures

and policy regimes in the national stakeholder summary reports provide a basic understanding of the positions of stakeholders within the neighbourhoods and within the local governance structure. Due to these limitations, as a pilot project, VOICITYS aimed at raising questions about how to study diversity and to develop a methodology that provides linkages between citizens' views on diversity and decision-makers' understanding of the phenomenon. Utilising the community reporting method provided important reflections for the social science approach with regard to analytical dimensions about studying diversity.

2. Diversity in Neighbourhoods – conclusions of the results³

2.1. From Perceptions to Lived Experiences: Life in diverse communities. conclusions of the Community Reporting



Across the stories gathered in Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari, a number of perceptions of diversity have emerged. When discussing the concept of diversity on a surface level, people generally spoke about ethnicity. For example, when talking about diversity and changes in the Józsefváros neighbourhood of Budapest, **one resident** stated that “Arabic, Turkish and other Asian people have moved here, it wasn't like this before. It was much better, for the shop and everything. Mostly

Roma musicians lived here.” Where this was slightly different was in the stories from Wedding, in which people spoke about other aspects of diversity such as religion and sexuality.

The Wedding stories valued difference and saw it as strength. As one resident reported, “People here behave peacefully and with no violence because they all got the idea since they came that our diversity

³ In the following chapter the conclusions of the two research methods and the crossing of these results will be presented; more detailed description of the results in each city can be read in the Annex of the Handbook. (89-144 pages)



builds a stronger community." In the Old Town of Sassari as well, people generally saw diversity as a good thing: *"Diversity is an opportunity"* through which one can grow and *"enrich oneself"*, as **one resident** explained. Yet within these stories, there seemed to be a discourse that denied (whether intentionally or not) the differences that diversity presents. This could be problematic in diverse neighbourhoods if integration becomes too close to assimilation. Essentially, the recognition of difference should not be seen as a negative.

When people spoke about their lives in the neighbourhoods, their perceptions of diversity were more varied when they were not talking about it directly. For example, when just talking about their experiences, the residents of CHALK, Salford acknowledged other parts of diversity beyond ethnicity. Understandings of health issues emerged from such discussions, particularly in terms of mental health. As **one resident** stated, *"I built a wall around myself for five years, not speaking to anyone, so then trying to talk to someone was very hard."* Moreover, societal issues that transcend ethnicity were addressed such as poverty and unemployment. Such understandings demonstrate the importance of the adoption of the concept of 'hyper-diversity' within this project. By approaching diversity through a multifaceted lens, we aimed not to reduce discussions around ethnicity but to seek more interconnected and nuanced understandings of people's life in diverse neighbourhoods.

2.1.1. Overarching challenges

Within the stories, a number of challenges to the neighbourhoods and the people who live there have emerged. Some of these issues were related directly or indirectly to notions of diversity while others seemed not to be. Based on the stories gathered one might conclude that diverse neighbourhoods experience rather high levels of change across a range of areas and seem to be home to some of the more marginalised groups within society. This in turn makes them more susceptible to arising social issues.

Looking across the individual summative reports, three overarching challenges to the neighbourhoods can be identified. They are:

Demographic shifts: The stories all referenced evident changes in the areas' demographics. In the case of Józsefváros and Wedding, the threat of gentrification may displace current inhabitants. In the case of CHALK and the Old Town of





Sassari, newcomers from outside the country who have moved into the area are often greeted with low-quality built environments or housing conditions, neither of which are supportive in making a home in a new setting.

Fear of newcomers:

With population changes has come a fear of the people who

are new to the area – essentially a fear of 'otherness'. This is evident in statements like the

Sassari businessman's description of the

historic area as a "*ghetto*", and in the lack of trust for Eastern European people spoken about in a story from Salford. Such fears contribute to the breaking down of a sense of community, and disable the cultivation of strong social ties across groups. This fear also appears, yet in another context, in the case of Wedding, where the arrival of new "gentrifiers" are considered as being a threat for the existing local diversity of the neighbourhood.

Wider contexts: The neighbourhoods also do not exist in a vacuum from the wider world, and external factors also inevitably influence them. For example, stories from CHALK and the old town of Sassari highlight how changing social attitudes have led to people to become less connected. In Wedding, although the neighbourhood is seen as being a good example of a diverse community, residents are still impacted by systemic issues such as institutionalised racism within the police force. It is hard for individual neighbourhoods to be resilient to such issues or have the capacity to combat them.

2.1.2.Going Beyond

What has become apparent from the stories is that in order for the diverse neighbourhoods we worked in to address the challenges they face, 'beyond' thinking and approaches are needed. Beyond thinking and approaches go further than seeking to solve the symptom of an issue, and delve into more multifaceted, complex solutions to an issue's root cause. This is not to say that some manifestations of more linear and symptom-addressing approaches are not needed, but rather to state that in order to fully tackle a social issue, new ways of thinking and doing things must be cultivated. In turn, this can lead to real change that goes beyond surface-level interventions. Looking across the stories, three distinct notions of beyond thinking and approaches have emerged, as detailed below.



Beyond physical regeneration and into creating environments of interactions

There are many examples within the stories about different types of physical regeneration that has occurred in our neighbourhoods. These include new bars opening in the squares of Sassari's Old Town, facades of buildings being renovated in Józsefváros, and the legacy of the NDC Regeneration Scheme in CHALK embodied in community centres. Yet what seems to be valued about such spaces is not just the visual appeal of buildings, but the ways in which the spaces allow for interactions between people. As **one person** detailed regarding Wedding, "*There is one or several spaces where people of different origins can meet.*" When such spaces are no longer there, such as the closed pubs in Salford, it is not only the service they offered the community that disappears but also the opportunity for people to socialise. Furthermore, when certain spaces are renovated it can also lead to the exclusion of people, as is the case with the gatekeeping of the regenerated parks in the 8th district of Budapest. Therefore, **when creating or renovating physical spaces it is important to think about how they can help facilitate social interactions**, particularly for those in the community who may be the most excluded.

Beyond services and into creating meaningful connections

While many of the stories highlight how services and formal support provision have helped people in their

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neighbourhood, it is important to remember that **services alone are not the answer**. In Józsefváros, for example, people reported that they didn't feel that those who really needed newly emerged services were accessing them. In CHALK, people spoke about difficulties navigating services and finding out information. Furthermore, in the stories from Wedding, it is highlighted that although there is a system in place to support newcomers in settling into Germany, the bureaucracy of the system presents a barrier to people who use it. Examples of services working for the people who need them are found when people have either been signposted by other locals or when the services enable them to connect on a human level with others. As the **caregiver** who attends a Zumba class in CHALK stated, the group helps her "*live a life as well as caring for [her] husband*". What we can learn from stories like this is that **connecting local knowledge regarding services and connecting people to one another are key contributors to services reaching their intended recipients**.

Beyond top-down strategic interventions and into bottom-up action

The stories and their contexts demonstrate that **top-down strategic interventions should be combined with the real engagement of local people**. In Wedding, the Social City programme is being used to include local people in decision-making processes in an attempt to bridge this divide. In CHALK, despite some of the divides between newcomers to the area



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and people who have lived there for generations, both sets of people work together at the local food bank to help address the bigger issue of poverty in the area. In essence, people who the stories suggest might otherwise not interact with one another have connected due to a common purpose and need. This demonstrates the power of taking responsibility for creating the neighbourhood that people want to live in. As one resident in Józsefváros stated, in the future they hope that people go beyond looking to the local government for answers and realise that *“we are all responsible for the environment we live in”*.

While some wider societal issues and systemic problems are difficult to overcome, particularly in these diverse neighbourhoods which undergo change more so than other areas, it is evident that **strengthening connections within communities helps people to overcome the challenges they face**. These connections are social (i.e. between people and people), environmental (i.e. between people and the place they live) and internal (i.e. between people and their sense of social responsibility). Through activating these connections, diverse communities are better placed to build (both physically and metaphysically) the neighbourhoods and lives they would like to have.

2.2. conclusions of stakeholder interviews

The analysis of research findings in the four neighbourhoods has drawn attention to some overarching phenomena and challenges regarding perceptions, places, policies and the governance of diversity. This section offers a comparative overview of analytical dimensions that evolved in the course of social research in the four neighbourhoods.

2.2.1. The past and its impact on social fabric

All the neighbourhoods in the VOICITYS project have a history of peripheral position within their respective cities. Formerly being traditional working class neighbourhoods, they had been inhabited by people with lower social status. Various migration flows of the late 20th and early 21st centuries affected the ethnic

and social composition of the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods. Migration also brought about the further weakening of the neighbourhoods' positions in their cities as more established citizens (working class Germans, Hungarian middle class, aboriginal Sassarians) moved out of the districts, with newcomers of lower socio-economic status having taken over their space. As a result, these neighbourhoods share characteristics of high



unemployment rates, low educational attainment of their citizens, low incomes and poverty. In two of our cases – Wedding and CHALK – migration waves brought about two deprived but ethnically diverse neighbourhoods where deprivation is a general feature of the local population. In the other two neighbourhoods of Józsefváros and the Old Town of Sassari, our research identified a local population bifurcated by socio-economic status, where deprivation is closely linked to perceptions of ethnicity.

2.2.2. Dimensions of diversity as perceived

Local people's perceptions of demographic changes in their neighbourhoods showed variation in the four neighbourhoods. In Wedding, 58% of the local population is of migrant background, which is higher than the rate of minorities in Berlin at large. In CHALK, the rate of ethnic minorities is higher than in Greater Manchester, however, the area has been predominantly inhabited by white British citizens until very recently. In Sassari, ethnic minorities that have arrived to the island with the current wave of migration comprise only 3% of the local population. Józsefváros stands out among the cases with its 4% "local" Roma minority, in Budapest, while it is still predominantly inhabited by ethnic Hungarians. Roma are seen differently from immigrant ethnic groups (Asian, Turkish, Arabic, African background) living in the neighbourhood since the 1990s; they generally appear in the narratives as poor and associated with social problems, while immigrants have stable businesses

in small shops and restaurants and are more accepted by the majority society due to their existential stability. Despite the low share of immigrants in Sassari and of the "local" ethnic minority in Budapest, diversity in these two neighbourhoods is accepted by mainstream society with serious reservations. In Sassari, diversity appears to be a positive trend if it is about integrating foreign students of the global middle class. In Józsefváros, diversity is only acceptable if it is middle class and does not concern Roma. On the other hand, in Wedding and in CHALK, diversity is seen as an asset in spite of the sometimes negative representations of diversity by the media.

These two neighbourhoods follow different pathways in terms of the recognition and perception of diversity within diversity. In Wedding and CHALK, diversities within minority groups by age, gender, disability and sexual orientation are strongly reflected upon by local stakeholders. Perceptions of local diversity in the Old Town of Sassari mainly focus on a dichotomous understanding of local and migrants/generations of migrants. In Józsefváros, diversity within the local ethnic minority of Roma is invisible, similar to the general approach of the mainstream society in considering the Roma invisible. Similar to the Sassari case, immigrants residing in Józsefváros are distinguished by generation as newcomers or more established immigrants.

Conflicts dividing local societies are present across our four cases, but the degree of such conflicts varies. In CHALK, conflicts emerge between "more transient"

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and “more established” communities and mostly concern littering. In the other three cases, stronger conflicts are prevalent that are often perceived as threats by mainstream society. In Wedding and in Józsefváros, threats are conceived around drug abuse and homelessness, while in Sassari, immigrants themselves are seen as a threat mainly by those living outside of the old town but commuting there on a daily basis.

One of the most striking outcomes of our stakeholder interviews is that social integration is perceived to be dysfunctional in all four neighbourhoods. A diversity of social and ethnic groups is seen to be living side by side with relatively few connections between them.

Various kinds and degrees of regeneration programmes have taken place in the four neighbourhoods in the past decade. The general perception of these developments is that while they bring about the rehabilitation of run-down neighbourhoods, their social impact is to build boundaries between social groups of different socio-economic status. Gentrification was seen as a general threat to diversity in Wedding and in Sassari. In Józsefváros, views on population change varied according to political identities: incumbents of the local government favour urban regeneration projects and their impact on exchanging population, while stakeholders from independent organisations, the poor and Roma are against them.

2.2.3. Places of diversity

In all four neighbourhoods, we found representations of diversity in open spaces as well as in the form of community buildings. Parks, streets, squares and playgrounds are important sites of social diversity in all of our cases. Nevertheless, the dysfunctionality of integration can be seen in the way some spaces – built and open – are appropriated by particular social and political groups. In Wedding, parallel to spaces of integration such as kindergartens, Leopoldplatz community-based ethnic cafes, grocery shops and associations are also present. Stakeholder perceptions were similar: people still keep to themselves next to several integrative spaces such as the Sport Village, and spaces that serve the integration of the majority society inherently exclude others, such as the few pubs that still exist in the neighbourhood. In the Old Town of Sassari, small ethnic shops, call centres and certain “piazzas” are used by particular ethnic groups next to some spaces of integration, such as the San Donato School.

The visibility of diversity follows similar patterns: minorities in Wedding and in CHALK are visible everywhere, but they have their own spaces spread around in the neighbourhood. In Sassari, the low rate of ethnic minorities is concentrated in a small lower part of the Old Town, which gives the impression to mainstream society of a “mass of immigrants”. In Józsefváros, built spaces of integration are strongly attached to particular groups of political identities.



2.2.4. Governance of diversity

In terms of the density and types of organisations, our stakeholder interviews found thick networks of various jurisdictions in Wedding and in CHALK while finding mostly local jurisdiction in Sassari. In Józsefváros, parallel to networks of independent local and Budapest-wide NGOs, we found a network of “fake NGOs” strongly attached to and financed by the local government. Organisations in Wedding tended to focus on integrated urban and social development, community representation, mitigation, social inclusion and social services, while in CHALK we found organisations for cleaning up the river, local charities, and national organisations for home services with local jurisdiction. In Sassari, most of the organisations focused on youth and migrants, while in Józsefváros the bifurcation of local governance can be seen in the separation of the independent network of autonomous NGOs: housing, support for the homeless and support for the poor, and the “fake” network that focused on local order and “cleanliness”.

In terms of the embeddedness of these organisations in the communities, in Wedding we found strongly engaged organisations that are often group-based. A strong participatory approach was prevalent in

the entire German governance system, but not all communities are involved in this in a similar way. In CHALK, organisations do not need to use publicity for their activities because the community seems to be genuinely engaged. In Sassari, in spite of the thick network of organisations in a bounded place, associations are often seen to be an end to themselves without having any substantial impact on local conditions. In Józsefváros, independent NGOs are strongly embedded through members being part of the local community, while “fake” NGOs are embedded in a particular community of the white middle class

that represents the bifurcation of the local community. In all but one of our neighbourhoods, organisations suffer from a lack of partnerships and coordination, and long-term visions for the community as a whole. In CHALK, however, organisations collaborate in strong partnerships that closely coordinate their activities and go beyond the local level to extend to national agencies as well.

Organisations’ access to decision-making varied in Wedding: the Quartiersmanagement and some other local organisations are well-connected at the decision making and policy making level, whereas the Stadteilkoordination has but limited access to





administration. In Sassari, stakeholders are neither involved with nor are consulted by the Municipality, while in Józsefváros only “fake” NGOs that are attached to incumbents in the local government can participate: independent NGOs are excluded from decision-making. In CHALK, two types of forums are available for organisations to participate in decision-making: a top-down, council initiative called the Community Committee, and an informal, bottom-up forum called the Community Forum. Stakeholders are more in favour of the latter, which also reflects the way CHALK residents do not like to engage with statutory organisations. We identified bifurcated participation in organisations, and hence citizen empowerment in Sassari and in Józsefváros. In the former, stakeholders saw a lack of citizens’ participation while the Municipality argued for hearing its citizens’ voices. In the latter case of Józsefváros, poor, homeless and Roma are silenced while incumbent party voters are allowed to have their voices heard through membership in “fake” organisations.



2.2.5. Policies of diversity

Housing policies emerged as central in the perception of urban regeneration policies in the four neighbourhoods. In Wedding, due to the lack of an overall systematic housing policy, the uncontrolled renewal of areas, building of new houses, selling of social housing and the resultant flight of the poor have been recalled by stakeholders as central issues of urban regeneration policies. Some policies aim at fighting against the negative effects of gentrification. In these protected areas, the demolition of buildings or the modification of their functions requires a permit and approval on behalf of the district

municipality. In CHALK, the increase in buy-to-let properties and in private landlords selling off social housing were cited as major problems impacted by the urban regeneration policy. In Józsefváros, the demolition of the Corvin quarter as a “business-base” and the reconstruction of Magdolna quarter as a social regeneration scheme resulted in building new houses and a decrease in social housing. Parallel to national trends in penal populism, regular evictions of poor families without housing exchange has been taking place. National migration policies also strongly impacted the way migrants are handled in local policy-making in Sassari. In Wedding and in CHALK, however, national policies were considered of secondary importance by local stakeholders.



3. Crossing the results

The Community Reporting and Stakeholder interviews' approaches brought similar and complementary results. The two methodology are based on two different initial approaches: bottom-up in the case of Community Reporting because the discussions are not directed and based on what the interviewee wanted to say; and top-down in the case of stakeholder interviews, because the discussions were semi-directed, based on an interview guide and on a previous knowledge on the area. In the same time, both methods are characterized by an approximately similar share of subjectivity and objectivity. While Community Reporting is based on the subjective opinion of people, the whole process of story gathering, co-curation and analysis is accompanied by a strong guidance on behalf of the lead organisation, the Institute of Community Reporters, ensuring that the subjective voices are treated and analysed in a systematic and structuralized way. In the case of stakeholder interviews, the interviews are guided, since the beginning, by the clear identification of the stakeholder's types to be contacted, the questions (or at least the fields) to be asked, the approximative information expected. However, the interviews themselves and the description of the interviews were not guided, and thus let a large field of free reflexion and subjectivity to the interviewers. In this way, the two methods, that at the start of the project seemed to be in complete contradiction, revealed to be closer to each other than expected, and to be rather complementary than opposite. The crossing of their results is particularly apt to give an overview on the opinion of the large spectre of the local society. As mentioned above, VOICITYS has been a pilot project, with limited time and structural frame, therefore our method could not be deepen enough. However, this pilot research has already proved the interest of the parallel use of the two research methods for the understanding of local societies and societal issues.

Looking across the results from the Community Reporter stories and Stakeholder interviews three distinct, yet interconnected, categories in which the findings could be situated have emerged. They are:



People: This category focuses on findings related to the main **social changes and interactions**, the conditions of dialogue and inclusion of social groups, as well as the **social infrastructures** and contexts of the neighbourhoods, the lives of the people who live and work there, their own understandings and experiences of diversity and social changes.

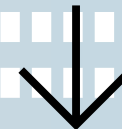





Places: This category focuses on the **main areas and physical infrastructure** where diversity is reflected in the neighbourhoods, the buildings, spaces and services that are evident in them and notions of regeneration, physical change and placemaking.



Power: This category focuses on the **power structures in the neighbourhoods** in terms of decision-making and policy making processes, management of the areas, top-down and bottom-up processes, governance, and the different types of power (i.e. public, civil, legal, social capital) and the ways in which the actors in them interact.

The table below identifies the findings that emerged in both the Community Reporter stories and Stakeholder interviews and situates them in the aforementioned categories.



	People 	Places 	Power 
Berlin, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Together: The different demographics live together in Wedding without conflict. It is felt that there is interaction between the different groups (ethnic, social, age etc.) in the area but that this could be enhanced further. • Tensions: There is a tension around gentrification in terms of young professionals/middle-classes moving into the area and changing its social make-up that could weaken the diversity of the area. Diversity is seen as being a key part of the area's and its inhabitants identity. • Language: Language is seen as something that can united people if it is common, and separate people if it is not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of spaces of interaction: There are spaces in which people can interact, such as specific streets/squares and schools. The schools are generally sites at which the children interact rather than their parents. • New spaces: The different migrant populations of the area have opened up different businesses such as a shops and restaurants that have added to the diverse vibrancy of the neighbourhood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making and governance: There are systems in place to connect residents with the people in positions of power, and also channels through which local people can meet to address their needs through cooperation. These can help to address any power imbalances in the area.
Budapest, Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of people: In general, the Roma community are largely seen in a negative light, whereas other groups (i.e. migrants) are seen more positively. • Perceptions of diversity: The area is seen as being diverse and vibrant, even if there are negatives associated with this vibrancy and liveliness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical improvements and social consequences: Whilst the area has seen physical improvements to the aesthetics of the area and the assets available, they are not generally seen as supporting the growth of the social infrastructure between different groups. In general, the 'regenerated' spaces seem to have fragmented people or excluded certain social groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing: The policing has been enhanced in the area. This and other factors have penalised (and in some instances) criminalised the poor and the Roma community. • Divisions: The power structures in the area have created divisions between people. More inclusion of the residents (in particular those who are becoming more marginalised) in change processes and power structures is needed.
Salford, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic change: The neighbourhood has undergone changes in terms of the demographics who lived there. It was predominantly a white British area (and is still so statistically) but in recent years it has become more ethnically diverse. • Lack of integration: There is little integration or interaction between the different groups who live in the neighbourhood. This has led to the feeling that the social infrastructure of the community is not as strong as it once was. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to spaces to interact: The area has seen changes in the types of spaces open to people to use that provide sites of interaction. Whereas previously informal spaces such as public houses were the hub of social interactions, in recent times other spaces have emerged (as the public houses have closed) such as community centres that provide a range of activities and support for people. Some of these places are seen as belonging or being only used by a specific demographic, whilst others provide support that crosses such divides (i.e. the food banks that focuses on the common problem of poverty). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception gaps: Whilst the support organisations in the area feel they are well connected to one another, the users of such services identify that it can be difficult to know where to go for support. • Bottom-up Action: Action from a grassroots level is seen as positive for the community and the individuals involved as a way of 'giving back' to their community and there are communication channels that exist between people who live in the area and those in positions of power.
Sassari, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic change: The historic centre has seen significant changes in which the migrant population has increased. There has also been a movement out of the local people of Sassari belonging to the lower middle classes from the lower sections of the historic centre. This area is now largely populated by migrants. • Perceptions of Diversity: The diversity of the neighbourhood is largely discussed as ethnic diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squares and Schools: The piazzas and schools provide spaces in which different groups of people can interact. They are seen as being key to bringing people together and promoting social interaction. The cultural events that take place in the public spaces and the new cafes opening in the squares are seen as supporting this too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of connection and communication: There seems to be little communication or connection between residents and the power structures of the area. It is seen that people themselves most make the change happen as there is little support or connectivity with those in a position to support change processes.



CHAPTER IV.

CO-CREATING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOODS – VOICITYS PARTICIPATORY EVENTS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Krisztina Keresztély (CRN)

1. Methodology – a complex participatory process

The aim of the second part of VOICITYS was threefold: first, to double check the results of the crossing of the two research methods and to bring up complementary statements if necessary on the challenges and assets of diversity in the neighbourhoods; second, to formulate policy recommendations on the most important ways to improve diversity management on the local level; and third, to identify, through the crossing of these reflections, some more general statements and recommendations on the Pan-European level.

In order to achieve these objectives, the VOICITYS project developed a participatory process based on two consecutive meetings in each city where inhabitants, stakeholders and policy makers were invited to discuss and identify, together, the main characteristics of local diversity and some main steps to be undertaken for more integrated social development of their neighbourhoods. The outcomes of these events permitted the formulation of policy recommendations on the local level, while the summary and crossing of these local results, supported by the results of a Pan-European participatory event, permitted the formulation of some general principles and recommendations on the European level.



In order to assure comparability, the local events were planned and organised in a way that followed a similar structure and timeline. At the same time, great freedom was provided to the partners to adapt the meetings to local possibilities, needs and specificities. The following chapter will present the organisation of the participatory meetings, the methods used for the analysis of the results and the main results of the analysis.

1.1. Step 1: Local Conversation of Change events

1.1.1. Local CoC events

Conversation of Change (CoC) events were held in the framework of the Community reporting method, some general information on which has already been presented in the sub-chapter on “story mobilisation”(Chapter III, 1.1.5). CoC events bring together different groups of people – residents, Community Reporters, professionals, community leaders, policy makers, decision-makers, etc. – and focus on creating a dialogue through which processes of change can be initiated and people can become catalysts of change at a local level. In the VOICITYS project, these events were started with the presentation, as a stimuli, of some details from the Community Reporter stories and stakeholder interviews in order to launch a dialogue between different people who live or work in the neighbourhoods studied. CoC discussions are *not* intended to give any summary or feedback on the results

of the reports, but rather represent a step forward and provide a space in which the insights from the Community Reporting activities and stakeholder interviews are used to initiate a discussion through which people can better understand other people’s perspectives and perceptions and relate them to their own lived experiences. The stimuli used in these events included extracts from the Community Reporter stories, short quotes from the stakeholder interviews and elements of the background studies. The main principle is that the stimuli help the participants to set the agenda of the conversation by providing them with a focus for discussion. This technique is used to create an environment in which people listen to others rather than seeking to merely have their own voice heard and push forward their own agenda. The organisers of the CoC event must ensure an environment that enables a dialogue conducive to catalysing change, and that people feel secure enough to enter into it. This is achieved by the following components:

- ✓ Stimuli – using items that provoke interactions
- ✓ Equity – removing hierarchy and enabling engagement
- ✓ Curiosity – opening minds and avoiding cognitive dissonance
- ✓ Understanding – knowledge of the process and principles
- ✓ Reflection – providing a time to think before responding
- ✓ Empathy – connecting to the emotions in experiences



There are three core sections of Conversation of Change events:

- ✂ Opening the space: The method for introducing the event is largely based on Open Space principles. This involves acknowledging who is there, inviting them to participate, explaining the workshop's process and talking them through the principles to be used during the event.
- ✂ Creating dialogue: This section uses the stimuli to prompt dialogue about topics. This dialogue should be explorative, focused on the stimuli and own lived experience, and include sharing amongst participants.
- ✂ Activating change: This section takes the learning from the dialogue and creates 'action' from it through individuals identifying how they can use the event's lessons to make change or by co-creating an output (e.g. policy ideas).

In the VOICITYS project, the Conversation of Change events aimed at generating dialogue between a wide range of residents, local organisations, decision makers and other stakeholders who had been the subjects of the two different research methods. The main objective of the events was the co-creation of some first common statements and recommendations on how to respond to the needs of people living in diversity and how to maintain, support and improve diversity in local neighbourhoods. The four local CoC events represented the common rules and structures described above. However, the set-up,

timing, moderation and tools used varied according to the cultural, social and political background of the cities. Largely they drew on and adopted facilitation techniques associated with aspects of Open Space Technologies, Brene Brown's (2012) vulnerability research and story dialogue techniques (see Labonte and Feather, 1996).

In **Berlin**, the Conversation of Change event was based not only on the results of the previous research, but also on that of two other participatory events organised by the local Quartier management unit. During these two meetings, local residents and stakeholders discussed the possible improvement of the area of Wedding through four main topics: 1) education and youth; 2) local economy; 3) public spaces; and 4) culture. During the discussion, the participants pointed out the main places for improvement on a map. Several stakeholders interviewed during the VOICITYS project and several Community reporters participated in these events. The third Conversation of Change event was introduced by quotes and videos presenting results of the VOICITYS research, as well as by some quotes on the results of the two previous events. Following this introduction, the participants were asked to identify on a map the main locations of diversity, and to explain how they see diversity in the neighbourhood





and what needs to be done for improving social cohesion and diminishing the impacts of gentrification in order to maintain diversity's positive assets.

The reason for this complex setup can be found in the local partner's acknowledgement of the general complexity of the scene of local participatory events in Wedding. Due to the relative large number and frequency of these events organised by some important local organisations or public policy representatives (such as the Pankstrasse quartier management), it seemed rational to join the VOICITYS event to one of these occasions in order to be able to gather the information from a large number of stakeholders. In this way, around 30 participants were able to share their opinions and views on the situation linked to diversity in Wedding.

In **Sassari**, the local Conversation of Change event gathered around ten participants, including the following types of stakeholders: a local cultural organisation, one member of the City Council, one community reporter, the Caritas organisation representative and some local residents and expatriates living in Sassari.

The event was based on three parts: first, a presentation of some short video clips and quotations; second, a discussion between the participants in small groups following the three main areas identified for the summary of the research results: 1) People: the changing of the social environment, 2) Places: changes of the physical (urban) environment, and 3) Power: the individual and collective responsibilities

for generating social change and integration. Finally, the participants used the “objective tree” method in order to transfer the statements into general and specific objectives.

In **Salford**, 15 participants were gathered during the CoC event, including local residents, responsables of some local organisations, management and frontline staff in local infrastructure organisations (medium to large), and a consultancy organisation representative working toward connecting people with education, business and career opportunities. Several local participants claimed specific identities linked to religion, national belonging or health conditions.

The discussion took place in two preliminary rounds, which explored physical and social changes in the neighbourhood of CHALK. In both rounds, Community Reporter stories and quotes from the stakeholder interviews (printed onto A4 sheets), which covered topics linked to the two large

fields, were presented to the participants (for instance, in the case of physical change, topics such as environmental changes, housing changes and issues such as litter were covered. In the case of social change, topics included differences in religion/faith, challenging people's assumptions, isolation and segregation and personal





experiences/encounters with diversity). Following this, participants were asked to think about the key messages of the stories, and their personal experiences linked to them. In the third round, participants were asked to suggest ideas for how to make changes by identifying the key topic areas, the positive aspects that support these areas, and the key areas where improvements are needed.

