

C4i

Communication for Integration



# ANTI-RUMOUR NETWORKING

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## **DOC 9 ANTI-RUMOUR NETWORKING**

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# Anti-Rumour Networking

## 1. Introduction

As a point of departure for this document, a few facts are highlighted about the social and political context in which the BCN Anti-Rumour Network was created, as well as identified difficulties the network has aimed to solve.

The Barcelona Anti-Rumour Network (the Network) is one of the strategic lines of work of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy. Created in July of 2010, it is the result of the decision taken by Barcelona City Council to support the demand of the city's organisations that a network be put in place to work together to dismantle rumours and stereotypes about cultural diversity. The original objective was in the BCN Interculturality Plan as defined in axis 8 "From stereotype to knowledge", in the proposal "to design a city-wide strategy against false negative rumours that are an obstacle to living together in diversity, based on networking with a variety of social agents and organisations."

The project began in March of 2010 with active involvement of organisations that had taken part in the creation of the BCN Interculturality Plan, most of which had previously collaborated with City Council in hosting services and other participatory actions related to cultural diversity.

The Network was conceived for participation of the entire population. Its actions are designed for city-wide impact and are also adapted to a variety of contexts (neighbourhoods and sectors).

Other relevant details with regards to context:

- No precedents of anti-rumour campaigns or training courses were known.
- City Council's first question was "Should we talk about rumours? Should we work with rumours?"
- In all city surveys, immigration was perceived as the 1st or 2nd social problem
- Social organisations and hosting services expressed their difficulties in carrying out their work because they were continually accused of favouring migrant people.
- First signs of social impact of the economic crisis
- There were discourses that fed rumours against migrant people, among the media, some political groups, public administration employees, and so on.
- There were few sources of reliable information.
- There were no explicit conflicts in the city that could be attributed to problems with intercultural community life.

## 2. Conceptual framework of the Network

The Network has the same conceptual framework as the broader Anti-Rumour Strategy. It is defined in the Network's Plan of Action for 2012-2014:

The BCN Anti-Rumour Network works and contributes to the city's intercultural model. Three fundamental principles guide its action and cannot be understood separately as they are closely interconnected.

**1. Principle of equity/equality:** Promotion of real equal rights and obligations and social opportunities for all citizens. Fostering equity by fighting against situations of exclusion and discrimination, particularly those related to cultural backgrounds and differences.

**The BCN Anti-Rumour Network aims** to bring awareness and visibility of actual compliance with equal obligations and the true state of affairs concerning equal rights of all people, regardless of their cultural background. Work focuses on dispelling false conceptions and experiences of injustice, inequality between citizens and competition for resources, which favour social exclusion and discrimination.

**2. Principle of acknowledgement/recognition of diversity:** The need to acknowledge, value and respect diversity. Making the most of the opportunities deriving from socio-cultural diversity.

**The BCN Anti-Rumour Network aims** to value a plural society, and fight rumours and stereotypes about cultural diversity in order that the right to difference will not become a generator of discrimination, hostility, resentment and social rejection. Work focuses on establishing non-competitive relations; relations based on cooperation and true collaboration in order that greater social benefits may be reaped from existing diversity.

**3. Principle of positive interaction:** The emphasis is on the feeling of shared belonging, based on common and shared interests that unite all citizens. Creating opportunities for positive community life in everyday situations. Stimulating contact, getting to know each other and dialogue as a path for reinforcing this common sphere and the feeling of belonging which is the foundation for social cohesion.

**The BCN Anti-Rumour Network aims** to bring awareness and disseminate information about common interests shared by all citizens of Barcelona, regardless of their cultural background. Work focuses on fostering an environment that prevents spreading of rumours and stereotypes, and encourages relationships between people of different cultural backgrounds based on trust and mutual knowledge.

### 3. Brief description of the Network experience

- The Network is one of the strategic lines of action of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy and is defined as a place for collaboration and coordination between individuals, organisations, agencies, public facilities, programmes and services, and Barcelona City Council, who work to dispel rumours, stereotypes and discriminations that hinder positive community life in the city. It is an initiative under constant construction, always open and flexible.
- The Network has defined three levels of participation based on the degree of commitment and work. A very basic level is the outer circle of the Network, where all members are represented (more than 460 members at present). On a more functional and operational level, we have the working groups (with about thirty member organisations) and the Steering Committee, with six member organisations.
- The Technical Office of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy (City Council) is present at all levels of participation.
- The Network is involved on a day-to-day basis in “networking action” to accomplish its transversal objectives, such as the territorialisation of anti-rumour action (adapting activities to neighbourhood contexts) and seeking alliances with specific sectors.
- Aside from meetings of the working groups and the Steering Committee, Plenary Sessions are held twice a year with participation of all members of the Network. Plenary Sessions are the largest space for participation within the Network. Their main objectives are:
  - To share all the work done during a specific period of time
  - To share the new anti-rumour materials, resources and tools created
  - To share information about new actions or those underway within the broader framework of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy
  - To be a place of encounter, mutual knowledge and sharing proposals for the future among all members of the Network.
- The Network’s main functions are:
  - a) **Awareness-raising:** To develop anti-rumour actions and projects. Three types of actions are carried out:
    - **Actions promoted by the Network (organisations and City Council).** These are actions designed by and developed by the working groups, according to the Network’s annual plan of action.
    - **Actions promoted by Network organisations,** without the participation of City Council.
    - **Actions promoted by City Council,** without the participation of Network organisations.

