



Belfast City Council

OPENCities Local Action Plan

2011

Annex: C – OPENCities Thematic Learning



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LEADERSHIP and GOVERNANCE: understanding the characteristics, motivations and building blocks required for effective city leadership in creating a more open city;

INTERNATIONALISATION: considering the key aspects required to develop a successful international city, open to international populations and the key ingredients required for city success;

INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION: understanding the advantages of having a diverse city; the need for a shared approach and ten key principles in successfully managing diversity, inclusion and integration.

10 Most Important Points in Facilitating OPENNESS

1. Recognise Different Agendas and Cases for Openness
2. Adopt an Integrated Approach to Openness
3. Develop an OPENCity Strategy
4. Partner with Governments and Voluntary and Private Sector
5. Facilitate the Openness Process and Institutionalise It
6. Adopt Approaches that Foster Openness
7. Strengthen the City's Openness By Appointing a Champion or Champions
8. Identify and Promote Local "International" Assets
9. Engage in International Knowledge Sharing Activities
10. Showcase Your OPENCity.

The characteristics of a successful leader of an open city

- Political will - Willingness to spend political capital and city funds on issues related to building open cities.
- Foresight - Ability to look beyond the pressing problems of the day to what lies ahead for the city community and how a successful future can be achieved.
- Perseverance - Staying the course and not being dissuaded by setbacks or opposition.
- Commitment - Making a personal commitment to inclusiveness and to challenging biased attitudes.
- Flexibility - Being open to new and different people, cultures, and approaches.
- Respect - Showing deference to all types of people, cultures, and approaches.
- Honesty - Being straightforward in approach and communication.
- Vulnerability - Being willing to misstep, to admit mistakes, to be open to criticism.
- Appreciation of history - Understanding and appreciating the history behind the feelings and actions of the various members of the community, and the local history related to immigration and discrimination.

Underlying motivations which help city leaders make the case for openness:

- Globalisation, Specialisation, Agglomeration, and Talent Attraction.
- Population and skills replacement.
- Managing diversity better.
- Advantage of diversity and cosmopolitanism.

Building Blocks for Effective Leadership and Governance for OPENCities

- Leaders need to promote integration, diversity and openness
- Adopt a long-term integrated approach to openness – integration and internationalisation
- Be cautious of the impact the media can have on perceptions
- Balance between indigenous and migrant populations
- Promote trust and good relations within neighbourhoods, to increase understanding and acceptance
- Policies, structures and resources to facilitate integration are mainstreamed
- Need to reconcile national policies and local approaches
- Value of family approaches to engagement and networks
- Need to have networks, partnerships and alliances across the public, private and voluntary sectors

- Develop comprehensive information tools, e.g. one stop shops, websites, knowledge management tools
- Encourage the use of common spaces
- Facilitate access to local democratic structures
- Engage in international knowledge sharing exercises

10 Most Important Points for Internationalisation

1. Base strategy on thorough, all-encompassing prior research
2. Identify and foster niche specialisations
3. Build a strong, stable business environment
4. Ensure the plan covers all themes - events, firms, institutions and populations
5. Engage local stakeholders and formalise relationships
6. Use mechanisms that ensure mutually beneficial interaction with international actors
7. Communicate - promote the benefits to the city's people and continue to up-skill domestically
8. Consolidate the city administration to avoid duplication and gain visibility
9. Plan for the long term - internationalisation takes decades
10. Monitor, evaluate and improve the plan at regular intervals as part of an iterative process

Ingredients of City Success

Shorter-term (one or two business cycles):

- Connectivity and accessibility.
- Economic breadth.
- Quality of life, place, and amenity.
- Skills of labour force.
- Innovation and creativity.
- Business environment, entrepreneurship and city cost-base.
- Image and identity.
- Leadership and implementation of strategy.

Longer-term (five to ten business cycles):

- Diversity and Openness to international populations.
- Power (and adaptability) of the city region identity and brand.
- Location and access to growing markets.
- Role in fostering/brokering international trade.
- Power and influence of language and regulatory/legal/financial systems.
- Depth of artistic, architectural and cultural endowment.
- City-regional leadership and effective investment advocacy.
- Adaptation to climate change.
- Success in adjusting to shocks, and luck/skill in being on the right side of conflicts.
- Investment in the city from all sources (including higher tiers of government).

The Business Advantage of Diversity

- Labour Pool Advantages
- Creation of new markets
- Connectivity advantages
- Creativity and entrepreneurship
- Talent attraction
- Attracting international firms

Advantages of having a diverse City

- Enhance quality of life and place by adding variety and difference to the existing cultural landscape of a city;
- Bring new skills, ideas and approaches to a city's working environment;
- Reinforce a city's reputation for tolerance, flexibility, adaptability and openness which could enhance its international identity;
- Contribute to the creative, artistic and entrepreneurial spirit of a city;
- Connect the city to international markets through global social networks.

A Shared Approach to Managing Diversity

The city is just one of many key actors in the urban ecosystem of diversity management. OPENCities has identified a total of five signification groups and the types of role that they have been observed to play:

- National Government. Sets legislation and policy frameworks as well as qualification rules and regulations
- City government. Translates national policy locally and sets appropriate strategies which link, promote and co-ordinates existing and future activities.
- Voluntary and civic sector. Less formal, culturally sensitive and grass-roots approach to diversity management.
- The private sector. A key player in assurance of equality in procurement and the labour market.
- The Media. Plays a key role in telling positive stories, recognising value and impacts even in the bad times such as recession conditions.

The approach to diversity management is a complex one which needs to be joined-up, co-ordinated, bottom up, top down, strategic and practical, local and global. There is a requirement to look at the entire system of diversity management and create a seamless approach to leverage the potential benefits of diversity more effectively.

Ten clear principles for managing Diversity, Integration and Inclusion

1. Focus on the positive contribution that international talent and migrants can make to city economies.
2. The City must take a leadership role in managing diversity and inclusion.
3. Innovation and flexibility is essential to effective service delivery.
4. Develop your approach with the human-scale at centre-stage.
5. Scale up your successful initiatives.
6. Most initiatives should work on both sides of the equation.
7. International populations require targeted differentiated approaches.
8. Focus on what will work for the duration of a business cycle.
9. Smart evaluation is needed to enhance effectiveness.
10. Diversity management can be addressed indirectly.

Sources: Understanding OPENCities, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

http://opencities.britishcouncil.org/web/download/understanding_opencities.pdf

Leadership and Governance, Greg Clark, British Council 2010:

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