

ICP-AGIR Cooperation Action Plan for St John's (Canada) – Utrecht (Netherlands)

Cooperation Data		
	St John's (Canada)	Utrecht (Netherlands)
Departments / Institutions involved	City of St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada	Utrecht, Netherlands
ICP AGIR City Coordinator	NAME: Elizabeth Lawrence Position: Director of Economic Development	NAME: Jan Bratt Position: Chief Policy Adviser
ICP AGIR Pairing Manager	NAME: Colin Maddock Email: Cmaddock@hotmail.com Phone: +1 709 649 6437	
Description of the partnership	<p>The partnership between Utrecht and St. John's focus primarily on Immigration, refugees and inclusion. Both cities have experience in incorporating refugees, immigrants and newcomers, and have developed best practice examples that each are eager to learn. In addition, as global geo-political and economic realities dictate broader engagement in the broad are of immigration, significant learning opportunities exist in both cities. From the perspective of the individual cities, the focus of the partnership is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the oldest European city in North America, and the closest city to Europe, St. John's shares a very unique and close relationship with Europe, and often looks to European cities as leaders in many areas related to health, economics, and environmentally sustainable projects, the city anticipates achieving enhanced learning to supplement our work, especially in inclusion, immigration and refugees, increasing the collective capacity to address difficult challenges. Utilising connections with Memorial University (the largest University in Eastern Canada) the City of St. John's plans a solid and long-lasting cooperation with Utrecht especially in future activities such as student exchanges, business and economic development opportunities. • The Objective of the City of Utrecht was to seek a strong cooperation framework within a city-2-city pair, while developing cooperation frameworks throughout the network focusing on best practices, innovation and the way we can implement results. The area of developing a "legal pathway" which is also part of the Canadian policy, we want to combine with the effect is inclusion policies. The City of Utrecht is particularly proud of its Plan Einstein is an inclusive policy which has gained a lot of support with the local population and newcomers. The plan has received significant interest from Utrecht's 	

partner city. The ICP engagement was seen as important, to verify the program components, which it has, with strong support. The City of Utrecht expected a fruitful exchange of ideas which has occurred in the 2 visits and through significant on-line cooperation which has occurred over the last 111 months. A continuation of the cooperation is anticipated. Including educational and private sector contacts, was built into the program during the cooperation period, and a future and broader cooperation, including elements of Municipal, Universities and the private sector is anticipated, built around the Public Private Partnership Model of cooperation which is more developed in North America (especially in Canada).

The ICP Canada – Europe programme was officially launched on the 3rd March 2022, with participants from both Utrecht and St. John’s participating. The City Mayor of St. John’s Danny Breen participated for the full launch, with Jan Bratt, The main project proponent from the City of Utrecht representing the city. Representatives from the Memorial University (head of the international department) and partners structures on both sides dialled in to participate. As part of the programme launch, a cooperation exchange occurred between the parties, where a broad cooperation framework was established.

Multiple virtual cooperation meetings were conducted during the framework of the cooperation, monthly (April and May 2022), although the commencement of the partnership was defined by the first exchange visit from Utrecht to St. John’s, from the 6th to 10th June 2022.

City Visit: Utrecht to St. John’s, from the 6th to 10th June 2022.

A total of 3 participants travelled:

- Jan Braat, Senior Policy Advisor Migration and Inclusion
- Roman Meutstege, Policy Advisor Inclusion
- Hein Roeffsema, Assistant Professor Economics and Entrepreneurship Utrecht University

The intentions of the participants (both sides of the partnership) was on identifying potential areas of intersection and learning for longer term collaboration in areas of immigration, employability and community connections. Utrecht’s Project Einstein was presented to the City’s inclusion staff and found to be very useful. In fact, the programme was presented on multiple occasions during the visit.

Project Einstein, which is the Utrecht Refugee Launchpad was an innovative solution to the issue of asylum seeker and refugee reception, conceived during the 2015-2016 refugee ‘crisis’. The city government, benefiting from direct European funding, built a partnership with NGOs, social enterprises and educational institutions. Between November 2016 and October 2018, the project housed asylum seekers and refugees in the same complex as local young people in the district of Overvecht. It used co-learning, inviting residents from the neighbourhood to take courses together and engage in social activities in a shared social space. Courses in English and entrepreneurship were offered as subjects of ‘futureproof’ value, useful to participants’ professional future regardless of the country

they would ultimately reside in. The co-housing and co-learning reception facility, known locally as 'Plan Einstein', aimed to develop asylum seekers' social networks with neighbours, while providing opportunities for participants to develop their skills, to enhance wellbeing and improve community cohesion in the neighbourhood. As such, the project aimed to engage with concerns from receiving communities, activate asylum seekers 'from day one', as well as reverse the negative spiral of boredom, anxiety, and worsening mental health that existing approaches to reception generate.