**b) Proactivity:**

- To make contributions to consultations from City Council about future strategies (new materials required, appropriateness of certain messages, and others).
- To contribute new demands, proposals and ideas to the Network (organisations and City Council).

**c) Advisory:**

- To research and offer advice within the circles of participation of Network members.
- To attend questions and demands from other networks, organisations and agencies outside of the Network.

**d) Information and communication**

- To disseminate information about the existence of the Network and its strategic objectives.
- To disseminate anti-rumour messages that are key to the Network's strategy.
- To research and highlight anti-rumour experiences being developed elsewhere.

**e) Research and systematisation**

- To systematise actions, processes and results carried out by the Network.
- To foster practical ties between academic research and Network objectives and strategies.

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## 4. Objectives

**General Objective**

To maintain social cohesion and favour positive interaction and intercultural living together in the city based on equality, by means of action against rumours, stereotypes and prejudice about cultural diversity in Barcelona.

**Specific Objectives**

1. To dismantle and stop rumours and stereotypes that affect community life.
2. To prevent spreading of new rumours and the existence of stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory attitudes.
3. To facilitate positive interaction in the relationship between people from different cultural backgrounds, and thus to foster a context where rumours cannot spread.

**Operational Objectives for the year 2014**

- To consolidate and increase participation of new organisations in the Network's working groups, by including at least one new organisation in each working group.

- To define a strategy to diversify participation in the Network, and thus to ensure greater active participation of people from cultural groups who barely take part in the Network.

## 5. Stages and lines of action

A summary of the stages and main actions carried out by the BCN Anti-Rumour Network since it started can be useful to cities currently engaged in launching their own anti-rumour networks.

### 2010-2011: Launching and Exponential Growth

#### Context

- The BCN Interculturality Plan was approved in March of 2010 with the participation of more than 400 organisations.
- Economic and social context: The effects of the economic crisis are increasingly visible on the streets of the city (unemployment, evictions, emigration in search of jobs, etc.), as well as in social organisations (drastic decrease of public funding, professional teams are replaced by volunteers, etc.). Nevertheless, there was strong support and collaboration on the part of organisations due to:
  - They have more work than ever with issues related to social emergencies. And yet they are willing to open new lines of work related to intercultural issues. At a time when equal rights, values and basic principles are put into question, organisations understand that they must reaffirm the values of positive community life in diversity, inclusion, equality, respect for difference, dialogue.
  - Most organisations were already collaborating with City Council in hosting and participatory actions.
  - The participatory process for drawing up the BCN Interculturality Plan opened up many expectations and interests in working together with City Council on specific measures defined in the Plan.

#### Structure, main strategies and relevant actions:

- **Design and launching of the Network with broad participation of organisations**
  - First training course aimed at training sensitised social agents with the objective of creating the figure of the anti-rumour agent.
  - At the end of the course, participants contribute ideas about the kind of actions that should be undertaken in the city to fight rumours and stereotypes. Forty-two proposals were made. These were collected in a document that became the point of departure for the first steering committee of the Network. This group then presented a participatory proposal with 4 working groups to organisations who wished to join the Network.



- **Official constitution of the BCN Anti-Rumour Network**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Network meeting in July 2010 with organisations to announce City Council's readiness to take anti-rumour action and engage social organisations in the effort (60 member organisations when the Network was launched).
  - Organisations are invited to join one of the 4 working groups designed to collect proposals for developing a joint strategy of action to fight rumours about cultural diversity.
  - City Council creates a Technical Office to support the Network and collaborate with organisations.
  - As a result of suggestions provided by the original working groups, a road map is designed with the systematisation of the proposals made, and the first characteristics of the Network are structured: lines of work, objectives, target groups, participation mechanisms, working groups, priority rumours and priority actions, and so on. A few guiding documents are drawn up, such as:
    - A form for formal Network membership
    - A participation form (to sign up to working groups or actions promoted by the Network)
    - Strategic lines of action of the Network (objectives, impact levels, areas of work..)
    - Dimensions of the Anti-Rumour Agent
    - Protocol for monitoring and responding to news that spread rumours and stereotypes
    - Criteria for good practice in fighting rumours and stereotypes about cultural diversity (included in the anti-rumour website).
- **During the Network's first ten months of action (from September 2010 to June 2011), two subworking groups were created: the action group and the communication group.**
  - The communication working group aims to work on issues concerning the dissemination and communication strategy of the Network and its anti-rumour messages. Work focuses primarily on:
    - Monitoring and responding to the press
    - Registry of the media
    - Creating contents for the anti-rumour website
    - Occasional advisory actions and decisions concerning strategic communication lines of action
  - The action working group aims to promote anti-rumour actions. Work focuses primarily on:
    - Creating materials: advising on contents, design and distribution/dissemination of materials.
    - Creating a databank of existing resources
    - Creating and planning new and specific awareness-raising activities

