



Immigration

# Prospering Together

Cities with large migrant populations have shown that they can achieve shared prosperity and economic growth when they embrace and integrate newcomers. The Cities of Migration programme has been collecting case studies from around the world to showcase innovative and practical solutions so that other cities can adapt and replicate these good integration ideas.

Immigrants overwhelmingly choose to migrate to cities; consequently, the local experience plays a defining role in their settlement. Yet, too often, the immigration discourse focuses solely on the levers of national policy as key instruments in selection and integration. National governments play a major role in setting the terms of immigration and citizenship, selecting potential immigrants and developing strategies about how immigration will build the nation, both socially and economically. But too often, national policy informs an abstract public discourse that fails to account for the realities of lived experience.

Local policymakers have a critical role to play. As the famed urban theorist Jane Jacobs wisely observed, the level of government closest to the people is best positioned to serve the people. Indeed, around the world, cities are on the front lines of immigrant integration. Indeed, as our research at Global Diversity Exchange and Cities of Migration have shown, many municipal governments are already leading the way with innovative policies and programmes that ensure that immigrants are welcomed and integrated into their new hometowns, where they can contribute to the local economy and culture.



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A DiverseCity onBoard consultation session to identify board and committee candidates from under-represented migrant communities.



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### Welcoming Diverse Leadership

The suburban community of Richmond Hill, north of Toronto, attained its multicultural identity and urban status almost overnight. Once a small town, its population not only doubled to 185,000 within 20 years, but the proportion of visible minorities increased to constitute almost half of the community. This rapid change created challenges both for long-time residents (some of whom resisted the change), and for newcomers (who often reported feeling unwelcome).

The response of the town’s leaders was direct: in 2007, they embarked on a new strategic plan guided by the motto, “We are a welcoming community.” To ensure all voices in the community were heard, the town held consultations including open houses, ethnic forums, youth contests and surveys, as well as informal conversations with leaders from diverse communities.

However, the leaders recognised that more work would be needed to make the town and its governance more inclusive. To ensure its citizen committees reflected the area’s varied demographic, the town approached the DiverseCity onBoard programme to discuss how it could progress towards its goal.

Launched in 2005, DiverseCity onBoard is a social enterprise that bridges the diversity gap in governance by connecting public institutions to the talent they need for competitive growth and urban prosperity. This is done by identifying qualified candidates from under-represented immigrant communities for appointments on the governance bodies of public agencies, boards, commissions, committees and voluntary organisations. From a pool of more than 1,700 candidates, DiverseCity onBoard has matched over 800 individuals to board and committee positions at more than 700 organisations to date.

Eager to replicate this successful community engagement process, Richmond Hill partnered with DiverseCity onBoard early on in its citizens’ committees appointment process. The new appointments process opened doors to citizens who might otherwise have never become involved in municipal governance. Visible minorities now account for nearly 25% of the membership of all citizen committees. In 2010, DiverseCity onBoard recognised Richmond Hill with a Diversity in Governance award for embracing diversity in board governance and making it a priority to recruit board members from diverse backgrounds.

01 Diversity Day Celebration at Redstone Public School in Richmond Hill, Toronto.

02 The diversity charter for Copenhagen’s inclusion policy, *Engage in Copenhagen*.

03 Copenhagen’s Diversity Charter organises several events such as the Eid festival for Muslims.

## Creating More Opportunities

A 2010 analysis by the City of Copenhagen showed that while the City's public service sector had grown in tandem with the increased number of Copenhageners with an immigrant background over the previous decade (from 11.5% to 22.2%), the majority of these public employees held low-skilled jobs.

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Inspired by the diversity agenda set by the City of London for the 2012 Olympic Games, as well as the seminal French Charte de la diversité, now replicated in Germany and Spain, the City of Copenhagen developed its own Diversity Charter in 2011. The Charter actively engages the business community to affirm the campaign's three guiding principles and make Copenhagen the "most inclusive city in Europe"

Companies, educational institutions and non-profit organisations that sign the charter pledge to "promote the quality of life and growth in Copenhagen" by:

- making diversity the norm in their organisation;
- contributing to the public conversation so that diversity is seen as an asset; and
- supporting initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion and fight discrimination.

Cities are not only major employers, but also major buyers in local economies. So in 2007, when a City of Copenhagen audit revealed that 15,000 private sector suppliers with a total turnover of approximately 6.5 billion Danish kroner (US\$913 million) were accounted for in sales to the council, the city responded with a proactive procurement policy. The municipality introduced mandatory "social clauses" in any municipal contract with suppliers of goods and services that exceed the value of half a million kroner (US\$70,204), in order to prioritise suppliers that employ targeted categories of disadvantaged workers. As the country's largest employer, the City of Copenhagen models a positive approach to diversity at home and nationally, providing leadership through good recruitment and diversity management practices in its own offices.

## COPENHAGEN'S DIVERSITY CHARTER



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## Mentoring Skilled Immigrants

Without professional networks or contacts, many new immigrants struggle to find work that reflects their experience, skills and education. In the eyes of Canadian employers, job applicants with foreign credentials and work experience may come across as untested and pose a potential hiring risk.

With more than half of Toronto's population made up of immigrants, labour market inclusion is vital to the prosperity of Canada's largest city. So talking about the importance of immigrants to the region's economy is not enough for the City of Toronto—the administration is leading by example. Since 2004, the City has invited members of the Toronto Public Service to volunteer as mentors to skilled immigrants through its Profession to Profession mentoring programme.

