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Kuromi

Beyond paper

the “Fellow Citizen” Project
on diversity in city organisations

Lotte De Bruyne



Kenniscentrum
Vlaamse Steden

Local government approaches to
diversity conference for mayors,
councillors, experts and civil servants

19 april 2024



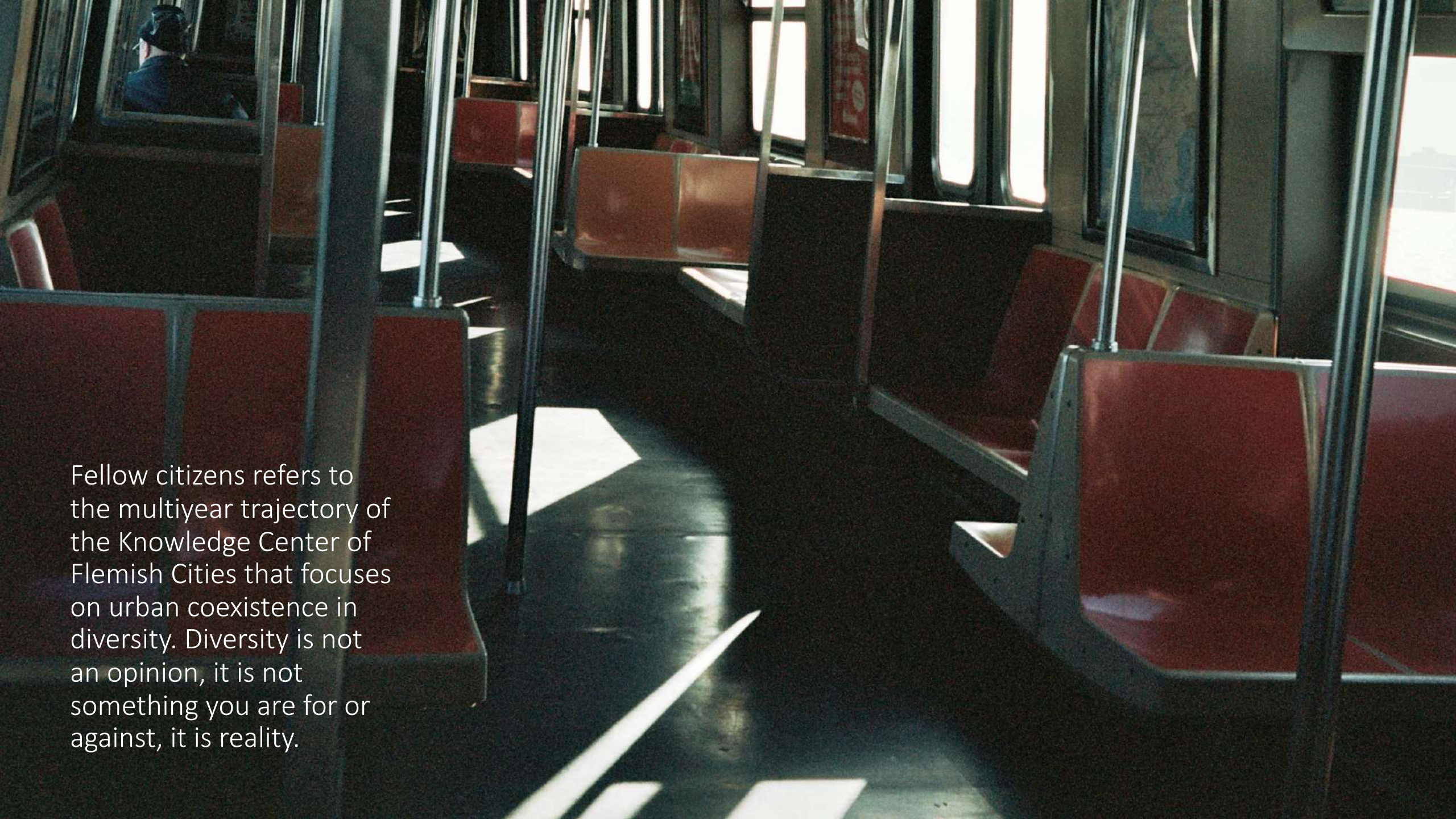
Welcome, we are

- The Knowledge Center Flemish Cities
- Lotte De Bruyne

Knowledge Center Flemish Cities

13 cities + Flemish Community Commission for Brussels

- Aalst
- Antwerp
- Bruges
- Genk
- Ghent
- Hasselt
- Kortrijk
- Leuven
- Ostend
- Mechelen
- Roeselare
- Saint Nicholas
- Turnhout
- Flemish Community Commission for Brussels (FCC)



Fellow citizens refers to the multiyear trajectory of the Knowledge Center of Flemish Cities that focuses on urban coexistence in diversity. Diversity is not an opinion, it is not something you are for or against, it is reality.

Reality (Statbel 2023 + Dirk Geldhof+Maurice Crul+Vertovec)

- One in three Belgians has a migration background
- Antwerpen: 172 different nationalities
- majority-minority-cities: cities where the majority of the inhabitants have a migration background: Brussels, Antwerp, Genk and Vilvoorde (*Crul et al 2013; Geldof, 2019 & 2020; Geldof et al 2023*).
- In almost all Flemish central cities, more than half of the children have a migration background, and in majority-minority cities this is more than two out of three.
- Diversification is also continuing in the other central cities and cities with an industrial past. In cities such as Ghent, Mechelen, Turnhout or Sint-Niklaas, more than one in three inhabitants has a migration background.
- Superdiversity! Diversity in the diversity.

