

International Master's Degree in Sustainable Territorial Development:  
Climate Change, Diversity and Cooperation / Maestría en Cambio Climático,  
Sustentabilidad y Desarrollo

**How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the  
integration of diversity in Lisbon?: An exploration of the main challenges in the city**

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# UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

*Department Of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering*

International Master's Degree in Sustainable Territorial Development:  
Climate Change, Diversity and Cooperation



***How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool  
for the integration of diversity in Lisbon?***

*An exploration of the main challenges in the city*

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*“No culture is perfect or can be perfected, but all cultures have something to learn from and contribute to others. Cultures grow through the everyday practices of social interaction.”*

*Sandercock, 2004*

## Abstract

To understand the importance of a programme like the Intercultural Cities Programme, this thesis discusses one of the most significant challenges facing global society today - migration; due to instability and climate change, these movements will continue to develop, and most pressing of all, decisions need to be made as to how to embrace it and the challenges it will bring in the best way. The literature review focuses on the ideas of Scott E. Page and Ricard Zapata-Barrero that defend the importance of diversity in today's society and explain why measures to promote interculturalism play such a fundamental role in the ending of discrimination and the better integration of immigrants. The ideas of the authors that came to inspire the Intercultural Cities Programme, Charles Landry and Phill Wood are discussed, followed by an examination of the modus operandi of the ICC, which focuses on supporting cities to adapt their policies regarding migrants and minorities, seeking equality and positive discrimination under an intercultural lens as well as promoting active citizen participation for integration. To contextualise the case study, an overview of the main challenges surrounding immigration in Portugal and Lisbon is provided. The case study then focuses on how the ICC programme serves as a tool for diversity integration in Lisbon and reporting on the obstacles to integration in the city. Pursuing an explanatory qualitative analysis, interviews with both experts working in the field and immigrants themselves are considered. Recommendations are proposed for the near future concerning Lisbon's municipality and the ICC programme.

## Resumen

*Para comprender la importancia de un programa como el Programa Ciudades Interculturales, esta tesis aborda uno de los más significativos desafíos a los que se enfrenta la sociedad global en la actualidad: la migración; debido a la inestabilidad y al cambio climático, estos movimientos seguirán desarrollándose y, lo que es más perentorio, es necesario tomar decisiones sobre cómo afrontarlo de la mejor manera. La revisión bibliográfica se centra en las ideas de Scott E. Page y Ricard Zapata-Barrero, que defienden la importancia de la diversidad en la sociedad actual y por qué las medidas para promover la interculturalidad desempeñan un papel tan fundamental para acabar con la discriminación e integrar lo mejor posible a los inmigrantes. Se discuten las ideas de los autores que llegaron a inspirar el Programa Ciudades Interculturales, Charles Landry y Phill Wood, y a continuación se examina el modus operandi del ICC, que se centra en apoyar a las ciudades para que adapten sus políticas relativas a los inmigrantes y las minorías, buscando la igualdad y la discriminación positiva bajo un prisma intercultural, así como promoviendo la participación ciudadana activa para la integración. Para contextualizar el estudio de caso, se ofrece una visión general de los principales desafíos en torno a la inmigración en Portugal y Lisboa. A continuación, el estudio de caso se centra en cómo el programa ICC sirve de herramienta para la integración de la diversidad en Lisboa e informa sobre los obstáculos a la integración en la ciudad. Siguiendo un análisis cualitativo explicativo, se consideran entrevistas tanto con expertos que trabajan en este campo como con los propios inmigrantes. Se proponen recomendaciones para el futuro próximo en relación al municipio de Lisboa y al programa ICC.*

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## Introduction

Interculturality becomes ever more crucial in contemporary societies as they turn increasingly globalised and issues surrounding immigration are expected to continue rising, principally due to conflicts and climate change. The Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) aims to help cities, like Lisbon, to grasp the benefits of living in a diverse city while simultaneously providing tools to help municipalities to better integrate immigrants. This thesis focuses on understanding the main challenges immigration poses in Lisbon and on the role that the ICC plays in the city.

Immigration has always existed in the city of Lisbon and, in recent years, Portugal has begun to be seen as a more welcoming country to immigrants when compared with its European neighbours. Nevertheless, as a resident in the capital, I have been witnessing a rise in tourism that has led to an exponential acceleration of the gentrification process. The price of rent continues to increase, and for both the current Portuguese residents and the newly arrived immigrants it has become increasingly difficult to find affordable housing as well as to maintain purchasing power. Apart from this, my attention has been drawn to other significant issues, like cases of discrimination and of labour exploitation around Portugal, among others. The situations where I initially came to know of cases firsthand were through the conversations I would have on Uber trips with the drivers, which are almost all immigrants.

This situation made me want to write about immigration integration measures and on how to create more tolerance within the diverse society we live in. Along with Professor Alessio Surian, my thesis supervisor, I decided to focus on the Intercultural Cities Programme that unites all of what I think Lisbon is in need of, bringing people together with a programme that I believe can make a tangible difference. The literature review, focusing on authors such as Scott E. Page, Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Charles Landry and Phil Wood, is presented as the basis to illustrate why diversity is so important for a well performing society, to grasp what cities are doing with regard to introducing measure to promote interculturalism and in order to understand how immigration is going to keep rising in the years to come.

To present the line of thought and guiding thread of this thesis to its readers I offer below a brief road map through the different chapters of the essay. After the introduction, I begin with an extended literature review. The first chapter - *The rationale behind ICC* - is

subdivided in four subchapters. These chapters represent some of the ideas that were key to the foundation of the ICC programme and its importance. The first subchapter entitled *Diversity Trumps Ability* brings out one of this essay's most relevant ideas; Scott E Page introduces us to his theorem on how benefits arise when we come face to face with a complex problem and it is best solved by the most diverse group of people. The next subchapter divided in other three sections accompanies some of the concerns regarding the migratory flows of this century - like *environmental migration*, the *Mediterranean migration crisis* and the *Ukrainian Invasion* that have caused major movements of refugees in recent years. The third subchapter, *Urban resilience and Interculturalism*, focuses on some of the lines of the work of Ricard Zapata-Barrero regarding the local turn, on how cities can bypass their country when it follows anti migrant policies and makes reference to the influence that intercultural practices have on discrimination and vice versa. The fourth subchapter, *the first outlines of the Intercultural City*, introduces this concept based on the definition given by Charles Landry and Phil Wood who were to inspire the ICC programme with their research.

The second chapter, continuing the literature review, explores *the ICC in practice*, explaining the programme's structure according to *the Intercultural city step by step: A practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural inclusion* (2021) and it is subdivided in three subchapters - *Elements of an intercultural approach, policy frameworks and evaluation processes*.

The third chapter regards *Integration in Portugal* looking at it from different perspectives, which are subdivided into subchapters, the *state of affairs, what the MIPEX and OECD statistics tell us, what the press is starting to cover* and the *Portuguese public's opinion on immigration*. There is a fifth subchapter, *the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI)*, which explains how the network is operating in Portugal.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the *Lisbon Case Study* and it is in this chapter that my contribution begins. I start by giving a context on *Lisbon's state of affairs* regarding immigrants, covering dimensions such as the *Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants* and the *opinions of the leftist press*, offering an overview of that which the mainstream media omits. Next follows the *methodology* of our empirical research, an explanatory case study bearing a qualitative analysis that consisted of interviewing both a number of experts on the area of immigration and integration as well as immigrants living in the city. The methodological framework was based on the work of Robert K. Yin. The presentation of the



results of the interviews is next, followed by a discussion that summarises the most important results while the conclusions offer suggestions as to what the municipality and RPCI could do to create a truly intercultural environment. The transcription of the interviews as well as tables of results can be found in the appendix.

With the research question “How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the integration of diversity in Lisbon? An exploration of the main challenges in the city” the aim is to acknowledge the central problems affecting immigrants' lives, the role that the RPCI has in tackling these issues and how diversity is perceived.

## **I - The rationale behind ICC**

This chapter presents the first part of the literature review. Just as the name suggests, it explores the motivations behind the Intercultural Cities programme, covering four elements. The first element concerns why diversity is so important for a society to thrive, considering Scott E. Page's concept of diversity advantage. The second element is today's migration tendencies, its causes - such as environment degradation - and some of the major events regarding immigration that we have seen in recent years such as the Mediterranean crisis and the quantity of refugees caused by the Ukrainian Invasion. The third element relates to Ricard Zapata-Barrero's ideas on the role that cities play when it comes to applying pro-immigration policies and on interculturalism in relation to discrimination. The fourth element is the story behind the book written by Charles Landry and Phil Wood that came to inspire the programme itself.

### **Diversity trumps ability**

To talk about the Intercultural Cities programme is to talk about the concept of "diversity advantage" or "bonus" introduced in 2007 by Scott E. Page, an American social scientist and professor at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on model thinking with an approach to statistics and to the study of diversity, collective decision-making, and problem-solving. He has been developing the idea of diversity, its complexity and how it can be seen as an advantage for society.

One of his first notes on the topic can be read in the article *Groups of diverse problem solvers can outperform groups of high-ability problem solvers* (2004), where the authors, Page and Lu Hong, come to analyse, through a mathematical framework, whether a group with more functional diversity solves problems better than a group formed by individuals considered as having superior abilities. In this specific case, the authors refer to functional diversity concerning the characteristics of how people represent problems differently and develop unique patterns to solve them. Which, they affirm, is linked to the most common usage of the word diversity, designated by the authors as identity diversity - meaning the differences regarding backgrounds that may come from religion, one's origin, ethnicity, cultural identity, areas of expertise, but also age and gender, sexual orientation and physical capabilities - that, consequently allows the diverse groups to think more broadly and exceed

the high ability homogeneous group, mostly constituted of individuals with higher IQ (Page, Lu Hong, 2004).

In this article, the authors prove that an ability to think differently in a group is actually more advantageous when it comes to problem-solving than IQ or college grades are. The author suggests that functional or cognitive diversity is key to achieving better results when it comes to making predictions and being innovative (Page, 2017). Through the framework used and previous research, the authors extract their main theory that: Diversity trumps ability (Page, Lu Hong, 2004). Another idea implied by Page is that when it comes to solving problems, a contributor's value derives from their capacity to improve the solution presented by others, and so on. Notice that, this value is not regarded here as intelligence, since one's contributions come from the set of tools this person has and its value might change depending on the group they are in, because there might be people that have the same tools and might achieve similar results (Page 2017:132).

Over the years, Page has refined his framework on this subject, always coming back to bolster his main theorem that diversity trumps ability. In 2007, the author published *The Difference: How the power of diversity creates better groups, firms, schools and societies* where, again, he seeks to prove the importance of diverse and smart talented people to effectively solve difficult problems. Solving problems has to be understood, here, as a main exercise in today's society, ranging from solving problems, predicting outcomes, undertaking research and evaluating mergers (Page 2017:46). It's not only solving a difficult engineering or maths exercises but rather a condition that exists in almost every field, may it be finding new ways of tackling climate change, improving the educational system, designing new health policies, scheming new buildings, curing diseases or even writing examinations, producing movies or designing a new product.

In order to follow this theorem, it's relevant to understand what the author intends by perspectives and heuristics, the logic of reasoning, without which it is not possible to find the solution to a problem. A perspective is a way in which situations and problems are depicted. Diverse perspectives would be the different ways of understanding possibilities for a problem. On the other hand, heuristics is the method for generating a solution to a problem, reliant upon the tools one already has. The more diverse the perspectives and heuristics the group has, the more connections to possible solutions it can make and the more improvements it will be able to make for the presented solution (Page, 2017:7-10).

Page comes to deepen what was stated in his 2004 article gathering an antecedent theorem and four conditions for diversity to trump ability. Thus, to facilitate understanding about why diversity is beneficial, the author introduces its readers to a first theorem - that diversity trumps homogeneity. In short, if there are two groups of people, one diverse and the other homogeneous, regarding their functional and cognitive diversity, and their ability is the same, the diverse group will find better solutions for the given problem, since it has a richer variety of ways to approach it.

Now, what the *Diversity Trumps Ability* theorem comes to add is that, when there are two groups, if individuals for one group are randomly selected and consists of specifically selected participants with higher abilities, the randomly selected, and therefore more diverse group will still come with better solutions, since the second homogenous group shares similar points of view and approaches.

As previously stated, there are four conditions for the theorem to prevail. The first condition is that the problem has to be difficult. The second condition regards the abilities of the individuals trying to solve the problem, having a sufficient level of intellectual capacity. Given this condition, that all the problem solvers are smart, in the randomly selected group, the range of different perspectives and heuristics will be much higher than in the group of the highest abilities, allowing for the creation of a more complex and complete solution, outperforming the latter. The third condition, and probably the most important one regards the existence of diversity within the group, meaning that there must be one or more individuals functionally diverse enough to bring new heuristics or improvements to the achieved solution in order to help achieve an even better one. The fourth and last condition for the theorem to hold is to have substantial collections of individuals drawn from a large number of potential problem solvers (Page 2017:152-158).

Although Page is usually referring to cognitive or functional diversity, let's not forget that the author affirms that identity diversity also contributes to more successful problem solving, relevant to this research concerning the ICC programme in particular, given that someone's experiences and identities influence their perspectives and heuristics, their way of thinking and what they know. It is then easy to understand why cognitive and identity diversity tend to coincide. One is a proxy for the other. Probably, without identity diversity, it would be harder to achieve the benefits of cognitive diversity within the sphere of problem-solving (Page, 2017:235).

Katherine W. Phillips, commenting on *The Diversity Bonus* (*ibid*:123-127), adds some benefits related to identity diversity. First of all, she implies that a group with varied representation of different identities, for example, women, minorities, disabled people, old or young people, transgender people, homosexual people, and so on, will not only likely be a cognitively diverse group, but it will also create more dialogue and efforts for good communication amongst its participants than a homogenous group. Phillips continues by asserting that generally, cognitive diversity is also more respected in these identity-diverse environments that create fertile discussions where different points of view are heard and discussed. Apart from this, the mere presence of diverse people can also alter the way people work together. It's important to emphasise that this diversity in order to be beneficial must be conducted by people that meaningfully engage in the group's efforts.

This benefit of having a diversity of identity within groups brings us to understand how immigrants and minorities are so essential to a functional and well-performing society. In addition, one person alone is incapable of succeeding in high-dimensional tasks and so, as Earl Lewis and Nancy Cantor stated in the introduction to *The Diversity Bonus*: "The dynamics of identity and cognitively diverse groups produce the innovation that bolsters our knowledge economy" (Page, 2007). And here, we should add not only the economy but also our communities, whether in educational development and technological advancements, and for our culture - and that's one of the main reasons why diversity fosters progress, bringing new insights and dynamics.

In order to achieve these outcomes, diversity and inclusion compliment each other. Cognitive diversity, which is often triggered by identity diversity, brings talent. Accordingly, talent and diversity are fostered when environments are inclusive (Page, 2017:2). And, when they're not, diversity bonuses are lost due to a lack of acknowledging the views of women, migrants and minorities, or in other words, conservative optics. Trust and shared values amongst different people are essential elements to be considered by policy-makers, organisations and ultimately should be taken seriously by the institutions responsible for the promotion of global justice.

We come to a point where it is of great relevance to reflect on why this topic of proving the benefits of diversity are necessary (Page 2017:226), on why all groups in society, with the exception of straight white cis males, have to prove that they will bring benefits to society? As Katherine W. Phillips suggests, it is important to pose these types of questions

since they elevate topics that must be urgently addressed in our society that are neglected by a vast number of people. Phillips explains that power relies on today's status quo, that of homogeneity, which, unfortunately, determines the reason there must be research like Page's body of work. These issues illustrate why debates on representation, research and action are essential for more concrete changes and for this the ICC can play a big role.

Page provides more reasons to engage with our differences, providing the logical justifications and evidence that sustain the diversity advantage theorem and why societies should seek it, inspiring Charles Landry and Phil Wood to write *The Intercultural City*. It is noticeable that in today's world, besides a focus on representation and fairness, we are finally witnessing a wider recognition of the benefits that diversity and interculturalism have for our world. Nonetheless, in the complexity of the current era, urgent action and awareness raising are needed to continue to bring people together and to try to capture the advantages of diversity (Page, 2017:xvii).

## **Immigration**

Our world is facing old and new global challenges causing migration to increase. Migrants are moving to escape the effects of the climate crises; move away from terrorism, conflicts and wars caused by greed and corrupt countries; flee from pandemics, economic downturns and political instability that compromises situations; or most commonly in the search for better living conditions. As stated by the United Nations, "more people than ever live in a country other than the one in which they were born" (UN, 2023) and this happens not only because these people opt to do it but also because they need to, in many cases there is no other possibility but migration, causing displacement. With global population growth at current levels, it is now the biggest ever, the number of migrants will keep increasing and the disturbances caused by climate change will make this issue even worse.

As we have seen, diversity brings great benefits and can help a country thrive, but besides this, immigration also plays a decisive role in the renewal of Europe's increasingly ageing societies and in boosting the working-age population. Immigrants most often have a demographic impact, given that they can change the age pyramid of receiving countries, as they're normally from a young working-age group (OECD Migration, 2014).

A focus will be given to three main migration issues, since these are the most critical ones that Europe is facing. They are: environmental migration, the so-called Mediterranean migration ‘crisis’ and the Ukrainian migration caused by the Russian invasion.

## **1. Environmental Migrations**

It is estimated that as the climate crisis worsens, extreme heat and droughts, storms and floods, agricultural issues and ocean acidification will continually affect the rising number of migrants, which is making migration patterns change worldwide. In addition to these, slower-moving climate challenges will arise in the next few years as a result of rising sea-levels and intensified water stress (Prange, 2022).

As the environmental agenda has moved towards the spotlight since the mid-2000s, more attention is being given to environmental migration. Nonetheless, evidence of climate change had been here much before. In the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which dates back to 1990, specialists were already showing that “climate change acts as a risk multiplier” (Pereira & Puscas, 2023) - Natural disasters become more intense and frequent as a result of climate change, which further affects migration trends, exacerbates socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and widens governance disparities.

Trying to have an idea of the factual numbers, taking a look at only internal migration caused by environmental disasters, the movement of people within a country, the figures show an escalating threat to the livelihoods of tens of millions of people. From 2008 to 2018 there was an average of 24 million displacements and in 2021 alone the number was the same, a troubling reality. The estimated number of internal displacements in 2050, if climate action does not take place, will be around 216 million people (Pereira & Puscas, 2023). It is important to emphasise that environmentally displaced migrants normally migrate internally within their country. Thus, the number of internal migrants is much higher than the migration numbers that take place from one country to the other.

In 2022, the topic of environmental migration was discussed all around civil society organisations, governments and institutions as large-scale disasters kept happening. The two more important conferences where the matter was discussed and measures were taken were the last COP, COP27, which took place in Egypt and in the 113th Session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council in December 2022 in Switzerland (Pereira & Puscas, 2023).

At COP, participants came up with the decision of creating a fund to address damages caused by climate change, which includes migration and will provide more finance for progress in this regard. The IOM session, which brings together 175 representatives from different states, members of the IOM, and other representatives from intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, chose this year's focus of the forum to be on the discussion between climate change, food security, migration and displacement. It underlined more coherent policy narratives throughout the last year that can be translated as a sign of institutionalising this topic of environmental migration (Pereira & Puscas, 2023). The media is also gradually talking more often about the subject, creating a positive overall increase in public awareness since this concern is now starting to be on the agenda in some form for all countries and institutions.

Nevertheless, there is no specific status for environmental refugees or migrants, since when this refugee status was discussed in the 1951 Geneva Convention, environmental migration was not discussed. Even though the needs and situations of these people that have to move from the places they live due to environmental factors, which might be similar to those of migrants or refugees leaving their cities for other reasons, the former have no legal basis in international refugee law, since the environmental or climate change category is not yet included in the international legal framework for refugees and migrants (*Statistics on Migration to Europe*).

Efforts to establish a legal status for environmental migrants and refugees should take place as, unfortunately, the causes and therefore numbers of environmental refugees is set to increase in years to come. Protection status settles a more direct way to tackle the problem ensuring that the people in these situations have the human dignity everyone deserves as, when speaking of Europe, there are still some countries that prefer to have climate walls than to use the political tools at their disposal to help in this situation - even though countries can help, some prefer not to (Dini et al., 2023).

Now, as supported by Page's theorem, what could be a more adequate means to find solutions to tackle climate change than involving diverse groups of people, migrants included, to share their perspectives on the issue?



## **2. Mediterranean Migration Crisis**

The Mediterranean is considered to be one of the most key geographical areas globally regarding human mobility - “an umbrella term that refers to all aspects of the movement of people: human mobility is understood to encompass involuntary internal and cross-border displacement of populations, voluntary internal and cross-border migration and planned and consented relocation” (Advisory Group On Climate Change And Human Mobility, 2015). This region is considered the most diasporic in the world, being where the European, African and Asian continents meet. According to scholars, it turns out to be the deadliest and least peaceful place in the world (Zapata-Barreto, 2023), not only because of its active conflicts but also for the number of migrants coming from Africa and Asia in search of better living conditions and opportunities.

There have always been a significant number of conflicts around the Mediterranean that makes this region severely tense. Often enough, these conflicts involve the interests of global powers and have impacts in a wider context, within a globalised and changing world order. Currently, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has lasted for a year now, having a worldwide impact on energy supplies; the ongoing tension between littoral states like Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and Libya that over the years keep disagreeing over whom has maritime rights in order to exploit energy resources; this was aggravated in 2019 when Turkey and Libya agreed on a new division of their zones of influence, causing more disputes between Greece and Cyprus with Turkey on their maritime coastlines and the rights to explore gas reserves (Axt, 2022:395). The Mediterranean continues to be a space of conflict generating disequilibrium around its regions and peoples; the continuous religious and territorial conflict between Israel and Palestine causes great instability; the arab spring, that started in Algeria in 2011 and spread with protests around other muslim countries like Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria where some autocrats were deposed but also big uprisings occurred being indirectly but partially responsible for devastating civil wars like the war in Syria that has been going on for more than 10 years; the Yemen war has continued for 9 years; and the Libyan war which has ended but its legacy is still felt since the country is extremely unsafe; the on-going tension between Morocco and Algeria and others (Cobo, 2021). These factors have been on the rise in the last few years causing the migration agenda to intensify in the surrounding area. There is a need to promote peace and inclusion practices in its cities, through dialogue and cooperation between them.

The world as we know it is facing numerous changes that are altering the way it is shaped. Globalisation, climate change, political instability, conflicts, ascending socioeconomic gaps and inequality are responsible for growing human mobility and the Mediterranean has unfortunately been proof of this. The year 2015 is remembered for its unprecedented migration numbers that created a so-called crisis in Europe. An overwhelming number of a million migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea to arrive in Europe that year and around 4 000 lost their lives during this journey (UNHCR, 2015b). The EU attracts these people fleeing from their countries in the search for better conditions.

The nationalities that most came to Europe in 2015 were Syrians, 50% of the all number that arrived in the EU that year, followed by Afghans and Iraqis. The most common, yet dangerous routes preferred by this collective of people looking for better life conditions are from Libya to the south of Italy and from Turkey to Greece (UNHCR, 2015). It must be noted that this migration happens on a regular basis, it didn't only happen in 2015, it was just discussed more frequently in the media and the number of people arriving in Europe was also higher. There were even records of boats designed for eight people carrying sixty nine passengers (UNHCR, 2015).

The media coverage on the matter that year was vast. Nonetheless, barely any mainstream media conveyed migrants' own perspectives on what was happening or even on why it was happening. It focused on the resulting "crisis" in Europe instead and, only a limited attention was given to the multitude of contexts causing this massive migration to happen. In a report from the Council of Europe focusing on the media coverage this situation had in Europe the authors agree that migrants are often depicted as an anonymous group with no voice of their own who are either extremely vulnerable or dangerous to society. The dissemination of information in the media can be dangerous. The way news is written can sometimes provoke more stereotypes about the people coming to one's country creating consequences on how they will be welcomed and integrated in the long term (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2007). Furthermore, this type of news might not only influence the people of a country but also its policy decision makers.

In this regard, one event that came to indirectly shape European minds was what happened in November in Paris that same year - the terrorism attack in Bataclan. There was and there still is a terrorism-migration linkage constructed in and through the media in some

countries in Europe as a process to socially construct the idea of migrants as a threat (Galantino, 2020).

Europe reacted to a larger number than expected of migrants arriving in Europe in an uncoordinated way. While some countries were committed to helping and making a difference, the European freedom of open borders ended when five countries, both in the Schengen area and outside of it, built fences on their borders with neighbouring countries, like Hungary did with Serbia, to try to impede the arrival of more migrants from the Middle East. Apart from this, on a national level, there were some EU countries that throughout the year changed their legislation on migration, restricting people's rights (Wagner, 2015). It is clear that not all policy makers are seeing this situation as a way to enrich their own cultures and societies within the EU. Some also tend to forget that the mediterranean area is already a patchwork of different cultures, languages and traditions that make this region unique (Zapata-Barrero, 2023:123).

According to Irene Calaza (2022), what is happening in the mediterranean is a direct consequence of security policy, externalisation and militarisation of borders that, in the name of national security of each country in the EU, fosters a racist, exclusionary and lethal regime. A hate discourse towards immigrants is prompted by some EU countries to which Calaza states "We are witnessing a continued and generalised process of indifference, naturalisation of death, selfishness, and alongside this, criminalisation of migrants and securitisation of borders" (Calaza, 2022). An example of the level of indifference of some to the misfortune of others, was the extensive search and media coverage for a submersible with five passengers in parallel with the Greek migrant boat tragedy where only 104 people were rescued alive out of 750 migrants originally on board (Davey-Attlee & Labropoulou, 2023). It tells a lot of the world we live in nowadays that in the search for a leisure submersible trip to the titanic wreckage with five people aboard there were millions involved, with helicopters, more submarines etc. and that for almost 800 people seeking better living conditions in the Mediterranean, apparently nothing could be done by the Greek authorities, who were only capable of saving 100 people, and it was vastly underreported in the news.

While Europe is horrified by the situation in Ukraine and welcomes with orientation and inclusion programmes thousands of Ukrainian citizens - as it should be given our international obligations - hundreds of migrants from other countries disappear at our European borders every week in the face of the naturalisation of violence and death of part of

the migrant population. It is clear that racism, classism and xenophobia operate as structural axes of European migration policy and that borders are not open to all, not all are welcome in “Fortress” Europe as Calaza (2022) calls it.

In 2022, the number of immigrants arriving in the European Union was around 1.92 million. In 2021 the number of irregular border crossings was almost 200 000. Looking at the period between January and July, in 2022 there was an increase in crossings of 85% (*Statistics on Migration to Europe*). It is an ongoing situation that will only keep increasing with the escalation of climate hazards.

Taking a look at the overrepresented sectors when it comes to employment nowadays, it becomes clear that there is still a huge gap between the roles that immigrants, non-EU citizens, have and the ones that EU citizens do, unveiling weak inclusion policies. In figure 1 and 2, it is possible to have an idea of how public administration, defence, compulsory social security, education and professional, scientific and technical activities are clearly economic sectors in which migrants are not represented while citizens arising from the European Union have a much larger representation. When it comes to migrants' most represented sectors, the picture alternates. The sectors in which migrants are working are predominantly accommodation and food service activities, administrative and support service activities, domestic work and construction (*Statistics on Migration to Europe*).

Understanding how this current situation is illustrates how concrete policies on inclusion of migrants and a change of perspective is much needed in this regard. It makes it even more important for these migrant communities to be supported, which are often more vulnerable and lack the access they should have to higher positions when it comes to employment, the access to services and good housing, to education and support, in general. If measures like these would be taken by host countries and effective policies for integration followed, these communities would suffer from less resentment, which is often felt by migrants in the EU, particularly as we are referring to countries from the European Union which are better placed to help than the neighbouring countries of the migrants' country of origin, normally in Africa or the Middle East (Karasapan, 2022).

### 3. Ukrainian Invasion

The Ukrainian Invasion by Russia on 24th of February 2022 triggered major entries of refugees in terms of scale and speed in EU countries since World War II (Zhou et al., 2022). By April 2023, around 8 100 000 refugees had entered the European Union (*Ukraine Refugee Situation*, 2023) and by December 2022, between 3.6 and 5.4 million people were internally displaced in Ukraine, meaning that more than 30% of the Ukrainian population has so far been displaced (*Displacement from Ukraine*, 2023).

The Temporary Protection Directive was created in 2001, after the conflicts in what was formerly Yugoslavia, it is, as stated by the Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, “an exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin” (*Temporary Protection*, 2023). This directive was first applied last year, on the 4th of March of 2022, days after the conflict started. Its duration has been renewed up to March 2024, as agreed by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 14 October 2022. Under the Temporary Directive or similar national protection schemes around 5 million refugees have been registered so far (*Ukraine Refugee Situation*, 2023).

This Directive gives the people under this temporary protection several rights such as a residence permit for the duration of the protection, access to employment, to accommodation, to medical care, education, banking services, to move freely within the EU amongst others (*Temporary Protection*, 2023). Fortunately, Ukrainians received unprecedented strong and immediate support from European countries.

Witnessing these two major impact cases in the regional and global order - the Mediterranean influx of migrants, particularly felt by Europe in 2015 and 2016 with their majority being Syrians trying to flee the civil war and now the Ukrainian invasion by Russia - we can observe how differently the refugees were received in Europe. This matter raises questions regarding why nationals of some European countries are deemed more worthy of receiving asylum than others (Zhou et al., 2022).

In contrast to Ukrainians, that in less than two weeks after the conflict started had already seen 2 million migrants hosted by European countries, in 2015 the number of arrivals to Europe, not only from Syria but also from other middle eastern countries, as already stated

above, was around 1 million migrants and considered impossible to deal with by authorities of the EU (Zhou et al., 2022). The Hungarian prime minister, regardless of being known as from the radical right-wing, stated that the migrants fleeing Syria represented a “muslim invasion” in 2015 and built borders to prevent their arrival in the country, legalised pushbacks and put up a razor-wire fence, even though now he is welcoming ukrainian refugees (Khalid, 2022). It’s possible to understand by comparing both situations how Europe has an assembled mechanism for this type of crisis but can prioritise some over others. Only a day after the conflict in Ukraine started, there were already reception centres for migrants in the borders.

So, what is the basis of the discrimination between some over others? This is a really complex matter and I will try to be brief. First of all, Eastern European countries, who had been under the rule of the Soviet Union for decades, know what it feels like to be subject to Russian rule, distinguishing their attitudes and behaviour towards Ukrainians. Apart from this, they are neighbouring countries, who share similar languages, similar culture and that encompass a great number of Ukrainian diaspora, which may naturally link to more ties between the countries (Europe’s Different Approach to Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees Draws Accusations of Racism, 2022). On the other hand, Ukrainians are European and in geopolitical terms, have the right to freely move around the Europe Union countries for as long as 90 days, while most countries from Africa and the Middle East, like Syria and Afghanistan have not (Khalid, 2022). Thirdly, there is the race and ethnicity bias.

Forms of racism and xenophobia may play a big role in this case. The impression created, through the media and by what was stated by politicians, was that if a migrant shares the race of the hosting country, they are more worthy of helping than one that is not, as illustrated by the following quotes - “Look, Ukrainians are like us, they have blonde hair, blue eyes, they drive the same car as we do, they are educated” (Khalid, 2022); “These people are Europeans. These people are intelligent. They are educated people. This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists” said the Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov regarding Syrians (Europe’s Different Approach to Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees Draws Accusations of Racism, 2022); "These are prosperous, middle-class people. These are not obviously refugees trying to get away from areas in the Middle East. They look like any European family that you would live next door to." stated an Al Jazeera English television presenter also CBS had to apologise after one of their presenters said "This (Ukraine) is a

relatively civilised, relatively European" city comparing it to Iraq and Afghanistan (Europe's Different Approach to Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees Draws Accusations of Racism, 2022).