In **Budapest**, 21 participants were gathered at the CoC meeting, mainly representing local and other NGOs and organisations which are trying to influence some aspects of the neighbourhood's everyday life. A wide range of people gathered including Roma activists, the future candidate of a local civil community to be presented at upcoming local elections, local residents, community reporters and academic researchers interested in the social changes in the area. The strong division in society along political lines was also reflected in the composition of the event's participants: stakeholders from the local government were not represented (despite the efforts of the organisers), and only one organisation, which was generally known as politically loyal towards the ruling party, represented itself at the event.

After a short introductory discussion on people's experiences of the area, the discussion continued in three rounds around three main topics: 1) public safety; 2) public cleanliness; and 3) community programmes. Each topic was introduced through a short video of 3-4 extracts. Although three relatively limited topics had been raised, the discussions revealed the wider aspects of the district

linked directly and indirectly to these topics. Participants discussed potential and humane solutions to and prevention of problems rather than trying to solve them by force.

Pan-European CoC event

VOICITYS has a double engagement: beyond understanding diversity and formulating policy recommendations on the local level, our consortium had also committed itself to providing statements and recommendations on the European level. As a first step, a Pan-European Conversation of Change event was organised.

The main purpose of the Pan-European Conversation of Change event was to explore what diversity means to people across the four participating countries and identify the similarities and differences. More concretely, the participants of this event were able to discuss the main characteristics of diversity in the four neighbourhoods, to compare/cross the policy recommendations identified in each city, and to formulate some common principles linked to local diversity management.

The organisation of the event followed similar "rules" and principles as the local CoC events. The participants were





made up of stakeholders, residents and Community Reporters coming from the four cities. The event was organised in Salford and hosted by People's Voice Media, the founder of the Community Reporting method. For this specific reason, the local community of CHALK in Salford was overrepresented: the event was attended by 29 people, ten representing the three partner cities (Berlin, Budapest and Sassari), and 19 coming from the local community and from Manchester.

At the start of the meeting, the participants were divided between four tables in a way which would ensure gender and national equity. One person at

each table was invited to become the moderator of the group.

In the first part of the meeting, entitled “*Exploring diversity*”, some extracts from the Community Reporter stories were presented from each city, and some quotes from the stakeholder interviews were shared in printed form. Based on this information, groups discussed two main topics: 1) the key messages from the stories and quotes about diversity; and 2) the positive, negative or neutral similarities of diversity in their neighbourhoods, especially concerning the links between the community they live or work in to other communities in the area.

In the second part of the meeting, entitled “*Towards a Pan-European Agenda*”, a selection of ideas formulated at the local Conversation of Change events was distributed among the tables, and participants were invited to label them according to the three main groups (People, Place and Power) and place them into a Venn diagram situated on the wall.¹

This practice did not only contribute to the crossing of the local results and recommendations received at the local CoC events, but also to the understanding of the high importance of following a cross-sectorial approach when dealing with diversity. Further, it allowed the participants to obtain a visually understandable result, strongly symbolising the complexity of diversity management in neighbourhoods.



¹ **Venn diagrams** are broadly used for the purpose of analysing the content and the overlapping elements of any items, concepts or facts. This practice enables participants to organise the information visually so they are able to see the relationships between two or three sets of items. They can then identify similarities and differences. A Venn diagram consists of overlapping circles. Each circle contains all the elements of a set.



1.2. Step 2: Crossing the recommendations with the research results

The results of the local CoC events were summarized in each city by highlighting, among others: the main common statements describing the objectives as identified by the participants as responses to the situation/challenge linked to diversity; the translation of these objectives into policy ideas, and the identification of the policy area where the ideas could be implemented. These lists were then linked with the results received by crossing the two research approaches (see Chapter III, 3.).

The policy ideas and recommendations were first established according to the 3 categories of “People”, “Place”, and “Power”. Second, they were identified according to some main policy fields. These fields correspond to almost all of those that were highlighted in the conceptual background of VOICITYS, as follows:

Education: this broad topic which includes policies relevant to the creation of education curricula, informal education, language teaching, etc. on the one hand, and policies relevant to the improvement of schools and physical spaces for education that can also be used as places of encounter, on the other.

Community building and cultural development: this field includes all activities linked to the facilitation of

dialogue between the different cultural and social groups in the neighbourhoods, including the creation of cultural/community centres as places of encounter, the organisation of community events, the re-thinking of the use of existing cultural spaces for different community purposes, etc.

Public spaces: this topic is one of the most important in diversity management, including the need for policies linked to the maintenance and improvement of public spaces, the creation of new spaces of encounter and the improvement of universal accessibility to these common spaces.

Infrastructure and local services: the accessibility of public services and the availability of sufficient public infrastructure serving social and cultural inclusion in the neighbourhood are basic elements of diversity management. This topic includes a wide range of local activities, from public cleanliness, management of health- and other local social services, support for people's access to existing services, and the construction of new public infrastructure that responds to the needs of diverse social groups settling in the neighbourhoods.

Housing: this topic covers policies of social housing, policies regarding rent regulations and the fight against increasing housing prices, policies linked to the management of condominiums, and housing renewal/renovation policies.



Local economic development: this topic covers policies supporting the competitiveness of local SMEs, and small businesses.

Security: this topic covers the general need to improve the *sense of security* of the inhabitants in the neighbourhoods. This need is only partially answered by increases in public security measures (like video cameras, police patrols), while other more “human based” measures are rather linked to community building, education, etc. In certain cases, the security topic also called for an end to the penalisation and discrimination of people living in vulnerable situations (poverty, refugees, ethnic minorities, etc.).

Governance: efficient governance is a basic condition of integrated local development as it ensures that the needs of all groups and stakeholders are taken into consideration. Good governance embraces: cooperation between stakeholders, the participation and involvement of all social groups and stakeholders with an outreach to the most vulnerable ones as well, wide public participation facilitated by good techniques and communication, and dialogue, communication and social control between the local residents, stakeholders and decisions making bodies.

Of course, the activities and priorities identified above as part of certain policy fields in reality cannot be linked exclusively to only one field. Almost all of them cover at least two or more policies; the need for a **strong cross-sectorial approach is therefore particularly relevant**

in the case of diversity management, or, in other words, the management of a neighbourhood through diversity.

The policy fields identified above as relevant to diversity management are therefore rather indicative, permitting the readers to position the actions in terms of policies.

Based on the results of the first discussions between local residents, stakeholders, and some political representatives at the CoC events, the identified policy fields could be linked to the main results of the research on diversity summarised under the three main groups as “people”, “place” and “power”. At first sight, the above policy fields are easily linked to these larger groups according to the main challenge/need they are intended to resolve:



People (social infrastructures): Education, Community building, Culture, Public services



Places (physical infrastructures): Development of public places, Housing policies, Public infrastructure



Power (forms of power and management): Security, Economic development and Governance

Bearing in mind the cross-sectorial approach, it is clear that this distinction is not always realistic. As a matter of fact, all policies are relevant to People, Places and Power through their diverse aspects and activities. This was also evidenced by the results of the Pan-European CoC event, as presented on the Venn diagram. The implementation of local policies based on diversity therefore requires particular attention for



ensuring that all aspects linked to people, place and power are taken into consideration when formulating objectives and actions.

1.3. Step 3: The Local Consensus events

The crossing of the research results with the policy ideas and recommendations identified at the CoC event was presented in a short summarizing document in each city. Based on these documents, local consensus events were held in each neighbourhood in order to ask the participants to comment on and confirm the statements and recommendations, and to add some complementary remarks or ideas for policy implementation. These short events resulted in the finalization of a list of local recommendations as the main result of the VOICITYS project.

Contrary to the local CoC events, the consensus events did not follow any previously set rules; the local partners had more freedom in the set-up of the agenda and the methods of the discussion. However, some basic conditions were set as a framework for the meetings, as follows:

- The participants had to cover the same people or at least people representing similar organisations or interest groups as in the CoC events.
- The aim of the events was to confirm the recommendations, and to add some small complementary ideas if necessary, but not to give the floor to a large debate or to new policy ideas as these had already been settled during the CoC event.

- However, the organisers could note any new topics or upcoming polemics if they thought it was important, but only as ideas and not as confirmed recommendations.
- Participants could follow up on their discussion if they chose, or they could think about further topics, but these were not necessarily taken into account as a VOICITYS result.

The concrete venue, the moderation and the methods used were not identified, so all partners could organise these meetings according to their specific availabilities, the local occasions, etc.





In **Berlin**, the consensus meeting was embedded in the German “Tag der Städtebauförderung” (day of urban development programmes), and took place during a public event at Leopoldplatz in Berlin -Wedding. The recommendations and information on the project

had been displayed on flipcharts, and the attending public was asked by volunteers to provide feedback. During the event, roughly 200 citizens visited the display and around 20 people, mostly from NGOs and administration, were questioned.

In **Sassari**, the meeting was held with ten people, most of whom were also present at the CoC event. Similarly to the CoC meeting, the main topics were discussed under the fields of People – social change, Places- urban change, and Power – collective and individual responsibilities.

In **Salford**, the meeting was attended by only three people, and further, some contributions via email were added. The reason for this was that the people from the local community also attended the Pan-European CoC event, so it would have been too demanding to gather them a third time as well. The participants of the meeting and the email contributions added some precision to the already identified recommendations.

In **Budapest**, the consensus event attracted almost the same amount of people as the CoC event: 19 participants took part in the event, covering approximately the same group of people but also including some new faces. Two representatives of two different opposition parties within the city council were also present. The cause of the event’s “success” was linked to the fact that VOICITYS offered a topic that is relatively distinct from ruling political discourses, while at the same time can easily lead to discussing the main problems of the neighbourhood. In light of the forthcoming local elections, the event also served as a venue for discussing and understanding the general local challenges in the entire neighbourhood.

As a result of the strong motivation of the participants, the consensus work went a bit deeper here than in the other cities. Participants were divided into two groups, each of which received the summary tables with the main recommendations identified at the CoC event. They were asked to prioritize the recommendations and to identify concrete actions and possible responsibilities for the actions. The ideas were presented in a large table. By identifying concrete actions and tasks, the Budapest consensus meeting **went a step ahead in the participatory process: participants were engaged in a short co-design process** that had not been part of the objectives of the VOICITYS project, but that should be part of a follow-up activity.

This diversity of the local consensus events permitted us to obtain real local feedback to the recommendations. In all neighbourhoods, the identified policy ideas were confirmed and completed.



2. The results: policy recommendations in the four neighbourhoods

The following chapter will summarize the main results of the participatory process in each neighbourhood as follows:

1. The challenges and assets of diversity will be described as identified by the participants based on the results of the research according to the three main fields: People – social infrastructure; Places – physical infrastructure; and Power Structures (management and governance)
2. The main policy recommendations will be presented as outlined by the participants at the CoC and the consensus events following the three main fields above
3. Finally, an overall summary of the policy recommendations will be provided, on the basis of the two previous lists, by the coordinator of the whole process (Comparative Research Network), this time by linking the recommendations to the main policy fields as identified above (see 1.2.).

people belonging to different social and ethnic groups coexist peacefully without any fundamental conflict.

However, this positive picture also hides challenges. If groups are living side by side, their interactions remain only superficial and occasional, and relatively few places and occasions yet exist for creating real intergroup connections. Language and the lack of places of encounter are seen as being among the main barriers for such interactions in Wedding.

The main social tensions in Wedding are not linked to diversity itself, but to a phenomenon that is rather a threat to diversity: gentrification. The arrival of a white middle class population with a different lifestyle, different economic and cultural activities and more favourable financial capacities leads to the rise of real estate prices and the displacement from the neighbourhood of the most vulnerable groups.

2.1. Wedding in Berlin: sustaining diversity faced with the threat of gentrification

2.1.1. Assets and challenges of diversity in Wedding



People

In Wedding, diversity is generally seen as a positive and natural fact, something which provides the main characteristic and tradition of the neighbourhood. The



Places

Wedding is a vibrant neighbourhood with high diversity visibility in its urban landscape, something which is partly linked to different places such as shops, cafes, and community centres which permit encounters. However, the majority of these places limit such encounters to one or two groups, and there are very few places and occasions where a mixing of all



groups would be supported. These latter places of encounter are mainly in open spaces (public squares, parks, streets) which are accessible to everyone, but also are accompanied by feelings of insecurity expressed by some of the residents. Therefore, in Wedding, the spaces of encounter are in need of improvement and enlargement.



Power

In Wedding, as in other districts of Berlin, a very rich and complex governance system exists with a large variety of stakeholders and social initiatives; several of these latter also support the connection between residents and people in positions of power.

There are also local structures that implement policies worked out on the city and/or federal level. However, the coordination and collaboration between these structures is still not entirely assured, which leads to parallel activities or competition between some organisations within the area. Furthermore, despite the acceptance of otherness as experienced in local discourses and in the activities of local organisations, there is still an unequal balance of power acting in favour of German citizens (for instance, in the case of police interventions, or in some media discourse which presents Wedding as a “dangerous neighbourhood”).

2.1.2. Managing Wedding through diversity – policy ideas and recommendations

The participatory process in Wedding raised a large number of suggestions and recommendations as a reaction to the main challenges as identified above. The main recommendations can be summarized as follows:



People

The recommendations concentrated on the need to reinforce the encounters and interaction between different ethnic and social groups living and working in the area, and to support the most vulnerable people facing gentrification. Schools and after-school activities are acknowledged as basic occasions for meet-ups and exchanges between all kinds of people, and the support of these spaces was therefore most routinely

mentioned. Bilingualism and especially the support of bilingual curricula in schools were also mentioned as a solution for creating bridges between people. Supporting young local entrepreneurs in improving their entrepreneurship skills as they face growing competition linked to gentrification is also a field where education can intervene for maintaining diversity in Wedding.



Places

Creating and improving places of encounter was first mentioned. This objective included, on the one hand, the creation of community based spaces, such as a „repair café“, and on the other hand, the improvement of the quality, accessibility and safety of public spaces.



Power

The main objective in Wedding is clearly to improve the coordination of the existing local initiatives and activities. As an interesting point, also mentioned was the need to convince the political decision makers to take into account the professional and social values and knowledge represented by the people volunteering in the neighbourhood.

The crossing of these recommendations

with the main challenges and policy fields provides the following summarising table:

2.1.3. Recommendations according to Policy Fields in Wedding

Policy	Statement/situation	Recommendation
Education	Language is a barrier for encounters	Support of bilingual teaching in schools
Education	Local young entrepreneurs, often coming from an ethnic minority group, are not skilled enough to compete with newly settled, more skilled middle class entrepreneurs	VET trainings for young entrepreneurs
Community building, culture	There are not enough interactions between the social and ethnic groups	More community events and organised places of encounter with community programmes are needed: repair café in one school, after-school activities for children and parents
Public spaces	There are not enough organised public places of encounter, and the existing places are not accessible for everyone and are often considered unsafe or unpleasant	The improvement of public spaces is needed: cleanliness, a more pleasant environment, playgrounds, benches, etc. The inter-generational renovation of the main square is also needed
Public infrastructures and local services	Local schools are the most important places of encounter, but existing schools are saturated as a result of increases in newly-settled populations.	The improvement of the existing schools and construction of new schools is needed
Housing	The housing prices are drastically increasing, pushing out the most vulnerable part of the local population	Setting a cap on rent for housing and offices is needed
Local economic development	The small, local businesses often led by ethnic groups are in danger due to new investments	Support of local businesses is needed
Safety	People's sense of security feeling in certain public spaces of encounter is not assured	Decreasing drug consumption and illicit commercial activities in public spaces is needed
Governance	There are many initiatives and organisations, but their activities are not always coordinated	Stronger coordination and understanding of the area by people in positions of power is needed by valuing the volunteering in the neighbourhood



2.2. Old Town of Sassari: reinforcing the social, participatory and cultural dimensions of urban revitalization

2.2.1. Assets and challenges of diversity in the Old Town



People

In Sassari, diversity is discussed as ethnic diversity, a consequence of the recent settling of third country nationals in the city. For some people, the integration of these ethnic groups is a positive asset for the city, while for others it is seen as a challenge. Several social

phenomena that are linked to the physical

degradation of the Old Town are also considered in some discourses to be linked to the arrival of migrants, such as some middle class residents moving out of the Old Town, or the changing habits and living conditions there (the lack of community encounters in the main squares, the unsafe character of certain parts of the area, etc.).



Places

The Old Town of Sassari is suffering from decay, and the traditional places of encounter, like the piazzas, are now



Power

There is a general lack of communication between residents, local organisations and the political power structure. On the policy side, the decisions are mainly concentrated on short term impacts, and there is a general lack of longer term strategic reflection on the city. Social change is mainly generated by the activities of citizens.

2.2.2. Managing the Old Town through diversity – policy ideas and recommendations

The main recommendations formulated at the two participatory events for dealing with the situation described above are as follows:



People

In terms of the interaction between people, the most important objective is the reinforcement of the local community by attracting people to move back to the area. The importance of after-school activities and encounters were highlighted, which led to the idea of the creation of a community centre where children and their parents from different backgrounds can spend their after-school time involved in different activities.





Places

In Sassari, similarly to Berlin, the need for the creation of places of encounter was also most often mentioned as a measure for supporting social cohesion through diversity. Here, due to the high number of devastated buildings and cultural heritage sites, the creation of places of encounter needs to be linked to the revalorisation of these buildings: for instance, the repurposing of commercial stores for cultural and community functions through the implementation by the municipality of tax deductions and incentives; or, the transformation and reuse of historical public libraries for participatory purposes, permitting the encounter of all social and ethnic groups.



Power

In Sassari, the empowerment of citizen participation and the communication between citizens, local stakeholders and the municipality are the first high priority tasks to be undertaken. The bases for participatory governance need to be set up. To achieve this, openness and relevant activities are needed from both sides – the citizens and the municipality. Citizens and local stakeholders need to push the municipality to create required social and physical changes in the Old Town. On the municipal level, the openness towards the creation of longer term strategies and collaborations would be needed.

The above statements and recommendations can be summarized as follows according the main policy fields:

2.2.3: Recommendations according to Policy Fields in the Old Town of Sassari

Policy	Statement/situation	Recommendation
Education	Schools are the most important places of social interaction	A long term programme for public integration of education would be needed, including the VET training for young people (immigrants included)
Community building, culture	There is strong ethnic division within the society. The ethnic diversity is largely perceived as a dividing factor which breaks the "traditional" community life	New places of encounter are needed: a community centre for after-school activities and the revalorisation of public libraries as places of encounter and participation
Public spaces	Piazzas, the traditional places of encounter, are less vibrant than before and are perceived by some as not safe enough	The reuse of abandoned historical buildings for cultural purposes could be a solution to the need for new places of encounter.
Housing	Very low quality of housing and lack of systemic renovation; the middle class has left the area which attracted low-income refugees and immigrants.	An overall public strategy is needed for the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions, even for the lowest income groups
Services, infrastructure	There is a lack of public services and amenities	A synergy is needed between residents, stakeholders and decision makers for a strategic revalorisation of historical heritage, and also for reinforcing public services
Safety	There is a feeling of unsafeness in certain parts of the neighbourhood	Establishment of a law enforcement plan by municipal police is needed
Governance	Public policies follow short term strategies; there are very few connections between the local residents, stakeholders and the decision makers; there is a lack of dialogue between local civic organisations	Citizens should launch a petition campaign to force the local government to ensure better participation and the renewal of the area; Institution-based, long term strategy making is needed



2.3. CHALK in Salford – Reducing Social Gaps and Improving Connectivity for a More Inclusive Society

2.3.1. Assets and Challenges of Diversity



People

Until very recently, CHALK was a traditional poor neighbourhood where dimensions of diversity were acknowledged along with differences between groups of different social status, age and health. The settling of new immigrants brought about a radical and rapid change in the social composition of the neighbourhood, and provoked feelings of fear and unsafety on behalf of the local population. Ethnic diversity is therefore a new phenomenon, and the social infrastructures are not prepared to handle it. At the same time, residents claiming to have a high level of resilience that supports them in overcoming issues and gives them the capacity to address adversities. Due to some central public programmes (e.g. New deal for Communities, Young Task Force), young people (especially NEET) are now supported in overcoming unemployment.



Places

In CHALK, the connectivity between social groups through space and services is still relatively weak. The area suffers from a lack of educational qualifications and long term health conditions. There are spaces in the neighbourhood that provide services or points

of interaction for people from a single demographic. This means that people live parallel lives but do not integrate with one another.

The traditional places of encounter (such as pubs) have lost their importance. However, they have been replaced by some new places of encounter such as St. Sebastian's community centre, Salford Sports Village, Food Banks, etc. The latter forms a very positive initiative providing space for long term residents and newcomers to interact around their common issue: poverty.

Cuts of public funds have resulted in either limited or deteriorating quality of public services. This has resulted in both a lack of accessibility to and communication about public services and assets, which in turn has created an overarching perception and narrative of a lack of services.

At the same time, the area is rich in green and blue spaces, with a strong capacity for providing good living conditions to its residents.



Power

In CHALK, the governance system is well functioning: there is good communication between the grassroots, the people (the community) and the local authority, and between the local organisations. At the same time, this governance system has problems in reaching out to the most vulnerable groups. It seems that there is a perception gap between NGOs that feel they are well connected to all groups, whereas certain users of services claim they have difficulties reaching social support providers. Although the voices of the people are taken into consideration on the municipal level, many residents have the feeling that only the 'loudest' voices are the ones that are listened to via these structures.



2.3.2. Managing CHALK through diversity: policy ideas and Recommendations

Based on the general statements, the following policy ideas and recommendations were raised at the two events:



People

On the social level, the improvement of the connectivity and interaction within different local community groups is the most important objective. This would mean supporting to make better use of current services by ensuring that services are more connected and better communicated to people. Support of community integration can be achieved by using events and educational activities as spaces for cultural integration in which people can learn about each other. Conversations such as these could be facilitated by additional training in intercultural dialogue for some of the neighbourhood's residents, groups and organisations.



Places

Supporting good connectivity and quality of life in CHALK will need to enhance the usage of existing green and blue spaces (i.e. the wetlands) so that they become more of a local asset. This could be achieved by better signage to and about them, and improving amenities such as places to shelter in bad weather. Furthermore, enhancing the physical regeneration of the area will need to be realised using 'bottom-up' or community-led approaches so that residents support both the environmental quality and physical appearance of the improved area. This could be achieved by developing more horticultural projects and by reducing littering in the area through litter collection and better access to bins.



Power

In terms of governance, the personal engagement of people and the connectivity between all social groups need to be supported. This could be achieved through connecting people through a common cause or adversity, and supporting them to help themselves and others in overcoming them (i.e. volunteering at food banks to overcome poverty, opening a repair café at which people learn how to fix/ make things for themselves).



The usage and effectiveness of existing infrastructures for decision-making in the area should be enhanced by enabling a wider range of resident voices to be heard. This could be achieved by making current decision-making forums more welcoming to newcomers, by not allowing a small minority of people to dominate the infrastructure by having different people on different forums and changing the forum leaders on a regular basis, by challenging behaviour that subverts the intentions of these decision-making forums, and by better communicating the outcomes and practical actions taken as part of these meetings so that people feel they've been heard.

2.3.3. Recommendations according to Policy Fields in CHALK

Policy	Statement/situation	Recommendation
Education	There is a general lack of educational qualifications among people living in the area	More bottom-up, informal education would be needed to open people's minds and change their receptiveness towards otherness
Community building, culture	There is a general fear of "Otherness" and a lack of social integration/dialogue with the newcomers	More community events are needed that have different groups of people attending so that people have the opportunity to mix and get to know each other
Public spaces	The traditional places of encounter are closing down, and new spaces like the community centres have opened. Specific groups use specific spaces rather than all together	Using events and educational activities as spaces for cultural integration in which people can learn about each other
Public Spaces	The area has good assets for improving quality of life and creating open spaces of encounter: many green and blue spaces (wastelands) need revalorisation	Enhancing the usage of these areas by improving their amenities and accessibility. The physical appearance of the area should be improved with greater involvement of the residents. Improving horticultural projects for better urban regeneration
Public infrastructures and local services	Limited or deteriorating quality of public services resulted in both a lack of accessibility to and communication about public services and assets, which in turn has created an overarching perception and narrative of a lack of services	Support people to make better use of current services by ensuring that services are more connected and better communicated to people
Housing	Some groups, especially students and third country nationals living in shared housing, are suffering from poor housing conditions. Access to housing support is age dependent	A reform of the law for housing support would be needed to support people's access to their own housing and leaving shared housing
Governance	There is good support of bottom-up policy making and participation, and a good communication flow between local NGOs, residents and the local government. However, there is uneven accessibility to these processes by the different groups of the population	Decision making forums with the involvement of all social groups including newcomers should be organised. The communication of the outcomes of these meetings with the people should be improved



2.4. Józsefváros in Budapest: Dealing With a Highly Politicised and Fragmented Local Society

2.4.1. Assets and Challenges of Diversity



People

Józsefváros is a historically diverse neighbourhood where ethnic diversity is mainly perceived in terms of the Roma ethnicity. The Roma community itself is divided according to the cultural roots, habits, professions and capacities of integration of the groups into the majority society. In Józsefváros, diversity also concerns the difference between the social groups: marginalised and vulnerable people who are suffering from homelessness, poverty and unemployment are living side by side with low income citizens and better-off middle class citizens. In the last ten years, two new social groups have been settling in the area: non-EU immigrants who have become part of the vivid local life in the neighbourhood, and groups of young artists and intellectuals arriving due to gentrification, some of them Hungarians and some of them expats. The lack of interconnectivity between these groups, and especially the role of Roma groups, is an important challenge in the neighbourhood.



Places

Józsefváros has a highly fragmented urban structure. Most of its parts are run down and strongly stigmatized

areas of the city. The refurbishment of some buildings, public areas and parks linked to Urban Regeneration programmes has improved the general perceptions of the neighbourhood, but has not improved social justice or the quality of local services.

There are almost no places of encounter where all social groups constituting local diversity could meet; not even in the parks, as most of the newly renovated ones are surrounded by fences which exclude part of the population. There is a shortage of community spaces. The existing communal spaces are themselves strongly divided between those run by the organizations that are close to the local government and by the so called “liberal NGOs” which are opposed to the current political structure. The only places of integration are the streets and markets.



Power

The power structures in the area have strongly contributed to the division between people and spaces. Contrary to the original aims and objectives, part of the population is excluded from the regeneration policies. The accessibility to services and amenities is not balanced. Certain groups of the population have better access and certain areas of the neighbourhood



are prioritized, while others are left on the margins. The ruling policies follow a model of penal populism and criminalisation of the Roma and the poor. There is a strong division between local organisations according to their political commitment. The communication with citizens is one-sided, and mainly limited to information and not participation. Crime is considered a traditionally important topic in the area.

2.4.2. Managing Józsefváros through diversity: Policy Ideas and Recommendations

Based on the identified challenges, the following recommendations have been formulated by the participants in the meetings:



People

Creating connections between different segments of local society is the most important current social objective in the neighbourhood. Participants in the events identified solutions in the framework of informal education and community building, such as supporting mentoring programmes for pupils from elite middle class and poor local schools, organising summer schools for local children, or community programmes that interest all social groups.



Places

The strong spatial inequalities in Józsefváros need to be reduced in different aspects. The equal repartition of public services including public cleanliness and of urban regeneration policies is needed. The creation of open and accessible places of encounter and organised places and events for social dialogue is an essential condition for reinforcing cohesive diversity.



Power

A balanced governance system can only be realised through overcoming the strong political division between local residents and stakeholders in two groups: defenders and opponents of the ruling political power. This can only be done by strengthening civil engagement and collaboration.



2.4.3. Recommendations according to Policy Fields in Józsefváros

Policy	Statement/situation	Recommendation
Education	There is strong segregation of the education system and the schools, and the lack of dialogue between children belonging to different social groups is an important challenge to diversity	Enhancing informal education opportunities by supporting mentoring programs where mentors can come from district's elite schools
Education	Crime and drug consumption is an important problem in the area	Re-launching efficient drug prevention programmes in elementary and secondary schools
Community building, culture	There is a lack of connectivity between the different social groups	Enhance integration by organising summer camps involving all children from the neighbourhood. Enhance integration by organising programmes and activities for diverse audiences (more than one group of people). Re-launching the initial functions of the community centre called "Kesztyűgár"
Public spaces	The neighbourhood is fragmented, there are no places of encounter, and even the parks are not accessible by a part of the community. The existing community spaces are themselves strongly divided between those run by "liberal NGOs" and by organizations close to the local government	For community building, equal support of spaces for dialogue is needed from the local government. Diversity should be appreciated
Public infrastructures and local services	The accessibility to services and amenities is unbalanced. Certain groups of the population have better access; certain areas of the neighbourhood are prioritized while others are left on the margins. The growing gentrification of the area is not followed by the creation of sufficient services	Ensuring equal access to services by providing the same level of street lighting, public cleaning, and safety everywhere. Supporting public cleanliness by having existing public toilets open and operating at all times
Housing	Housing is a core challenge in the area. The housing stock is in bad condition, the refurbishment of buildings is limited to the facades and to urban renewal areas. The tenants of municipal housing are left alone to deal with problems (bad living standards, conflicts), while there are conflicts in the condominiums linked to the lack of maintenance capacities. Access to housing is limited	A complex municipal service is needed which provides maintenance and social services (conflict resolution, mediation) through training and supporting the mediator and community- building work of "social handymen in each building. Ideally, the social handyman is also active in community-building, cooperates with the municipality and has the possibility and authority for concrete everyday support (has access to all level of the institutional system, e.g. family support services)
Governance	There is no dialogue between the municipality and the NGOs. On the contrary, the work of certain NGOs is under threat. The strongly politicized atmosphere reinforces the populist discourses. At the same time, there is a strong local potential for social engagement	Enhancing civil collaboration is needed for reaching dialogue

3. conclusions: crossing challenges and recommendations

The four neighbourhoods forming the pilot areas of our participatory process represent a large diversity of diversities, with different positive and negative features in each case – as concluded by the two research processes and confirmed by the participatory discussions. At the same time, this diversity hides some similar challenges and assets that can be regarded as common entry points for the formulation of more general policy recommendations of neighbourhood diversity management. In the following chapter, which presents the crossing of the results of the local participatory processes, we intend to highlight the main similarities and the main differences in terms of challenges and recommendations.

