



**A roadmap for inclusive cemeteries
and crematoria in diverse societies**

Research findings report

A roadmap for inclusive cemeteries
and crematoria in diverse societies

Publisher

University of Luxembourg

Date

2022

Contents

Part 1	Introduction	4
Part 2	Executive summary	8
Part 3	Background information	12
	The case studies	13
	COVID-19 pandemic	16
Part 4	Key findings	17
	Inclusive cemetery and crematorium services	18
	Examples of good practice	31
Part 5	Conclusion	43
	Key references	46
	The authors	48
	Acknowledgements	50

Part 1

Introduction

The EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion aims to improve intercultural dialogue, better understanding between communities (including religious communities), combatting xenophobia, working with diversity and providing guidance on cultural awareness for professionals (European Commission 2016; 2020). This report addresses municipal cemeteries and crematoria as public spaces and services, which have an important role to play in making all citizens and residents feel included, and in promoting dialogue and understanding between different secular, faith and cultural communities in increasingly diverse European towns, cities and societies.

This report shares the findings from a HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) funded study of eight mid-sized municipalities in six north west European countries: Cork (The Republic of Ireland), Drammen (Norway), Dundee (Scotland, UK), Leeuwarden and Maastricht (Netherlands), Luxembourg City (Luxembourg), Eskilstuna and Umeå (Sweden). Oversight of public cemeteries and crematoria varies in each country, with the municipality typically being the main provider, but the case studies include mixed provision, e.g. in Dundee where the crematorium is a commercial operation. In Norway and Sweden, the national church oversees cemeteries and crematoria but makes provision for minority religious and secular requirements.

Core findings presented here are from the eight case studies, but also draw on insights from neighbouring cities, their wider national contexts, and a preceding study of England and Wales (see Maddrell et al. 2018). The material for this report was collected 2019–2022 through mapping and photo surveys of cemeteries and crematoria. In each municipality we conducted interviews with experts and individual facility users, held focus group discussions and public engagement activities variously with municipal officers and elected representatives, cemetery and crematoria staff, clergy and celebrants, stakeholders, and local majority and minority communities. All participants quoted have been anonymised in this report.

Having the 'right' sort of burial, cremation and associated rituals is important for the respectful treatment of the deceased and for those mourning them. As societies become more culturally diverse, so too do the requirements for funerary spaces and practices. Census data evidence increasing ethnic-religious diversity in small as well as large urban areas (see Figure 4). Previous studies have shown that larger metropolitan municipalities tend to be better equipped to meet diverse cemetery-crematorium and related needs, but that these needs are growing in medium as well as large municipalities.

Although many service-providers work to accommodate all majority and minority needs to the best of their ability, this research highlights various challenges in practice, often commonly reflecting issues of governance, finance/staffing and understanding of the significance of varied funerary practices. It is notable that cemetery and crematorium provision between and within European countries varies, and provision for different ethnic-religious groups can be uneven and inadequate. Further, in addition to understanding different religious and cultural practices, there is a need for understanding varied needs *within* ethnic-religious groups (e.g. denominational and regional differences) and how these are mediated through local and personal circumstances.

The CeMi research project highlights the varied cultural and religious funerary needs in north west Europe, the associated challenges and the different ways in which both communities and service providers (e.g. cemetery-crematorium managers, town planners and funeral directors) respond to them, potentially contributing to the EU inclusion strategy.

Based on extensive research with local communities and service providers in the eight case study locations, this report outlines challenges, examples of good practice and creative opportunities for cultural inclusion and cross-cultural dialogue via cemetery and crematoria sites and service provision. We argue that diversity-inclusive cemeteries, crematoria and remembrance sites are a necessary

We argue that diversity-inclusive cemeteries, crematoria and remembrance sites are a necessary but currently neglected aspect of understanding inclusive and integrated public spaces and broader multicultural society.

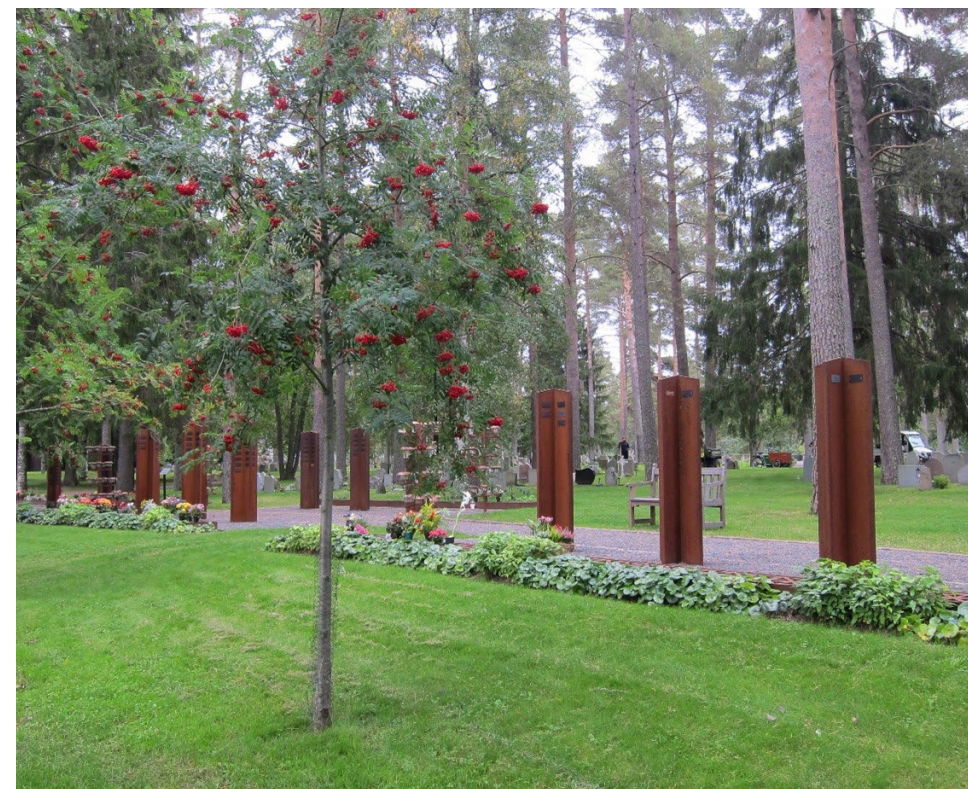


Figure 1. New zone for cremated remains, with burial area behind, Umeå, Sweden.

but currently neglected aspect of understanding inclusive and integrated public spaces and broader multicultural society. Addressing these issues will contribute to greater social well-being and more inclusive civic spaces and culture.

