

# Webinar agenda

## Living Together: City Strategies for Social Inclusion



1) Presentation by **Leen Verbist**  
Alderman, Antwerp City Council, Antwerp



2) Presentation by **Naima Charkaoui**  
Director, Minderhedenforum, Brussels



3) Presentation by **Claire Witney**  
Manager of Community Engagement, Waltham Forest, London

4) Q&A Moderated by Kim Turner, Maytree, Toronto

The webinar is supported by Open Society Foundations' At Home in Europe project

Note: Webinar recording will be available on the website: [www.citiesofmigration.ca](http://www.citiesofmigration.ca)



# Diversity in Antwerp

Leen Verbist

Alderman for Social Policy, Ethnic diversity and Windows  
OCMW Chairman



STAD ANTWERPEN





## Facts and figures

Antwerp is growing, greening, aging and increasing in its ethnic diversity

492.149 inhabitants

173 different ethnic groups

38% of the population in Antwerp does not have a Belgian background

17% of them have a different nationality

7 large communities: Moroccan, Turkish, Eastern Europe and ex-Soviet Union, African, Latin, Asian and Jewish.

34% of the pupils in primary school taking lessons in Dutch don't speak Dutch at home.

14% unemployment rate in Antwerp ► 89% belongs to socio-economic disadvantaged groups (low education, ethnic minority, 50+, handicap)

OCMW (Antwerp Local Social and Welfare Services) in 2011: decrease of welfare benefits for inhabitants and an increase of welfare benefits for newcomers





## Antwerp's local diversity and integration policy

**The Diversity aim of the city of Antwerp is coordinated by Samen Leven. Alderman for Diversity is responsible for the political coordination.**

### **Local policy agreement 2007 – 2012**

Samen Leven: inclusive policy with focus on broad diversity

Local Diversity Program: organize categorical activities where needed

### **Office of Samen Leven and OCMW: Urban integration policy**

- ▶ Office of Integration: integration of newcomers
- ▶ Social Networks: invests in social stakeholders
- ▶ Municipal Office of Diversity: supports each business unit of the city of Antwerp to include diversity in it's work to the maximum
- ▶ OCMW: recruitment policy





# The Office of Samen Leven

## 2012-2014: Diversity plan with support of the Flemish government

### 3 ambitions:

1. We motivate Antwerp minorities' talent
2. We empower the feeling of togetherness among the citizens of Antwerp
3. We help Antwerp minorities guarantee fundamental rights in their family

→ **22 actions**

### Partnership with many:

Associations Service (*Servicepunt Verenigingen*) supports

- ▶ logistically and financially
- ▶ coaching and advising
- ▶ training program and information

→ partnership with Minderhedenforum

By supporting associations, the city invests in encountering, interaction, personal development and participation of deprived citizens, who otherwise wouldn't take part in society.



**Forum of ethnic  
minorities Antwerp**

**A push to make a  
change**



Webinar Cities of Migration



Forum of ethnic minorities Antwerp

A strategy for real intercultural cities

- independent watchdog
  - Recommendations **and** follow up
  - Different scopes (education, employment, etc.)
- Interaction at different policy levels
  - National HQ-regional office



Forum of ethnic minorities Antwerp

What's on our agenda?

- Develop intercultural network
- Grasp the city
- Raise your voice



## Forum of Ethnic Minorities Antwerp

- An intercultural network



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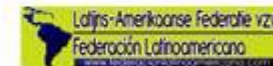


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[www.lafederacionlatinoamericana.com](http://www.lafederacionlatinoamericana.com)



## Forum of Ethnic Minorities Antwerp

- Grasp the city
  - Strengthen intercultural civil society: key figures, other organisations
  - Increase participation in public life



## Forum of Ethnic Minorities Antwerp

- **Raise your voice**
  - Network local media
  - Training (eg. sharpen political awareness of youngsters)

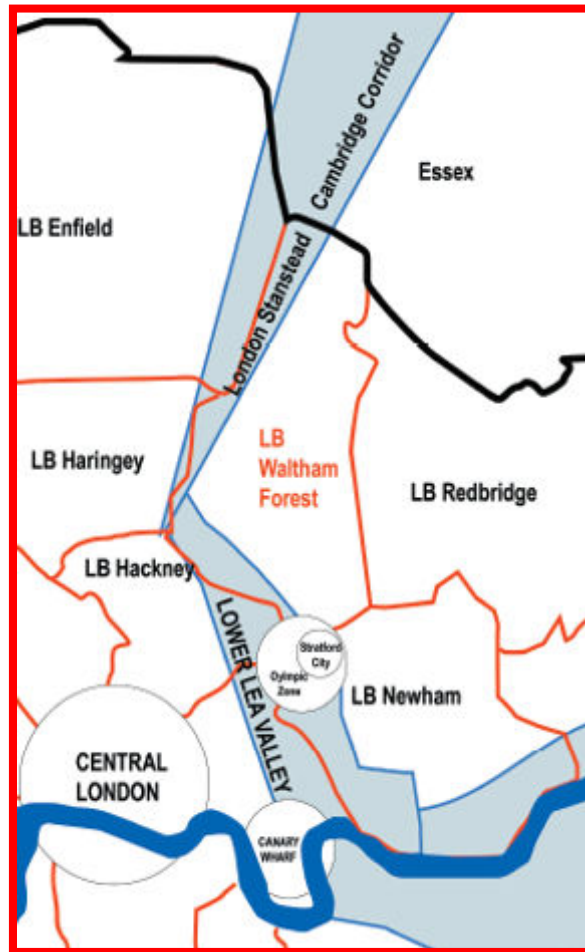
**Waltham Forest Council**

# Community engagement to deliver cohesion

Addressing local issues with local people

8<sup>th</sup> February 2012

# Waltham Forest, London borough, UK



- 2012 Host Borough
- One of the youngest populations in London
- One of the most diverse London Boroughs
- One of the fastest changing local populations in London

# History of Cohesion in Waltham Forest

- Established Community Cohesion Task Group in 2003 (Iraq War)
- Community Cohesion Strategy 2005-2008
- Focus on Hate Crime and Young People
- Response tested 7/7 – London bombings

# and then 2006...



# ...local government a key player

## Waltham Forest Council appeals for calm after terror raids

Waltham Forest Council is working with its partners to ensure the borough remains a place where people from all backgrounds, faiths and cultures can live together.