Refugees coming from Syria and other countries besides Ukraine face similar conditions as the latter, their families being put apart, having to seek shelter from Russian bombings... Instead of focusing on the commonalities, it seems like some only focus on the differences. These are also people who left everything behind. Syrian refugees have said that the speeches and attitudes they've witnessed were disturbing and hurtful (Europe's Different Approach to Ukrainian and Syrian Refugees Draws Accusations of Racism, 2022) given the inequality with which refugees from different parts of the world are treated. Even though in the beginning of 2015 there were times of sympathetic and supporting attitudes towards hosting migrants coming from the mediterranean and by land in Europe it soon turned to hostility with discourse in the media quickly turning to terrorism. And this issue again arises within the types of statements that were previously quoted.

When a white person commits an act of terrorism it is considered more as an individual act that does not represent the whole "white race". In contrast to middle eastern and islamic cases where the entire ethnicity or religious group can frequently be considered to be violent and dangerous, there isn't this stereotype for whites. As affirmed in Vox's article, this is "racial thinking disguised as security motivation" (Khalid, 2022). Also evident in the statements that were made is the identification of Ukrainians as "us", whites, with similar cultures, religions and proximities to one another and then "the rest" or the other migrants from Africa and Asia, with a negative connotation, fostered by the media and so on.

The role the mainstream media has been playing is dangerously influencing civilians and policy makers. It has been fostering stereotypes on migrants coming from abroad in Europe - It's regularly portraying refugees as people that should be feared. Most of the news reporters are white (Khalid, 2022). This media lacks diversity and different, broader perspectives.

Some of the countries that in the past had been considered anti-migrants, complicating the EU refugee and migrants policy, are now having a positive response to migrants (Khalid, 2022). It would only be better if these positive responses were also given to refugees coming from other continents. The attitude towards helping Ukraine was really positive in the last year and the key point is: if it is possible to support Ukranianians, efforts should also be made to help other populations in need; for this to happen, people's mentalities on how they see

refugees and migrants must also change. Europe has the resources to help more migrants as has been observed, so it's time to loosen the EU policies on migrants and let people that are principally in the global south (Khalid, 2022) come to the global north where they can find better life opportunities.

### **Urban Resilience and Interculturalism**

Having reflected upon the resentment around the influx of migrants and the challenges it presents, another important author ought to be introduced, Ricard Zapata-Barrero; he is a professor of political theory and director of the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain. He is a leading expert in the field of intercultural studies and has made significant contributions to the development of intercultural policy and practice at the local, national, and international levels. As a scholar and researcher in the field of intercultural studies and migration, Zapata-Barrero has worked as a consultant and expert for the ICC programme, providing guidance and advice on issues related to intercultural policy and governance. His research from recent years on migration has been key to reaching a better understanding and developing solutions for the issue.

First of all, Zapata's-Barrero argues that cities, themselves, can turn the current migration situation around. Cities gain a whole new importance under the lens of the local turn or urban resilience as the author prefers to call it in his article *Urban migration governance under the resilience lens conceptual and empirical insights* (2023). The local turn is something that is progressively increasing around Europe, where cities are beginning to overcome their own state governments, locally and regionally, regarding migration, creating their own measures and policies (Zapata-Barrero, 2022:6). The urban resilience includes all of the above, with the addition of some nuances: the fact that it focuses on sharpening the analysis of policies on migration and how its policy makers and politicians are contributing or not contributing in this sense; how it targets the use of resources and infrastructures for the welcoming of migrants; and also how the interface between narratives and concrete action takes place (Zapata-Barrero, 2022:5).

The new pattern is that, in the legally and politically constrained environment in which they normally operate, most cities are increasing their governance capacities through



multi-scale relationships with other cities and civil society organisations (CSOs). As the author puts it, regional cities are contributing to a new way of perceiving these relations and spaces with economic, political, cultural and social strands, where a geographical region endorse values that go beyond the national interests of typical top-down restrictions when it comes to supporting migrants, thus creating a wider feeling of ‘cosmopolitanism’ (Zapata-Barrero, 2023:121-125). In place, urban-regional systems are emerging, and beginning to dismantle some state narratives, bypassing their pressure on migration governance and exploring new critical paths for real change that begin to challenge their own state.

These regional cities are not something fictional, they're already here, already working from a bottom-up perspective when it comes to migration policy and strategies for its support, voicing new regional and local agendas on migration, and broadening their external relations with other similar spaces and organisations. They do so by generating joint strategies and alternative narratives creating a geo-migration space for more cities typifying solidarity (Zapata-Barrero, 2023:125).

Indeed, often cities that network and join forces with other cities with similar principles benefit from shared knowledge and from expertise when it comes from organisational dynamics. To know that there are cities with the same or related strategies is a form of inspiration and self-assurance for local authorities and a reinforcement that they don't strictly have to go by national level policies (White, 2018:29).

The author focuses on the mediterranean cities that are playing a pioneering role in these matters, it is far from difficult to understand why, given that they're searching for ways to overcome the state-level and legislative barriers, when a new unexpected group of migrants or refugees arrives in their country, since there is still a negative idea of human mobility that drives this debate to security more than protection or support in most EU countries. A positive aspect is that the autonomy of these mediterranean cities regarding their own external policies is increasing, thus these spaces of solidarity are expanding on behalf of forward-leaning innovative actions that raise questions around the preexisting hierarchies (Zapata-Barrero, 2023:129).

Closely associated with regional cities, the author brings us the concept of urban resilience, on how to grasp the challenges that these cities, pressured by the governments,

face. He explains that although there is already literature on urban resilience, he is evoking the concept to relate it to urban migration and ethnic governance and how these notions benefit from one another (Zapata-Barrero, 2022:3) helping to shape a new agenda on migration. An example of this resilience, that the author presents, comprehends the efforts made by coastal cities in the mediterranean that receive a big number of refugees and although they might have a rigid government that would not allow these regions to give these newly arrived people support, the local authorities find a way to bounce back. This way, they are not only resisting their own country's security agendas but also including people from diverse backgrounds into their system and lifes, welcoming these migrants and refugees (Zapata-Barrero, 2022:6).

For cities to be resilient there are some characteristics or tools that they may adopt. Starting with imagination, having the creativity to overcome, for example, financial and resources impediments with inventive solutions or to effectively navigate state governments migration policies, finding alternatives to them as well as creating new innovative policies for resilience. Another important idea concerns the fact that an ongoing debate should be established with the inhabitants that already live in the region through narrative-building campaigns supporting migration, having a positive impact on public opinion and thus, on the upper-governance as well (Zapata-Barrero, 2022:18).

A relevant idea conveyed by Zapata-Barrero within this frame of urban resilience concerns the socioeconomic distribution of urban space and how it is affecting cities' suburbs. Under this lens, analysing the maps of three different cities, Tunisia, Barcelona and Marseille, it becomes clear that there is a correlation between poverty and migrants - The poorer areas are also the ones where most migrants will be living. Migrants often live in vulnerable situations, there's an overall problem of housing which does not allow them to find houses at an affordable price contributing to unplanned urban growth.

In order to approach an idea of what the underpinning theoretical grounding for the Intercultural Cities Programme would look like, it is important to consider some of the main ideas Ricard Zapata-Barrero presents. Another indispensable concept is the one of interculturalism, transversal to the ICC as the name suggests, and its connection to public spaces. The author, along with Zenia Hellgren, in *Intercultural Citizenship in the Making: Public Space and Belonging in Discriminatory Environments* (2023) discusses the correlation between interculturalism and discrimination and how they affect each other reciprocally. On

one hand, discrimination doesn't allow interculturalism policies to fully succeed while on the other hand, interculturalism practices are paving the way for discrimination to decrease.

City public spaces play an important role regarding migrants since these are the places where people meet and have the chance to relate, although they still lack conditions of equality, situations and places free from discrimination. It is recurring to see migrants gathering in the city parks or other open spaces to share their cultures, be it music, food, dancing, creating thus, a new and deep sense of community closer to what they experienced in their own countries. One of the main tasks of interculturalism policies is assuring that the relationships between all people are positive. That is why equality, power sharing and diversity awareness and recognition are regarded as a condition for positive relations to take place, otherwise stereotypes, prejudices, ignorance, misconceptions as discrimination might arise (Zapata-Barrero & Hellgren, 2023:112-13).

Contexts of discrimination separate people and create situations that are prone to foster racism, xenophobia and disrespect for others. For this reason, discrimination can lead to public spaces not being shared so often by inhabitants coming from different cultures. People (subconsciously or not) may stop attending these public spaces because they are already expecting to be diminished or to feel that they are not welcome there somehow, given racial, ethnic and cultural barriers. These can be considered as structural restrictions that migrants find in their day to day life and what needs to be tackled by those in power to change it. Power relations shape the way diversity gets perceived and organised in specific places. This is why discrimination and giving space to the feelings of how one is perceived should also be brought to the debate around interculturalism and, more specially, to the local authorities who are making efforts to change the current situation (Zapata-Barrero & Hellgren, 2023:113).

The author points out that in these places of conviviality of different cultures and customs, white people do not feel as comfortable as the ones who more typically frequent these places. When people get raised in places of high ethnic diversity, where different nationalities are encountered they get more familiar with diversity and less biased generally than the city's local inhabitants. In these neighbourhoods, it becomes possible to understand how interculturalism is rising from below, from the people that live there and from their conviviality (Zapata-Barrero & Hellgren, 2023:113).

This takes us to realise the importance of, as the authors call it, people-to-place linkages in a migrant's diverse society, that is sometimes even a precondition for people-to-people linkages to happen in the first place (ibid, p.112), and the role they play for a discrimination-free and intercultural place.

Nevertheless, bear in mind that in these multiethnic environments there tends to be an implicit segregation since the native-origin population does not live in these neighbourhoods nor attend these public spaces so frequently. One exception are the native inhabitants who encounter themselves in situations of poverty or exclusion and often share a sense of disadvantage. So even though intercultural practices might be being addressed this way in these types of environments, which is already fundamental for change to take place, the issue of urban segregation does not allow equality of opportunities for all. For the intercultural project to be fully addressed it can't only settle with a part of the population, but with it all, minorities as well as those in the majority. As the authors put it, for egalitarian intercultural citizenship to arise, discrimination and urban segregation may be the centrepiece of the problem that policy makers should address - Immigrants and individuals from visible minority groups encounter multiple challenges that extend beyond political participation and social integration, they are also facing hurdles when it comes to fundamental necessities like housing and employment (White, 2018).

Zapata-Barrero's rigorous and ongoing research work on migration and interculturalism have helped to develop the debate on this issue and keep civil society organisations, policy makers and authorities at a local and regional level informed and up to date. For the Intercultural Cities Programme, who keeps on refining itself, we can say the same, in the sense that the authors continuous studies on these concerns help the programme advance.

The author raises another interesting, complex, dimension not frequently spoken about that is illustrative of some fundamental barriers to inclusion and refers to "us". When white Europeans talk about diverse people, they tend not to put themselves in that same category. Being that the diverse ones tend to be the non-white, this indicates a sense of discrimination, distinguishing "us", the dominant group, from the non-white, the "others", putting them in a certain box of inferiority in comparison to us, white Europeans. The concept of othering typifies this dynamic, which is really prejudicial for migrants since it degrades their human rights and values. This discriminatory, racist, behaviour builds an

ideology of hatred towards external persons, migrants, making them responsible for the state's economic, political and social failures. This conduct which used to be reserved for extreme right-wing parties, is spreading across Europe and reaching not only mainstream politicians (Baker, 2020) but the media as well, framing public opinion and contributing to the idea of Fortress Europe.

Miguel Duarte, an activist working at Humans Before Borders (which is on the ground carrying out humanitarian maritime rescue in the Central Mediterranean), claims this Fortress Europe is an EU political project less visible behind its immigration policies, achieved mainly through agreements with bordering countries or other countries in the Mediterranean Sea that are not part of the EU, where immigrants who try to enter the EU end up in refugee camps without access to basic living conditions, as is the case in Turkey, or even in concentration camps or being sold into slavery in Libya, where the militias that make this possible are financed by the EU (Carneiro & Duarte, 2022). Duarte has been judged for rescuing immigrants trying to cross the Mediterranean. "The criminalisation of humanitarian aid is just one part of this project to criminalise immigration", as he puts it.

The way the EU has been conducting these operations is somehow related to othering as well, since the suffering of these hundreds of thousands of people has been relegated to the silence of refugee camps abroad. As one can imagine, the media coverage of a refugee camp in Greece attracts much more attention in Europe because the suffering here always causes much more outrage than the suffering there. Even though there are sixty thousand women who are at risk of being tortured and sold into slavery in Libya (Carneiro & Duarte, 2022).

### **The First Outlines of the Intercultural City**

The book that came to inspire the Intercultural Cities programme was *The Intercultural City - Planning for Diversity Advantage* by Charles Landry and Phil Wood (2008), "two white guys interested in crossing cultures", from Comedia, a culture and urban change advisory team and think tank that came to provoke the way of thinking city systems around the world in the last quarter of the 20th century. Landry founded Comedia in 1978 and his innovative team led more than 500 hundred projects over a 30 year project history (Comedia). Comedia was known for its innovative and interdisciplinary approach to urban development, which emphasised the importance of cultural and creative industries in shaping

the future of cities. The organisation conducted extensive research on topics such as cultural mapping, cultural planning, and the creative economy, and developed tools and methodologies for engaging communities and stakeholders in the urban planning process. Over the years, Comedia became recognised as a leading authority on cultural and urban development, and its work influenced the development of cultural policy and planning initiatives in cities around the world.

The concept of what is an intercultural city started with a Comedia research programme called the 'The Intercultural City: Making the Most of Diversity' led by Phil Wood conducted in five different countries, UK, United States, Australia, New Zealand and Norway, in 2004 (*The Origins of the Intercultural City Concept*). In short, the programme's aim was to understand how cultural diversity can lead to innovation, creativity and positive intercultural networks through dialogue. Multiple publications arose from this research which eventually led to the publication of the book which provided the methodological and conceptual foundation for the ICC.

As Zapata Barrero also defends, these authors agree that the city is the place where, in reality, experiences are felt and lived, where the economy thrives and different ethnicities mix, although it is usually the state governments who create its rules. As so, there comes the proposal from Wood and Landry for cities to become the centre of decision making as a way to maximise opportunities for their citizens in a local and bottom-up autonomous approach, as 'local turn' advocates, paying closer attention to its peoples' needs (Wood & Landry, 2007:323).

Scott E. Page already provided us a glimpse of why diversity is so important to a society's development and enrichment. His work emphasised cognitive diversity, essential for effective decision-making and problem-solving, as individuals with different perspectives and approaches can collectively produce better outcomes than homogenous groups. Charles Landry and Phil Wood approach diversity more broadly, including cultural, social, and demographic diversity in addition to cognitive diversity. They argue that a diverse city, one that embraces and celebrates its cultural differences, can be more innovative, resilient, and prosperous. While Page had already proved it in organisations and enterprises, Charles and Landry only came to justify that the same indeed works for a nation in itself - diversity brings advantage, when cultivated within this in food, sports, art, music, design, architecture, gardens, language and probably most importantly, inventions.

As Bob W. White (2018:21), an intercultural city expert, puts it “diversity lives in the cities” and the inventions that led us to the world we live in today were discovered in different parts of the world, the wheel by the sumerian people, the concept of zero by muslims as well as the pendule that was later used to measure time (Wood & Landry, 2007:33), for example. The authors also make an analogy between culture and nature. The same way nature needs ecosystems and biodiversity for animals to prosper, also culture needs diversity to develop. Taking a closer look to past history, it’s possible to fathom how change and progress occurred through the interactions between different cultures.

So, as Aristotle first put it, humans are a social animal and as such, it is in its natural condition to interact and socialise with others. The world is increasing its human mobility everyday, and societies must cope with this in terms of the relations that are being built amongst diverse people moving to different places. Not only should we foster these relations, but seek to understand how much we can gain by doing it.

Nevertheless, sometimes to communicate across cultures isn’t always easy, conflicts might arise. The way we, as humans, tend to categorise everything that exists sometimes leads to distinguishing between groups and individuals over excessively, which in extreme cases can lead to disagreements and even wars (*ibid*, p.16). Also, categorising can create animosities between people and can lead to stereotyping - most often it is a way of putting the unknown into boxes, consciously or unconsciously, as a way for one to feel more comfortable, sustaining the belief that something is already predictable (*ibid*, p.50). All conflict needs good management to be resolved and often governments do not make enough efforts to address the root of the problem. Generally, there seems to be a passive approach concerning the reality of changing populations and some of the associated resulting issues, like discrimination. But, with the right skills and tools in hand, solving this crisis is achievable, and the solution lies in the perspective we take to acknowledge and address differences. Especially when they are being a cause of the discrimination suffered, differences must be given a concrete form, (White, 2018). And here is where intercultural policies enter the picture. When intercultural regulation takes a proactive approach of intervention, through its action, there is a broader understanding and respect for the other (Wood & Landry, 2007:6).

The intercultural city is a space of connection and acceptance where one gets to explore not only the differences but also the similarities communities share. It is built and

rebuilt by the milieu of people cohabiting within it, with continuously renewing ideas based on informal dialogue between the diverse cultures and any concerning conflicts that may arise (*ibid*, p.9). It also comes from the understanding that, for an intercultural environment to prevail, one of the main challenges is that both the host and the hostess need to adapt (*ibid*, p.49) to each other within the changing reality.

What distinguishes intercultural cities from other cities is the way they come to achieve their goal of ensuring social cohesion amongst their citizens, which occurs not only from the acknowledgement of diversity, but from the creation of programmes that aim to dismantle discrimination suffered by migrants and minority groups. Apart from diversity and equality, it's essential to have sustained interactions between the people living in the city to create a sense of belonging and common ground (White, 2018). As so, the main pillars for planning intercultural policy frameworks involve the recognition and embracing of diversity, fighting discrimination and having constant meaningful dialogue.

In the same school of thought, Page had already shown us how embracing diversity can bring multiple advantages to society. Wood and Landry, as the title of their book implies, also suggest the conditions for a flourishing intercultural city to benefit from the cultural advantages offered through interculturalism when such values are well implemented. For ideas, business and a society to innovate, ideas must come from a variety of places, different cultures that provide richer environments and consequently finer perspectives and insights - this has become a collective process (*ibid*, p.220) - one individual alone will not come up with the best idea neither a group composed of too similar people. Diversity is essential.

Another crucial aspect for an intercultural city and consequently for advantageous diversity to thrive is cultural literacy, which enables citizens from different backgrounds to promote empathy, social cohesion, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity. To be culturally literate, one must possess the skills to obtain, understand, and put into practice knowledge related to diverse cultures. The intercultural city must promote this dialogue between diverse people in a regular way (*ibid*: 246). As such, there is a need for cultural literacy programs and policies that actively educate professionals on understanding how every decision can have a cultural and relevant consequence.

Wrapping *The Intercultural City - Planning for Diversity Advantage* the authors propose five principles for the intercultural city to thrive. One of them is to have adequate



leadership, a good leader that sees the advantages of diversity and acts to support it, encouraging debate on the matter and step-by-step making everyone feel welcomed in their city; Another principle is city-making, the process of shaping and designing the physical, social, and cultural environment of urban areas through an intercultural lens, where not only the leader but the public sector is aware of the planned approach; City management means to actualise the ideas, from theory into practice, engaging, as Zapata-Barrero, defending the city as a more autonomous authority from the state government capable of driving its economy; A new form of citizenship, where people respect, comprehend and interact positively with the others around them; And lastly, for an intercultural city to flourish, we need bridgers and mixers, the ones overcoming barriers, taking first steps and leading by example to show others a caring way to help shift the city for something better (*ibid*: 321-324).

Intercultural policy-making is not being implemented as broadly as it should be, given this will be everyone's future - to live in a world with increasing human mobility everyday. We are a migratory species. Humans have always moved, but from now on we will do it more and our descendants to an even greater extent, given wars, given the forces and pressures caused by global capitalism and consequently climate change. Should we not all start seeing in migrants the reality of ourselves? (Hamid, 2019) It's time to make intercultural policy understood, wanted and implemented. The intercultural society creates a sense of belonging not from race, religion or common beliefs but from the will to share a commitment to a political community (Wood & Landry, 2007:65).

This book is already 15 years old and still up-to-date in this technologically fast moving world in which we live. It makes sense. The concerns of the authors are still today's worries as we could see from Zapata-Barrero's most recent articles where he is also addressing the role cities start to have emancipating from their own state governments, as well as about interculturalism. However, it would be interesting to see how the authors would react to what has changed since the Intercultural Cities Programme was launched in 2008 and what good practices are there to serve as new examples from the 120 cities across Europe and beyond that are using this recognised framework for intercultural policy development and implementation. This is indeed one of the first programmes, surely with the largest networking basis specialised in designing, implementing and evaluating urban planning and policy-making for intercultural cities (White, 2018).

## II - The ICC in practice

Having in our minds the preambles of why intercultural policies play such a fundamental role for the cities of today, we get into the second part of our literature review, analysing how the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities programme (ICC) works in practice. This chapter will mainly be based on normative texts found on the resources of the ICC website, especially in *the intercultural city step by step: A practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural inclusion* (2021).

The programme was launched in the same year of the publication of *The Intercultural City - Planning for Diversity Advantage* by Wood and Landry, 2008. The programme provides a framework and support for cities to develop and implement intercultural policies and practices. It promotes a holistic and inclusive approach to intercultural integration, emphasising the active involvement of local communities, civil society organisations, and relevant stakeholders. By fostering intercultural dialogue and cooperation, the programme aims to build inclusive and cohesive societies where diversity is seen as an asset.

The step by step book is based on the experience of the 145 cities in Europe and beyond, who adopted this intercultural integration and inclusion model. The number of participating cities continues to grow. It serves as a tool for the cities who want to join this big network of good practices. As Page, Wood and Landry had already proven, well-managed, diverse cities can largely benefit from what migrants and minorities have to bring. What the ICC does is help with the mechanisms that already exist in the respective cities, reviewing its institutions, services and policies in several different areas in order to tackle discrimination and promote a positive intercultural approach (Council of Europe, 2021:6).

The programme is designed for competent and independent-minded local authorities, in cities normally with more than 30.000 inhabitants, that foresee a relevant amount of diversity and want to apply resources and time to design governance mechanisms and policies that will enable migrants and minorities to become an advantage for the whole community. The ICC is not constituted of concrete and singular guidelines. Since each municipality is different and with unique priorities it does not offer a 'one size fits all' system. As such, each city is invited to take advantage of the programme and its concepts as will best suit the circumstances it faces. The programme aims for cities to have a common

vision on the importance of interculturalism and not only to provide technical changes (*ibid*, p.6).

As it had already been stressed, a new era of diversity boosted by globalisation, technology, expanding urban areas and transnationalism, is creating more opportunities for cross-cultural fertilisation and the sharing of ideas and language. Unequivocally, this asks for a new approach to manage diversity, one that has in consideration the advantages of having backgrounds, occupations, histories, abilities, across genders and ages all combined for the good of society (*ibid*, p.9). When people are exposed to others with diverse attributes, they're subconsciously pushed to think more critically and in a creative way.

To better grasp what an intercultural city looks like, it is worth considering that there are two ways a city can be part of the ICC programme. The first, by enrolling directly to the ICC network and benefitting from everything it can offer, like access to expert support and the activities it regularly organises. The second, is to opt to be part of a national network (if there is one in the country of origin) (*ibid*:23). As one can imagine the process of becoming progressively more intercultural takes time and does not happen overnight. Widespread effort and will from different and important entities is strictly necessary and it can be hard to engage some stakeholders in the long way ahead (*ibid*:23).

A curious aspect mentioned in the guide is how the more stakeholders from distinct areas that are following an intercultural integration approach, the less chances there are for policies to be changed if the government shifts. The bigger the network of people and organisations with an intercultural lens the greater the longevity and chance of success (*ibid*:22). As Bob W. White puts it (2018:40), for an intercultural city to prevail it's essential to have a constant political assurance that the ideas will keep being sustained even if there are changes in influential people.

For the intercultural city to rise there are several points to be taken into consideration. For its vision to take off, policies, structures and initiatives need to be designed and readjusted to complement the pre-existing ones. Next leadership is key; the mindset of leaders is essential to give purpose to the intercultural project as well as a sense of commitment, in a visible and public way. Voices are needed to spread the word and encourage the city's citizens. Leaders should encourage political debate on the matter. Apart from this, what may turn out to be more controversial to others from a political and economic point of view, is the fact that they should also, according to the step-by-step guide, support

measures to use taxpayers' money to implement such initiatives (Council of Europe, 2021:16).

Raising awareness of the advantages that diversity can bring and on stereotypes about minority groups is central to promote social cohesion between native inhabitants and those from diverse backgrounds. In order for this to happen a big number of people involved in spreading the word are necessary, from organisations to media and social media stakeholders and to public institutions. What's more, to know the contextual dynamics of interaction and history of the city with migrants and minorities can ensure better results (*ibid*:17). In addition, it is essential to have people from the community as bridge-builders, active people with an influence in the community that are fostering intercultural relations amongst diverse people. The city's population as well, should be part of the process and consulted in order to have their voices heard when creating new strategies and also simply, to create a sense of ownership (*ibid*:21). One of the important dimensions for building intercultural competence is to give workshops and training on it. To provide people with the tools to better understand, interact and have empathy for others (*ibid*:22).

### **Elements of an Intercultural Approach**

There are 15 different elements or areas that, according to the experience of the ICC strategies around different cities, should be addressed and reviewed. All of these areas relate to urban policy and can significantly impact people's lives in the city (*ibid*:25).

As we have already seen before, the intercultural approach differs from others like multiculturalism, especially given the **interaction** between the diverse city inhabitants promoted by this type of strategy. As stated in the step-by-step guide, it is proven that the more contact people culturally, ethnically and religiously have, the lower the probability of conflict there will be in the long term, since people start to think of each other in less prejudicial ways. For interaction to be fostered it is important to simultaneously promote equality as well as recognition for different cultures, essential for intercultural mixing (*ibid*:26).

**Participation** also linked to interaction is really important to create a sense of belonging in the minority community. Every resident should participate and have the right to do so in the civic, cultural and political life of the city, as a way of communicating people's

needs and prospects and having them reflected in the life of the city focusing on common objectives and interests. This would translate in decision making processes, so that types of participation can go from consultation, feedback mechanisms to partnership and co-design of strategies. As a result, local policies become more sustainable and consequently help reduce social exclusion (*ibid:28*) by creating opportunities for people, together, to shape and influence better lives for them and their neighbours.

**Anti-discrimination** policies and mechanisms are one of the other key elements of an intercultural integration approach. As we know, discrimination is still very present due to stereotyping and the prejudices that people hold against one another. Discrimination creates impediments at very different levels like social cohesion, quality of life and the local economy. It can stop people from accessing basic services like health or housing and it certainly creates insecurity for those who experience it. The ICC meets some plans of action to address this. There are structures supporting victims of discrimination and creating ways to help stop it systematically. They can take form in official public discourse, non-formal education, partnerships with NGOs, social media strategies, intersectional activities, and anti-rumour strategies. One good example of a practice created by the ICC is the anti-rumours methodology. It basically consists of a tool to reduce stereotyping at its roots as a way to prevent discrimination and negative interactions and promote positive relations (*ibid:31-32*).

The way a city **welcomes newcomers**, emigrants and or refugees, and the mechanisms that it has set up in order to do it in the best possible way will be relevant for how the new citizens will settle and integrate in society. This not only depends on how the other people already living in the host city will receive them, but also on how communication is being conveyed with regards to diversity (*ibid:33*).

**Education** is central in everyone's life and it translates into knowledge. It also plays an important role for intercultural approaches. The way one treats others is formed from a young age. The education received at school has the power to inform the youngest members of our communities as to how they ought to treat and respect the 'other', being it by the social, physical or pedagogical environment instigated. Parents from migrant and minority groups should be involved in the school dynamics (along with the other parents), there should be ethnic diversity between teachers, students should also be ethnically mixed, the teaching curriculum should involve intercultural ideas throughout the programme it is following, etc.

The educational content and environment created in schools will be essential for the relations with the community outside the school (*ibid*:34-35).

In an ICC approach there isn't exactly the need for perfectly mixed **neighbourhoods**. This will depend on various historical and cultural attributes of the city. As long as the neighbourhood allows for ideas, people and opportunities to flow, it is moving in the right direction. Nevertheless, neighbourhood social cohesion is a good indicator of integration, of affection. Projects promoting good neighbourly relations are important for providing incentives to create relations between one another and interact across differences. They can take shape in the form of civic festivals, community centres, mediation activities, public spaces that foster cultural knowledge etc (*ibid*:36).

**Public services** are one of the other areas which also needs to be reviewed in an ICC approach. Services should be examined through an intercultural lens. For this to happen, intercultural awareness and training should be facilitated along the different areas that incorporate the public dynamic sector. Added to this, migrants and minority groups should also be represented in the body of people working as public officers (*ibid*:38).

Just as importantly, **business and labour**, as already described, can improve largely from an increased diverse background. Diversity is interlinked with a city's wealth and innovation since the diverse and skilled migrant employees will bring advantages to organisations and enterprises. Not only will they help to increase attractiveness and entrepreneurship but also competitiveness and growth (*ibid*:39). In order for this to happen it is necessary that new linkages between the recognition of migrants in the urban economy and the private and public sector are set up.

Regarding the **cultural and social life** there are numerous actions and initiatives that can be put into practice to develop and encourage a more intercultural environment, bringing art and culture to the city and at the same time making minorities proud about their origins in some cases. Examples of these types of action go from inviting artists for exhibitions, concerts and other events from the countries of origin of the city's migrants, booking migrant artists in the city's cultural agenda and promoting mutual collaborations from artists with different backgrounds (*ibid*:42).

**Public spaces** play a crucial role in intercultural cities, serving as vibrant hubs for diverse communities to interact and connect. As citizens naturally converge, these spaces are

fostering spontaneous interactions among strangers. These encounters have the potential to strengthen cross-cultural solidarity. Intercultural place-making focuses on designing spaces that facilitate meaningful connections between individuals of diverse backgrounds, while discouraging avoidance or rivalry. By prioritising them, cities can create inclusive and dynamic public spaces that celebrate diversity and promote social cohesion without needing to use extensive financial resources, they just need to want it (*ibid*:42-43).

**Mediation and conflict resolution** are crucial for an ICC to thrive. In a diverse environment, conflicts are bound to arise, and the process of intercultural integration is not always smooth. Factors like inequalities, poverty and cultural or ethnic differences can contribute to social tensions and be even a source of conflicts. However, an intercultural city does not shy away from these types of conflict or dismiss them. Instead, it fully embraces diversity while actively identifying, anticipating, and addressing conflicts that may arise. This proactive approach to conflict mediation and resolution is crucial for fostering harmonious coexistence within a dynamic and diverse community. In fact, the optimal intercultural city recognizes that conflict resolution can bring forth opportunities for innovation and growth, learning by them. One measure that it can take is, for example, to identify whether there are any city hotspots that are facing more difficulties such as conflict regarding housing, segregation or educational issues and ensuring swift and appropriate action according to the area's needs (*ibid*:44-45).