We thank everyone who participated in the research and hope that this report is of value to local and national service providers, planners and policy makers, as well as to the communities represented in the case study municipalities. We also hope these findings will be thought-provoking and relevant in wider European settings.

Part 2

Executive summary

Dignified care for the dead is a universal need and right

Municipal cemeteries and crematoria:

- Are important symbolic public spaces for the living and the dead
- Are set within national and local legal and governance frameworks
- Embody wider public values such as equality and inclusion
- Need to serve diverse local needs in multicultural societies, including secular and varied faith funerary requirements
- Benefit from liaison and dialogue with local communities and faith groups
- Have the potential to be places which bring diverse people together to enhance social interaction and cultural understanding
- Can provide significant green leisure spaces and ecosystem services within particular localities – but these uses can cause tension with mourners

Inclusive cemetery and crematorium services require:

- Engagement with, and dialogue between, local majority and minority communities
- Community liaison and consultation regarding current and future provision
- Regular review of national and local regulations e.g. inclusivity audits
- Long term planning in the light of demographic trends
- Careful design, including layout, neutral iconography and flexible ritual spaces
- Clear guidance on leisure use, especially dog walking, and/or zoning of recreation areas
- Timely service provision (including 'out of hours')
- Planned affordable provision for faith groups requiring perpetual grave rights
- Access to viewing/ initiating cremation if requested
- Freedom to remove cremated remains from the crematorium for disposition elsewhere
- Good public transport connectivity, plus adequate parking
- Site facilities such as toilets and waiting rooms
- Provision of secular space and spaces for varied local faith communities
- Environmentally-friendly provision

Events, public consultations, volunteer schemes and social spaces such as on-site cafés can help bring diverse local communities into contact, and foster understanding between these groups.



Figure 2. St. Eskils' cemetery in Eskilstuna, Sweden, at All Saints' Eve (2019).

Part 3

Background information

The case studies

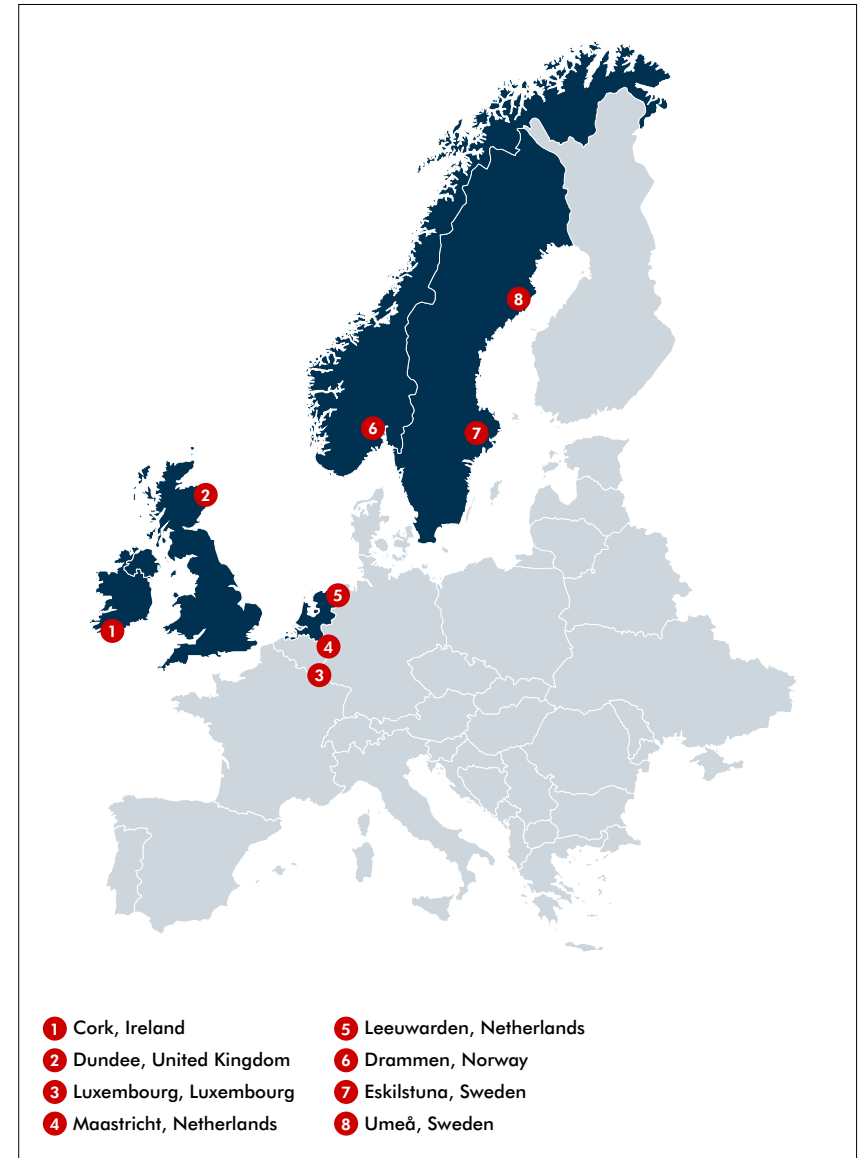


Figure 3. Map of case study locations.

