

# iCoCo – bringing local solutions to global issues

**Community cohesion** is frequently cited as a way of addressing many of the issues and challenges that accompany globalisation, demographic change and migration. It looks at how people and communities can improve their quality of life by respecting difference, whilst building a better understanding of the things they have in common.

## What we do

- Collect and share good practice
- Evaluate cohesion programmes and conduct action research
- Build capacity at all levels
- Develop clearer connections between the cohesion, citizenship and social capital agendas
- Help to develop an understanding of how communities can be more at ease with “difference”

## iCoCo works in five main areas:

- Development of cohesion strategies, impact assessments and action plans
- Training and development programmes in public/private/voluntary sectors
- Research programmes building on the strengths of four partner universities
- Programmes of study at postgraduate level
- Advocacy, dissemination and wider support for all agencies involved in the development of community cohesion policy and practice

## **How we do it**

We work throughout the UK with local authorities, schools, health authorities, government and non-government agencies, on a wide range of cohesion projects.

## **Development Workshops**

We provide tailored development programmes that will address specific issues in every area. Workshops are devised for strategic leaders, or offered on a wider basis, involving a range of local and regional agencies and providing a good grounding in community cohesion theory and practice. All programmes are based on partnership, include key stakeholders and lead to action planning.

## **Community cohesion local reviews and mapping**

We can provide an assessment of community cohesion locally or regionally. Reviews are based on research, interviews with stakeholders and community based focus groups. This, together with an acute awareness of the national perspective, including current best practice, will provide the basis for an informed, strategic approach to decision-making in all areas reflecting local needs. We 'map' local populations, for example in respect of the Muslim and other minority communities, to develop a better understanding of the nature and diversity within them and contribute to improved engagement. We also conduct numerical and impact assessments.

## **Tension monitoring and extremism**

We work with local authorities and regional government offices to develop a clearer understanding of their local communities and those factors that may lead to disengagement and disaffection amongst particular groups. We advise on practical steps to prevent extremism and to predict and tackle community tensions before they result in disorder and conflict.

## Toolkits and practical resources

We produce web-based guides and toolkits on a range of issues including communications, population dynamics, tension monitoring, sport, interfaith, schools and health.

## Applied research - Mixed communities project

This is a major research project in a key policy area. We are currently examining the determinants and sustainability of mixed communities. This is funded by national, regional and local partners, providing a real opportunity for collaboration between practitioners and researchers and will result in new practical guidance.

## How to get involved

If you are already actively working to promote cohesion you can join the iCoCo Practitioners' Network and share in our growing information network. This was set up for cohesion practitioners, so they can exchange ideas, discuss issues, seek solutions to problems and find out about successful initiatives operating in other areas. These resources are entirely free of charge, sign up on our website.

## Good practice database

We continue to build a database of good practice and make case studies available through our website. To register a scheme, please complete the good practice case study template available on the website.

## Find out more

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

**[www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)**

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

**024 7679 5757**

**[cohesion@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:cohesion@coventry.ac.uk)**

## 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