Stadsgenoten – Fellow Citizens *2018-2023*

- Many important social phenomena manifest themselves pre-eminently and often first in urban society. For example, living together in super-diversity is an everyday fact of life in cities.
- A lot of expertise + many questions, worries too. It was decided that diversity would become one of the programmes of the Knowledge Centre.
- Much information and research on (super)diversity but not diversity + cities
- We (Knowledgecenter of Flemish Cities) decided to do it ourselves
- Always starting from the needs of the cities + focus on what the city itself can do,

Welcome, you are

- A mixed group
- Leaders are often not present at diversity discussions, classes, conferences
- Welcome all

Doing or discourse?

- The higher you go in the organization, the more positive the diversity story sounds.

If there are no actions and measures underneath a story, it is only discourse.

- What is 'doing'?
- (Also time is not doing 'it')

I think people like to hear that they are doing a good job. Unfortunately, in this field, things are often very difficult.

And often things don't go very well at all. Wanting to hear this requires an openness, a specific dignity and will. Listening to employees, to people, keeping your ear to the ground is crucial.

Prof. Dr. Yvonne Benschop, Radboud Universiteit

The longstanding issue.

You know how it always goes?

People who temporarily have the time to delve into this issue but then disappear. People start out with a fresh perspective and enthusiasm but at some point encounter the fact that intentions are shared by others in the organization but the actions that go with them are not. Being alone in that is a difficult, hard position. Always pulling and repeating. And then people drop out. And expertise disappears. And the organization has to start all over again. Y. B.

- A circle is not a path

Part of the discomfort of diversity professionals lies in having to constantly repeat certain messages

As an expert, you may have said something a thousand times, but that does not mean that it has been picked up and understood. Of course, it's frustrating to constantly have to talk to others who don't seem to be listening and who have more power but less expertise than you.

Prof. Dr. Yvonne Benschop, Radboud Universiteit

Do you know how little we are really listening?

The power is in the repetition

- Awareness does not follow a linear pattern.
- Awareness is crucial.
- One can learn about the topic, which can turn into awareness.
- You can learn to talk about this topic.

A journey

- The project and its materials
- Our observations, findings and detected issues in the cities
- Key insights + potential solutions (focus on the structural)





Exploring and building a foundation for conversation 2018

9 thematic sheets +
questions + interviews



A framework and a compilation of materials

- stimulating awareness and adding knowledge
- opening the conversation and engaging in in depth conversation
- asking critical questions (about daily practice, frameworks for action, own views and assumptions)
- inspiration for drawing up one's own framework
- basis for discussion
- the core of this framework are 9 thematic sheets, each containing questions

Every sheet ends with a series of questions

- Where is there still work to be done, where do you see positive evolutions?
- Do you feel that there is sufficient knowledge, expertise and openness regarding themes and dynamics such as inclusion, power, inequality and privilege?
What is needed?
- How open are we to critical evaluation?
- Do we feel safe to evaluate ourselves and our services?
- Do we have a context for this? Time?



Focus on city organisations themselves

2019-2021

Two separate rounds of research

1. Broad and general: diversity + city organisation in general
2. The diversity of the city organisation itself:
focus on employment of people with a foreign background

What did we want to find out? And how?

Intent?

Find out what issues live in the cities and where the struggle is

Explore contemporary practices and tools

How?

28 group conversations (round tables) in all 13 centre cities + VGC

In depth interviews with experts in the field + top leaders of the cities (general director/management team)

A total of + 50 conversations

Analyses of materials and plans



There is a lot of project-based work

Opportunities

- respond quickly and flexibly to needs, opportunities and situations
- custom
- experimenting with new forms of work

Limitations

- small-scale
- limited in time, little continuity
- too little anchored in structural operation
- too much focus on the innovative and not on what is already working well
- fast paced
- too little working what is exposed

one wishes to be more results-oriented, more planned, more goal-oriented and more structural.

Glue & Bridges

- There is much need for glue and bridges
- This materializes in projects, initiatives, tools, and the recruitment of new profiles
- The work of the bridge persons present is greatly appreciated
- It is important for bridge persons to be palpably supported by the administration and their superiors
- How much gets incorporated into the organization?
- Bridge persons and projects expose a lot
Are we addressing this adequately?

True vision versus vocabulary I

- The importance of, and need for, a good vision!
- An elaborated vision on diversity appears to be limited. Mandates, resources, support and clear choices are often missing
- Important questions about diversity often seem inadequately answered
 - *What does diversity mean to us?*
 - *What diversity are we striving for?*
 - *Who do we want to be as a city? What do we stand for?*
 - *What do we want to achieve?*
 - *How do we accomplish that? ...*

True vision versus vocabulary II

- 'Diversity' as a theme appears in different ways and under different flags in city organizations. For example, under 'values' or 'accessibility'.
- 'Diversity' often appears to be a concern only within a limited number of domains (welfare, culture, diversity, integration, etc.).
- Vision proves especially crucial in difficult moments.
- In places where the vision does have more thought and support, you notice that there are more innovative projects, they are more anchored and diversity is discussed more openly (and less tensed).