A case study approach was used for the study of eight municipalities from six countries: Cork (The Republic of Ireland), Drammen (Norway), Dundee (Scotland, UK), Leeuwarden and Maastricht (Netherlands), Luxembourg City (Luxembourg), Eskilstuna and Umeå (Sweden), plus a pilot study in Groningen (Netherlands). Municipalities of broadly similar size with significant migrant and/or established minority populations were chosen from across six north west European countries which share a similar majority Christian/ Christian heritage and secular cultural norms.

Case studies	Population	'Minority' population	Year
Cork Ireland	125,657*	14%	2016
Drammen Norway	68,945	22%	2019
Dundee Scotland, UK	148,750	10%	2018
Eskilstuna Sweden	105,924	26%	2019
Leeuwarden Netherlands	124,481	17%	2021
Luxembourg-City Luxembourg	122,273	71%	2019
Maastricht Netherlands	120,227	33%	2021
Umeå Sweden	127,119	12%	2019

Figure 4. Case study demographics (source: based on Nordh et al. 2021).

* A boundary change in 2019 increased the population to 210,000.

The case studies typically have a population of 100,000–130,000 (with Drammen at 69,000 and Dundee at 148,000 being outliers), with national census data identifying migrant and/or minority populations typically ranging between approximately 10% (Dundee) and 33% (Maastricht), with Luxembourg city being a marked outlier with 71% of the population identified as non-nationals.

The make-up of the populations of all our case study locations varies because of their own specific histories. For instance, the high proportion of migrants in Luxembourg can be explained by bilateral agreements with Portugal, Spain and Yugoslavia from the 1970s onwards; economic growth since the 1980s, including booming financial and IT sectors; and Luxembourg-city's status as one of three EU capitals and home to EU institutions. Consequently, the largest minority groups in Luxembourg City are French (17%), Portuguese (11%), Italian (6.9%), Belgian (4.1%) and German (3.7%). By contrast, Leeuwarden's largest minorities are influenced by tourism / second house ownership (from neighbouring Germany, 2%) as well as historic colonial ties and trade: Indonesia/Moluccas (1.8%), Antillean (1.3%), Surinamese (1.2%), Curaçao (1%) and Moroccan (0.9%). For similar historical reasons, 4% of the population in Dundee are Asian/ British Asian. Eskilstuna is most characterized by more recent refugee settlement, including: Iraqi (5.4%), Syrian (3.6%), Somali (1.9%) and Eritrean (0.8%), as well as migrants from neighbouring Finland (4%).

COVID-19 pandemic

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and governmental restrictions on travel, meeting etc. varied across the case study countries and different communities within countries. Notably, migrant and minority communities were adversely affected reflecting disproportional representation in (a) essential worker roles (e.g. doctors, nurses, public transport and supermarket staff) and (b) residential areas with high levels of social deprivation (Islam and Netto 2020).

While the subject of inclusive cemeteries and crematoria was brought to the fore by the pandemic, some pandemic regulations reinforced majority norms and made equal treatment even more challenging. We outlined these issues in a blog post in four languages highlighting the need to be sensitive to minority religious funerary needs in the context of the pandemic: <https://cemi-hera.org/diverse-funerary-needs-at-a-time-of-crisis-reflections-on-covid19-in-multicultural-europe/>

On the project, planned public engagement activities were halted and interviews and focus groups cancelled or delayed, as the team pivoted to online interviews and surveys where possible, as well as incorporating experiences of the pandemic into our data collection.

Part 4

Key findings

Challenges for inclusive cemetery and crematorium services

Challenges for inclusive cemetery and crematorium services varied by country and case study, but key common challenges include:

- National/local policy of grave re-use versus religious requirements for in-perpetuity graves
- National regulations which prohibit shroud burial and/or limit access to separate burial sections
- National regulations which prohibit the removal of cremated remains from the crematorium and/or designated cemetery (or require special permission for removal)
- Public services which are only available Monday to Friday (cemeteries, crematoria and related services such as doctors, registrars, coroners) fail to meet the needs of faith groups which require prompt burial or cremation
- Service providers need to be aware of 'diversity within diversity', including different denominations within religions and regional interpretations of religious practice, as well as generational and gendered preferences
- A lack of information regarding state provision or costs incurred for funerary services
- Where funeral costs are charged, differential costs between cremation and burial can create financial stress for those requiring burial for religious reasons, especially when perpetual grave rights incur additional costs
- Inflexible design, e.g. hard landscaping in cemeteries and fixed seating in funeral halls
- Lack of cremator viewing facilities for Hindus and Sikhs
- A lack of staff presence in some cemeteries has made elderly and minority visitors uneasy about visiting on their own
- Conflicting meanings and significance attributed to graves and cemeteries, e.g. by mourners who view it as sacred space and recreational users, e.g. dog walkers and runners (see Figure 11)
- Poor public transport connectivity (key issues: proximity and frequency)

- Inadequate parking for large community funerals
- Unreliable funding streams where municipal services depend upon national/local government budgets
- Cemeteries and crematoria often have low priority for municipalities and local planning agencies

Dominant norms

While European countries recognise the rights to religious freedom and freedom of expression, national legislation and dominant cultural norms reflected in cemetery and crematorium infrastructure and services can be exclusionary for minorities. For example, under Swedish law special permission is required to remove cremated remains for dispersal on moving water, as required by Hindus and Sikhs; lack of weekend services can prohibit prompt burial for Muslims and cremation for Hindus; the infrastructure and architecture of municipal cemeteries and crematoria commonly reflect Christian heritage-influenced or secular norms which may be valued by the majority of residents but be experienced as exclusionary by some non-Christian or non-secular minorities (see Figures 1 and 5b,c below).