The programme matches city staff with skilled immigrants in similar professions for a four-month mentoring experience that focuses on building professional networks so that the immigrants can learn more about their profession and workplace culture in Canada. Providing

job search advice and support through mentoring helps to ease newcomers' transition into the job market.

The City of Toronto's senior management have championed the programme and opened the workplace to skilled immigrant mentees. Mentors volunteer on "company time" and are encouraged to invite their mentees to attend professional development sessions with them. The mentors, many of them immigrants themselves, have found the programme useful, with some mentoring more than 10 skilled immigrants. Some mentees also move on to become mentors to new immigrants. The City hosts an annual recognition event, as well as mentor networking sessions to further enhance the mentor and mentee experiences.

The City developed its mentoring programme with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and its mentoring partnership, a collaboration of 13 community delivery organisations and 27 active employer partners. As of March 2016, the Mentoring Partnership has matched over 13,000 skilled immigrants with 8,000 Canadian mentors across the city.

01 An orientation on mentoring for City of Toronto employees.

02 Senator Ratna Omidvar (second from left) with Toronto Public Service mentors (holding plaques) who have mentored 10 or more skilled immigrants.



“Mentors volunteer on ‘company time’ and are encouraged to invite their mentees to attend professional development sessions with them.”





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### Connecting with New Migrants

The Marae Welcome Programme offered new immigrants a chance to connect with the culture and people of their new home at their local *marae*, or Maori meeting house courtyard. The programme was offered through Wellington's newcomer services to people who had lived in New Zealand for less than five years and was a key strand of the broader Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy (WRSS).

The programme connected newcomers to New Zealand's indigenous people and helped them understand the significance of Maori culture. Activities included educational workshops on the Treaty of Waitangi (the founding document of New Zealand as a nation), and on Maori culture, language and history. Interpreters were on hand to bridge the language barrier among participants.

The Marae Welcome Programme was delivered through partnerships between local government and Maori *iwi* (tribes) in each of five participating municipalities. *Marae* leaders worked with WRSS government advisors to ensure an optimal experience for newcomers and meaningful dialogue with the Maori people. Municipalities provided publicity and recruited participants through local settlement support coordinators working within each city council.



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Feedback from participants and their Maori hosts had been enthusiastic. Local *marae* reported that their experience had helped connect them with newcomer communities.

The partnership model also strengthened connections between municipalities and local *marae*, and created a valuable context in which all parties could come together to discuss the impacts of migration and the changing demographics of local communities. After three years of funding, the Marae Welcome Programme has ceased, but five *marae* continue to welcome newcomers by incorporating citizenship ceremonies into their annual Waitangi Day activities annually, which commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

### Reaching Out to Migrant Entrepreneurs

Munich, the third largest city in Germany, takes its economic success seriously. In a city of 1.45 million residents with over 35%

01 *Marae* visit as part of the WRSS Marae Welcome Programme.

02 New migrants sampling traditional Maori food during a *marae* welcome visit.

03 City of Munich's Phoenix Prize award ceremony.

04 Saina Bayatpour, recipient of the Phoenix Prize in 2015.



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of migrant background, this also means recognising the importance of migrant enterprises. The city estimates that the more than 12,000 migrant-run businesses have contributed to the employment of over 100,000 people from all walks of life.

Since 2010, the City of Munich has awarded the Phoenix Prize at an annual gala to recognise five winners who exemplify “outstanding economic achievements and social responsibility efforts of migrant enterprises”. The Phoenix Prize is one of four components of the Migrant Entrepreneurs in Munich (MEM) programme, run by the city’s Department of Labour and Economic Development.

MEM’s migrant entrepreneurship programme has four pillars: providing assistance; helping with qualifications; creating dialogue; and promoting recognition. Launched in 1999 to provide training for established migrant entrepreneurs and their employees, the programme has grown to include specialised services to help new and emerging entrepreneurs get started, develop business plans, or help them assess their qualifications and further training needs. Other offerings include a training course on how established entrepreneurs or business leaders can mentor young entrepreneurs and pass on the required knowledge and relevant skills needed to succeed in the labour market.

Outreach remains a critical part of MEM’s ongoing success. This includes growing a

network of successful migrant organisations, businesses and leaders who are keen to foster migrant entrepreneurship in Munich. The diversity of MEM’s office staff provides ready access to a pool of foreign language skills and knowledge about informal communities and networks. This helps them recruit new clients from districts that have a high percentage of people with migrant background.

MEM is now considered Munich’s information and counselling hub for business development in the city’s migrant communities. It helps small business operators, employers and future entrepreneurs to build bridges with mainstream institutions. MEM team members are increasingly sought after to share good practices on migrant entrepreneurship at local and international conferences and seminars.

We know that civic leadership matters. Where you see a newcomer population thriving in an inclusive way, you see leaders in city government, in local business, in community organisations and institutions showing the way. For there is no doubt that leadership matters, whether it comes from the head of the city government or from other, sometimes surprising, places in the community.

As the examples in this article demonstrate, local governments in leading cities are taking action to encourage conditions that welcome and integrate immigrants into economic, social, and political life. Drawing on these analyses, we hope you will find new ideas to inspire your work in your own city. ○