The unruly implementation

- Implementation is much harder/stubborn than plans and words.
- Making people switch to a different way of seeing/working is difficult.
Especially when there is little political or public support
- *We are facing a true cultural change.*
People indicate that this is an intense process that requires a lot of guidance. It takes time, energy, money ... and courage.
- Implementation demands tailored frameworks for different departments and services. These frameworks are often lacking.
- Breaking the daily grind is difficult. Many things are seen as 'on top' when in fact it is about a continuous different way of working/ looking at things.

A rather vulnerable, vague position

- A rather fragile position in terms of organizational embedding.
- Crisis, personnel changes but also illness and reforms can easily undermine it.
- We find that the subject not infrequently floats throughout the organization or is parked with a person or department with relatively little power or leverage.

Knowledge and Expertise I

- There is a great deal of knowledge and expertise on this subject, but it is often fragmented and not always present in crucial places.
- Talking about, and working with, the diverse society appears laborious, too often people surf on feelings, opinions and personal views. Knowledge and expertise can offer a counterbalance.
- Complex thinking about diversity appears to be rather limited.
- People often take themselves as the norm and think from their own frame of reference. People are not always aware of this human reflex.

Knowledge and Expertise II

- Questioning oneself and each other is not evident, often people have the same blind spots, questioning oneself and each other is sometimes sensitive.
- Thorough and skilled discussion is necessary to get to the bottom of difficult themes and topics and to tackle hot issues.
- The lack of quality of internal discussion is cited more than once.
- Conversation is often difficult and uncomfortable.
- Not rarely hidden, behind closed doors, 'under the table'.

Oh God

- Religion is clearly a sensitive topic. Conversation about it is rather uncomfortable and (consequently) avoided.
- The knowledge and expertise regarding religion is rather limited.
- There is much uncertainty, ambiguity and caution. Information does not always flow well.
- Schools as well as counselling and other sectors face religion-related issues. Some are knocking on the city's door for advice.
- People do not always know how to handle questions that have a link to religion. *People come to HR but HR doesn't know either.*
- Social services notice religion as a threshold (elder care, ...)

Lost in welfare and assistance I

- A lot of cities are aware of the pitfalls and gaps in assistance and are trying to address them with projects and reforms.
- There are a lot of thresholds, a lot of conditions. Several places are actively tracking down thresholds.
- There is a need to show people the way. A need for professionals that follow the entire process.
- A need for more integrated assistance. Several cities have projects focussing on this.
- Great psychological needs and complex problems versus long waiting lists and many conditions and rules. People too often fall between the cracks, the rules and the conditions.

Lost in welfare and assistance II

- It is difficult for a city to provide flexible and fast assistance (often many conditions).
- Language is a major barrier to assistance. Trajectories are slower.
- People indicate that in counselling there is a need for frameworks and education on dealing with difference and awareness of one's own frame of reference.
- A number of times religion is referred to as a barrier in assistance.
- When thresholds are lowered and poverty and other problems are detected more actively and preventively, this has an impact on the work organization.

Poverty I

- The weak socio-economic position of a lot of people from immigrant backgrounds raises concerns.
The poverty risk of people born in a non EU country is high (25 percent versus 6 percent for people born in Belgium – statbel).
- Major worries about coloured poverty.
- Fighting poverty is difficult.
Several cities are making additional efforts to combat poverty. For example, by matching the living wage and projects and initiatives of all kinds.

Poverty II

- Projects are temporarily subsidized. Short-term results.
Poverty reduction should be a long-term investment.
- People indicate that poverty is too often approached from the perspective of guilt.
- Automatic rights assignment could help counter the under-protection and non-inclusion of rights. It could also remove some workload and bias.

The road to work (and financial independence) I

- The path to financial independence and employment is hard. Especially for low-skilled people of other origins. Our labour market is described as 'closed'.
- Newcomers, who often want to work, need to complete a trajectory and learn Dutch first. This doesn't work for all. Towards more practice based learning.
- Several cities have projects and collaborate with private parties. *Yes we do that, but on a small scale. I think there are a lot of opportunities not used.*
- It is indicated that it is not always obvious for companies to deal with the extra care and issues. *Could we as cities play a role in that?*

The road to work (and financial independence) II

- Because of their weak starting position, a lot of people from other backgrounds start at the bottom. However, many have greater abilities.
- The quality of work is low. Lots of insecurity, low pay, interim. Transportation is often an issue. Undeclared work and exploitation exists in the cities.
- Major concerns about early school leavers.
There are ongoing (small-scale) projects in several cities.
That's a huge problem. Education in general, the way our education is organised, is a huge problem.

A lot of

- Intentions
- Diversity and inclusion vocabulary
- Projects
- Fragmentation
- Pulling, pushing, stitching
- Curative, problem solving
- Important key figures and individuals
- Knowledge
- Protocols and procedures
- Shadow work
- Unclarity
- Hard work
- Engagement
- Uncertainty
- Vague
- We should, there should

And less

- Urgency
- Vision and framework for action
- Structural work
- Concrete plan and action
- Systemic and long term
- Carrying and broadly sharing
- Choices
- Complex thinking
- Clarity
- Data
- Openness, outspokenness
- Sustainable solutions and ways of doing
- Deep investment, prioritisation
- Result-oriented thinking and working
- Thorough and dense work
- Doing



Stadsgenoten

"Stadsgenoten" verwijst naar het strategisch traject van het Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden dat focust op het stedelijk samenleven in diversiteit.