Cremation is now widespread, if unevenly distributed across European countries. Cremation is the most common funerary practice in the countries studied, except Norway where 44% of funerals are cremations (2019). Repatriation of the dead (whether in sealed coffins or urns) has been a common practice amongst some migrant communities in Europe e.g. South Asian migrants to Europe and intra-European migrants. However, repatriation of Third Country Nationals is declining in European countries (such as the UK and Netherlands) as local provision for minority requirements improves, the cost of repatriation increases, and migrant or migrant heritage families identify with their home in Europe (Kardouch-Outmany 2014; Jassal 2015). The latter is especially common for the children of migrants and subsequent generations who were born in Europe, although some belonging to these 'established' minorities still prefer the transnational disposition of their bodies or cremated remains at sites of religious or familial significance (e.g. dispersal in the Ganges or buried in an ancestral tomb). COVID-19 restrictions, when the international repatriation of the dead was widely prohibited, served to consolidate this trend.



Figure 5a. All Saints Day rituals at Luxembourg City, Luxembourg. Figure 5b. Detail of cemetery gates with Christian symbols (Alpha-Omega), Groningen, Netherlands.



Figure 5c. Municipal cemetery gates with Christian iconography, Merl, Luxembourg.



Uneven minority provision

Funerary legislation and formal provision for minority faiths varies by country. While the majority of municipalities oversee public cemeteries and crematoria, services can be delegated by the state or outsourced. In Sweden and Norway, the established church oversees cemeteries and crematoria, with a legal requirement to ensure secular and minority provision; in the Netherlands and UK there is a mixed economy with both public and private providers. In countries where there is no legislated provision for minority faith practices, provision tends to be negotiated locally on an ad hoc basis between cemeteries-crematoria managers and faith groups, which can have uneven results. Previous studies show that an inability to fulfil religious and cultural requirements for the dead, leaves mourners feeling misunderstood, marginalised and in some cases anxious about the wellbeing of the deceased (Maddrell et al. 2018; 2021).

Norway, Sweden and Luxembourg finance basic funeral services via taxation (as is also the case in Denmark and Poland) whereas funerary costs are a private matter in other countries such as the Netherlands and UK (except for those who qualify for government benefits). Where private funding is required for cemetery-crematoria and funeral director services, cost is a significant factor which can exacerbate inequalities and create funeral poverty. This is particularly the case for faith groups such as Jews, Muslims, Orthodox and some Roman Catholics who require perpetual grave rights for religious reasons. The costs for perpetual graves in municipal cemeteries reported in this study varied from approximately 1,500 to 10,000. There can also be local barriers to accessing perpetual grave rights in countries where grave plot re-use is established as the norm (e.g. Luxembourg) (see Nordh et al. 2021). Mohammad, a Moroccan migrant in Maastricht, explained:

“People prefer to pay once and for all for perpetual grave rights. But the municipality (...), they don't offer those possibilities. And if they offer them, it is quite expensive. Approximately 10.000 Euros altogether. And that's too expensive for us. (...) When I heard about their prices for the first time, I thought: 'How dare you profit from a dead human being?' (...) Look, in the official communication there is always talk of 'joining in', 'participation', 'tailor-made for the people'. I don't call this 'tailor-made'.”

A sense of marginalisation or exclusion may be experienced by indigenous minorities such as Travellers, whose cultural practice of large headstones and elaborate grave architecture do not match majority norms or cemetery regulations (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Traveller grave, Cork, Republic of Ireland.

There is evidence of growing awareness of, and attention to, diverse cemetery and crematorium needs across Europe and within particular municipalities. The most effective multicultural service providers are well informed about diverse needs of different faith and cultural groups, including local variations and changing trends in population and practices. However, rigid regulations can limit options, as a cemetery manager in Luxembourg explained: 'At cemeteries, you have your urn burials, you have classic coffin burials, you have the dispersal of ashes. Otherwise, nothing...we have no other demands because of the regulations'.

A small but significant number of cemetery and crematorium workers we spoke to also thought that minority faith groups should 'fit in' with majority practices. For example, a cemetery worker in Drammen understood that Muslims put 'frames' or kerbs round the graves to protect the deceased from people walking over the grave, but this contradicted cemetery rules: 'They should follow the rules for the cemetery, so when I discover that they have started to frame the graves, I confront my boss, and he goes on to his boss, who will take care of it and then send a letter to the relatives'. This suggests that education on the significance of religious requirements for particular faith groups to enhance understanding of varied needs and local liaison with minority faith groups is required, as well as a review of regulations which may be driven by particular, majority-culture influenced aesthetics or prioritizing ease of maintenance.

In many municipalities, minority faith groups such as Muslims and Baha'i, and the Chinese community have negotiated/ are negotiating separate dedicated burial grounds within municipal provision (see Figures 8 and 9), but procedures for this are often unclear, provision is uneven, and the process is frequently prolonged. For example, in Dundee, a Muslim participant reported that his community felt they could progress their plans for a dedicated Islamic cemetery when a fellow Muslim was appointed as a Councillor, saying to him 'Look, you're in the Council, now can you do something'. Dialogue between municipal cemetery and crematorium staff and local faith groups is vital to ensuring inclusive provision, especially with those groups whose beliefs require certain orientation and/or protection of graves or specific rituals, such as body washing or viewing the cremator, for the wellbeing of the dead.

However, some individuals may prefer burial within the majority cemetery. Nouria, a participant from Luxembourg, who migrated with her husband from Algeria, reported that arrangements were made for her husband to be buried in

the Muslim section of the cemetery by default: 'The main thing was that it went well, that he had his prayers, that was important. But in hindsight, why not be buried next to others [non-Muslims]?...I'm a believer and a Muslim, everyone knows that. But you have to adapt to the new environment'. For Nouria, her husband's burial in the main section of the cemetery would represent integration in the local community. Thoma, an Arminian-Christian refugee from Syria in Maastricht, voices the same idea: 'In my view it would be great if a Dutch person and an Armenian, or a Turk and an Arab lie next to each other. And, if that happens in the Netherlands, I would want a Dutch text on the tomb stone and an Arabic text underneath. And for the neighbour a Turkish text with a Dutch text. Yes, that would be integration at its best, I think. It seems to me quite beautiful to combine things in this way.'

