LUCIDE - Languages in Urban Communities - Integration and Diversity for Europe

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1 The origin of LUCIDE

The context of LUCIDE is the European Life Long Learning Programme, funded for the period December 2011 to November 2014. It derives directly from a LLP Programme called Languages in Europe: Theory, Policy, Practice (LETPP), which was carried out by The Languages Company and The London School of Economics, working with CERCLES (University Language Centres), FIPLV (Language Teachers Associations) and the UK Parliamentary group on languages. The LETPP project had two main focuses – Languages and Social Cohesion and Languages and Intercultural Communication – and examined both the theory and practice of multilingual policy in Europe. It organised 2 high level seminars and an international conference attended by 150 participants from 18 countries, as well as representatives of the EU and Council of Europe (for further information see `http://www.letpp.eu`). In 2010 LETPP came to its end and published a series of documents. One direct result of these proposals was the idea that the multilingual city would be both the driver of change and a test bed for future progress. It is this which has provided both the inspiration and the framework for the LUCIDE network project.

2 The aim of the project

There is a *fil rouge* linking LETPP and LUCIDE very tightly. Both projects start from the consideration that we live in a period of unprecedented movement - of capital, of goods and of people. Contact between people and countries has never been easier or more frequent. In such a changing and volatile world, communication across cultures becomes very high stakes.

Such communication is indispensible for international relations. It underpins wealth creation, enables individual mobility and grows employ-

ment. Communication is itself a major economic and cultural activity.

Multilingualism has to play a key role in this world where English has greatly facilitated the global impact of the 'communications revolution'. However, English – even as a *lingua franca* – also poses key cultural, social and psychological challenges.

In such a complex world, simple indicators of identity – national citizenship or national culture - are challenged. People share allegiances to an ever widening range of social groups and cultural icons – local, national, religious, sporting, artistic. In each case, language can be a major factor. The issue of multilingualism has been hotly debated over the last two decades, and despite much effort and progress, the way we first apply theory to policy, and then put the resulting policies into practice can still have varying results.

The 'younger' project (2011-2014) aims to address these issues and formulate the questions which need to be asked to help language policy have a more central role in national and international policy debates.

Let's take a closer view at LUCIDE. It is a network which is developing ideas about how to manage multilingual citizen communities.

One of the main points is building up a picture of how communication occurs in multilingual settings across the EU and beyond. The aim is to help institutions (councils, schools, hospitals) and local and national economies make better productive use of diversity as an economic resource and to strengthen social cohesion by fostering better communication and mutual understanding. Another important aim is to understand better how the cultural richness of these new cities can strengthen the 'diverse unity' of the 21st century.

LUCIDE includes 16 partners (14 from Europe and 2 Third Country partners) already active in the domain of multilingualism within urban contexts, at both University and City level, and in a range of city types. It includes cities which have long traditions of multilingualism as well as those for whom this is relatively new.

In concrete terms LUCIDE carries out research, runs seminars and workshops and developing guidelines for multilingual cities relating to

– **Education**: language learning and language support
– **The public sphere**: how the city supports democratic engagement
– **Economic life**: the bene ts of multilingualism and the requirements
– **The private sphere**: how people behave and interrelate and celebrate
– **The urban space**: the appearance and sounds of the city

3 Project publications

Anyone interested in multilingualism and the particularities of multilingualism in European cities can access the publications produced by the LUCIDE project in the website, especially a major publication, `Vital Multilingualism - City Stories,` is planned in 2015. It is producing a book, describing and analyzing the present landscape of languages in cities, and suggesting ideas for future policy development.

A the moment the website – which is the main source of this info sheet – presents 6 tool kits (`http://www.urbanlanguages.eu/toolkits`) for policy makers, professionals and citizens to alert them to key issues and examples of good practice taken from across the LUCIDE partnership:

– Languages and Work
– Multilingualism in the Health and Social Care Sector
– Learning new languages
– Bilingual and Multilingual learners
– Languages and Public Services
– Multilingualism in Urban Spaces
– **17 City Reports** giving an overview of multilingualism in European and also Canadian and Australian cities, looking at the historical context of each city and an overview of the present situation across different areas of life.

These publications show, through the diverse nature of the cities involved, that there is no single answer to the challenges posed by multilingualism and that cities are benefiting in different ways from multilingualism too. At the same time, some common areas have emerged, and this is evident in questions of public policy (health, social services and employment) as well as commerce and the new frontier of more mobile and connected populations, social media and increasingly interactive public spaces.

A more detailed analysis of the State of the Art will be available soon in the website.

4 What next?

As mentioned above, the programme is coming to its end just in the months when this issue of *EL.LE* is published. The LUCIDE website cannot explicitly present the next steps, as the very existence of the project depends on European Funding.

So far, we know that the LUCIDE project is now entering a new phase of widening participation and interest, as the project's website will be hosted by the London School of Economics through to 2016.