Na een literatuurstudie, verkennende interviews en de opmaak van een roadmap (2018), richtten we in 2019 onze lens op de stadsgenooten zelf. We wilden te weten komen met welke kwesties de steden het meest worstelen én waarin bestendige praktijken nu toch te exploreren.

Om op relatief korte termijn een zo breed mogelijk én een fijnmazig perspectief te krijgen, nodigden we de steden uit om schriftelijk aan de slag te gaan met twee thema's uit de roadmap, te weten we zelf naar alle gemeenteraden en de VVC en vonden we daar gesprekken met zowel bestuursverantwoordelijken als (algemeen) algemeen directeur en leden van het management team.

Belangrijke inzichten, vraagstellingen en analyses werden over de steden heen gebundeld in dit rapport.



Diversity in the workforce of city organizations

- Diversity in the workforce composition of centre cities: difficult, especially in management
- Long history, persistent issue
- Focus on persons of foreign origin who have a major disadvantage in the labor market (socio - economic monitoring, National Bank, ...)

Persons of foreign origin:

- those with a current foreign nationality
- those with a current Belgian nationality but with a foreign birth nationality
- those with a Belgian birth nationality but with at least 1 parent with a foreign birth nationality.

Diversity in the workforce of city organizations

- What do we see?
- What are the obstacles? What is difficult?
- Where is promise?

On niche projects and the main entrance I

- niche projects versus general structure/ main entrance: an imbalance

What's missing is an overall approach and vision and a focus on the 'big gate'.

We think we are doing well while there is actually still a lot of work to do.

I think we're just overwhelmed and overworked already, therefore we don't really look closer at it, let alone push harder.

Projects teach us a lot about ourselves, our methods and thresholds. It really opens the eyes sometimes and is important for the organization. Of course, afterwards we have to try to process and implement those insights, and yes, that is difficult.

Those intense trajectories are certainly valuable for us (city workers) and the participants but to say that's where the big turnaround is, no.

About niche projects and the main entrance II

- duration of projects?

Six months is too short when there is also a language problem.

- careful pre-selection and guidance

participants and supervisors get an idea of strengths and weaknesses.

- dealing with 'potential' is not always obvious

For colleagues it was not always obvious to combine their tasks with taking care of needs and questions of people from the trajectories. Especially for managers it was a lot.

- post-trajectory counseling and "the in-between area"

It's on or off, we don't move much in between. This while there are a lot of opportunities in that in-between area. Sometimes people are not quite ready but there are signs that, given work on specific things and the right guidance, they could do it.

About niche projects and the main entrance III

- a hidden target group : the talent that we don't address

The second and third generation that speaks Dutch is also not doing that well in the labor market. The disadvantage of that group is real.

We just do projects for those who, excusez-moi, 'require a lot of work'. I'm not saying we shouldn't do those projects, absolutely not, they are important and necessary, but meanwhile we forget about the other group, the group that already speaks Dutch, and have diploma's.

The mind switch we have to make: the talent is present in society but we don't appeal to them.

'We're not reaching them, they're not coming.' I

They often drop out at the CV screening and in the first round.

We also see people who did well 'disappear' during the procedure.

I think we still communicate too much in our own networks. Just because we put something on social media doesn't mean young professionals see it.

An intern once said he never thought he would work for the city as a Moroccan. And that he was now telling friends and family that it was possible.

At the higher levels, there is simply not enough intake. The numbers show that people of foreign origin are graduating from colleges and universities.

'We're not reaching them, they're not coming.' II

I suspect we don't seem an attractive employer. But actually we are. The wages here are not bad and there is a lot of flexibility and vacation.

That focus is there in our minds yes, but perhaps mostly as a concern and an observation. But yes maybe, now that we are talking about it like this, maybe not enough yet in our concrete actions. It could be sharper. Better and more focused. We do go to those job fairs and send vacancies to schools. But to say that that is very consistent, mmm. I don't know.

Tinkering and evolving. Are we thinking far enough?

- clearing thresholds, rules and other obstacles
- breaking away from known (measurement) tools
- CV screening under the microscope
- screening tests
- measuring competencies, an alternative for degrees and documents
- more attention to character and person?
- more transparency and guidance
- match language to job profile and less weight to the written part
- home assignments and leaving the assessment centre
- ...

Tinkering and evolving.

Are we thinking far enough? I

- Clearing thresholds, rules and other obstacles

It's also about cleaning at one's own doorstep.

In a lot of these things, it's really not the law that says we have to do it that way. It is also how we arrange it and like to arrange it and are used to arranging it. First, of course, we have to detect them. Of course, it is quite a process and it is not always obvious to get everyone on board.

Tinkering and evolving. Are we thinking far enough? II

We must learn to ask the right questions. And dare to ask them. And if we don't know the answer: search. And try something else.

The things that ultimately make someone 'the best' are often on another level. We should also dare to talk about that.

*Are we measuring with our tests what we actually want to measure?
And how can we do it differently?*

Two key positions: selection officers and leaders I

- Selection officers as gatekeepers

This better be a responsible person with good insight.