Some faith groups, including Jews, Muslims and some Christian denominations, require perpetual grave rights for religious reasons, which is in tension with a widespread policy of grave re-use in some European countries. Maria, a Roman Catholic migrant from Ireland, where perpetual graves are the norm, was shocked to discover the policy of grave re-use in Luxembourg, where Roman Catholicism is also the predominant cultural context. It is also important to note that while migrants of Christian faith favouring or requiring burial are typically buried in the majority consecrated or secular areas of cemeteries, they may have specific rituals or memorial cultures which vary from local norms e.g. longer funeral ceremonies or public mourning rituals.

These examples highlight that textbook knowledge of diverse practices needs to be supplemented with ongoing dialogue with local communities and consultation with individuals.

Textbook knowledge of diverse practices needs to be supplemented by ongoing dialogue with local communities and consultation with individuals.



Figure 7. Dedicated Jewish burial ground within a municipal cemetery, Dundee, UK. Figure 8. Feng Shui burial ground, municipal cemetery, Zwolle, Netherlands.



Generally, clear signposting of different burial grounds within a wider cemetery improves accessibility and understanding of different faith and secular provision within the site. However, Jewish graves have all too frequently been subjected to racist damage, and fear of vandalism prompted a Muslim community in Norway to request no signposting to the Muslim burial ground in one municipal cemetery, highlighting the need for local consultation. It is also important to note diverse practices and aesthetic preferences within a faith community, for example for different denominations or in different localities (see Figure 9). However, some faith groups feel they can only ensure their religious needs are met by making private provision, such as was the case in Dundee where the Muslim Burial Trust bought part of the municipal cemetery (see Figure 10) in order to ensure the correct orientation of graves, prompt burial and keeping dogs away from the graves when dog walkers frequently fail to respect the cemetery rules and the sanctity of graves (see Figure 11).



Figure 9. Muslim burial area with varied headstones, Drammen, Norway.



Figure 10. Private Muslim Burial Trust Cemetery, adjacent to a municipal cemetery, Dundee, UK; note the uniform size, shape and colour of the headstones.

Many municipal providers were attentive to diverse needs of different faith and cultural groups, including local variations and changing trends in populations and practices. However, this was not universal, and national and local regulations, as well as institutional or individual resistance to change, constitute barriers to inclusive cemeteries and crematoria. Inability to fulfil religious and cultural requirements for the dead results in mourners feeling misunderstood, marginalised and anxious on behalf of the wellbeing of the deceased (Maddrell et al. 2021).

The Eight-Factor Framework (Jedan 2023) may be a useful tool to aid understanding of why certain dedicated funerary facilities have been proposed for a specific migrant or minority group, and may help with planning for provision. It offers a model for ‘mapping’ proposed dedicated zones in the light of group size/population trends, existing cemetery-crematorium regulations and norms and funding constraints, and may assist in the framing of requests for new funerary facilities to meet minority needs (see Figure 12 below).

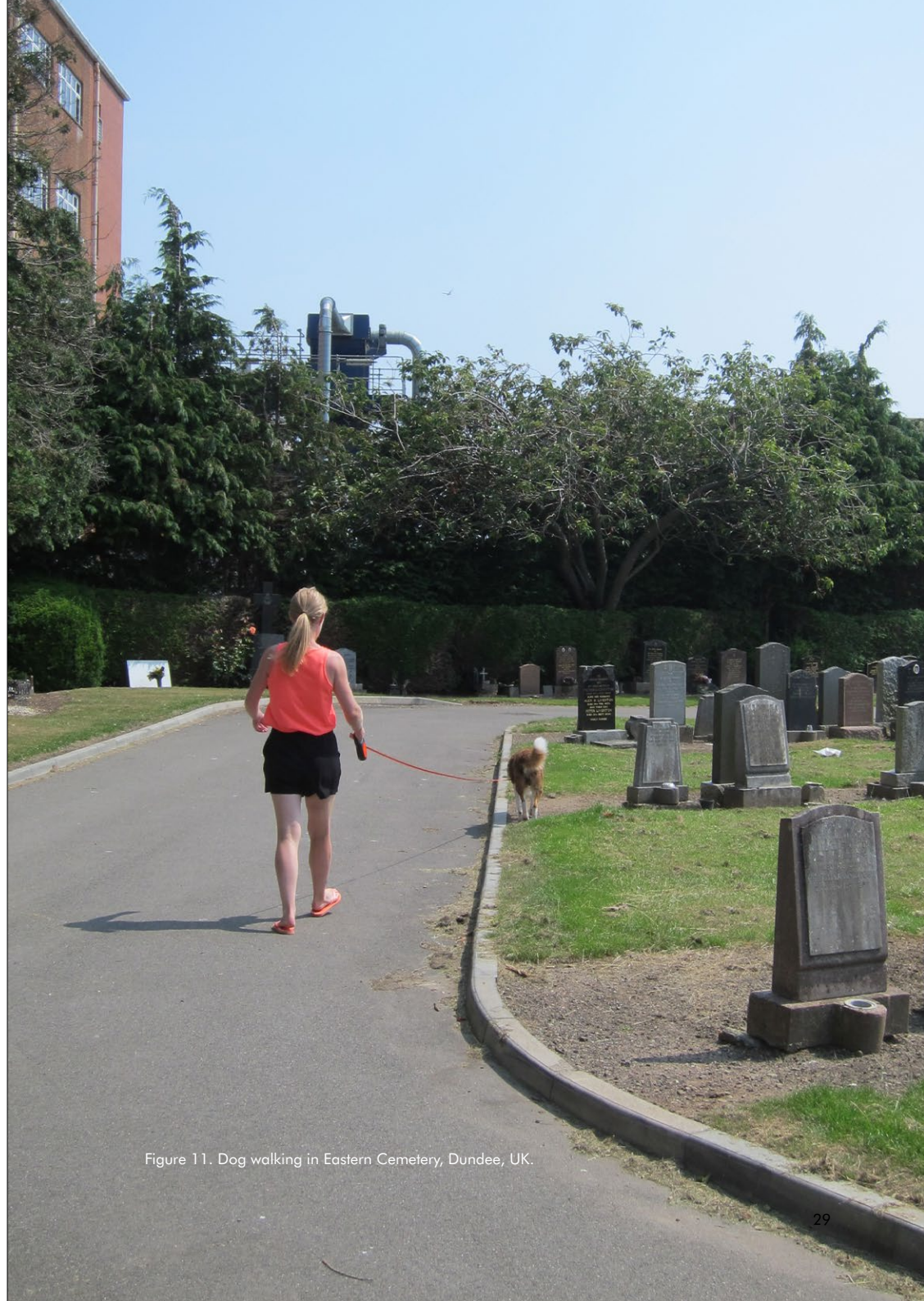


Figure 11. Dog walking in Eastern Cemetery, Dundee, UK.