**Language** holds a key position in fostering integration and respecting diverse linguistic communities. Learning the host country's language is crucial for newcomers, while equal respect for all languages is essential in cities with diverse populations. Schools play a pivotal role in promoting multilingualism and language awareness, especially in the context of super-diversity where students bring a variety of heritage languages. Embracing language diversity not only enhances understanding and communication but also boosts the well-being, identity development, and academic performance of non-native language speakers. By valuing and encouraging native languages, an intercultural city creates an inclusive environment that supports the success of all students (*ibid*:46).

Traditional and social **media plus communication** hold an enormous influence over attitudes towards cultural differences shaping public opinion. City authorities should work with the media to create a more favourable environment for positive intercultural relations. In an Intercultural Cities approach, meetings with journalists could be held to familiarise them

with the concept and encourage their partnership in achieving project goals to embrace diversity. The objective is to transform local media into an active participant with an intercultural lens. Regular discussions with the media should be held to update them on project progress. To enhance inclusivity, media content should reflect social diversity, and efforts should be made to diversify the staff at media organisations to better represent the audience as well. By actively engaging the media and promoting diversity, cities can better foster intercultural understanding and dialogue (*ibid*:48).

An **international outlook** is embraced by actively seeking connections with other countries. These connections serve various purposes, such as developing business relations, exchanging knowledge and expertise, promoting tourism, and acknowledging existing ties between the cities. The intercultural strategy of a city involves proclaiming openness to external ideas and influences while simultaneously projecting its own identity. Zapata-Barrero also backs networks of cities for these to thrive as we have seen before. By actively engaging with the international community, an intercultural city promotes cultural exchange, economic growth, and the development of inclusive and globally connected societies (*ibid*:50).

The last element is **leadership and citizenship**. One of the most impactful actions a city can take to embrace interculturality is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents, irrespective of their origin, nationality, or residence status. While formal political rights are typically determined at higher levels, city councils can influence interactions and cooperation among diverse groups regarding the allocation of power and resources. By redefining citizenship at the local level to recognise and value diversity, cities can innovate and test inclusive practices that may even catalyse changes in legislation. Participatory democracy initiatives enable foreign residents to engage in political debates and decision-making and some cities have explored granting their own form of urban citizenship, based on residency and the connection to the local territory. These inclusive approaches empower residents, foster social cohesion and unlock the full potential of intercultural leadership and citizenship within the city (*ibid*:52).



## Policy Frameworks

As suggested by the step-by-step guide (*ibid*:16-21), three stages are proposed for the development and implementation of intercultural strategies. Firstly, a vision for the intercultural city identifying political leadership and commitment to it, as well as ensuring a diversity-friendly discourse, would be implemented. Next, an intercultural strategy would be prepared, mapping the major issues and challenges; then the intercultural strategy would be built in a process involving consultation, participation, monitoring and evaluation.

Bob W. White after introducing what is presented in the step-by-step guide also suggests another similar framework structure that he calls building blocks for intercultural cities, corresponding to the process one may follow to create new policies, easily adapted to different circumstances (White 2018:42). According to Figure 3 found in the appendix, White suggests this approach: Documentation of local expertise and knowledge, analysis of local context and challenges, mobilisation and communication, consultation and partnerships, and finally monitoring and evaluation.

On the whole, putting together the aforementioned ideas conveyed in the step-by-step guide, the 10 points for policy-making (Council of Europe, 2021:21) and the building blocks, we can highlight these following steps in the creation of intercultural policy frameworks under an ICC approach. First, participating cities conduct a self-assessment to analyse their intercultural strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement. Based on this assessment, an intercultural profile is developed to understand the city's diversity and existing policies. Cities then formulate an intercultural strategy and translate it into a practical action plan with clear goals, activities, and responsible stakeholders. After this, implementation will involve resource mobilisation, stakeholder engagement, and project initiation. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be essential to assess the framework's impact, while cities share their experiences and good practices. A continuous review and improvement should be pursued to adapt policies and promote intercultural understanding and inclusion (*ibid*:54-57).

## Evaluation Processes

It's clear even for the Council Of Europe (2021:54) that an ideal system to assess the progress and impact of intercultural integration policies is still not fully developed. It is constantly evolving. Monitoring these programmes has been demonstrated to be a complex task with multiple challenges such as a lack of data, tightening budgets and methodological issues among others.

Apart from this, there is almost no research comparing intercultural approaches within the ICC programme and other policies for diversity inclusion and integration (White 2018:43), which doesn't permit the evaluation of programme differences and/or similarities in a constructive way. Even if there is an increasing interest in showing the advancements and impact in cities following the ICC programme, there is still a lack of evidence to comprehensively illustrate the effectiveness of some policies (*ibid*:43-44).

In 2014 at a conference organised by the Council of Europe in Hungary on evaluation strategies for the ICC, the participants came to the consensus that both intercultural policies and the methods to evaluate their effectiveness are still in the early stages of development (*ibid*:44). This emphasises the need for cities to effectively document and demonstrate the impact of intercultural policies if they wish to fully harness the potential of the intercultural ideals. It underscores the ongoing efforts to advance evaluation practices in intercultural contexts and highlights the importance of evidence-based approaches in shaping effective intercultural policies.

Nevertheless, the ICC Index is a good complementary tool to evaluate how well cities are engaged in the programme's progression regarding parameters such as their commitment; intercultural lens; mediation and conflict resolution; language; local media relations; open and international outlook; intelligence and competence; approach to welcoming new arrivals; governance; the adaptation of the education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civic life; and lastly public space (Council of Europe). These indicators capture key aspects of intercultural policies and practices, allowing the cities to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. By using this Index, cities can measure their intercultural development over time, compare their performance with other participating cities, and set targets for enhancing their intercultural policies (Council of Europe 2021:54). In order to have an even clearer picture of the general situation, the index

can be compared with other evaluation tools like the MIPEX, for example, that analyses comparable elements as the ICC but offers distinct outcomes (White 2018:42-45).

From now on, following the example of Barcelona, when a new city wants to follow an intercultural interaction approach with the ICC programme, it should start measuring its progress from the very beginning for consistency, even though it might require more funds. This way, it is easier to understand if the objectives are being followed and if goals are being accomplished (*ibid*:46).

As there are still inconsistencies when it comes to the evaluation of the ICC programme, one of the major challenges for the programme is to do more research and develop tools that are more conclusive in providing effective progress evaluation. Furthermore, to do so would serve to convince policymakers and funding agencies of the value in allocating public funds towards intercultural policy (*ibid*:46). Eventually, it is also essential to have good links and information sharing between the city governments that do pursue the policies with the entities that put them in practice - the relation between policy outputs and policy outcomes (*ibid*:48).

### **III - Integration in Portugal**

Now that we have a clearer picture of what the main elements and objectives of an Intercultural City are and how it is constituted, we will proceed by characterising the current status of migrants integration in Portugal and their reception by the locals. After this, we'll focus on how the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities is contributing at a national level, before moving up to a wider analysis of our case study of the city of Lisbon.

#### **State of the affairs**

Portugal experienced an increase in migration flows in the early 2000s, receiving more immigrants than ever since it assumed a stable political situation after the end of the far right wing dictatorship and the immediate instability that followed. The profile of the people coming to the country was more diverse than usual - not only in terms of nationality but also regarding their economic sector. This exponential growth, at the time, brought new challenges in terms of public policy for the integration of migrants (Observatório das Migrações, 2022:15). New relations and partnerships between local entities were here to stay.

At the time, the High Commissariat for Migration (ACM) developed new logistical and informational centres around the country to help migrants with day-to-day tasks, called Local Support Centres for Migrant Integration (CLAIM), working in cooperation with municipalities, higher education institutions, civil society entities and NGOs. These centres have proved essential in the recent challenges the country has been facing, such as the COVID 19 pandemic and its effects on migrant communities, the national commitment to the reception and accompaniment of people displaced by the war in Ukraine or migrants in vulnerable situations (*ibid*:7). Besides this, they also work as hubs for activities that in the end, reflect the plurality of origins and cultures that make up the territories where they are operating.

By the end of 2022, CLAIM had established 154 offices around Portugal, which not only shows the engagement of the municipalities with migrants but also of the state government. The two, local and national administrations have established good relations and made significant efforts to promote interculturality (*ibid*:7).

In 2021, the number of foreign residents with a valid residence permit was around 700 000, which in percentage represents 6.8% of the total number of residents in Portugal. We know that these numbers are higher around urban clusters, where normally one can find more job opportunities. In fact, the foreign population living in Portugal was mainly concentrated in the district of Lisbon. Almost 300 000 migrants were living here, representing 42% of the total number of migrants in the country. Therefore, it is normal that around metropolitan areas, stronger networks of mutual help are formed (*ibid*:9-10).

### **What the MIPEX and OECD statistics tell**

Opening the MIPEX interactive world map with statistics, one encounters the positive analysis of Portugal, being one of the only four countries with a warming and positive colour (see Figure 4 in the Appendix). According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which gathers 58 different indicators, Portugal is ranked third, with an 81% overall score, after Sweden (86%) and Finland (85%) and before Canada (80%) (MIPEX, 2020).

Regarding the penultimate assessment in 2014, Portugal's overall score increased by 3% points. There were positive changes in Portuguese indicators: a better school curriculum on cultural diversity, wider healthcare access for asylum-seekers and involvement of migrants in health information as well as improvements in the residence requirement for ordinary naturalisation (MIPEX, 2020). Regarding negative changes, none were noted.

Integration policies in Portugal seem to be moving in a good direction according to these indicators, proving that the two-way process of an intercultural structure is emerging given that there is public's willingness to accept and interact with immigrants, but also immigrants enjoying equal rights, opportunities and security (*ibid*). The principal indicators (seen on Figure 5 in the appendix) of this index vary slightly from the ICC index but in combination, they are a good way of studying and analysing the interculturality of a place and integration of immigrants.

According to a report done by the OECD, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023*, Portugal has made positive structural changes in terms of integration improvements in the last ten years. These changes have led to a reduction of overcrowded housing situations, a very common situation amongst immigrants who live in Portugal. The percentage of foreign-born individuals living in overcrowded houses is almost 10%, which, whilst

significant, appears not to be so high when compared to the other countries of this study. Nevertheless, regarding living in substandard accommodation, Portugal holds one of the highest percentages, of around 33% for foreign-born people (OECD, 2023).

When it comes to language proficiency, Portugal is the country with the second highest rating after Croatia (see figure 6 in the appendix) (OECD, 2023). This data indicates high levels of integration of immigrants in Portugal because language is one of the most important skills for migrants to develop. It is what will allow them to have more opportunities in the labour market and to integrate with the local inhabitants.

Portugal is also one of the countries of the OECD, where immigrants are more prone to acquire nationality, with a percentage of nearly 90% (OECD 2023). Nevertheless, the Portuguese legal system is one of the least trusted by foreigner-born people living in the country, with a percentage of only 20% confident in the system.

Another interesting element of data in this OECD report regards a question asked to native-born Portuguese people, namely, “Is Portugal made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?” on a scale of 0 to 10 where the mean score was around 6, a positive response. The host-society views on the integration of non-EU migrants in the EU has the highest rate in Portugal with almost 90% considering integration to be successful, which is a signal that reflects overall positive attitudes towards them and better integration outcomes, indicative of positive social cohesion (OECD 2023).

### **What the press is starting to cover**

Apart from the promising results from the latest statistics, Portugal is facing a serious problem of labour exploitation and neo-slavery, that has seen its media coverage increased in the recent years, principally since the pandemics.

The number of immigrants, normally illegal immigrants brought by smugglers from their own countries, is increasing. The first scandal around this subject happened during the pandemics, which brought more media exposure, raising awareness on the topic. In their countries of origin, mainly Romania, Moldova, India, Senegal, Pakistan, Morocco and Algeria (Reuters, 2022), people would pay large amounts of money, reaching 18 000 thousand Euros to have the “privilege” of coming to Europe to work. Getting deeper into

debt, the organised criminals do not offer discounts and may even hold the families staying in the native country as hostages. This type of subcontracted work is happening mostly around the Tagus river with clam harvesting, in the olive and almond groves of Alqueva and around the area of Odemira with berries greenhouses. Landowners, the primary recipients of the economic gains from this business, increase their profits while avoiding any social obligations by assigning responsibility to temporary contractors through agencies. Not only does this agricultural model cause environmental harm, but it also results in decreased wages and labour rights. The pursuit of quick and effortless profits takes precedence over considerations of quality, as well as the well-being of workers and consumers, as evidenced by the excessive use of chemicals and pesticides. This system relies on the exploitation of immigrants, undocumented labour, tax evasion, and the non-payment of social security contributions, and in some cases, even in the withholding of workers' salaries. Alongside the labour exploitation, exorbitant profit margins of 200% or 300% arise from the rental of cramped "rooms" or overcrowded containers. Moreover regarding transportation to work, it is usually done in 9-seater vans that sometimes carry up to 15 people. This is also deducted from the worker's minimum wage down to the last cent, which results in wages being reduced to as little as 200 euros each month (Matos, 2022). In some of the cases the contractors are the ones holding the workers' documents putting them in an even more vulnerable situation. As Matos (2022) states, all of these characteristics imply that this is indeed slave work, according to the UN and the ILO - "any subject who is forced to work, for debt, in degrading conditions and on an exhausting day".

Labour trafficking has risen as Portugal's native population has aged and declined amid falling birth rates and emigration to more prosperous northern EU countries (Reuters, 2022). The rural interior is also facing a tremendous depopulation as people are moving to the cities. Without the labour of immigrants, some of the sectors that have experienced significant growth in recent years, from the restaurant industry to tourist accommodation, from construction to intensive agriculture, would come to an immediate halt. However, this same economy for which they are indispensable has constructed an agricultural-intensive "business model" based on neo-slavery, where labour recruitment companies take advantage of the vulnerable situation of undocumented workers. This model turns a blind eye to the lack of dignity and conditions these people are working in, causing serious injustices. More investigations into the matter are starting to happen more often around Portugal and those suspected of involvement in human trafficking are being arrested as massive operations are

starting to take place by the authorities (Rádio E Televisão De Portugal, 2023) (Reuters, 2022).

### **Portuguese Public Opinion on immigration**

Portugal has a historical connection with former colonies, such as Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique, and Brazil, which has influenced the perception of immigrants in the last decades amongst the general Portuguese population. Cultural ties and shared language often facilitate integration and foster positive attitudes.

There is an awareness that immigrants play a crucial role in sectors such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, and domestic services, filling labour gaps and contributing to economic growth. As stated in the last Statistical Annual Report presented by the state entity, ACM, without immigrants, some economic sectors and activities would collapse, reinforcing the fact that immigration in Portugal is essentially active and contributes to the nation flourishing (Reis De Oliveira, 2022: 5). Many immigrants are also starting their own businesses, opening restaurants or grocery stores. Yet, it is essential to legislate for equitable jobs that suit people's qualifications, which in an economy like the Portuguese one has been hard even for the native-born residents. This is a priority area of intervention with the greatest relevance today, particularly in a post-pandemic context and with major socio-economic vulnerability resulting from the war in Ukraine affecting all of Europe (Reis De Oliveira, 2022: 6).

Overall, public opinion on immigrants in Portugal has been relatively positive (see figure 7 in the appendix). In the most recent survey (Reis De Oliveira, 2022: 27) that dates back from 2019, Portugal appears in the group of countries that consider immigration as a positive factor for the country's development, given that almost half of respondents answered favourably. Portuguese society generally perceives immigrants as contributing to the country's economy, culture, and demographic vitality.

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the far-right wing movement is gaining more support in Portugal in recent years, with the growth of the nationalist party 'Chega', and along with it more populist ideas (Calado, 2021: 5). Barbara Reis, a portuguese journalist wrote an article about some populist ideas heard in the parliament about immigrants, which the author deconstructed, proving they were misleading (Reis, 2023). It's always a good idea



to challenge stereotyping and unfounded ideas, contributing to an anti-rumor strategy, even more importantly in the media where it can be acknowledged by a wider audience.

Statements like “immigrants enter Portugal by any means necessary to use our public goods” or “immigrants are stealing our jobs” or even “more immigration increases crime” (Reis, 2023) have been heard around Europe in general, but now, in Portugal you hear it more often as well. What’s more, this populist type of discourse isn’t plausible, as the facts below help to dispel.

First of all, there are 660 thousand legal foreigners in Portugal who contribute to the Social state Portuguese system. In 2022 alone, immigrant workers contributed with €1.5 billion, a record of 19% more compared to the year before. As Barbara Reis stated in *PÚBLICO*, the Observatory of Migrations (OM) has already shown that immigrants give much more than what they receive from the Portuguese State. Between what immigrants paid to the Portuguese state and what they received from the state, the difference was €968 million, this being profit for the country. So yes, one can say that immigrants use Portuguese public goods, but why shouldn’t they? They’re not only paying for themselves to use the services, but for others too as they are making the country profit (Reis, 2023). Secondly, more than 50% of the immigrants working in Portugal do low-skilled jobs as opposed to 38% of the Portuguese natives living in the country. Immigrants are indeed filling this gap when it comes to unqualified jobs and even though immigration is increasing, unemployment rates are decreasing so it is also wrong to say that “immigrants are stealing our jobs” - they are engaging in some of the labour that Portuguese-born citizens would prefer not to do, often activities essential for the economy.

Despite this, more progressive legislation, as well as action, is necessary and there still is a long way to go when it comes to improving the living conditions, the integration of immigrant communities and, of course, besides this, to acknowledge that people’s diverse cultures and backgrounds offer a multitude of opportunities.

### **The Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI)**

The Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities RPCI dates from 2012 and already includes 16 cities around the country. Since 2021, the RPCI is now an entity registered under the Portuguese National Law (Council of Europe, 2023).

Each city has its own strategy. Cities approach their objectives in different ways, finding tailor-made solutions to their local challenges, making use of the resources and partnerships at their disposal. Each plan is then specific to each city, although they can collaborate with each other. RPCI focuses on migrant integration plans. These plans incorporate the action strategies of the entities that work in the field of migration and contribute to the process of immigrants integrating into Portuguese society (Calado, 2020). Amongst the different cities engaged in the RPCI, sharing good practices and experiences is a good way to learn from and support each other.

Just like we saw above in *policy frameworks* and *evaluation processes*, this framework for the migrant integration plans follow similar guidelines as the ICC. Starting with a diagnosis, involving all stakeholders with participatory approaches to collect information about the needs of migrants, this data is used as a basis for a preliminary plan. After this step, they engage in the search for liaison with relevant local or national partners and organisations that can contribute to the objective, joining forces. Subsequently, concrete actions and actors of such a plan are defined. The whole community is involved. And lastly, a continuous evaluation since the beginning of the project is made, including everyone who participated as well as the ones the project was aimed at (Calado, 2020).

Apart from these local projects that the municipalities draft and implement, there are annual and regular actions that they must follow according to their membership in the Intercultural Cities Network, some at an international level. These can be proposals for the city to take part in studies, test new tools and give its opinion on them; to participate in network events and workshops at international level, normally two to three events are promoted to all the partners; to participate in the RPCI annual meetings, usually there are two encounters to discuss a common project to which the council of Europe participates with 10 000 to 15 000 euros; amongst others (Calado, 2020: 5).

Carla Calado, the coordinator of the RPCI, states that there is a good relationship and mutual support between the Portuguese cities that make part of the network. It is frequent for the cities to work together, reinforcing each other in some of their projects, sharing good and creative practices (Calado, 2021).

For instance, last year, five main projects were led around the participating cities. One of them was on Gender and Interculturalism studying how both concepts intersect. Others were focused on employability networks to understand how these can be more inclusive of

immigrants. A third one under the title ‘welcoming Ukrainians’ aimed at improving the capacity for cities to include and support the people fleeing the war. The other two projects that are still running this year are Net Idea and DiverCities. Another big focus of every city is to disseminate the guides and handbooks to better help immigrants integrate and the communities receiving them. The handbooks are available on the official website of the RPCI and of the Council of Europe. They vary from a welcoming guide, an anti-rumor guide, a facilitation guide for welcoming sessions, a handbook with intercultural projects and more. Apart from these plans, the RPCI runs a Podcast called *Portugal Plural* that has released seven episodes since it was launched in January 2022 and the network is present on social media. (Calado, 2022).

## **IV - Lisbon Case Study**

After this short introduction to how the Portuguese network operates, attention can be drawn to addressing the research question “How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the integration of diversity in Lisbon? An exploration of the main challenges in the city”. We will start with an introduction to the environment of the city of Lisbon. This will be followed by the current municipal plan for the integration of migrants that the city is pursuing with the main challenges raised by migrants. Subsequently, we will get into recent news on immigration, on what’s going on in the city. Given the context to grasp the present situation in Lisbon, we will describe the methodology used in the case study and subsequently will follow the analysis and interpretation of the interviews in order to have a clearer picture of the main challenges that immigrants are facing as well as to understand the role that the ICC is having in this regard.

### **Lisbon State of Affairs**

The current situation in Lisbon at first glance seems positive. Only by taking a closer look, will one realise that for some of the cases of immigrants arriving in the capital, the situation is far from ideal.

Lisbon has been, since its early stages of development, a geostrategic point of entrance both of people and of goods, a space for cultural exchanges, encounters and diversity, at levels comparable to the other major European cities. It serves as a connecting point between the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Africa and Europe (RPCI, 2023).

Around 14% of the entire migrant population, 55 000 people, lives in the city of Lisbon and not in Greater Lisbon, the region surrounding Lisbon, they are mostly from Brazil, China, Nepal, Cape Verde, France, Spain, Italy, India, Romania, Bangladesh, Angola and Ukraine.

The municipality in line with the ACM has built various local centres with the objective of helping migrants with their issues in the country. In 1993 it also started promoting a council for Interculturality and Citizenship (RPCI 2023). Overall, it has been developing a wide range of new policies that foster equality, non-discrimination and that try

to build an ever more open and diverse city. Nevertheless there are still some urgent issues that need to be addressed.

### **Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants in Lisbon**

Municipal plans for the integration of migrants are done in line with the national plan for the integration of migrants but according to the most urgent needs in each municipality. There are 308 municipalities in Portugal and these municipal plans are only being made in 14 of these municipalities, which presents a challenge for those municipalities that do not have one (Proposta 96/2021). The municipality of Lisbon, being located in the centre of the capital, hosts a large number of migrants as we have seen above, so it is of great importance to have such a plan developed and implemented here.

Until the present year, 2023, three plans have been implemented in Lisbon's municipality since their initial development in 2015 (*ibid*), respectively PMIML 2015-2017, PMIML 2018-2020 and the current one PMIML 2020-2022. The Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants currently in effect is still the one from 2020-22. Before the end of 2023, the plan for 2024-2026 will be presented (Proposta nº167/2023) (Lusa, 2023).

In this sense the achievements of the Central State through the national plan for migrants is complemented in Lisbon through the municipal plan (CML, 2020:7) in adherence with the following measures and guidelines: to address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; to provide access to basic services to migrants; to empower migrants and society at large to achieve full cohesion and inclusion; to eliminate all forms of discrimination and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and abilities.

The plan in the first place presents an assessment based on the evaluation of the last plan (2018-2020) with suggestions of measures to be undertaken in Lisbon having been proposed by the migrants living in the city and presented in parallel with one by the various civil society organisations. This means that the plan follows a participatory approach in which migrants, civil society organisations, different local entities involved in migrants support, along with Lisbon's municipality take part in the development of the plan (CML 2020: 9). Given the pandemic period in which the research took place, the participatory models had to be adapted to virtual and online ones.

According to Figure 8 (in the Appendix), one can see the main difficulties felt by immigrants in Lisbon. The most pressing issue is the right to housing which has been a very controversial and recurrent theme in the city of Lisbon, that has experienced a rapid gentrification process in recent years. The international projection as a tourist destination, together with foreign investment policies, turned what should be a basic right into a financial asset (CML 2020:25) making housing difficult both for immigrants but also for Portuguese-born inhabitants as well. In 2018, in the municipality of Lisbon, the percentage of immigrants living in overcrowded houses was 25%, while for natives it was 8%. Another valuable data-point regards the Supported Rental Programme in 2019, 10 279 requests were made concerning requests for municipal housing and affordable rent of which only 144 were awarded, representing 2,4% of the total number of requests (*ibid*:26). The housing problem felt by immigrants is followed by difficulties relating to employment, business creation and vocational training.

As we have seen before, informal work is very frequent among immigrants, mainly in agriculture, fishing, domestic services, construction, etc., thus, immigrants are more exposed to the risk of unemployment and poor working conditions. After this, there are the regularisation processes, which are often very slow and then problems relating to discrimination and violence given ethnicity, racism, gender, LGBTBI+ identity. On both of these topics it is important to stress that it is essential to have intercultural mediators and to train public service employees to provide empathetic, friendly and effective service to the public, as there have been several complaints on the mistreatment of migrants, heightened if these are LGBTBI+ (*ibid*:19-24).

Secondly, the municipal plan presents the main elements on which it will focus, according to the challenges identified in Fig. 7, followed by tables with the approximate measures (CML 2020:84-92) to be applied in each of the areas, in which we will not get into detail.

### **Left-wing Press Opinion**

The mainstream media does not seem to sufficiently address some of the injustices facing migrants happening around the city, which are reported by some alternative leftist press like Fumaça, a journalism podcast, or Esquerda, a news portal. Some examples are

outlined below to provide a wider picture of some of the things that occur and are not given significant attention.

The mayor of Lisbon, Carlos Moedas has made some remarks that illustrate a non-inclusive attitude echoing the ideas of the leader of the far-right party, Andre Ventura. Moedas was talking about immigration, following a fire in the Mouraria neighbourhood that killed two migrant workers and injured 14 others, people who lived in squalid conditions in overcrowded housing that, like others before it, burned down, when he uttered “People cannot come to our country without having a job” (Afonso 2023). This type of statement illustrates troubling xenophobia from the city’s main representative. It’s also contradictory to the attitude Lisbon has been promoting when it regards platform capitalism or hi-tech overexploitation. He has been promoting an economy centred on the power of the large technology companies that dominate deliveries and tourism, TVDE or local accommodation, whose operation depends on cheap immigrant labour (*ibid*). Apart from this, it’s as if immigrants that arrive without a work contract are to blame for what happened (Esquerda 2023). The organised criminals and trafficking networks must be combated and the municipality has to do something concrete.

The overcrowded housing situation is very common. Prices are still rising and it doesn't look like there's going to be a significant change in the state of play. As Beatriz Ramalho Da Silva, a young Portuguese journalist from the Guardian stated, “Wealthy overseas buyers lured by ‘golden visas’ helped create a city where workers struggle to find homes” (Da Silva 2022). Lisbon is currently experiencing gentrification like many other cities in Europe have already experienced - property prices are soaring and tourism keeps booming which represents one of the biggest challenges for Lisboners and new immigrants arriving in the city. There is a lack of decent housing conditions at affordable prices.

The concrete case of Timorese immigrants is also alarming. About a year ago, news broke of the vulnerable situation of hundreds of Timorese who arrived in Portugal through immigration networks that charge them thousands of euros with the promise of work in the agricultural sector. But once they arrive in Portugal, the dream is quickly shattered, with the unhealthy conditions, precariousness and lack of work giving way to hunger and homelessness in Lisbon, where many Timorese migrant workers are travelling in search of new work. The Lisbon mayor is now planning another eviction of 75 Timorese immigrants

that are temporarily living in a Municipal Police Pavilion that was transformed into an emergency centre for Ukrainians when the war started.

They are often sent to other centres across the country but usually this leads to other difficulties. In the past when Timorese people were sent to Fátima and Fundão, they were not given any support with regard to their integration into the labour market, nor were they helped with the process of the regularisation and obtaining of documents. It is worth noting that when Timorese individuals are resettled in distant, non-urban areas, their mobility becomes severely restricted, as they often lack the financial means required for travel. Remaining *ad aeternum* in a place where their life is limited to eating and sleeping is a luxury that these people cannot afford, as they have debts associated with the cost of having travelled to Portugal, and their families depend on their efforts to become autonomous (Carneiro 2023).

Low-income immigrants in the city of Lisbon face a myriad of challenges as they strive to establish their lives in a foreign land. Beyond the issues mentioned earlier, such as exploitative immigration networks and substandard living conditions, these individuals often confront linguistic barriers, employment discrimination and social exclusion, which can leave them feeling marginalised and vulnerable, which doesn't help in their integration into the local community. Limited proficiency in the Portuguese language can be a significant obstacle, hampering their ability to secure employment and access some services.

Another pressing concern for immigrants in Lisbon is the soaring cost of living in the city. Housing prices and rental rates have surged in recent years, making it increasingly challenging for newcomers with limited financial resources to secure affordable accommodation. This often forces them into overcrowded and substandard housing arrangements, further compromising their quality of life. Additionally, the lack of access to healthcare and educational opportunities can hinder the well-being and future prospects of immigrant families. Low-income immigrants in Lisbon contend with a complex web of socioeconomic and systemic hurdles, necessitating comprehensive policies and support structures to facilitate their successful integration and equitable access to opportunities within the city. That is why we will now proceed with the analysis of our interviews intended to grasp the reality felt in the city.



## Methodology

As we come to the empirical part of this thesis, it becomes essential to understand which research method we followed. As doing case study research and as recommended by professor Alessio Surian, we decided to follow *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* by Robert K. Yin (2018). The guidance provided by our tutors was also a big help given its guidelines with structured chapters and examples of questions we should try to answer.

Regarding our time-space frame, we are looking at the present time having in account the last 5 years approximately in the city of Lisbon whilst looking as well at the general picture around Portugal. Given that our research question focused on how the ICC is effectively having an impact in the city of Lisbon, we chose to focus on this territory and what the main challenges are when it comes to the integration of immigrants in Lisbon, being this the hot topic to acknowledge what still has to be done in a programme of which its main focus is to promote interculturality.

The methodology consisted of a qualitative analysis. According to Yin (2018), a case study is most relevant when trying to explain a contemporary circumstance (Yin 2018:33) and this is exactly what we've been seeking - to understand the major challenges that our city is facing when it comes to immigration and what has been done by the ICC. By doing a qualitative analysis with both experts in the field and immigrants living and working in the city we're seeking to grasp a real-world perspective of this issue in Lisbon (*ibid* 35).

The research method we opted for is an explanatory case study, our research question being "How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the integration of diversity in Lisbon? An exploration of the main challenges in the city". By trying to understand the circumstances around immigration in Lisbon with our interviewees we're seeking a deeper exploration of the contextual conditions to address our research question. We opted to pursue a relativist perspective with our interviews, subdividing them into subthemes in order to capture the different perspectives of our interviewees on the same topics so as to understand how they will illuminate our study on immigration, as suggested by Yin (*ibid* 47). The applications for our case study are to illustrate our topics in a descriptive mode, which was only undertaken with the experts in the field not with the immigrants themselves and to enlighten situations in which what is being evaluated has no specific set of

outcomes (*ibid* 50), which resulted in having longer interviews with the experts on the theme and shorter interviews with the migrants themselves. This was not specifically planned beforehand, it just naturally happened that way, according to how the interviews flowed.

