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Cooperation for Social Inclusion Project (SINC)

# GOOD EXAMPLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY MUNICIPALITY COOPERATION ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

**Fostering Social Inclusion in Multicultural Regions Project**  
(TR2016/DG/03/A1-01/070 (EuropeAid/166483/ID/ACT/TR))



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**YUVA ASSOCIATION**

**Acronym:**

**COOPERATION FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT (SINC)**

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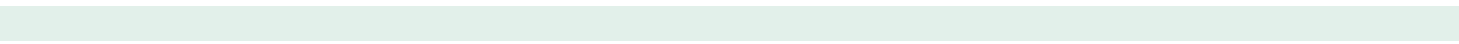
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## 2. INTRODUCTION








From a theoretical perspective, a white paper is a persuasive, authoritative, in-depth report on a specific topic that presents an issue and provides a solution. White papers are used to educate readers to bring to light a new or different perspective. Correspondingly, this white paper is a research-based report which offers a focused description of collaboration cases generated by local governance units and not for enhancing the social inclusion of people exposed to forced migration.

Within this paper, we aimed to present both the details of the cases which we perceive as **good examples** of collaboration between municipalities and CSOs for the sake of social inclusion and the point of view of the project partners regarding their experiences and perceptions that emerged out of the project cycles.

The report is based on both the relevant literature depicting the functional pathways to foster social inclusion throughout the collaboration between local governance units (municipalities) and civil society organizations (CSOs) and interview data attained from the practitioners who efficiently performed to enhance social inclusion at the local level. The report also aimed to identify the good practices in the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups at several locations in **Turkey, Sweden, and Germany**. Its overall purpose is to provide an overview of good

practice examples gathered through interviews, an online survey, and specific information on some of the inspiring initiatives and programs carrying out this work. The report is put together in four parts. The first part provides an overview of why the role of the local level has become more important for social inclusion policies across the world. Based on an assessment of the main challenges and opportunities for cooperation in section two, the third part provides practical ideas to improve models for cooperation among local authorities and non-state actors. The last section highlights SINC member initiatives and projects that are being implemented in close collaboration with local public actors and municipalities to meet the needs of migrants and refugees.




Throughout the documentation, we have elaborated on institutional characteristics and capabilities, project/program contribution to social cohesion, participation of affected groups in project design and implementation, project/program contribution to partnership and coordination amongst diverse stakeholders, its relevance to the needs of affected people, taking a multi-stakeholder approach, and sustainability, per current literature, while considering a project or initiative as a good practical example. Taking a rights-based or holistic approach to programming, replicability of projects/programs, their efficacy and efficiency, incorporating impact evaluation into the program cycle, and partnership with the business sector are among the other success markers mentioned by respondents.





### **3. THE SINC PROJECT AND THE PROJECT TEAM**





The SINC Project was set out to enhance the impact of social inclusion interventions by exchanging knowledge between the CSOs in Turkey and Sweden with a focus on social inclusion activities deployed in multicultural regions in cooperation with local governments i.e. municipalities. The lead- and co-applicant established a steering committee that examined recent projects implemented in the years 2021 and 2022, with a specific focus on social inclusion interventions in targeted cities to obtain a detailed understanding of the different ways of working; to raise awareness of Turkish CSOs on the social inclusion interventions undertaken by their European counterparts that fall under the EU Acquis of Social Policy and Employment (Chapter 19) in cooperation with municipalities.

The steering committee aims to share knowledge, samples of ways of working, and lessons learned with CSOs in both

countries, Turkey and Sweden; and in Turkey with a specific focus on increasing awareness of Turkish CSOs concerning the EU Acquis chapter for Social Policy and Employment; to strengthen the dialogue between CSOs established under the FIER project funded by European Union (EU) by following up on the specific recommendations of the consortium for the cooperation of CSOs with municipalities in targeted locations. The lead- and co-applicant aimed to contribute to the sustainable dialogue between CSOs by sharing their experience from the previous project (FIER) with the wider CSO community in their countries using the tools of communication i.e. panel meetings, and white papers. The following section will depict the general information regarding the lead applicant, project partners, and associates.