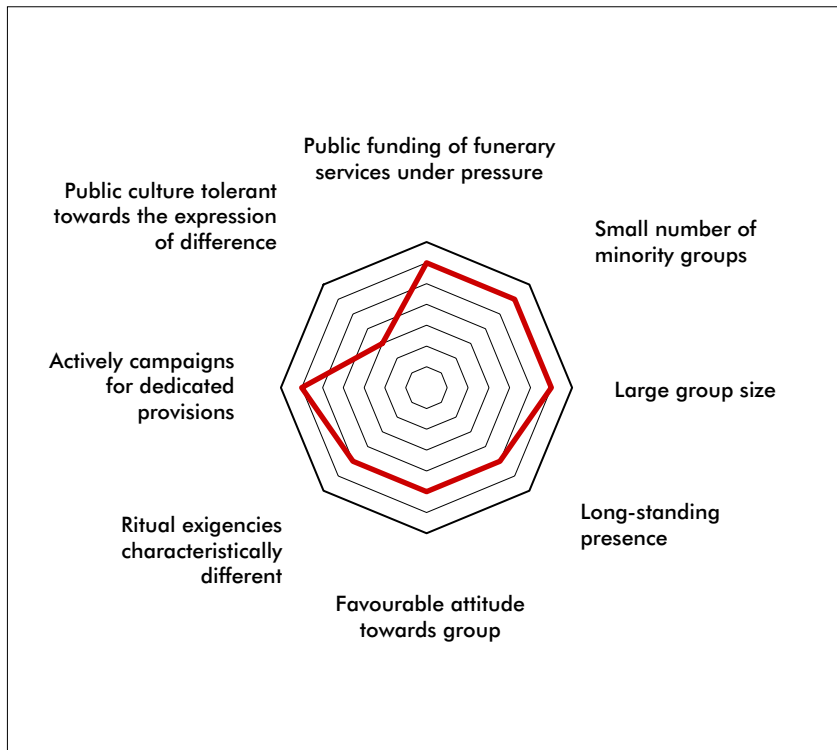


Figure 12. Eight-Factor Framework (EFF) of specific funerary provision for minority and migrant groups (Jedan 2023).

Examples of good practice

As noted above, cemetery and crematorium staff and local communities have worked together to ensure inclusive provision of those of all faiths or no faith, and to facilitate personal preferences where possible. Some of the examples below relate to improving processes, public engagement, communication and liaison, and creative responses to local needs. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions created additional challenges but also prompted some creative responses, such as the training of additional voluntary municipal staff; pre-dug graves from prompt burials; new or wider use of outdoor ritual spaces; recruitment of new younger community volunteers for religious rituals such as body washing or communal prayers; and increased live-streaming facilities and digital participation at funerals (see Figure 16). Elizabeth, a participant in Cork, commented: 'We've watched quite a few funerals through streaming. So that's been a great blessing. I know you've not got the warmth of people next to you, but they certainly did help. There are some older people who can't get to the funeral anyway, so I hope they keep that on for funerals and for the services'. Some cemeteries and crematorium gardens also saw increased leisure use at this time, which has prompted more thought regarding possible expansion and/or zoning of recreation activities.

Municipal cemeteries and crematorium gardens are both a public space and resource. They serve a universal need; as an imam in Cork noted: 'When people die, they're the same...Catholic or Muslim'. Cemeteries and crematorium gardens can also be places of encounter, including within and between particular communities. As one grave visitor from the Traveller community in Cork commented: 'It's probably the one leveller...We're all the same, in the graveyard we're all the same. In fact, I suppose we're more united in the graveyard than any place else. There's a man two plots down from my brother who was a big businessman in Cork. We talk to his family standing by the grave. In any other context we would never meet or talk to each other'. Clearly, cemeteries have great potential for fostering social encounters and better mutual understanding.

Examples of good practice include:

Regulation, governance and planning

- Regular review of national cemetery and crematorium regulations and local policies in the light of changing demographics, allowing local/ bottom-up insights to be fed into national guidelines
- Translation of municipality and other funeral service information (including any entitlements, costs and regulations) into key local minority languages for websites and leaflets
- Local liaison and community-informed planning and design of cemeteries and crematoria sites and services, including expansion or redevelopment (see Figure 13 a,b)

Design, facilities and ritual spaces

- Facilitation of diverse funerary needs and preferences, including secular and local religious communities
- Neutral ritual buildings (e.g. no religious iconography) (see Figure 14 a)
- A selection of appropriate portable religious icons that can be used on an optional basis in funeral rituals (see Figure 14 b)
- Adaptable ritual buildings (e.g. overflow spaces for large funerals with TV screen relay)
- Outdoor ritual spaces (e.g. for Muslim communal prayers, socially distanced or green space rituals (see Figure 15 a,b)
- Ritual washing facilities for mourners (e.g. for Muslim communal prayers) (see Figure 14c)
- Facilitating viewing/initiating the cremator for Hindus and Sikhs (see Figure 16)
- High quality audio systems allow use of pre-recorded personal or devotional music, mantras and prayers
- Webcam links facilitate virtual attendance/participation by international mourners or those in poor health (see Figure 17 a,b)
- Coroner services which are actively working to protect the integrity of the corpse and improve prompt release of bodies to meet religious requirements, e.g. through the use of non-invasive autopsies
- Extending cemetery and crematorium time allowance to accommodate large