During the visit, the team from the City of Utrecht had the ability to visit:

- **Memorial University's Internationalization Office** are the champions in international student connections and have developed and delivered a series of programs in this area. Additionally, programs and research that are specific to or support international connections help St. John's and the province in efforts to become a more culturally diverse and entrepreneurial city and province. In a broader context, the participants were able to visit the Engineering, Marine Food Science Centre and the Music program, which hosted a luncheon with an excellent musical program.
- **St. John's Local Immigration Partnership** work with community partners to identify gaps and opportunities with agencies and organizations as they help newcomers connect with, participate in all aspects and society and economy. These were presented during the visits, and intense discussions were held.
- **Coordinating Committee on Newcomer Integration** is a community-driven policy table which combines the various groups involved in the broad area of immigration and includes: representatives from Canadian, Newfoundland and Labrador provincial government, City of St. John's, Memorial University and Association of New Canadians (Newfoundland and Labrador's immigration and refugees settlement agency) This joint discussions framework was seen as interesting and informative to all, and created significant discussion on best practice globally and a discussion on the challenges related to the current refugee crisis.
- **Music NL** deploys the **Connector Program**, developed a decade ago by Halifax Partnership and is now deployed throughout Canada to facilitate easy connections in support of employment, professional development and connections.

City Visit: St. John's to Utrecht from the 7th to 10th November 2022

A total of 4 delegates travelled:

- Nathalie Godden, City of St. John's, Manager of Inclusion
- Chris Hibbs, Memorial University, International Office
- Gabriel Williams, Manager Intergovernmental Relations. Provincial Government
- Mariana Castro Carvajal, Music NL, Connector Programme

The return visit of St. John's to Utrecht occurred from the 7th through 10th November 2022. The focus of the programme was inclusion and an overview of the City of Utrecht's Einstein programme. The visit

included an overview of the City’s immigration, migration, refugee, and undocumented worker programmes. A morning overview at city hall delivered by Jan Bratt, the Director of Inclusion programmes, was followed by a visit to Utrecht’s integration team. The St. John’s team was able to visit and tour facilities utilised by refugees, including integration, language, knowledge sharing and legal support structures.

The programme of the following day (Tuesday) focused on a deeper exploration of Plan Einstein, including a tour of a migrant facility which focuses on social integration of refugees, and how the program welcomes and integrates. The Social Impact Factory was an interesting methodology which creates a safe space where integration is promoted. A focus on providing the tools and advice that a new entrant requires to make the decision to stay in the Netherlands. St. John’s saw this program as very interesting as the focus on retention of students and newcomers, is a very important part of the connectors program. The “Build your own future”, is an additional important component of the programme. A late afternoon visit to a safe house (located in a church) where refugees facing deportation can receive legal and moral support, albeit not overly relevant to the Canadian legal situation, created a clear view that the Project Einstein, was indeed comprehensive in its scope and did not leave significant gaps was interesting. An evening visit to a cultural centre, and participation in an evening meal shared and cooked jointly with a broad range of peoples from different refugee and migrant situations, and participation at a choir rehearsal, where native Dutch and immigrants from different places, learn songs from different places, sung in other languages, as a mechanism to promote inclusion and awareness was very well received, especially in the context of the St. John’s Music Connector programme, which attempts the same output.

The Wednesday program focused on anti-discrimination and LBGTI, with a tour of the city from an Anti-Slavery perspective, which outlined Utrecht’s darker history. The most interesting component of this tour was the degree to which the City had acknowledged its past and has made efforts to make the past known to its citizens. A presentation on the Slave history of the Netherlands further reinforced the theme. A visit to the current intake centre for refugees fleeing the Ukraine war, further demonstrated the integrated nature of the refugees response.

The final day of the programme included a visit to Utrecht University to discuss monitoring efforts and demographic analysis of the Einstein program, as well as a discussion on possible areas of cooperation between the universities (Memorial and Utrecht University). A broad understanding that the areas of Public Private Partnership, Triple Helix, and academic cooperation, including educational exchanges (Staff and Student) would be possible and are desirable. Working within each other’s financial frameworks was discussed and it was thought that further cooperation and discussion would be required. Based on the morning with the University, the afternoon session was focused on a visit to a legal support centre for those facing removal from the Netherlands, and how the programme ensures that vulnerable persons are supported adequately. The facility is within a Catholic Church, although the funding is provided from the municipal budget. Finally,

	a refugee temporary housing facility managed by the Salvation Army, demonstrated the further level of integration between the main actors which operate in this area. This level of operational solidarity impressed the participants from St. John's and provided significant food for thought for future discussions.
--	---

Best practices or Challenges identified in the questionnaire		
Topic	St John's (Canada)	Utrecht (Netherlands)
Inclusion and Integration	St. John's Local Immigration Partnership	Plan Einstein