Our empirical research and the set of questions chosen were based on our previous literature review on the topic and what were considered the main issues regarding the integration of immigrants in the city. So as a research design, based on the information outlined in the section titled, *Lisbon state of affairs*, we wanted to extrapolate whether our interviewees experience in reality that which the research had suggested and to grasp what else they have to tell us on this topic, being that our literature review narrowed our plan for the interviews. That is why it was so important to define sub questions such as “Regarding the reception and integration services provided by the Portuguese institutions, how do you think these have been interacting with immigrants?” and “Could you provide insights on the housing crisis in Lisbon and its implications?”. These study questions, as Yin suggests, help to delimit the research and identify important information among our interviewees - “The more a case study contains specific questions and propositions, the more it will stay within feasible limits.” (*ibid* 63) By asking these two questions we could focus on two of the major problems the city is facing at the moment, those that were identified in the literature review.

Our approach to the interviews that were made was to follow inductive reasoning, nevertheless not forgetting how important it is that our case study is an opportunity to shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts or principles that we had presented above in the literature review.

The empirical research started in July and finished in the beginning of September. A total of ten interviews were completed and can be subdivided in two groups of interviewees. A first set of interviews were carried out with six experts working in the field of immigration in the city of Lisbon, both in institutions and non-governmental organisations. The second set of interviews took place with four immigrants living in the city. Having both types of interviews was essential to get different perspectives of firstly, the people working in the area to improve and dynamize intercultural relations and secondly, of immigrants living in Lisbon to actually tell their experiences and how they feel about it.

Regarding the people we chose to interview, we had a big list with names that could provide insight on this topic. We reached out to most of them. Some of them did not reply, and what was particularly disappointing was that none of the academics, scholars and

researchers working in the field of and teaching about immigration that we contacted replied. There were some other potential interviewees that made initial contact, but eventually stopped engaging.

Two persons that were essential to interview, and we accomplished that aim, was firstly the coordinator of the RPCI, the Portuguese Network of the Intercultural Cities, Carla Calado and secondly, the person responsible working directly with the RPCI on the field of interculturality from Lisbon's municipal government, Luís Gaspar. By interviewing the former we were able to grasp aspects of how in practice the ICC really functions in Portugal. With the latter we got a perspective on how the municipality is currently looking at interculturality, essential to understanding the path that it's taking in this sense.

The other four interviewees from a immigration background that we managed to interview were Beatriz Ramalho Da Silva, a young promising figure in journalism, working with The Guardian and Al Jazeera covering, above all, inequalities and immigration; Teresa Tito de Morais who has already retired but was the founder and President of the Portuguese Council for Refugees working in the area for more than 30 years; Carmo Belford, coordinator of the legal department in the Jesuit Refugee Service in Portugal and Maria Reis, psychologist and co-founder of Humans Before Borders, a collective of volunteers and activists fighting for refugees and migrants rights.

Regarding the immigrants interviews, first I contacted my housekeeper, who is Brazilian, to ask if I could do an interview and by chance she brought another Brazilian friend with her for the interview as well. I had a third interview with a Brazilian girl whom I met at a shop I went to. After a little talking I understood that she was an immigrant too and asked permission to do a quick interview. The last immigrant I got to interview was a Bangladeshi neighbour of mine that runs a grocery shop.

All interviewees were asked for permission for us to record the interviews but there were two that did not allow it, which made us take extensive written notes especially on these two, Carla Calado and Luís Gaspar, to have as much detail as possible. The interviews that we got to record with our phones were then transcribed using a platform called Cockatoo.

The reliability and credibility of the interviews is based principally on the selection of participants, which are all relevant to the study, have firsthand knowledge on immigration and hold different perspectives on it. Apart from this, the questions that were asked were

mainly identical for everyone with some small exceptions, when interviewing Carla Calado, we needed to know the ICC procedures etc. and so had some specific additional questions regarding this topic.

## **Limitations**

We tried to have a sample of academics, local authorities, government entities, journalists, associations and NGOs. Unfortunately we couldn't reach out to all of these entities even though we tried. For instance, we were in contact with the High Commissioner for Migration for several weeks and even though we even sent an interview request to the ACM Board of Directors as well as an interview script we were not able to run the interview because suddenly our contact stopped replying.

## Results

To present the results from our case study we will firstly provide some of the information about our interviewees which has relevance to our study, like their profession and familiarity with the ICC. Secondly, we will present the results of the interviews, organised by theme, according to the questions that were asked. Our discussion surrounding and interpretation of the results and personal opinions on what was commented will be explored in a later chapter.

- Carla Calado

Carla Calado, the ICC coordinator, provides insights on how the ICC works. She starts by explaining her duties within the network. She explains everything cities need to do when they enter the network, all their obligations and all the advantages of becoming a member of the network. She hosts a meeting with all the cities, usually twice a year, to enable them to share good practice. Her task is always to promote the sharing of experiences, case studies, projects, ideas - what they are doing through collaboration with the other municipalities, so that peer learning experiences are promoted.

Apart from this, Carla Calado has the responsibility of engaging the cities within the ICC in one joint project every year, usually with the duration of nine months. Cities then decide collaboratively what they want to do; Normally, two or three cities join the consultation committee for the project; They develop the project with the help of the Council of Europe which provides a small amount of funding for it.

In addition, she usually translates the information that comes from the international network. These might result in invitations of international figures to the Portuguese ICC cities for seminars and events that are happening around the world or to inform them of specific requests from the international network.

Along with this, Carla Calado and her team also have the task of updating the index report. The recommendations of the Council of Europe is to do so every two years, but this is not happening. As Carla Calado explained, there is too much work and the cities do not make meaningful progress that quickly as to have such different results every two years.

Carla Calado told us that the ICC pays her for two days a week. So, even as a coordinator she does not have a full-time job. There are five people working in total on a part-time basis but the other four are voluntary positions, Calado is the only one getting paid.

Besides belonging to the RPCI, the Portuguese ICC network, Lisbon belongs to the international network as well, which means Lisbon is directly invited to participate in international seminars and international study visits. Lisbon has this type of free access to international events, with travelling and accommodation covered, because they pay a fee to the ICC international network.

There are three different types of projects happening annually within the scope of the ICC. There is the congregating annual project which is funded by the ICC. This project usually has a consortium of two to three cities and all of the sixteen cities that are part of the RPCI are engaged in this annual project. The cities usually decide collaboratively on what they will do. Last year the focus was on gender and interculturalism with the goal of bridging both agendas. This year the subject is on intercultural competences and the cities along with other organisations are developing three webinars. Lisbon is part of the consortium of this project, helping organise the events and making decisions.

The second type of project are the joint projects financed by intercity grants. These grants are given by the ICC to any two cities who want to start a joint project. First, they must present a proposal, once it's approved they can start the project. This year there were two proposals. One of them is between Lisbon and Loures municipalities and it's called Employability Networks. It regards exchanging practices on employability for migrants and how they could work in local networks to promote employment for minorities. The network created three videos that are available on the RPCI YouTube channel. Cities are given the opportunities to participate in these joint projects and do so if they wish to. Lisbon has been very active in several of these opportunities recently. Last year they also participated in the gender and interculturalism project.

There are also the European projects. The RPCI, the portuguese network, joins other partners from other countries and then they do an open call to all the cities that want to participate in the project. So far, Lisbon is not participating in any of the two projects that are running, but they can in the future if they want, as it is open to all cities.

We wanted to better understand the impact that the ICC had on the Municipal plan for immigrant integration, and there is no one better to answer that than Carla Carlado. She told us that most municipalities already have these plans drafted and they regularly create a new one every year. The RPCI only participates and offers help to municipalities if the municipalities request them to. Many have not yet asked for help. Nevertheless, by providing all of the practice sharing opportunities, events and training sessions that the RPCI does, they believe they are influencing, indirectly, the way municipalities draft these plans.

In 2021 the RPCI cooperative was created and along with it the possibility that the Portuguese ICC cities can become members of the cooperative by paying an annual fee which would provide them access to a number of hours of services and consultancy, including support for the municipal plan. Carla Calado stated that it's too demanding to be rendering this kind of service without being paid for it.

We have also asked Carla Calado about the impact the ICC has in the city of Lisbon. She believes that Lisbon is a very specific city in the context of Portugal. Since it is the capital, it is also the one with most projects and initiatives as well as a most diverse composition. A problem that Calado identified is that Lisbon's municipality changes the person that is in contact with the network every two years. She has stated that now is actually the first time that there has been the same contact for more than one year. This makes it harder to see the results of the ICC's continuous work. So, to reach the organisational level of change, it will take a lot of time. Nevertheless, Carla Calado states that eventually one starts to see changes both in the people and in their dynamics. The staff of the municipality designate a position that is in direct cooperation with the ICC, which is benefiting from the exchange practices and also from the training opportunities that the network offers. These municipality's employees definitely need these opportunities, according to Carla Calado, because another problem of the cities is that usually the people in charge of these projects don't have enough expertise on the matter. The current municipal representative in communication with the RPCI is also one of our interviewees. Carla said that Luís Gaspar is a person that is very eager to learn more about interculturality and that has been very engaged in the projects that the RPCI has pursued with Lisbon's municipality.

The impact of the ICC ends up being felt more in the long term, as more and more projects are undertaken and people start internalising interculturality as the norm. What the ICC tries to do is to help cities think about immigration positively and to have an active role

in promoting better conditions for the people that live and work in their cities. In the opinion of Carla Calado, the recent political changes don't make it very easy for the integration of immigrants. When the party changes in a municipality, it takes a lot of time before they have everything settled again as they have to change all the heads of departments. For Carla Calado, one of the main problems of working with cities is, especially in cities like Lisbon where the mayor changes a lot, it can be very hard to undertake evaluations on the programme because when the mayor changes, everything changes.

- Luís Gaspar

Luís Gaspar is a public officer at Lisbon's Municipality, CML, he works in the Cohesion and Youth Division, in the Interculturality Department. He is the only officer from CML working directly with the ICC. Since he accepted this position, he has been involved in multiple projects within the programme.

Luís Gaspar holds that the ICC programme has a positive impact, since the municipality gets to learn the good practices from other cities. He has added that the annual projects promote the learning of intercultural competences and the functional skills of the municipality's officers, contributing to the construction of a wider perspective on interculturality.

- Maria Reis

Maria Reis was one of the cofounders of HUBB, a portuguese platform for activists against the inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees, basing their work on raising awareness of the topic and with activism. They organise campaigns, protests, donations as well as social media content. They are regularly invited by political parties to talk about their work and to help to review how the system of integration works in Portugal. Maria Reis works as a psychologist as well. She wasn't aware of the existence of the ICC.

- Beatriz Ramalho da Silva

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva is an independent Portuguese journalist that collaborates regularly with journals like The Guardian, Al Jaazera and Vox Europe, focusing most on migration and food systems.

She was not familiar with the ICC. But after she read about it, she told us that more important than implementing awareness campaigns or apps helping with the information that



immigrants need, the priority is to implement policy changes, a robust state provision programme that everyone can benefit from. She read about the app that was developed by the ICC programme, but she says she has never heard any of her interviewees mention this app, only that there is information they need and don't know how to get it.

- Teresa Tito de Morais

Maria Teresa Tito de Morais was the founder of the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR) and President of the Board until March of 2019. She was honoured with the title of Grand Officer of the Order of Liberty presided over by the President of the Republic. Teresa Tito de Morais during her life worked continuously to build a national agenda for refugee rights, with more than 25 years of service to the community and the country (CPR 2019). She wasn't aware of the ICC programme.

- Carmo Belford

Carmo Belford is the coordinator of the advocacy office in the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service. Carmo Belford told us that this international catholic NGO has been present in Portugal since 1992 and it is part of the network of institutions coordinated by the High Commissioner for migration that give psychological and physical support to migrants.

Carmo Belford was familiar with the ICC before our interview. She told us that they reunite with the ICC every three months for meetings regarding the Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants, CLAIMS. She feels in Lisbon at least they have been lacking a lot of action and that the ICC committee needs to go further on their actions instead of creating only groups of sharing.

As previously explained we will now present our results by theme regarding what each interviewee told us.

1. Integration

- Carla Calado

On the topic of integration, Carla Calado tells us about a project that they had last year called Employability Networks focused on how companies can see diversity as an asset and how they can promote better conditions for people with different origins within the organisation. The year before, in 2021, they had another project where pamphlets were

created with information in several languages about the labour market in Portugal and the rights that people have according to the law, since they realised that frequently migrants may not have full information on their rights and may be more likely to experience vulnerable situations. Carla Calado stated that what the ICC can do is at least make sure that people have access to information in their own language so that they know their rights and this way can avoid dangerous conditions of labour exploitation, human trafficking etc. In order to do so, they intend to have distributed printed copies to all of the cities that are part of the RPCI. However, some of the booklets are still to be sent since the ICC coordination did not have the opportunity to meet the representatives of every one of the cities yet because they are dispersed all over the country, as Carla Calado said. Nevertheless, immigrants can also access the guides on the website.

Regarding integration services, Carla Calado says that micro discrimination is felt in the public services. Actual aggressiveness towards immigrants can be felt too but it is not that common. This happens because most people working in service delivery are not prepared to deal with diversity and often don't have a diverse background.

According to Carla Calado, all public officers should be trained in intercultural competences. They should be ready to interact with different value systems and understand that people may have different perspectives on life and that everyone should be respected. On the other hand, developing one's intercultural competences is also developing one's self-awareness in the sense that one gets to understand their own prejudices and stereotypes before interacting with any kind of audience, especially if one is delivering public services which are essential goods and services. There needs to be an assurance that employees have the best knowledge and skills possible, to ensure that people feel safe, feel that they are welcomed.

The High Commission for Migration has a set of free training courses, either online or through face-to-face workshops that they deliver freely to whatever public service requests the service. They have run workshops for many different groups and they have been requested a lot in the recent past. Fortunately, public officers are starting to get interested and concerned with the topic. It is a positive start but there is still a long journey ahead. Apart from this, the government has also announced that they will have more money for human rights training.

- Luís Gaspar

No specific concerns except for the language barrier that he identified as one of the major problems the CML faces regarding immigration challenges.

- Maria Reis

Maria Reis told us that there is a lack of service integration programmes in the institutions who receive immigrants.

She also added that what was done with the Ukrainian people arriving under the temporary protection directive made people see that there is a system prepared to receive thousands of immigrants, the difference is whether they meet the expectations of those responsible regarding ethnicity and religion.

- Beatriz Ramalho da Silva

Regarding integration, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva starts by saying that some plausible measures or suggestions to mitigate labour exploitation would be a well-funded integration service. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva suggests that Portugal could create bilateral agreements with the countries that have more emigrants coming to Portugal in order that people arrive transparently and acknowledge their rights.

These well funded integration services should include, according to Beatriz Ramalho da Silva, different characteristics. One of them would be that every immigrant should be entitled to Portuguese language classes, since everyone she speaks to really wants to learn it, as they know that it is the only way they can get better jobs. One other essential topic regards the information people are given upon arrival, inherent to one's empowerment. She believes there should be some kind of tool kit that every immigrant would receive that specifies information on the minimum wage, what to do next and how to take care of one's documentation. Since the reality of most migrants is getting lost shortly after arrival in Portugal, which might lead to labour exploitation or smugglers intervening, or needing to pay a lawyer to help them with processes that people should have the right to be informed of. Some of this information is often exchanged in Facebook groups which can lead to more scams. An inspectorate system and good oversight of the labour abuses is also crucial and unfortunately there is not enough funding nor monitoring on this issue. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva sees the Portuguese system as a truly flawed one.

Apart from this, one of the other major concerns regarding integration is the waiting time for your residence permit as the backlog is way too slow, being on average around two years, meaning that people live in a limbo whilst they're waiting for it, according to Beatriz Ramalho da Silva. This happens because one does not have the same civic right as they do when they have their documents already. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva said that she had interviewed people back in 2021 that had been waiting for their documents since 2017, that processes take too long and that people aren't treated as they should be.

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva says that at least, the Portuguese state has acknowledged that the system is failing since it is closing down SEF. She says that a border service that works in straight connection with migrants needs to be trained to treat the people arriving from vulnerable situations.

She has put the problem in this way: as the problems mentioned above are not often disseminated in the press as they should be, immigrants see Portugal as an amazing country to come to, but they often don't know the reality unless having heard it from friends or family that are already here or from Facebook groups. Because apart from this, it is seen as an amazing country ready to welcome everyone, which is not true.

- Teresa Tito de Morais

Teresa Tito de Morais says that the Portuguese Council for Refugees has tried to raise awareness on the importance of good integration services and that has seen a gradual improvement in reception services during her tenure. She mentions that Portugal has sought agreements with PALOP countries, portuguese-speaking African countries, former colonies, which also helped the process of immigration of those countries. Teresa also comments on the issue of documentation but does not develop the subject much.

- Carmo Belford

Carmo Belford suggests that the system is not working. One can take a glimpse of this by only seeing the amount of people living under the Tagus bridge. Vulnerable immigrants without documentation, waiting for the documentation, who face huge struggles and most probably will sleep on the streets because there is no response either from social security or from the municipalities.

The lives of these immigrants are basically put on hold because of, on one hand, the lack of human resources in the reception services, and on the other hand, the problems of the platforms like SEF that don't allow people to legitimate their residency. Even if there are call centres to help with the issues, people call a lot, but seem to have no answer most of the time. There is a perspective that things will get better in the future, but as Carmo Belford says “we have more questions than answers so far”.

One of the aspects that Carmo Belford raised was that the measures taken in the temporary protection directive proved a large capacity for receiving refugees, which from her point of view, would be perfectly replicable for other nationalities.

- Helena

Helena has told us that her process to obtain documents has been very slow and bureaucratic and that although she has lived here for 2 years already she is still looking forward to receiving her residency permit. She stated that no information was given to her nor to other immigrants she knew upon arrival and that she feels that the country is not prepared to receive them.

- Dora

Dora told us she had to arrange everything with a lawyer before coming to Portugal and that she even paid for a SEF visa which she says was expensive, because otherwise she knew what she would have to have to go through. She says she liked the integration services and that she felt no discrimination.

- Vitória

Vitória recognized that has a big privilege on having had the opportunity to study abroad in Portugal and how that allowed her to obtain a student visa even though now that she has finished her studies, she will have to apply for a European passport to be living in Portugal, which is easier for her since she has family from Italy. Vitória also told us that she sees the system as really precarious since the search and bureaucracy is too long and that ends up controlling everything.

- Mohammed

When it comes to Mohammed, he explains that as he had a daughter with his wife already in Portugal, the process was easier. They will apply for nationality in three years. Their integration process was easier but they had help from a lawyer.

## 2. Housing

### - Carla Calado

Carla Calado was the first person I interviewed and I did not ask for her opinion on this topic.

### - Luís Gaspar

Luís Gaspar stated that the housing issue is structural in the city and that it isn't easy to solve. He told us that the central administration has to do something about this crisis and enlarge its response. He also added that the municipality holds numerous houses that could be used for this purpose but they are old, closed for many years and in this way they do not meet minimum living conditions.

Luís Gaspar mentioned a case he was aware of regarding overcrowded housing in which there were fifty people living in a house designed for five.

### - Maria Reis

As Maria Reis has put it, the housing crisis problem is huge for Portuguese people themselves so for immigrant people receiving normally the minimum wage or sometimes less, one can imagine the drama. And, as the higher prices keep getting, the more difficult it gets.

Last year Maria Reis was helping at Hubb finding rooms for refugees which were around 18 years old and it wasn't an easy task. She stated that racism is still very present in Portuguese people's minds. When the future landlord knew that the tenant was a refugee, they would rather not rent the house, afraid of their cultures and with the idea of these people coming in. The fact that Portugal used to be a colonialist country until not long ago still has a big influence on the typical Portuguese mind and refugees and minorities tend to be seen in many cases as inferior to the more common white Portuguese people. Maria Reis argues that normally people tend to stereotype too much. If one hears a back story with one migrant person they'll generalise it to the whole community.

Another thing she points out is the overcrowded housing is often portrayed in the news, as well as segregated neighbourhoods.

- Beatriz Ramalho da Silva

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva started by noticing that the problem kept worsening since rent kept on rising principally because of foreign investment that comes into the city and by the fact that there are no rent controls to mitigate this issue, like there are in other European cities.

She told us she has spoken to a middle class Portuguese person that is also struggling to find a house for her family. People are being pushed out to the margins and their wages don't match the rent prices. It becomes obvious that if one is marginalised or from a migrant background, then one is doubly affected if they are part of the working class or even middle class.

She did a documentary last year where she documented Ukrainians who were searching for a house after having been hosted by Portuguese families. It was really hard to find one as rents are crazy, and they eventually could only afford it because someone gave them a house at a discounted rate.

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva then speaks of how it is a huge problem that we have very little public housing stock available, one of the worst levels in Portugal. This fact translates to the fact that most asylum seekers or refugees are usually put into state accommodation, which could for example be a public hospital, at least whilst one is waiting to regularise their residency in the country, and after this, they should have the right to housing. As there is no public stock in Lisbon, these people are reallocated to other cities. Even if they're a refugee and their life started in Lisbon a year ago, they will have to, forcibly, go to a new city and reintegrate.

- Teresa Tito de Morais

In the CPR, they would try to involve as many authorities with the aim of decentralising the refugees from Lisbon, so that they could, little by little, be displaced to other parts of the country. One of their essential tasks was to search for local housing.

According to Teresa Tito de Morais, access to housing is a very pertinent problem, especially because, in general, the owners are not very sensitive to renting houses to

immigrants who come from African countries as they're "different" from the immigrants who come from countries like Ukraine given that they're blond with blue eyes. In that case there is greater openness.

- Carmo Belford

Carmo Belford started by stating that there is almost no social housing in Lisbon. Apart from this, the amount of overcrowded housing situations is significant and even though the municipality knows about these cases, they prefer not to report them. Which ends up disguising this housing issue, in terms of responsibility for finding social housing for vulnerable people and municipalities. Vulnerable immigrants, most of the time, do not report the situations they are living in either, since their priority is most probably to get a job, send money to their families and find a way to establish themselves, and then they may try to bring their family members to Portugal to join them. Moreover, most of these immigrants are ashamed of the way they are living and afraid of the consequences of reporting these conditions. As Carmo Belford has put it, "when there is no other hypothesis, it is better to sleep in overcrowded houses than in the streets".

Carmo Belford suggested that the municipality should create innovative solutions for this problem but didn't suggest one. She talked of a measure that could be implemented at a national level regarding insurance companies that could create insurance for appropriate and reasonable renting for vulnerable immigrants since they have no social network support, no informal network, nor friends that could be the guarantor or help by providing rent advances to secure accommodation as an alternative.

Carmo Belford added that with this lack of support, one can imagine how difficult it is for Portuguese people to find a house without a guarantor, one knows how much harder it must be for vulnerable immigrants. Especially when landlords won't even answer the phone or let people visit the house if they are aware that it is an immigrant.

- Helena

It wasn't easy for Helena to find a house as she couldn't find anything at an affordable price. She eventually found a house in the city outskirts one hour by train to the centre.

- Dora



Dora found a studio for one based 30 minutes from the centre and says she pays a lot. She mentioned that she has also struggled with finding a house at an affordable price, which she didn't until now.

- Vitória

Vitória says it is a big challenge for whoever comes to live in Lisbon nowadays. She was lucky to find a house at an affordable price with a Portuguese friend.

- Mohammed

Mohammed and his family were about to move out of Lisbon and start from the beginning in the countryside opening another grocery shop. Even though they searched for another house in Lisbon, everything was too expensive and they could not afford it.

### 3. Main challenges

- Carla Calado

For Carla Calado, the main issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of readiness to receive immigrants. According to Carla Calado, public services and our society as a whole are not fully prepared to receive the amount of migrants and diversity we have been receiving in the past year. It is not prepared in the sense of infrastructure, but as well in the sense of personal and cultural skills and competences. Most of the prejudices are very much alive and people, unfortunately, are not being invited to reflect upon them. As a society, Carla Calado believes that we have been failing to provide our citizens with the opportunity to reflect and question their own prejudices and stereotypes, making the whole environment not as welcoming as it could and should be. This topic should be taught at school, however there aren't teachers prepared for it.

In Carla Calado's opinion, everyone should be given the opportunity to learn on how to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice and to reflect on their own prejudices, becoming more ethical, more competent. Especially for those who work in the public services, it shouldn't be a matter of choice, it should be mandatory. For example, it's not okay that a person working in a public service has very extreme positions about migration and if this is a country that has a welcoming policy, a public officer needs to work within this policy. The same happens with pride and the LGBTI+ community.

This tells us how much work is left undone. People tend to be too naive in receiving migrants and thinking that Portugal will be extra welcoming. This is not true all of the time, as Carla Calado said. Racism and xenophobia are very present in Portugal, and first we need to acknowledge that it exists and then as a country we need to tackle it by training people, by creating organisational policies that are more strict on conduct and behaviour. Carla Calado feels that at this moment, under the public service, there are no consequences if someone is being discriminated against. She suggests that everyone should receive training in this regard, including those in leadership positions, and then conduct rules should be created with consequences for acts that are not inclusive.

Carla Calado adds the idea that if we are receiving that many people we should indeed be prepared for it. Portugal is a country that calls itself very welcoming, but in practice, the law isn't working in this respect. It's a confusing system that doesn't provide immigrants with all the information that they should be receiving. There's a big gap between the desire and intent to be welcoming everyone and the reality of actually doing it in a proper way. And Carla Calado says Portugal needs to bridge that gap as the country doesn't have the infrastructure and resources that it should to be able to fulfil its legislative requirements. She implied that it is almost as if Portugal wants to say that it is very inclusive but it really does not want to be that inclusive. It is kind of contradictory how people are in some way pushed to come here as they hear that it is a good place but when they arrive will feel frustrated because they feel they were lied to as it is so hard to integrate.

- Luís Gaspar

For Luís Gaspar the main challenges are the language and cultural barriers. When it comes to language, he says that it is one of the main issues that the CML should try to tackle. The other regarding cultural barriers concern practices that some immigrants may practise which are not in line with the western way that might contend the limits of interculturality, as he has put it.

- Maria Reis

Maria Reis identified several challenges, one of them being the availability of Portuguese language courses. The process of learning it is really bad according to her as the offer is very low and the quality of the courses is bad, in general. She suggests that there should be more regular daily courses for every immigrant to access, not depending

exclusively on volunteers as teachers. Maria Reis says learning Portuguese is essential to one's integration.

Housing is one of the other big problems, alongside finding a job according to one's abilities. To find a well-paid job that suits an immigrant's abilities is actually very hard. Maria Reis told us that there is a problem regarding giving the equivalences to the certificates that one has in their own country. It can take a lot of time, and usually it doesn't happen.

Another challenge is the lack of information given and readiness of the system. Maria Reis believes there's a lack of information in the services about what the rules are and the rights of the people arriving. The system is embarrassing for putting people's lives on hold, making them wait for years to become legally resident and on top of it all mistreating immigrants at centres that are supposed to help them and not discriminate.

There should be information sessions for immigrants so that when they arrive they know what will happen with them, what their rights are, what they are obliged to do etc. Maria Reis argues that often, institutions take advantage of these people because they don't know their rights. Specific programs should be created to integrate these people and help them with their jobs and housing.

She adds that it is unfair that immigrants are paying taxes or paying personal security and then do not have access to the basic services.

- Beatriz Ramalho da Silva

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva does not believe that Lisbon can be viewed as a model of exemplary intercultural integration. The main challenges she has identified are not having adequate housing, neither a robust system for people to integrate into the city or access to language classes, and these programmes don't exist at a policy level. They may exist through NGOs that try to offer these services more informally but there's no actual structure for a migrant coming in to understand how to navigate the employment sector, or how to legitimise their residency themselves.

The backlog is a massive issue. When a person is waiting for a really long time for her documentation, the risk that she will end up in a lower paid exploitative job, or in an overcrowded house because one does not have enough money or because one is living under your employer's conditions is high. All these things that are really bad for one's own personal

civic and human rights. Portugal needs to deal with the backlog in their immigration processes. People shouldn't be waiting more than six months for their papers, according to Beatriz.

People need to access basic information and they could receive it in a tool kit for example, that would convey basic rights, access to employment, to get equivalencies in your studies, to housing, to language classes etc. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva mentioned that she met a lot of people in Odemira who were farm workers that hold bachelor degrees in engineering.

Beatriz Ramalho da Silva suggests that the different actors working in integration should work hand in hand with the state body. Immigrants need protection and they're not receiving it as of how the system is working now.

Then again, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva suggests the creation of bilateral agreements with specific countries, those where people are frequently being recruited to work on the jobs that the Portuguese are not doing, so that this is done in a transparent way. Otherwise, it just means people continuing to come to Portugal in really unsafe ways. People need the state to protect them.

- Teresa Tito de Morais

She points out the overcrowded housing situation. The state should provide dignified conditions for people to live in and make available affordable housing within social housing programs.

Another challenge is to find a job according to people's abilities since there is the difficulty of recognizing one's skills and finding them work in those same areas.

The Portuguese language should also be addressed as a priority for immigrants to learn.

The migrant population should be more involved in order to solve problems that might arise since they are living them firsthand and can make valuable contributions so that the system changes, according to what their needs are. Apart from this, the traumas that people bring from their countries of origin need to be addressed and they're often not able to fully identify them because of cultural differences. Having cultural mediators helps in this task, harmonising the integration of people who seek refugee in Portugal.

One other challenge identified by Teresa Tito de Morais is the clarification of the public opinion. The news and social media tend to be sensationalist with some cases, not going to the actual root of the problem that people are facing in their everyday life.

The difficulties in access to work, in access to housing and documentation can lead immigrants to a parallel hidden employment market where they're exploited in terrible conditions and this has to be tackled.

- Carmo Belford

Carmo hasn't pointed out distinct challenges beyond those already mentioned above regarding housing and the integration services.

- Helena

Helena mentioned the documentation issue as one of the main challenges, alongside finding affordable housing. The fact that the government encourages immigrants to come, but then doesn't support them, that parish councils have no relationship with each other and the lack of integration into the labour market

- Dora

Dora mentions the documentation issue, finding affordable housing, the fact that immigrants are being exploited and that the only solution they have in her opinion is for them to start a business, otherwise one has to return to their home countries since prices are too high.

- Vitória

Vitória points to xenophobia as she thinks there is big prejudice against Brazilian women that tends to be objectified and sexualized often, which are complex problems that are historically widespread in Portuguese culture and society.

The bureaucracy to become legal in the country, the housing crisis, the cost of life that is not equivalent to the wages workers receive and lastly, the problem of gentrification and digital nomads that come along with it.

#### 4. Diversity Perception

- Carla Calado

There is a lot of discrimination against immigrants in Portugal, according to Carla Calado.

- Luís Gaspar

He mentioned how SOS Racismo, an anti racist Portuguese association, says that there is favouritism towards caucasian people like Ukrainian or Russian nationals in detriment of Asian or African people, since they look more like the average Portuguese people.

Luís Gaspar then added that diversity is not that well thought of in Portugal and he gave the example of some of his CML colleagues not looking favourably upon the work that his department of Interculturality has been doing. He suggested that the ICC anti rumours campaign can be seen as an example that has had measurable results and should be repeated.

- Maria Reis

In Maria Reis's opinion there is still a lot of colonialist thinking and actions from the Portuguese people towards immigrants. The fact that most Portuguese are fighting for a better salary and job makes them more afraid of the immigrants that might come thinking that they may steal their jobs since the Portuguese are not in a position in which they feel comfortable either. However, the majority of immigrants are getting the jobs most Portuguese do not want.

Education that regards the importance of diversity is fundamental in schools. There is still a big lack of acknowledgement on how diversity can take such an important role.

