integrating cities **ImpleMentoring**

The ImpleMentoring method: an overview

City-to-city mentoring - helping partner cities to implement change

MigrationWork

EURO CITIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ImpleMentoring method is a new way for cities to help one another to improve practice – not just by exchanging good ideas about it, but turning these insights into action. EUROCITIES hopes this leaflet, outlining the process, will encourage cities to apply it in developing strategies, policies and practice.

Implementoring: background to the method

ImpleMentoring helps cities to learn from each other: In ImpleMentoring, cities faced with common challenges are paired up. One is a mentor city, sharing experience and offering independent support and reflection to the implementing city which wants to raise standards and carry out changes. Both parties benefit. Mentors not only help their implementing partners to bring about desired improvements, but also learn from this dialogue.

How was the ImpleMentoring method developed? ImpleMentoring grew out of a series of transnational projects, funded by the European Commission, aiming to put into practice the EUROCITIES Integrating Cities Charter. This commits signatory cities to ensure equal opportunities for all residents, integrate migrants and embrace the diversity of their populations.

The first project, **DIVE** (Diversity and Equality in European Cities) used the peer review model in which peers or 'equals' from different administrations jointly evaluated other cities' performance against a benchmark, and then made recommendations to their hosts. The benchmark set out detailed indicators to define a European standard for cities' work on integration. The second project **MIXITIES** developed this peer review model. Benchmarks were streamlined, replacing complex indicators with 'key factors' that could drive success in a given area of integration. Host cities were encouraged to report on context factors affecting their ability to meet the benchmark.

IMPLEMENTORING (2012-14), whilst still drawing on the peer review concept, further simplified the learning process. It focused on city-to-city mentoring: instead of a full team of peers, one or two practitioners from a mentor city (MC) in another member state visited the implementing city (IC). They were still peers, doing jobs similar to those of IC counterparts. Dialogue between partners was again framed by a benchmark defining a Europe-wide standard. Their bilateral learning was backed up by discussion within thematic groups or 'clusters' of cities working on the same challenges.

The ImpleMentoring project, devised to support the integration of migrants, worked on four themes within this policy field. Benchmarks which it developed for each theme have since been published by **EUROCITIES** in a set of ImpleMentoring toolkits, available online and in hard copy:

A: Enhancing public perception on migration and diversity
B: Managing diversity and promoting equality in cities' administration and service provision
C: Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods
D: Engagement in local policy-making processes and political participation of migrant communities.

Though launched in the field of migrant integration, the ImpleMentoring method can be used equally well in other areas, for example environmental issues and social policy.

The EUROCITIES *Short Guide to ImpleMentoring* gives a more detailed explanation of this method, stage by stage. Some of its key elements are described below in this outline leaflet.

The implementoring method in practice

Setting up: the mentoring relationship

A typical ImpleMentoring project starts with city authorities deciding to work as mentoring city (MC) and implementing city (IC) pairs, which are also linked through a supporting 'cluster' or network of other cities interested in the same topic. Whilst the IC may want to draw on some aspects of the MC practice, it mainly needs the mentor's perspective - external but informed and sympathetic - on the challenges it faces in the relevant area of work. Participants from mentor cities will need to understand the roles and responsibilities of colleagues to be mentored in the implementing city, even if their jobs are not identical.

Early face to face contact between them is important. A group training and discussion workshop will help both parties to develop trust, understand each others' needs, and talk through the challenges ahead, as well as developing the skills needed for ImpleMentoring: the mentoring approach; collecting and analysing data, including interviews; and action planning.

As a common framework for their dialogue, both assess themselves against an agreed benchmark or standard of good practice. This includes looking carefully at the political, social and economic context in which their cities operate. The IC then consults colleagues in its own administration, and other local stakeholders, to get an initial view on where it needs to improve.

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Roles and relationships

Mentor city officers: Should help the mentored partner to develop and explore ideas, rather than tell them what to do. They should be good listeners, confident in asking questions, and open to sharing ideas and giving constructive feedback. They should respect confidentiality.

ImpleMenting city officers: Should be open to new ideas and be able to reflect on them, recognise the need for change and be confident in leading it. They should be able to harness local stakeholder support and to get key managers and policy-makers on board.

Expert facilitator: Cities in EUROCITIES original ImpleMentoring project found it useful to work with an expert who is familiar both with the topic area and with this learning method, to run the training sessions and then to support and advise cities through the project.

Project co-ordinator: Where a number of cities are involved, a co-ordinator can ensure that the project runs smoothly: organising meetings and visits, and dealing with communications and finances.