- Leaders - middle management in the sandwich position

Work pressure is something that I hear consistently. So yes, we need to empower and guide them in this area but they also need support.

Managing diversity requires specific skills. Not everyone has them.

We have to select and support leaders better.

Two key positions: selection officers and leaders II

- Interplay

Those people are often really in a pickle and want a new employee as soon as possible.

There will be a number of vacancies coming up soon, and really, I'm very happy with the way those will be approached and filled. Not only do we get a lot of space, the person in charge of that department is really thinking along.

Currents and dams

- The poor flow of the alternative inflow

*Aren't there ways to make a positive work experience, more prevalent?
Can you actually have a better test than that?*

- Internships as path to greater diversity, reality: not always thought through and consistent
Missed opportunities!

- *We want to invest in interns and find that interesting, but then again, if they don't end up getting in, you do wonder.*

- Limited movement within the organization

I think there are executives who are working on that and executives who are not. This is not something consistent, something structural or something we are very consciously working on or directing. I don't think it should be a focus on diversity so much. Rather in general it is important that we pay attention to the talents and competencies and possible growth opportunities of our employees.

Juries. Conscious and diverse? I

- Yes and no.

We always talk about bias and diversely composed juries. In practice, there are hardly any diverse juries. Meanwhile, jurors do know that bias exists but neither do they consistently receive training in it to better detect their own blind spots, for example. It's all very theoretical. In practice, there is often no time for it.

I think it's perfectly legitimate that one candidate makes you feel more agreeable than another. That you feel one better than another and prefer that one. What is important, though, is to think about the possible mechanisms behind that.

Juries. Conscious and diverse? II

- One city (Genk) had diverse juries as a standard

Motivations:

- Show the candidate that different types of people work for the city.
- Involve more diverse views, backgrounds in the decision-making process
- A way to engage the outside world and connect different types of people (and their networks) to the city
- Candidates who can identify with the judges may feel more comfortable and do better.
- Managing director of the City of Genk is very involved in this process.

Herkomst/functieniveau

(niet-Belgische herkomst)

	2015	2017	2019	2021*
Algemeen	31,3%	32,8%	34,6%	35,7%
A-niveau	5,9%	4,8%	6,0%	11,8%
B-niveau	18,9%	14,5%	21,5%	28,1%
C-niveau	23,1%	24,3%	28,8%	32,7%
D-niveau	26,2%	24,0%	31,6%	35,2%
E-niveau	46,0%	47,3%	53,2%	58,9%

2.4 De Genkse bevolking naar herkomst

Zoals in de inleiding toegelicht zijn er 8 herkomstcategorieën bepaald. De categorieën "Belgisch" en "Geen vreemde herkomst maar onvolledige historiek" vormen samen de hoofdgroep "Belgische herkomst". De andere categorieën vormen samen de hoofdgroep "Niet-Belgische herkomst". Tot slot is er nog één groep waarbij er geen enkel aanknopingspunt is wat betreft herkomst ("geen gegevens bekend omtrent herkomst").

HERKOMST	aantal	aandeel
Belgisch	22.672	33,9%
Geen vreemde herkomst maar onvolledige historiek	4.841	7,2%
EU-15	15.379	23,0%
EU-13	2.629	3,9%
Maghreb en Turkije	16.932	25,3%
Onbekende vreemde herkomst	1.650	2,5%
Andere nationaliteit	2.859	4,3%
Geen gegevens bekend omtrent herkomst	13	0,02%
TOTAAL	66.975	100,0%
Belgische herkomst	27.513	41,1%
Niet-Belgische herkomst	39.449	58,9%
Geen gegevens bekend omtrent herkomst	13	0,02%

41,2% van de Genkenaren is van Belgische herkomst, 58,9% heeft een niet-Belgische achtergrond. Ongeveer 1 op 4 van de Genkenaren heeft een Maghrebijnse of Turkse achtergrond (25,3%) Een bijna even grote groep komt uit één van de EU-15 landen (exclusief België, 23,0%). 3,9% heeft banden met één van de EU-13 landen, een klein aandeel (4,3%) met nog andere landen.

More expertise. Also from experts by experience?

- Speaking and thinking with, not about!
It was really important to think all this through with people who are really experts by experience.
- Seeing the diversity is important. Being confronted with it.
Diversity is a layered concept and is not just about people needing language support.
- In dialogue, other questions are asked. New perspectives emerge.
People have a voice and an opinion. Those can sometimes be surprising.
- It's a kind of mirror and it keeps you on your toes.
Being contradicted and presented with something different is interesting.
- A sign of equality and respect.
- New networks may emerge.
- It's another way to learn

(Ghent)

Sometimes it is as if we are timid about doing this.

Sometimes we don't do it because we want to 'treat them like everyone else'.

Of course you should treat people equally.

You also shouldn't force anyone to participate in that or expect people to participate.

But I'm sure many people would like to think about this in a mature, open way.

Diversity, a shared issue? Supported at the top? II

- Supported by the top: yes.
Actively and involved: in moderation

There is a difference between being well aware and being actively engaged in it. One is accommodating in that. If that is not hammered home, it quickly falls out.