It needs to start being seen as something good. Firstly, people will start realising they can't stop immigration and more diversity from arriving in the country. Secondly, they will start to understand how diversity can make a country thrive and rich in so many different ways. So, according to Maria Reis, all these myths around migration and diversity should be tackled with anti-racist talk and structural change in the majority of Portuguese institutions, alongside more integration-promoting activities towards immigrants.

An important topic that Maria Reis brought to the table was that diversity is seen as something good or bad depending on the country one's from. The government sees digital nomads as something amazing but looks at other migrants, that contribute much more to our country and society than the digital nomads, in not such a good way.

- Beatriz Ramalho da Silva

We asked our interviewees on how people tend to see immigrants or refugees as the 'other'. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva told us that the concept of othering comes from colonialism, that there is a hierarchy that was established about race superiority and that if it is not adequately deconstructed in today's political climate or in how one teaches history or educate people about different cultures and how they are also part of a national identity, then you create othering. For example one may think that if you're a black Portuguese person then you're not really Portuguese. The way our history was taught in schools is still promoting structural racism which contributes to othering.

Structural racism creates a vicious cycle of people being continuously othered because they haven't been given the tools to access university and as a result struggle to find employment in the same way that a more privileged person can.

When we asked about how is diversity seen in Portugal, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva answered that we seem very welcoming, embracing diversity at first sight, but if one takes a closer look, the reality is that the diversity will not be respected in the same way by local inhabitants, peers or work colleagues or whoever is sitting next to you in a restaurant, it will be noticed instead between the people who are cleaning, working in construction or serving food in restaurants. According to Beatriz, this is a big red flag that contributes to showing how structural racism is so present nowadays.

She continues by saying that there needs to be more diverse representation in labour positions. For diversity to be seen as a benefit one has to go to the root of where the problem is, within the Portuguese people, addressing equal opportunities. When one speaks of diversity in Portugal, one is reminded of the colonial past, unfortunately, and this paradigm needs to be changed, especially with education in schools, the way Portuguese people think about history needs to change.

- Teresa Tito de Morais

Teresa Tito de Morais starts by saying that education is the first aspect that needs to change, right from the beginning, when children grow up. It is also important that Portuguese children grow up together with children of other nationalities, to realise that it doesn't make them any more or any less inferior.

Apart from this, one other priority should be to spread information on the importance of respect for others, raising awareness on how immigrants contribute to progress and complement everyone's work.

Teresa Tito de Morais also mentioned that the emergence of populist movements, that are also racist and xenophobic, all over Europe doesn't help. It creates a fertile ground for people to subscribe to ideas that are false. They don't understand the richness that exists in interculturalism, in diversity, in innovation, in the discovery of better practices, because all of this is questioned by selfishness and greed with the idea that "the other can harm me".

Even though there are efforts in the academy to change mentalities and we went through a long period of great process in terms of accepting each other, to Teresa Tito de Morais, we are still at a crossroad that does not guarantee that in a short time there will be a healthier perspective on diversity.

- Carmo Belford

Carmo Belford gave the example of how when the media talks about social security and how immigrants are contributing so much to it, they forget to explain that although their paying these taxes in their first 12 months after arriving in the country, they're not receiving the counter part they should, the right to access social security itself, health, employment support if their lose their jobs, etc. So, the government tends to use these numbers as an awareness raising for the contributions of immigrants in Portugal, but on the other hand, it is also a result of the lack of rights that immigrants have in Portugal. For Carmo Belford, immigrants are seen as a source of income and contributors to social security.

Carmo Belford says that the issue is not so much about racism but more about xenophobia and the fear of the unknown - There is the presumption that if people do not have their proper documentation they are somehow criminal. But that is not what one can find in Portuguese law. Nevertheless there is still a lot of subtle violence from the government regarding immigrants, especially towards those who are more culturally distant from Portugal, still she says that in Portugal, diversity is better implemented compared to other countries.

- Helena



According to Helena, there is great diversity but as it grows more and more, violence and discrimination come along with it.

- Dora

Dora said that there are still some people that simply can't stand diversity.

- Vitória

Vitória is of the opinion that Portuguese people are closed and that they should learn how to see the richness in other cultures.

- Mohammed

No complaints on the topic.

## Discussion

Our interviews results and literature review focusing on the state of affairs in Lisbon and Portugal when it comes to immigration and its integration in the country allow us to make a series of interpretations and evaluation of the findings. What draws our attention is that - having interviewed different experts that work in the field of immigration - the analysis made by each one on the topic tended to be quite similar in almost every case. Regarding the immigrants alone, we cannot say the same, given that their opinions differed more in comparison to one another's; this will be examined in detail.

First of all, it is important to disclose how important it was to interview Carla Calado as the Portuguese ICC coordinator. We were able to ask her more practical information about the RPCI and ICC that was difficult to grasp from the documents we had access to online, and these were essential in helping to better understand its functioning, which can almost be considered as an enhancement to the literature review on the ICC, but regarding Portugal.

One first consideration that we have to comment on is the dimension of the ICC/RPCI in Portugal. This was something we couldn't find information on before, only how much financial support they're getting from the Council of Europe every year. As Carla Calado mentioned, she works with a team of five people but only she is getting paid as all the others are volunteers. Furthermore, she only works for the programme two days a week as a part time job. For a national programme installed in 16 different cities, one can imagine that it is difficult to reach tangible advancement with only one person being paid and seriously involved in the project. Even Carla Calado said the same. The lack of budget creates constraints on the programme's better functioning and influence that it could have on the municipalities. The programme in Portugal is already 12 years old which means it could have grown more than it did. It is a good thing that it has expanded to new municipalities but only having one hired employee with a contract and only for two days a week after all this time seems to indicate that the organisation is significantly under-resourced. Carmo Belford agreed, explaining that the ICC lacks a lot of practical action and that it shouldn't be limited to sharing groups. In contrast, Luís Gaspar, officer at CML working in close cooperation with the RPCI feels that the programme has a positive impact on the construction of an intercultural perspective and approach, as the RPCI municipalities are sharing their good practices with one another, improving the skills of its officers.

In the case of Lisbon at least, from Carla Calado's interview we understood that the RPCI does not participate in the development of the municipal plan for immigrants integration which contradicts what is in chapter *The Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities* where it says that, according to Carla Calado, the programme focuses on these plans. The reality seems to be that in Lisbon, although the municipality may ask for help in that regard, the RPCI has only been available to give some suggestions but not to contribute more thoroughly as they are not having their time paid for.

Integral to answering our research question was to know how familiar our interviewees were with the RPCI programme. If it was more commonly recognised amongst the experts that work in organisations related to the integration of immigrants in the Portuguese system, it would be a sign of a laudable and valuable reputation; it may one day be so, but as of yet it has not developed such a reputation. To the ones we asked, only two already knew about it - Luís Gaspar, the one working with the RPCI directly, and Carmo Belford because JRS organises meetings with them every three months but was not that happy about it. Beatriz Ramalho da Silva didn't know about it but was disappointed to know that even though the RPCI created a toolkit app with indispensable information for immigrants in the country, she told us that none of the people she had spoken with and interviewed before knew about this app and a lot of them mentioned that its creation would be indispensable and a priority. The fact that this RPCI app was not widely disseminated might have come from a lack of budget within the programme, or because municipalities didn't make enough effort to share it amongst the immigrants living in each of their cities. One inference we can make is that being this a type of programme that wants itself to be widespread and heard by the whole community, it is not a very good indicator that it is not known about by those working directly in the field, which might indicate that it is not as yet an effective tool to promote diversity and integration.

It's interesting to compare the way that Carla Calado described the ICC programme in Portugal with the exploration in our literature review. It is normal that from theory to practise it differs, especially if the organisation has big ambitions and a small budget. In Portugal, the RPCI is looking to help cities thinking about immigration positively and reflecting upon interculturalism as well as engaging cities, having an active role in promoting better conditions for the people that live and work there. Basically, what the RPCI is trying to do here, at a small scale and slowly is to raise awareness of the benefits of having different cultures living together, as Scott E. Page explains, while at the same time trying to improve

conditions to receive and integrate immigrants in the cities that engage with the RPCI, creating annual projects to do so.

Carla Calado is aware that it is hard to see results from the programme. Apart from funding, in Lisbon this happens because the mayor changes every four years and those responsible for the interculturality department change even more frequently, which translates to the RPCI having its efficiency delayed and this is particularly problematic when results are predominantly felt in the long term.

Following the structure of our interviews, we will now focus on the sub questions. We had previously seen both in the municipal plan for immigrant integration and in news reports we looked at in our literature review that integration and housing issues are some of the most prominent problems that concern immigrants in Portugal, as can be seen in Figure 8 in the appendix. That is why we chose these two sub questions to complement the scope of our research question and study. Starting with the integration of immigrants in Lisbon there are some results worth examining.

The idea that immigrants suffer from discrimination in the public services was expressed by three of the interviewees - Carla Calado, Maria Reis and Beatriz Ramalho da Silva. They agreed on the fact that public officers should receive training in intercultural competences in order to treat people the best way possible and contribute towards general acceptance and diversity. The High Commissioner for Migration already has a programme to address this matter, illustrating one more reason for it to be widely spread and made mandatory in a system that is said to be welcoming immigrants. The sample of immigrants we have interviewed is small but from the three who have had direct contact with the integration services, they haven't had any issues nor have been a target of discrimination. Nonetheless, only Helena did the normal residence permit process since the others resorted to consulting a lawyer for help, so cannot be compared to the majority who cannot access this type of aid.

A relevant suggestion made by Beatriz Ramalho da Silva is, in line with what the RPCI has tried to do already, to create a tool kit with all the relevant information for those who arrive in the country and the immigrants already living here. This was identified as one of the main challenges almost everyone including Maria Reis, Carla Calado, Helena and Dora raised - the lack of information - essential for people to know what their rights are and for them not to be taken advantage of by employers, landlords, etc. Helena mentioned that upon

her arrival no source of information was offered to her on what to do next or who to contact, etc.

One comparison that was done by the interviewees, Maria Reis and Carmo Belford, and that would probably be sustained by some of the other interviewees is the capacity shown by European countries to receive Ukrainian refugees under the Temporary Protection Directive, including Portugal, in stark contrast to how other immigrants are usually received. This had also been raised in our literature review above. After all, the capacity and means to support others exist, unfortunately access to it just seems to depend on who the immigrants are, where they're coming from, their religion, beliefs and ethnicity.

The RPCI in itself does its part by developing activities to promote better integration through the projects it organises every year. Nevertheless, I feel that these projects are not given enough attention and that their scope should be wider in order to have a greater impact. An example of how projects aren't given enough attention is the example of a project from 2021, which failed to meet its main goal of distributing pamphlets in the RPCI cities, with the excuse that the ICC coordination hadn't met these cities yet. The ICC scale unfortunately is too small. However this doesn't mean that it is not having an impact amongst the people with whom they contact, like for example Luís Gaspar, who in turn is expected to have an effect with the immigrants in the city. It will always have some impact, even if it is small.

One of the other major issues exposed by interviewees like Carla Calado, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva, Carmo Belford, Teresa Tito de Morais, Helena, Dora and Vitória is the lack of readiness to receive immigrants, in terms of how the system works, the backlog to receive permits, the absence of affordable housing, etc. On the contrary, the message that is passed abroad is that Portugal is a country ready to welcome everyone, which as presented above, is not true. For instance, there are people that have been waiting for their registration documents for at least 5 years, which shouldn't be accepted. Unless one has access to a lawyer that takes care of the paperwork, one must simply wait. As Carmo Calado said "this is basically putting people's lives on hold". This problem, the infrastructure's lack of readiness, was the second issue that our interviewees agreed the most with.

The first one was finding affordable housing. Even Luís Gaspar, who is working at CML and did not expose those much problems regarding what is going on with immigration in Lisbon, said that the housing crisis is a structural problem in the city, and everyone, with

the exception of Carla Calado (we did not mention this subject with her) was of the same opinion. This subject has a lot of nuances.

As we have seen before in *esquerda.net* news, Luís Gaspar, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva, Maria Reis and Carmo Belford told us of overcrowded housing conditions in the city of Lisbon, to which local authorities tend to turn a blind eye according to Carmo Belford. If this is happening, one can understand one more reason why these cases are not reported; immigrants in this vulnerable position may think that they won't receive support or might be afraid of the consequences of reporting. They may be ashamed of living in those conditions or they may even be in a situation where this is the least of their worries.

Portuguese people are also struggling to find affordable housing so tend to see immigrants as a threat, competing with them in their search. The crisis in itself has not gotten any better since rents kept on rising, principally due to foreign investment in the city and because there are no rent controls imposed by the government. Most generally, when a future landlord is aware that the future tenant is an immigrant, their willingness to rent the house tends to disappear, afraid of these people's cultures. Maria Reis, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva, Teresa Tito de Morais and Carmo Belford illustrated these cases. This issue is directly correlated with structural racism, the product of a colonial past. This still holds a big influence on the Portuguese people in general as there is an idea that immigrants, especially non-white ones, are inferior to the common white Portuguese person.

The immigrants we interviewed illustrated that it is not possible for those on low incomes to live in the city centre anymore. Mohammed, the only one who lived close to the centre, is going to move to the countryside with his family as living costs are too high in the city and he could not find a house for an affordable price. We visited his house that was inside the grocery shop, with poor conditions for a family of five to live in.

Another main challenge that our interviewees identified is the necessity for regular and well prepared Portuguese language courses for immigrants, essential for their integration in the country, to look for a job, relate with the local inhabitants, etc. Luís Gaspar said that this is one of CML's biggest goals at the moment, concerning integration.

Access to employment according to one's abilities is hard for immigrants to find in Portugal as well, especially because the process to obtain certification equivalences is difficult and very slow. As this process is hampered by the government, this becomes

evidence that our country still hasn't understood the power that diversity can bring to its economy, as skilled migrant employees would bring much advantage to it, increasing attractiveness and entrepreneurship but also competitiveness and growth, as we have seen in the exploration of the pillars for an intercultural approach.

Teresa Tito de Morais told us her opinion on a new dimension of the integration process that the others interviewees didn't refer to - on the role that the news and the media play in informing public opinion as they tend to be sensationalist, a result of the racism that persists in this country. As we know the media holds enormous influence, helping to shape public opinion. The city authorities should work with the media to create a more favourable environment for positive intercultural relations.

Another theme also introduced by Teresa Tito de Morais that we had already seen exposed in the municipal plan for immigrant integration is the need to involve the immigrant population in the civic, cultural and political life of Lisbon, since they are also experiencing the city firsthand and should have their prospects reflected in local policies. Participation of immigrants results in having more sustainable local policies and reducing social exclusion by creating opportunities for people, together, to shape better lives for them and their neighbours.

Inherent to Portugal's past history is racism and xenophobia which translates in discrimination against immigrants. The results of almost all of our interviews agreed with this, Carla Calado, Beatriz Ramalho da Silva, Maria Reis, Vitória and Helena. Carmo does not consider it racist, only xenophobic. There is a strong idea among the common Portuguese people that this country is not racist, but it seems to be deep-rooted in our culture. Luís Gaspar even mentioned that there are people in the CML that don't agree with what is being done in the interculturality department, so there is a lot of work still to be done. First, people need to acknowledge that racism exists indeed, so that subsequently, one can start to tackle it.

We found it curious that in the RPCI website the description of the city of Lisbon was that "the capital is today, as it has always been, an intercultural city". It is an intercultural city in the regard that it has multiple nationalities cohabiting in the same place but not in the sense that this is a place of tolerance for cultural exchanges. Being the RPCI making this statement, we suggest it could be more careful with the words that they used, since their goal is to make the city as intercultural as possible and there's still a long way to go. Therefore, we do not consider it the most accurate statement to label it as intercultural.

## Conclusion

Intercultural integration is more important than ever, given the rise in migration inflows in recent decades and by the imminent rise in displacement as a result of climate change, which suggests a continuous arrival of new immigrants to Portugal. The benefits that migrants and their diversity can bring to Portugal are enormous but unfortunately there are still some barriers to facilitating these as well as discrimination that prevents this relation between migrant and host country from reaching its potential. Even though at a first sight, looking at numbers, Lisbon seems to be in a good place when it comes to the integration of immigrants, the reality, according to our research, seems to indicate that there is still so much work to be done. A programme like the ICC could be the perfect support mechanism for a city like Lisbon, where parishes and the municipality are lacking knowledge, expertise and widespread political will in the matter. The ICC could facilitate sharing new insights with these institutions as a way of helping them deal with the actual needs of its immigrants, especially finding affordable housing, ways to fasten legal processes and developing quality language courses.

Answering the research question “How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the integration of diversity in Lisbon?” I came to the conclusion that it still has a low impact on the city's progress on this matter. Even though I initially thought it could make a difference when I decided to write about it, the programme is too small to have palpable results. There is still a long way to go for it to achieve its wider aims and have an influence amongst city planners, even its coordinator said so. Carla Calado explained that they don't have a sufficient budget or enough staff to do what they would like to do, for instance providing better support in the formation of Lisbon's Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants, which would take the form of expert assistance on the matter.

Given that the programme is already 11 years old, one could expect it to have evolved more significantly. It grew in terms of the cities in Portugal it gives support to, but not so much in terms of the dimension of what it does for them. And it is justifiable that it does not when the main person responsible for the project and the only one getting paid for her job works just twice a week, while the other five employees are volunteers. The impact of the programme appears to be somewhat superficial, even if there is some action as a result of the projects they organise every year. When a project that aims at developing tool kits for immigrants, such as to raise awareness on what their rights are, the next steps in the legal



processes, but that in the end the tool kits despite having been produced do not reach the intended audience, then there's a problem.

The programme's main actions in Portugal will be felt in time and in all likelihood only at a small scale if it continues with the same budget. First, the sharing experience meetings are important, but result in little concrete action as they're only sharing their good practices and not much else. Besides this, as the mayor changes every four years and those responsible in each department every two years in the CML, it is hard to root ideas in the officers minds, hindering more continuous longer term project work.

One strategy to acquire more budget that the RPCI has already considered would be by becoming a cooperative, but that is not entirely within their powers, it would require that the CML would pay the RPCI for some of their hours of work in order that they could have a bigger presence in their decision making process, through counselling, proposing ideas, etc. Because otherwise, with the programme's lack of budget, the RPCI won't be able to have an active role helping cities to progress. Is it better to keep the programme expanding to new cities or to actually invest more time in developing comprehensive intercultural strategies along with the cities that are already part of the RPCI? This is debatable but I have reached the perspective of the second idea, since the cities that are within the RPCI network are the ones facing the greatest integration challenges. It is better to do a good job in one city with more difficulties, than a mediocre job in more cities, at least when the programme is starting.

The sub questions, chosen along the written progress of this paper, raise two of the main challenges Lisbon is facing regarding immigrants. The first sub-question asked to the interviewees was "Regarding the reception and integration services provided by the Portuguese institutions, how do you think these have been interacting with immigrants?". I came to the conclusion that even though Portugal might have a good reputation of welcoming migrants in general and inclusively, it being the country with the second higher rate when it comes to giving nationality, it is also one of the countries where the legal system is trusted the least. One of the reasons for this is, according to the testimonies of the interviewees, news and my personal opinion, that racism and xenophobia are still very much present, contributing to discrimination in Portuguese institutions, the other is the massive backlog and lack of preparedness for services to receive them. This reflects how Portugal, in the end, still has to overcome a lot of structural considerations on diversity and assemble a system with a bigger capacity to receive immigrants in an appropriate manner.

Regarding racism and xenophobia, everything starts with education. To begin with, education at schools is a core element that will dictate how the young people of the future see the world. The way one treats and sees the other is formed mainly in childhood and adolescence. It's important to change the way kids are learning history at school, especially Portugal's colonial past, to have ethnic diversity amongst the students, to have a curriculum promoting interculturality. All of this is essential for the relations young people will foster in their future life.

Now, not only for children but for adults as well, a strategy is needed to tackle existing stereotypes and racism. Stereotypes and prejudices need to be dismantled because they create several impediments at different levels - they are stopping people from accessing basic services like housing and health, finding jobs that suit their abilities and they are certainly creating issues relating to insecurity and mental health concerns in those who experience this. Overall, it is affecting social cohesion, the quality of life of these people and the local economy. To adopt anti-discrimination policies and mechanisms, like the RPCI did with the anti-rumour methodology should be essential in Portuguese institutions, but it needs more continuity and time. This type of tool that helps to reduce stereotypes at their root is a good way of educating people to not discriminate and to prevent negative interactions. Allied to an anti-discriminatory campaign, as previously discussed, it would be essential to educate public officers on intercultural competences to make immigrants feel welcomed into the country, as the High Commissioner for Migration has already started doing.

To fight the backlog that prevails in the Portuguese Legal System the government could make efforts like simplifying the processes to obtain documentation and unifying the information across different public services, as well as investing in the implementation of an online service. Some good news in this regard was the substitution in November of SEF, the foreigners and borders service, to AIMA, the new agency for integration, migration and asylum and the incorporation of some other agencies that already existed. The creation of this new agency will be responsible for the regularisation and integration processes and it has already announced that it will be dealing with 600 000 pending processes by March 2024, which seems to me like a very ambitious measure. The government has also formally announced that AIMA will invest heavily in digital infrastructure (Lamares, 2023).

The lack of readiness is also reflected in the difficulties faced in finding affordable housing, another serious structural problem, evident to everyone I interviewed reflecting the

answer to our second sub question “Could you provide insights on the housing crisis in Lisbon and its implications?”. The three main axes of this problem in Lisbon are the unfeasible rental prices, the overcrowded housing scenario and the racism and xenophobia from landlords towards immigrants looking for a house to rent. Both the parishes and municipality of Lisbon haven’t been giving adequate answers to solve these issues, forcing people to move to the outskirts of the city or to the countryside as living costs are too high.

The government must do something to enlarge its response to this matter. One measure our government should take to help in this crisis we’re facing should be to make more social housing available, as the public house stocking is really low, as supported by Luís Gaspar, Carmo Belford and Beatriz Ramalho da Silva. In reality there are a lot of houses that could be used in this regard but they are old, have been closed for many years and in this way they would not provide adequate living conditions in their current state. The government should consider renovating these houses in order to increase the number of low-rent housing offers, so that heritage doesn't deteriorate, putting vacant properties on the market. It would be important to disseminate this information regarding municipal housing support programmes amongst immigrants. Greater investment is definitely needed in this regard - decent housing inclusion policies and inclusive rehousing plans are crucial now - not only for immigrants but also for Portuguese-born people, who complain about the same thing. Other measures that the government could take would be to combat the degrading housing conditions of many migrants, in overcrowded houses and rooms, a situation that is a danger to them and to public health in general; to control the prices of rent, regulating them according to the type of property and its characteristics, preventing precarious housing conditions, taking the country's minimum wage as a benchmark; to strengthen the legislation on local accommodation and holiday lets, such as Airbnb, in order to facilitate renting and house purchases; to set up a committee to monitor complaints about landlord abuses and exorbitant rental prices, creating new legislation to penalise abusive behaviours from landlords.

Apart from the problems we highlight with our subquestions, there are two other main challenges essential for an intercultural city basis that need a government response. They are the need for better Portuguese language courses for immigrants and a greater access to employment according to a migrant’s abilities. For the first case, the CML should consider making more Portuguese language courses available, with a greater diversity of levels on different schedules, with smaller class sizes and taking into account the students' level of

education and their mother tongue. They could monitor and evaluate existing courses, in order to understand the adequacy of the offer to the needs and abilities of the target population. As we have previously mentioned, to learn the host country's language is essential to increase the chances of success of the newcomers, their integration and interculturality. In regard to the second issue, to reduce bureaucracy in the process of recognising and validating foreign qualifications becomes essential to facilitate the entrance of immigrants in the labour market as well as to promote vocational training tailored to the needs of the Portuguese labour market, in order to guarantee faster integration into it.

Now that the research question and subquestions have been answered, I want to make a few other observations and interpretations that could be useful for some other next steps of the RPCI in Lisbon.

The RPCI organises several encounters, opportunities for sharing and activities - a little step in the right direction to a more intercultural city. In Lisbon, these meetings mainly involve organisations that work for integration purposes, CML and parishes that may be interested. Apart from these participants other types of contributions are essential, not only in the meetings organised by the RPCI but in all of the other encounters of this type. One fundamental step to promote interculturality is creating a sense of togetherness, to include immigrants in the decision-making process, investigating participatory approaches to the definition of local plans in Lisbon and recognising that there are still few references to participatory local planning. There is a need to coordinate a more collective process with a greater integration and bigger involvement of immigrants. The municipal plan for immigrant integration included a significant contribution from immigrants living in the city, which is to be praised. Nevertheless, it is important that these opportunities for sharing good practice are organised more frequently, making immigrants feel included and on the other hand promoting active dialogue on what are the pressing problems felt in Lisbon.

An intercultural city is made of renewed ideas and continuous dialogue between the different cultures that cohabit these same spaces. The city should be a space of acceptance and reliance upon the other as well, where discrimination has been dismantled. As I have already stated, it is time to make intercultural policy understood, wanted and implemented. Lisbon still has a long road ahead, but I believe this research helps to show that it has already improved considerably.

It's interesting that every city following the ICC plan has a strategy of its own. There is no mandatory path or single set of guidelines to follow since every city has a different story and structure, only an ideology in common, the one of interculturalism where dialogue, diversity and tolerance are key. The approach that the RPCI has had in the past couple of years has been very soft, but still considerable for the amount of money and employees it has. I suggest that more effort should be directed towards it though, better funding would make a big difference; I'm not suggesting that the ICC should have novel and extraordinary ideas, they're always welcomed, but I'm speaking of developing and building upon what it has already done. For instance, working with the tool kits it has created to deliver them in a more consistent way, making sure every immigrant receives one; engaging in more anti-rumours campaigns with different groups of people, visiting companies, talking to other institutions; or even looking for more funding to do all of these and contract more people to be engaged in the programme. These are more tangible suggestions based on a framework that they have already worked on, so it would be necessary only to expand it, in order for it to reach and keep integrating more people.

In a Europe that tends to close its doors to immigration, we need more empathy, more tolerance, more acceptance and also a willingness to accommodate immigrants. There needs to be more and more awareness of the benefits that immigrants bring to the countries that receive them, since immigration will continue to increase. Diversity needs to start being understood as mutually beneficial, as an advantage for everyone. Awareness raising is needed to bring people together and capture this advantage. Interaction will not happen by chance, the conditions must be created for it to happen and they depend on the rise of programmes like the RPCI. Careful planning is key to achieve engagement and cooperation. As Wood and Landry have put it, interculturalism is something desirable, attainable, sustainable that will add value to our urban communities (Wood & Landry, 2007:216) and I believe Lisbon, in spite of everything, is becoming more aware of this fact.