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Preparing for mutual learning: the benchmark

A EUROCITIES benchmark is an agreed standard of good practice for cities Europe-wide (see box). Developed jointly by independent experts and practitioners in the field, it draws on a range of evidence and is tested in real-life situations. It set out key factors for success in the given thematic area.

To inform their initial discussions, each city gathers evidence - including statistics, policies, and project examples - to see how far it goes to meeting each key factor. Then they use the benchmark as a diagnostic tool to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. ImpleMentoring online tools explain how they do this:

- Gathering and analysing evidence: underline guidance note,[6]
- underline template for Needs Analysis:[7] using the benchmark to identify areas which need attention,
- underline template for Good Practice Analysis:[8] using the benchmark to show what works well and why.

Format of ImpleMentoring benchmarks

Each benchmark begins with the "Integrating cities standard" for its work area - a headline summarising best practice for cities to aim for. It then lists key factors: critical issues which cities need to address if they want to reach this European standard. For each key factor, we give:

- A brief rationale, saying why this factor is a key to success in achieving the standard
- Guide questions to help users to check whether the factor is present in their own city
- Examples to show how other cities in Europe have addressed that factor.

How ImpleMentoring benchmarks work: an illustration

Benchmark theme: Making participation effective in diverse neighbourhoods

Integrating Cities standard
Where a city sets up schemes at neighbourhood level for participation by residents in decisions about the future of their area, it makes sure that these schemes fully include those who are migrants (or of migrant background) and gives them a voice on the same basis as other neighbourhood residents.

[The following, shown for illustration, is one of 11 key factors in the benchmark that are necessary for a city to realise the standard above.]

Key factor 4: Community self-organisation
The scheme bases itself so far as possible on existing self-organisation among neighbourhood residents, and embraces diversity (on all equalities dimensions) by engaging the full range of self-organised community groups active in its area, whether formally or informally.

Rationale
Participation promoted by the city is most likely to succeed where citizens have already independently organised to promote their own aims. By keeping an open door for self-organised groups, this activity can reflect the diversity of its neighbourhood and engage residents who – like some migrants – may hesitate to get involved as individuals.

Guide questions
- What was the level of activism and self-organisation in this neighbourhood (including groups extending into other areas), before the scheme's launch?
- What role have community-led organisations played in the design and running of the scheme?
- Do they include any formed by migrant / ethnic minority residents, and how far have such groups got involved in the scheme?
- Does the scheme encourage independent community-led organisations - including those not formally represented in its structures - to engage with it; and does it maintain regular dialogue with them?

Good practice examples
[The key factor is illustrated with examples of successful actions in two European cities.]

City-to-city mentoring visit

When the MC makes its visit to the IC these partners will, building on initial analysis, explore the following critical issues using the framework of the benchmark:

- What needs to change – where are the gaps and problems?
- What are the strengths of its current work programme which the city can build on?
- What are the key goals to aim for?
- What practical steps or actions will help the city to reach these goals?

In making their analysis, both mentor and implementing city need to think about external constraints under which they operate. The IC's chances of success in carrying out change can depend on social, political and economic conditions beyond its control. Especially if it seeks to introduce good practice from a MC abroad, such contextual factors may be crucial - showing why this works in the original site; whether it can work elsewhere; and how far it may have to be adapted to make its transfer successful. Examples from the ImpleMentoring checklist of context factors are:

- the city's financial resources,
- population change - in particular, patterns of migration,
- competences of national and local government, and constraints of national legislation,
- the extent to which civil society contributes to city life.

The city-to-city visit helps to deepen the mentor's understanding of the implementing city and usually last two to three days. Interviews and discussions give visitors an opportunity to ask probing questions and understand the issues from the perspective of those who are affected by policy, or help to shape it. Ideally the visit should include:

- seeing projects in action,
- face to face interviews with officers, politicians, and managers,
- meetings with community representative and service users,
- workshops with other local stakeholders, or a local support network.

Planning for change: actions and activities

After exploring these issues, the mentor and facilitator look at all the evidence; identify key challenges and risks, and make recommendations to the partner authority about the way forward (including local stakeholders if appropriate). Feedback from outside visitors can often encourage people to work together and move from debating problems to taking action, seeing options more clearly and thinking about how to maximise support – internally and from outside stakeholders.