- **July 2011: SWOT with the Network.** The first internal evaluation with the organisations regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Network at present. A relevant conclusion is the need for a shared discourse, shared expectations, coordinated work and a realistic work plan. The idea of a participatory working seminar is proposed as a solution to move forth together.
- **From July 2011 to March 2012, the two working groups come together in one Executive Group** that carries out preparatory work for the Network Working Seminar.
- **End of 2010: Constitution of the Steering Committee (SC), as the motor group of the Network.** The SC is a central working group of organisations created from within the Executive Group (EG). The SC meets regularly (at least once a month) and between meetings of the EG. Its main function is to decide on specific proposals to be submitted to the EG and support their implementation. At this stage, the first actions are to gain a commitment from the new city government (2011 elections) for continuity of the Network, and the organisation of a working seminar to define the Network's plan of action.
- **During this stage, the EG and the SC focus on the organisation and creation of documents for the First Working Seminar of the BCN Anti-Rumour Network to define its Plan of Action** for the coming years: definition of objectives, contents, participants, discussion documents, thematic glossary, dissemination, methodology, consensus building, and others.
- **Creation of the Advisory and Monitoring Group of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy.**
  - The Advisory Group was a small team representing key people from different fields who were involved in the Network's strategic objectives.
  - Its main functions were:
    - Guidance concerning the strategic lines of communication and action
    - Supervision of the Network's actions in general
    - Evaluation of Network results within a 6-month to 1-year period
    - Establishment of collaboration mechanisms between the departments and agencies they represent, and the Network's actions
    - Activating dissemination and information mechanisms about the Network within their fields of work and influence
  - The Group was composed of:
    - Representatives of City Council's Directorate of Immigration and Interculturality
    - Representatives of other municipal areas: social services, public health agency, prevention, commerce and taxes, and education
    - Academic expert
    - 2 media representatives
    - Representative of the Audio-Visual Council of Catalonia (CAC)
    - A member of the Professional Association of Journalists of Catalonia
    - 4 member organisations of the BCN Anti-Rumour Network

Plans were for regular meetings three times a year. After the first meeting in January and the 2011 elections to city government, the Group was dissolved.

### **Other relevant actions of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy for the Network**

It is important to remember that the Network has always been a very important part of the broader Anti-Rumour Strategy. This means that while the Network moved forth on its own road map, efforts were made from the start to keep it tightly interrelated with other lines of action being promoted by City Council through the Strategy.

- Creation of the first awareness-raising materials (viral power point presentations, comic book *Blanca Rosita Barcelona*, pocket anti-rumour brochure, practical guide for the anti-rumour agent...), the website and publishing of technical materials such as “A Handbook for fighting rumours and stereotypes about cultural diversity in Barcelona”. Several updated editions of all these material are successively published and distributed throughout the city in the context of anti-rumour training courses, actions and activities.
- 2010: The Anti-Rumour Agent appears in the media as a new figure and as part of the Strategy, and during the year 2011 a strong alliance is built with journalists and the media. These continue to disseminate information about the Strategy and its actions.
- Anti-rumour projects are included in public funding in City Council’s call for projects in the line of interculturality of the Directorate of Immigration and Interculturality.
- Increase of supply and demand of anti-rumour agent training courses.
- School year 2011-2012: Youth project “Moves Me” [EmMou], with workshops in numerous high schools and other centres in the city. These focus on rumours, stereotypes and discrimination.
- Other cities in Catalonia/Spain/Europe show an interest in the broader Strategy, the Network, Anti-Rumour Agent Training and other lines of action.

### **2012. Consolidation of a clear strategy for the Network: Plan of Action 2012-2014**

#### **Context:**

- Turning point in City Council on a political and technical level with regard to the line of interculturality (change of city government after 2011 elections)
- The new political plan, the Immigration Working Plan for 2012-2015, validates the existing model of intercultural values. The model of positive interaction in community life is reaffirmed and the measures to be implemented are updated.
- On a technical level, City Council’s line of interculturality is formalised with the creation of the BCN Interculturality Programme. This umbrella provides the necessary structure for greater synergy, coordination and economy between intercultural actions promoted by City Council and in collaboration with others. The BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy becomes a part of this Programme and the Technical Office can now work more closely and efficiently with the Network.
- The previous stage had taught us about the key role played by the communication aspect in intercultural awareness-raising projects. The Programme formalises the figure of a key transversal figure responsible for communication with a global communication plan for all projects. One of the main lines of action is communication support to the Anti-Rumour Strategy and Network.

- Working groups of the Network and City Council search for ways of balancing co-leadership in actions to be implemented.