3.1. Similarities and Differences in Diversity: the Common Challenges and Assets in the Four Neighbourhoods

The main common points and differences will be highlighted following the three main fields of People (social interactions and infrastructures), Place (spaces of diversity and physical infrastructures linked to diversity) and Power (the power structures and interactions of stakeholders).



People

The acceptance of otherness and the vision of people on the meaning of 'living in diversity' show entirely different conditions in the four neighbourhoods. Diversity has been perceived in all cities as a positive thing, but with different nuances and "side feelings". Wedding was essentially the only place where diversity was clearly identified as a positive condition, whereas in the other cities, the perception of diversity was more "nuanced", showing the



Places

difficulties and potential conflicts. As a common point, independently from the degree and the composition of diversity, the lack or the weakness of connectivity between the diverse groups was highlighted in all cities.

The conditions and local policies linked to spatial development are very different in the four neighbourhoods. However, in terms of the spatial aspects of diversity, there are common points as well.

First, all cities are experiencing a certain urban transformation that is often labelled with the term "gentrification", referring to the general increase in real estate prices and refurbishment of buildings in the devastated parts of the neighbourhoods. These physical



transformations have a general negative impact on the social cohesion of the neighbourhoods as they push out the most vulnerable groups of local residents. The same process can be identified in different measures and contexts in the four neighbourhoods.

Second, in all cities the lack of sufficient places of encounter which gather all social groups has been raised as a challenge for cohesive diversity.



Power

The four neighbourhoods represent absolutely different power structures. In Berlin and Salford, the

conditions of a local governance system, bringing the citizens, NGOs and policy makers into a common platform, are set up and functioning. In Budapest and Sassari, even the basic conditions of this system are underdeveloped, and the local power structures are characterised by the lack of any communication and dialogue between the residents, local stakeholders and political power.

However, some weaknesses can be identified even in the context of good governance, such as the weakness of cooperation between the local stakeholders, or the unequal outreach of the local governance system to the most vulnerable groups of the society.

3.2. Similarities and Differences in the Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report gathered at the two participatory events in each city also represent a strong diversity, as they were formulated in very diverse local social and cultural contexts by local stakeholders with very different experiences and expertise. Therefore, behind the different formulations, different understandings of diversity, local community, local policies and local needs might also be perceived. In Berlin and Budapest, the formulation of policy ideas generally resulted in most detailed policy recommendations that sometimes were close to the formulation of concrete action plans. In Sassari, the recommendations remained more general. Salford

was the city where the strong vertical interconnection of the recommendations was the most visible, making the task of “dividing” them between the different sector-based policy fields difficult. The Pan-European Conversation of Change event was partly designed to reduce these differences between the local voices and to identify common values and concepts (see *chapter V.*).

While the Pan-European CoC event – to be presented in the next Chapter – highlighted the common values regarding diversity through a dialogue between the representative of the four cities, the crossing of the



recommendations identified in the four localities parallel to each other, has also shown that despite the large diversity of concrete recommendations, some common tendencies and objectives might be identified which link the four very different neighbourhoods.

These common ideas, according to the three fields of People, Place and Power, are as follows:



People

The most important common aim identified in each city was the provision of occasions for creating interactions and dialogue between the different social groups in the neighbourhoods. Schools, after-school activities and cultural events came up in all cities as places/occasions where these interactions could work the best. The second aim is the empowerment of local people in vulnerable situations, such as members of ethnically and socially disadvantaged groups through informal education and communication.



Place

First and foremost, the creation of new places of encounter has been mentioned in all neighbourhoods as a basic need for maintaining and supporting cohesion in diversity. The types of such places are various: “organised places of encounter” can be in schools, repair cafés, abandoned buildings, public libraries, etc. Second, “open public spaces of encounter” which require better

accessibility and safety conditions can be public squares, parks, gardens, etc. A second important objective is the improvement in the quality of the urban environment, again in various ways: increasing public cleanliness, better signs, accessible public toilets, revalorisation of abandoned buildings, piazzas and existing green and blue spaces, etc. Thirdly, linked to the second point, the improvement of universal accessibility to public services was mentioned by all cities in different forms. Fourth, as a very specific topic linking people to places, the improvement of the housing conditions was mentioned in different ways according to the cities’ main challenges.



Power

As mentioned above, the need to improve dialogue and cooperation between the residents, stakeholders and decision makers has been mentioned in all cities, independent of the level of governance in the neighbourhood. However, the cities represent different levels of governance and thus expressed different needs related to it. In Berlin, the emphasis is on the increase of coordination within the governance system between the wide range of local initiatives and organisations. In Salford, the main need is to achieve better outreach of the governance system towards the most vulnerable groups. In Sassari, the main need is to set up the basic conditions of a participatory governance system. In Budapest, the most urgent aim is to overcome the political division in society by strengthening civil engagement and collaboration.

3.3. Entry points for diverse neighbourhoods: the most relevant policy fields for managing neighbourhoods through diversity

Based on the above considerations, the main policy fields where diversity management in neighbourhoods might bring the most relevant results can be identified as follows:

Policy field	Statements/needs linked to diversity	Recommendations
Education	Schools and education are generally the main meeting points between the different social groups living in a specific area	Diversity management can be realised within education curricula, through intercultural teaching, bilingualism, etc. Strengthening the function of schools as places of encounter, and bringing together parents and children from different social and cultural backgrounds through after-school programmes. Intercultural, professional training and capacity building, and language instruction to local people through informal education
Community building and culture	There is a general lack of communication/ exchange between the different social and ethnic groups	Organisation of intercultural events, support of cultural dialogue
Urban development/ place making	Places of encounter are needed to be able to outreach to all segments of the local society, even the most vulnerable or invisible groups	Place making and urban renewal activities, such as the refurbishing of abandoned spaces and buildings, the revitalisation of existing public spaces (squares, parks, etc.) can contribute to the creation of places of encounter in the neighbourhoods that are accessible for all
Public infrastructures and services	There is a general uneven accessibility to the public infrastructures and services by the different social and ethnic groups	Development of public infrastructures and basic services, from public cleanliness to adapted street signs, as well as health services and infrastructures accessible to all are improving quality of life and social cohesion in the neighbourhood
Housing	Generally bad housing conditions among the most vulnerable groups; the risk of increased housing prices and rents linked to the transformation (gentrification) of the areas; the lack of financial capacity of tenants and poorer owners to maintain the housing stock	Through social housing policies and by supporting the availability of affordable housing for the most vulnerable groups The regularisation of the housing rental sector is a basic condition for avoiding the negative trends of gentrification in many areas. The related activities can be manifold, such as the maximisation of housing rents, the introduction of strong rules of renting, etc. Support for the maintenance of housing: in areas where housing ownership is high, local policies are needed to support the most vulnerable owners who are not able to cover maintenance costs: a support for the management of condominiums in the poorest areas is needed
Economic development	The local small – often ethnic – businesses are in danger due to the settling of new investments and businesses	Support of local SMEs. Capacity building trainings for local young entrepreneurs. Agreements with the new businesses (local diversity charters)
Safety	In many of the diverse areas, some people claim they feel unsafe	Better control of security in certain areas is needed. Police control is only one part of the solution. There need to be soft elements for improving safety
Governance	The dialogue and cooperation between the residents, local stakeholders and decision makers exists at various levels in the four cities, but there is a need of improvement even in the most developed governance systems	In areas where dialogue is missing between decision making power and the local stakeholders and residents, and where the basis of a governance system has to be created, bottom-up community based mobilisation is needed. In areas where the governance system is established, the improvement of cooperation and outreach can be realised either through bottom-up or top-down measures



The above list is the result of a complex participatory process based on research and dialogue between the residents, stakeholders and policy makers on their experiences and needs for living better in diverse neighbourhoods. The recommendations are not “original”, and the reader might have the impression that they are already known objectives and methods of integrated urban development. The point of novelty of the results is, we believe, that for good management of diverse neighbourhoods, **all of**

these policy elements need to be realised in parallel and interlinked with each other. The limited timeframe of the present pilot project did not permit the identification of more specific, place-based and problem-based actions. It did permit, however, the identification of the general frame of diversity management in local neighbourhoods. The above summarized recommendations can be used in the future as a starting point for the formulation of more specific action plans in each city.





CHAPTER V.

LIVING DIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS – PAN EUROPEAN CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Krisztina Keresztély (CRN)

In VOICITYS, the reflections and dialogue on diversity management on the local level were concluded by some considerations and recommendations on the Pan European level. The four neighbourhoods where our research and community dialogue activities were conducted represent four very different European realities with different traditions socio-economic backgrounds, and with entirely different approaches to social integration, diversity, participation, etc. As we saw in the previous chapter, in spite of these different cultural and social backgrounds, some similar considerations emerged as a result of the local participatory reflections regarding the ways social inclusion and local neighbourhood development can be improved through diversity management. In the frame of the recent pilot project, a more general reflection of these common points has been generated in order to identify some

Pan European considerations that address European cities and funding institutions dealing with diversity management.

Diversity management in neighbourhoods

In VOICITYS we often use the term *diversity management*, borrowed from the business terminology. In human resource management, “Diversity management is much more than just a multicultural issue: it is about embracing many different types of people who stand for different things and represent different cultures, generations, ideas, and thinking (Llopis, 2011).”¹ We believe that this term can be well adapted on the neighbourhood/city level, indicating an ensemble of policies designed for the cohesive development of diverse societies where the needs and the capacities of all social groups are answered and improved. By approaching diversity management as a tool for developing cohesive public policies on the city level, we follow the line drawn by some authors on local diversity (A. Germain, 2002) as well as by the European Council’s Intercultural cities programme.²

¹ <https://www.kbmanage.com/concept/diversity-management>

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about>



Our pilot project's time frame and capacities did not permit us to follow the same deep research and dialogue on the European level as had been done on the local levels. However, we could create and test a methodological frame that can be extended/revisited in the future. Based on the results of the local participatory processes as presented above (see *Chapter IV, 3.*), and on the results of our Pan European Conversation of Change event (see *Chapter IV, 1.1.2*), some general ideas

and recommendations could be identified that address all cities and localities setting up their policies for local diversity management. These considerations were merged with some ideas on diversity management on the European level identified as a result of desk research and a limited number of interviews with representatives of European organisations and stakeholders. The following Chapter will present the main steps and main results of these reflections.

1. Managing Diversity in European Neighbourhoods – establishing Pan European recommendations for cities and localities

The reflection on the common points raised by diversity in local neighbourhoods was launched by the Pan European Conversation of Change event held in Salford during the second half of the project (see *Chapter IV, 1.1.2*). During this event, the participants were asked to identify the key characteristics of diversity and the main similarities and differences between the cities. The

following quotes summarize and reflect key messages of this event, which themselves reflect the ideas that came out of the local Conversation of Change events:



1. The concept of hyper diversity has been confirmed:

"Diversity is not only a term based on religion and ethnicity."

"Diversity is not just about culture but also about classes."

2. Dialogue and interconnection are crucial for the inclusive development of diversity:

"Real diversity is not just about living side by side but being connected."

"Diversity needs to be built on reciprocal relationships to avoid some people feeling they are pushed out."



“There is a need for communication and to listen to people.”

3. Policies must be aware of the negative perceptions and feelings of certain people concerning diversity which are mainly the result of their fear of differences and newcomers:

“People are rather scared of diversity and what it might bring, and not of certain ‘races’.”

“There are acceptable and unacceptable differences.”

“We all have prejudices.”

“People’s frustrations push them to search for new enemies.”

“Diversity is considered a ‘threat’ by people because it is the result of a change. The arrival of newcomers might mean a ‘change of the enemies’.”

“Diversity is a two-sided process where locals face immigrants.”

“There is a general negative trend in the public discourse concerning immigration. In general, even in this negative aspect, the discourse often does not cover reality.”

4. Diversity can be seen from different points of view: policies dealing with diversity management need to take diversity as a strength and an asset for the local communities and local development.

“Diversity in general should NOT BE A PROBLEM, not a negative thing to be resolved. Unfortunately, for instance, Roma communities in Budapest or Eastern Europeans in Salford are often seen as a problem, and not as an asset.”
“Vibrant communities bring something extra to the people, and they realize that.”

5. Policies dealing with diversity management should be careful and attentive in order to generate real social inclusion:

“It is important to let people choose their ways of belonging and looking like. Integration cannot be forced, but can be supported through tolerance (for instance, tolerating someone’s religion). But these actions shouldn’t go beyond someone’s comfort zone, which can differ: for one it is just sharing, for another, it is about integration.”

“There are strong differences between tolerance, welcoming, dialogue and integration. All these have different meanings and different results in the community.”

“Integration does not support diversity; inclusion supports inclusive diversity.”

“Inclusion should be a natural approach for all people.”

“Turning the positive and negative approach to a neutral one, where inclusion is a natural thing, would lead to a better humankind.”

“There is a difference between policy priorities and



the priorities of the society: minority groups with social needs are prioritized in the UK by the policies, but not by the society. There is a reciprocal situation in Hungary where people with special needs are not forming a priority for policies, but do have the sympathy of a large part of the society."

6. Place-making policies and actions have a strong impact on diversity in different ways:

"From the point of view of diversity, physical location is important: differentiation of places is characterized by 'racist' or by 'welcoming' attitudes."

6/a. Inclusive diversity depends a lot on the existence of **places of encounter**:

"Diversity needs public spaces, but also structure and security."

"Places are important: they might help in starting a conversation. Berlin offers places for exchange that are also relaxing and open places."

"There is a need to facilitate diversity through places (schools, community centres, etc.)."

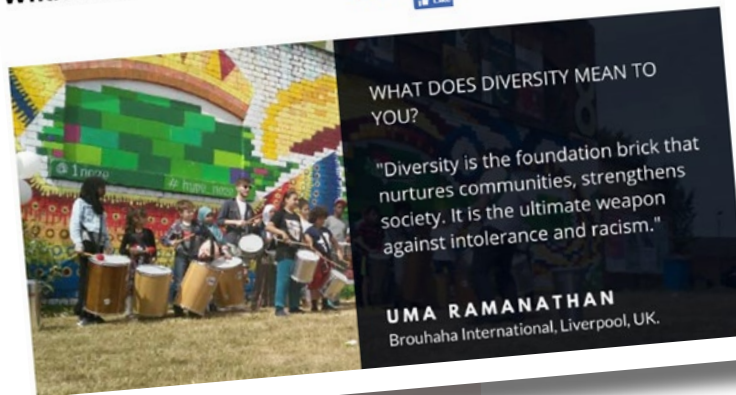
6/b. The **economic and spatial transformation of neighbourhoods** also have a strong impact on social inclusion and on the development of dialogue and interconnection between groups forming diversity:

"Urban regeneration is changing the communities. It can

be negative when it pushes out marginalized people, reinforcing gentrification; and positive when it is about investing into the people."

"Economic interest outweighs social interest that can destroy spaces of diversity."

What does Diversity mean to you?



7. The importance of education in diversity management has been highlighted:

"It is important to support the opportunities for children to learn about diversity in school, but we have to take care so that they do not learn something 'bad'."

"A positive feature is that the increase of public discourses and debate on immigration and diversity is breaking down

taboos regarding immigration as a subject

of conversation. As a result of this, children are more informed and open towards diversity –schools have an essential role to play here."

"Schools are good places for diversity for the children, and adults are also seeking to create their places of diversity where they can be safe."

These general considerations provided by the participants delegated by our four neighbourhoods are also strongly reflected in the general crossings of the results of the local participatory reflections presented above (see Chapter IV, and specifically point 3).



Based on the overall results of the local and Pan European discussions, the following main policy fields and recommendations could be identified as a base of diversity management in European neighbourhoods.

1.1. General recommendations for cities

Before summarizing the policy fields and actions, some general recommendations might be presented on the basis of our project for all cities/neighbourhoods working on diversity management.

Every society is diverse

According to the concept of hyper diversity, diversity is not only linked to ethnicity but also to many other characteristics forming a social group (see *Chapter II, 1.*). Although this concept had been formulated mainly to explain the complexity of urban societies living in larger metropolises, we might consider that according to this concept, all (urban) societies might be considered hyper diverse, as all local societies are composed by various groups according to their social, economic and cultural status and activities. The complexity of these local diversities may vary according to the city's size, its historical development, cultural and economic functions, etc., but still, its society will always be diverse to a certain degree. Therefore, taking this very broad sense of diversity as a basis of our reflection, we might

conclude that **every neighbourhood and locality can use diversity as an entry point for identifying its policies and tools for improving social inclusion in their area, independently of the size of the city or the number of its ethnic groups.**

Approaching diversity through dialogue rather than top-down integration

According to the concept of hyper diversity, diverse societies are based on the intersection of people with different social, economic and cultural situations, and therefore, hyper diverse societies cannot be divided into majority and minority groups. The groups forming diversity are interconnected, but not in a hierarchical way: their habits and cultures are changing due to their mutual interconnections and the influence played on each other. Following this approach, in hyper diverse societies social cohesion needs to be built on mutual dialogue between social and cultural groups rather than on the integration of all groups in the frame of previously identified roles and values constituted by one group considered as the "majority". Of course, this does not mean that no integration is needed in hyper diverse societies, nor does it mean that there are no differences between the groups according to their sizes, identities, composition or interests. It only means that the **integration needs to be, as much as possible, the result of a decision making process based on dialogue and participation involving all social**



groups living in the neighbourhood. In other words, diversity management in local neighbourhoods needs a bottom-up, rather than a top-down approach. Using dialogue as a tool for diversity management also permits the understanding of the diverse perceptions of diversity and the identification of the policy responses accordingly.

Diversity management in neighbourhoods needs cross-sectoral policies

During the VOICITYS participatory process, several policy fields were highlighted as crucial for strengthening dialogue and inclusion in diverse neighbourhoods. However, these considerations and recommendations rarely identified “diversity” as the main target of the policies. In the policy recommendations, diversity appears as a constant characteristic of the local society, an element that contributes to the complexity of the assets and challenges in the neighbourhoods; the policy recommendations identified as linked to diversity all answer other specific issues as well, such as urban development, housing, education, etc. **Being strongly linked to the objectives of these policies such as supporting local dialogue, social cohesion, social justice, education, etc., diversity brings all these policies onto the same platform. It is through this “platform” that policies linked to diversity can be used for the integrated development of urban neighbourhoods.** Accordingly, the policies willing to manage integrated neighbourhoods through diversity need to be cross-sectoral.

1.2.The Main Policy fields

The most important policy fields identified in the four neighbourhoods as a conclusion of the VOICITYS research and participatory process have been summarised above (*Chapter IV, 3.3.*). In the following, a list of general recommendations based on the policy fields will be provided.

Education

Schools are among the most important places of encounter where people – children and their parents – of a wide range of origins can meet and exchange. Further, education is one of the most important tools for empowering people and creating dialogue between them. Therefore, one of the most important entry points for managing social cohesion through diversity needs to be through education and schools, and this can be done on three levels: through the improvement of formal education curricula; through the development of after school activities permitting the encounter of children and parents; and through the creation of adult education schemes. A large variety of possible fields of actions can be identified here, as follows:

- Supporting the integration of intercultural learning in school curricula;
- Reinforcing language learning and bilingualism beginning in elementary school;
- Supporting common after school activities for children and parents, and supporting the meeting of children of different origin and status;



- Developing school infrastructure in order to reinforce capacities for providing after school programmes and activities;
- Reinforcing adult education programmes for providing the capacity-building of young people from disadvantaged social groups (migrants, minorities, etc.)

Place making and urban development

The neighbourhoods where diversity management is the most relevant tool for social cohesion are generally undergoing social and economic transition, which is often labelled as urban regeneration or urban gentrification. Positive and negative signs of urban regeneration are a current topic in many European cities, especially in traditionally deprived neighbourhoods. These areas went through strong deprivation during the past decades, and offered cheap housing and living conditions in the city which attracted the most vulnerable groups including immigrants, minority ethnic groups, marginalised people, or people with lower income. Later, many of these neighbourhoods, which had become the most diverse areas in European cities, became attractive for the middle class population thanks to the affordability of real estate prices which offered good living conditions and investment opportunities. Therefore, diversity management is also strongly interconnected with the need to manage and regulate the physical, economic and social transformation of these neighbourhoods in order to maintain a balance between the original and the new values. This need concerns a wide range of policies (social

cohesion, education, economic development) that are all connected to the physical regeneration of the area.

In the context of policies linked to local diversity, the upgrading of the physical environment is coupled, among others, with the creation of new spaces of encounter accessible for all segments of the local society as follows:

- Reinforcing public cleanliness and the comfort of public spaces;
- Reinforcing the accessibility and safety of public spaces;
- Revitalization of public spaces, for example, by the creation of multigenerational parks, community gardens, etc.;
- Revitalization of abandoned buildings and heritage sites with some new functions as new organised spaces of encounter (cultural centres, etc.).

Public services and social infrastructures

The biggest issue in areas with strong social diversity is the uneven accessibility of services and infrastructures to the different groups. Diversity management in neighbourhoods needs to deal with this issue as a high priority in different ways, for instance:

- providing good communication of services towards all groups, including support and signalisation of the relevant information in different languages;
- permanently mapping the needs of all groups taking into consideration the different needs linked to diverse cultural and/or religious backgrounds.



Housing

A very sensible topic in all European cities is the accessibility to affordable housing for all social groups. In diverse neighbourhoods under transformation and gentrification, increasing housing prices and the lack of affordability often push the most vulnerable groups out of the neighbourhoods. The difficulties in housing conditions might raise social tensions between the different groups living in diverse areas; integrated neighbourhood policies linked to diversity are therefore strongly linked to social housing policies. These policies are very complex and variable across the countries and cities, and in the frame of the present project it is difficult to provide any general recommendations apart from the raising of awareness of the strong importance of social housing policies in all cities willing to develop diversity policies.

Culture and community building

The role of cultural policies in reinforcing social cohesion in diverse communities is clear, as intercultural and community events are in the forefront of supporting social cohesion and dialogue. Apart from the support of cultural events, festivals and other local celebrations that bring together the different communities, these policies can also contribute to place making by providing new cultural functions to existing places (such as squares, sport areas, or abandoned buildings), or by creating new spaces of encounter such as community centres, pop up spaces, etc.

Safety/Security

As it was formulated at the Pan European CoC event, people feeling unsafe in diverse areas is a general phenomenon that is in large part linked to the general fear of otherness and prejudice. Security policies are therefore important in these areas, but they need to be prudently developed. Looking at and addressing the root cause of risks such as delinquency, drug use, etc., might be more beneficial than enhancing security around them as this only puts a bandage over more deep-rooted social problems. The effectiveness of police and security measures thus needs to be regulated and permanently controlled ensuring that the real problems are targeted. At the same time, it is important to avoid – and fight against – any punitive policies or measures that could reinforce the stigmatisation and the discrimination of certain groups.

Economic development

Diverse neighbourhoods are also important job providers for ethnic minorities and for other vulnerable communities in the cities. At the same time, local shopkeepers and small businesses are not competitive enough in the face of new businesses and entrepreneurs attracted into the area because of cheap real estate prices. The disappearance of local businesses is a threat for diversity and social sustainability. Local small businesses need to be supported through capacity building (education) and also by creating a dialogue with the new businesses in order to find compromises.



Several recommendations could be identified to maintain the diversity of local economies:

- capacity building of shopkeepers;
- special tax reductions and support for small local businesses;
- The implementation of local diversity charters with the contribution of all economic and social actors for the maintenance of inclusive and diverse local economies corresponding to local needs.

Governance

The cross-sectoral, participative and bottom-up approach of a good governance system where all groups are represented are, of course, the essential elements of an integrated diversity management.

The conditions of building a local governance system vary greatly across cities and countries, so it is not possible to provide general recommendations on how to build good governance. However, VOICITYS has clearly shown that even in the neighbourhoods where governance has longer traditions with a clearly set institutional and policy system, the outreach of this system to all groups, or the cooperation between all members of the system, might always need to be improved. It has also been shown that even in areas where the complete governance system is not applicable because of the current political circumstances or the lack of interest of decision makers or other groups, a wide mobilization of local stakeholders can always bring good solutions and ideas and might improve general conditions, even without strong political support.

2. Unity, integration and dialogue – some dilemmas and ideas on European policies on diversity

As part of our Pan European reflections based on some lectures and interviews with European stakeholders, VOICITYS also attempted to identify some core ideas to be considered as possible ways to think about the improvement of an integrated approach on diversity policies on the European level.

Since the early 1980s, diversity has been adopted, step by step, as a core value of European identity. This principle was formulated first as a leading element of the European Commission's cultural policies by the promotion of minorities and their cultures and languages as part of European cultural and living



heritage. The principle of supporting and protecting minorities, conceived also as a “moral duty”, also meant the creation of a greater proximity to the citizens, and, among them, to citizens with diverse cultural backgrounds (O. Calligaro, 2014). This process became more and more articulated during the 2000s, reflected by the new motto “Unity in Diversity”, or the support of Intercultural Dialogue (Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008). **The initially culture-based concept of diversity has been extended more and more towards a concept based on social stability and inclusion (O. Calligaro, 2014).**

Diversity and intercultural dialogue have become core elements of the concept of “European citizenship”, constituting an important aspect for the European Commission’s policies in the period of 2014-20.³ Diversity management and the fight against discrimination (in the form of providing equal access and rights to life and work for all people with different conditions of diversity) have been incorporated into the main European objectives, illustrated, for instance, by the creation of a European Platform of National Diversity Charters.⁴ This platform is one activity in the large spectrum of actions supporting social justice, equal rights and the fight against discrimination within the “Justice and Fundamental Rights” Policy of the European Union, which also supports the European Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (which also funds the VOICITYS project). The need for incorporating diversity management as an element for social inclusion

on the level of urban policies has also been acknowledged by the programme of Intercultural Cities launched by the Council of Europe.⁵

Our interviews with representatives of European institutions and organisations in the frame of VOICITYS⁶ showed that **although diversity and intercultural dialogue have been adopted as key elements of culture, social cohesion and European citizenship, the European policies are rather confused when it comes to the implementation of these principles on the level of sectorial policies.** In our interviews, we took as an example the specific case of the Roma minority. The main considerations coming out of these short interviews might provide some starting points for mapping the entire picture of diversity policies on the European level in the future.

European institutions work with the concept of inclusion rather than dialogue in diversity. This methodology starts from the concept of disadvantage and possibilities for inclusion, rather than from the perception of diverse socio-cultural and economic conditions. The general goal of the different sectoral European programmes is thus to implement inclusion through identifying target groups and developing institutions accordingly, instead of creating a solution based on dialogue.

There is difficulty in identifying the target groups.

The group of beneficiaries has been highlighted as a

³ i.e. Europe for Citizens programme
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-management_en

⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about>

⁶ European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, the European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) Roma Health and Early Childhood Development



fluid concept as minority groups, ethnic groups and social groups are identified variably across the Member States. This is especially true in the case of the Roma ethnicity, which itself is divided into several groups and the members of which often do not recognize their own Roma identity.

The problem of definition also comes up with regard to third-country nationals. This concept has a different meaning in each European country: in Germany, for instance, it is understood much more broadly than in Hungary. Hungary defined third-country nationals as Ukrainians and Serbians, and by giving lessons to Serbian and Ukrainian children whose mother tongue was Hungarian, it fulfilled all indicators required for migration quotas. At the same time, Roma migrants in England are conceptualized within the framework of social inclusion since they are EU citizens. There seems to be a clash between the administrative approach of the EU and the academic discourse.

There is a dichotomy between colour blind and targeted policies. Mainstream European policies that are colour blind permit, among others, the avoidance of contradictions related to the identification of target groups and their specific needs. However, in this context, social inclusion or education policies are not always able to answer the specific needs of the Roma population and other minorities. In order to break this contradiction in the case of the Roma minority, some advocacy groups tried to convince EU decision-makers to put some target-oriented

content within mainstream policies. These difficulties came to the fore with the creation of the European Roma Strategy (2011), which aims to provide special monitoring of the European programmes from the perspective of the Roma as a target group. This monitoring, however, is mostly handled on the Member State level.

Policies related to social inclusion are mostly in the jurisdiction of Member States. The EU harmonizes these every seven years and provides directives from which policies and programmes are generated at the Member State level. The lack of information flow among countries, as well as in the vertical dimension between horizontal committees and the national representatives, further inhibits the implementation of effective mainstream policies with a focus on social diversity. **This is further exacerbated by the absence of “intersectionality” in EU policies.** The concept is still rather new for most EU officials who are cautious with the use of a term that best depicts the realities of the great diversity of European citizens.