The mentor can then work with IC colleagues to draw up an action plan, mapping out a pathway for change. Whilst the IC may prefer its own planning tools, the ImpleMentoring action planning proforma may also help in this task. Its standard headings can be adapted to local requirements, and it offers advice (for instance) on setting targets, managing risk, communications, and monitoring and review.

Following through: the implementation phase

The mentoring relationship: Sustaining this link after a visit can be important for the IC as it begins to turn its plan into action. Regular informal contact online or by phone between mentor and IC will help to keep up the momentum of change, especially if these actions meet obstacles. If the ImpleMentoring method is being used by a network of cities working on the same theme, they can keep in touch remotely to learn from one another's experiences and suggest ways to deal with challenges.

Visiting the mentor's city: The ImpleMentoring process can be enhanced by making a visit to the mentor's city. One option is to do this before the visit to the implementing partner, so the IC can see the mentor's good practice, stimulating ideas on which aspects it might develop. The mentor city could also host a return visit, a few months after it goes to the implementing city. For the IC, this:

- allows it to see the mentor's good practice in action, and understand its context,
- gives inspiration to overcome problems and move forward,
- allows the IC to review progress on the action plan, with the mentor, and adjust it where necessary.

Whenever it is held, hosting a visit offers benefits for the mentor too. Showcasing its practice to other cities interested in the same area of work, with discussion between visitors and local officers, can raise the profile of their work and help both sides to learn.

Concluding the ImpleMentoring process: Whether ImpleMentoring is being used in a bilateral partnership or by a cluster of cities; a final meeting provides the opportunity to reflect on what all parties have learned, so partners may want to build this into their project timetable. At this meeting, whether its action plan is completed or not, the implementing city can review progress in achieving its objectives or moving closer to the benchmark standard. A closing event is also an opportunity to tell a wider range of stakeholders about project results, giving individual cities a platform to celebrate their achievements and good practice.

The IMPLEMENTORING approach: multiple uses

The ImpleMentoring process is an effective means of city-to-city learning across national borders, with extra benefits when working in a larger group to share ideas and expertise. But besides this transnational use, ImpleMentoring Toolkits can be used for:

- self-assessment within a single city, so that departments can share viewpoints, review progress or identify priorities for further development – or promote existing good practice among city departments,
- collecting baseline evidence for monitoring and evaluation, against which a city can then check progress,
- checking how far the city meets national or local authority quality standards or quality marks,
- comparing the practice of cities nationally and then sharing the findings with officers, politicians or other stakeholders.

Whilst a benchmark is not essential for these tasks of self-appraisal and review, cities may find it valuable as an external standard to which officers and local partners can refer and aspire.

The mentoring relationship can also be adapted, for example with two mentors from each city or from different cities. The ImpleMentoring method could work within a single country, in a region or cluster of local authorities, or in a wider network of people working in neighbouring countries. It can even be used for mutual development between external service providers to cities, or between civil society organisations in the city.

About ImpleMentoring

ImpleMentoring was a city-to-city support project running from November 2012 to May 2014, introducing to the field of mutual learning between cities the concept of mentoring.

Led by EUROCITIES, the ImpleMentoring project promoted mutual learning between cities in four thematic areas of integration, to enable them to improve their practice. In this way it helped them to get closer to European standards of best practice and - in particular - to realise the principles of EUROCITIES' Integrating Cities Charter. It built on the experience and success of EUROCITIES projects (MIXITIES, DIVE and INTI-Cities) by shifting the focus from peer reviews and standard-setting towards policy implementation guided by standards and evaluation.

ImpleMentoring was realised by a consortium coordinated by EUROCITIES, 15 local authorities from 11 member states and Migration Work CIC as a facilitator and expert leader.

How do the Integrating Cities Toolkits relate to the broader EU context?

ImpleMentoring introduces an innovative learning method. Its strength lies in the interaction between two levels:

● ● ●   **Specific and local:** It supports partner cities in carrying out concrete changes to local practice - where goals and standards are set by a benchmark based on EU-wide experience, and each city undertaking these actions is mentored through the process of change by a mentor city.

● ● ●   **General and EU-wide:** By applying its thematic benchmarks in these 'real-life' city actions, ImpleMentoring develops, tests and validates them so they can be delivered to Europe's cities and the European Commission as tools for improving practice EU-wide in future years.

These four toolkits and benchmarks on migrant integration follow the three toolkits already published in the framework of the MIXITIES project in 2012 and are still available on www.integratingcities.eu. They show the ongoing commitment of many public authorities and NGOs to learn from each other, assessing and improving policies for the integration of migrants in Europe.