funeral groups or more elaborate funeral rituals

- Weekend staffing at crematoria and cemeteries
- All week (seven-day) access to doctors and registrars for death certification and registration in order to facilitate prompt burial or cremation
- Inclusive spaces which allow individual expression (see Figure 18)
- Facilities and symbols reflecting and celebrating diversity and inclusion (see examples in Figures 19 and 20)
- Movable seats to allow alternative layout or use of the floor in funeral halls
- Accessible parking, paths, toilet facilities etc.
- Good public transport connectivity
- Environmentally-friendly overflow parking for large community funerals
- Cemeteries and crematoria gardens can provide significant green spaces within particular localities, as was evident in some urban areas during COVID-19 restrictions
- Zoning for leisure activities such as dog walking or exercise
- Design for environmental benefits e.g. through the inclusion of 'natural' or 'woodland' burial areas within municipal cemeteries where these are not already present

Communication and community engagement

- Cemeteries and crematoria gardens are social spaces with the potential for fostering meaningful interaction. Information on the diverse communities using a given cemetery or crematorium can enhance understanding
- Good communication and dialogue between cemeteries and crematoria professionals and local communities
- Creating opportunities for social interaction e.g. seating areas, cafés, events and volunteer work parties
- Staffing at well-publicised fixed hours could enhance social interaction; as could the conversion of redundant buildings to other services such as cafés, florists and information points with toilet facilities
- Clear information and signposting within cemeteries and crematoria designed in consultation with local communities (see Figure 21 a,b,c)
- Cemetery and crematorium events to encourage local engagement, interaction between different communities, and knowledge of different practices and options, e.g. tours, open days, concerts, public talks, exhibitions, discussion café, 'Dying Matters' and similar awareness events
- Cemetery and crematorium volunteers drawn from local community volunteers and faith groups, e.g. community liaison, gardening, events
- Some community groups have liaised with providers to create and fund culturally specific cemetery facilities, and to provide local community members with training in cemetery health and safety to support cemetery staff during weekend burials
- Identifying contact persons within community groups can ease communication with service providers, and can support families and service providers in making funeral arrangements
- Community initiatives can support families and service providers, e.g. Jewish and Muslim burial councils which collect funds for communal facilities, such as ritual washing rooms and hearses, and individual funerals



Figure 13a. Community engagement at Feng Shui burial ground, Zwolle, Netherlands.
Figure 13b. Creative workshop exploring inclusive cemetery and crematorium design, Luxembourg Festival of Migration 2020.



Figure 14a and b. Neutral ritual spaces with movable chairs, and portable religious icons, available on request (UK).



Figure 15a. Muslim burial ground within municipal cemetery, Groningen, Netherlands. Figure 15b. Outdoor ritual space created in 2020, Umeå, Sweden. Figure 15c. Outdoor ritual spaces and washing facilities for mourners.



Figure 16. Provision for viewing/ starting the cremation process. Figure 17a. TV relay to overflow space (UK).



Figure 17b. Livestreaming of a funeral (Sweden). Figure 18. 'Free field' in a municipal cemetery, Groningen (Netherlands), which allows different grave orientations, grave markers and style of grave decoration.





Figure 19a. Windrose at Muslim burial ground.

Figure 19b. Colour coded orientations in a body-washing facility (both Leeuwarden, Netherlands).



Figure 20a. Secular and multi-faith iconography on benches at a Dutch cemetery.

Figure 20b. Bowl of pebbles to mark grave visits at the Jewish section of hard landscaped municipal cemetery, Luxembourg City.

Part 5 Conclusion



Figure 21a. Cemetery map and information (Umeå, Sweden).

Figure 21b. Signpost showing varied faith and functional sections

(Eskilstuna, Sweden). Figure 21c. Dog walking regulations (Dundee, UK).

Creating diversity-ready cemeteries, crematoria and associated services is a vital element of an inclusive multicultural society, where everyone feels they 'belong', where their needs are catered for, and their deceased are treated respectfully. This could play an important, if often overlooked, part of the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion. Creating opportunities for dialogue between minority and majority communities, and with service providers and planners is vital for the provision and maintenance of appropriate, effective and inclusive cemeteries-crematoria. Experience of funerals during the COVID-19 pandemic have also highlighted that innovative and inclusive provision such as live-streaming, TV relay and outdoor ritual spaces can benefit all users.

Improved services and facilities which ensure cemeteries and crematoria are accessible and more inclusive of religious and secular, majority and minority needs ensure that municipal cemeteries and crematoria are inclusive public spaces and services. Good planning and design, including good public transport links and accessible parking, zoning leisure use, and facilities such as benches and cafes, as well as community events and volunteering opportunities, can foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.



Figure 22. Cemetery café, Groningen, Netherlands.