#### Structure, main strategies and relevant actions:

- **March 2012: First Working Seminar of the Network**, to which all members were invited, with two objectives:
  - **Participatory definition of the Plan of Action for 2012-2014:** a strategy is designed to ensure that the different actions to be implemented are part of a coherent framework of actions based on the identification of priority fields of action and preventing disconnected and occasional interventions.
  - **Strengthening the Network as a unit of action:** facilitate scenarios for Network organisations to get to know each other better and foster interaction and greater work coordination with shared objectives, methods and criteria.
- Certain premises and reflections were defined that would guide the task of designing the plan:
  - **Changes are made in the orientation of how to approach rumours:** the approach was broadened to other stereotypes, prejudice and rumours, such as those associated to gender issues, social class or age.
  - **Work with city actors who had a great impact in disseminating and legitimising discourses:** the media, the political class, professionals of public services.
  - **Have an influence on city residents' attitudes from a broader perspective:** working for a participative citizen with critical and empathic attitudes who is prepared to question and doubt information
  - **Foster collaborative work:** Organisations and City Council working together in the Network must undertake co-leadership in the implementation of the Plan of Action
  - **Opening the Network to other cities:** Constant work towards the expansion of this initiative to other cities in Catalonia, the rest of Spain and Europe.
  - **Territorialisation of the Plan of Action:** Anti-rumour action must reach the different districts and neighbourhoods of the city, and engage and support organisations on this level for greater capillarity of the Network.
  - The Plan must not only foresee **new actions; it must also evaluate the impact and development of those already in place.**
  - **Dissemination and deployment of the anti-rumour agent:** This figure needs to gain a relevant position by granting it positive acknowledgment and disseminating its key role in positive community life in the city.
- The Executive Group and the Steering Committee identify **4 interconnected areas of action** according to which the actions defined in the Plan of Action must be designed: communication, awareness-raising, training and education.

- All the organisations, services, public facilities and individuals who were then members of the Network were invited to the Working Seminar for the Plan of Action. A total of 86 people took part in a day-long seminar designed around three processes and dynamics:
  - 1st: group work, for proposals and contributions to the 4 areas of work
  - 2nd: speed-dating exercise to encourage organisations to meet and get to know each other better
  - 3er: presentation of five experiences of organisations who had developed anti-rumour projects
  
- The final text of the Plan of Action was eventually validated by the EG and SC, with a leading role on the part of the SC in achieving consensus with City Council concerning methodology and content.
  
- Implementation of the Plan: the Network defined four key areas of action and strategic lines for their development, and four working groups were created to implement them:
  - 1. Awareness-Raising Area:** Includes actions aimed at disseminating counter-rumours and bring critical awareness to the population. Areas of action are:
    - a. Highlighting and making the most of encounter places in the city.
    - b. Fostering and disseminating the figure of the anti-rumour agent
    - c. Bringing reflection to residents less acquainted with positive views of cultural diversity by making the most of everyday places of potential interaction.
  - 2. Training Area:** Actions aimed at training professionals. Areas of action are:
    - a. Training professionals working in the public administration and political representatives
    - b. Training private sector entrepreneurs and employees
    - c. Capacity-building of community-based organisations
  - 3. Education Area:** Promotes actions targeting formal and non formal education. Areas of action are:
    - a. To foster anti-rumour educational methodologies aimed at school students and focusing on experiential dynamics, artistic languages, and so on
    - b. To train teachers and educators
  - 4. Media Area:** Three lines of action:
    - to have an influence on the way information about immigration and diversity is dealt with in the media;
    - dissemination of information that counteracts rumours or highlights positive experiences of intercultural interaction;
    - communication strategy for disseminating the Network’s objectives and actions.
 Areas of action:
    - a. To engage the media in a commitment to cultural diversity

- b. To train media professionals with regard to their social responsibility in these issues
- c. The Network's communication strategy.

### **Other relevant actions of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy for the Network**

- Support to specific anti-rumour actions started by community networks or organisations on the neighbourhood level (ex: anti-rumour video in a neighbourhood in Barcelona hard hit by the economic crisis)
- Creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities
- Steady increase in supply and demand of anti-rumour agent training
- Continuing support to anti-rumour projects through public funds to organisations in the city
- Reprinting and distribution of materials and production of new ones (new editions of the comic book *Blanca Rosita Barcelona*, and so on)
- Continuing interaction with journalists and the media, who disseminate information about the Strategy and its actions.

### **2013-2014. Strategic Growth: territorialisation and optimising alliances and resources**

#### **Context**

- The Plan of Action provides the Network with a road map for coordinated implementation between organisations and City Council
- As the Network consolidates, organisations in working groups tend toward a less reactive role, toward a more proactive role
- Achieving co-leadership of organisations with City Council is a constant objective in the production of materials, as well as in communication issues.
- The aim is strategic growth, which is reflected in the following actions:
  - Diversifying the Network to make it an intrinsically intercultural network, in its training team, in provider organisations of the Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities, in students at training courses, in organisations that are members of the Network, and so on.
  - Greater involvement of organisations in the Network's working groups and clear definition of roles and functions, together with the Steering Committee, to meet the objectives of the Plan of Action
  - Mapping of Network organisations in the city
  - Sectorial work: small trade (commerce), health, education, elders, and so on
  - Territorialisation of strategic anti-rumour actions in specific neighbourhoods
  - Innovation in networking methodologies to generate collaborative work processes through specific training initiatives and anti-rumour actions
  - Synergy with key actors in the city and mainstreaming anti-rumour action within City Council

