

Getting to grips with super-diversity

Support for public sector bodies to map local communities and understand the complexities within them

Discussion about race and migration is often based on generalised concerns about numbers. We rarely get to focus on the people behind the statistics, their needs, or the impact of population increase and 'churn'.

And it is not just about numbers - a more profound change is found in the sheer breadth of diversity in the UK. Over 300 languages are now spoken in London schools. In many market towns and rural areas, over 50 languages are spoken.

All ethnicities and nationalities are made up of many different strands and traditions. Diaspora communities, especially those based on faith are particularly diverse.

Local estimates of population have not provided an accurate picture of the number or diversity of residents. This makes it difficult to cater for emerging needs and to anticipate and deal with problems and tensions.

So what's new?

Since 2006, iCoCo has been building on its groundbreaking 'COHDMAP' work to provide local partners with a means of using local data to estimate local populations. In 2008, the LGA commissioned iCoCo to 'estimate the scale and impact of migration at a local level'. This highlighted issues like population 'churn' and supported calls for more resources.

Also this year, iCoCo published “Understanding and appreciating Muslim diversity: towards better engagement and participation”. This report set out a unique approach to understanding and mapping Muslim communities. This approach is now been applied to other communities, such as white working class and Sikh communities.

It is vital that public sector bodies understand the complexity of local communities to ensure:

- Services are tailored to accurately meet local needs
- More targeted approaches to tackling deprivation and inequalities
- Community engagement and empowerment reaches out to all sections of local communities and groups and gets beyond those community leaders who act as ‘gatekeepers’
- Cohesion and improvement strategies are underpinned by an accurate assessment of the make up of communities and so have realistic priorities for improvement
- Better ability to identify and tackle potential sources of community tension

How iCoCo can help

Leading national and local government experts will work with you to gather local data and provide detailed local analysis. This can focus on particular groups, such as young people, women, or faith communities, or look at all communities in an area.

Our work will look at existing population data gathered from a wide range of sources and enrich this by consulting with key stakeholders in the voluntary, community and statutory sectors, who may be in touch with minority communities. We will consult with elected councillors to gain their understanding of population change in the areas they represent. We will validate early findings through focus groups of community representatives.

What you will gain

- A 'map' of different communities and leadership structures within them
- A more detailed understanding of communities and effective ways to reach out to them, including under-represented groups such as women and young people
- The tools and capacity to continue to monitor change so that you can stay up to date with dynamics within communities and identify new communities as they emerge
- Knowledge of a range of good practice examples drawn from previous work
- Clearer understanding of who the gate keepers and gate openers are in local communities.

Find out more

For more information about iCoCo and the work we do, visit

www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk

To discuss your local community cohesion needs and the support we can offer, contact us at:

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About iCoCo

The Institute of Community Cohesion was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race, diversity and multiculturalism. Our work focuses on building positive and harmonious community relations. iCoCo represents a unique partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, combining the experience and expertise of four universities with practitioners from a range of diverse backgrounds and professions.

iCoCo is a not for profit partnership, which aims to build capacity at all levels and in all local and national agencies to promote community cohesion.

iCoCo

Institute of Community Cohesion