Many think it's important, and I can't imagine anyone wouldn't support it. But to really say that across departments people are putting a lot of extra effort into this and it's being actively picked up? No.

We now happen to have a general manager who is very sensitive to diversity. For example, when there were relatively many people with foreign names for the resume screening but none were left in the end, a question will be asked about that. I'm okay with that. Should I have no sensitivity to that, for example, it would be noted there. It still depends a lot on where the powers are and also, what feeling people have with this social fact.

An inclusive climate?

- Yes and no
- Raise awareness. How to reach all? And those who need to be reached?
It remains non-committal. And demand-driven.
- Detecting your own blind spots is hard.
- Racism, discrimination, bullying exist. Cities are aware of this and are firm that it has no place in their organisation.
I get people coming to me who are victims of racist remarks. Then I fall off my chair. Not only from what is said. But the way it is said, as if it is the most normal thing in the world.
Yes it happens. We react strongly to this. We know we don't see everything.
- Outflow persons of foreign origin.
We need to pay more attention to this.

A difficult context: strong plans and tools needed!

- The legal framework within which one operates.
- The city organization (made up of many different people and services) that runs at full speed and needs to keep going. Its many procedures, processes and habits.
- The high workload.
- media, public opinion, the internet, citizens, politics,
- Despite the fact that cities desire it, diversity and inclusion are still not widely shared goals
- A challenging labour market with diverse players and parties. From the private sector to labour unions. A difficult, competitive job market, hunt for talent.
- A changing, complex society.
- It's about people. Each with their own frame of reference.

General analysis

- A lot of action and projects!
- Some reallyy interesting plans (diversity personnel plan Ghent!), fruitful seeds, projects and experiments, ... still, ...
- A turnaround will not happen with the current way of doing things.
- A lot happens but not always streamlined, consistent, thoughtful, structured and focused.
- Imbalance in reach and in the support of management.
- The ball is in the city's camp (rather than in people's heads).
- Not all paths are taken, let alone properly explored.
- Lots of potential, lots of work

Directions

- Measure, set goals, monitor, evaluate.
- Seek and challenge the limits of the regulatory framework.
- Commitment, clear choices, mandate, resources.
- Vision and a concrete plan, specific to this objective.
- Commit to structural inbedding and intervening in processes and procedures.
- Adjust the viewing direction and perception: the talent we do not address!
- Attention to thresholds, visible within the city & within people.
- Firmly committed to inclusion, actively counter discrimination & racism.

Stadsgenoten
De extra mijl



Foto: Elit Van Hoolgen

Lotte De Bruyne
Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden
Maart 2021





Many issues had to do with vision and implementation, the strategic level (2022-2023)

- How can we support the cities in a concrete way?
- We detected a need for more support, expertise, guidance.
- We wanted to add something there where most impact could be made: the top level.
- Focus on leaders and top management!



Masterclass Leadership, Diversity & Inclusion

- In collaboration with Leiden University and Dr Saniye Çelik, a Dutch specialist in HRM and governance and organisational issues at Leiden University.
- Four-day masterclass leadership, diversity and inclusion, or: managing difference.
- For executives in strategic positions in the city organization.



Universiteit
Leiden

Centre for Professional Learning

Masterclass Leiderschap, diversiteit en inclusie Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden

*Locatie 21/22 april: Gate 15
Kleine Kauwenberg 15
2000 Antwerpen*

*Locatie 12/13 mei: Hof van Liere - Prentenkabinet
Prinsstraat 13
2000 Antwerpen*

Donderdag 21 april - Diversiteit, inclusie en leiderschap

09.30 - 10.00

Ontvangst met koffie en thee in het cafetaria

10.00 - 10.30

**Welkom door Kenniscentrum Vlaamse gemeenten
Check-in en toelichting programma & kennismaken met verscheidenheid
Door: Saniye Çelik & Lotte De Bruyne - [Klik hier](#) voor de presentatie**



Saniye Çelik is opleider bij het Centre for Professional Learning van de Universiteit Leiden. Ze is tevens lector Diversiteit aan de Hogeschool Leiden en doet onderzoek naar diversiteit, inclusie en leiderschap in publieke organisaties. Ze promoveerde aan de Leidse universiteit op het thema diversiteit in publieke organisaties. Ruim een kwart eeuw heeft ze in verschillende functies gewerkt bij de overheid, waarvan 17 jaar bij de politie. Zij fungeert daarnaast als coach voor rijksambtenaren en politie.



Lotte De Bruyne is onderzoeker, schrijver en interviewer. Binnen het Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden is Lotte verantwoordelijk voor het programma Stadsgenoten dat focust op het stedelijk samenleven in diversiteit. De voorbije twintig jaar werkte Lotte in opdracht van diverse culturele instituten, kunstenhuizen, beleidsinstellingen en kenniscentra zoals bv. MAS Museum aan de Stroom, Kunstenhuis Het Bos Antwerpen, Stedenbeleid Vlaanderen en Bibnet.



Ton Louhenapessij is programmamanager 'Politie voor Iedereen' voor het Politie Dienstencentrum (PDC) van de Nationale politie. Daarnaast is Ton landelijk voorzitter van het Indisch Moluks netwerk politie waar ruim 170 politiemensen bij zijn aangesloten. Ton heeft een breed netwerk. Hij is onder meer aangesloten bij een landelijk netwerk voor burgemeesters en adviseert verschillende bestuurders zoals de Inspecteur-Generaal van de Krijgsmacht, de commandant KMAR en meerdere landelijke en lokale politici. Hij verzorgt lezingen en presentaties over inclusie en diversiteit aan bedrijven en scholen.