## Structure, main strategies and relevant actions:

- Mechanisms are put in place to implement the Plan of Action and build on proposed contents. The Communication Materials Working Group merged with the Educational Materials Working Group, and became the Working Group for Anti-Rumour Action in the Neighbourhoods. The structure and actions during this period are:
  - **Working Group for Anti-Rumour Action in the Neighbourhoods.** The idea of working at two levels was taken up again: city and territory (or neighbourhood). Priorities: proposals of action in neighbourhoods to make materials, resources and information more easily available and accessible. Also, to carry out actions adapted to the needs and particularities of different areas in the city.
  - **Training Working Group.** Priorities: reach key sectors in order to engage them in anti-rumour action (health, small trade/commerce, education...); diversify participation in training initiatives and continue with the different training formats designed to date.
  - **Communication Working Group.** Priorities: communication actions on a city-wide level, and generating news and events for the media. In-depth work on communication impact in social media.
- The Steering Committee meets regularly, about once a month and depending on the needs of the moment. The year 2013 is mostly devoted to:
  - Definition of the election process for a new Steering Committee and transition
  - Revision of the Network membership form
  - Production of the 2012 Annual Report of the Steering Committee
  - Definition of main objectives to be achieved during 2013
  - Definition of the first lines of action in order to define the strategies for communication and diversification of the Network
  - Organisation of two Network plenary sessions in 2013
- During this period, the main channels for access to Network membership are:
  - Anti-Rumour Agent Training
  - Monitoring of projects funded through City Council's line of interculturality
  - Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities
  - Presentations of the Network in city neighbourhoods
  - Acquaintance with the Network on the Internet.
- Street and city-wide actions to bring awareness about the Network and its objectives (information stand and anti-rumour clowns at city festivities, information stand at the annual festival of organisations of the Municipal Council of Immigration of Barcelona, anti-rumour awareness-raising at neighbourhood festivities in the summer...)
- Implementation of a new project called "Anti-Rumour Agents in Action" in order to engage trained agents in anti-rumour actions carried out by the Network and active organisations.

## Other relevant actions of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy for the Network

- Territorialisation of strategic anti-rumour actions in specific neighbourhoods

- Continuity of the Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities, with the 2014 edition of the general Catalogue, a specific Catalogue for educators, and strategic promotion of the Catalogue
- First evaluation of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy
- Reprintings and distribution of materials, and production of new materials (cups, bookmarks, and so on). Production of a new anti-rumour comic book, number 4 of *Blanca Rosita Barcelona*.
- New chapters of the Anti-Rumour Handbook and updating of anti-rumour data and argumentations
- Continuing interaction with journalists and the media, who disseminate information about the Strategy and its actions.
- First steps in the task of collecting and systematising the evolution of the Strategy, its methodologies and experiences.
- Acknowledgement of the Strategy as a best practice in Europe (EU-MIA, ECCAR, Intercultural Cities) and in other parts of Spain (CEPAIM, RECI network), among others
- Participation in the C4i Project (Communication for Integration), of the Council of Europe, together with 10 other cities of the Intercultural Cities network, in the role of transference of knowledge, for the implementation and adaptation of the anti-rumour strategy in other contexts, during 2014-2015.

## 6. People engaged in the Network and channels for participation

- Engaged members: Social organisations and community-based organisations, individuals, public services and facilities, and municipal programmes.
- Channels of participation: Working groups. Plenary sessions. Anti-rumour activities. E-mail, biweekly newsletter, website communication.

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## 7. Dissemination: impact of communication

During the 2013-2014 period, the Network carried out an evaluation of its communication, both internally and externally, and objectives and actions were defined on both levels.

**Action for External Communication** is currently built and developed within the framework of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy of City Council, with permanent support to the Network.

To highlight a few actions:

- Collaboration with the TV show “Tot un món” [*The whole wide world*] for the production of 70 chapters of an anti-rumour season on Catalan TV, with testimonies of Network members.
- Making Network actions visible to the media (dissemination of bookmarks, interviews and news in the press, the radio, and so on)
- Creating a platform for specific dissemination: “Dades contra rumors” [*Facts vs Rumours*].
- Presentations of the Network in neighbourhoods and districts of the city
- Meetings for exchange of experiences and transference of knowledge with regard to the Strategy and the Network with professionals from other cities of Catalonia, Spain and Europe



- City-wide actions: Network participation at the city’s annual festivity [*Festes de la Mercè 2013*] and at the annual festival of organisations of the Municipal Council of Immigration of Barcelona
- Production of informative brochures about the Network

## 8. Resources

### Impact Resources of the Network:

- Channels for communication in social media: website, facebook, twitter:  
 Website: [www.antirumors.cat](http://www.antirumors.cat)  
 facebook.com/BCNAccioIntercultural  
**twitter** @BCNAntirumors
- Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities 2014
- Comic book *Blanca Rosita Barcelona 1, 2, 3, 4*
- Anti-Rumour Handbook and updates
- Informative brochure about the Network
- Cups, badges, bookmarks, bags, anti-rumour vests