## 3.1 YUVA ASSOCIATION (YUVA)

As the leading partner of the SINC Project, YUVA was established in 2010 to foster sustainable lifestyles that respect the rights of all living beings and future generations. YUVA suggests holistic solutions to sustainability issues from both nature and human perspectives and takes measures for environmentally sustainable lifestyles, poverty reduction, and democratization through youth and adult learning. For this purpose, it has been providing lifelong learning opportunities with non-formal education and participatory teaching methods in many areas from vocational education to Turkish courses, to active citizenship, social cohesion, and environmental literacy training to enhance the socio-economic conditions and increase the ecological and cultural awareness of its beneficiaries. YUVA carries out its activities under two main programs; chiefly, the Earth Citizenship Program (ECP) and

the Human Development Program (HuDP). Under the ECP, YUVA has adopted the goal of delivering, developing, and diversifying the Global Citizenship Education programs, with two main identified thematic axes; 1) Ecological Awareness and 2) Human Rights and Democracy. Under the HuDP, YUVA provides empowerment programs specifically for youth and adults to be independent and have a life with dignity. YUVA has so far cooperated with various international organizations such as Malala Fund, ECF, IOM, UNHCR, GIZ, State Secretariat for Migration of Switzerland, DVV International, DRC, Save the Children, etc., and has been a member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) since 2015.

## TABLE 1. SINC PROJECT'S PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATES

Project Partners	Team Members	E-mails
<b>Yuva Association (YUVA)</b>	Erdem Vardar Deniz Dinçel Özge Sönmez	erdem.vardar@yuva.org.tr deniz.dincel@yuva.org.tr ozge.sonmez@yuva.org.tr
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## **4. EU ACQUIS ON SOCIAL POLICIES**








To fully comprehend the European Union Acquis on social policies, we must first recognize and investigate some key EU strategies in terms of inclusion, including the “The European Pillar of Social Rights”, “capability approach (CA), Active Inclusion, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), the European Social Charter, the Lisbon Strategy, and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.” The European Union aims to strengthen the inclusiveness and cohesion of European society and to ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources by supporting member states in the fight against poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination. By implementing efforts to achieve equity and social inclusion in society, the EU has made social inclusion a core issue in its approach to social policy. Countries in the EU have also agreed on regulations making it unlawful to discriminate against people based on their race or ethnicity, as well as standards ensuring that people with disabilities have access to services. EU citizens are also protected against discrimination in employment





and occupation. With the gradual dispersion of social exclusion as a concept within the social policy through the European Union (EU) during the 1990s, the EU poverty program was converted into a fight against social exclusion. This process culminated in the Council of Europe's adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2000. One of the key measures for achieving the Lisbon Strategy's overall goal is the European Social Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy intends to have a significant influence on poverty elimination, as well as combating social exclusion and promoting social cohesion. Persons with disabilities, younger and older employees, low-skilled workers, migrants and ethnic minorities such as the Roma, people who live in poor regions, and women in the labor market are all supported by EU Cohesion Policy. The European Pillar of Social Rights was formed by the EU in November 2017 to provide individuals with additional and more effective rights and to support fair and well-functioning labor markets and social systems.

The European Pillar of Social Rights identifies 20 principles that the European Union should follow to become more inclusive and equitable and to better the lives of all European people. It was unanimously endorsed by the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Commission in November 2017, indicating that all of the European Union's institutions, as well as all of its member states, embrace the declaration's principles and rights. The European Pillar of Social Rights is a joint political commitment and obligation of EU institutions and member states. The pillar includes a variety of measures aimed at ensuring EU citizens' rights to; 'fair working conditions', 'appropriate and long-term social protection', and 'equal chances and access to the labor market'.

One of the other critical notions in understanding the EU perspective toward social inclusion is the capability approach (CA) which foresees that deprivation of definite goods entails an absolute deprivation of capabilities.



To exemplify, migrants (of the first generation) have generally linguistic difficulties. Consequently, even if formal educational attainment were achieved, they can't tap their full potential. Besides, some institutional and economic barriers accompany these general problems for immigrants. Thus, the EU considers that evaluation of poverty is no longer based on earned income, but on the capabilities that can be generated through it as outlined by the capability approach (CA) which offers a framework for evaluating social phenomena such as justice, inequality, and social exclusion. According to the CA, poverty is interpreted as a lack of actual possibilities to choose different forms of living and “can be sensibly identified in terms of capability deprivation” (Sen 1999, p.88). Active inclusion is also a European Union policy aimed at promoting social inclusion and social protection for people who are most excluded from the labor market by addressing issues such as minimum wages, access to quality services, and inclusive labor markets in a holistic manner. Furthermore, active inclusion entails allowing all citizens, particularly the most disadvantaged, to actively engage in society, including working.