Since the raids occurred the council has been co-ordinating proactive community cohesion outreach work.

This has included convening a meeting of community leaders chaired by the council leader, within Waltham Forest on the latest information regarding the police raids and give areas of concern to the borough police.

A letter signed by the leaders of the three political parties in distributed to residents calling for calm.

The council's Community Cohesion Task Group will also be tackle any particular issues which may arise as a result of the

Council Leader Councillor Clyde Loakes has been coordinating the events.



### Councils' core role in terror challenge

By Jamie Hallstone

Local government and communities secretary, Ruth Kelly, has met with Muslim community leaders to discuss tackling religious extremism, as councils were pushed to the fore following last week's terror raids.

The meeting was held in the aftermath of the raids which resulted in 24 arrests and a reportedly failed plot to blow up a string of oil pipelines.

One person has been released without charge and 23 remained in custody as *The Mj* went to press.

Mrs Kelly described the meetings as 'very constructive and forward looking.'

The assistant secretary general of the British Council of Britain, Imayot Banglawala, said: 'We made it clear that we believe it is important for the Government to ensure that the scope of its policies, particularly in the Middle East, have helped or hindered us in the struggle against extremists.'

The Local Government Association called on...


...for calm following the arrests, and advised councils to reassure local people and to issue joint statements promoting community cohesion.

'It is vital that people co-operate with the authorities and stay united,' said vice chairman, Sir Jeremy Beckett.

Most of the police raids are subsequent to an incident in Waltham Forest. Councillor leader Clyde Loakes said the council is 'the borough was calm', but he added: 'There are a lot of people with a lot of questions... We should organise a meeting of council leaders and faith leaders last week... (aside: the vision of a joint statement, Waltham Forest Council is more also in the coming days of the urgent change caused by a urgent new security checks with the Manchester Airport Group which is being owned by Manchester City Council and neighbouring local authorities reporting some delays last Thursday but this news is great after that.'

J.hallstone@lga.gov.uk

### Unity in the community



**WALTHAM Forest Council Leader Clyde Loakes believes this will leave us stronger** (P6W8525)

WALTHAM Forest Council Leader Clyde Loakes believes recent events will unite the community.

He said: "Waltham Forest's strength lies in its celebration of diversity and we will come out of these events a stronger community."

"The council is a learning organisation and it will continue to evolve and respond to the needs of our commu-

# Challenges

- 12 Muslim councillors but all from the same Mosque
- Although Council had a commitment to cohesion in its strategy – not shared /embedded in schools etc.
- Communities ‘rubbing along nicely’ but little or no interaction
- Weak voluntary sector and no history of inter-faith activity
- Forced a re-assessment of approach not linked to Extremism

# Our response: strategic approach

## A new cohesion strategy

- Cohesion at every level and good governance structures
- Developing a strong evidence base
- Three clear priorities for cohesion activity
  1. Understanding and responding to the impact of migration and newly arrived communities
  2. Building trust, contact and dialogue between communities
  3. Promoting active citizenship and engagement

# 1. Understanding and responding to migration

## Some examples

- Migrant Workers Report - 2008
- Community Cohesion in WF - 2009
- Understanding our Somali communities – 2010
- Community Cohesion in WF 2011

## 2. Building Trust and Promoting Contact

### Some examples

- Citizenship work with schools
- Awareness and celebratory days across a range of diversity groups
- Interfaith activity

# 3. Promoting Active Citizenship and Engagement

## Some examples

- Active Citizenship for schools
- Women in Civic life
- Participatory Budgeting
- Developing a Thriving Third Sector

# The Lessons we learned

- Community cohesion is complex and requires a thorough understanding of issues and buy-in at all levels to deliver outcomes
- Prevent is dependent upon well informed and effective cohesion activity
- Police and local authority have key roles and must work together to make both agendas successful

# Challenges

## Obstacles we've yet to fully overcome

- The impact of Prevent agenda on cohesion activity
- PVE agenda led to negativity and skepticism and lack of trust for authorities
- London boroughs have geographical boundaries but these don't exist for communities

# Challenges going forward

## Public spending cuts

- Unlike recession in 2008 unprecedented cuts in public services
- Perceptions of 'fairness' – access to and allocation of resources
- Cohesion issues now include tackling gangs and youth violence
- A new approach to cohesion and Prevent at central government level

# Transferable lessons, New approaches

- Working with key voluntary and community organisations to identify issues and find solutions, especially amongst hard to reach
- Maintaining on-going engagement with community and enabling them to identify priorities
- Good quality engagement informing our work with voluntary and community sector
- Using existing mechanisms to address cohesion issues such as gangs
- Making sure we are using all existing engagement activity such as libraries, regeneration

## Waltham Forest Council

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# Acknowledgments

## Webinar Living Together: City Strategies for Social Inclusion

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