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## Appendix

### Figures

Figure 1 - Over represented sectors by migrants in the economy of EU countries

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Overall employment of non-EU citizens</b>	<b>Overall employment of EU citizens</b>
Accommodation and food service activities	10.2%	3.7%
Administrative and support service activities	7.7%	3.8%
Domestic work	6.7%	0.7%
Construction	9.2%	6.6%

Source: *Statistics on Migration to Europe*

Figure 2 - Under represented sectors by migrants in the economy of EU countries

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Overall employment of non-EU citizens</b>	<b>Overall employment of EU citizens</b>
Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	1.3%	7.5%
Education	3.8%	7.7%
Human health and social work activities	8.3%	11.3%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3.5%	5.9%

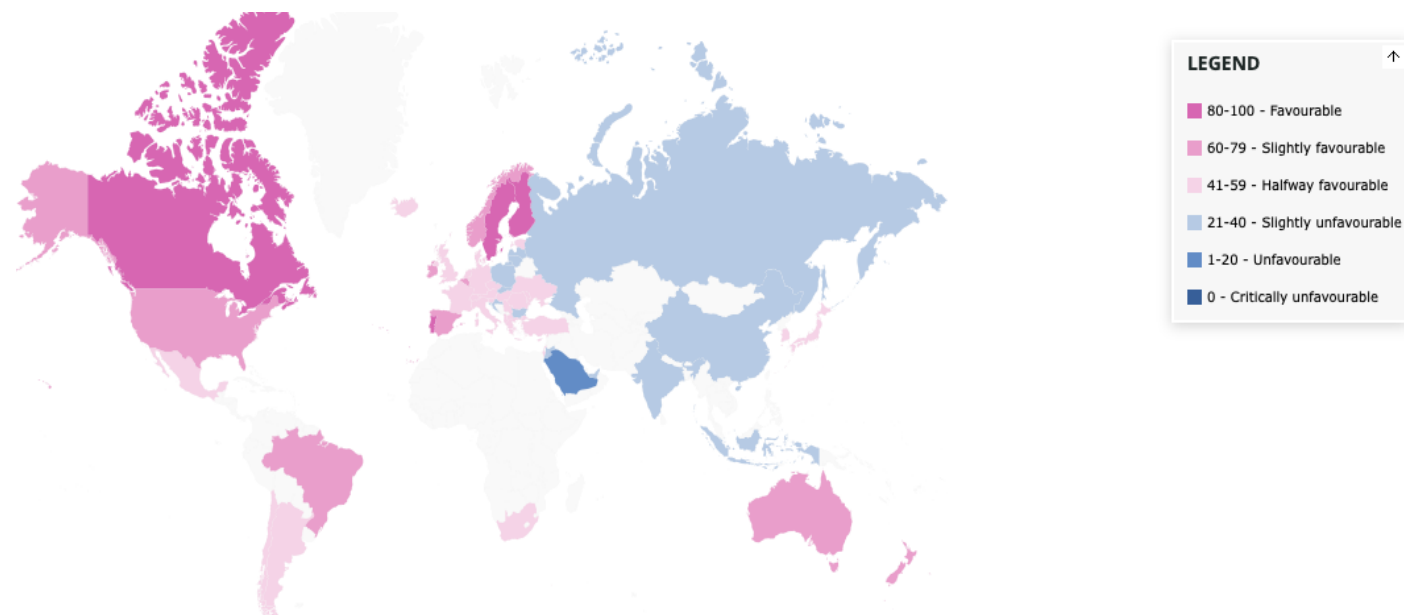
Source: *Statistics on Migration to Europe*

Figure 3 - Building blocks of intercultural policy frameworks, according to Bob W. White

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR INTERCULTURAL CITIES	
<b>Block 1</b>	Documentation of local expertise and knowledge (actors, organizations, practices, programs, policies)
<b>Block 2</b>	Analysis of local context and challenges (process, knots, scale)
<b>Block 3</b>	Mobilization and communication (internal vs. external, transversality, sustainability)
<b>Block 4</b>	Consultation and partnerships (civil society, citizen groups, expert communities)
<b>Block 5</b>	Monitoring and evaluation (mixed methods, longitudinal, evidence-based)

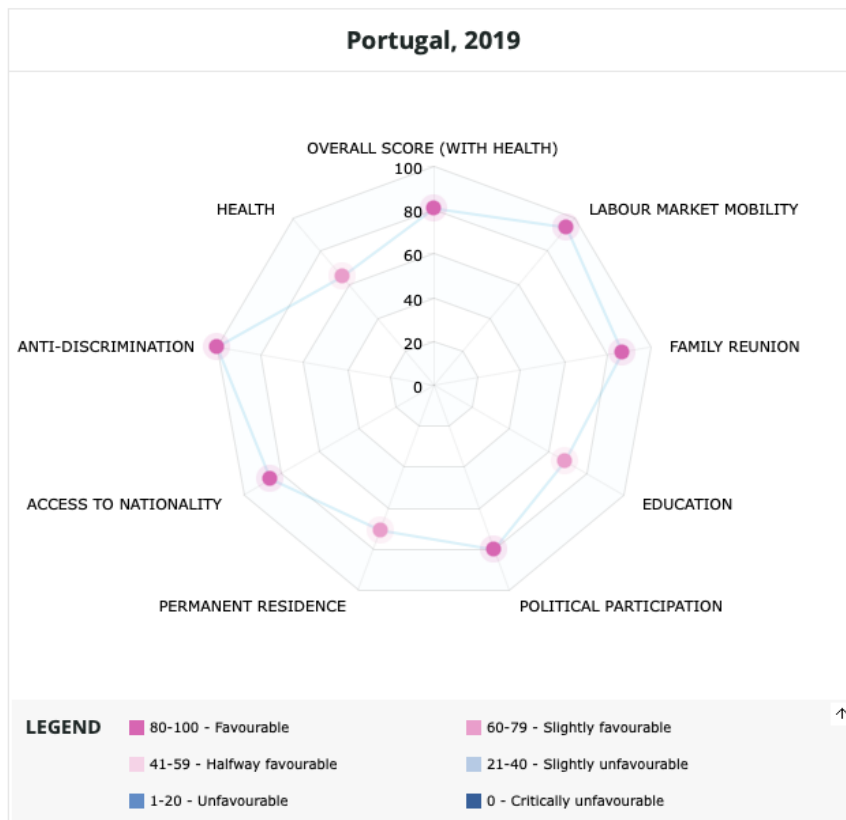
Source: Bob B. White

Figure 4 - MIPEX World Map on Migrants Integration



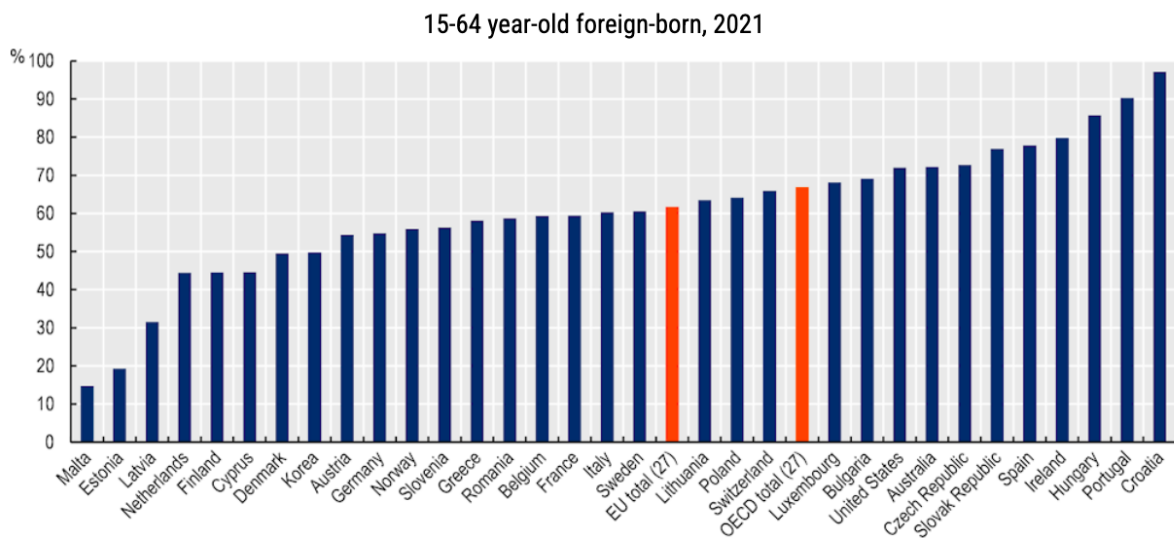
Source: MIPEX 2019

Figure 5 - Portugal MIPEX chart 2019



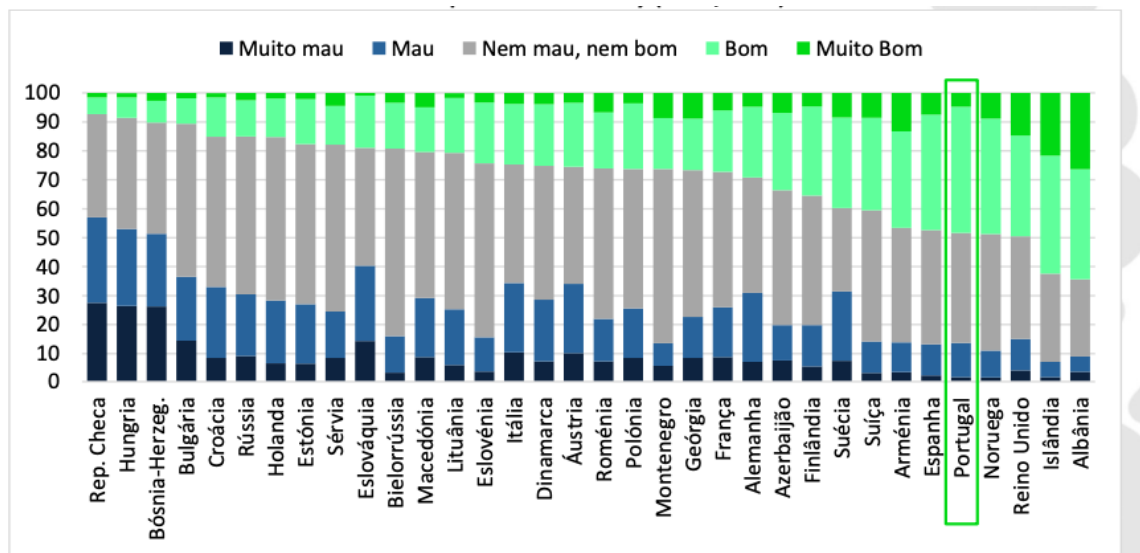
Source: MIPEX2019

Figure 6 - Host country language proficiency by foreign-borns (2021)



Source: Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023, OECD

Figure 7 - Opinion on the impact that immigrants have on the development of the host country (2017/2019)



Source: Relatório Estatístico Anual - Indicadores de Integração de Imigrantes (2022)

Figure 8 - Main difficulties in Integration in the city of Lisbon according to immigrants



Source: CML. (2020). *Plano Municipal Para A Integração De Migrantes De Lisboa 2020-2022*. p.18

## Table of Results

	Maria Reis	Beatriz Ramalho da Silva	Carmo Belford
Position	Psychologist and co founder Humans Before Borders (Hubb)	Journalist at The Guardian	Coordinator of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Advocacy Office
Familiarity with ICC	no	no	Yes. JRS reunites with the ICC every three months.  Lisbon has been lacking a lot of action. The committee needs to go further on their actions instead of creating only groups of sharing.
Housing Crisis	Big problem even for the local inhabitants, even worse for immigrants receiving sometimes less than the minimum wage.  When a landlord knows that the tenant is a refugee or immigrant normally prefers not to rent the house	gotten worse because rents keep going up  people are just being pushed out to the margins and our wages don't match the rent.  We don't have any public housing stock. We have one of the worst levels in Europe of public housing stock.	almost no social housing in Lx.  Overcrowded housing. Carmo says that even though the municipality knows about these cases, they prefer not to report them.  vulnerable immigrants do not report the situations they are living in.  landlords don't answer the phone or let them in to visit the house as soon as they are aware of an immigrant.



<p>Reception and integration Services</p>	<p>lack of integration services programmes in the institutions who receive them.</p>	<p>There needs to be real integration services - everyone needs to have access to language classes.</p> <p>Everyone needs to know what their rights are on arrival. Empower people.</p> <p>Processes take so long and people are not treated as they should be treated.</p>	<p>vulnerable immigrants without documentation face huge struggles and most probably will sleep in the streets because there is no response either from social security or from the municipalities.</p> <p>The lives of these immigrants are basically on hold because of, on one hand, the lack of human resources, and on the other hand, the problems of the platforms of CEF that don't allow people to regularise their documentation</p> <p>the measures taken in the temporary directive, it was a huge difference for me. I think it would be perfectly replicable for other nationalities.</p>
<p>Main challenges</p>	<p>Language courses</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Jobs according to one's abilities</p> <p>Lack of information and readiness</p>	<p>No adequate housing</p> <p>No robust system for people to informally integrate the city</p> <p>Language classes</p> <p>Too long process to get documentation</p>	<p>Too long process to get documentation</p> <p>Housing problem</p>

<p>Perception of diversity in Portugal</p>	<p>Portugal as a past colonialist country has a big influence on the typical Portuguese mind and immigrants tend to be seen as inferior to the common white portuguese. people tend to stereotype too much.</p> <p>There is still a lot of colonialist thinking and actions regarding these people.</p> <p>There is a lack of information and education in schools regarding diversity</p> <p>More integration activities that we could do to integrate people</p> <p>fake news regarding these topics. political parties that take advantage of this.</p> <p>diversity is seen as something good or bad depending on the country one's from.</p> <p>start seeing diversity as something good when people realise that first no one cant stop it. And that it make us richer in a lot of terms. So all these myths around migration and diversity should be tackled and with anti-racist talk and structural change in a lot of institutions.</p>	<p>Structural racism</p> <p>more diversity representation in labour positions. For diversity to be seen as a benefit one has to go to the root of where the problem is, within the Portuguese people, addressing equal opportunities.</p> <p>need to change the education at schools.</p>	<p>compared to other countries, diversity is well seen</p> <p>seen as a source of income and of sustenance of social security</p> <p>ubtle violence from the government regarding immigrants, especially from those who are culturally distant from Portugal</p> <p>Carmo says that it is not about racism but more xenophobia and the fear of the unknown.</p>
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	Carla Calado	Luís Gaspar	Teresa Tito de Morais
Position	Portuguese ICC Coordinator	Public officer at Lisbon's Municipality (CML) - Cohesion and Youth division. In the interculturality department (in this position from an year ago)	Former President Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR)
Familiarity with ICC	<p>Yes. Lisbon is the city with the most initiatives and projects.but it is difficult to reach results as the municipalities quite often change who's in charge.</p> <p>the impact of the icc ends up being felt more in the long term, as more and more projects are done and people start rooting interculturality</p>	<p>Yes. works directly with them being the only member from the cml that does so. Refers involvement to multiple projects.</p> <p>Positive impact CML</p>	no
Housing Crisis		The city does not have the answers	Access to housing is a pertinent problem, especially because the owners are not very sensitive to renting houses to immigrants who come from African countries. different if immigrants are from countries like Ukraine, being blond with blue eyes, in that case there is a greater openness.

<p>Reception and Integration Services</p>	<p>Micro discrimination in the public services as well as a few cases of actual aggressiveness towards immigrants, since most people working in service delivery are not prepared to deal with diversity and often don't have a diverse background.</p> <p>all public officers, either from cities or any other public services, should be trained in intercultural competences.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Issue of documentation, because there is a great need to have documents, to have valid documents that allow you to work.</p>
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<p>Main Challenges</p>	<p>lack of readiness - no infrastructure and no cultural competences to receive immigrants</p> <p>lack of information given to immigrants</p> <p>racism and xenophobia</p>	<p>Language barriers - says that CML sees this as the major problems to solve</p> <p>Cultural barrier- genital mutilations. Cultural practices of some immigrants not in line with western way</p> <p>Regarding the municipal plan of immigrants integration, no goal on the axis culture and religion - mimo is too ambitious for what can actually be done</p>	<p>Access to housing. Overcrowded housing - State has to provide dignified conditions for people to live in and disponibilize affordable housing with social housing program</p> <p>Job according to one's abilities - Access to employment</p> <p>involve more and more the migrant population to solve the problems that arise because they live in the first person</p> <p>Language</p> <p>The traumas that people bring from their countries of origin need to be addressed, which we are often not able to fully identify, because of cultural differences.</p> <p>clarification of public opinion -&gt; news, the social media tend to be sensationalist with some cases, not going to the actual root of the problem, that people face in their everyday life.</p>
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Perception of diversity in Portugal	<p>There is a lot of prejudice from Portuguese people against immigrants.</p> <p>we should, as a society, ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice and to reflect on their own prejudice and to become more ethical, more competent</p>	<p>Said that diversity is not that well seen, that even in CML some colleagues of his don't look favourably upon the work that his department of Interculturality has been doing</p>	<p>important that Portuguese children grow up together with other children of other nationalities, to realise that being from other nationalities doesn't make them any less inferior.</p> <p>raising awareness on how immigrants contribute to the progress and complement everyone's work and country</p> <p>the emergence of populist movements, racist and xenophobic, doesn't help. It creates a fertile ground for people to go after ideas that are false.</p>
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	Helena	Dora	Vitória	Mohammed
Nationality	Brazilian	Brazilian	Brazilian	Bangladeshi
Occupation	house maid	Does not have a job yet	Shop assistant	grocery shop owner
How long in Portugal?	2 years	3 months	4 years	3 years
Process to obtain documents	Very slow and too bureaucratic. Still waiting to get her residence permit	Before coming arranged everything with a lawyer and payed for a SEF visa (expensive)	Recognizes that has a big privilege compared to other immigrants as she came to do her studies in Lisbon she could get a student visa. But now that she has ended, they have to get a European passport.	As Mohammed had a daughter with his wife already in Portugal, the process was easier. Will apply for nationality in three years

Contact with NGO to help with the process	Tried to but had no response.	no	no	No but a midwife in the maternity ward helped.
Familiarity with the ICC	no	no	no	no
Integration services	No information given to people arriving. The country is not prepared to receive immigrants	Liked it. No discrimination felt	Precarious. The search and bureaucracy is so long that ends up controlling everything	Easy process. Lawyer helped.
Housing Crisis	Had to search a lot. Lives in the outskirts of the city (1 hour to the centre)	Lives in a studio only for a person (30 min from the centre). Pays a lot	Big challenge for who ever comes to live in Lisbon. Lucky since she found a house to live in at an affordable price with a portuguese friend	Found a house online. There isn't affordable housing. The family is planning to leave Lisbon and move to the countryside.
Main Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-documentation</li> <li>-finding affordable housing</li> <li>-The government encourages immigrants to come, but then doesn't support them.</li> <li>-Parish councils have no relationship with each other.</li> <li>-integration into the labour market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-documentation</li> <li>-finding affordable housing</li> <li>-immigrants are being explored</li> <li>-states the only solution is to start a business, otherwise one has to return to their home countries since prices are too high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-xenophobia (big prejudice against brazilian woman - tends to be objectified, sexualized)</li> <li>-Complex problems that are historically widespread in Portuguese culture and society.</li> <li>-bureaucracy</li> <li>-housing crisis</li> <li>-cost of life (not equivalent to wages)</li> <li>- digital nomads and gentrification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Housing</li> <li>-living costs</li> </ul>

Diversity perception	There is great diversity but as it grows more and more, violence and discrimination come along with it.	There are still some people that simply can't stand diversity	Portuguese people as close.  Learn how to see the richness in other's cultures and	No complaints.
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## **Transcribed Interviews**

### **Maria Reis - Hubb**

MG: So, can you tell me more about the work you do with humans before borders?

MR: So you're basically a platform against this inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees in Portugal and in the world. And our work is really based on awareness and activism and we do lots of different things. campaigns, protests, a lot of social media content regarding these topics. We organise donation campaigns. We actually have one project directly with refugees. And we, by the time we were growing, we started getting invitations from political parties to talk about our work and to help to review how the system of integration works in Portugal and laws and all of that. So we're getting a more important job, I would say, as time goes by. This is like our main focus.

MG: How long is humans before borders?

MR: We just were born out of nowhere basically. We are just a bunch of people that met in the process. And we were like, hmm, we wanted to do something, we didn't know what, and then suddenly...

MG: Wow, amazing. I didn't know that. Are you familiar with the Intercultural Cities program?

MR: No.

MG: Okay. That's basically what I'm writing about. It's important to understand if people working in this area have an idea of what it is. Basically it's a program from the Council of Europe that promotes the integration of immigrants and refugees in the cities that apply for this program, helping the municipalities to change the public policies in this regard.

MR: we're just volunteers, but my previous job was actually in direct work with refugees and silent speakers, and I've never heard of that position. Yeah. So it's a good factor to understand whether it has, like, visibility or not.

MG: Regarding the housing crisis in Lisbon, could you provide some insights on this topic And what do you think are the implications of this problem?

MR: Well, they are huge. I mean, they are huge for Portuguese people, so for migrants, for refugees, it's like 100 times worse. obviously the price of the rents that are getting higher and higher and higher and most of the migrants and refugees, the majority, have like, they receive like minimum wage or similar, so it's possible to get like a decent house and also because there's a lot of racism So, and I can talk about my experience because last year I was, one of my roles was to try to find rooms for refugees with like 18 years old. And there's so much racism. Like when people know that they are not Portuguese, they always find excuses not to rent them a house or a room because they are afraid, because they... I don't know, just a bunch of reasons that all come up with... are presumed racist in the room and being afraid of these people and their culture. So what happens is that what we see in Latin news, for example where there's like 100 people living in one apartment and there's a lot of accidents happening and people, like Portuguese people, complain about how working with just foreigners and people living, 200 people living in the same apartment Like, they want to leave like this. It's just that they don't really have another option. And so, yeah, I don't think that this is... And this is just the reality of Lisbon. Obviously, it depends on the city you are talking about. But, yeah.

MG: And where do you think this racism that you're talking about comes from?

MR: Ignorance, probably. And also... I think the fact that Portugal is a colonialist country also helps a bit, because we tend to look at these people as a bit inferior to us. And, like, we generalise, like, Brazilians are all liars, or, I don't know. You cannot trust Brazilians because they're... whatever. And, yeah, and so, sometimes people have one back story with one migrant person and they generalise to the whole community. And this is crazy because imagine that you do that with Portuguese people. It doesn't make any sense, but I think that happens a lot. And also because a lot of times there's a lack of integration programs that really integrate people in this environment. So, programs that prepare the people from the

cities to receive the migrants, and you can see that in the middle or whatever, people who are not ready to receive this amount of migrants, and not before the city of Paris, because usually, we segregate these people in neighbourhoods, and obviously, that this is not going to help.

MG: Regarding the reception integration services provided by the Portuguese institutions in general, how do you think they have been interacting with immigrants?

MR: Well, there's not a program for immigrants in general. So it depends if you are an asylum seeker, a refugee with a refugee status, or an immigrant. So there's different programs depending on your status when you come to Portugal. It depends on if you come with a relocation or a reinstatement. So yeah, first of all, there's not a specific program. There's a bunch of them. So if you're an immigrant, there's no other program at all. You just come and then you have to apply and start getting a job as a refugee. And if you are a refugee with a status and you come to a program of installation or repatriation, there's this program where you receive €125 a month for one year and a half you are integrated in Portugal, you know the language, you can pay your own house, you have a job, blah blah blah. Obviously this doesn't happen, or it happens with like 20% of the people, because it's really hard to integrate in one year and a half and start a job and have a house, etc. especially in Lisbon. And there's many factors that influence this. And also, the process of learning Portuguese in Portugal is really bad. Like, the Portuguese courses are non-existent or bad. Like, there's a scarcity of Portuguese courses. So, it really depends on your case. There's no specific problem.

MG: What is your perspective on the controversies surrounding the cases of labour exploitation in Odemira, now in the Tagus River and in general in Portugal? And additionally, what measures and suggestions do you have to address and mitigate these issues?

MR: Well, first of all, I think it's a scandal that this happened, right? And that is so obvious and like it's good for the Portuguese economy. They are in a very precarious situation. And this is good for us. So I think that's why it's a problem, but it's not really a problem. And also because we would have to tackle the companies that contract these people. And there's a lot

of political will to do that. Because there's a lot of news about this and there's actually like more police operations regarding this. and also because of the trafficking webs that bring these people. But still I think this will keep happening if we don't blame the right people. And the right people are not only the traffickers, but also the companies that contract these people. It's well aware for everyone that these people apply for jobs that have a regular like labour situation because they don't and that's why they have these situations because They accept everything because they are in a very vulnerable position.

MG: What would you say are the main immigration challenges in Lisbon?

MR: I think there are challenges, like different kinds of challenges. challenge because as I said there's not a lot of courses of Portuguese like well like good courses so like which is a huge problem and housing is also a huge problem and jobs it depends like I don't think that it's that difficult to have a precarious job, but if you are a migrant and you want to have a better job or a well-paid job, it's really hard. And also, there's the problem of giving the equivalence to the certificates that you have in your own country. It takes a lot of time, and usually it doesn't happen. And this whole job situation is very bad and I think there's this lack of information for migrants and about migrants, for example when you go to the health system and they don't know what are their rights, what they can request. And I think this is a Portuguese problem in general, which is that sometimes there are rules that are applied, but when you go to the service, the rules change because of the person that is doing it to you. So like there's a lack of information for in the services about what are the rules and the rights of these people and also of course a problem of pieces like The Embarrassing institutions that leaves people waiting for like two years Yeah, or more and tweets mistreats people in centers, in the airport, and all of that. And we still have to wait for a new staff that will, I don't know, appear, I don't know when. And, yeah, so that's, like, I would say, a huge problem. And that puts people's lives on hold, basically. supposedly it will be dismantled in October, I think. So it's a different concept every time I went to SEF they were like yes because in a few moments we will not be here but then it's always postponed and I know that they will create a new

thing and that they like the police will be responsible for a lot of it which is first yeah like I just like 0% and so I don't really know what's their idea to be honest I just think that they will keep postponing a new agency and I'm not really hoping for a better solution.

MG: Regarding these problems that you identified, language, housing, jobs that suit immigrants, qualifications, the lack of information in the health system, and this self-institution, what do you think should be the priorities to tackle these problems?

MR: It depends on the institution responsible. I think, first of all, you need to guarantee that these people have their rights guaranteed. They cannot be paying taxes or paying personal security and don't have access to the basics. So I think that's one of the first things. And you need to have information sessions for these people. When they come to the airport, they have the right to know what will happen to them, what are their rights, what they are obliged to. They need to have all this information. And I think just like the institutions take advantage of these people because these people don't know their rights. And that's really, really bad. And I think there are specific programs that should be created to integrate these people in terms of job and housing and all of that. And I think this will probably mean that a lot of people will have to be spread out in the country and not only in Lisbon and living in those conditions. And of course, having better Portuguese courses and more regular, and not depending on volunteers, which happens a lot. Because if you have Portuguese courses and it depends on volunteers, then the volunteers go, and then you don't have a Portuguese course. And if these people don't know Portuguese, it's going to be very hard for them to integrate. We are not really a country that has English as a primary language. So I think it's important that we create Portuguese courses every day, suitable for these people. And this is possible. Like we've seen this with the Ukrainian people and there was a lot of complaints before like, ah yes, we cannot afford to receive so many people and then when the Ukrainians came here, everything was possible and last night, two weeks, in all Europe, you could see that there is a prepared system to receive millions of people And I mean, it's just so obvious that it's a matter of colour and religion and all of that, that it's stressful.

MG: Diverse people, immigrants, refugees, like the LGBTQI community are often seen as the others, portrayed in this way in the media, for example, all over Europe, in the more mainstream media. What factors do you think contribute to this, that they are seen as the others?

MR: Well, in Portugal I think the colonialist past has a lot of influence, and the fact that we have some difficulty to acknowledge that we were colonising other countries and we did really bad things and we always have this thing of ah yes, but we did a lot of good things for these countries and blah blah blah and I think it's really Important to acknowledge that we are still doing a lot, like keep a lot of colonialist thinking and actions regarding these people. And you can see that in everything, like the fact that most of our people are fighting to get a good job or a good salary also makes them more afraid of the other people because they think they are going to steal their jobs or whatever because we are not in a position that we feel comfortable. And also the lack of information. Like a lot of lack of information in schools, I would say mostly. and I don't know, integration activities that we could do to integrate people. And also, like, there's a lot of fake news regarding these topics. And there's a lot of political parties that take advantage of this. And it's really dangerous because when you go to the inside of Portugal, you see people fighting for their own survival. It's obvious that they're going to see migrants and they're going to be afraid. Because they didn't know, they were not prepared. I don't know, I think my answer was a bit confusing.

MG: You already answered this question, I would say, but if you could give a more straightforward answer, how would you say diversity is seen in Portugal? And when will we be able to get to a moment where we'll see it as a benefit, like we'll perceive it as a benefit, the diversity that we have here.

MR: I think diversity is seen as something good or bad depending on the country you're from. So we see digital moments as something wonderful, or the government sees them as something amazing. and we tend to look at other migrants that contribute much more to our country than digital nomads as something bad. So I think that, well I don't have the solution, I

just think that we will start seeing them as, seeing diversity as something good when we realise that first we cannot stop it. make us richer in a lot of terms and that is not going to... the fact that another person is living here doesn't mean that I will live worse than I am living if it's just Portuguese. So all this myth around migration and diversity I think should be tackled and yeah I think a lot of racist, anti-racist talk and structural change in a lot of institutions. and structural change in a lot of institutions.

MG: Okay we're done here thank you so much. Obrigada.

### **Beatriz Ramalho - The Guardian, Al Jazeera**

MG: I'm finishing a master's degree in Italy, mainly, the base is there. Then I was in Ecuador for a semester, in a university that did a partnership with mine, and I'm studying sustainable development, more localised, and that's why I decided to do a thesis about immigration. And with all this that is happening and that is getting worse and worse, I thought it was a topic worth talking about. And my mentor, who I like a lot, advised me to do it on this programme. I don't know if you've heard of it or not. I realised after the program that it doesn't have that much impact. They don't have enough budget to go to all the cities and say ok, let's do this, that, that. It's also interesting to understand what they have done or not in the city of Lisbon. And as I understood that people here don't know the program that well, I started to ask this question. Thank you for coming, thank you for being here. To have a little more insight of the people that work in this area To understand how it is, beyond what I study and what I see in the news What are your opinions about the most flagrant issues that are happening now?

BR: I was just reading the questions, I even googled what ICC was. But yeah, I'm going to talk based on what I've seen. I'm not an academic. It's based on my work as a journalist. We're always more pessimistic.

MG: So are you familiar with the ICC program? No, I'm not familiar. I was not familiar until I read your question earlier. But I went to read briefly what it is and sort of what it proposes to do in Lisbon. And even though I can speak to how it's been applied, and I hope it's good work, I'm not sure, I think that regardless, I don't believe that Lisbon as a city can be viewed at present as a model for intercultural integration. You know, it'll depend on who you're

speaking to, so if you're a refugee coming to Lisbon or if you're someone of a migrant background who's going to end up working in low-income jobs, or if you're a wealthier migrant, these are all different ways that you will experience the city. But I think the fundamental issue of how we don't really have adequate housing or a very robust system for people to informally integrate into the city or access language classes, and these programs don't exist at a policy level. They may exist through NGOs that try to offer them more informally, but there's no actual structure for a migrant coming in and understanding how to navigate employment, how to regularize themselves. I think that we're not really excelling at this. So we're not doing brilliant work, I think, in an intercultural city. I think I read on the website, there's an app that they've developed on the basis of this ICC program for this. But I've never heard any interviewee mention this app. I've heard people tell me, I don't know how to get this information. And I wish I could have told them to make this app, but I've never heard of this app. So, I mean, there's a danger in creating symbolic things like an app or public awareness campaign which are important but that shouldn't take away from how we actually implement policy change because only policies and only really robust state provision programs will be something that everyone can benefit from. Because if you're a migrant arriving in Portugal, your first point of place that you're going to go to is the border service, like SEF. I don't think SEF is offering this app. I don't think they will do more than their basic kind of thing, which is fill in this sheet and go away. studying this properly, like the most immigrants I knew were like, unfortunately, were when I was like having a Uber trip, for example, and I would speak to them and they would speak to me and they would be asking questions like, but how can I get, like how can I search for this and this and like I couldn't, I couldn't tell them anything because I also me like I didn't know because things are not divulged as they should.

MG: And what is your perspective on the controversy surrounding the cases of labour exploitation in Odemira, on the Tagus River now and in general in Portugal? And additionally what measures and suggestions do you have to address and mitigate such issues?

BR: Yeah, so what's been happening in Odemira is a really horrible and unfortunate consequence of creating or like promoting an entire region as like the agricultural stronghold of a country inviting or promoting foreign labour to work in these farms which are owned by multinationals and then not creating any system for integrating people into that region or that city like Odemira. I mean I can speak about Odemira more because I spent quite a lot of time there for the story that I did. So you know what is still happening there but what began



happening I think like five, six years ago now, is like really massive cases of human smuggling. So, you know, all these farms, you know, there's like all this farmland and there's like farm owners who need workers and these workers are not going to be in their majority Portuguese people. And so what ends up happening is the thing that we see in southern Italy or southern Spain. And a lot of foreign labour is tempted to come into Portugal, mainly because of the way that our immigration system is created. Because you can enter Portugal as an undocumented person, and you're a regular, and then you can regularise yourself, which obviously is really positive. But it only works if people are integrated into that country, and they're not paying thousands of euros of fees to the smuggler who brought them here. So most people who end up working in Almeria, they were smuggled here, this means that they're predominantly from Nepal and India and there they pay agents to like basically get them a job here or to get them like a plane ticket and to get them a visa because there's no bilateral agreements with these countries. For instance, we have bilateral agreements with Brazil which kind of prevents this from happening at the scale that it happens with other countries. So people play smugglers, they arrive in Portugal, they owe a lot of money to smugglers, they work on these farms, and then they're almost in a situation of debt bondage, which means that they can't leave these jobs, even if they're really badly paid or they're being exploited, because they need to pay the feedback to their smugglers. And they become exploited, and there's all these sources of trafficking and this happens to both women and men. Now, how does this come to happen in a place like Portugal and how does this come to happen in a sleepy town like Odemira? As you know, there's just no oversight. My problem here is like this happened for years before the press like put it on the on the radar and then that just means that the people that had been hired in this region to, you know, there is like a, it's called like a CLAIM, it's like a regional office for integration of migrants. Yeah, I mean, like, how are they doing, like, obviously, these people, they have the best interests, but they probably, I don't know if they didn't have enough budget or don't know how it works, but they really couldn't be doing their job because of the scale of exploitation that is happening there. And so what that meant is that people in Odemira were living, as everybody knows, they were living in overcrowded homes. When there was a COVID outbreak, they were subject to COVID. You know, I visited people that were living in garages. They lived in mattresses with bugs. It was almost like slave-like conditions. And so this labour exploitation is basically enabled by the fact that when people entered the country, they weren't given any tools to understand, listen, this is how you get employment. This is what the minimum wage is. This is what you're entitled to. And there are ways of preventing smuggling, preventing

trafficking, and I don't think any of those things are being implemented in Odemira. Now, I guess there are a few criminal cases going on, but it's largely the same because there hasn't been a massive overhaul of the housing situation in Odemira or or, yeah, or like labour policies or anything. A problem that comes... Why does this happen? There's no integration. So, for instance, when you're a worker, when you work in a job like farming, or which is really hard work, but if you're from a migrant background, you should be part of a union. So you should be part of a union that will tell you, you know, this is the minimum wage, these are your rights. And when I ask people, why aren't you part of any union? They're like, well, we don't know where the unions are. We don't, we don't speak Portuguese because for you to get language classes, you need to get your residency permit, but they don't have the residency permit yet. So the whole system doesn't make sense. The whole system keeps you in this loophole where you know you're undocumented so you don't really have language classes. You do have access to healthcare which is great but then you don't have any tools at your disposal to empower yourself. And then I suppose the owners or the organisers of these unions in Odemira, and they said well, we don't speak English so we can't have these people. Because they're like normal farmers, you know Portuguese farmers, they're not like You know, they don't speak much English and so they're like already It's hard for us to kind of help them and the problem is not on the unions It's not their fault the fault is like the local integration kind of unit. They should form a union for them, they should, I don't know, these should be things that they're thinking about ahead, because these are not isolated problems, this is like a European problem, like labour exploitation in southern European countries. If we've seen it before, we should have prevented it, but we didn't, and it's kind of still ongoing.