Yvonne Benschop is hoogleraar Organizational Behavior bij het Institute for Management Research van de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Zij is het Hoofd van de Sectie Bedrijfskunde en geeft leiding aan de onderzoeksgroep Gender and Power in Politics and Management, waarin 20+ onderzoekers uit de Bedrijfskunde, Politicologie en Economie samenwerken. Zij geeft onderwijs en doet onderzoek naar de wijze waarop organisaties hun verantwoordelijkheid voor gender gelijkheid, diversiteit en inclusie vorm en inhoud geven. Ze is bijzonder geïnteresseerd in informele organisatieprocessen die gelijkheid, diversiteit en inclusie hinderen, en in het ontwerpen, toepassen en evalueren van interventies om structurele verandering te realiseren.

Masterclass

leiderschap, diversiteit en inclusie



Universiteit
Leiden
Centre for Professional Learning

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Diversiteitsperspectieven



Getting the "why?" in focus

Deputy general director of Sint-Niklaas Tarik Van Ballaer:

I think the next step, and this is something I was introduced to in the Knowledge Center's master class (session Dr. Saniye Çelik), is that in the next administration period we need to get it clearer about what kind of city we want to be.

What kind of society do we want?

Why are we committing to that diversity, because it shouldn't just be diversity for diversity's sake.

If that 'why' can be made more explicit, you have a very explicit mandate to start working in an even more focused and multidisciplinary way. The efforts we are making should be a common choice.

How can we direct all our actions and programs so that they all contribute and shape that city we want to be?

Going for a certain vision also means that there are consequences.

By really naming the why and the vision of the city you want to be in, you get a more solid framework with which you can really make the case that certain things are necessary. It is important that we all endorse the vision and the why. (TVB)



Insights, tips, reminders, traps

- A selection!
- Bird's eye view
- Masterclass + conversations with experts
- Inspire, inspire, inspire
- Repeat, repeat, repeat

Prof. Dr. Yvonne Benschop, Radboud Universiteit , Els Compernelle, HumanInsight, Hakim Benichou, Teamspeler , Marijke Cornelis, diversiteitacademie, Prof. dr. Judi Mesman, Universiteit Leiden, Ton Louhenapessij, Nederlandse politie, Dr. Saniye Çelik, Universiteit Leiden, ...

Acknowledge the friction that diversity holds

- Differences are not easy. It creates friction.
- The key is managing that friction, managing differences.

An inclusive culture is a culture in which differences are commonplace, where differences are seen and accepted and where individuals can flourish. Leadership is an important key to allowing differences to thrive and increase their added value.

It is important to let people be themselves as much as possible. People are at their best when they can just be. It is important to be curious about the other person. Listen!

Leaders: managing difference

You can come up with all kinds of interventions, but when the leadership is not right, it will not work.

- Leadership style, organizational culture and firmly embedding diversity at the strategic level play an important role in the effectiveness of diversity interventions.
- The importance and the power of exemplary behavior!
- Leaders need to be able to manage differences and conflicts.
- Influence and power, access to resources.
- Decisionmaking, also on the structural level.
- Big influence on organizational culture

If your leaders are feared or known for their 'bad jokes', how believable and how real is your organisation's striving for 'equality and respect'.



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Inclusion is an attitude, not a goal or a roadmap

- The basic attitude is really an attitude of equality.

If it's good, you got that from home, but that's often not the case.

You are not inclusive because you have different profiles. It's about people feeling safe and equal.

- It is crucial that a manager reflects on himself.

There is a lot of uncertainty. Opinions and feelings also get in the way of acting efficiently and decisively.

Attention for the infrastructure

- How and where you embed it in the organization is crucial. How do you set it up? What is your infrastructure?
- Link diversity to the strategic goals of the organization.
- The importance of hierarchy.

Do you give this assignment to someone with seniority and power and influence and expertise or rather to a junior?

The top must support diversity actions & diversity specialists

What you see happening is that when specialists come up with something, a negotiation starts and in that negotiation what was worked out by those specialists is diluted. A kind of compromise emerges. If anything arises at all! So here you need hierarchical power to get the plan implemented as it was conceived.

Strategy! Map your allies + resistance

- The importance of strategy and plan!
- Map out your force field.
- Where are your supporters? your opponents? The middlegroup?

Make it visible (including resistance)

- Not on the sidelines and under the radar.

There is a diversity dimension in everything and only when you take the whole thing something can happen.

We see that working on diversity often happens on the sidelines. In the margins. Under the radar too, but if you marginalize things and keep them under the table, you can't achieve real conversations and breakthroughs either.

Don't hide resistance

- Change gives resistance.

*A lot of resistance, opposition, against diversity is very subtle and hidden and is often on the measures and not so much on the fact of diversity.
So hiding that resistance doesn't help.*

Science + stories + numbers + finding where it ticks

- It is an expertise. A skill. There's science too. Numbers. Statistics.
- Stories can make discrimination tangible.
Let them tell their story, so that they are no longer refugees or migrants, but human beings, citizens.
- Find connections between the topic and the organisation, the person.
- It's not about convincing, but letting people experience the position of others.
- It is very much about organizing connections and moments where people can exchange and thus touch each other.
- It's a matter of taking each other on this journey and opening each other's eyes.