Based on the results of our interviews, it becomes clear that in the European Union, there is a gap between the appearance of the concept of diversity and dialogue on the cultural and political level, and on the level of sectoral policies and institutions. Based on the VOICITYS experiences, some basic ideas can be provided for reconsideration:

1. **A common concept of diversity needs to be identified on the European level** in order to clearly represent the values of diversity within the more



specific sectoral policies as well. The link between diversity, European identity and citizenship might be better formulated and clarified.

2. **Dialogue between social and ethnic groups** would need to be supported on the EU level as well – the creation of Diversity Charters, as an interesting starting point, could need further improvement and extension.
3. **A more targeted support of diversity management on the local level**, in the frame of the communities, is an important topic to be reconsidered in order to be able to provide well-targeted answers and policies in Europe where the increasing complexity of societies might need more specific and target-oriented answers than before.

These ideas are the fruits of a one-and-a-half-year long pilot project, dealing mainly with the questions related to local diversity. They are thus not as profound as those that we obtained on the local levels, and cannot be considered as real “recommendations”. However, we believe that they might be a good basis for further reflections and studies on the future orientations of European policies on Diversity.





CONCLUSIONS

Krisztina Keresztély, James W. Scott (CRN)

VOICITYS' main goal was to strengthen social dialogue between residents, stakeholders and policy makers in diverse urban neighbourhoods. As a pilot project, VOICITYS has been testing a complex methodology for generating dialogue. It has collected narratives from all segments of the local community and has been providing opportunities for open dialogue within the community through a participatory process. This has been done for four case study neighbourhoods as well as in the context of an international comparison. Through this complex methodology, VOICITYS has achieved several results on the local and on the transnational levels, as follows:

The main conditions, assets and challenges linked to diversity in the four neighbourhoods have been mapped by using two different approaches: a bottom-up research brining up citizens' voices by using the Community Reporting method, and a top-down research collecting the voices of stakeholders, organisations and policy makers by using the more traditional social research method based on conducted interviews. As a result, **VOICITYS obtained a complex picture on diversity in the four neighbourhoods** that was the basis of the following step of the project: the

dialogue between stakeholders and the identification of policy recommendations.

Two participatory events were organised in each of the four neighbourhoods with the participation of residents, Community Reporters, stakeholders and, where possible, decision makers. These events permitted to jointly identify the main challenges and assets of local diversity and the policies needed to be implemented for a more integrated and cohesive development of the neighbourhoods. Moreover, with a view to the identification of local policy ideas and recommendations as being part of VOICITYS' objectives, the local participatory events – Conversation of Change event and Consensus event – had positive impact on the local communities by providing them a place and time for dialogue and discussion on some local topics that were identified by themselves as being the most pertinent ones in the neighbourhood. **VOICITYS provided a possibility for the communities to discuss about local issues openly and contributed to the social dialogue on the local level by generating new connections and collaborations.** The concrete and direct impact of these events varied according to the local needs and capacities.



In Berlin, they contributed to the already existing social dialogue on the neighbourhood of Wedding; in Sassari, they provided a new approach to injecting social content to present policies of revitalizing cultural heritage in the Old Town; in Salford, they permitted to re-think decision-making infrastructure in order to outreach to all segments of the local society; in Budapest, the participatory events created a real occasion for open dialogue and brought up many constructive ideas for improving social cohesion in Józsefváros.

VOICITYS was a transnational European project and one of our objectives was therefore to provide some conclusions and recommendations at the European level by crossing the results achieved in the four case study areas. Wedding in Berlin, the Old Town of Sassari, Charlestown and Lower Kersal in Salford and Józsefváros in Budapest are representing entirely different socio-economic, political, historical conditions, different roles in the European migration trends and even diversity is appearing under different connotations and understanding in the local languages. Therefore, **while the VOICITYS process has been primarily managed at local levels particular attention was also paid to the permanent international dialogue between the consortium partners.** The Pan-European Conversation of Change event provided a unique occasion for dialogue between the partners and delegated members of the local communities. These activities contributed to the formulation of some policy ideas and recommendations on the European level.

As a pilot project, VOICITYS has aimed at implementing and testing an innovative methodology that links different practices and approaches as well as empirical research and methods based on community dialogue.

Our project has had an important direct impact on the partners and their collaborators, by providing them practical know-how of these different tools and methods. Community Reporters in each city went through a complex training process, and as a result, became validated members of the Institute of Community Reporters, with the right to use the method in other projects and occasions, in their local communities as well. Partners also obtained a training in social research method and especially on how to prepare, realise and analyse semi conducted interviews. During the participatory events, all communities learned about diversity, the specific problems and needs in their areas, and also about the need of real dialogue and exchange between each other.

VOICITYS was a pilot project. It allowed us to identify general problems and elaborate recommendations based on a participatory and community-based process. We believe that our methodology and our results will provide a useful support for diverse neighbourhoods and localities that seek to develop local dialogue regarding social cohesion and integration and in this way maintain diversity as a community asset. We also believe that VOICITYS has considerable potential for follow-up activities. These will provide opportunities for improving, and further developing our methodology.



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SUMMARIES

VOICITYS – VOICES OF DIVERSITY

VOICITYS aimed improve social integration through the strengthening of social dialogue in European neighbourhoods characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity, through improving sustainable communication and integration between different social groups. A key part of this process was to deepen dialogue between policy-makers, stakeholders and citizens as a means of creating positive social change in the participating areas, with a keen focus on bringing citizen voice to decision-making realms.

Our activities were running in four diverse neighbourhoods in four European countries of entirely different geopolitical situation, with different traditions and experiences with diversity and different roles in the currently transforming migration trends in Europe. These neighbourhoods are:

- Charlestown and Lower Kersal, Salford, United Kingdom;
- Historic Centre, Sassari, Italy;
- Józsefváros, Budapest, Hungary;
- Wedding, Berlin, Germany.

As part of the project we sought to:

- Map diversity in four different urban areas by collecting citizen stories and stakeholder interviews;
- Identify the key learning about diversity in the areas and use this to formulate policy recommendation for local change-makers;

- Synthesise the learning across the areas and create policy recommendations at a European level.

Within the project we have used two research methodologies – Community Reporting with is a bottom-up, qualitative research process in which people tell and gather lived experiences from their peers and traditional social science approaches to conducting interviews. Community Reporting was used to gather perspectives of residents in the neighbourhoods studied and stakeholder interviews were used to gage an understanding from community leaders, professionals and other decision makers in the neighbourhoods and at European levels. The findings from this research was then used to work with the residents and stakeholders in the neighbourhoods to co-design policy recommendations at local and European levels based on this learning. The core findings from this work have been situated in an emerged 'People', 'Place' and 'Power' framework and the policy recommendations cover sectors such as housing, education, urban development, community building, public services and infrastructure, and more.

The consortium was composed by four partners: the lead partner, Comparative Research Network (CRN) form Germany, People's Voice Media (United Kingdom), Mine Vaganti NGO (Italy) and CERSHAS (Hungary).



VOICITYS – STIMMEN DER VIELFALT

Das wichtigste Ziel von VOICITYS ist es die soziale Integration in Europa zu stärken. Um das zu erreichen stärkt VOICITYS den lokalen Dialog in verschiedenen Nachbarschaften in Europa, die durch eine oder mehrere Arten von Vielfalt geprägt sind. Wir wollen den Dialog durch Gespräche, Geschichten und direkter Kommunikation zwischen den verschiedenen sozialen Gruppen ermöglichen.

Besonders wichtig für VOICITYS war es den Dialog zwischen den Bewohner*Innen, politischen Entscheider*Innen und anderen Interessengruppen zu initiieren und so einen positiven sozialen Wandel zu unterstützen. Die Bürger*Innen sollen sich als Teil des Entscheidungsprozesses verstehen und wissen, dass ihre Stimme gehört wird.

Das Projekt fand haupttragig in vier Stadtvierteln in vier europäischen Ländern statt. Alle Viertel sind durch eine Art von Vielfalt gekennzeichnet - gleichzeitig haben Sie verschieden historische, politische und kulturelle Rahmenbedingungen. Vielfalt hat hier überall andere Traditionen und die Erfahrungen mit Vielfalt sind und dem aktuellen Migrationstrend in Europa sind jeweils unterschiedlich.

Die Stadtviertel sind:

- Charlestown und Lower Kersal, Salford, Großbritannien;
- Altstadt in Sassari, Italien;
- Józsefváros, Budapest, Ungarn;
- Wedding, Berlin, Deutschland.

Im Rahmen des Projektes haben wir:

- Durch die Geschichten der Bewohner*Innen und durch Interviews mit den verschiedenen Institutionen ein Verständnis gewonnen, welche wie in den Stadtteilen Vielfalt verstanden und gelebt wird;
- Zusammen mit den Bewohner*Innen ein Verständnis gewonnen, wie Vielfalt entwickelt werden könnte. Die Ergebnisse wurden als Politikempfehlungen an mit Entscheidungsträger*Innen zusammen diskutiert;
- Durch einen europäischen Dialog zwischen den Stadtteilen ein gemeinsames Verständnis für Vielfalt erkundet.

In VOICITYs haben wir zwei Ansätze genutzt - Community Reporting, eine qualitative, bottom-up Methode, in der jeder seine Geschichte erzählt und seine Erfahrungen direkt in den Prozess einbringt und zweites der eher klassische sozialwissenschaftliche Ansatz mit qualitativen, halb formellen Interviews. Durch das Community Reporting haben wir tiefe Einblicke in den Alltag der Viertel erhalten und erfahren wie Vielfalt gelebt wird. Die Interviews gaben uns ein Verständnis davon wie die Vielfalt von AktivistInnen, WissenschaftlerInnen und anderen ExpertInnen wahrgenommen wird. Die Ergebnisse wurden dafür genutzt um mit beiden Gruppen Empfehlungen für die lokale und europäischen Ebene gemeinsam zu erstellen, wie Vielfalt in Zukunft gestaltet werden könnte. .

Das Konsortium bestand aus vier Partnern: Comparative Research Network (CRN) der Koordinator aus Deutschland, People's Voice Media (Großbritannien), Mine Vaganti NGO (Italien) und CERSHAS (Ungarn).



VOICITYS – A SOKSZÍNŰSÉG HANGJAI

Az Európai Unió által támogatott 'Voicity' kísérleti kutatási program **Magyarország, Németország, az Egyesült Királyság és Olaszország** egy-egy városában vizsgálta az etnikai, származási és társadalmi sokszínűséggel (*diversity*) járó kihívásokat és az erre adott lakossági és közpolitikai válaszokat. A kutatást a közösségi riportkészítés és a szociológiai interjúk kombinált módszertanával végeztük annak érdekében, hogy betekintést nyerjünk a lakosság, a civil szervezetek és a döntéshozók sokszínűséghez kapcsolódó benyomásairól, véleményeiről, értékeléséről. Magyarországon a főváros, Budapest nyolcadik kerületét, Józsefvárost választottuk vizsgálati terepként. A kerület társadalmi és részben etnikai szempontból is jellegzetes részre tagolódik, amelyek közül mi a munkások, szegényebb társadalmi csoportok és különböző etnikai közösségek által lakott belső-józsefvárosi résszel foglalkoztunk.

A kísérleti kutatás első lépéseként a közösségi riportkészítés módszerével dolgozó munkatársaink a kerületben élő vagy ide kötődő embereket képezték ki közösségi riportternek, akik azután a kerületrészben élő, illetve ott dolgozó embereket szólították meg véletlenszerűen és beszélgettek velük a kerületről alkotott benyomásairól, itt szerzett tapasztalataikról. Munkatársaink e beszélgetéseket az érintettek hozzájárulásával kép-, illetve hanganyagként rögzítették. Szociológiai interjúkat végző munkatársaink a városrész sokszínűségével kapcsolatos képekről, véleményekről, a sokszínűség színtereiről és arról kérdezték a nyolcadik kerületben működő szervezetek képviselőit, hogy hogyan tudják befolyásolni a helyi szakpolitikai döntéseket, és ezeknek milyen hatása van a különböző etnikai és társadalmi csoportokra. A kutatás során igyekeztünk megkeresni a kerület legkülönbözőbb véleményformáló csoportjait, így az önkormányzati intézmények mellett civil és egyházi szervezetek képviselőit is megkérdeztük.

Az interjúk elkészítését és feldolgozását követően két helyi eseményt is szerveztünk a Nem Adom Fel kávézóban, amelyekre meghívtuk a közösségi riportkészítés-

ben résztvevő helyi lakosokat és a józsefvárosi intézmények, szervezetek képviselőit. Ezeken az eseményeken az interjúkban felmerülő összefüggésekre, problémákra, kihívásokra stb. reflektáló beszélgetéseket kezdeményeztünk a megjelentek között. A beszélgetések fókuszában az a kérdés állt, hogy miként lehetne élhetőbbé tenni a kerületet az itt lakó és a kerületet naponta használó budapestiek számára.

Eredmények

Összességében, a kutatás az etnikai, társadalmi sokszínűséggel kapcsolatban erősen megosztott véleményeket és kerületi társadalmat megosztó helyi közpolitikákat tárt fel. Az interjúalanyok többsége arra hívta fel a figyelmet, hogy a városrészben élő szegények a peremre sodródva élnek, érdekeiket figyelmen kívül hagyják a köztisztaságot és lakhatást érintő szakpolitikai döntésekben, sőtukat pedig különböző eszközökkel kiszorítanak a kerületből. A szegények jelentős része roma, illetve romának tartott lakos, ami további konfliktusok forrása. A helyi romákkal ellentétben, a harmadik országokból érkező bevándorlókról alkotott kép pozitív, ami elsősorban az általuk üzemeltetett kisvállalkozásoknak (ide lehetne egy-két példa a kisvállalkozásokra zárójelben) köszönhető. Az önkormányzatot képviselő interjúalanyok alapvetően eltérő véleményt fogalmaztak meg ezekben a kérdésekben, szerintük az önkormányzat célja nem a lakosság kicserélődésének elősegítése, hanem a lakók és ezzel a városrész társadalmi státuszának javítása. Összességében azt mondhatjuk, hogy a helyi közpolitikák és fejlesztések nem támogatják a különböző társadalmi és etnikai csoportokon átívelő kapcsolatokat, amit csak erősít az e csoportokat összekapcsoló intézmények, közterek, és közösségi események hiánya is.

Józsefváros helyzetére reflektáló közpolitikai javaslatok a különböző társadalmi csoportok közötti integrációt elősegítő helyszínek és események jelentőségére hívják fel a figyelmet. A köztisztaság, az oktatás és szociálpolitika, valamint a városfejlesztés terén tapasztalható térbeli-társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek kizárólag a politikai erőviszonyok aránytalanságát és megosztottságát felszámoló koordinációs megoldásokkal oldható meg.



VOICITYS – LE VOCI DELLA DIVERSITÀ

VOICITYS è un progetto cofinanziato nell'ambito del Programma europeo “Diritti, uguaglianza e cittadinanza”.

Il consorzio è costituito da:

- Comparative Research Network (Germania);
- Mine Vaganti NGO (Italia);
- People's Voice Media (Regno Unito);
- CERSHAS (Ungheria).

L'obiettivo del progetto è stato quello di migliorare l'integrazione sociale attraverso il rafforzamento del dialogo sociale e della comunicazione nei quartieri urbani europei caratterizzati da diversità etnica e culturale e approfondire il dialogo tra decisori politici, stakeholder e cittadini al fine di promuovere una gestione più efficiente della diversità.

Confrontando le esperienze positive e negative dei cittadini locali con quelle degli stakeholder, dei leader e dei decisori politici ci si è proposti di migliorare la comprensione comune della diversità a livello di quartiere. Un ulteriore elemento di valore aggiunto consiste inoltre nel favorire lo sviluppo di nuovi approcci alle politiche, agli incentivi e agli strumenti esistenti in materia di integrazione sociale e diversità sostenibile.

Il progetto VOICITYS si è concentrato sullo studio di quattro diversi quartieri europei: Wedding (Berlino, Germania), Józsefváros (Budapest, Ungheria), CHALK in Salford (Area Metropolitana di Manchester, Regno Unito) e il Centro Storico di Sassari (Sassari, Italia).

Lo studio è stato condotto con due metodi di ricerca diversi.

Il primo si è basato sul *Community Reporting*, un movimento intellettuale legato alla corrente dello Storytelling, che si propone di

supportare le persone nel raccontare le proprie storie, a modo loro. Le storie autentiche raccolte al livello degli individui costituiscono materiale di stimolo e di riflessione per gli stessi decisori che possono usare le intuizioni in esse contenute per apportare cambiamenti positivi al livello della comunità.

Il secondo è stato indirizzato a capire come gli Stakeholders e i decisori politici considerano e gestiscono la diversità nel proprio quartiere.

Le attività principali svolte nell'ambito della ricerca sono state:

- Raccolta e cura delle storie dei cittadini attraverso il Community Reporting. In questo contesto sono state raccolte 80 storie di cittadini in tutti i paesi partner da parte dei Community Reporter formati da ciascuna organizzazione partner;
- Raccolta e analisi delle interviste agli Stakeholder attraverso l'implementazione di interviste semi-strutturate. Tutte le organizzazioni partner hanno eseguito un totale di 45 interviste con le parti interessate a livello locale, regionale, nazionale ed europeo;
- Confronto dei risultati dei due metodi utilizzati ed elaborazione di una serie di raccomandazioni politiche attraverso workshop partecipativi e “Consensus Event” in tutti i paesi partner.

Durante il progetto, nel centro storico di Sassari sono state raccolte e confrontate le informazioni sulla diversità locale da parte dei cittadini e degli stakeholder al fine di delineare delle raccomandazioni politiche su più livelli. In tal modo, si è inteso sviluppare un nuovo meccanismo di partecipazione del cittadino alle politiche europee e locali legate alla diversità.

ANNEX 1: THE NEIGHBOURHOODS



Old town, Sassari (Italy)

Sassari is located in North-Eastern Sardinia. The city represents a major administrative centre for the Island, seat of the Provincial Government of the homonymous province.

The Historic Centre of Sassari encompasses the entire area of the urban circuit within the space previously enclosed by the latter's walls (nowadays mostly demolished). Sassari retained the aspect and features characteristic of its first Medieval incarnation till the process of urban development kick-started in the 19th century, which led to the demolition of the quasi totality of the city walls to make room for urban expansion.

127.533 inhabitants in the entire urban area. Approx. 9000 inhabitants in the historic centre.

ISTAT (Italian Statistics' Institute) findings place the total population of foreign nationals in the urban circuit of Sassari to 4290 individuals as of January 2017. Of the foregoing 4290 foreign nationals, ca. 2000 live in the area of the Historic Center.

Józsefváros, Budapest (Hungary)

Józsefváros is the 8th district of Budapest. It has traditionally been the poorest among the inner-city neighbourhoods, but with a high diversity of social status and of urban functions.

Within the district, some neighbourhoods can be delineated according to their population and housing stock: Inner Józsefváros is home to prestigious bourgeois buildings and many public institutions and universities; Middle Józsefváros is a traditionally working class, poor, and ethnically heterogeneous area; Outer Józsefváros is a multilayered residential and retail district.

76.811 inhabitants

7,2% (2008)

CHALK, Salford (UK)

Charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK) is located in Salford, a city and metropolitan borough located a ten-minute drive to the north-west of Manchester. It is situated in the metropolitan county of Greater Manchester, in the north-west England, UK.

Lower Kersal is part of Kersal ward of the city of Salford, while Charlestown sits in the Irwell Riverside ward. They both are within the 1-3% most deprived areas in England according the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Charlestown and Lower Kersal area includes distinct communities, smaller pockets of housing as well as an industrial area, the student village of Salford University, and large areas of green land.

12.929 inhabitants

The population is predominantly White British. 74.7% of the population identify as belonging to this ethnic group (ibid.). In total, 3,059 or 24.1% of residents identify as BME (Black and minority ethnic). This is higher than the average across the city (14%) and slightly higher than the average for England overall (19%). The largest individual BME groups in the area are: White other (1,531, 12.1%); Other ethnic group (337, 2.7%); African (295, 2.3%) and Pakistani (173, 1.4%) (ibid.).

Wedding, Berlin (Germany)

Wedding is a former independent borough (Bezirk) of Berlin that is now part of the Mitte Bezirk.

It is traditionally a working-class area and before WW II was an industrial centre. Wedding suffered from heavy destruction during World War II and experienced a period of steady decline after 1945 characterised by outmigration of local residents. In the 1960s the area experienced large-scale in-migration of Turkish workers who arrived as "temporary labour". Despite being scarcely touched by the waves of gentrification that since 1990 interested many central neighbourhoods in Berlin, in the last three years Wedding experience a reverse of the phenomenon.

178.381 inhabitants

58% of the population, including German ethnic immigrants.

LOCATION

DESCRIPTION

POPULATION

FOREIGN RESIDENTS



THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

ETHNICITY

Old town, Sassari (Italy)

Senegal (21,8%), Romania (18%) and Popular Republic of China (10,2%).

Józsefváros, Budapest (Hungary)

Other ethnicities together (7,34%), Roma (4%), German (1,31%), Romanian (0,82%), Chinese (0,72%).

CHALK, Salford (UK)

White other (1,531, 12.1%); Other ethnic group (337, 2.7%); African (295, 2.3%) and Pakistani (173, 1.4%).

Wedding, Berlin (Germany)

Turks (18%), Poles (6%), Arabs/Lebanese (6%), Africans (about 6% of the foreign-born population), Chinese and Vietnamese community (4,5%).

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

17,7%

8,6%

11.9% of the working age population claimed Out of Work benefits. 1.3% claimed Job Seekers Allowance. 6.8% of people aged 16-18 NEET.

Unemployment in 2016 was around 12%, with almost 36% of the population dependent on welfare payments and 27% living in poverty

HOUSING

The Historic Centre of Sassari accounts for a total of 3,600 of the housing facilities of the city.

Privately owned housing: 84.9%
Publicly owned housing: 11.5 %
A large number of private rental is in the grey and black market, and does not appear in statistics.

79.9% of Kersal ward's housing stock was private stock, The remaining 20.1% belongs to registered providers of social housing.

There is a great demand for housing in almost all neighbourhoods. Social housing built during the 1960s and 1970s. The housing stock which was in rather basic condition until the early 1980s has been largely rehabilitated. New construction activity is high.

SERVICES

Many public services and institutions have their seat in the historic center. University, primary and secondary schools, municipal library, cultural centers.

Institutions of tertiary education, social services, schooling and health services.

Sports village, local community centres, Healthy Living Centres.
Four primary schools, one secondary school

Wedding has several nationally known institutions, which are among the largest employers in the city. Two main hospitals, colleges and cultural institutions.

THE NEIGHBOURHOODS



Old town, Sassari (Italy)

There is no comprehensive notion of diversity in Italian legislation. National policies impact on the area considered. An overall assessment of diversity at the level of Italian policies lets emerge the lack of a comprehensive approach to diversity which reflects on the area object of this study (Historic Centers of Sassari) in the context of a fragmented governance of the phenomenon.

At the level of Sardinia, civil society debate on diversity has been strongly influenced by the insularity, cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the region. In this context, the phenomenon of migration, which has increasingly interested Sardinian after the closing of the Libyan route (which has led to increasing fluxes to Sardinia from the neighbouring Tunisia) has led to a partial alteration in the traditional framing of the public discourse on diversity in Sardinia, with migrants being ever more vocally identified by some sectors of the regional public opinion as a source of economic and security discomfort.

Józsefváros, Budapest (Hungary)

Integrated Urban Development Strategy (2015): two workshops organized for local consultation on "social problems"; Anti-segregation Plan to enhance social and housing integration and to provide various local services. Local Program of Equal Opportunities (2013, 2016), specific actions for the following target groups: people living in extreme poverty and Roma, children, elderly people, women, people living with disabilities. Development Concept for Social Services (2013): maintaining and developing existing services, closer cooperation of NGOs and religious organizations.

Józsefváros historically has a role of accommodating newly arriving people to the city. The population change of the district has been more favorable than other inner districts of the city since 1990 (with a milder population loss). Since 2011, nearly all inner city districts started gaining population, as an indication of gentrification processes. Since data about ethnicity is only available in Hungary based on auto-declaration, these statistics are very unreliable and probably under-estimate. Nevertheless, statistics also show that Józsefváros has an ethnic diversity above the average of Budapest.

CHALK, Salford (UK)

Equality Objectives (2015-2019): ensure all residents are able to inform decision making; work to understand who lives in Salford; train those delivering services to understand diverse needs; remove barriers and employ people representative of the local area. Draft Local Plan on Education: improving the skills and qualifications of Salford residents for the future success of the city; accessibility of new schools, especially by walking, cycling and public transport. Salford Safeguarding Children Board (2011): all services should ensure that racial heritage, language, religion, faith, gender and disability are taken into account when working with a child and their family.

Salford City Council emphasises that the city has always been home to young and old, and disabled residents as well as established ethnic and faith groups and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. The Council promises to take into account the equality needs of the most marginalised groups including those with caring responsibilities and those in care, homeless, refugees and people seeking asylum, people in and coming out of the criminal justice system, people with substance misuse problems, deprivation and socio-economic status, thus widening the categories of diversity that they are willing to engage with. There is again a recognition of the importance of understanding intersectionality.

Wedding, Berlin (Germany)

Wedding has since the early 1990s been a target of urban regeneration and several of its neighbourhoods have been designated special development areas within the overall framework of the Soziale Stadt (Socially Integrative City) Programme, funded by the European Union and the German government. The regeneration strategy pursued by the Socially Integrated City Programme is specifically targeted at ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. The Programme has consisted of several elements that give evidence of a holistic approach: 1) improvement of public spaces and environmental quality in neighbourhoods, 2) establishment of community centres and organisations, 3) improving schools and educational opportunities, 4) emphasis on youth work, 5) development of employment opportunities and economic activities and 6) the provision of local cultural, social and health services

Wedding is one of the most ethnically diverse localities of Berlin. One major narrative is that of Wedding as a 'problem area' – a crystallisation point of socio-cultural tensions – In popular imaginations, a dangerous ghetto, a haven for lawless Arab clans and non-integrating minorities. Politically, the problem area stigma has been both a local handicap as well as a reason for supporting the symbolic gentrification of the area through cultural activities. This stigmatisation of Wedding is giving way to more positive narratives of the area, in which the mix of "working class" and ethnic diversity is understood as an asset, are increasingly present in traditional and social media.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

PERCEPTION OF DIVERSITY



ANNEX 2.

DIVERSITY IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

This annex will explore the findings of the Community Reporting activities and stakeholder interviews conducted as part of the VOICITYs project. It will begin with analyses of the Community Reporter stories from each area and present a set of findings that emerged across the neighbourhoods, followed by the analyses of the stakeholder interviews. It will conclude with comparative findings from across the data sets.

1. Life in Diverse Neighbourhoods: Stories of lived experience from residents of Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari



The Community Reporting process has seen over 50 Community Reporters trained in the neighbourhoods involved in the project. Together, they have gathered more than 120 stories.

With the exception of the German team, which combined local people and people residing in other countries as part of their Community Reporter group, all of the Community Reporters and storytellers lived or worked in the neighbourhoods being investigated. The following sections of this chapter will highlight the key findings of the stories gathered in each of these individual areas, before concluding by synthesising this learning into a cross-country understanding of diversity and the everyday lives of people living in diverse communities. All of the stories gathered as part of this process can be viewed [here](#).





1.1.Exploring diversity in charlestown and Lower Kersal: Rebuilding social structures, rebuilding a community

CHALK, Salford (UK)

Charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK) is a neighbourhood in Salford, a city and metropolitan borough in the north-west of England, UK. According to a 2016 report on the area produced by the Salford City Council, the majority of the neighbourhood's population of around 13,000 residents is White British. Despite this, nearly 25% of the residents identify as BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity), higher than both the city and UK average. The largest group within this 25% is White Other, with other ethnicities such as African and Pakistani groups representing smaller numbers. English is a second language for many residents within this population. For example, in 2014, the headteacher of Lower Kersal Primary School stated that *"there are 14 languages spoken by children at the school and 22% speak English as an additional language"*.

The CHALK neighbourhood was one of 39 neighbourhoods selected for the UK Government's New Deal for Communities (NDC) regeneration scheme, which ran from 1998-2011. As the Department for Communities and Local Government outlined, the programme's aim was to *"reduce the gaps between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest*

of the country". As part of the NDC programme, new services were brought to the area as part of the regeneration, including a sports village, local community centres and Healthy Living Centres. As the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (1999) has reported, the impact of this on the local area has been mixed in that crime appeared to have been reduced in the area but it had very little impact on reducing the number of workless households.

Despite such efforts, the Salford City Council identifies the area as being one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city and in the UK. Levels of deprivation in the UK are ascertained by analysing a number of factors that include income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and living environment. Looking at the Council's reporting on the area, we can begin to see how the neighbourhood faces a number of challenges. For example, many residents in the area have no qualifications (28.6%), which is more than the Salford and UK averages. Furthermore, specific groups in the neighbourhood find accessing employment more difficult than others. Lone parents (who in the area are predominantly female), for example, have a higher rate of unemployment than the city and national average, while young people also face high levels of unemployment. Chronic health conditions are also an issue in the area which are exacerbated by some behaviours such as high levels of smoking.