The European Commission created a three-part policy model for active inclusion: (1) appropriate financial assistance; (2) inclusive labor markets; (3) access to high-quality services.

The open method of coordination (OMC) is a form of intergovernmental governance in the European Union that is based on member states' voluntary participation. Soft law processes such as norms and indicators, benchmarking, and sharing of best practices underpin the open method coordination. The OMC was created as part of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, which defined social cohesion, together with growth and jobs, as the hallmarks of a thriving, future-oriented Europe. The Lisbon Strategy, on the other hand, sought to make the EU by 2010 the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy capable of sustained economic development with more and better employment and more social cohesion.

Economic, social, and environmental restoration and sustainability were the key topics in the strategy. As one of the other remarkable notions in understanding EU acquis on social policies, the European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights as a counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights, which refers to civil and political rights. The basic rights set out in the Charter are as follows: housing, health, education, employment, legal and social protection, movement of persons, and non-discrimination which are all very fundamental variables of social cohesion and inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Since the EU has identified restoring economic growth and providing more and better jobs as key factors in fighting poverty, the European Commission has placed the fight against poverty at the heart of its economic, employment, and social agenda in 2020.

To help achieve this, the European Commission proposes establishing a European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Correspondingly, heads of State and Governments have agreed on a breakthrough: a common target that the European Union should lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion in the next decade. The fight against poverty and exclusion needs to rely on growth and employment as well as on modern and effective social protection. Moreover, innovative social protection intervention must be combined with a broad set of social policies including targeted education, social care, housing, health, reconciliation, and family policies, all areas where welfare systems have so far tended to intervene with residual programs. Achieving the Europe 2020 objectives of social inclusion and cohesion will crucially depend on the capacity of the EU and its Member States to fit together social and migration policies.







## **5.SOCIAL INCLUSION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE**



***Social inclusion is a process that enables people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion to gain access to the opportunities and resources they need to fully participate in economic, social, and cultural life, as well as to achieve the prosperity and living standards that are considered acceptable in their society.***

Ensuring social integration, eliminating impediments that prohibit people or groups from participating in social life, and contributing to social peace and calm are all parts of social inclusion (Biçerli, 2016; Erincik, 2018; Seyyar, 2008). Greater citizen participation in making decisions that affect their life and the achievement of basic rights is ensured through social inclusion. Social exclusion, on the other hand, is a condition in which people or groups are continuously denied access to essential citizenship rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights). Social, economic, political,

cultural, interpersonal interactions, numerical, generational, and gender factors all play a role in exclusion. Poverty, insecurity in employment, educational deficiencies; disability, addiction, excessive household management responsibility; discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnic origin; weakening of social relations, breaking of emotional ties; fragmentation of citizenship relations based on ethnoculture; inadequacy of quality basic services, loss of cultural indicators are all examples of social exclusion.

Inclusion policies are designed to address the needs that contribute to a dignified existence, such as those related to social interactions. To these objectives, social variety and the liberty to disagree must be included, as well as the promotion of egalitarian relationships that eliminate economic, social, and cultural inequity. As a result, institutions in the same metropolitan region must agree on policies and services that will improve the effectiveness of policies already in place. Local governments should try to foresee social problems as much as feasible. Finally, efficient policies must be developed through the implementation of city-based programs for the



participation of socially vulnerable populations. Furthermore, any social inclusion policies must eradicate inequities between men and women, as well as between ethnic groups, and they must promote the formation of a happy coexistence of diversity. Promoting intercultural relations amongst diverse cultural populations is part of the inclusion philosophy. Intercultural policies must be created by combining the acceptance of differences with coexistence based on shared civic principles. Human rights, particularly urban rights, should underpin this unity.