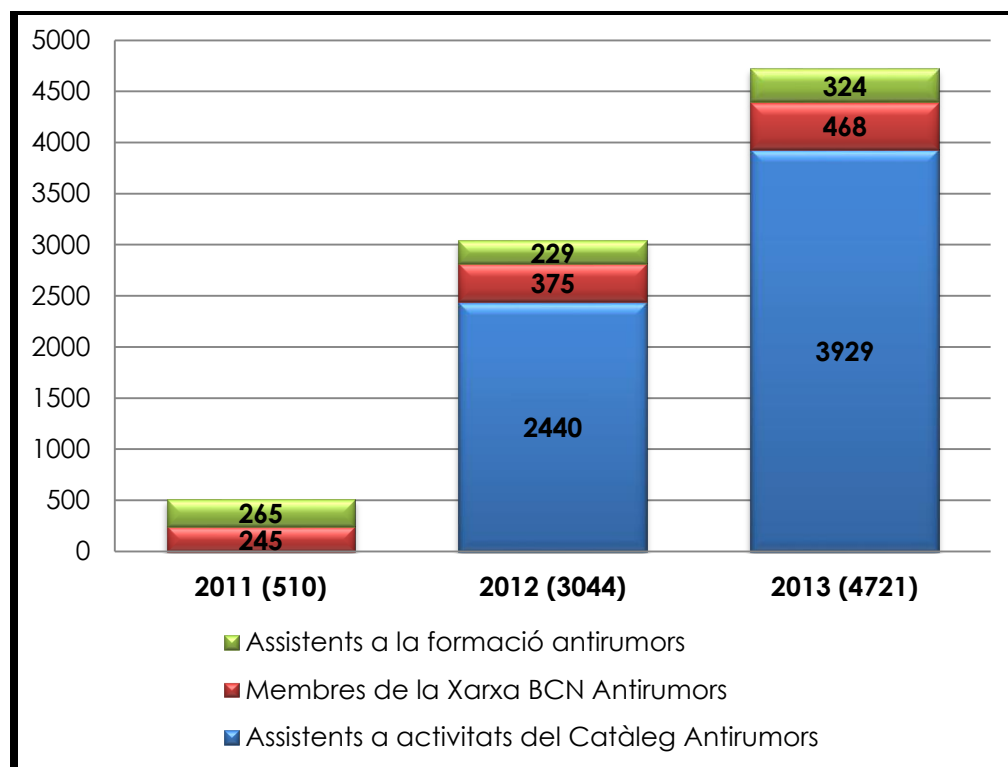
### Human resources:

- Technical team involved in the Network/Strategy, within the framework of the BCN Interculturality Programme since 2012:
  - 1 professional responsible for the Strategy and reference person for the Network and anti-rumour training;
  - 1 professional responsible for the Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities
  - 1 professional responsible for communication of the Strategy
  - 1 professional for support to anti-rumour neighbourhood action
  - 1 facilitator of support to the Strategy
  - 1 team coordinator
  - 1 city technician, responsible for all projects in the BCN Interculturality Programme of City Council, including the Strategy
- Support from external providers for specific assignments (anti-rumour training; editing, layout and printing of materials, informative stands, video production, and so on)
- Collaboration and participation of organisations and local/mass media

**Budget resources:** Funded solely by Barcelona City Council

## 9. Objectives achieved (evolution and impact)

**Changes in the composition of the Network:** The graph below shows the quantitative evolution of participants in the Strategy and its different lines of action during 2011, 2012 and 2013:



**Participants in lines of action of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy. Evolution 2011-2013 (Global variation: +926%)**

**Green:** Participants at anti-rumour training courses; **Red:** Members of the Network; **Blue:** Participants at activities of the Anti-Rumour Catalogue

Growth in participation is exponential in the different lines developed by the Strategy. Note that the Catalogue and Training are powerful sources of engagement of new members to the Network, as their increase feeds naturally into the Network itself.

This table summarizes the evolution of the Network from 2010-2013:

2010	2011	2012	2013
65	245	375	468

- As for member organisations, the Network has also experienced important changes: from 65 organisations in 2010, all related to social work and hosting services, in 2013 the Network had 157 organisations with highly diverse lines of work.
- An important increase has occurred too in people who become members of the Network as individuals (from “0” in 2010 to 311 in 2013). The presence of a growing number of individual participants who wish to have a more active engagement in the Network, has led to the new project “Anti-rumour agents in action”.

### Milestones and relevant changes in the Network's functioning:

- Developing a Plan of Action that was built with ample participation from social organisations and community-based organisations: the Network's road map for 2 years. Seventy percent of its measures are underway, and key objectives for 2015 will be to evaluate the Plan and actions and engage members in designing a new plan for the following period
- Organisations in working groups have gone from being consultative members to taking on an active, proactive and executive role
- Both organisations and City Council are engaged in sharing leadership of the Network, which implies that they are increasingly in search of consensus. Awareness-raising materials and actions are not only actions from City Council toward the organisations, but also from the Network (organisations and City Council) toward and for the city.
- Changes in the BCN Interculturality Programme team, primarily with the inclusion of a professional responsible for Communication, which nurtures the Network with a new framework that determines the way awareness-raising messages and actions are developed:
  - The values of interculturality are added to the statistical fact: an invitation to reflection on living together in diversity from a human and ethical standpoint.
  - Awareness-raising messages are enriched with inclusive language for more respectful and egalitarian communication
- Move forth in several lines of work toward becoming an intercultural network
- Engage in joint actions shared by different working groups and the rest of the Network.

## 10. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the Network

- **As mentioned above, the Network engaged in a SWOT analysis in July 2011.** This is the first internal evaluation with the organisations about the Network's strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. A relevant conclusion is the need for a shared discourse, shared expectations, coordinated work, and a realistic work plan. The idea of a participatory working seminar is proposed as a solution to move forth together.
- **Evaluation of the Network's internal and external communication in 2013-2014**, with participation of all working groups. Based on the results, the Steering Committee together with the Technical Office have started work on a communication proposal in order to define communication objectives and actions more clearly and effectively on these two levels: internal and external
- **The first full Evaluation of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy** is carried out in 2013.