Bearing these factors in mind, this report will explore how people are experiencing life in the neighbourhood and look at some of



the issues they are encountering. It will examine changes in the area in terms of population, housing, employment and support services. Through this exploration of change, it will unearth the transformation in social structures evident in the community and discuss the impact that this has had on the people who live there.

changes in the area

In the stories, the residents talk about changes within the CHALK neighbourhood, the dominant discourse centring on changes within the social structures of the community. Only one person mentioned physical changes, and she is a relative newcomer to the area. Speaking about moving from Merseyside to Salford, **this woman** describes recent road alterations and the creation of a new village with bars that is aimed at young people. The intended impact of these changes, in her eyes, is to keep people socialising in the area rather than travelling into the neighbouring city of Manchester. On the plus side, these physical changes to the roads have meant that buses can more easily pick people up in the area, *“but the road leading to the motorway is chaotic”* making it difficult to move about by car.

The key part of people’s stories of change in the area has focused on the deterioration of social life in the community. Speaking about these changes, an **older woman** from the neighbourhood describes how many years ago, when she purchased a house in the area, it was the *“crème de la crème”* where she was happy



“The key part of people’s stories of change in the area has focused on the deterioration of social life in the community.”

to live in a house rather than a maisonette. Now, however, she *“hates”* the area. In her experience, she feels that *“the world has become an awful place, we don’t communicate like we used to, I’m frightened of change”*. She doesn’t feel that people connect with each other and feels ignored by younger generations. As **she describes**, young people don’t look at her, *“values have changed, and it’s a very different world than what I grew up in”*. Offering a similar perspective on social change in the area, **a man** describes how the community was once *“close knit”* and that people *“left doors open and walked into each other’s houses”*. Nowadays, he says, people don’t do this as they are more *“cautious”*. Yet rather than linking this phenomenon to broader changes in societal values as the older lady does, this man perceives the change to be more related to the recent influx of Eastern European people into the area.

This change in the demographics of the area, as the report will later discuss, is also linked by the storytellers to changes in housing and employment circumstances that have presented a number of issues for residents. Related to this is the emergence of food banks in the area. This change is not just related to CHALK or Salford, but has occurred across the UK, partially due to the long-term impact of the economic crisis of the late 2000s. As **a man** described it, *“food banks have had to be brought in because of people’s poverty”*. In his own experience of working at the food bank, the man recalls an encounter with a food bank user who came in *“with no shoes or socks on”*. He reported that incidents such as this are



“quite regular” and “not nice”. Additionally, he details how immigrants use the service as they await legal status in the UK, and also help out by volunteering at the service. What this suggests is that the area's residents are facing (largely) economic poverty, but also that particularly vulnerable social groups – such as immigrants – are helping the wider community to try to overcome such issues. Despite this sentiment, there is a feeling in some of the stories that the different demographics in the neighbourhood – namely in terms of differences in ethnicity – as **one man** states, are “a bit separate”. This is sometimes perceived as “foreigners” keeping themselves to themselves.

The challenges in people's lives

These social changes have had an impact on people's lives which has resulted in a number of challenges for residents. **One man** sees a relationship between the social segregation of different groups in the area and housing. He describes how landlords in the area are converting two-bedroom houses into eight-bedroom houses, and says that it is *“not the English that are taking these houses, it's the foreigners”*. For him, it is not the shortage of housing that is the issue, but rather the exploitation of migrant tenants by landlords. According to this man, grouping large numbers of newcomers to the community into the same dwelling is not helping their integration with the existing residents.

Still on the topic of housing, **one man** who moved into a flat in the area after previously living in a detached



"These social changes have had an impact on people's lives which has resulted in a number of challenges for residents."

house described some issues that he has had with his neighbours. As he recalls, *“one woman permanently wants all the communal windows open, so she has put grease on the handles so you can't close them”*. He also reported that there had been a range of other problems within the residence concerning fire exits, noise and driving. He explained how he was happier in his house, and that he has found living in a flat difficult.

The takeaway from this story is not that living in flats is always a negative experience and living in houses is always positive one, but rather that if people are living in close quarters sharing communal spaces, then a strong sense of community and social responsibility must exist to make such co-habitation pleasant.

Employment is also seen as key issue for local people. As **one man** stated, there seems to be too many people fighting for the same job. This issue also seems related to population change, with **one man** stating that the community has been “flooded” with Eastern European immigrants and that there are *“thirty to forty people applying for a job”*. However, the man did acknowledge that other factors are preventing him from securing employment, such as his age and skills. While he does tend to get interviews, he said, *“younger more experienced people will get the job”*. He doesn't see formal provision of job support in a positive light, saying that *“job centres aren't that good”* since people are given a five-minute chat and asked to come back the next month. What this suggests, as this report will look at later, is that in some



instances the support structures in the community aren't always adequate, or they are not addressing the needs of residents in ways that are meaningful to them.

A key element in many of the stories was people's mental health, and issues that have arisen in periods of their lives when their mental health was poor. When people spoke about the emergence of mental health problems, it usually coincided with major events occurring in their lives. For example, a **middle-aged man's** business failed, which led to him having a heart attack. Not long after, he was diagnosed with depression which he describes as *"a perfect storm"*. Another **middle-aged lady** described how an accident that left her in a wheelchair could have had a long-term impact on her mental health if it wasn't for the support of her family. After the accident, her mother would force her out of the house, and at one point told her, *"I'm going to the pub to meet some friends, you can come with me or go home"*. The woman knew that going home involved getting up a steep hill in a wheelchair, and that her only real option was to go out and socialise. These interactions with people and not *"staying in [her] head"*, as she described it, made a big difference to her overall wellbeing despite the big changes in circumstances she had experienced.

Immediate family acting as a support network for coping with mental health was also discussed by an **elderly woman** in the community. While raising her children, she was *"quite low"*, but instead of accessing a service, she looked to her family for help. Yet some of those who

"Respondents described many different opportunities for accessing mental health services, but as one man said, 'they're hard to find, and if they rely on funding to exist, then they disappear'."



discussed their mental health in their stories couldn't rely on family for support. Some described how reaching out to a service and requesting help was very difficult for them. As **one man** recalled, *"I built a wall around me for five years, not speaking to anyone, so then trying to talk to someone was very hard"*. Echoing this, **another person** stated that *"it takes a lot of strength to ask for help"*.

Discussing his experience of poor mental health, **one man** highlighted that other issues in people's lives were more tangible and easier for people to understand. As he stated, *"you don't have a crutch, it's all up there [in your mind] so it's hard for people to appreciate that you actually are ill"*. What this suggests is that there is still social stigma surrounding mental health, perhaps one reason why it is considered such an issue within the community.

Respondents described many different opportunities for accessing mental health services, but as **one man** said, *"they're hard to find, and if they rely on funding to exist, then they disappear"*. Similarly, **one man** recalled that when he really needed some help years ago, *"there wasn't anything"*. For others, services in the area such as Working Well, The Orchard and Being Well Salford, which are relatively new, have provided support. **One person** explained that simply talking to someone in one of these community settings, rather than in a medical context, had helped them. As he said, *"she wasn't like a trained psychiatrist, but she was there to listen and that helped"*. As the stories have



shown, people's experiences of poor mental health have resulted in them getting help locally in a range of ways – from formal support to more informal help.

Support structures in the community

Nearly all of the people who told their stories as part of this project discussed various forms of support in the community, or a lack thereof. A recurring theme was that there is a great deal of support opportunities available but that it is often difficult to find and navigate them. For example, one **lone parent** reported that it wasn't until speaking to her child's nursery that she was made aware that she may be eligible for tax benefits. **Another man** described how he was referred to a local support group which enabled him to *"keep in check with [his] addiction"*. He also described how giving back to the organisation through volunteering also helped him – *"the volunteering keeps me busy and I like talking to new people"*. What these stories demonstrate is the importance of local signposting to support services, and that the sharing of knowledge is vital within the CHALK community.

While such examples of direct support groups did come up in the stories, a number of people discussed the benefits of more community-led and informal groups in their lives. A **woman** who attends a regular Weightwatchers group talked about how helping other people had really helped her. Upon hearing that someone in the group she had supported no longer had diabetes, she was *"so pleased"*. Additionally, this

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woman is also a caretaker for her husband with Multiple Sclerosis, and groups such as Weightwatchers and a Zumba class she attends, *"help [her] live a life as well as caring for [her] husband"*. The benefit of the social settings and informality of these groups contribute to her overall wellbeing beyond the benefits of enhancing diet and improving physical fitness levels.

Although these informal support groups came up regularly in the stories as assets to the community and key parts of people's lives, not all of the informal groups or the spaces in which they took place exist anymore. **One gentleman** told a story about going to the pubs in the community, and described how *"a 10 minute walk from my house there were eight pubs, now there is only two"*. He recalled how he would *"meet friends, play pool and just have a chat and a laugh"*. When asked about the community that would frequent the pub, he described it as *"mostly men"*, and suggested that the types of men that went to there to chat *"aren't going to go to community centres and go on courses"*. The question, then, is where do these people now go to socialise and form peer support bonds?

For other people, community centres have had a positive impact on their lives. An **elderly lady** described how after a *"personal tragedy"*, going to her local community centre and attending courses such as *"flower arranging, art [and] computers"* really helped her re-engage with society. She claimed that the centre *"gave [her the] confidence to meet new people"* and expressed her disappointment that the community centre has since closed. However, she



did say that “it gave me the strength to go elsewhere and get involved with other groups”.

Similarly, **a person** who had been marginalised from wider society by attending education for people with learning disabilities described how a community centre enabled her to learn new things and enhanced her social interactions with non-disabled people.

Evolving to meet the needs of a changing community

What these stories highlight is that this community has experienced changes in terms of the demographics that inhabit it and the buildings, spaces and services that belong to it. Within this change, some support structures – whether formal or informal – have emerged that support the residents and are addressing certain needs, such as food banks, community centres and informal support groups. However, more is still needed to support the CHALK community. Some traditional support structures such as social ties built in the pubs or relationships between neighbours have been dismantled, and the newer provision of such support has not fully addressed what residents feel has been lost in the social sphere. Crucially and specifically for middle aged and older men, informal support networks that were found in the area’s pubs have gone.

Furthermore, a number of the stories identify other areas of support that is needed but not currently available in



“What these stories highlight is that this community has experienced changes in terms of the demographics that inhabit it and the buildings, spaces and services that belong to it.”

the community. A **lone parent** described how a lack of assistance in filling out applications for benefits claims made the process “horrific”. Similarly, **a lady with learning difficulties** described how she needed support when she went to court for the first time about her benefits claim. She said she was “made to feel this big” at the hearing, and this experience has had a negative impact on her. She also described how she never got help with her learning difficulties when she was young, and that she “never learnt anything in school, it was crap”. Echoing that sentiment, a **young girl** described how “there needs to be more youth provision for kids in the community”.

Yet as the stories highlight, providing support services alone is not enough. Other barriers exist such as not wanting to ask for help (as the stories of mental health experiences exemplified), and people not knowing how to navigate the current system. Simply put, additional services are not necessarily the answer to some of the issues raised in the stories.

These stories show that relationships between people are of key importance in supporting residents to live full lives, and that this is often found in informal provision or peer support. In essence, the stories highlight the importance human connections, whether they be formal or informal, as it is through the lack of such connections that people become isolated, their issues seem more difficult and their mental health deteriorates. Through enabling residents to be a part of the social rebuilding of their community, they will be in a better place to address some of the other



issues they are experiencing in the realms of economic situation, education and health.

A short film that summarises the main findings from the stories can be viewed [here](#).



**Józsefváros,
Budapest
(Hungary)**

1.2. Exploring diversity in Józsefváros: How privilege and social position impacts on perceptions and experiences of diverse communities

Despite being a relatively small territory, Józsefváros, the 8th district of Budapest, is a diverse area within this capital city in terms of the ethnic and social background of its inhabitants (ITS Report, 2015). It is part of the historical inner city area that was formed mainly during the urban boom of the late 19th century. It had a modest population during the 1990s, and has increased in population in the last decade as part of city-wide gentrification processes (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2015). The area has a unique mix of vibrancy, nostalgia and deep-rooted social issues such as poverty and a reputation for crime (Gentrification and Rescaling Urban Governance in Budapest-Józsefváros: Czirfusz et al, 2015). Népszínház Street, for example, was famous for handicrafts, as one [storyteller](#) recalled. “We know Józsefváros very well. It has some dark sides and bright sides. This used to be a very nice street of merchants and craftsmen.” Similarly, another [resident](#) highlighted the neighbourhood’s mix of vibrancy and decline by stating, “It is a very colourful district. There are days or moments when it is not so comfortable to live here. But by now I have already accepted its advantages

and disadvantages. It is loud, vivid and restless, even at night, which I love.”

Within Józsefváros there are 11 neighbourhoods split between 3 sections: Inner-Józsefváros (Palace Quarter), Middle-Józsefváros and Outer-Józsefváros. Within Inner-Józsefváros there are high quality residential buildings and some national institutions such as the National Museum. By contrast, the housing in Middle-Józsefváros is more run-down and features typical pre-fab housing estates. Residents of the area tend to be from the lower classes, and it is this part of the district that has garnered a negative reputation due to intensifying social issues over recent decades. As such, it has been the focus of a number of regeneration programmes. In the outer area of Józsefváros, the landscape changes again and is characterised much more by brown-field and industrial sites with a mixture of elegant low-rise residential areas not seen in the other sections.

Given the differences between these areas in terms of look, housing, residents and social features, and the



overall ethnic diversity of Józsefváros, it is unsurprising that the stories gathered here contain a range of perspectives through which the 8th district is viewed. The stories of the area are subjective to each storyteller and are influenced by the viewpoint they hold. For example, the way the storytellers perceive social problems mainly depends on their level of education and professional experience; some interpret social processes and context in a complex way, while others see the surface symptoms of social problems. This report will outline the various understandings of life in the area from these different perspectives, unpacking how differing positions of privilege and social standing can impact on how diversity is viewed. We will firstly explore the effect of changes to the physical landscape of the area on people's lives and perceptions, before going on to highlight some of the ways in which the underpinning social issues are being and could be addressed. We will conclude by suggesting that it is a person's position of privilege or social position that determines how they perceive and experience a diverse community, as well as the changes within it and the issues it faces. Through this, the report highlights the importance of a relational understanding between people and their spaces when regenerating diverse neighbourhoods.

Lenses of diversity

From the stories, it appears that young intellectuals in particular admire diversity and welcome the range of ethnic and social groups present in Józsefváros. They

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think of diversity as a value in the sense that it inspires them; as one person stated, *“What also elevates my personal comfort level is that the population is very diverse here. It makes me feel like I’m living in a real European city”*. Furthermore, the architectural beauty in the neighbourhood, particularly in the Palace Quarter, is also mentioned by many. While these perceptions of the area are quite common in the stories, they tend to be from people who live in other areas of Budapest. These ‘outsiders’, many of whom are young intellectuals, describe Józsefváros as a place of constant happenings and excitement, something they claim to love while at the same time preferring to live somewhere quieter.

Inhabitants of the area see their neighbourhood more realistically. As the stories demonstrate, their experiences of the area paint a diverse picture of Józsefváros that is influenced by more day-to-day encounters with its residents, its spaces and its services. These ‘insiders’ like this *“familiarity”*, but also describe some of the daily difficulties that they encounter, such as a lack of cleanliness, the state of the buildings and some public areas, and issues of crime. Speaking about this, **one resident** stated, *“Basically it is the same people who live around here. I know almost everyone. Probably they got older and their behaviours have changed. I don’t know but it is much quieter. But there are some streets where I would never move”*. Similarly, **another person** highlighted how they feel relatively safe where they live, but not in some other parts of the



district. *"By now I got used to this district. I got to like it. There are good and worse areas here, too. Where I live now is not the area, let's say maybe it is medium category".*

Despite some these negative features, residents feel safe living in Józsefváros, but understand that aspects of the area could invoke fear in others, especially those who live somewhere else. Those who live in the area are aware of and tend to avoid dangerous places and situations: as **one of them** said, *"You have to get used to it. It is a matter of getting used to. Because you will get to know everyone around here."* As the resident implies, knowing others provides people in the 8th district with the feeling of security despite the crime levels in the area.

Yet despite this sense of security, there are mixed feelings when storytellers talk about bringing up their children in Józsefváros, especially regarding crime, traffic, and providing children with the autonomy to go out on their own. As **one parent** explained, *"What is still a bit difficult is that sometimes this 'nyolcker' (eighth district) feeling is still here. In our house there are drug addicts and prostitutes, and there are things I would not like to show to my kid. Now she does not detect it, but it happens that I have to pick up needles."* This story highlights how the criminal activities in the area have impacted on people's understanding of their own safety in the area and the safety of those who they are responsible for.



"You have to get used to it. It is a matter of getting used to. Because you will get to know everyone around here."

This sense of fear is also reflected in some stories in which people talk about the more marginalised, vulnerable or newly arrived people to the area. As **one shopkeeper** explained, *"Arabic, Turkish and other Asian people have moved here, it wasn't like this before. It was much better, for the shop and everything. Mostly Roma musicians lived here."* In this sense, some of the stories suggest that diversity is connected to the unknown, which can be something to be afraid of. Certain demographics such as different ethnic groups and the homeless are being perceived as 'the other', and this otherness is articulated by the storytellers as a source of potential danger, even if the storytellers themselves haven't experienced any such danger directly.

In this respect, some (but not all) of the storytellers welcome a more intense police presence on the streets, and in such instances people feel this is helping the area overcome its challenges. As **one storyteller** explained, *"Népszínház Street has changed a little bit. Right now you don't see as many people on the streets as before. Actually it became quieter. Sometimes I can see these domestic disputes among people that have decreased. And when I go home there are not so many people staying there overnight there as it was".* While opinions vary regarding the recently intensified police presence in the neighbourhood, storytellers tend to agree that there is a strong correlation between police presence and quieter, less troubled public spaces.



Changing spaces

In general, the storytellers welcomed the visible changes brought about by urban development projects such as nicer public spaces, playgrounds and parks. A **grandmother** pointed out how these regeneration programmes have changed her usage of public spaces, saying, “As it has improved a lot, when my grandchildren come we can come down, and in this nice environment the kids can play”. **Another resident** highlighted other local changes by stating, “The square where I live evolved a lot, because they like renovating squares, as it was renovated more than once, and it is very picturesque.” From this perspective, we can see that urban changes are seen largely as positive enhancements to the area, and result in orderliness, regularity and a sense of security.

At the same time, however, other stories raise questions about whether such changes support the most marginalised groups. For example, as one storyteller explained, the newly renovated Teleki Square Park, located at the end of Népszínház Street, is a nice place for her to spend time with her grandchildren. Yet in some ways this park has become an artificial community space where guards decide on who can enter. As the **storyteller** explained, “there aren’t any drunk and homeless people here. They are outside. Gatekeepers would not let them in.” The idea that certain groups are being excluded from community assets (physical or otherwise) is echoed in **another resident’s** reflections.



“As it has improved a lot, when my grandchildren come we can come down, and in this nice environment the kids can play”.

“Those in extreme poverty do not make it to Énido (Me Time) or to Rákóczi Breakfast in the market (community programmes). Special attention or programmes would be needed for reaching those who are even poorer and have less information.” These stories highlight how gentrification processes that are driven by the local government can exclude the most vulnerable social groups.

While a safer neighbourhood is welcomed by everyone, there are local worries about who is being included and excluded from the area. Within this thinking, there is concern over what will happen to local families. Will regeneration come at their expense? As **one resident** stated, “the local government has been accomplishing a social rehabilitation programme for a more liveable neighbourhood. But it always raises the question of for whom it might be more liveable and how it is going to be achieved, at what price.” The question about who the regeneration is for – people who currently live in the area or others who may want to move into the area once it begins to prosper – is prevalent in the stories gathered. The stories exhibit the tension between who should benefit from the enhancements in the area and who should be publicly visible and included within the 8th district. Almost all of the storytellers mention extreme poverty as a part of Józsefváros, and that this has deteriorated the mental and physical state of certain groups, especially the Roma community, and people living on the streets and in homeless shelters in the neighbourhood. While some storytellers sympathise



with people's situations, some would prefer if these groups left public spaces.

Among the recommendations made by local storytellers for enhancing the area were simple, practical solutions, such as police-supervised zebra crossings that would enable children to cross roads safely. More complex solutions to the area's needs included ideas such as improving people's behaviour toward their environment and each other by creating a sense of social responsibility across local government, schools, and residents. For example, high on the list of people's concerns is the cleanliness of the neighbourhood. In many stories, the local government was expected to attend to the cleanliness of public spaces. Yet as this quote demonstrates, some storytellers draw attention to **local people's responsibility** towards their environment – *"I hope that people will be aware that we are all responsible for the environment we live in"*.

There seems to be a difference of approach between the generations as to how this social responsibility can be achieved. Some of the older storytellers believe in direct and nonviolent communication as a tool for influencing people's attitudes. **As one resident** explained, *"I have always tried it. Everything can be told, but in a kind manner, in a nice tone, not in a raised voice. Kids also have to understand that this cannot be done. And even if they are rude they have to be told that this is not the way to answer."* Younger respondents, on the other hand, believe in the power of setting an example rather than direct communication. **As one person** stated, *"Go for cleanliness,*

love and peace. (...) Good examples have to be shown, and sooner or later those who have had a different upbringing will somehow change." Perhaps a mixture of both stances is what is required.

Community-related activities such as the Rákóczi breakfast, organized by Mindspace (an NGO active in the field of community development), are mentioned by a few local storytellers as good practices. These storytellers feel interventions such as this will have a positive effect in the long term, but others – such as social workers - acknowledged their limited impact. **As one person** stated, *"middle class people are much more addressed by these activities than locals in extreme poverty who are very much isolated."* Those with such perspectives call for special attention or special programmes in order to motivate and involve those with greater difficulties.

Among the most vulnerable groups mentioned are the homeless and Roma population, which sheds light upon the shortcomings of the social welfare system. **One person** shared her impression that there is a lack of *"... housing for poor people, or supported houses, where you have some guidance. [...] I would say from my background as a nurse and soon to be a psychologist that many of the people who live on the street can't manage to live on their own."* As this story suggests, people with complex needs may require more than the current physical regeneration of the area to support their inclusion in the 8th district's renewal. Furthermore, engaging with these groups can activate those who are marginalised into becoming more

**"I hope that
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environment
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productive members of the community. As **one resident** suggested, moving away from renovating buildings into supporting the development of places for people to thrive could enable *“a very gritty and conscious Roma community that would lift the whole city up.”*

The importance of relationships between people and place in the regeneration of diverse neighbourhoods

As these stories have demonstrated, the way that people perceive the social problems and diversity in Józsefváros is influenced by their social position or position of privilege that is determined by factors such as level of education, profession, lifestyle and so on. Those who live outside the area view the 8th district's diversity through a somewhat rose-tinted lens, seeing only the area's vibrancy from their privileged position. They do not have to live day-to-day with the very real social issues and fractures that residents of the district experience.

It is because of these issues that the area has seen a number of local government projects and interventions aimed at revitalizing the neighbourhood, and these are perceived in both positive and negative lights. Some people welcome the changes, since their area has been renovated and spaces otherwise not accessible or available to them have become usable. Yet despite this, others perceive this as negative gentrification in the sense that the most vulnerable social groups in

Józsefváros are becoming excluded from the area and its services. Intellectuals, locals with enhanced social awareness (usually owing to profession or education) and young people who have made an active choice to live in the neighbourhood because of its “realness” particularly express these thoughts on recent changes. In many of their stories, they highlight the contradictions between the developments and the lack of support for the social groups who really need it. Outside of these groupings, even those who express gratitude towards the new renovations, such as older people, are also calling for raised awareness for local responsibility and for supporting each other in the community.

What this suggests is that the physical renovation of the neighbourhood alone cannot address the deeper issues that affect it. Regeneration processes (when done in this vein) only move a social issue or socially disadvantaged group elsewhere, rather than tackling the root cause. In this respect, more intricate processes based on enhancing relations between local residents and in how they interact with their environment are needed to enable the people of Józsefváros to address and heal their own social issues in more sustainable and systemic ways.

A short film that summarises the main findings from the stories can be viewed [here](#).





**Old town,
Sassari
(Italy)**

1.3. Exploring diversity in the historic centre of sassari: stories about the past, life experiences in the present and future visions of the old town

Sassari is the second largest city in Sardinia, Italy with a population of 126,769 inhabitants and a surface area of 547,04 km² (ISTAT, 1ST of January 2018). It is located in northwest Sardinia and has had a University since 1617. Around 13,000 students (UNISS, 2018) and approximately 3,800 foreign persons live in the city (Servizio statistica del Comune di Sassari, 2018). The historic centre of the city is home to approximately 12,000 inhabitants, and the population in this neighbourhood is mainly composed of lower middle-class families who have lived there for generations, and increasingly by migrants to the area (Servizio statistica del Comune di Sassari, 2018).

Natives of Sassari and migrants from different parts of the world (in particular from East Europe, Africa and Asia) have coexisted here for a number of years, but not without problems. On one hand, the area is characterised by urban decay and socioeconomic issues, such as high rates of unemployment (especially of young people) at around 27.6% (Dati ISTAT 2017). But on the other hand, there are some signs of positive change in the area through a revitalisation of the neighbourhood that has been influenced by activities implemented by schools, associations and commercial ventures such as bars and cafes that bring a renewed vibrancy to the historic centre's squares.

The stories gathered represent both of these perspectives, and the transitions and changes that the city and its historic centre have seen, alongside its population and socioeconomic shifts. Exploring the concept of 'diversity' within the context of Sassari's old town has provided us with an understanding of how this concept is perceived by its residents. There is a tendency in the stories – either deliberately or inadvertently – to perceive diversity particularly along ethnic lines. This is represented the stories that discuss different types of people living in the area, such as the resident who comments on seeing children playing with other children “*from various ethnic groups*”, and the person who talks about the people who live around him who include “*three Russian guys, four people from Romania, five Africans, and in front of my house there are Chinese people*”.

There are, however, a number of stories that seek (actively or not) to negate the differences between the people inhabiting the old town. For example, a man from South America who has been living in Sassari for years compares diversity to a mask that everyone wears but which hides a reality in which no actual differences exist between people. As he said, “*It's like a mask that each one puts on but in reality, there is no difference*”.



between us, we are all the same. We should look beyond the sex of a person, the political ideas, the clothes he/she is wearing, the position...doctor, engineer, lawyer, astronaut, housewife...the essence of every one of us is unique and we are all human beings." Similarly, another **man** explained, *"diversity is a mental matter. There are no differences between us, unless you are talking about diversity from a physical point of view, but this is not considered diversity"*. This sentiment was echoed by **another person** who suggested, *"We are all children of the earth and we all live under the same sky"*.

Yet even within stories that follow this ideological stance, there is still the acknowledgement that diversity is viewed along ethnic lines. For example, **one person** stated that *"diversity does not exist if foreigners do their best to contribute to the evolution of the host society."* **Another person** argued that there *"is not a lot of diversity in the end, because the different ethnic groups that live in the old town coexist"*.

What this somewhat contradictory discourse on diversity represents is an acknowledgement of the population shift that the historic centre has experienced, on the one hand, and wanting to create or retain a collective sense of identity for the area by its residents on the other. The latter component of the discourse is rooted in the area's strong sense of cultural identity embodied by customs and traditions from the past that are still present in contemporary society and consolidated by people's nostalgia for the city centre that once was. As this report

**"We are
all children
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will detail, the interplay of past and present customs and culture is not only important to understanding the lives of people living in the area but is something that can also play a vital role in addressing some of the issues that the neighbourhood now faces.

From vibrancy to decay, and back again? Changes in the historic centre

The historic centre has changed considerably over time, a common topic within the stories. These stories paint a picture of residents' understandings of how and why the old town has changed, and of how people have experienced these changes. Nostalgia for the historic centre of the past is common. For example, a **local small shop owner** in the historic centre recalls it as a more vibrant and populated space than it is now. As she said, *"In the past, the historic centre was more populated than now. You could listen to the voices of the children who played outdoor traditional games. This made you feel happy...and also the good smell of traditional dishes, such as pasta and beans...now it's not so common..."* Reminiscence about traditions from the past is often accompanied by a sense of melancholy over things being not so vibrant nowadays.

There is a sense in the stories that residents have seen the old town dilapidate over the years. As **a man** stated, *"The historic centre has been in a state of decay for many years. It has been abandoned for decades and*



now it would be very complicated to bring it back to its original beauty.” A **young man** who has lived in the historic centre since he was young details how his own café is one of the most important parts of the square because it is a space that brings people together. But even he sees how the area lost its original energy over the years. *“The historic centre is somewhat emptied, both at the level of ideas and commercial activities, and at the level of the people. The community is missing. We are all using our phones because we want to be more ‘social’, but then very little remains of the concept of ‘social’... especially in the historic centre.”* In this respect, we can see that the stories not only reflect the decay of the buildings over time but also deterioration in the sense of community that there once was historic centre. In essence, the physical decline is mirrored by social deterioration.