First of all, cities and metropolitan areas should be encouraged to be proactive actors in the national and international cooperation network on inclusion issues. The methods of representative democracy fall short of involving all citizens in the decision-making process and promoting their critical abilities. Participatory democracy processes, on the other hand, permanently guarantee the right of citizens to participate in public matters, at an individual or organized level. In this context, participation needs to

include an experience of shared responsibility to strengthen social networks and involve new actors in public action. Thus, governance is preferred in managing periods of social complexity. Therefore, it is necessary to implement administrative reforms that create an administration capable of developing integrated and cross-cutting action. This includes taking a holistic view of problems and responding through interconnected action – a network of various actors such as public administration (from different levels), non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

In a society where the majority of the population lives in cities and metropolitan regions, local governments play a vital role. Along with increased social, economic, political, and cultural complications, there is a world of new, varied possibilities and difficulties. Inequalities have risen as a result of current globalization; in reality, poverty and social inequality have increased on all continents during the latter part of the nineteenth century, resulting in the exclusion of many individuals from society (UCLG, 2013).

Studies have been undertaken and published in recent years to determine if towns should provide services to refugees, and if so, what those services are (Koçak, 2019). Daoudov (2015) describes the role of local governments in this phase as “the ladder of integration,” which describes the process until a foreigner or immigrant joins the nation, loses their foreign status, and becomes a citizen. In most nations, the central government issues entry, settlement, and work permits. In the second phase, the individual’s adaptation to the nation starts, and local governments provide courses aimed at providing newcomers with knowledge about the language, country, and culture. Furthermore, for an individual’s engagement in economic life, local governments are responsible for vocational training and employment help. In cases where immigrants arrive as a group in the third step, various surveys or interviews are conducted with them, and the local administration is responsible for evaluating their views. This is done to improve the community’s harmony with the local community, strengthen communication between them, and, most importantly, give the immigrant community a voice by supporting the establishment of immigrant associations and

immigrant platforms. The fourth stage is to formally recognize foreigners’ involvement in the decision-making process. It entails the formation of advisory boards and commissions for foreigners working in local government. In many European nations, immigrants are given a special opportunity to participate. The acknowledgment of certain political rights, such as the ability to vote, is the fifth stage.

The importance of municipalities in supporting local growth and developing inclusive communities in the face of large-scale displacement has never been greater. Municipalities have spearheaded initiatives to promote social and economic inclusion, such as improving access to services for refugees and migrants and expanding infrastructure and administrative systems to meet rising demand. For immigrants and long-term residents alike, they have offered access to work and livelihood possibilities, housing, health care, education, and skills and language training. Local governments have played a critical role in not just serving the urgent needs of newly arrived refugees and migrants, but also in capitalizing on the prospects for longer-term social and economic growth and



urban resilience that new inhabitants offer. Local governments are the closest to the people and are constantly presented with difficulties and possibilities. As a result, they have a unique opportunity to influence local development and drive innovation by promoting the involvement of underserved communities.

Considering the practices of European Municipalities for immigrants, it is seen that refugees can vote in the city council in Dublin, Ireland. In addition, it is noteworthy that some posters were hung in the neighborhoods, and pieces of training were given to inform the immigrants in the city. In Barcelona, Spain, foreigners participate in city councils to minimize discrimination. In the city of New Haven, a municipality identity card is given to immigrants by the municipality, and with this card, immigrants can benefit from some opportunities such as library use and access to parks. Marseille Municipality, on the other hand, tries to bring different religious communities together and carries out activities to strengthen the communication between them. It is seen that many countries in Europe are the first authority

in the integration of foreigners into the local society. It is seen that these municipalities have some responsibilities and policy-making authority regarding the settlement and adaptation of immigrants and are also authorized to provide the necessary services (Yıldırım & Mertek, 2017, p. 1203).





By looking at the policies of some European municipalities for immigration, it is clear that refugees eventually have the right to vote in the city council. It's also worth noting that certain posters were put in communities and pieces of training were conducted to enlighten the city's immigrants. Foreigners engage in city councils to reduce prejudice. Immigrants in some European cities are granted a municipality identity card, which allows them to make use of services such as library usage and park access. To exemplify such inclusion efforts, Marseille Municipality, works to bring together diverse religious communities and conducts events to improve dialogue. Many European nations are recognized as the leading authorities in the integration of foreigners into local society. These municipalities are believed to have some obligations and policy-making authority in terms of immigrant settlement and adaption, as well as the authority to offer the essential services (Yildirim & Mertek, 2017, p. 1203).