Confirmation of Priority Areas	
Key focus of cooperation themes following the idea generation online workshop	<p>Future cooperation between Utrecht and St. John's will be built around 3 themes, as was developed in the programme ideas generation workshop held during the return mission of St' John's to Utrecht on the 9th November 2022. The framework will focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University-to-University Cooperation 2. Development of mechanisms for Public Private Partnership at the Municipal level 3. Best Practice exchange on inclusion at the municipal level
Short description of main actions and key outputs	<p>The main cooperation themes of the partnership will be built around 3 cooperation themes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University Cooperation: Built around cooperation between each city's university, it is planned to focus on developing an educationally focused cooperation framework built on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of information exchange frameworks with the expectation of developing joint research concepts. One potential research area is the retention of international students and how to enhance participation of international students in both municipal and private sector employment - Development of an international research framework - Exchange of students and professors 2. Development of Public Private Partnerships: Through engagement at the municipal, university and local business, both cities are interested in forging public private partnerships (PPP). Building on the experience St. John's, it is anticipated that broad sector partnerships will be explored and developed over the cooperation period. Key sub-themes might include:

Confirmation of Priority Areas	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to labour through enhancing opportunities of refugees and migrants. Utilising best practice examples and through joint research and cooperation, both cities look to develop innovative mechanisms. - Creative mechanism to develop business opportunities - Matching businesses to create and further develop international business opportunities - Best practice exchange in entrepreneurship which can directly benefit refugee and migrant community. <p>3. Best Practice Exchange in Migrants and Refugees: It is the intention of the partner cities to cooperate and share information and best practice in inclusion and support mechanisms for refugees and migrants. During both visits, significant opportunities to further develop and localise best practice exist. Sub-areas of cooperation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A joint examination of inclusion policy to make recommendations for improvement in both jurisdictions - The development of practical programmes for inclusion. In both jurisdictions, issues related to cohesive inclusion policy have been noted, which through established networks of both cities appears to be a wider and more expansive issue. - The development of an international network of cities, building on the established networks of both cities to cooperate on best practice, the development of inclusion policy and program development at the municipal level. - Development of a knowledge exchange platform - Development of an impact evaluation framework for municipalities
Expected results and benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best Practice framework / Guidelines in inclusion policy at the municipal level 2. Establishment of an international exchange network on inclusion policy at the municipal level. It is anticipated that 10 cities will be involved by the end of 2023- and 30 municipalities will be involved by end 2025. 3. Knowledge exchange platform 4. International university cooperating in place with annual exchange of students and professors

Topic of Cooperation – Key focus of Cooperation	
Counterparts	City of St. John’s and City of Utrecht, supported by the University of Utrecht and Memorial University of Newfoundland.
Objective	<p>Municipal Cooperation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University-to-University Cooperation - Development of mechanisms for Public Private Partnership at the Municipal level - Best Practice exchange on inclusion at the municipal level
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of information exchange frameworks with the expectation of developing joint research concepts. One potential research area is the retention of international students and how to enhance participation of international students in both municipal and private sector employment - Development of an international research framework - Exchange of students and professors - Access to labour through enhancing opportunities of refugees and migrants. Utilising best practice examples and through joint research and cooperation, both cities look to develop innovative mechanisms. - Creative mechanism to develop business opportunities - Matching businesses to create and further develop international business opportunities - Best practice exchange in entrepreneurship which can directly benefit refugee and migrant community. - A joint examination of inclusion policy to make recommendations for improvement in both jurisdictions - The development of practical programmes for inclusion. In both jurisdictions, issues related to cohesive inclusion policy have been noted, which through established networks of both cities appears to be a wider and more expansive issue. - The development of an international network of cities, building on the established networks of both cities to cooperate on best practice, the development of inclusion policy and program development at the municipal level. - Development of a knowledge exchange platform

Topic of Cooperation – Key focus of Cooperation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an impact evaluation framework for municipalities
Outcomes	Established cooperation frameworks at multiple levels continue to exist at the end of the cooperation period.
Indicators	<p>Existence of an international research framework by 2023</p> <p>Number of Exchange of students and professors</p> <p>Number of refugees and migrants accessing labour opportunities utilising programme framework.</p> <p>Best practice examples developed</p> <p>Number and type of joint research and cooperation</p> <p>Business cooperation mechanism to develop business opportunities for refugees and migrants created</p> <p>Number and type of best practice exchange in entrepreneurship which can directly benefit refugee and migrant community.</p> <p>International network of cities focused on cooperation on best practice, the development of inclusion policy and program development at the municipal level exist and contuse to grow</p> <p>Knowledge exchange platform developed</p> <p>Impact evaluation framework for municipalities Developed</p>
Sustainability of the action	Both cities commit to using own resources as is possible le and to locate additional financial frameworks necessary to continue development.
Time and Resources	<p>The program will operate between November 2022 and November 2025.</p> <p>Resources as are available from both participating municipal departments</p>