After so many years of neglect, people feel it would be difficult to make the old town pulsate as it once did. The city has also seen a demographic shift in the area during the years of neglect historic centre. As **one storyteller** stated, *“Before, it was inhabited only by people from Sassari, and then people from other areas arrived, especially from Senegal. The historic centre was repopulated, undergoing a remarkable anthropological transformation.”* For some people, certain aspects of this transformation have been positive, while for others it has contributed to a negative image of the historic centre area. For some, the large numbers of immigrants who arrived in Sassari and settled in the historic centre



“The historic centre is somewhat emptied, both at the level of ideas and commercial activities, and at the level of the people. The community is missing.”

are seen to live without any system or rules, creating a kind of “ghetto”. As one **business owner** claimed, there is *“little control from the police. I have a business and today I can say that the rate of dangerous people has increased. There should be more control.”*

Yet this is only one side of the picture. The historic centre has seen a re-valorisation of many historic squares and streets due to the scheduling of events and opening of new cafés and restaurants. Furthermore, the multicultural community now seen in the old town is perceived by some as bringing about a new form of vibrancy in some ways akin to the old nostalgic reminiscences while also being different. As **a woman** stated, *“The children alive now do not look at nationality anymore, they are a bit mixed up. There are children from Sassari playing with children from various ethnic groups who have moved here. You can see a lot of cultural exchanges, various games, and every child can teach others a different game from the various countries they come from.”* In some ways, this echoes some of the older stories of children playing games in the streets and the neighbourhood’s bygone energy.

Traditions: Past and present

What is evident in the stories is the importance of tradition in the psyche of the people who have resided in Sassari for generations. Many of the stories shed light on the role that these traditions play in people’s lives and sense of identity, with many of them still being



very popular and considered to be important events within the historic centre. One very prevalent tradition of the past was Li Gobburì. As **a teacher** from Sassari detailed, this tradition involved *“some young people who went around the city as storytellers. They told stories in rhymes about the history of our city, and local people participated in the event, adding some extracts of stories always in rhyme. They often had a small wagon and people could give them some money”*. This tradition doesn't exist anymore.

Two traditions that do still exist, however, are the Cavalcata Sarda and the Candelieri, also called Festha Manna. A **young tourist guide** from the city explained how the Cavalcata Sarda *“started more than a century ago and is still an annual occurrence, in May. It's a folk procession of traditional dresses from all over Sardinia. It was started to welcome the members of the royal families. It's a very nice and colourful parade, and thanks to this, we remember our Sassari's traditions, habits, customs and history”* The Candelieri also holds an important place in the minds of people from the area. As the young tourist guide explained, *“it's a religious tradition”* which involves small processions through the historic centre. It lasts from June until the main celebration in August with preparations being made throughout the year. While this event is a local tradition, it also attracts tourists. Its significance locally is rooted in its ability to teach children typical songs and dances from the area, and its capacity to gather people from throughout Sassari in the historic centre. All of

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these traditions, both past and present incarnations, highlight the importance of activities that bring people together for a joint celebration and to share local knowledge and insights from the past. Events such as these enable communities to remember their roots while also celebrating these customs with newcomers to their community, or those who are momentarily residing there.

Future visions from the historic centre: Creating connections, cultivating a community

Within the stories, people explored what they thought the future held for the historic centre. The vast majority of these visions were positive, with residents holding out hope for a better future of their neighbourhood. In her story, **a singer** from the oldest choir in Sardinia said that she can already see some positive changes, particularly in terms of integration between the original population of Sassari and newcomers to the area. She described how the San Donato School *“is a very important institution in the historic centre where children and second generation children meet and create Sassari's community of tomorrow”*. It is through such spaces and projects where people can meet and interact that she believes *“that Sassari will be a multicultural and open city, with a renovated historic centre”*. Similarly to how the old traditions functioned, schools, projects



and other sites of interaction create valuable spaces in which people can meet each other.

The stories suggest that collaboration among neighbourhood residents is key to bringing about a better future for the historic centre. A **young yoga teacher** from the area detailed how she hopes that Sassari will grow culturally through the area's demographic changes. As she described, *"I have a very positive vision of the future for the historic centre. I hope that people from Sassari will grow culturally through the hospitality of migrants and that migrants, at the same time, could be more in contact with local people...I hope there will be better integration because, for the moment, there is only tolerance but not a 'living together'."* What this story suggests is that more spaces and initiatives are needed to bring people together so that they can build a sense of community rather than just co-habitation of the same geographical territory.

The revitalisation of the historic centre imagined in these stories is already underway in some respects. As **one storyteller** detailed, *"At a slow pace, the historic centre of Sassari is improving thanks to many cultural and local events, and to youngsters that moved here from peripheral areas historic centre. The city is taking a breath again."* But as the stories alluded to, this change cannot be brought about by local government and decision-makers alone, but must also come from the residents who have a vital role to play in building a more connected community within the old town. As **a young**



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man suggested, *"It depends on us, it is not only about the intervention of political authorities, but it depends on us, the young people especially...We must regain these spaces which belonged to our grandparents that are abandoned today but still beautiful."* In addressing some of the issues that the historic centre has encountered, such as the changes in traditional social structures and the make-up of the community, people must take responsibility for the social rebuilding of the neighbourhood in which they live.

Back to the future: Using the past to inspire tomorrow

In numerous stories, the negative evolution of the historic centre is highlighted and the feeling of loss, whether it be for traditions of the past or the architectural beauty of the now dilapidating buildings, can be felt. This downfall of the area is symbiotically tied to a process of depopulation in which many of the original residents of the city moved to other areas which in turn led to the neighbourhood being repopulated by migrants from other parts of the world. Yet within this context, positive aspects of the previous social structures and customs have remained, and new possibilities have been introduced or could emerge. The importance of tradition is strong in the stories, and the continued success of events such as the Candelieri and the Cavalcata Sarda are testaments to their importance in the cultural psyche of the people.



Rather than customs such as these being buried in the past, they are still alive today and are key elements in the community's collective calendar. More so, things from the past such as children playing together in the streets are still evident nowadays. Perhaps, as detailed in the stories, the games that the children play and the demographics of the children have changed – but the sentiment of togetherness remains.

It is through lessons of the past – the importance of sharing traditions and creating spaces in which people can interact, such as vibrant squares or social events – that Sassari's old town can re-invent itself. The newcomers to the area have a big role to play in this, as they too will bring their own customs and heritage to share and add to the vibrancy of the neighbourhood. As **one resident** said, *"Diversity is an opportunity"*, and through it you can grow and *"enrich yourself"*. This concept of sharing and learning from one another was

echoed by **another resident** who asserted that true integration involves overcoming perceived barriers to engage with people who are different. As this person stated, *"Getting along with those who think like you is the easiest thing in the world. The beauty is to get along with those who don't think like you, with those who have different opinions from yours, with those who have different habits from yours. That is integration. We call it 'collective growth'"*. In essence, it is through collective exchanges that people can really get to know each other, creating strong social ties and a sense of togetherness that results in valuing one another, their cultures and the spaces in which they live. This lesson is evident in the past traditions of the old town, and must not be forgotten in the present as it could be the catalyst for renewed vibrancy in the neighbourhood.

A short film that summarises the main findings from the stories can be viewed **here**.

"Getting along with those who think like you is the easiest thing in the world. The beauty is to get along with those who don't think like you That is integration. We call it 'collective growth'"



Wedding, Berlin (Germany)

1.4. Exploring diversity in Wedding: cultivating a community of difference, combating external threats

Wedding is a sub-district of Berlin, just north of the city centre. According to statistics from the Office Capital Portal, in 2016 the area had a little more than **84,000 inhabitants**. It is traditionally a working-class area, and before WWII it was an industrial centre. However, after the war the area experienced a period of decline.

In 1961, Wedding was surrounded on two sides by the Berlin Wall, resulting in industry and its workers leaving the neighbourhood and the once-industrial epicentre. What followed was a wave of 'guest workers' from Turkey and Yugoslavia arriving in the area, attracted by low rents and a **huge number of social dwellings**



(Source: weddingweisser.de). Ultimately, this led to the neighbourhood being further associated with poverty and migration. **One storyteller** described how the “*neighbourhood was originally a working-class area with a large Turkish community and other European communities*”. Yet despite not being a “*rich neighbourhood*”, this person depicts the area as now being “*very vivid*” with “*a strong exchange between its different communities*”.

This vividness followed the fall of the Berlin Wall which led to the area becoming a central part of Berlin once again. In recent years, more migration into the area has occurred. Demographics such as Africans, Asians and others from around Europe have moved into the area and begun opening cafes, shops and small businesses. As documented in the **online press**, more and more students, artists and ‘creative businesses’ have simultaneously established themselves in Wedding, adding to the kaleidoscope of diversity. However, as a consequence of this, the area is threatened by gentrification and despite the positivity felt by people towards the new spaces that have opened up, some old businesses have closed and **long-term residents have had to leave the area**. This process and the fear of negative social change are reflected in many stories.

Despite such concerns, as this report will outline, the stories gathered have found not only optimism but positivity around the concept of diversity among the people of Wedding. This is largely based on the



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interactions between the people who live there and the different cultures to which they belong. This is not to say that the symphony of diversity in the neighbourhood does not encounter problems, or that people from minority groups do not experience issues that non-minority groups do not. But it does suggest that Wedding provides (for now) a section of Berlin where people belong to different groups (whether based on race, religion, sexuality, etc.), can build their lives together. What threatens this living environment, it seems, are external factors that are not specific to the Wedding neighbourhood. It is also worth noting that the **German storytellers** often said they sympathise with the situation of the migrants, and were more sceptical that Germans are ready to live in diversity than migrants storytellers were.

Definitions of Diversity:

There's something special about Wedding

Within the stories, people reflect on their personal understandings of what diversity means. A lot of the residents refer to diversity as “*Multi-Kulti*”, and this coming together of people from different cultures was seen as a cohesive co-existence. For example, **one person** detailed how for them, “*Diversity means that all kinds of people from different nations, races and backgrounds live together in peace, love and harmony*”. Similarly, another **person** outlined how “*Diversity means that there are a lot of people creating something*



**“People here
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community”**

together”. Concerning Wedding in particular, this sense of togetherness appears to be the reality rather than an ideal. As **one resident** said, *“People here behave peacefully and with no violence because they all got the idea since they came that our diversity builds a stronger community”*. Furthermore, another person described how *“People are very kind, very friendly...It’s a beautiful place to be”*. What such comments suggest is that the positive notions of diversity within the stories gathered are being drawn from the connections between people living in the neighbourhood.

Diversity manifests itself in the area in a multitude of ways that engage different senses. **One person**, for example, outlined how diversity is found in culinary experiences, and talks about their love for the flavours and tastes of Wedding. **The local shops** also represent the diversity of the area. *“It’s funny to see that the shops are in Turkish, not in German, but that’s part of Berlin, people become part of this district now,”* one person said. This sense of people being part of the district is a key contributor to why people feel warmly towards diversity in Wedding, and to the cohesion of both newcomers and the ‘Urgesteine’ (people who have lived there all their lives).

This integration, as observed in the stories, is connected to language. **People suggest** that immigrants tend to connect easier with others and integrate successfully if they can speak German. However, this can also have its own issues. As **one person** acknowledged, *“[s]ometimes*

when I speak English, I face comments that I have to speak German. For native German people, it is very important for them [that immigrants] also learn the German language.” While commonality in language plays a key role in non-German people’s integration into the area, the expectation of this, as this storyteller alluded to, can make newcomers feel excluded if their lack of German language skills is frowned upon by the society they are entering. In this sense, a balance must be struck whereby usage of a single language supports interactions between people instead of erecting additional social barriers. As **one person** stated, diversity is about *“interactions with another culture”*. The person describes how all cultures in Germany try to integrate with each other to redefine and construct a ‘Berlin culture’. What this suggests is that what makes diversity in Wedding as positive as the stories suggest is not total assimilation, but rather interactions and the forming of new, joint cultural understandings.

A thread runs through the stories that suggests that people’s positive notions of diversity are specifically formed by living or working in Wedding. For example, the people often use the phrase *at least here*” in reference to the cohesion between people spoken about in the stories. As **one storyteller** outlines, it is *“very tolerant [here], especially in Wedding, and therefore I only see benefits. You get to know many other cultures. And I hardly see any disadvantages. Not in Wedding.”* Furthermore, a **Turkish storyteller** said that in Neukölln (another Berlin district), the Turkish are



less willing to contribute to the neighbourhood and therefore integration isn't the same as it is in Wedding. Building on this further, **some people** brought up the fact that they have never experienced racism in Wedding, but had experience it or feared experiencing it in other areas of Germany. What this suggests is that the understanding of diversity, particularly in terms of its positive reception and cohesion between people from different backgrounds, is quite specific to Wedding. In this respect, Wedding is not a 'typical' German neighbourhood, and the stories highlight the importance of preserving the area's diversity as it is.

While the dominant discourse within these reflections is positive, there are subtle nuances between how people speak about the concept. In essence, this represents a feeling of the 'diversity of diversities' that is apparent in Wedding and perhaps in the wider Berlin culture and mind-set. As **one storyteller** put it, "[I]n Berlin I think everything is very well accepted, your sexuality and your religion. I think in the rest of Germany it might be different, so I think Berlin is a good start for living diversity and accepting it." A key element to this quote is the acknowledgement of difference. For these Wedding residents, diversity is not about the suppression of differences into one homogenous culture or form, but the acceptance and harmonious co-existence of difference. Understanding diversity thus means leaving behind the idea of diversity determined 'just' by ethnicity and coming closer to the ideas of hyper-diversity as elaborated by the VOICITYS project.



For these Wedding residents, diversity is not about the suppression of differences into one homogenous culture or form, but the acceptance and harmonious co-existence of difference.

A Community of Diversity

People's notions of diversity as represented in these stories are wrapped up in an understanding of the atmosphere of the neighbourhood and how this relates to and constitutes the sense of community in Wedding and in the wider culture of Berlin. **One person** described how *"in Berlin people with different backgrounds can live together relatively well"*. This sentiment is echoed in a number of other stories, with **one person** describing Berlin as "colourful", stating that there *"is no real difference in the city between people from Germany or other countries, so for me Berlin is a place of diversity with various people"*. When speaking about "typical Berlin culture", **one person** suggested that if *"there is typical Berlin culture, it is very mixed."* Because of the different groups present in the city, he *"feels at home"*. What such stories suggest is that there is a sense of belonging to a society or community in which both differences and similarities are contributing factors.

So how is this sense of mixing of cultures and harmonious living created? One **individual** thinks that this can be found in spaces that enable people from different backgrounds to connect. As they described, *"this mostly happens at universities"* within Berlin and Wedding, and such opportunities are key to Germany being able to accommodate diversity within its population. Spaces such as kindergartens also bring people together. As **one person** described, *"The children don't see any more ethnicity. For them it doesn't matter if someone is*



German, Turkish or Polish. They just play. The problem is rather the parents who do not mix. Education would be key to bring them together.” New spaces that have emerged in Wedding also contribute to this. As **one person** explained, “If you walk down the street, you can see many Arabic and Turkish stores and restaurants. There are a lot of opportunities to interact with other people and learn from other cultures and see how other cultures are.” Such spaces allow for interactions between people that can foster better understanding between different groups and individuals. This in turn can result in, as **one woman** put it, people respecting practices which differ from their own happening in shared spaces. “People let me practice my religion and respect me when I am praying,” she said.

Challenges of Diversity: Tensions between Wedding and the outside world

Positivity about Wedding and people’s enthusiasm towards life in the neighbourhood is overshadowed by some deep-rooted concerns. Many of these problems appear to be ‘imported’ from outside of the neighbourhood. A key threat at the moment appears to be gentrification. As **one storyteller** suggested, “People that have the money are buying places [in Wedding], renting them to some other people who cannot afford anything else”. This results, they say, in existing communities being pushed out. May say they’d prefer Wedding to stay as it is. What this suggests is a tension



“The police always stop them and want to see their IDs. That’s something that never happens to me. So I think it’s not equal,”

between what people value about the area (i.e. its vibrancy, cultured atmosphere and spaces, and the new bars, shops and restaurants that have emerged) and the ability of these things to attract various investors into the area which inevitably brings about rises in rent and tourism and the development of the last free spaces available in the neighbourhood. This leads to the disappearance of places in which people can encounter diversity. The stories indicate that people want those places to be preserved or new ones to be established.

While diversity appears to be celebrated by the residents of Wedding, there is a sense in some of the stories that newcomers to Germany from other countries experience forms of social and institutional racism. As **one person** described, they feel that their Arabic and Turkish friends are treated differently by the police. “The police always stop them and want to see their IDs. That’s something that never happens to me. So I think it’s not equal,” one person said. Furthermore, German administration is seen as creating hurdles for people to overcome in terms of completing the necessary paperwork to start a new life in a new country. Speaking about people’s difficulties in navigating the German system, **one person** said that while language can be a barrier, refugees “are not used to [the system]”, and that frustration with bureaucracy is making them feel “discriminated” against and thus making it hard “to integrate and get used to the local culture”. These perceptions of discrimination by people and organisations in positions of authority do pose a significant threat to newcomers from outside



Germany settling into German society. Such issues, if left unaddressed, could destabilise the integration and strength of the community in Wedding.

Making (and keeping) spaces for dialogue

These stories paint a relatively positive picture of diversity in Berlin and even more specifically in Wedding. Many of the stories convey the idea that diversity makes a cohesive society, and that Wedding could be a role model for this case despite some of the issues that people discussed like the external threats of gentrification and systemic racism. As **a person** stated, *“Wedding is changing perceptions on tolerance. People from Saxon villages especially should come and live here to see what diversity is.”* This sentiment is expanded on further with **storytellers** suggesting that rather than focusing on negative elements associated with diversity, policies should rather focus on the positive. Yet as some stories report, Wedding is also changing and problems have begun to emerge. The findings from the stories suggest that Wedding residents are less concerned about problems with diversity or conflict between cultures and more concerned about social segregation. The **storytellers** fear the disappearance of long-standing spaces and the changing image of the district. They are afraid that the neighbourhood might lose its diverse character and be turned into another sterile, white middle class neighbourhood where the bars and social spaces serve mostly tourists.



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With this and the stories in mind, there are two key things to learn about what has contributed to Wedding's current identity as a diverse yet cohesive neighbourhood. Firstly, there must be spaces where people who live in an area can come together and interact. As **one person** explained, *“When there are different communities it is not always easy, and it can only work if there is one or several spaces where people of different origins can meet.”* It is especially important, in light of the concerns about gentrification raised in the stories, that these spaces do not just become inhabited by people with social privilege but also by people who are seen as being more marginalised or excluded. The **kindergartens**, for example, were a place where children could get to know other children from cultures other than their own. Underpinning these interactions is the role of language in supporting cohesion, which the kindergartens also support. The **stories** highlight a need for more support for adults in learning German, and the need for more structures for the growing number of bilingual people in the area. Therefore, in providing physical locations in which people can meet one another and by having a commonality of language to support communication, dialogue can emerge in which the positivity, assets and value of Wedding can be preserved and developed.

Certain local policies and initiatives are in line with this way of thinking. For example, the **Social City programme** seeks to involve local residents in deprived neighbourhoods in decision-making processes. This takes the form of Neighbourhood Councils in which residents decide



how funds should be used to support local regeneration projects. Such opportunities that bring people together to create or work on something collectively provide meaningful opportunities for those with potentially differing perspectives to meet, discuss and contribute to a better future for their area. Furthermore, the concerns over the gentrification of the area and locals being outpriced are being addressed by initiatives such as [Sozialräumliche Orientierung](#) and the issuing of [Milieuschutzverordnungen](#) that seek to make neighbourhoods socially balanced, culturally diverse and cosmopolitan, and also provide social housing and tenant protection. With such strategic support, combined with the assets that diversity has brought to Wedding, the neighbourhood is in a strong position to overcome current challenges, not only to protect but also possibly to build on their very own symphony of diversity in the centre of Berlin.



A short film that summarises the main findings from the stories can be viewed [here](#).



2. Life in diverse neighbourhoods: stakeholder interviews in Berlin, Budapest, Salford and Sassari

CHALK,
Salford
(UK)

2.1. “A Diverse Salford is nothing new”: stakeholder interviews in Charlestown and Lower Kersal, Salford

Perceptions of diversity

Among our interview set, age was the type of diversity most commonly mentioned. This was most often mentioned to describe the extreme ends of the age spectrum (e.g. “old” and/or “young” people). Older people were seen as a vulnerable and potentially hard-to-reach community. “We don’t see that many people 65+, it’s one of the age groups we don’t see much at the sessions,” noted the manager of Salford Food Bank. On the other hand, young people were frequently mentioned as a visible group within the community. Attitudes towards young people were sometimes characterised by worry for their future and their opportunities. Childhood and adolescence was highlighted as a key time period in which aspiration needed to be encouraged to improve the life chances of people in the area. The specific category of NEETs – young people not in



education, employment or training – and children under five were also raised as a concern by interviewees.

Respondents often juxtaposed the experiences of young and old people in the CHALK area and noted the need for provision that reached across age boundaries. A good example of such cross-cutting provisions was older people's litter gathering activities with children at the nearby primary school. In general, however, the perception of demographics in CHALK was that the older community was "dying out" and that there were more young people than before.

Ethnicity, race and religion were also mentioned by stakeholders as important dimensions of social diversity in CHALK. Contrary to statistical data, multiple interviewees conveyed the perception that the area used to be predominantly white but is now more racially and ethnically diverse. This was generally celebrated by interviewees who spoke of CHALK being "*a vast mix of people from all over the world*", or an "*eclectic mix*" of ethnic communities. Specific communities mentioned included Jewish, Somali, Chinese, Muslim, Eastern European, Congolese, and Catholic.

Another common category that interviewees drew upon to discuss their perceptions of neighbourhood diversity was place of birth. This tended to split into three categories: residents who had been born and raised in CHALK; residents who were frequently termed "transient"; and newcomers who were moving to CHALK from other areas of Salford and Greater Manchester. These categories are used to depict problems between "established CHALK residents" and newer more transient communities over issues such as "*litter and keeping the communal spaces clean*" as noted by the CEO of local charity. Students are also occasionally mentioned as a transient population, linked to problems like "*late night noise*".

Refugees and asylum seekers were also mentioned by some interviewees when discussing the diversity of the area. Often, they were discussed as beneficiaries of community services facing a degree of prejudices from mainstream society. Formal organisations, on the other hand, that work with refugees and asylum seekers in the area celebrated the refreshing nature of diversity these people bring into the community.

One potentially controversial aspect of living in an ethnically and racially diverse community was perceptions of "integration", or rather the lack of it. Responses reflected the complexity of community relations and the insularity of different groups. According to respondents, "*the community spirit does exist but is within diverse groups of people and they don't mix socially*". Informal community stakeholders rather than formal organisation stakeholders found that there was little integration in CHALK despite the general openness of each informal group and formal organisation.

Overall, community relations and ethnic/racial diversity is "*complex and mixed*" in the neighbourhood as described by the CEO of a local charity. Most interviewees celebrated this while also acknowledging the challenges that it presents for supporting the community and its needs. There was also evidence in the interviews of progress in terms of engaging ethnic communities that have historically been harder to reach. The local councillor celebrated the fact that "*Jewish people are more outward looking now than they used to be*", and highlighted their increased use of local services while also describing the effort that this has taken on a local level. "*With the Jewish community, you have to get to know them. You have to put the work in.*"

Most interviewees also referred to the difficult socio-economic circumstances of many residents in CHALK, describing unemployment



and low incomes as the causes of deprivation in the area. *“It can be people who live hand to mouth,”* stated the manager of Salford Food Bank, who also reported that people with jobs and the unemployed alike rely on the food bank’s services. Participants often made links between socio-economic status and educational attainment and opportunities for residents in CHALK. The local councillor celebrated the fact that educational achievement for the area has gone up over the last decade, but felt that there was more work to do in encouraging young people into further education.

It was common for interviewees to discuss changes in the area’s diversity that they had perceived in recent years: the general perception was that the increase in diversity had been *“dramatic”*. As the local councillor stated, *“When I first came, it was very white working class. Now there is a whole range of people, a diverse range of diverse communities.”* In general, increased racial diversity was seen as a positive by many interviewees, such as the Mersey Rivers Trust worker *“When I was at school, there was one black girl in the entire school. Now it’s multi-lingual. I don’t see that much racism.”*

Another positive shift noted in the local area was regeneration. As the local councillor pointed out, before the regeneration programme, the city was in decline, but due to the programme the population increased for the first time since the 1930s. Part of these changes was related to housing policy which has favoured BME communities and younger people. As a result, *“some local people feel like they’re kind of being pushed out of the area”* because *“private landlords are letting large families live in these houses”*, as noted by a member of the Healthy Walking Group.

“When I first came, it was very white working class. Now there is a whole range of people, a diverse range of diverse communities.”

When discussing places of diversity in the area, some key buildings and sites were repeatedly mentioned in the interviews. The most commonly mentioned site was the Salford Sports Village. The responses and actions of interviewees from informal community groups reflected a sense of community ownership and pride regarding the Sports Village. Stakeholders representing formal organisations pointed to the Sports Village as a place where they thought the community could come together and socialise. Representatives of local and regional institutions and service providers saw the Sports Village as a place for delivery of their own services, as well as for meetings and a place to refer their service users to.

Although it technically sits just outside the CHALK area in Lower Broughton, several interviewees also mentioned the Broughton Hub as a key community site. Most interviewees connected this site to the Jewish community that lives in the area. The viewpoints of different stakeholder groups seem to collide in the tension-ridden perception that the site is used primarily by the Jewish community. On the other hand, engaging the traditionally hard-to-reach Jewish community is a huge achievement for the local council, and its representatives held up the Broughton Hub as an example of where local government has provided facilities and places for community engagement.

Although pubs can be spaces which implicitly exclude some social groups, many respondents noted them as spaces which used to fulfil community gathering functions. One respondent described the Beehive pub as *“the main social place in the area.”*



St. Sebastian's Community Centre is another community hub mentioned by several interviewees. The centre is owned and run by the Catholic diocese of Salford and is open for all the use of the whole community. St. Sebastian's is a point of access for information, advice and guidance (IAG) services offered by local charities. Churches were also seen by several interviewees as playing an important role as meeting points for the community. Responses ranged from discussing functions like venues for line dancing to providing space for the Eritrean community to worship after their own building burned down.

Interviewees also discussed CHALK in terms of public services with a physical presence in the area, the schools and Healthy Living centres in particular. Other spaces mentioned were the drug and alcohol provision (provision for the whole city is located in CHALK) and the foodbank (one of three locations across Salford). Some voices celebrated the availability and diversity of places and services in the area, but others spoke of the limitations on these services. They mentioned the lack of spaces for young children in schools, who sometimes stay longer in nurseries as a result. Long waiting lists for doctor's appointments were also mentioned, and interviewees said the area would benefit from another GP surgery. Some interviewees felt overall that the area lacks places for community gathering, particularly in terms of encouraging diverse groups to come together. The perception of public transport services was also quite negative: a limited evening service that often leaves young women walking alone at night, expensive services that price out families in poverty, and unreliable services that disrupt planned appointments

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were often described. *"The buses aren't on time, I have to wait ages and sometimes they don't turn up."*

Another place that was frequently mentioned when interviewees discussed CHALK was the River Irwell that loops through the middle of the area, and its adjacent flood plains and wetlands. One interviewee described the area as having "*blue space*" as well as green space. However, the river is perceived to "split" the area, indicating a sense of a natural geographical barrier. The river bears symbolic significance regarding the changes that have taken place within CHALK over the decades. Its position used to make CHALK an affluent area because it attracted industry, especially factories and washhouses, and the greyhound and horseracing tracks located there meant that people travelled from all across the UK to visit it. Over the decades, however, manufacturing companies and other industries have been replaced with waste and recycling companies that negatively affect air quality and act as a depository for the waste of the whole Greater Manchester area.

A range of interviewees made reference to streets and houses as key places of diversity in CHALK. Streets were seen as sites of recreation and positivity. However, litter and tipping were also mentioned as issues experienced on the streets. Transient communities were seen as sources of conflict owing to their tipping rubbish in front gardens and alleyways. Streets, on the other hand, were generally seen to be safer than in the past. Perception of the area's safety varied among residents, which could be influenced by factors such as the length of time spent living in the area, gender and ethnicity.



Governance of diversity

Most interviewees felt that the organisations they represented had a good level of engagement with the local community, and that people interacted positively with them. Formal and informal organisations seem to act as a middle ground between citizens and local and regional institutions. Local citizens, including refugees and asylum seekers, seem to be more proactively engaged with these organisations than with statutory organisations. *"We don't do publicity. It's word of mouth. One person comes with a problem, we work with them, then three more come."*

Many interviewees gave examples of where the voices of users, clients, volunteers or the community were listened to and acted upon within their organisation. In Mersey Rivers Trust, volunteers have informal input into the organisation through suggesting other parts of the river that need attention. (Mersey Rivers Trust worker) The Christian Brothers co-ordinator said he feels that that the people who engage with their services have a voice and feel that they can make a difference: *"We try to make a space where everyone can reach their potential. It's not a teacher/pupil environment."* The manager of Salford Foodbank said he hopes his organisation represents the people that use their service. The CEO of a local charity said their ethos involves local people getting involved to help their own community: their nursery is run by locals, and they choose to employ local people because of their connections in the community. The voice of the community is also fed into their work through an annual questionnaire which asks local residents to answer questions which inform the priorities for the following year.

"Many interviewees gave examples of where the voices of users, clients, volunteers or the community were listened to and acted upon within their organisation."

According to interview data, many organisations work in partnership in CHALK. Almost all representatives of organisations said they had worked in partnerships, and could point to specific examples of projects that were jointly delivered. They also reported clients moving across services to get the right help and support. Overall, respondents were positive about the level of and enthusiasm for partnership working across the area. Partnerships include social connections and fishing clubs that are based in the area, as well as working on local projects and opportunities such as the Broughton Trust, Inspiring Communities Together and the University of Salford. They also include partnerships with national agencies like United Utilities and the Environment Agency. Strong partnerships bore fruit, evidenced through the number of volunteers that regularly get involved in the activities of the organisations: where they would expect 20-30 people to volunteer, 100-120 people would get involved.