Key references

- Beebeejaun, Y. (2012) Including the Excluded? Changing the Understandings of Ethnicity in Contemporary English Planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 13(4), 529-548.
- Beebeejaun, Y., McClymont, K., Maddrell, A., Mathijssen, B., & McNally, D. (2021). Death in the Peripheries: Planning for Minority Ethnic Groups beyond "the City." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X211043275>
- Cremation Society of Britain (2019) *International Statistics* (Accessed 30 Sept 2022), <https://www.cremation.org.uk/International-cremation-statistics-2019>
- European Commission (2020) EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758&qid=1632299185798>
- Francis, D., Neophytou, G. and Kellaheer, L. (2005) *The Secret Cemetery*. London: Berg.
- Gardner, K. (1998). Death, burial and bereavement amongst Bengali Muslims in Tower Hamlets, East London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, xxiv(iii), 507-22.
- Gunaratnam, Y. (2013). *Death and the Migrant: Bodies, Borders and Care*. Bloomsbury Academic
- Hadders, H. (2021 online first). Hindu urn burial in Norway: an option for the future? *Mortality*. DOI: 10.1080/13576275.2020.1869708
- Havik, P., Mapril, J. & Saraiva, C. (2018). Introduction. In P. J. Havik, J. Mapril & C. Saraiva (Eds.) *Death on the Move: managing narratives, silences and constraints in a trans-national perspective* (pp. 1–10). Cambridge Scholars Publishing
- Hunter, A. (2016). Deathscapes in diaspora: contesting space and negotiating home in contexts of post-migration diversity. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 17(2), 247-261. DOI:10.1080/14649365.2015.1059472
- Hunter, A. & Ammann, E. S. (2016) End-of-life Care and Rituals in Contexts of Post-migration Diversity in Europe: An Introduction, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37(2), 95–102, DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2016.1142052
- Islam, F. & Netto, G. (2020). 'The virus does not discriminate'. *Debunking the myth: the unequal impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minority groups*, *Radical Statistics Journal*, 126, 19-23 <https://www.radstats.org.uk/no126/IslamNetto126.pdf>
- Jassal, L. K. (2015). *Necromobilities: The Multi-sited Geographies of Death and Disposal in a Mobile World*. *Mobilities*, 10(3), 486-509. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2014.912049
- Jedan, C., Kmec, S., Kolnberger, T., Venbrux, E., & Westendorp, M. (2020). Co-creating ritual spaces and communities: An analysis of municipal cemetery Tongerseweg, Maastricht, 1812–2020. *Religions*, 11(9), 435. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel11090435>
- Jedan, C. (2023 – forthcoming), *The Economics and Politics of Dedicated Funerary Provision for Migrant and Minority Groups. A Perspective from the Netherlands*, in: Maddrell et al. (eds.), *Mobilities in Life and Death. Negotiating Room for Migrants and Minorities in European Cemeteries* (Imiscoe Research Series), Cham: Springer.
- Kadrouh-Outmany, K. (2014). Burial practices and desires among Muslims in the Netherlands: A matter of belonging. *Can. J. of Netherlandic Studies*, 33.2/34.1, 107–128
- Maddrell A. (2020) 'Bereavement, grief, and consolation: Emotional-affective geographies of loss during COVID-19', *Dialogues in Human Geography* 10(2) 107-11, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820620934947>
- Maddrell, A., Beebeejaun, Y., McClymont, K., McNally, D., Mathijssen, B. & Dogra, S.A., (2018). *Deathscapes and Diversity in England and Wales: setting an agenda*, *Revista d'Etnologia de Catalunya* 43, 38–53
- Maddrell A., McNally D., Beebeejaun Y., McClymont K. and Mathijssen B. (2021 online first), *Intersections of (infra)structural violence and cultural inclusion: the geopolitics of minority cemeteries and crematoria provision*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* <http://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12437>
- Maddrell, A., Beebeejaun, Y., Kmec, S. & Wingren, C. (2022 online first) *Cemeteries and crematoria, forgotten public space in multicultural Europe. An agenda for inclusion and citizenship*. *Area*, 00, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12824>
- Marjawaara, R. (2017). Selecting a place of rest after a life on the move: determinants of post-mortal mobility in Sweden, *Applied Mobilities*, 2(2), 166–181, DOI: 10.1080/23800127.2017.1326779
- Nordh, H., House, D., Westendorp, M., Maddrell, A., Wingren, C., Kmec, S., McClymont, K. Jedan, C., Uteng, P. T., Beebeejaun, Y., & Venbrux, E. (2021). *Rules, Norms and Practices – A Comparative Study Exploring Disposal Practices and Facilities in Northern Europe*. *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228211042138>
- Rugg, J. (2020). *Social justice and cemetery systems*. *Death Studies*. DOI:10.1080/07481187.2020.1776791
- Skår, M., Nordh, H. & Swensen, G. (2018). Green urban cemeteries: more than just parks. *Journal of urbanism*, 11(3), 362-382. DOI:10.1080/17549175.2018.1470104
- Swhajor, A., Heessels, M., Van der Velde, P. & Venbrux, E. (2010). *Aan de Ganges in Twente. Onderhandelen over vormgeving van hindoedodenrituelen in Nederland*. *Quotidian*, 83-102.
- Tolia-Kelly, D. (2008) *Investigations into diasporic 'Cosmopolitanism': beyond native mythologies of the 'non-native'*. In C. Dwyer & C. Bressey (Eds.), *New Geographies of Race and Racism* (pp. 283–296). Ashgate
- Wojtkowiak, J., Rutjens, B. T., & Venbrux, E. (2010). *Meaning Making and Death in a Secular Society: A Dutch Survey Study*. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 32(3), 363–373. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157361210X532059>

The authors

Yasminah Beebeejaun (UCL), Danielle House (University of Reading), Christoph Jedan (University of Groningen), Sonja Kmec (University of Luxembourg), Marianne Knapskog (TOI), Avril Maddrell (University of Reading), Katie McClymont (UWE), Helena Nordh (SLU), Eric Venbrux (University of Nijmegen), Tanu Priya Uteng (TOI), Mariske Westendorp (Utrecht University), Carola Wingren (SLU). With additional project assistance from Vevila Dornelles (University of Reading) and Farjana Islam (Heriot-Watt University).

Contact

Project Leader Professor Avril Maddrell (avril.maddrell@reading.ac.uk)

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank everyone who participated in and supported this research. Including interviewees and community groups, our project partners, the Royal Town Planning Institute (UK and Ireland), the Dutch Funerary Museum Tot Zover and the Terebinth Foundation (Netherlands); and the Humanities in the European Research Area funding agency.

Photo credits

Danielle House, Christoph Jedan, Sonja Kmec, Marianne Knapskog, Avril Maddrell, Brenda Mathijssen, Helena Nordh, Mariske Westendorp.

Copyright

This work is licensed under Creative Commons CC-BY_NC-ND.

Website

cemi-hera.org

Design

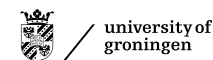
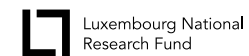
Bison Bison



HERA



NWO



cemi-hera.org