- To do so, 75 members of the Network were surveyed (45 organisations and 30 individuals). Results and conclusions were ready in October of 2013 and the entire Network was invited to the presentation
- Among the recommendations for the Network, several are already being followed, such as:
  - **Strengthening ties between trained anti-rumour agents and the Network.** Along these lines, as mentioned above, the new project “Anti-Rumour agents in action” was started in 2014. This project is designed to become a place for exchange and participation in the many anti-rumour actions underway throughout the year. This proposal seeks to build bridges with agents in the neighbourhoods of the city and explore ways of working together through social media
  - **Promoting face-to-face encounters (plenary sessions and work sessions) especially conceived to be dynamic and participative** where Network members are protagonists and direct interaction is facilitated.

## 11. Difficulties and solutions

**Difficulty 1.** Working in a city with highly diverse territorial realities and with specific communication dynamics regarding rumours. The complexity of aiming the same messages at the entire city so that they are effective is a true challenge.

**Solutions:** A determined effort to “territorialise” the Strategy is underway which opens doors to working with key social agents of the Network who are well acquainted with the reality of the neighbourhoods they work in and can contribute to adapting messages, resources and the deployment of anti-rumour actions.

Moreover, the Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities is available as a tool provided for services, public facilities, educational centres, organisations, etc., that offers several different formats of awareness-raising activities, and gives community agents leeway to use them as best suits their own reality.

**Difficulty 2:** Reaching the population that is not acquainted or sensitised about cultural diversity issues and do not take part in community organisations. The Network is aware that it primarily reaches people who are aware and sensitive to rumours, stereotypes and prejudice about cultural diversity, immigration and/or interculturality. The objective of fostering scenarios where non-sensitised people could express their experiences and views about living together in diversity was not being achieved. So the Network and the Strategy were not having an impact on their main target

**Solutions:**

-Territorialisation of the Strategy with Network members who have an influence on the neighbourhood level

- Giving continuity to reaching sensitised people in order to strengthen the Network and provide them with tools to reach others who are not yet sensitised

-Resources of the Strategy: Catalogue of Anti-Rumour Activities, sectorial anti-rumour training (education, health, small trade/commerce...), work with the media

**Difficulty 3:** Internal communication and interaction between members of the Network

**Solution:** The Steering Committee has worked hard on this challenge together with working groups and the Technical Office. Changes are underway in participatory spaces. Plenary sessions twice a year, for instance, are now not only a time for information and updates on the Network's activities. Central importance is given to dynamics where members can get to know one another, share experiences and join in group work to make proposals for the future.

Work on internal communication and achieving an appropriate flow of communication between working groups and with the rest of Network members

**Difficulty 4:** Seeking consensus and shared actions between organisations and City Council, especially with regard to standpoints about political declarations and communication with the media

**Solutions:**

-Organisation of meetings between the Steering Committee (member organisations) and the political representative

-Seeking consensus and valid circuits for decision-making between organisations and the administration through the Technical Office

**Difficulty 5:** Establishing formats and work dynamics that are realistic and effective between City Council and the organisations actively involved in working groups

**Solution:** Organisations involved in working groups have gone from a consultative role to a proactive and executive role. This change has come about as a result, among others, of a demand expressed by the organisations and by accommodation between what they want to do and what they can do

**Difficulty 6:** Making the Network a place for participation that is truly diverse and intercultural

**Solution:** The Steering Committee and the Technical Office define a strategy for diversification of the Network that aims to explore the interests of residents from different cultural backgrounds living in the city and then take this knowledge as a point of departure for designing actions to engage them and facilitate their participation

**Difficulty 7:** The Strategy/Network was launched with no previous detailed design (planning, objectives, etc.). The negative effects of this is to have many open fronts, the uncertainty regarding priority objectives, and the challenge of managing the expectations of those involved

**Solution:** To draw up a road map, the Network's Plan of Action for 2012-2014, and create ad hoc working groups

**Difficulty 8:** The Evaluation of the Strategy brought awareness of the fact that one of the threats to the Network had to do with some unbalance between member organisations according to their degree of professionalisation, an issue that might negatively affect their ability to follow the Network's pace

**Solution:** This is linked to the objective of diversifying the Network, mentioned above. In the implementation of actions to achieve this objective, it is clear that one of reasons for the obstacles for a more culturally diverse network might lie in the pace and methods for work, which are more appropriate to professional contexts and not that close to the the way community-based organisations work, for instance, particularly in the case of working groups.