In addition to local, horizontal partnerships, cooperation with national organisations is also prevalent among organisations in CHALK. The CEO of a local charity, for example, asserted that their entire organisation was based on working in partnership. Their nursery provision is housed in a Salford Community Leisure space, and their adult work is partly funded by the council. They partner with housing developers to run engagement and apprenticeship courses, and for their work with older people, they work closely with AgeUK Salford. This organisation felt that through working in partnership they are able to bring additional resources like people, funding, and spaces.) The charity structures its partnerships in different ways, sometimes through informal



conversation, sometimes through a delivery partner in a contract or a grant bid with shared outcomes and a formal contract. They also partner with organisations that fill in gaps in their own provision. For example, the charity does not have any services specifically for young people but partners with organisations that do.

When asked to discuss whether the local community has a voice in how their area is run, interviewees typically mentioned the local Community Forums and/or the Community Committee. The Community Committee is a council-run initiative where each of the eight neighbourhoods across Salford have regular meetings where they can speak to councillors, find out what's happening in their neighbourhood, be introduced to local groups and meet service providers such as the police, housing authorities and the council. The East Salford Committee meets bi-monthly in the areas of Kersal, Irwell Riverside and Broughton. The Community Forums, on the other hand, are run by Inspiring Communities Together, and are more informal, designed to allow residents to have their voices heard and allow the community to gather and share information. They also provide activities for children so that childcare is not a barrier.

Overall, interviewees welcomed the Community Committees as a place for residents to engage with local government. However, there were mixed views as to how effective they were. As noted by a Mersey Rivers Trust member, *"community Committee doesn't work because it's been taken over by people with their own agenda. Anyone with an idea just*

gets shouted down. People only ever go to Community Committee once or twice."

Local and regional institutional stakeholders saw the role of their organisations in representing the community at Community Committee and amplifying their voices: *"We give local people a voice at community committee. We give the voice to our local residents, really."* Though they said that the committees were a good way for local people to directly address local government representatives, they also thought the voices of CHALK could be much stronger and that people in the area don't engage as well as they could with statutory organisations. They worried that people felt disempowered and without a voice. Others, like lecturers at the University of Salford and local councillors, felt that the local voice is very much heard and that the community is engaged at all levels when developing projects and ideas. The responses of these two interviewees suggest that a perception gap might exist between those higher up the community's power structures and those working closer to grassroots levels. The councillor and lecturer both spoke of the strength of local voices and the councillor emphasised the effectiveness of Community Committee, whereas other respondents tended to be more pessimistic about these aspects, feeling that they or their clients struggled to get their voice heard or needed help to do so, and found the Committees of limited use and value.

Interviewees were generally more positive about the Community Forums run by Inspiring Communities Together as a way for the community to have a voice about what is going on in the area. Community Forums are designed to sit

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below the council-level forums (which cover the broader East Salford Area). They are a tool to bring together stakeholders, councillors and the community in order to come up with a solution to any issues that arise. In contrast to negative views of Community Committee, Community Forums are more effective in getting a response to questions. Publicity for these meetings could perhaps be improved. There are also limitations to the forums as noted by a member of a local charity *"Often people come to the forums because they need somewhere to air their voice in a negative way rather than staying at home to make change happen."*

Most interviewees described good relationships with the local council, and some mentioned that their organisation was represented on formal decision-making panels and boards in local government. In addition, some charity organisations have a formalised relationship with local government through a legal agreement in the form of an annuity with Salford City Council that is part of the legacy of NDC. These organisations have to update the council every quarter to demonstrate the impact they have on the community. They are contracted by the Local Authority to deliver work with Public Health, and they have a local councillor sitting on their board.

The councillor's perception was that local government works well in partnership with other organisations. He highlighted Salford CVS and The Broughton Trust in particular. He explained that these partnerships are crucial because *"local government can't solve problems on its own"*.

Some interviewees also felt that their organisations had an influence on a level wider than local government. For example, the Christian Brother's co-ordinator felt that they have a global voice by attending conferences and speaking about the issues that refugees and asylum seekers face: *"I do think we are the voice for the voiceless."*

Many interviewees also mentioned engaging with local housing associations, as almost all of the area's social housing is now owned and managed by approved providers rather than the councils themselves. When asked to describe the organisations that are the key decision makers in CHALK, one interviewee highlighted Salix Homes, the area's largest registered provider of social housing, as well as the steering group for the new housing developments which includes the local authority, a local charity and housing developer Keepmoat Houses.

Policies of diversity

The next section of this report deals with instances where interviewees described their reactions to impacts of local policies. This is split into two sections, the first dealing with housing policies (by far the most frequently mentioned policy by interviewees), and the second dealing with other local-level issues raised by respondents.

Changes in housing policy were frequently linked by interviewees to shifts in the demographic diversity of the local area. Private landlords and the increasing amount of buy-to-let properties were mentioned as having had an impact on the types of household living in the area. The increase in the amount of buy-to-let properties had increased the size of the "transient community" in the area. One respondent felt that this was leading to larger families being housed in the area: *"The older people have moved out, then the council and the landlords are putting bigger families into these houses."*

A policy linked to this was the selling off of social housing. There was once a lot of social housing in the area, but that supply has decreased as it was sold to tenants. Overall, the selling of social housing had a mixed



response, with interviewees recognising that it restricted the supply of housing for those in need but with one interviewee being able to attest to the personal benefit they had seen from the policy.

Another housing policy in CHALK that impacted the diversity of the area was the construction of new housing. The reaction to this was mixed. For some groups, it meant disruptions such as blocked or churned up roads, and also meant displacement when residents had to be moved and rehoused as their homes were demolished to make way for new construction.

New builds in the area were also perceived to have altered CHALK's demographics as a newer, younger community moved into those types of houses. Most of the new houses are not social housing, which means new people from a different socio-economic background are entering the area. *"Some local people feel like they're kind of being pushed out of the area. But with the new buildings being built the area is improving."* New housing developments thus affect the area not only in broad terms of demographic shifts but also in the daily lived experience of residents.

Other local policies and issues raised by interviewees included fly tipping, lack of public transport, littering, lack of benches, lack of bins, and difficulty in getting an appointment with a GP. Many felt that there is a difference between 'need, want, would like to have' in terms of services that could be added to the area. The basics are covered by council policies: schools, police, and medical services. However, according to the CEO of local charity, it would be nice to have more local support for people to encourage them into work). Another interviewee

"With cuts to public services and Housing Associations, resources are finite and their priorities have to switch".

echoed the perception that intervention services focus on the economically active, acknowledging that *"with cuts to public services and Housing Associations, resources are finite and their priorities have to switch"*. This means that *"people furthest away from the labour market are the people that get left behind," It's heart-breaking to see all the funding cuts that have been put in place by Salford City Council. They get the blame, but it's out of their control."*

The local councillor considered the ways in which the council has tried to respond positively via policy to issues of diversity in the area. He has helped the council develop an anti-poverty strategy and is working with GPs on a long-term health strategy. He is also trying to improve the transition from hospital to home. He also described steps that the council was taking to try to make services "equal opportunity". He gave the example of council tax collection, and discussed how they have recently stopped using bailiffs when people do not pay their council tax. As long as people are talking to the council and responding to letters, then they are keen to work with them to come up with a solution. He also highlighted how carefully the council has to consider the details of council tax collection with regards to diversity, e.g. not collecting on the Sabbath day from Jewish residents.

Several interviewees were able to point to examples of national policies that they felt had a negative impact on people in CHALK. Interviewees spoke both generally about budget cuts and austerity measures as having had a negative effect on people in the community, and specifically about cuts and policies that had affected their organisations and clients. Even the local councillor said he felt that all the austerity initiatives



Old town,
Sassari
(Italy)

from national government make things harder for the community of East Salford.

The most commonly cited policies were those in relation to the changes in the benefit system (Universal Credit, the “Bedroom Tax”, and Personal Independence Payments or PIP). The CEO of a local charity described how the Universal Credit initiative has had a negative impact and made life challenging for the community of CHALK. Cut backs to the Legal Aid programme were cited by others as having had a “massive impact” on refugees and asylum seekers in CHALK: *“These are services that my clients were using and are now no longer there.”*

Only the local councillor mentioned Brexit as a national policy that he felt affected the lives of residents in East Salford. He expressed worries for the Eastern European and particularly Polish community in his ward after Brexit, saying that he is very keen to develop relationships to make sure they stay and feel part of the community. The local councillor is also worried about the effect Brexit will have on the local construction and hospitality industries, and even on the food supply. His concern suggests that the higher up in the power structures an interviewee was, the wider the issues that they saw as important for local residents. The local councillor also worried about the influence on people’s thinking that policies like Brexit have had. For example, he said he thinks there are some members of the community that are hostile to immigration. However, he also feels that culturally, the community of East Salford is more willing to embrace different communities.

2.2. “Conflict of living together”: Stakeholder views in the historic centre of Sassari

Perception of diversity

The age composition of Sassari’s historic centre has emerged as a positive, albeit challenging characteristic of the area. Foreign students have increasingly taken to renting apartments in the Historical Centre, which has animated social life in the area (particularly recreational events, local bars and nightlife). This has led to a visible rejuvenation in the population and tends to be regarded positively by the established civil society, which cites the initiative “City Game”, a treasure-hunt event organized yearly by university students. Interaction with the locals is met with openness and cordiality.

For younger age groups, the local San Donato elementary school offers integrated learning. Migrant pupils from North Africa, Senegal, Morocco, Asia, the Arabic countries and Romania study in this school together with local children, enabling them to get acquainted with the local dialect and culture and bridging the gap between migrant and local families. Nevertheless, episodes of tension among the local youth do happen in the area, which is connected to the socioeconomic context of the Historic centre and with “a war between the poor” for spaces and resources. Stakeholders generally agreed that it is very important to focus on children and young people because they are the future of the community. They said it is much easier and more productive to work with them than with their parents or adults in general. According to a stakeholder representing the school,



diversity is not even perceived by the pupils until the end of primary school, and they start questioning themselves on the differences between people during adolescence in secondary school. This early age discrimination is felt mostly by newly arrived teenagers under 16 who attend the secondary school of San Donato without having gone to the primary school there. They come with prejudices because this is what they see in their families and in the community.

Diversity related to ethnicity emerged as the central dimension in the perceptions local stakeholders have of the historic centre. When asked to express a general assessment of diversity in the historic centre, all stakeholders linked the concept to the presence of migrants. In general, people have the perception of an “invasion of foreigners”, even if, in reality, the number of migrants is relatively small compared to other places in Italy. In this context, diversity is conceived as a dichotomy, “me born on Sassari and the others”. At the same time, a more nuanced categorization of “the others” has also emerged from the interviews, distinguishing between more and less integrated ethnic groups. The Senegalese community, for instance, appears to be well integrated, which was explained by stakeholders as it having been one of the first foreign communities to arrive in the historic centre.

Discussing processes of integration, some stakeholders point out that the inclusion of “otherness” is a transversal characteristic of a rooted, specifically “Sassarian” identity. *“Nothing like racism is farther from the character of Sassari, which has always been welcoming to diversity throughout its history. We Sassarians ourselves originate from Genoese and Pisans.”* Others, however,

argued that migration has brought about challenges in the historic centre. These stakeholders pointed out that hostility of the locals towards migrants is a real and concerning phenomenon related to *“socioeconomic degradation and at times outright ignorance”*. A representative of the local business association Il Corso expressed that locals are becoming less tolerant towards migrants. *“There is a visible distrust among local and migrants which is visible at the level of our own association. Many of the business-owners we represent consider migrants in the area as a factor discouraging customers from purchasing from them. Also, many of them express direct hostility towards migrants considering the possibility of denying [them] entry in the association.”* Such outright hostility towards migrants by business owners also derives from the fact that *“many businesses which were once in the hands of locals are now run by migrants, with many of them selling typical goods”*.

The phrase “conflict in living together” was often used by interviewees when describing community relations, not only between established residents and foreigners, but also between different ethnic groups that live in the historic centre. This was mostly explained by overcrowding. In fact, many migrants live in very small apartments where hygienic conditions are substandard. Unemployment and the low incomes of both local residents and migrants give rise to further conflicts. Perceptions of changes in the demographics of the neighbourhood are mostly related to shifts in the last ten years: historic centre Sassari’s Historical Centre, populated by natives of Sassari until 2008, changed when the majority of the natives moved to suburban areas of the city. As a consequence, the number of inhabitants decreased

**“Many
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of them selling
typical goods”.**



considerably and now most of them are from different parts of the world. Perceived shifts in the urban landscape took place as social processes triggered changes between the upper part of the historic centre, which is more “homogeneous” (meaning prevalently inhabited by “locals”), and the lower part of the historic centre, where migrants are said to account for the majority of inhabitants. This composition, however, did not mean substantial changes in the diversity of the area within Sassari’s urban geography: *“The historic centre, particularly in its lower part, has always hosted the lower social classes. Today, even with the influx of migrants, this situation has stayed the same.”*

Parallel to migrants from third countries, the growing influx of foreign students from other countries of Europe has had a beneficial effect on the perception of diversity in the Historic centre. Sassari is a university city which welcomes many students from all over Europe each year on exchange programmes. Local people’s perceptions of foreign students have been positive; they consider international exchange programmes an opportunity to explore diversity and engage in dialogue.

Places of diversity

The social geography of the historic centre has gone through considerable changes over the past decades which have led to the modification of established social patterns. For example, the proximity of households to one another represented an important source of social control, with different families and individuals creating a network of relationships based on mutual support. Another example is the way small shopping stands in Piazza Tola once provided a gathering point and a

place of contact with local traditions. This established pattern disappeared along with the small stands as the urban renovation process which touched Piazza Tola replaced the stands with pubs.

Piazza Tola and Piazza Università were identified as places of interaction between different identities. Piazza Università is located at the heart of the historic centre and is named after the central headquarters of Sassari’s university, which is located on the same square. Piazza Tola, once one of the public squares with the most widespread reputation of decay and insecurity in all of Sassari, now represents one of the main cornerstones of the city’s recreational life, being home to numerous restaurants, pubs and bars. These squares are the gathering places for most of the city’s population of foreign students, who regularly interact with locals through use of local services such as the public library in Piazza Tola.

Piazza Santa Caterina is located nearby the Municipality Building. It is characterized by a long history of decay and perceived insecurity but also functions as a space of interaction for both migrant and local youth. It has undergone a substantial regeneration programme that enhanced its accessibility and revitalized it through cultural activities and events. As part of this regeneration programme, a youth centre (Centro Giovani Santa Caterina) was established, which is endowed with an open Music Room and Eurodesk. The organisation called Informagiovani provides employment services and information about European funding opportunities for young people of both local and migrant backgrounds, thus facilitating interaction between different social groups. One stakeholder

“The historic centre, particularly in its lower part, has always hosted the lower social classes. Today, even with the influx of migrants, this situation has stayed the same.”



drew a stark contrast between the present and the past condition of the area, stating that the square was simply “unliveable” prior to the renovation programme. Piazza Santa Caterina provides an antidote to social fragmentation in the historic centre and stands as an example of success through the way local authorities made it more attractive rather than abandoning it.

“Tzilleri” is the name in the local dialect of traditional Italian taverns (Circoli) which combine recreation and beverage consumption. Tzilleris are meeting places for inhabitants of the historic centre which represent a local attachment to heritage and identity. Nowadays, Tzilleris are also used by foreign students as points of gathering, exchange and mixing with the local community. One stakeholder recalled an episode in which he witnessed a group of foreign students chanting a traditional Sardinian song in a Tzilleri for an audience of locals. Tzilleris are places of diversity restricted to the local community and foreign students, but not for migrant inhabitants.

Specific insights about Piazza Sant’Antonio and all the smaller public squares along Corso Vittorio Emanuele were presented during the interview with the representative of the local business association Il Corso. The stakeholder referenced the concept of “places/non-places” (defined as places whose physical reality in the urban environment is not compounded by a parallel function of social aggregation and interaction) to refer to these places and the role they play in the wider unfolding of diversity in the area.

In the stakeholders’ assessment, this nature results from the inadequacy of the urban planning of the Corso in creating actual spaces of social aggregation. Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the stakeholder stated, was designed as a narrow-patterned street which

made all the subsidiary squares connected to it secluded and hidden, and thus ill-suited for a function of social aggregation. The fascist regime’s plan for a major programme of urban renovation targeted at “opening” Corso Vittorio Emanuele was not implemented due to the start of the Second World War. As a result, all the smaller squares along Corso Vittorio Emanuele presently represent “places/non-places” in that they are not the centre of any noticeable social life, and thus do not play any consequential social role. In connection with the influx of migrants, this has contributed to such places coming to play a “ghettoization” function, the opposite of the original roles for which they were conceived. For example, different communities came to appropriate spaces for themselves: Piazza Sant’Antonio has become an established gathering space for Romanians, the Nigerian community established its hold over the small public squares along the lower part of Corso Vittorio Emanuele, and Piazza Tola was appropriated as a gathering place by the local youth community.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, the longest and most important street of the Historic Centre, is divided into two parts, the upper and lower Historic centre, which represents a division in both demographic and economic composition. The buildings of the upper and lower parts are of differing value as the materials used to build them are very different in terms of quality. The lower part of the avenue is historically the poorer one, inhabited by Sassarians of lower social status and nowadays largely by immigrants. Shops are owned in the upper part by locals and in the lower part by migrants. The difficulties they face are clearly different from those of the upper part of the Corso. Sassarian shop owners consider that the differences in the business culture between local and migrant shop owners might be a problem. Commercial venues owned non-locals are mainly call centres, small shops and fast food restaurants owned by Pakistani and Senegalese people.



The School of San Donato is widely regarded as a virtuous and positive model of integration and interplay among different identities at the level of Sassari at large due to its role in bridging the gap between local and migrant households through its work with local and migrant children. The ethnic composition of the school's pupils includes North African, Senegalese, Moroccan, Arabic, and Romanian students. A representative of San Donato said the school invests its efforts in building citizens of tomorrow with the hope that these children can become better adults than the adults of today. In these efforts, the school also collaborates with local institutions and the University of Sassari. The projects are about social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and trainings for teachers about these topics.

Primary school students at San Donato live diversity on a daily basis. Conflicts related to ethnic identity are not typical among students who attended the primary school of San Donato they are rather generated by adolescent students who received primary education in other institutions. This is illustrated of the fact that *"the biggest challenge of coexistence in the Historical Centre of Sassari is not between pupils within the school but is to be found outside the school, in the relationships among adults in the nearby area"*.

Theatre En Vol is attended by a heterogeneous audience of locals and migrants. In more than 20 years of activity, the organization has focused on the street as its natural context of research and representation. The transformation of the public space into a daily place, involving the spectator/citizen, aims at enabling the distracted passer-by to retrieve

"The biggest challenge of coexistence in the Historical Centre of Sassari is not between pupils within the school but is to be found outside the school, in the relationships among adults in the nearby area".

the forgotten dimension of the public space, of the street, by rediscovering its significance as a place of action, encounter and confrontation. Its project is called "Habitat Immaginari" (Imaginary Habitat), and is focused on the abandoned places of the lower part of the Historical Centre, such as San Donato and Sant'Apollinare.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of stakeholder interviews was that insecurity and crime in the historic centre went unmentioned. This is all the more remarkable since the Historical Centre is deeply embedded in the mind-set of Sassarians living outside it as being an area characterized by physical insecurity and high crime rates. An example of this common prejudice is the fact that some people do not continue their way during parades as they arrive at the lower part of Corso Vittorio Emanuele because they perceive the area as an off-limits part of the city. Such prejudice towards space is related to prejudices towards migrants. The presence of migrants is considered to be detrimental to businesses by local traders, more related to the generally-held image of migrants as connected to deviance and violence than to actual evidence of higher crime rates. This *"sense of insecurity might be felt by those who live outside and are not actually aware of what living in the historic centre is like"*.

Governance of diversity

The Historical Centre is home to a large number of organizations. All the stakeholders agree that this manifold cluster of associations works to exert a meaningful social impact on the challenges that directly concern the area and



its inhabitants by stimulating the citizens to make their voices heard in processes of local governance.

Connection with the people at the grassroots level is ensured by open activities promoted by local associations such as Diritti al Cuore, a parade against homophobia, sexism and racism. The role of the LGBT community in Sassari is also growing: the organisation “Movimento Omosessuale Sardo” (MOS) organised the “Sardegna Pride” in Sassari last year, contrary to earlier practices of holding the event in Cagliari. Sardegna Pride was preceded for two months by small events such as film screenings and book readings about racism, sexism and homophobia in different historic streets and squares. These events were held in order to raise awareness of these topics among young people and citizens in general.

The foreign student association also organizes a series of activities aimed at bringing local residents closer to intercultural exchange. “City Game” is a treasure-hunt event which involves groups of local and foreign students, while “Eurotrip” is an annual culinary event held in June. The organisation Informagiovani specifically targets young people. Stakeholders, however, pointed out that it is difficult to reach out to young people through Informagiovani due to the general mistrust of public institutions by the local youth. Another event focusing on young people introduces young locals to migrants from a nearby shelter. This initiative was particularly significant in that the local young people came from a school with few migrant students. Some 16-year-old locals were interviewed after the initiative and admitted that they had never spoken with a migrant prior to that day.

Local sport associations like UISP (Unione Italiana Sport per Tutti) and CSI (Centro Sportivo Italiano) were identified by some of the

stakeholders (Informagiovani) as promoters of sports for people of diverse backgrounds. UISP aims to involve people in sport activities not only on its premises but also in the streets and in the squares. It organises outdoor events in order to raise awareness of the importance of being active and using sport as a tool of social inclusion.

Stakeholders unanimously agreed that the main challenge of local associationalism in the historic centre is the lack of communication among different civil society organizations. The Historical Centre is not devoid of local networks, but partnerships are mostly related to individual initiatives rather than to long-term cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals. In several stakeholders' views, local associations are mostly positive towards cooperation, but inconsistent when it comes to the actual establishment of networks. As a result, *“in many cases the activities carried out by local associations end up being an end in themselves.”*

Most stakeholders identified the school of San Donato as a point of reference for the development of project networks. Many stakeholders work with the school or in a network where the school is involved. The most active network in the historic centre consists of the school of San Donato, the University of Sassari (and in particular the Department of Architecture which plans urban regeneration projects), Tamalacà, UISP and Theatre En Vol. They collaborate because they have the same vision and hope for the historic centre, and want to revitalize the area and build a well-integrated community.

Stakeholders had mixed views about the way people's voices are heard in local decision-making. According to some stakeholders, the Municipality of Sassari is trying to involve people, associations and commercial activities that are based in the historic centre in decision-making. The association for foreign students believed



that “if I, as a representative of ESN, were to knock on the door of a local policy-maker, I have no doubts that I would be received”. Other stakeholders, however, reported that “under this perspective I dare say that the present political establishment of Sassari is the worst I can remember. Yet, I actually believe that the problem is greater than that, and refers directly to the lack of citizens’ education to active citizenship for which the political class has been very reluctant to cultivate the necessary educational basis. For how much the local politicians like to talk about the positive value of active citizenship, they actually loath its concrete exercise, as they consider it dangerous for their position.”

Some stakeholders specifically pointed out that the Municipality’s urban renovation programme has been carried out without consultations with local citizens. “Gentrification does not mean inclusion. Urban renovation is certainly a priority but the consequences of gentrification are potentially devastating for this area.” Nevertheless, local citizens were also responsible for their own neglect as “top-down approaches such as these are due to generate lack of participation and ownership on the receiving side”.

The Municipality of Sassari’s 2016 establishment of a “Council of Immigrants”, an elective body composed of immigrants, was an important step towards giving voice to diverse immigrant communities in the historic centre. The representatives of this body (17 people from Senegal, Argentina, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, Nigeria, Hungary, Russia, Moldova Chile and Syria) have

“Gentrification does not mean inclusion. Urban renovation is certainly a priority but the consequences of gentrification are potentially devastating for this area.”

the opportunity to talk directly to public institutions and represent the problems of their community and possible resolutions. The Council promotes the integration of foreign citizens and stateless persons to local public life, fosters consultation and active participation, and stimulates cultural dialogue. The body was established as a consequence of the strongly expressed desire to ensure a stable relationship between the municipal administration and the foreign communities in the area, and above all to allow understanding between the communities themselves. Among the various initiatives carried out by the Council of Immigrants are information campaigns linked to the correct use of public transport and on the importance of blood donation, the preparation of spaces within city libraries dedicated to newspapers, books, and magazines in foreign languages and to the establishment of international literature sections in foreign languages, and film screening on the theme of integration in different neighbourhoods of the city.

The stakeholders interviewed mainly addressed the topic of engagement with the local government from the perspective of what the latter should do to provide strong leadership and support to the local associations engaged in the field. A recurring theme was the need for the Municipality to provide administrative centralization for local associations to identify and pursue common goals through joint, coordinated and continuous action. The Municipality, as suggested in the majority of interviews, should aim at supporting local organizations in the development of initiatives focused on integration, while simultaneously providing them with the



instruments they need to facilitate such processes. Some stakeholders criticized the inability of the Municipality to establish a networking structure backed by a strong administrative centre that could support coordination and long-term planning, something seen as one of the most crucial failures in the local policy approach. In general, stakeholders confirmed the openness of the Municipality to enter into dialogue with associations, but reproached its lack of effort in letting concrete patterns of cooperation with local associations emerge. The general depletion of public funding across Italy connected to the economic crisis was also seen as an important factor in hindering permanent network building.

Policies of diversity

Many of the interviewed stakeholders declined to evaluate local policies in the face of vigorous investment programmes of urban regeneration in the historic centre. In general terms, however, all the stakeholders agreed that the impact of municipal interventions in the historic centre have been mostly temporary and lacked a concrete long-term vision and approach.

The regeneration programme has included the organization of local events, the renovation of old buildings with historical value, and the creation of a Limited Traffic Zone. Notably, none of the interviewed civil society stakeholders mentioned that they had played a role in the design of the wider strategy or in the planning

“Conflicts and problems in the historic centre can’t be solved with short-term projects or events, but long-term projects on education, social inclusion and job opportunities are needed. There should be a concrete structured action plan.”

of specific interventions. Some of the stakeholders were explicitly critical of the lack of consideration for the input of citizens and local associations in the design of municipal revitalization programmes. This may have led to a situation in which municipal interventions did not calculate children into the relatively young population of the historic centre. Children can thus play football or volleyball only in the streets, and there is no sport governance.

From the perspective of impact, some stakeholders positively appraise the programmes of renovation. Stakeholders of the foreign student association, while expressing an overall positive assessment of the success achieved by the Municipality in revitalizing the social and economic life in the area of Piazza Tola, also asserted that the side-effect of favouring modern pubs and restaurants in the area led to overshadowing and ultimately causing the disappearance of the small retail stands that used to embody traditional economic life and social interaction. Stakeholders underlined that *“conflicts and problems in the historic centre can’t be solved with short-term projects or events, but long-term projects on education, social inclusion and job opportunities are needed. There should be a concrete structured action plan.”*

National policies seem to receive less consideration by stakeholders when compared to local public policies. Nevertheless, some stakeholders pointed out that national policies on migration have negative effects on migrants’ integration at the local level. *“Migrants in Italy represent a large minority not integrated in social life.”*



2.3. “We came from ‘Nyócker’ and arrived in Józsefváros”: demographic transformations in Budapest

Józsefváros,
Budapest
(Hungary)

Perceptions of diversity

The perceptions of diversity in Budapest's Józsefváros are strongly connected to decades long presence and different understandings of Roma ethnicity. Although Middle-Józsefváros has been seen by mainstream society as a Roma ghetto, according to the national census (2011), only 4% of the inhabitants declared themselves as Roma. Thus, in most cases, representations of ethnicity are based on external categorization processes imposed on the local population by the majority of society. This external categorization is distinguished by the presence of unequal social and power relations and often associated with poverty, social problems and crime. The rise of radical racist discourses coupled with the political success of the radical right since 2010 has raised the “Roma question” in which Roma appear as “annoying” beggars and welfare dependents. The concept of Roma is at present a construct of mainstream society, reflecting its perceptions and prejudices rather than an actual ethnic community/group belonging. According to our field experiences and interviews with local stakeholders, decades of assimilation policies and continuous prejudices have resulted in the everyday strategy of the Roma being characterized by invisibility. This is highlighted by the situational character of ethnic identity: generally, a person is Roma in a personal situation such as in their family, while in open spaces (schools, workplaces and

shops), they try to be invisible and hide their ethnic belonging. The intermarriages between different ethnic groups also reinforce the invisibility of ethnic identity.

There are only a few visible Roma groups in the neighbourhood. Traditionally, musicians with their instruments are distinguishable from the others: their skills and social ties within and across the different neighbourhoods put them in a privileged situation. Generally, the musicians are educated and well-to-do, and accepted by the majority society. However, the flip side of this representation is the romantic figure of the Roma musician who is born to serve and entertain the majority society. This image was promoted by the district government founding of a “Park of Roma Musicians” and support of a Roma music group, the Józsefváros Roma Band. The municipality also organizes an annual Roma Music Festival that features “traditional” Roma music at various public places and events in the district – part of the Roma Musicians are playing here in the frame of their public working program a compulsory element in Hungary for obtaining unemployment benefit. Vlach Roma and Roma from Romania are often indistinguishable to outsiders, and are usually present around the main market where they make small businesses. While their language and special clothing made them visible for the majority society, they distinguish themselves from each other. In summary, diversity of Roma minorities refers to their linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and identification hybridities and helps to understand the rapid social transformations that current societies witness today as a result of inequality, social mobility or inter-marriage, and also as a result of the availability of resources.