MG: I'm sorry, but what do you mean by unions? What are these unions you're talking about?

BR: Unions are syndicates. Ah, okay. So like farms, you know, labour unions. So that's, you know, how you like, will know how to advocate for your rights, they're not being exploited, which most of the people were. And then another problem in Odemira was, which happens a lot, is just like, because there's no housing, there were big companies, big farms who would create housing inside of their farms. That means that people, you know, they're horribly exploited because you work or you live that actually should not be legal. So yeah, there was just like a lot of undercover, like, weird shoddy things happening because nobody was kind of addressing them. I mean, there's a problem which is big farms, some of which exploit people, they finance the local integration services. I know this is like a deviation, but I'm like, this is messed up. So, anyways. That's kind of the gist of the problem there. So, if I had to think of

measures or suggestions to mitigate this, it would be that you have to have a more well-funded integration service. It can't just be like, I feel like a lot of it is just kind of nice, big, like campaigns, but not really a lot of active work. So, you know, to mitigate this, you have to go to the root cause, why are people smuggled into a country? Well we need like you know safe pathways for people to enter Portugal and we need like bilateral agreements. If you want to recruit thousands of people from Nepal then create a bilateral agreement with Nepal and people can come here with their rights and transparently and then beyond that you know you just need and this is another problem you just need like good kind of like oversight and inspectorate systems. So like in Portugal there is and every country has offices for a man to inspect the situation of labour abuses in farms. These things are really underfunded. There's like one person for the whole region, I don't know, but I'm just exaggerating to say that there's not enough monitoring of that. And then in the last instance I would say there needs to be real integration services, and that means everyone needs to have access to language classes, because everyone I spoke to really wanted to learn Portuguese, because they know that's the only way they can get the better jobs. So everybody should be entitled to it, regardless of their residency situation. Everyone needs to know what their rights are on arrival. So there should be some sort of toolkit that people get, like, this is the minimum wage, this is what you can do with your current documentation. Get on it and empower yourself. And people were just lost. And then when you're lost in a country, you're reliant on your employer who might be exploiting you or on your smuggler. Or people are just on Facebook groups exchanging information. But that means that they can be scammed. So for instance, a lot of people are paying hundreds of euros in fees to lawyers to help them do their SEF application. That's not necessary if you have the tools and if SEF, which I think is getting extinct now, you're gonna close it down, but if SEF kind of offered you those tools in the first place then you don't have to be taking out, you know, paying lawyers. It's basically a really flawed system. But it's like a microcosm for how the whole integration works in the entire country.

MG: Thank you so much for your insights. And regarding the housing crisis in Lisbon, I read your article, but it's already one year and a half old. Could you provide any new insights on what's happening now, at the moment here in Lisbon?

BR: From what I've heard, it's not like research as much as I did a year and a half ago. I think it's just nothing's changed or it's gotten worse because rents keep going up. And that's really, really depressing. So, some cities, like I think, you know, like in Berlin or in Germany, there's like rent controls and there's ways to like mitigate these kinds of issues which aren't really

happening in Portugal when you have like still a lot of foreign investment that comes into the city and just like puts your prices up. So I think now I mean it's actually it's probably worse because I was speaking to someone who was not it's not even from a migrant background but someone's kind of middle class and they can't find a house for their family. So people are just being pushed out to the margins and our wages don't match the rent. And so obviously if you're marginalized or of a migrant background, then you're kind of double affected if your wage is like, you know, if you're working class or if you're even middle class. But if you used to live like I think I put in the article, if you used to live in Loures, which is like a peripheral area of the city, because there's so much foreign investment there, then you're pushed out and out and out. That affects people who come here, who are migrants, particularly badly. So I can speak of probably two instances. So I did this short documentary about these Ukrainian women who were coming to Portugal, like everybody, like hundreds of thousands of people and they were lucky enough to be hosted by a family but eventually they needed to go out and find a house and obviously, like everybody else in the city, it's not them, it was incredibly hard for them to kind of have an individuality, Portuguese, but also like the rents were really crazy and their wages were not high I mean, you only got a house in the end because someone was really nice and gave them a house at a discounted rent. But there's another, I think, ramification of the housing crisis, if we're speaking about how it affects people of a migrant background, it is if you come into Portugal and you're a refugee or an asylum seeker, like many people did from Afghanistan last year, I think, has Then you are initially put in like state accommodation, or you get put in a public hospital or whatever, that's what happens to a group of people. And then, whilst you're waiting for everything to be regularised, then maybe you can get access to housing. So you can leave this hospital or whatever, which are really bad, they're really bad places that people are put in. And then you can go into a house and that's what should happen. But there are no houses in Lisbon. So for starters, nobody gets put in Lisbon anymore. If you've started your life in Lisbon, if you're a refugee and you've started your life in Lisbon for a year, and you were in this state of accommodation, you will have to, forcibly, you will have to go to a new city and reintegrate. So a lot of people are sent to the north where there's more houses, like Braga. But then you get there and you still don't get your own house in Braga. You get either put in another hostel or you get shared a house with other people. So, you know, it's not ideal. And every country in Europe has this in some ways, but at least I think eventually you get your own place. But I, you know, at least like African refugees, if you don't have money, of course, I mean like state housing, then you just don't really get your own house anymore. You just get put endlessly living in a hostel, which

is terrible, and it shouldn't happen. Obviously if you have a lot of money, obviously someone can just have money and they can get their own house, but in terms of like states, states offered housing, we just don't have it. And nothing's changed because actually all of the policies they were talking about a year and a half ago, I've barely seen them implemented in any way. We don't have any public housing stock. We have one of the worst levels in Europe of public housing stock. And that's a real problem, because if you don't have public housing stock, I mean, it's madness, really. Yeah.

MG: And regarding the reception and integration services, you talked to me about this before. How do you think this has been interacting with immigrants on their arrival and what could be done in the beginning has been a big problem. So what's your perspective on this?

BR: Yes, so, I mean, SEF, which is the only thing I can speak about because it's the only thing that still exists. The problem with reception and integration comes from the fact that it was like an understaffed agency and it had a huge backlog. That means that, I mean, this affects like everybody who is, you know, doesn't matter if you're from Nepal, from Brazil, if you come here and you want to get your situation, your documents, or you want to get your residency permit, it's, you're, you're looking at like two years wait, or a year and a half wait, because the backlog is so unimaginably horrible. That means that people live in a limbo whilst they're waiting for that. If you are, depending on getting a better job with that residency permit or whatever, because it's great to have your document, you just live undocumented for one or two years. And, you know, provided that the Portuguese state does offer you healthcare and fundamental rights, it doesn't mean that people are completely marginalised, but you don't have the same civic rights as when you have your documents. And that's just awful and Steph will probably, you know, if you email them, I think they will admit it at this point. It's really awful. I put in a freedom of information request for their kind of, for how many, like, applications they have pending. And it's like thousands and thousands of people that are waiting for their applications. Sometimes, I did this in 2021, so people have been waiting since 2017, since 2018. So, the system wasn't working. I think the Portuguese state has acknowledged it because it's closing down SEF. Will the new agency, like, tend to be better? I don't know. I think that a border service, like I was saying, like SEF, needs to be... The people who work at SEF, actually, need to be trained to work with people who are coming in from highly vulnerable situations. That is not the case. I mean, again, there might be, and there will be, brilliant and excellent and compassionate people working there because you can change your life. But in the majority, people are not detected to even like to know,

this might be someone who's been trafficked, or this is someone who's just fled a war zone, let me approach them differently. So I once walked in with a young kid who was Nigerian, but he was studying in Ukraine, so he fled the war. And he had been wrongfully imprisoned in Poland because a lot of black people were being put in jail in Poland at the time. I mean, this was a whole problem of how people who were not Ukrainian were struggling to leave the war zone because they didn't have the same rights. And I walked with him to the Serbian Casparash. And he went in there and he was trying to like... The online service was American, so he was asking for help on how to register himself for temporary protection. And they were incredibly cold and unhelpful. They tried to speak to him in Russian and he didn't speak Russian. They kind of thought he was lying. So, I mean, it was really confusing, which is basically, because they're understaffed, they don't have, I think, adequate training sometimes to deal with vulnerable people. The system isn't that, the system for you to, like, request your residency permit, you know, it's not that straightforward, like I said. People have to pay lawyers to kind of help them understand it. There's not enough tools, there's not enough information, and because SEF is the first place you go to, there just needs to be more, I mean, there's more, yeah, like information, like tools, again, like people just need to know how to, how they can navigate a country, because it's just as you would think, people that arrive in a strange country and they're really lost, and the border service is not really giving them any tools. For instance, in Ireland or in Germany, I guess, if you're in a refugee reception centre, at least they might connect you to a job centre. It's not a perfect system, but I don't think we have that. They're neither giving the tools, neither the right approach to people, as you were saying with the Nigerian boy you were with. I really think there needs to be an urgent training on everyone who is working with immigrants. The amount of immigrants here in Portugal that are complaining about the way they're treated by the institutions, by the Portuguese institutions, is crazy. There really needs to be training on interculturality and how can these staff treat these people that are coming from vulnerable situations. It's really, really important. And also, to provide the toolkit, and I think that's a bit what the Intercultural Cities Programmes are trying to do. But I was speaking with the director of the programme here, and she told me that they printed some toolkits and distributed them in the cities they're in, in Portugal. Like, that's... it can be like that. Yeah, at least they have to work directly with SEF, or directly with that agency. So at least whatever it is, their toolkit, is coming in together with the official package. And I was going to say, because you mentioned in your question, you said reception services by Portuguese institutions. I mentioned this briefly, but like, the situation for refugees being received in

Portugal is terrible. Like, I can give you a quick example about terrible integration malpractice. So, when the Afghan, kind of, when the Taliban were in Afghanistan, Portugal said that they would take a number of people, including a large music school and orchestra. This was in the news. They were talking like Afghans orchestra, which are kids, they are minors. And, you know, we would host them and they could stay here for protection. So great. It was like hundreds of children, many minors, some were like 18, 19, 20, but many minors accompanied by teachers. None of them gossiping their parents and cousins because they were parents and family because they've been evacuated. So you're talking about unaccompanied children and they are taken to the military hospital in Belém. And their place there, you know, like really like sleeping on hospital beds you know it's it's been like it's not a hospital anymore it's been like they took out the stuff and it still looks like a hospital and uh well they're put there and they're put there for like a year um you know without any you know they didn't get access to school for a really long time the red cross came in to give them meals but they always brought pork and they're muslims so they wouldn't eat. I mean this is real. This is really real. And it was just terrible. I mean now they've been put in Braga, kind of what I was mentioning, they've been put in hostels elsewhere. But it was like, they were just abandoned there, basically. They were left, like again, why would you put minors in a company hospital with their teachers, with other adults that aren't their family. Like it's really weird, like there's a lot of safeguards that aren't happening there. And then obviously they said there were nice people at the Red Cross, they were trying to help them, but the meals were... Yeah, feed them pork. Yeah, they would say, after a month, they were like, you don't eat pork. I thought it was going to be like... I was like, crazy. So, yeah, I don't know what's going on, but the reception is terrible. And that's the only case I've heard. But it's one of the worst. I mean, a lot of them ran away then. They went to Germany because their social system there is better. Yeah. And I can speak about this more because it was kind of told to me confidentially, but yeah. Yeah. Terrible. to be seen as such a good country receiving immigrants and everything. But then the processes take years and people stay undocumented for years. And publicly, speaking itself, it's amazing, but then the processes here are so long and take so long and people are not treated as they should be treated. But those things are not spoken as much as they should be. And so immigrants see it as an amazing country to come. But then the reality that is happening here, like they don't really know it because it's not. Unless in these Facebook groups and stuff where they're communicating with each other. But apart from that, it's just seen as an amazing country.

MG: And so now what do you think are the main immigration challenges here in Lisbon? And what should be the priorities to tackle them? We already identified some main challenges.

BR: I'd say, it's going to be a repetition of what I said, but it's like, if we have a law that allows people to enter the undocumented and regularise themselves, which again is great, how do we protect them though? We can't just leave people in a limbo. The backlog is a massive issue. One of the biggest tools that you can have to be integrated in a city is to have your documents. If you're for a really long time waiting for your documentation, the risk that you'll end up in a lower paid exploitative job, that you'll end up in an overcrowded house because you don't have enough money or because you're like living under your employer's like, you know, whim or the house that they got, or the like construction workers or the farm workers, like all these things that are really bad for your own personal civic and human rights keep happening. So how do we tackle them? Definitely we need, you know, Portugal needs to deal with their backlog immigration processes. People there should be expelled. Like people shouldn't be waiting more than six months for their papers. I think that's what's actually been established that should happen. Like we said, people need to get, you know, initially they just need to have access to information like this toolkit we've been talking about. You know, it's just like, what are your basic rights here? How do you access employment? How do you access housing? How do you access language classes? How do you like, how do you, if you have studies, how do you get your equivalency to be able to like, some people have high school studies, or they might even actually, I met a lot of people in Alameda who were farm workers, and they had bachelor degrees in engineering. So how do I get, how do I like make the equivalency here in Portugal to then work in the field that I've studied? All of these things are so crucial, and they're not happening. You know, I actually have no idea. If someone asked me, how do I get my equivalency from Nepal, I wouldn't know how to tell you. And so this information isn't widely available. All of the different actors that exist that are trying to work in integration, they should work hand in hand with the state body, which is SEF or whatever will be the new step. There just needs to be good, I guess, state communication. So, that's kind of a mix of the challenges and what should be done. What else, what else, what else? I think that's mostly it. And then policy-wise, again, I think this is true. It's not the most important, but bilateral agreements. If Portugal, which is what they're doing, they want to recruit lots of people from other countries to work on their farms to boost its million dollar berry industry. They need to create bilateral agreements with the countries they want to



recruit people from so that this is done in a transparent way. Otherwise, it just gives way to people coming here in really unsafe ways, which is what Europe is struggling with. So people just need all these, you know, the state to protect them.

MG: And are you seeing the government doing these efforts to do this bilateral agreements with the countries that these people are coming from?

BR: I haven't heard of it. I mean, I haven't researched this. I don't think anything's been created so far. I think there's like a small agreement with Morocco to bring in 300 workers, but that's laughable. That's like no one. They are recruiting thousands of people for these farms, so I think more needs to be done. And if they don't want to do the bilateral agreements, then don't become the heart of Europe's agricultural industry because you can't protect the workers that come here, then just don't enter into his businesses, right?

MG: Diverse people, immigrants, the LGBTI community, are often seen as the others. Like, they're often portrayed as the others in the media that we're used to hear from, like here in Europe mainly, what factors do you think contribute to this phenomenon?

BR: Like I understand othering like from the academic perspective, you know, what it means to other someone. I don't think that I can speak so much about the LGBT community, although I think there will be similarities about how people are othered. I think unfortunately that's historically like the concept of othering comes from colonialism and so it's about kind of a hierarchy that was established then about obviously Race superiority and that if it's not adequately deconstructed deconstructed in today's kind of political climate or how you teach history or how you educate people about different cultures and how they are also part of a national identity. Then you create othering, you know, because it's like, well, they're different they're not, you know, if you're like black Portuguese where you're not really Portuguese or whatever. So then other things exacerbate it, right? So like I think if we go from the really low level, if I speak about Portugal, let's say, and we say there's an othering of people who are not white or were not like, you know, Portuguese by both their parents, then that comes from an issue of like, how have we taught the history of the country? We taught, you know, how, whatever, Portugal, you know, colonized all these countries and these people came here. But then issues that exacerbate it are obviously structural racism. I think structural racism contributes to othering. Because what happens in Portugal is you have a really, really big structural racism problem. We have people, if you come from a minority background, and maybe, you know, I mean, if you come, you know, if your family fled the war in Angola, they

didn't have that much money, and then they maybe started off in a low-paying job And then they have a kid and that kid goes to public schooling maybe not in a great area You know and for some reason they haven't been able to reach higher education which happens a lot You know a lot of people from minority backgrounds in Portugal don't go on to universities Because of you know issues of spiritual racism And then that kind of creates a vicious cycle and these people are continuously othered because they haven't been given the tools to access employment in the same way that maybe a more privileged person went to a private school did. So I mean, othering, obviously like the issue of race and othering intersects a lot with class and with how you've been able to kind of, what kind of education you've got and so on and so forth. But I think, yeah, the main issue that contributes to othering is continued structural racism and so that can be things such as not having access to education or jobs in the same way but also like everyday racism, right? where someone will not get a job because of the color of their skin or because of their accent. Again, it doesn't have to be coloristic, like, accent is an issue. Sorry, I'm not sure if that's a great answer.

MG: No, no, it's a perfect answer. Thank you. There's no right answers or wrong answers. And how would you say that diversity is seen here in Portugal? And when can it become perceived as an asset, as a benefit?

BR: Yeah, it's a good question. I mean, like you were saying, I think there is an idea that Portugal is kind of really welcoming to people of a migrant background or that it's a really diverse country. It is a very diverse country. There are people from all over here, but how is it seen? I think it goes back to the issue of structural racism. You might even say like, oh, this feels great, it's so diverse, but are your peers diverse? Are the people in your job diverse? Is the person who's in the restaurant eating to you? Is it really diverse? And then if it's not, if it's the people who are cleaning or the people who are serving you your food are diverse, then that's a really big red flag. So I'm not sure if there's a really critical addressing of diversity, even in Portuguese media. I think they try to take little steps, but it's not like in the UK, where again, there's a big racism problem. But you see representation more than you see here. And, you know, that's a problem because if you don't address the roots of it, if you don't address the issue of diversity and of equal opportunity with the people who are already Portuguese and of colour and of like a migrant background, then when other people come up with micro-backgrounds, it's like they're equally not being given, you know, like adequately represented in the country. They can become a part of the national identity. And like, I think in Portugal, it's really boring, I guess, when you speak of diversity, you always have to speak

about like reckoning of colonial past again. It's like, how do we deal with people who are different than, you know, who are considered to be othered. And that's a really big lapse in Portugal's way of thinking about history, how we have our monuments, how we don't address this in national curriculum. So it all goes hand in hand. It's a structural way of thinking, and for it to change, it will take years of new education on this topic.

Okay, we're done. Beatriz, thank you.

### **Teresa Tito de Morais - Portuguese Refugee Council**

MG: Are you familiar with the program Intercultural Cities? And if so, how have you been complementing the work done on the inclusion of immigrants in Lisbon?

TM: No, I don't know that program in detail. I presume that it will help to reveal a share of responsibilities and an exchange of experiences between several cities that receive immigrants and refugees.

MG: In the end, the program helps, within the municipal chambers, to develop public policies that go along with the principles of interculturality. But it's good for me to understand if the people who worked in this area know or not the program, because it helps me to understand how relevant it is or not.

TM: Look, what can I say about this? As I said, I've been reformed for three years and therefore I'm not active, and I think this program is capable of being recent. But while I was in charge of the Portuguese Council for the Refugees, and particularly when the reinstatement process began, we ourselves were concerned about involving many many authorities in this program with the aim of decentralising the refugees, so that they don't all live in Lisbon and around but that they could, little by little, be displaced to other parts of the country and for that we set up many contacts with the municipal chambers, in that sense, and one of the essential things was the search for a local housing. And we also had the opportunity to create a kind of platform of councils that received refugees, to see a change of experiences, what was happening in each part of the country, even though there is a great diversity. So, I had to see, let's say, those cares and we promoted at that time already so that she could share her good practices and answer to the problems that affect her geographical situation. It was an informal network. In the shelter of the Boubadella, have an auditorium, and at that time we

started a conference with several autarchies, where we invited the technicians who worked with the refugees inside these autarchies that could come and debate and give their testimony. We didn't advance much further in terms of giving a more solid force, let's say, and then we ended up doing a lot of bilateral mediation, because at the time we had more than 23 autarchies that responded in a favorable way, but there were three or four that were much more active, namely in Guimarães, we also had very close contacts. This meeting was a pioneer in this area and started from the Portuguese Council for Refugees. At the time we were launching the re-installation programs, we were receiving refugees who were in other countries but who couldn't stay there for long, and Portugal offered. They didn't come directly from their home country, they came from a third country, where they didn't have the possibility of integration. There was a need to find another country that would provide them with their integration. And in that sense, Portugal accepted many, who came from precisely all countries. And so, they would have a more definitive statute from the start. And it was necessary to arrange with the shelters that we worked for the requests of spontaneous asylum, those who arrive in Portugal and ask for protection, are installed in the shelter. The shelter has a more provisional character. And we, with the reinstalled, had a longer term strategy. We wanted to involve the authorities in this process.

MG: And regarding the reception, welcome and integration services by the Portuguese institutions in Lisbon, but also in general, because they work at the national level. How would you say that these have come to interact with immigrants?

TM: As I say, I have no experience with immigrants. All my experience is with refugees.

MG: But, yes, with refugees too.

TM: There were people who left their home countries and came to Portugal, either in search of security, or because their fundamental rights were denied in their home country, or because immigrants have an economic character, they come to Portugal to work, but then there is a force of poverty, of origin, offers them. And these are framed, let's say, in the law of asylum, which has a humanitarian protection that allows them to stay in Portugal. In a certain way determined to understand the rights and duties of each one. That's it. Yes, I agree. But... Now, what can I say? I consider that Portugal has been a learning experience. Because, let's say, 20 years ago, or 30 years ago, refugees were not well known and they were not given much attention. So, even though it was always my part and the colleagues who work in the Refugee Justice Council, which was the first organisation that was formed to welcome and integrate

those who fled their countries of origin of persecution, race, religion, political opinions, the definition of what a refugee is, we always tried to make the Portuguese authorities sensitive to this issue. But since there weren't many at the beginning, there was more attention given to immigrants, because there were big immigrant colonies, like the Brazilians, also the Ukrainians, which are a nationality that initially came as immigrants, and only now, with the war, are they considered refugees. But, for example, coming from Guinea-Bissau, from the Portuguese slums, Portugal was really looking for agreements with the countries of origin to receive immigrants from those nationalities. Now, little by little I believe that the welcoming structures have improved, but in my time they were frankly deficient. I was reading the last plan they made for immigration in Lisbon, in the municipality of Lisbon and one of the big complaints of immigrants, but also refugees here, is that the service they receive is not empathic and that many times they try to displace them and create violence. I think it is very important, even many times, with the good will of non-governmental organizations, of non-governmental structures that work in this field, with the good will they have, face great difficulties. I would name mainly the issue of documentation, because there is a great need to have documents, to have valid documents that allow you to work. Then, the access to housing is another very pertinent problem, especially because people, in general, the owners are not very sensitive to renting houses, especially immigrants who come from African countries are already made differently if they are from countries like Ukraine, which are blond, old blue, there is already a greater openness. people from Asia, for example, from Syria, Afghanistan, and especially from Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from countries that Portugal receives with the greatest number, There is a great difficulty. Many times we get a house, but then if they see that those who go there to live are Arabs or Africans, the contract does not go on and they leave people in very difficult situations. Now, we have had great success with positive steps, because initially, with access to the National Health Service, I think that improved a lot. And it was also a great struggle, because the projects had to pay a high fee, as foreigners, to access the National Health Service, and it was achieved, given the vulnerability of these people, that they had the same benefits as any immigrant who had already resided, and that the moderate rates were very high, and that they were forced to work, to pay. So, where I see the greatest difficulty in integration is the documentary issue, therefore, access to employment and access to housing, I think, are the most serious problems. And many times, the difficulty of recognizing the skills that bring the weight of origin and then be able to work in those same areas in Portugal, because the recognition of

MG: the housing crisis that is happening in Lisbon, what measures would you suggest to deal with this problem?

TM: In other words, there has to be a quota of houses that can be available to this more fragilized population. Social housing with the necessary conditions, and not, as it is often verified, housing many people in a room, exceeding the capacity of the houses, in inadequate conditions... the State needs to ensure that the living conditions are dignified and, on the other hand, be sure that people can afford to pay, right? And that affects the State. There has to be a social housing program for this population that makes available shelters and that the institutions that are in charge of accompanying this population can have access to these wells to use them for the benefit of the migrants.

MG: Exactly, thank you. And regarding the controversies around the labour exploitation cases that have been taking place, especially now, throughout the Rio Tejo and in Portugal in general. What is your perspective on all these things that have happened?

TM: Well, I think that this is outrageous and really, I think that watching the images are as degrading as we have seen lately, of people housed in subhuman conditions and the exploitation they are victims of, is really very worrying. And I think it is up to social security and public services to have a proactive attitude to control all these work contracts because labor exploitation is a scourge for humanity, isn't it? And to exploit people who arrive without knowing the country, in very traumatic experiences, because the antecedents that I had before arriving in Portugal were already very difficult, and not knowing the language, not knowing the rules of the country and see themselves perfectly condemned to violent and degrading situations, I think that we cannot allow such a thing to continue to happen.

MG: And Teresa has already identified here some of the main challenges in this matter of immigration and refugees, such as the documentation, the lack of jobs and the recognition of housing and the housing crisis. Is there a problem that needs to be addressed? And if so, what should be the priorities to try to solve these problems?

TM: When we face them, without being in the training of the technicians who deal with the problematics, but also to involve more and more this migrant population to solve the problems that arise because they live in the first person and can make valuable contributions so that the system changes, according to the needs. So, there are structural problems that not only affect the migrants, but also the Portuguese, with low incomes. We have to cross the

conditions of the host country with those that need to be integrated. the language, the traumas that people bring from their countries of origin, which we are often not able to fully identify, because cultural issues also have to be a cultural mediation that allows for this harmony in the integration of people who seek refuge in Portugal. The structural problems I see are in the solidarity of the recognition of the roles, let's say, the roles of identity, the recognition of the competences that people bring from their countries of origin, in documental terms, which has to be necessarily more cellular and more effective, which it is not. And then there has to be a clarification of public opinion, because many times the news, social media, live a lot of the scandal and the sensationalist case and it doesn't go to the root of the problems that have to do with people's daily lives. The need to have a roof, a house, the need to have a job that can support his family and the need to be a valid and useful element in the country he came from. I think that the integration of these people will be much more peaceful than it has been. Because, in fact, the difficulties in all fields, in access to work, in access to housing, the documentation of all these entries, leads these people to a parallel market that is always explored and always done in the worst possible conditions.

MG: Yes. Diverse people, immigrants, refugees, Many immigrants and refugees are often seen and treated like others, and thus portrayed in the media. What factors do you believe contribute to this categorization?

TM: The human being has to learn, and that's why I say that it's necessary to have a clarification, clarification sessions, even in schools, right from the beginning, when children grow up, grow up together with other children of other nationalities, to realize that they are not as different as they are, where we can, at a certain point in our lives, be forced to leave our country and look for better living conditions and safety in our country. I think that this stupidity among people has to prevail, and this can only be achieved with good examples, sharing information and with respect. Respect for others and not see the other as an enemy or a person who will contribute to the progress and will complement everyone's work.

MG: And how do you think diversity is seen in our country? And when can it be perceived as a benefit?

TM: I have some concerns in this field, because with the emergence of populist movements, I would say racist and xenophobic, which are emerging in Europe, this is a fertile ground so that people go after ideas that are false, naturally, and that's why they're called populists, and that don't understand the richness that exists in multiculturalism, in diversity, in innovation, in

the discovery of better practices, all of this is questioned only by the selfishness and greed that the other can harm me. If there is a break in these far-right movements that are emerging in Europe, I hope that the world will end up knowing a new setback and that it will bring a lot of suffering, not only for those who could give more and can't, due to the limitations they have due to this instability.

MG: But despite these populist movements, do you think there has been more dialogue about diversity and the importance of diversity and interculturalism in Europe and Portugal, despite the fact that these populist movements are growing in the academy?

TM: I'm afraid not, although I recognize that there is a struggle in the academy, There is an effort in schools and there it must be done, but it worries me a lot to do, even though it's to praise initiatives that want to talk about the issues, debate them, listen to them, discuss them, But it seems to me that we are still in a crossroad that does not guarantee that in a short time there will be a healthier change of mentalities. I have many fears, even though we went through a long period of great retrocess in terms of accepting each other. Let's see how you get through the next few years. But that doesn't mean that it's not worth continuing to try to make things better and that societies can be governed by movements of solidarity and attention, especially for multiculturalism and others that allow this assimilation and this will to contribute to a better, more just and more free world.

### **Carmo Belford - Jesuit Refugee Service**

MG: Thank you for being available for the interview. I'm writing my thesis about immigration and a program of the Council of Europe called Intercultural Cities, which promotes the integration of immigrants from several cities in Europe and now also outside of Europe. The cities basically, the chambers of the cities, sign up to be part of the program and receive this support. And I'm studying how it has helped in the city of Lisbon. Can you tell me more about the work you do with JRS?

CB: Yes. So, we are an international Catholic NGO. It is present in more than 56 countries in the world. In Portugal, we are present since 1992. We began our work among immigrants, vulnerable immigrants. Our mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate for the rights of vulnerable immigrants or asylum seekers or refugees in Portugal. We started our work by helping people seeking jobs, job opportunities, with our curriculums. Also, we started



working as a client. I don't know if you are aware, but there's a network of institutions that are coordinated by the High Commissioner for Migration. It's a network of institutions that pay psychosocial support to immigrants. This means the work we started doing by helping people seeking jobs, psychological support, also help with their documentation in Portugal and access to public services in Portugal, meaning social security, finances, every public office that may somehow contribute to the integration process here in Portugal. And it's called CLAIM.. The ACM website. We were one of the first CLAIM's in Santa Clara. People always go for a diagnosis with our social assistance, social workers, where they are asked very complete, very broad questions such like income. For example, if a person goes to JRS asking for support for their job, we ask several because if there's any other problem besides the lack of opportunities in the job market, in the labor market, some people are not even aware of the dimensions of their problems. So we do this diagnosis, and after this diagnosis, people are sent to other offices from JRS, the psychological office, the mental health office, legal support, in my case, I'm a legal advisor in JRS, or any other service, housing, or any other service people need, we can meet their needs and do this matching on the diagnosis. We also have a center. In 2006, we started working in a center that is specific for vulnerable immigrants, not asylum seekers, vulnerable immigrants. in a strategy on a Lisbon municipality strategy against homelessness. Okay. Okay, so ever since 2006 we've been welcoming hundreds of people in this center that has a capacity for a maximum of 25 people and an average of 50 people per year residing, 46 more or less, approximately 50 people a year in this reception center. And this was the first center we had. After that, we started working with the municipality of Lisbon also to welcome refugees and violent seekers from the relocation scheme and the re-establishment scheme from the European Union. This was our second reception response before 2015. In 2015, it's more or less 6 or 7 houses, I'm not totally sure. They belong to the municipality of Misede, but they are managed by JRS. So, in practice, we are the ones dealing with intergenerational health care. Our experience is mostly, besides the work we do with the homeless migrants, which is a profile mostly single men and also people coming from the protocols with Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde and other Portuguese speaking countries that have protocols since 1975 for medical treatment. So these are the two profiles that are in the Centro Pedro Arrupe, that center that I was talking about for vulnerable migrants. After, there's a difference in our daily job before 2015 and after 2015, as you can imagine, after the emergency crisis in Greece and Italy. After that, we started working also with the municipality to... We work inside a reception center that belongs to the municipality of Mismas, which is called Cafres, Centro de Apoio e Amento

Temporário dos Refugiados, which is based in Lumiar. And it also has a capacity for 20 to 25 people. So it mostly welcomes asylum seekers from every location in the Cerro Lusky. Now, this place is welcoming non-Ukrainians coming from Ukraine. From other nationalities, from Lviv, and other students that were studying in Ukraine. Also, after that, we started coordinating the PAR platform, the Departamento de Apoio aos refugiados. What? We started coordinating the PAR platform, the Departamento de Apoio aos Pugeados. We are founding members since 2015, but we started coordinating all dimensions of this platform in 2018. This did not involve the municipality because we already had this partnership with the municipality which is only for JRF and the municipality. And this platform allows us to welcome refugees from all cities in Portugal, mostly in the north and central regions of Portugal. Also with the municipality, I'll focus mostly on our work with the municipality of Lisbon. So in 2021, this partnership with Lisbon always was very good. And we managed all the documentation process and the public services just like we do for any other people. And in 2021, the municipality of Lisbon was The central place where Afghans from the National Humanitarian Admissions Program were welcomed was in the municipality of Ljubljana in Poznan-Dovrata-Švejpurs. And we welcomed more than 300 people in that center. It was an ad hoc reception center. their right to work inside the centre and take care of their social process. That's it. That's our history.

