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CONTENT

Wedding in Berlin: sustaining diversity faced with the threat of gentrification.....	4
Old Town of Sassari: reinforcing the social, participatory and cultural dimensions of urban revitalization.....	5
CHALK in Salford – Reducing Social Gaps and Improving Connectivity for a More Inclusive Society	6
Józsefváros in Budapest: Dealing With a Highly Politicised and Fragmented Local Society	7
Similarities and Differences in Diversity in the neighbourhoods.....	9
1.General recommendations	11
2.Recommendations according to the policy fields	12
More Information on the Voicitys Project	14

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VOICITYS Policy Brief — Diversity in European Neighbourhoods

Based on the results of the Conversations of change and Consensus events the main recommendations and policy ideas have been summarized on the local level by each partner and merged into a set of recommendations by the work package leader, CRN. Based on the results of the interviews and the pan European event, the European recommendations have been identified by the work package leader as well. The recommendations were discussed by the partners and integrated into the project handbook as the main result of VOICITYS.

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.



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Local recommendations

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

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:

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



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

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

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



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

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.

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

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

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.



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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



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Similarities and Differences in Diversity in the neighbourhoods

The recommendations 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.

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/opportunities 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.

Places

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.

The main policy fields where diversity management in neighbourhoods might bring the most relevant results can be identified as follows:



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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	<p>Diversity management can be realised within education curricula, through intercultural teaching, bilingualism, etc.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Intercultural, professional training and capacity building, and language instruction to local people through informal education</p>
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	<p>Through social housing policies and by supporting the availability of affordable housing for the most vulnerable groups</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>
Economic development	The local small – often ethnic – businesses are in danger due to the settling of new investments and businesses	<p>Support of local SMEs.</p> <p>Capacity building trainings for local young entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Agreements with the new businesses (→ local diversity charters)</p>
Safety	In many of the diverse areas, some people claim they feel unsafe	<p>Better control of security in certain areas is needed.</p> <p>Police control is only one part of the solution. There need to be soft elements for improving safety</p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>



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Pan European recommendations

1. General recommendations

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. 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.



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2. Recommendations according to the policy fields

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



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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.



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More Information on the Voicitys Project

Partner organisations¶



People's Voice Media¶
Salford, United Kingdom¶
<https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk/¶>



CERS-HAS¶
Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies¶
Budapest, Hungary¶
<http://www.rkk.hu/en/¶>



Mine Vaganti NGO¶
Sassari, Italy¶
<https://minevaganti.org/¶>



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