Roma are seen as different from immigrant ethnic groups (such as people of Asian, Turkish, Arabic, or African background) living in the neighbourhood since the 1990s. They generally appear in the narratives as poor and associated with social problems, whereas immigrants run stable businesses in small shops and restaurants and are more accepted by majority society due to their existential stability. Different immigrant groups are seen as exotic for the majority society, and their physical appearance, skin colour and language make them visible. Although they come from different countries and belong to different ethnicities and religions, in the interview narratives they appear simply as foreigners and 'migrants'.

As a result of the gentrification process, many young intellectuals, artists and students, as well as some young couples from the countryside, moved to the neighbourhood and established special shops, bars and community spaces. Perceptions of gentrification as linked to social division appeared in the narratives as potential conflicts between the middle class newcomers and the locals, threats from drug users and homeless people and the presumption of growing numbers of Roma families.

Places of diversity

Throughout its history, Józsefváros has always been home to diverse ethnic and social groups. Many of our interviewees recalled the way various groups – Roma, working class, intellectuals and Jews – used to meet in open spaces such as playgrounds and talk while their children played. Nowadays, the neighbourhood feels as if it consists of several little

**"Roma are seen as different from immigrant ethnic groups...
... They generally appear in the narratives as poor and associated with social problems, whereas immigrants run stable businesses in small shops and restaurants and are more accepted by majority society due to their existential stability."**

villages where only neighbours speak to one another. Within this mosaic, micro-communities – different groups of Roma, young intellectuals, people who just moved from the countryside, working class Hungarians and foreign immigrants of Asian, Turkish, Arabic, or African background – live side by side without much interaction.

Houses with courtyards are characteristic architectural features of inner city Budapest. In Józsefváros, they have always served as places for daily encounters of both social interaction and social fragmentation. The location of apartments by floor in such courtyard houses is still representative of the tenant's social status. Sunny and quiet upper floor apartments are generally inhabited by the middle class – university students and young families – while first floor apartments are owned by old people. Dark and damp ground-floor apartments are inhabited by poor Roma families. Running about their daily businesses, these people of diverse social status can encounter one another in the staircase and at the entrance of the house. New housing investment schemes have different architectural features and serve to separate and isolate middle class inhabitants. They also operate closed garages to avoid daily encounters in the street with locals of different social backgrounds. Usually, these 'newcomers' use institutions like kindergartens and elementary schools which are located outside of the neighbourhood, and therefore have no interest in influencing the development of local public institutions.

There is a general shortage of community spaces in the district, and as a result, street life is very active. Young



intellectuals and Roma all hang out in open spaces in the streets. Many of our interviewees were critical about the local government's vision of urban regeneration, which sets out to separate poor from middle-class families. The bridge connecting the main building of the National Public Administration University to its gym over one of the city's poorest and most problematic streets has become a symbol of bifurcated local policies. Teleki square was rebuilt by an organisation supported by the local government, and features a dysfunctional playground without public toilets. Playing football by children was prohibited in Mátyás square and other playgrounds because "it was noisy". This has raised questions about who has rights to the open spaces, and has highlighted the struggles between different social groups for decent places.

Governance of diversity

The set of questions looked at how diversity is taken into consideration in decision-making processes. The Budapest municipal assembly has a rather limited scope of action, especially since 2014 when the composition of the assembly was changed from an electoral system to the automatic delegation of district mayors. The district mayors thus actually hold significant political power, as the competencies for managing urban interventions and social services are mainly delegated to the districts. This means that, even though it may seem limiting in terms of urban functionality to study a particular district in the inner-city area of Budapest, it does have practical relevance from various perspectives.

"Many of our interviewees were critical about the local government's vision of urban regeneration, which sets out to separate poor from middle-class families."

In terms of the connections between various scales, it is important to underline the political and governance structure of the city and the district. Between 2009 and 2018, a prominent young figure of the governing right-wing party was the mayor of the district and managed to attract government financial support. He was also very proactive in introducing penal policies that could then (through his role in the party and in governmental bodies) be upscaled to the national level. The most remarkable of these was a line of regulation prohibiting rough sleeping and thus criminalising homelessness. This started out as a district ordinance in 2011, and two months later it became national law, eventually making it into the constitution in 2013 (In 2018 the scope of the law was further broadened).

Stakeholders gave account of a bifurcated inclusion of organisations, social groups and bottom-up initiatives. In the 1990s, many powerful Roma institutions and organizations operating in the neighbourhood provided active political representation, social and legal protection for poor families, and regularly offered musical and theatrical events which contributed to the high visibility of Roma in Józsefváros. The different waves of urban rehabilitation and the political will of the current right-wing government pushed out these NGOs from the neighbourhood. Generally speaking, organisations that are associated with the political/ideological orientation of the incumbent local government are invited to participate in the decision-making and development planning processes, while there is no communication with other independent groups. All in all, decision-making processes take place along lines of division.



Policies of diversity

The policies of diversity are strongly linked to the numerous urban rehabilitation projects that have caused an exchange of population in the district for over a decade. The most drastic manifestation of this process was in the Corvin Quarter, where one of the largest urban development projects in Central Europe has been rolling out since 2000. This project included a complete bulldozing and rebuilding of the neighbourhood and a complete population change. While this is not the narrow target area of our study, it did affect it. In the Magdolna Quarter (which is a significant part of our study area), the Magdolna Quarter Social Urban Regeneration programme has been executed in three phases since 2005. The goal of local planners programme was to avoid the formation of a massive ghetto with approximately 20, 000 poor residents in the heart of the city. As a result, the Corvin Promenade project was intended to be a “business-based regeneration scheme” that would “rebrand” the area by attracting large-scale capital. The Magdolna project, on the other hand, was a social regeneration scheme that aimed at halting the pace of downward levelling of the population in a way that preserves social and ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood.

In the case of the Magdolna Project, no houses were demolished and in theory, the previous inhabitants could stay in their homes. However, in practice there were many mechanisms that indirectly led to a situation where the main beneficiaries of the physically renewed environment are not the previous residents. This occurred in the public housing stock through new, short-

"Organisations that are associated with the political/ ideological orientation of the incumbent local government are invited to participate in the decision-making and development planning processes, while there is no communication with other independent groups."

term rental contracts, rising rents, or the enforcement of evictions due to arrears of payment that have been stalling for years. Furthermore, the Magdolna Project has contributed to rising market rental prices in the area.

The urban rehabilitation projects went parallel with the introduction of penal populism as a new policy tool that also fed into a popular narrative of 'Gypsy crime', and has thus targeted poor Roma families and homeless people. Criminalization and an increase in the number of local police, as well as the foundation of a special guard by the local government (Polgárőrség), have forced drug users, homelessness and prostitution into dilapidated buildings in former industrial areas, or even pushed them to another district of the city. At the same time, however, a significant part of the district has been 'cleansed' of persons seen as deviant or socially undesirable.

Our stakeholder interviews gave account of a sharply bifurcated understanding of local policies. Our interviewees from independent organisations were critical about the local government's anti-poor regulations. They argued that the local government offers high quality services only to white middle-class citizens, and its regeneration projects deliberately push poor families out of the district. Stakeholders representing the local government, on the other hand, argued that the goal of the regeneration programme is not to change the population but the status of residents. The lack of street cleaning by the municipality on streets with a high concentration of poor and/or problematic families was explained by local councillors in a way that held those poor families responsible for keeping their environment untidy.



2.4. “Gentrification is the biggest threat to the social peace”: Wedding, Berlin

Perceptions of diversity

Wedding is identified almost unanimously by the interviewees as a “classical district of diversity”, which also characterizes the whole city of Berlin. Based on the narratives of stakeholders, several levels of the concept of diversity can be identified. On the first level, diversity has been identified as the presence of several ethnic groups. In Wedding, these groups are mainly as follows: Turkish people, Arabs from the Middle East, Africans from West and Central Africa, Roma from Central and Eastern Europe, and Polish people. On the second level, diversity is described as a more complex phenomenon with the identification of ethnic and other social groups according to smaller spatial units within the neighbourhood. *“Wedding is really very diversified, there is really everything. Even between two metro stations, there are huge differences.”* In this interview, at least three different social aspects forming diversity were identified: ethnicity/origins (Turkish, Arabic, African, and East European), age (elderly people) and social status (refugees, middle class, homeless and poor, people with migrant backgrounds). Yet another approach appears in one interview, differentiating the inhabitants of Wedding as “old” and “new” Berliners according to whether they speak German. Further social groups with specific needs mentioned in other interviews are women, LGBT people and people with disabilities. On a third level, intersectionality appears as a core element of diversity, representing a holistic view of diversity. This approach is mainly identified in the narratives of the representatives of

Wedding,
Berlin
(Germany)

**“Our
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semi-public organizations playing a role as actors for social inclusion and integrated urban development. The most relevant narrative concerning diversity in its broader sense was expressed by the Quartiersmanagement Pankstraße, which claimed that “everyone is diverse”. This approach is strongly reflected in the composition of their council.

The three levels identified above are based on the narratives of the stakeholders when they were asked about their perceptions of the main groups forming diversity in Wedding. However, when considering their actions and global narratives, it seems that all of them are conscious of the high complexity and intersectionality of the phenomenon of diversity in Wedding and in the whole city of Berlin. Stakeholders generally consider diversity a positive phenomenon, a cultural and social “richness” in itself. *“Our neighbourhood is not socially deprived, it is the most socially strong in which many people are, despite their own problems, still interested in others and not only in their own wallets.”*

There are considerable changes in the social and ethnic composition of the neighbourhood due to recent in and out migration flows: while some young people from the Turkish community left the neighbourhood, a Roma community has settled here in the last decade and refugees appeared in the refugee centres, which both caused some social conflicts. Parallel with these processes, more affluent families moved to the neighbourhood in search of low real estate prices which caused a process of gentrification.

The narratives brought up no value-based differences between social and ethnic groups. Stakeholders spoke about



all mentioned groups with equal respect and consideration. If any difference were mentioned, they were mainly linked to the group of people which constitutes the newly-arrived “gentrifiers”, mainly composed of middle class Germans or investors from other countries who were attracted to the area in search of cheaper real estate prices and often only for investment purposes. These people often failed to become integrated into the neighbourhood. *“The people who buy flats are often not from Wedding. They have no interest in empowering local social networks. And this is a problem because one of the main advantages of Wedding has always been the strength of social connections.”*

The threat of social and spatial disintegration linked to gentrification is one of the main challenges that the society of Wedding currently faces. Gentrification was mentioned as the issue that most threatens diversity in Wedding today. It seems that in Wedding the weakening of diversity is considered the main social and spatial challenge for the neighbourhood. It also means that diversity is considered a kind of “social status quo” which represents, in spite of the many improvements needed, a sort of “social peace”.

Places of Diversity

Wedding is divided into several sub-areas, although the borders between them are not always easy to identify and often overlap one another. The main places of encounter in the area are open public places. The most important of these is the core of the neighbourhood, Leopoldplatz and its surrounding state park. This area has been identified as

“In this neighbourhood a lot of work has been done to facilitate social integration and the living together of the communities, but in reality these communities (...) continue to live side by side, and there is no space for interaction (...) in an organized and formal way.”

the most important hotspot in Wedding. It is mentioned first of all as a place of encounter for all citizens living in the neighbourhood. The zone itself can be divided into several sub-areas, such as the square where a bio-market and brocante are organised on weekends. The state park with a playground and a small corner are used by drug users who spend most of their time in the park. The park was planned with the involvement of its users some years ago. Leopoldplatz is also mentioned as the most important conflict zone in Wedding where conflicts are generated by drug users and people who commit petty crimes.

There are several community spaces in the neighbourhood (Sprengelhaus, Paul Gerhardt Foundation, Himmelbeet community garden, Osterkirche, Haus der Jugend, Silent Green Kulturquartier, Centre Français, etc.) which provide possibilities for encounter, including cultural events and places for small NGOs running in the neighbourhood. The assessment of these places as real places of encounter which bring together all communities is very diverse. According to certain interviewees, although the provision of places of encounter in Wedding is substantial, the majority of ethnic groups live side by side without mixing with each other. *“In this neighbourhood a lot of work has been done to facilitate social integration and the living together of the communities, but in reality these communities (...) continue to live side by side, and there is no space for interaction (...) in an organized and formal way.”*

The integrated character of the multicultural society of Wedding is a matter of debate. The lack of mixing between



ethnic groups as a general phenomenon in Berlin has also been confirmed by experts and representatives from the two largest ethnic groups, the Turkish and the Polish. According to some stakeholders, there is complexity within the Turkish community in terms of generations, but as a general observation it is *“relatively closed and, being young or old, they have few contacts to other communities”*. The Polish community is also very complex, divided along generational lines but also by social status, educational level and profession. Some groups in the community are entirely integrated and invisible within German society, while others are not or only partly integrated. The lack of mixing between communities is also linked to the language barriers. According to the director of the Tüte Mücken multicultural kindergarten, society in Wedding is split between families that speak German as a first language and those who speak it as a second language or not at all. *“...This divide is visible, especially in pubs and cafés. There are no real places where all people mix. The meeting points are rather defined by individual circles.”* According to the interviewee just quoted, education level is an important factor of mixing between different communities. Schools and kindergartens are places for the integration/cohesion of entire families, first of all, through the education of their children, but also because these institutions are important places of encounter for the families including parents. Similar observations were provided by others. *“You will find people in the cafés, but these are community-based cafés: here you find a Bulgarian bar, then an African restaurant, but inside, you will only find Africans, and maybe some curious German guys.”*

“You will find people in the cafés, but these are community-based cafés: here you find a Bulgarian bar, then an African restaurant, but inside, you will only find Africans, and maybe some curious German guys.”

Despite the relatively strong isolation of the communities and their internal heterogeneity, all interviewees emphasized that the main social conflicts in Wedding are not based on ethnicity.

Mentioned first as sources of social conflicts in the area are the petty crimes committed by people that spend their time in public spaces in the neighbourhood (Leopoldplatz, Spartplatz, Seestrasse), including drug dealers and people with alcoholism. Secondly, social conflicts linked to the gentrification of the area are mentioned. In spatial terms, this conflict is visible in the neighbourhood through the new buildings, new uses of space, new shops and cafés, etc. The third most important social conflict is identified by conflicts within the communities, especially between young and older generations. This is the most difficult to link to a specific space in the neighbourhood, and is rather linked to differences of lifestyle and approaches to traditions and religion. As has been highlighted in both the Turkish and Polish diasporas, people from the older generations prefer to preserve the traditional lifestyles of their communities, and at the same time they are more embedded into German society, whereas the younger generation is less traditional and less embedded in mainstream society.

Governance of Diversity

A complex governance system has been set up in Berlin for dealing with social cohesion and integrated urban/neighbourhood development. The initiatives are of different size and cover different, often overlapping territories



in Wedding, and sometimes even go beyond the borders of our case study area. One common feature of these structures is that all of them represent different levels of policy making by being simultaneously embedded at the local level through the involvement of local organizations/NGOs and/or inhabitants in the management of their activities. The offices/neighbourhood management groups locally operating these policy initiatives are often melted into locally created and independently financed structures. The national level policies are partly represented in the neighbourhoods by locally embedded governance structures (for instance, the network of Quartiers management) that are in close cooperation with local, independent NGOs and organizations. This structure ultimately results in a complex network of organizations and activities with horizontal connections to each other.

According to these principles, two main publicly-operated governance systems exist in Wedding for enhancing social inclusion and integrated urban development: the Quartiersmanagements and the Stadteilkoordinators.

This specific local management system for socially integrated urban development called **Quartiers-management (QM)** has been in use in Berlin since 1999 and is based on the federal level programme for integrated urban development called Soziale Stadt. Fifteen priority areas for creating local Quartiersmanagement units were designated in Berlin based on socio-economic indicators, and two further areas were added in 2001: today, there are 38 QMs in Berlin. In these neighbourhoods, the set-up of specific neighbourhood management structures and programmes is financed by the Federal State with co-financing of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund.

The Quartiersmanagements form a specific network of local governance systems based on the cooperation of local inhabitants, NGOs, housing associations, community centres, education units, etc. The actions and decisions are managed by a biannually elected Neighbourhood Council (Quartiersrat), half the members of which are constituted by local citizens that represent the communities, and the other half by local social institutions and stakeholders. In the case of Pankstrasse QM in Wedding, for instance, the make-up of the Council between 2018 and 2020 is as follows: 14 residents; two representatives of arts and cultural institutions; two representatives of day care centres; two representatives from other social facilities; one representative of an elementary school and one from a high school. The members of the district council work within the Quartiersmanagement team and public administration for improving the focus of the programme, evaluating project ideas, developing their own project proposals and deciding upon the use of funding. In QM Pankstrasse, the main actions since 2016 have been as follows: support of neighbourhood trade; motivation of young people by offering them public spaces; participatory creation of the areas' mobility strategy; permanent re-evaluation of the area's public spaces through diverse participatory methods; use of digital media in education; safety awareness concerning web use; and anti-discrimination through awareness-raising and prevention.

The Quartiersmanagement structure in Berlin is widely acknowledged as a great example of implementing social integration and participatory policies in Europe. This local governance structure ensures the implementation of public policies at the right place through the participation of local inhabitants. However, two main weak points of the programme have been highlighted by the interviews.



The first is that while public administration is highly involved in local development through the work of the QMs, this involvement may suddenly disappear once the programme is closed. This happened in the case of the Sparrplatz QM, which ended in 2016. *"When the Quartiersmanagement programme was still on, the responsible persons from the administration came to the quarter; now this has become much less regular. We now work rather with the district council members directly. The visits of the representative of the Senate became less frequent too..."*

The second weakness is that while the QMs are functioning as real governance structures in their specific areas, they have rather random contact and cooperation with other actors or local governance structures in the surrounding small spatial units. As a condition, the QMs have not yet completely fulfilled the need to link the different diverse groups in a sustainable way, for instance, by creating sufficient spaces of encounter and common activities. *"We should strengthen places which are non-commercially oriented, but offer people a place to come together."*

The aim of the **"Stadteilkoordination"** system in the district of Mitte is to ensure a permanent linkage between the district government and local neighbourhoods for an inclusive management of local social integration policies. The coordinators operate as bridges between the municipality and local actors and inhabitants in ten areas of the district. Their main tasks are strengthening the spread of knowledge and information, improving communication and networking on the local level, and ensuring better engagement of citizens

"While the QMs are functioning as real governance structures in their specific areas, they have rather random contact and cooperation with other actors or local governance structures in the surrounding small spatial units."

in local affairs. The ten coordinators meet regularly to discuss the main common priorities. Further, each coordinator can set up their specific priorities relevant to their area.

The Stadteilkoordination in Wedding-Zentrum is located in SprengelHaus community centre. Besides intergenerational projects for the support of senior citizens, the coordinator is strongly engaged in reinforcing civic engagement and participation. Through the "District Treasury Wedding Centre" programme, they provide financial support to local civic engagement initiatives. This support system permits the Stadteilkoordination to reach out to a relatively large number of local organizations working for and with the communities. In 2018, for instance, they supported the "Together Against Racism" action of NARUD, the creation of a green yard in SprengelHaus, the building of a still in Himmelbeet garden, the initiative of neighbours for creating a green yard in the upper part of Leopoldplatz, and others. Due to the relatively low funding capacity of the coordinator, this outreach must be considered rather symbolic, involving only €100-200 in each case.

This fact reflects one of the main weaknesses of the structure of Stadteilkoordination: due to their limited budget (€5,000/year), their real impact on local policies is hard to evaluate. In addition to this limited financial competence, they also have limited access to and communication with public administration, despite their initial task and role as potential bridges between the local level and the district policies. In this current form, the Stadteilkoordination is playing a



complementary role in Wedding as one of several local actors implementing small parallel programmes which aim at social inclusion and participation without any real coordination between each other.

Policies of Diversity

The stakeholders constituting the complex issue of governance in Wedding have a clearly identified, generally positive vision of diversity. Their policies aim at supporting actions and activities that directly enhance diversity, or support actions that are indirectly linked to diversity. Several stakeholders aim to support specific vulnerable groups within the different communities living in Wedding. For instance, the Kielz Mutter programme, launched by the Family Centrum and Stadteilkoordination in Parkveitel, supports mothers that coming from several communities who do not speak German. Himmelbeet garden supports programmes that bring people with different language backgrounds together to meet and share bread recipes, or attracts people with disabilities into community gardening activities. NARUD organizes an annual intercultural football event where everyone from the neighbourhood can meet. Through these actions, the concept of hyperdiversity can be perceived in the policies of most of the local stakeholders in Wedding – even if this concept is not consciously mentioned by the interviewees. Other stakeholders support diversity by strengthening civic participation and engagement, and thus involve people from all around the neighbourhood.

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Diversity is identified as a factor of local identity and an issue of social inclusion in Wedding. The main threat to the neighbourhood as perceived by the interviewees is losing this diversity as a result of gentrification and the settling of a middle class population. The interviewed stakeholders all agreed that policies are needed to fight the social and urban changes that threaten local diversity.

The main policies linked to diversity in Wedding will now be discussed according to their capacities to tackle the main challenges/threats in the neighbourhood as identified by the interviewees and the ways they treat hyperdiversity in the area.

Policies for integrated urban and social development and diversity

As previously mentioned, the most important policy for integrated social and urban development in Germany and thus in Wedding is linked to the Federal programme Soziale Stadt, which is financed partly by the federal state of Germany and partly by the ERDF (European Regional and Development Fund) and ESF (European Social Fund). Because of the relatively high amount of its budget, this is also the programme with the highest potential to play a concrete impact on the territory.

According to the interview with the QM Pansktrasse the programme represents a strong cultural concept of diversity, promoting diversity by integrating artists and



performances linked to people with migrant backgrounds into the street festival “Unverblümt”. The QM also follows a policy of integration of certain social groups through its programmes, including families, youth, and also a programme for the integration of people with Roma backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of the programmes reflect a rather horizontal, “colour blind” approach to the local society, where social integration is supported through horizontal programmes such as the creation of spaces for youth, support of participatory processes for improving the environment, and the support of awareness-raising activities against discrimination. Diversity is regarded by the QM as a broad concept, including all aspects of gender, age, nationality, health, education and social class. This broad concept is reflected in the constitution of the Neighbourhood council (Quartiersrat), where sometimes moderation is needed to overcome language barriers between the members coming from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.

This horizontal approach to diversity reflects the principle of social integration that is at the core of the Soziale Stadt programme. Since the main objective of Soziale Stadt is the improvement of urban living conditions for a more integrated spatial and social development, this programme does not have the objective of supporting the specific needs of any of the groups that constitute diversity. They represent a horizontal approach to diversity which reflects the classical concept and method of social integration, instead of the idea of bringing people belonging to different minority groups closer together through networking and communication. This approach, at the same time, risks blurring the specific needs and potentials of people with different backgrounds regarding their contribution to local participatory activities.

QMs and the Soziale Stadt programme clearly contribute to the positive transformations in the area, as stated by almost all the interviewees. Many of the achievements linked to the QM

programmes have positive impacts on the living conditions and, as such, on the integration of local communities (for instance, the renewal of the park near Leopoldplatz through participatory planning, the improvement of the traffic system, the opening of new public squares and the support of public events). At the same time, the improvement in living conditions attracts more middle class people from other areas and contributes to the increase in real estate and rental prices. Therefore, QM programmes might in fact reinforce the gentrification of the neighbourhood.

District policies for social inclusion

The policies on the city/district level can be presented through the activities of the Stadteilkordination offices. The scale and budget linked to these policies is smaller than those of the QMs’ programmes, and their social impact might therefore be smaller. The two main priorities identified by the Stadteilkordinatoren for social integration again reflect a rather horizontal vision of the local society by supporting the integration of seniors and the facilitation of civic engagement. The Family Centre and Stadteilkoordination of the Parkveitel area identified its programmes according to the main target groups programmes that are accessible for all. These groups are as follows: parents with babies, children, people living in the area, seniors, refugees and people who do not speak German. The concrete activities and programmes reflect a nuanced approach to diversity, clearly representing a willingness to manage hyperdiversity in the neighbourhood. In the Kiez Mutter project, for instance, the aim is to bring together and assist mothers of any migrant background who speak little or no German.

Both coordinators of the Parkveitel and Berlin Zentrum areas described their policies as supportive of initiatives and policies targeting diversity



and social inclusion. At the same time, a better structured financial support would be needed for higher impact. *“Priority should be given to a pro-active social policy. Providing a more stable financing model for the organizations would permit them to launch preventive programmes and not only reactive ones responding to urgent social issues.” “More coordination of actions would be needed and more financial resources should be allocated to the associations that are active in these fields as they do essential work for social peace.”* (This better structured coordination and financing would also permit better programming of the actions and policies between the different organisations. *“A better thematic coordination of the events and actions in the neighbourhood would help to prevent overlapping among them, and would permit the tackling of important topics on all levels. The district coordination would need to obtain more power, not only in terms of funding but also in terms of its access to the administration.” “Sectorial policies should catch up with the challenges of immigration, such as education but also housing.”*

Housing policies and gentrification

Gentrification, increase of rents and the saturation of the social housing market have been mentioned as the main threats for maintaining the current diversity in Wedding. As stated by almost all interviewees, inhabitants in the poorest strata of the local community have already had to move from the district because of increased prices. Several interviewees recommended the implementation of policies and actions to stop gentrification through the regulation of rental prices and the management of social housing.

“More coordination of actions would be needed and more financial resources should be allocated to the associations that are active in these fields as they do essential work for social peace.”

There are currently some attempts in Berlin to stop the increase in rental prices, but these are still very weak and have only a limited impact on the gentrifying neighbourhoods. In 2015, the Federal Act called Mietpreisbremse was adopted which introduced a cap on rent increases at 10% above the local average. In spite of the limit, the law left several loopholes allowing landlords to breach the ceiling. From 1 January, 2018, a reform of the Mietpreisbremse took place according to which the rental increase cap, in the case of housing modernization, will be lowered to 8% of the local average, and the tenants will obtain more rights in controlling the increase of rents planned by the landlords.

A network of tenant associations (Mieterverein) has been functioning since 1988 in each district of Berlin, supporting and representing tenants' rights in many ways. The Mieterverein of Mitte is located in Wedding. They support the tenants in conflictual cases vis-à-vis the landlords. At the same time, they have no special role in influencing the increase of rental prices.

The regulations of rent increases described above do not resolve the problem of the saturation of the social housing market. According to a 2015 regulation, only 5% of the public rental stock is dedicated as social housing for to the most vulnerable groups of refugees and homeless people. This relatively low share of social housing does not cover the existing need, according to a representative of the Refugee Centre of the Paul Gerhardt Foundation. According to that representative, the biggest challenge for refugees obtaining their residence permit in Berlin is to find a flat in the city. The



Refugee Centre recently hired a part-time employee whose only task will be to search for rental properties for the people temporarily living in the centre. The problem is that the lack of social housing is a potential source of conflict between refugees and homeless people as they try to find their way in the same very restricted market. Therefore, the reform of social housing policy should now be a top priority in Berlin, according to the Refugee Centre's representative. *"Instead of building shelters for refugees, social housing would be needed."*

Despite some existing instruments and regulations for preserving the housing stock and limiting the increase of housing prices globally, there are still no overall systematic policies and strategies in Berlin or in Wedding to fight against the negative effects of gentrification.

Education and integration through language and communication

One main challenge for social diversity and the inclusion of people with immigrant backgrounds is communication. Communities have different strategies and customs concerning their integration through language. Polish people, for instance, prefer their children to speak German or English, while Turkish people are more likely to speak Turkish at home and in public places. Of course, this also depends on generations and the degree of integration.

"The problem is that the lack of social housing is a potential source of conflict between refugees and homeless people as they try to find their way in the same very restricted market."

Language speaking is now a real issue in Berlin, and although it is often said that one can live there without speaking German, German knowledge is essential for attending school, arranging administrative issues, or communicating with people. Through the project "Sprachförderung Mitte", the Berlin Senate decided to support the district of Mitte to reinforce German language teaching in schools and kindergartens through better cooperation between the district and local schools.

In addition to teaching German to children with immigrant backgrounds, bilingualism and multilingualism are increasingly becoming policy priorities by the Berlin Senate. The practical impact of this priority is still limited, but some concrete practices can already be identified, especially regarding the case of the biggest immigrant community in Berlin. Teaching "Turkish as a source language" beginning in first grade has been implemented in 45 Berlin elementary schools thus far. Intercultural education and raising teacher awareness on topics such as how to treat Muslim pupils in schools are also important issues. Based on the interviews, it seems that in pre-school and elementary education, much attention is paid to the social, cultural and language-based inclusion of children with immigrant backgrounds through supporting them in maintaining their own cultures and encouraging them to better understand their neighbourhoods and to participate in cultural and art events. This also helps the parents to get more integrated in the local community.



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Some useful websites

- Europe for Citizens programme https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en
- Diversity charters in Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-management_en
- Intercultural cities : <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about>
- Diversitycities: Governing Urban Diversity: <https://www.urbandiversitycities.eu/>