MG: Thank you. And regarding this intercultural cities programme that I was talking about, have you heard about it?

CB: Yes, I've heard. We contribute. There are meetings for this network. Meetings? Meetings. I believe every three months, but I'm not totally sure. I can confirm you that. a platform of institutions that work in inter-religious dialogue and prepare the institutions to better the system of welcoming and the climbs that I was mentioning first, it was one of the dimensions of this work. There is only one person at a time dealing with the program in all of Portugal. Not only for the municipality of Lisbon, but for the other 15 municipalities around Portugal that are within this program. So every three months they are having meetings with these institutions. I'm not totally sure about the period of meetings, but I will confirm the event after that.

MG: And how do you think it has been contributing to this intercultural integration approach in the city of Lisbon?

CB: an altar for us to exchange knowledge and expectations. But in terms of planning, in terms of strategy, it's been lacking a lot of, I would say, this committee needs to go further on their actions instead of creating only groups of sharing. They should take more actions.

MG: Changing subjects now, what is your perspective on the controversy surrounding the cases of labor exploitation in Almeida, on the Tagus River, and in general in Portugal? And additionally, what measures and suggestions do you have to address these issues?

CB: I mean, one of the things that this committee would have an important role on is the housing. Housing is a challenge, we know that it's a national challenge, but it gets worse in terms of Lisbon and Porto. housing problem. Not only, but majorly the housing problem. And the municipalities are in very difficult to face this problem since there are no social housing. And there are, as you know, more than 30 people living in one bedroom apartment, in Lisbon, especially in the internet and moraria regions. This, in my perspective, and from my experience with municipalities, not only Lisbon, but also not to call social security when they are facing these types of situations, particularly in a one bedroom apartment, because they know that social security has a 2-3 days response. They can give the person an emergency solution for 2-3 days maximum. After that there is a huge challenge finding temporary or permanent solutions, meaning more than 6 months to 1 year. In practice, although the municipalities know about the situation, they prefer not to denounce. Report. Yeah, report. Social Security. And now that recently, since the beginning of this year, there's a new law that transfers social competencies from the Social Security to the municipality. So my experience in this is creating a mask in terms of housing, in terms of responsibility for finding a social and housing response for vulnerable people and municipalities. So Odemira is not only about housing, but it's mostly about housing and the social conditions for people to start their lives here from scratch. Another problem that is contributing for the admitted situation, such as like in other regions is the lack of control from the authorities for working conditions in the city. And so, labor exploitation is not only a migration subject. There are national Portuguese people that face this problem. And if you check the national security report from the... I can share with you the link. The majority of people that are in these operations, the police, the judiciary police, the staff, do have a residence permit, or have a visa. And then people need their documentation done until they are exploited. So one of the reasons that also that part of the population that doesn't have documentation that is caught in these schemes is because of the 2019 legislation change that allowed migrants to enter Portugal without a legal visa, working visa. In this case, the person comes to Portugal illegally, crosses the border

irregularly, and they work for at least 12 months and pay taxes for at least 12 months as far as this government, until they are entitled to ask for a residence permit. It was a change in the law. I can send you the video. So before that, you could only ask for a residence permit if you had a working visa or a proper visa that matches the motivation. After that change, it was allowed for people without a visa to ask for the permit because our consular section does not work as it should. So it's very difficult for Portugal to access the visa and the proper documentation before coming to Portugal. But with the recent changes in last year, we created the Job Seeking Visa, CPRVisa, we believe that this type of situation happens. And there is also, because it's a complex problem, you know, I mean it is a very complex problem. It's also police enforcement, because these people depend on the authorities to give framework as victims of exploitation or immigration schemes or human trafficking. So in practice, although the authorities know about these schemes, they do not frame or grant the residence permit that is predicted in our immigration law for these victims. This means that if they do not have these proper residence permits, they will only be able to ask for residence permits. and some are paying taxes to social security. So it's a double victimization. People are exploited, they are not rented the residence permit for a reason of exploitation, and they need to be exploited for more than 12 months so they can have a residence permit. Of course there are companies that don't even exist, they are not registered or immigration schemes among companies that are pointed out in the national security report that I mentioned. It's really curious.

MG: Regarding what you were stating about the housing crisis that we're living in Lisbon, this was actually my other question that I have for you. Could you provide more insight on this crisis that we're living now and its implications, not only for citizens of Lisbon, but also for immigrants?

CB: With the consequences of the unfortunate incident in Mouraria, but it's not only that, we have been accompanying one of the persons that lost a relative in that fire, lost his father, and it's difficult because vulnerable immigrants do not report the situations they are living in. It's not their priority, from my experience. Their priority is to get a job and send money to their families and find ways to establish themselves, to bring their family members to Portugal or not. and even populations so they can report their housing conditions. Mostly they are ashamed of the way they are living and they are afraid of the consequences of reporting those conditions. So there is a lot of fear not only from the municipality, because the municipalities don't want more homeless people living in their streets and immigrants themselves do not

conform to the situation because they need that bed, although it's not a proper housing condition for them.

MG: What could be done? What do you think could be done to try to solve this issue?

CB: For example, in Lisbon there are programs that require five years residing legally in the municipality. Or either it's very hard because living legally in any city, it depends on SEF. except not answer the application in the long time, as you know, and it's very difficult for any university to prove they reside there for five years. They do not have toll leasing, they do not have electricity bill to prove. Obviously, we hear the news about the establishment of a residence.. And municipalities also, in this case, the town... Just to say, they are really afraid to issue these papers because they don't want any consequences. Although the law strictly protects the town councils do not issue and create many problems for immigrants because they are afraid. This means that people not only cannot ask for a resident permit, because SEF specifically asked for it in this paper. But also they cannot access free medical care. Without that paper, people cannot register in the local health care centre. And they cannot pay 100% of the cost of medical exams and consultations, meaning that one urgent health care issue may cost 100 euros. 100. So people avoid going to accessing health care in Portugal because of that. So there's a lot of social consequences because of not only the municipality but also the town council. And do you feel that there has been a work with the parishes, I don't know how to say it either, to solve this problem. No, it's been more than 10 years, we are starting to lose hope on this matter. We hope that, yeah, this should be done at a political level, not at a parish level. There's a ministry that is responsible for this, the social cohesion ministry. But from my experience, every town council does the way they want. So they are not very welcoming to other perspectives besides our own. It's going to be very difficult and I don't think it's going to be easier for any of us in the brief future. Regarding housing, in theory it should be the municipality programs, creation of new solutions and innovation solutions. For example, and this is a measure at the national level, insurance companies could and should create insurances for renting that are appropriate and reasonable for access to vulnerable immigrants because they have no network support, social network support, informal network, friends that could be the guarantor or advance some rents in alternatives. This lack of informal support, you can imagine if it's difficult for us Portuguese people to find a house without a guarantor, you can imagine how it is for vulnerable immigrants. People don't even, the landlords don't even answer the phone or let them in to visit the house as soon as they are aware of an immigrant.

MG: And regarding the reception and integration services provided by the Portuguese institutions in general, how do you think that these have been interacting with immigrants? And do you receive, like in JTRS, do you receive complaints?

CB: Yes, there's a lot of answers for refugees and asylum seekers, but there's a huge lack of answers for vulnerable immigrants. We can see it in ports and regions under the bridge. And there's a huge problem, especially when it comes to undocumented migrants. Because without any documents, for example, the person does not have a passport, an ID, national ID, they are not allowed to enter a reception centre that has a phone with social security. And there are only a few, you can count with the fingers of one hand, the number of reception centres that allow, that welcome people without any documentation, because Trupeda is one of them, but it has 25 registries, so you cannot answer, and we cannot be a nationalist. In Porto it is very difficult, especially since the transfer of all the funds from Social this year, it's getting really worse and worse every day. So vulnerable immigrants without documentation face huge struggles and most probably will sleep in the streets because there is no response either from social security or from the municipality.

MG: What would you say are the main immigration challenges in Lisbon? You have already stated housing. What are the others that you identify?

CB: S.A.P.A. It's a platform that people submit their documentation, passport, criminal records, for the work, article 88 and 89 of the Foreign Act. But in practice, this platform allows people to submit their manifesto of interest without any documentation. So if I put a selfie in place of the passport, it's a set. The platform will allow me to submit the decisions on this issue. And there is a lot of people using this platform this way. There's a lot of people that don't meet the requirements of the law, but do it anyway. And this will get... huge human resources problem since 2010 at least. They've been mentioning this in their internal reports that since 2019 it's been a total mess. We had no appointments, vacancies for almost one year. We are still waiting, for example, for vacancies for family reunification since October last year. So you can imagine that the lives of these immigrants are basically freezed on hold because of, on one hand, the lack of human resources, and on the other hand, the problems of the platforms of SEF that allow people to regularize their documentation. And SEF is going to be over, probably in October. In October, yes. And we expect that these major problems that were the basis of such problems, would be solved by this new agency, but we have a lot of questions, especially the ratio of human resources versus spending procedures, and also

how they will digitalize, format, and simplify. The process of asking for confidentiality. There are also problems with the contact centre. People call a lot, they don't have an answer. the government will also reform this way of scheduling appointments. So they can do it online, 100% online, and the call center is only for information, not for scheduling. So there is a perspective that things will get better in the future, but we have more questions than answers so far. Let's hope it gets better.

MG: Diverse people, immigrants, refugees, also the LGBT community, are often seen and portrayed as the others. What factors do you think contribute to this phenomenon?

CB: I mean there's a huge distance, not only physical distance from these countries, but also the government response was very different from other nationalities. On one hand, because the Ukrainians had a lot of people, immigrants, people spread around Europe, so there's a huge community of Ukrainian immigrants in and that allowed a different response from the government. People could freely move from Ukraine to other countries, they could move without any visa, so they could enter the national territory and have the documentation in 15 days or less, and access to public services with a papership that was issued in Portugal. And there was a huge difference, especially in the communication between public authorities. And so staff, as soon as the people submitted their request to the platform, would contact the tax authorities, social security, the EFP for professional training and language teaching and they could have access to these public services without the need of going presently to that services to ask for their safety. the other immigrants from other nationalities or even Ukrainians before that should go to every public services and face a huge bureaucracy to have their documentation done without totally understanding why, because some countries, a lot of countries that don't require a number to access the national healthcare system. So even culturally it's difficult for people to understand why there's so much bureaucracy in Portugal and how to navigate through this system. And compared to the measures taken in the temporary directive, it was a huge difference for me. I think it would be perfectly replicable for other nationalities. Exactly, yeah. It's incredible to see how there is all, like, all the system that is set up when there is this need, but for all the others, the process is too long. Exactly. And it was even worse a few years ago. Since 2022, things started to go better. Before, it was impossible for people to ask for a social security number. They should present their promise of contract or work contracts For the needs, the next number, people should have a legal representative in Portugal. And change, they can choose to have online communication. I don't know if you know, but I think it's a very good idea. They can do it online, ok? If they

have a way to communicate it online with the text authorities, they can replace... They can be... They... It's not required to have a legal representative in Portugal. Before it was. Meaning, the person lived to ask a friend or a family member in Portugal or if she is national to be their legal representative with the text authority, it's impossible to do it. Yeah, because the majority of people don't know anyone here in Portugal. And this was until last year, until 2022? Yes, 2022.

MG: Our last question is, how do you think diversity is seen here in Portugal? And when can it become perceived as a benefit?

CB I mean, it's not totally... I think Portugal, compared to other countries, is very good. There's a New Yorkian social survey that states that Portugal is one of the best countries regarding the social security contributions. It's really tricky when we talk about the social security contributions because it's always mentioned in the media as a great contribution and a great source of income to the Portuguese government, but people are not totally aware of why those numbers are so high. It's because of what I told you before, it's because people in practice work for 12 months in Texas, but they are not entitled to the other side of their taxes, which is a right. Yeah, of course. They cannot access Social Security. They can lose their job and not have access even to an employment support. So these numbers are so high. The government tends to use these numbers as an awareness raising for the contributions of immigrants in Portugal, but on the other hand, it's a result of lack of rights that immigrants have in Portugal. So, immigrants are seen as a way for the government to have more income and for the sustainability of social security in Portugal. And they are not seen as people. This new legal change in 2032 that created the job seeking visa, the CPLP visa, can see some change in that narrative. But there are still detention centres in Portugal. There is still a lot of subtle violence from the government regarding immigrants, especially distance from or culturally distance from Portugal. And for example, the majority of people in detention centers, based on our experience in the Unidad de Prisionales de Porto Alegre, the only detention centers outside the airport zones where I work, we have a social officer there seven days a week, five days a week, sorry. There's a lot of CPLP nationals. So, especially Brazilians, because of the visa exemption. And we expect that visas, the jobs and CPIP visas, will somehow diminish the number of people detained in those detention centers. So we cannot say that Portugal has their doors open is contradictory to having detention centers in Portugal. People are detained and they pay with their freedom because they don't have their documentation. So in our opinion, if the person does not commit any crime, and migrations



are not crimes, they should not be detained in detention centers. So it's just a matter of narrative and the way immigrants are seen by the government and sometimes by Portuguese people in general, do you think it might have something to do with structural racism? I'm not sure if it's racism. I mean Igor Romenu, the Ukrainian citizen that died at the hands of the Portuguese government from the Lisbon airport was white. So I'm not sure if it's a matter of racism, but I would say xenophobia and the fate of the unknown. Because there is a presumption that if people do not have their proper documentation are somehow criminal. That's not what the law says. There's a binarity building among this that wants to create the illusion in the sphere among public opinion that Portugal will be invaded somehow. And you can see it, for example, in 2019, there was a crisis in the media because the small boat carrying 5 or 6 people from Morocco came to Algarve, arrived in Algarve. she used the air force to deport these people. Portugal is being invaded. There is a new route to Portugal. It was six people. Imagine if these six people would be coming through an airplane. It wouldn't be such a big deal. Because of the boat image, there was a French invasion of Portugal, the numbers are ridiculous. Yeah. Okay, I don't remember that event, that unfortunate event. And I've been reading a lot of news of what's been happening here lately and I didn't... 2018, 2019, 2020. Okay. Okay, got it. Thank you very much for your time.

## **Helena**

MG: So, what is your nationality?

H: Brazilian.

MG: How long have you been living in Portugal?

H: One year and eleven months.

MG: How has the process been to obtain the documents in a legal way in the country?

H: I'm still waiting for the document to be called. I'm waiting to be released from the lack of residence.

MG: Have you been in contact with any non-governmental association or organization that helps in this process?

H: No, no.

MG: Are you familiar with the Intercultural Cities Program?

H: No, no. I don't know it.

MG: Regarding the reception, reception and integration services by Portuguese institutions in Lisbon, how would you say that they have received you?

H: It was very fast. In fact, I wasn't even there yet. I went through everything by email, I didn't even go personally.

MG: You never went to the police?

H: No, no. The only place I went to was the Brazilian consulate. I had to get a document there. Only when I schedule a visit. Otherwise, I don't go there.

MG: And regarding the housing crisis in Lisbon, how did you find a house?

H: It was difficult, it was a lot of searching, it's very difficult to find a place to live here.

MG: And do you think they pay a fair price for your house?

H: Yes, where I live I pay, but in other places the price is very high.

MG: I don't know if he still has knowledge of this or not, but in Lisbon, on the other side of the southern border, in Alentejo, there are several cases of labor exploitation in Portugal. Have you been in contact with these cases?

H: No, I didn't know. I didn't know. There is a program. What? There is a program. I have been working here for a long time, mostly foreigners, who are later exploited, they work much more hours than they should, they don't get any money for the work they are doing, but I didn't know... No.

MG: What are, in your opinion, the main challenges for you and for other immigrants in Lisbon?

H: I think it's a matter of documentation, which is very bureaucratic, and it's very difficult for people to enter the labour market. I think everyone has difficulties with that. Everyone has difficulties. Those who come here go through difficulties to enter the market to find a job. The government keeps encouraging people to come here, but we don't have the support. Another thing I think is that the powers that we have here, each region, I don't know if you

say each region, each neighborhood, they don't get along. Each one is different. There's no one who talks. There's no interaction between them. They don't exchange information. So you go in one way, you go in another way. This makes it very difficult for foreigners.

MG: Of course. What do you think should be the priorities to face this problem?

H: Finding a room, getting into the job market? If the government decides to send me here, they should have this kind of job. So, have the system more well prepared, since it's a system that teaches with data and assistance. Yes, it's in the sense that people find it very difficult. Many people come back, many people are so worried that they can't document, can't work, and the person ends up coming back. This is very well known to me, that I came back to this, because there is no support from the government. It's in the sense that we come back, but then we see that there is no support.

MG: How do you think diversity is seen in Portugal? Diversity in the sense of having people from other countries and different races.

H: Diversity is very big here, right? I don't know if it's a problem. For me, it's not a problem. But I've seen that it's grown a lot. There's a lot of foreigners coming here. And that's a problem. Because of that, there's also violence. It's harder for us to find work. It's harder for us to find a place to live. A lot of people have already been affected by this.

MG: Do you feel that there is any way of discriminating the Portuguese people in relation to the immigrants who come from abroad?

H: Yes, there are a lot of people who don't like immigrants, I know. I even went to a place, before I came here, I worked at a doctor's office, and he didn't accept me. I was able to work there and take care of his mother.

**Dora**

MG: What is your nationality?

D: Brazilian

MG: How long have you been living in Portugal?

D: Three months.

MG: How has it been for you to obtain the documents in a legal way in the country?

D: For me it was easy because before I came I paid a lawyer, I came with a visa and it was easy. a document that we will go to the SEF. This document I will receive in the next month. To be able to live here. To be able to live here. Now, living here is difficult.

MG: Did you get paid a lot to find a house? Do you pay a lot for it?

D: A lot. It's a studio. Ah, the lawyer. I paid... In Brazil, I don't remember from where, but in Brazil I paid 5 thousand reais.

MG: Ok, a lot.

D: To be able to, like, fix everything for me, all the documentation, open an account. And... And regarding the housing, which was what I was asking About the flat I found a studio, which is a room with a bathroom and a mini kitchen And the woman charges, look, the woman charges 6,000 reais, which is 1,000 euros. A little more. The water, the light, I have to pay for it. I have a minimum amount to spend on water and gas. If it goes over, besides not going over, I have to pay extra. And if I don't pay, if I pay, I have to pay the extra amount. Okay. I think it's wrong. That's it. It's very expensive.

MG: Have you been in contact with any non-governmental organization to help in this search for a house?

D: No.

MG: Are you familiarised with the program Intercultural Cities?

D: No.

MG: Regarding the reception, welcome and integration services for Portuguese institutions in the city of Lisbon, how would you say that they have received you?

D: Where I went, which was in SEF, everything was fine, I liked it a lot, I was received very well. There was no prejudice.

MG: Are you aware of the labour exploitation cases in Portugal?

D: Yes. In Brazil I already knew about it. the Portuguese calls the Brazilian to work, he doesn't say anything, and the person spends a month or so, I don't know how they pay, and when the day comes, they don't pay and send him away.

MG: What are, in your opinion, the main challenges for you and other immigrants in Lisbon?

D: You have to be prepared, you have to have money, because if you don't, you have to go back to Brazil. and the owners of the apartments are exploiting the person asking for an absurd amount of money and not seeing that the person is receiving small amounts of money and they don't understand that and, like, the house is mine, the money is yours if you can't pay, you have someone else to pay and that's it. That's how it works. And what should be the priorities to face these problems? I have a thought, I don't know about her, but my thought is this. To solve this, to work in a family home, in a restaurant, there's no condition. Either you put a business for yourself here in Portugal, or you come back. Because, like, to work with the family is not enough, it's not possible, there's no way. And to work in a restaurant is also not enough, so you have to put a business for yourself. Or you work with two people. Or, like, a couple. If you work together, it seems to work. To live here in Lisbon, because the food is very expensive. I still have to eat. I still have to eat.

MG: How do you think diversity is seen in Portugal? Diversity? It's not tourism. How is diversity seen by the Portuguese? How do people who come from other nationalities, other than Portuguese, how do they think that we, Portuguese, receive these people?

D: There are some wonderful people, people who are very good, very kind, very supportive, but there are others who are not, who don't accept, like, I don't like it at all. But I go through it, I think it's wonderful.

MG: What do you think needs to be done for diversity to be seen as a good thing, as a benefit?

D: To see that it's a human being and we're all equal. I believe in this.

## **Vitória**

MG: What is your nationality?

V: I am Brazilian.

MG: How long have you been living in Portugal? Four years.

MG: How has been the process to obtain the documents to be legal in the country?

V: I came here to study, so I would have the facility to have a student visa, but now I finished my college. So now I will have to go after the European passport process. I think that, also speaking from a point of view of a very great privilege compared to other immigrants.

MG: Have you been in contact with any non-governmental organization helping in this process?

V: No.

MG: Are you familiar with the program Intercultural Cities?

V: No.

MG: Regarding the services of reception, reception and integration by Portuguese institutions in the city of Lisbon, how would you say that this has succeeded?

V: I think that from what I hear, from what I know of my friends, I think that it is a very precarious way. I think that the demand is very big, but the bureaucracy. And sometimes it seems that the will to help people is taken by the bureaucracy.

MG: Regarding the housing crisis in Lisbon. How did you find a house and do you think it pays a fair price for your apartment?

V: I think it was a great luck, yes. But first, because I rented with a Portuguese friend, so I think the man made a special price for her being Portuguese. But... that's really it. I gave a chance that other people don't give. And I think it's a very big challenge for anyone who lives here.

MG: What are, in your opinion, the main challenges for you and other immigrants in Lisbon?

V: Again, from a very privileged point of view, there is still a very big prejudice, I think especially with Brazilian women, who are extremely objectified and sexualized. But, that's it, again, bureaucracy is a very difficult process, especially for those who come here at the first illegal moment. I think that the cost of living in Lisbon, for example, is not equivalent to the ordained. That's it.

MG: Thank you. What are the priorities to face these prejudices? You mentioned xenophobia, the presence of problems in housing and the cost of living.

V: Well, I think these are very complex and historically well spread problems in the culture and in the Portuguese society. But, for example, as a Brazilian, Portuguese people like to consume my culture. Music, movies, soap operas, series, I think you have a much greater contact with the Brazilian culture than we do with Portuguese, but at the same time, some stereotypes of Brazilians are still perpetuated. And I think that's it, through education, through concentration. In terms of income, for example, I think this issue of gentrification, of digital nomads, is a very deep thing. I think that Lisbon is an example of what happened in other European capitals, like Barcelona, an example of what to do and what not to do. So, maybe it's an announced tragedy, but not a tragedy that has never happened before. It happens a lot. Because the Portuguese are less and less living where we are. Exactly.

MG: How do you think diversity is seen in Portugal?

V: I think that Portuguese people are very closed to each other. Maybe there is a respect for everything, but they are a group of very closed friends, very closed families. But at the same time, no. My best friend is Portuguese, for example. So, I think they are the nice exceptions, and that also make Lisbon my home. And I think that, as I was talking about this 9 days, I think that the diversity and the immigrants that come to each other countries can be perceived in a more beneficial way by the Portuguese who live here in the south? Of course, I think that it is very enriching for the Portuguese culture, and for other cultures. It is an enriching factor that can make the country more interesting, that can bring more tourism, to add to the culture. I'm from a country that is extremely mixed, I'm from a country that is extremely mixed, and maybe what is richest in my culture is the mixture.

## **Mohammed**

MG: What's your name?

M: Mohammad Saidur Rahman.

MG: And what is your nationality?

M: Bangladesh.

MG: Okay. For how long have you been living in Portugal?

M: three years.

MG: And your job is to own and run the grocery shop?

M: Yes, own business.

MG: How has the process been to obtain the documents needed to be legal in the country? It's like, how is it possible to be legal this country here? If it's been easy for you to become legal?

M: No, because now I have a resident card also. It was easier because my baby was born here. That's why it's easy to take our temporary residency.

MG: So because you had your babies born here it was easier?

M: Yeah, also me and my wife.

MG: Have you been in contact with any association or non-governmental organisation to help you with the process?

M: No, no.

MG: And so how did you know what the bureaucracies were? Like this process?

M: Yeah. Because, you know, when my baby was born in the hospital. That time this, that time also this one maybe one lady she also may be working with maybe safe or something like that. She helped me. If you want to apply to your baby passport then you can apply to the baby nationality here.

MG: Where was she working?

M: Hospital, maternity hospital. She applied everything in my baby and then when she got the passport, then we applied to the baby in the safe.

MG: But when you came here before from Bangladesh, you didn't know anything about it?

No, I know anything, but my lawyer was helping out. Lawyer, lawyer.

MG: You had a lawyer?



M: Yeah. But the baby has nothing to do. It's very easy to get a passport, nationality. I'm going to the lawyer. My baby has a passport.

MG: But are you going to the lawyer here or in Bangladesh?

M: No, here, here. When the baby was born here.

MG: And he helps you?

M: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then he helps. But it's not a long time. It's very easy. And then very short time we get normal. I didn't receive nationality. Only just, you know, the temporary resident. Resident card. After three years I'm going to apply for the nationality.

MG: Regarding the reception, welcoming and integration services by Portuguese institutions in the city of Lisbon, how would you say that they have treated and received you? Like for example, the organisations you had to go to, to have your legal residence, how were they? Were they okay? Not okay?

M: No, no, it's fine. Everything is fine. Because I'm going there, you know, the cash cash, say for me, cash cash.

## **Interview Questions**

### **Carla Calado**

MG: Being the RPCI coordinator, what are your main tasks and responsibilities? (+ HOW long have you been in this position and what was your previous job?)

MG:: How big is the team? (+ WHAT are the staff functions?)

MG: In the case of the municipality of Lisbon how do both parts work together and collaborate?

MG: And does the RPCI help draft the municipal plan for integration in Lisbon? How?

MG: What does it imply and how would you say that it makes a difference for the city of Lisbon to be within the Intercultural Cities network?

MG: Regarding the controversy surrounding the labour exploitation cases in Odemira, in Tagus river and in general around Portugal, what can you tell me?

MG: What could the network do and suggest in relation to what is happening?

MG: What is your opinion on the aggressivity of some of the institutions dealing with migrants, like SEF for example?

MG: Given the fact that the evaluation tools of the ICC are not at their best yet, how would you evaluate the delivery of the programme in Lisbon?

MG: What do you think are the MAIN challenges regarding immigration in Lisbon? (+WHAT are the priorities in tackling them?)

### **Luís Gaspar**

MG: Are you familiar with the Intercultural Cities Programme? And if so, how has it complemented the work done on the inclusion and integration of immigrants at CML?

MG: Have the Participatory Municipal Plans for the Integration of Migrants replaced the Municipal Plans for the Integration of Migrants? What are the main differences between one and the other?

MG: Could you provide insights on the housing crisis in Lisbon and its implications?

MG: Regarding the reception and integration services provided by the Portuguese institutions, how do you think these have been interacting with immigrants?

MG: What is your perspective on the controversies surrounding the cases of labour exploitation in Odemira, on the Tagus river and in general in Portugal? Additionally, what measures or suggestions do you have to address and mitigate such issues?

MG: What do you think are the main immigration challenges in Lisbon? What should be the priorities to tackle them?

MG: Diverse people, immigrants, the LGBTI+ community, are often seen as the "others". What factors do you think contribute to this phenomenon?

MG: How is diversity seen in Portugal? When can it become perceived as a benefit?

## **Abstract of the thesis in Spanish**

Name and surname of candidate: Mariana Kapsrzykowski Guimarães

Number of registration: 2043124

Title of the thesis: How effectively is the Intercultural Cities Programme serving as a tool for the integration of diversity in Lisbon? An exploration of the main challenges in the city

Language of the thesis: English

Supervisor: Prof. Alessio Surian

Day of thesis discussion: 12/12/1999

Abstract in Spanish (2000 characters including spaces):

Para comprender la importancia de un programa como el Programa Ciudades Interculturales, esta tesis aborda uno de los más significativos desafíos a los que se enfrenta la sociedad global en la actualidad: la migración; debido a la inestabilidad y al cambio climático, estos movimientos seguirán desarrollándose y, lo que es más perentorio, es necesario tomar decisiones sobre cómo afrontarlo de la mejor manera. La revisión bibliográfica se centra en las ideas de Scott E. Page y Ricard Zapata-Barrero, que defienden la importancia de la diversidad en la sociedad actual y por qué las medidas para promover la interculturalidad desempeñan un papel tan fundamental para acabar con la discriminación e integrar lo mejor posible a los inmigrantes. Se discuten las ideas de los autores que llegaron a inspirar el Programa Ciudades Interculturales, Charles Landry y Phill Wood, y a continuación se examina el *modus operandi* del ICC, que se centra en apoyar a las ciudades para que adapten sus políticas relativas a los inmigrantes y las minorías, buscando la igualdad y la discriminación positiva bajo un prisma intercultural, así como promoviendo la participación ciudadana activa para la integración. Para contextualizar el estudio de caso, se ofrece una visión general de los principales desafíos en torno a la inmigración en Portugal y Lisboa. A continuación, el estudio de caso se centra en cómo el programa ICC sirve de herramienta para la integración de la diversidad en Lisboa e informa sobre los obstáculos a la integración en la ciudad. Siguiendo un análisis cualitativo explicativo, se consideran entrevistas tanto con expertos que trabajan en este campo como con los propios inmigrantes. Se proponen recomendaciones para el futuro próximo en relación al municipio de Lisboa y al programa ICC.

## Declaration of Mobility

This thesis is the result of the Joint Master's degree in Sustainable Territorial Development (STeDe).

This program is offered by a consortium made up of the following universities: Università degli Studi di Padova (UNIPD, Italy), The Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Sede Ecuador, the University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and Université Joseph Ki Zerbo de Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

This program has a duration of 24 months. The course started at UNIPD in Italy, followed by at Quito, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Sede Ecuador. The third semester was blended with the international Winter School in South Africa. The fourth semester was spent for internship and thesis in ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy in Vicenza, Italy under the supervision of University of Padova.

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