## 12. Opportunities, recommendations and future challenges

### Opportunities generated:

1. The broad diversity of organisations and agents that have been reached: the Network went from 65 organisations in its first year, 2010, all of which were connected to social work and hosting services, to 157 organisations in 2013 from very different lines of work. This identification of actors and social agents in Barcelona that had previously never collaborated with the administration/immigration services, has given the Network depth and quality in the knowledge of work being developed in the city, as well as an increase in contacts and projects, identification of interests and needs, and so on.
2. The Network has provided a framework and a setting for collaboration between agents and people who were feeling isolated and alone in the task of fighting rumours and stereotypes about cultural diversity. The existence of a network has given them legitimacy and tools to work more solidly and with more support.
3. Organisations in Barcelona have included the contents and objectives of the Network in their own structures, and have created ad hoc awareness-raising activities while innovating in the activities they had previously been involved in.
4. This is the first intrinsically intercultural project that has the native population as its main target for information and awareness-raising actions. This has been a turning point in projects developed in the area of immigration/interculturality.
5. National and international projection of the Strategy/Network: participation in forums, international projects, presentation of best practices, and so on. These have reaffirmed

Barcelona City Council's interculturality policies and have provided contacts and synergies with other successful experiences and good practices in managing cultural diversity

**Recommendations:**

1. Maximize the opportunities for designing proposals jointly between organisations and City Council, in order to guarantee commitment and co-responsibility in the development of actions (in the case of Barcelona, organisations were consulted and engaged from the very moment that the BCN Interculturality Plan kicked off for preparatory work, for the first document of proposals for training, for the constitution of executive groups and then working groups, for the creation of a steering committee, for drawing up the Plan of Action, and so on.)
2. Provide interlocution between organisations on the community level and political representatives, in order to open permanent dialogue, adjust differing viewpoints and find a balance on issues which are often delicate, especially when the media are involved
3. Search for dynamic forms of participation, by fostering networking and creating scenarios for organisations to meet and get to know each other. Accept a certain "loss of control" over processes on the basis of trust between the administration and committed organisations, when organisations move forth assertively and don't need city council as an intermediary. A close watch is advisable on how leadership is shared in the network.
4. The network's open and flexible nature enables adaptability and inclusive practices (for instance, few prerequisites for membership). Simultaneously, as the network grows and matures, it requests greater formality in processes since it now requires a shared discourse and a clearer model for participation.
5. Carry out processes for self-analysis at key times; this may bring turning points with regard to weaknesses and orientation as to how to move forth (we again mention the SWOT analysis carried out by working groups of the Network in Barcelona, which was essential in providing guidance for the need for a Working Seminar with organisations and a shared Plan of Action, which consolidated the road map).
6. Importance of having a nuclear centre of organisations with whom consensus can be reached and who legitimise the work carried out by the network (in Barcelona, the steering committee).
7. Membership of individuals as an indicator of diversification of participants. Organisations generally join for work reasons, individuals do so based on personal conviction.

8. Provide the network with meaning and content based on clear conceptual premises of the model of diversity management in place in the city (in the case of Barcelona, the intercultural model).
9. Be attentive to the specificities in particular sectors and territories, in order to provide tools and enable work of organisations willing to carry out adapted actions.

### Challenges for the future

1. **To have a Network that truly reflects the cultural and social diversity present in the city of Barcelona:** participation of more organisations in the fields of education, parent-teacher associations, community-based organisations, neighbour organisations, as well as organisations of different cultural groups active in the city (Chinese, Moroccan, Pakistani, among others).
2. **To keep working to reach a diversity of publics** through different tools and resources available to the Network.
3. **To improve Network communication**, within and without. Achieve spaces for true communication and interaction.
4. **To seek more and better ties to strategic actors and areas:** academic circles, for instance.
5. **To make visible reciprocal exchange between Network organisations** and the projects they develop as an example of good practice in networking.
6. **To encourage making the most of tools, resources, actions and projects** based on the diversity of actors in the Network (linked to improvement of internal communication and participatory scenarios for encounters. A good example is the speed-dating technique used at the Working Seminar).
7. **To consolidate the project “Anti-Rumour Agents in action”**, aimed at engaging individuals who wish to participate more actively in the Network.
8. **To make work sustainable with territorial agents involved in the Network.**
9. **To evaluate the execution of the Network’s Plan of Action for 2012-2014.**
10. **To consolidate shared leadership between City Council and organisations of the Steering Committee** in anti-rumour action, sharing presentations in the city and with the media
11. **To make the task of the Steering Committee visible.**
12. **To focus on more global work with regard to intercultural community life**, based on the enrichment diversity brings to the city and making the most of the fact that the Strategy has been a bridge of access to people’s everyday life.



### 13. Annex: Sources of information

- CEPAIM – Best Practice: BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy, the Network and Training of Anti-Rumour Agents. 2013-2014
- Area of Quality of Life, Equality and Sports of Barcelona City Council – Best Practice. 2014
- C4i Project/Council of Europe - “Identifying rumours about cultural diversity”. 2014
- University of Montreal/Council of Europe - Building Intercultural Cities. A Case Study of Barcelona’s Intercultural policies and practices. 2014
- Web: [www.bcnantirumors.cat](http://www.bcnantirumors.cat)
- Plan of Action of BCN Anti-Rumour Network 2012-2014:  
<http://bcnantirumors.cat/sites/default/files/Pla%20d%27accio%CC%81%20Antirumors.pdf>
- SOCOL/Barcelona City Council – Evaluation of the BCN Anti-Rumour Strategy
- BCN Interculturality Programme/Barcelona City Council - Annual Report 2012
- BCN Interculturality Programme/Barcelona City Council - Annual Report 2012
- BCN Anti-Rumour Network - Documentation from the Working Seminar for the Plan of Action 2012-2014 of the BCN. 2012
- BCN Anti-Rumour Network - Documentation from minutes of meetings of executive groups, plenary sessions, steering committee and working groups. 2010-2013



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