Attention for the invisible and the individual

- Too much focus on groups and visible features of people rather than individuals and the invisible

A person may look a certain way but have different values at their core than the ones we associate with that group. And that's where we often miss the mark in tackling this issue.

If you start working with inclusion, it means that you start looking much more at that individual and the invisible. And that, of course, requires a bit more.

Diversity is about all of us. We all own the issue.

Meanwhile: inequality

- Balance and combine attention for the individual and the invisible with attention for strengthening the weak position of people with disabilities and ethnic minorities in the labor market.
- The importance of creating opportunities for specific groups to improve their social position.
- Battle racism and prejudice!

It's not a good idea to pile it all together. Inequality exists! Discrimination exists. You need to take action against this, do corrections.

It's paying more and less attention at the same time.

Vagueness is the sore point of all diversity issues II

If your vision is vague, it's hard for people to commit to it. Because what are you actually committing to? Where do you want to go? Words like diversity and inclusion don't mean much in themselves.

Start by formulating a widely supported vision, make managers responsible and give them the space and the support they need.

If you don't really want anything to change, vagueness is the way to go.

HR: away from the beaten track I

- Selection processes that are about what is really relevant.

What are you actually measuring with that assessment? Maybe that assessment will throw out people who were absolutely suitable for that job, but who score low on something that wasn't needed for that job.

- More attention towards the individual and how one deals with differences. Is there sufficient self-knowledge, reflectiveness and empathy?

If the person can't deal with difference and doesn't reflect on themselves, that person isn't fit to lead.

HR: away from the beaten track II

- Diverse selection teams

Gathering different perspectives rather than necessarily x number of women or people of colour. Diversity runs deeper, it's mainly about variety in the jury.

- Make things more objective and concrete. For example, ask all candidates the same questions.

Doing less but doing the right things I

- Why are we doing what we do and what is the effect?
- Measure impact. And evaluate!
Of course, impact measurements are expensive and difficult, yes, I know that, but at least you can evaluate thoroughly.
- Do less but do it good and know why you do it.
If you do so many things, you can't do them all well.

Out of the wild I

- The importance of expertise.

In essence we are talking about a change issue.

It's often happening in the wild. And blind. This while there really are frameworks for how to tackle such issues.

For example, if you don't put enough energy/ time into raising awareness, increasing urgency and creating support, we see that pioneers become exhausted and drop out. The organization then loses that knowledge, expertise and energy and starts from scratch again. So it's a vicious circle.

Out of the wild II

The inefficiency with which this issue has been approached for years is worrying. This is despite the fact that it is known how change processes work and what the best approach is.

You can't just start somewhere in the middle or just do a bit and then leave everything behind.

Sometimes you have a peak in action, but then there is a new board or cabinet and then it goes down for a while and then they start reinventing the wheel and so we always turn around with this issue.

Tips from Ton Louhenapessij (Dutch Police)

- Support from the top. *Knowing that you will not be fired for your actions helps.*
- Money! *You can't do these kinds of things without money.*
- Space, room for creativity and experimentation.
- Courage and guts.
If you start with 'yes but they're going to think it's 'woke' or something', then you're not going to get there. And just talking won't get you there either.
- Start small. Action! However small.
- Calculate risks, know that it won't always be a success. *Say sorry when needed.*
- Know where the resistance is.
- Know your own motivation.
- Look outside, bring outside in.

Authenticity and credibility

- The connection with society is crucial for public organisations.
- Authenticity and credibility are key in realising this connection. Also for mayors!
- People want and need to recognise themselves in public organisations.
They need to be part of it.

You can tinker with inclusion internally, but if you are all alike, you are not credible and you miss a connection with that society.

You can't keep hiring the same kind of people.

Not prioritizing diversity is an absolute misjudgement

- The connection with society and citizens is crucial for public organisations.
- A healthy society is a society in which the public structures are aligned with that society.

If you wait too long and don't do anything with it, you get separation, a fragmented society. This society demands it.

By not taking action, we are doing a serious disservice to the people who suffer from inequality, to ourselves and our society.

An everyday reality

- (Super)diversity is a basic characteristic of our society today, and even more so of tomorrow. It is about all of us.
- How we deal with this locally will determine the quality of living together.
- Diversity requires policy, and all policy areas have to deal with the impact of further diversification of the population in their city or municipality.

Taking that reality as the starting point, is the only way forward.

- A reality for all policy levels, cities can't do this alone.
- Cities have a pioneering role in the process of standardisation. Cities are the place where things happen, get real.

Thank you! Good luck

Thank you to all the participating cities and city workers

Materials and sources: Stadsgeboten reports and research, interviews and conversations with employees and experts such as Dr. Saniye Çelik Universiteit Leiden, Prof. Dr. Yvonne Benschop Radboud Universiteit , Hakim Benichou Teamspeler , Marijke Cornelis Diversiteitsacademie, Els Compennolle Human Insight, Prof. Dr. Judi Mesman Universiteit Leiden, Ton Louhenapessij Nederlandse politie, Prof. Dirk Geldof ...

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