Turkey, on the other hand, did not see the need to implement a cohesion strategy at both the national and municipal levels until it experienced the recent migratory flow and the

integration of refugees into society had not been a priority for policymakers. Given the challenges that local governments confront in implementing service delivery and integrating with the local population, the notion that proper policies should be developed for this circumstance has formed. Because refugees were unable to fit into campsites or leave camp centers for various reasons and began living in city centers, there are several issues with the host community, primarily due to linguistic barriers. Due to the sheer number of 5 million immigrants and refugees living in Turkey, these issues are frequently overlooked, and they are occasionally assumed to be resolved only by the central governmental authority. The central authority, on the other hand, will not be able to solve this problem on its own. The absence of any legal foundation for immigrant groups to be engaged in municipal decision-making processes in Turkey, unlike in several industrialized nations, makes it difficult for foreigners to participate in city councils designed to promote participatory democracy.



## 5.1. COLLABORATION BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOS) FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

***Local and regional governments are now seen as essential actors in the development of social policies in the global context of increased human mobility, decentralization, urbanization, and inequality (Fry and Islar, 2021).***

While it is widely acknowledged that effective migration management is critical to the development of socially inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities, migration scholars are increasingly turning their attention away from the nation-state and toward the local level as a site for debordering practices (Ambrosini, 2018). Despite these talks, research on the repercussions of civil society-municipal partnerships

is relatively sparse (Agustín and Jorgensen, 2019; Frykman and Mäkelä, 2019). Because municipalities play such an important role in integrating migrants and refugees into local development plans, collaboration with other local, national, and international players is essential. This involves collaborating with other municipalities as well as creating possibilities for CSOs to collaborate. Local governments are frequently the initial point of contact with migrants and refugees, lowering risks by ensuring that local services are tailored to their needs and characteristics (Seyidov, 2021). Beyond welcoming, long-term and successful integration necessitates integrating migration-related concerns into a wide range of municipal competencies, including urban planning, public spaces, housing, education, culture, and labor market access, among others.



## 5.2. BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION MODELS

Authorities see collaboration with CSOs as bringing knowledge and fresh solutions to migration difficulties, as well as diversifying the provision of integration services by entrusting other actors who are specialists in their fields. Furthermore, properly-managed service commissioning minimizes government bureaucracy and cost because CSOs may rely on the aid of volunteers who are familiar with the local situation. The advantages of collaboration, on the other hand, are mostly practical in accomplishing immediate and long-term integration goals: civil society organizations may have higher capabilities and expertise than government agencies. CSOs are most qualified to recognize the needs of migrants because of their on-the-ground expertise. CSOs and non-governmental stakeholders were seen as being more imaginative in their responses to new issues and changing realities, as well as in adapting their services to a variety of

target groups. Local governments in many cities delegate operations to non-state entities because they lack the legal authority to interfere. Furthermore, working with CSOs is appealing since their services are generally more accessible to migrants, partly because they operate on a more personal level, and CSOs, particularly faith-based organizations, are frequently more trusted than government-run enterprises. Hence, involving CSOs and faith-based organizations has the added benefit of assisting migrants in forming social networks and establishing links with local populations.



## 5.3. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

***For a variety of reasons, working with local authorities provides an opportunity for civil society organizations and their workers. CSOs might receive financial and administrative aid to help them expand their capabilities. Cooperation and interaction with the government can also help CSOs gain institutional clout and sway. Furthermore, collaboration and partnerships aid in the formation of specialist networks, which are critical in meeting the requirements of migrants.***

CSOs across the EU rely on local governments for financing and operational help to launch new initiatives and maintain

long-term services. As a result, collaboration is essential for developing services that fulfill the requirements of target groups while leaving no one behind, as well as for adapting services to changing demands and realities.

Cooperation in the form of frequent public discussions gives CSOs opportunities in addition to the advantages for the service execution. For starters, it's an opportunity to learn more about how the government works and contribute to evidence-based integration policymaking in the field of integration and service supply. Regular public discussions also aid in the development of networks and the sharing of best practices among like-minded organizations. Cooperation with local policymakers and municipalities in providing accommodation for refugees has resulted in a knowledge transfer from legal experts to social workers, as well as enhanced knowledge of social laws among our members



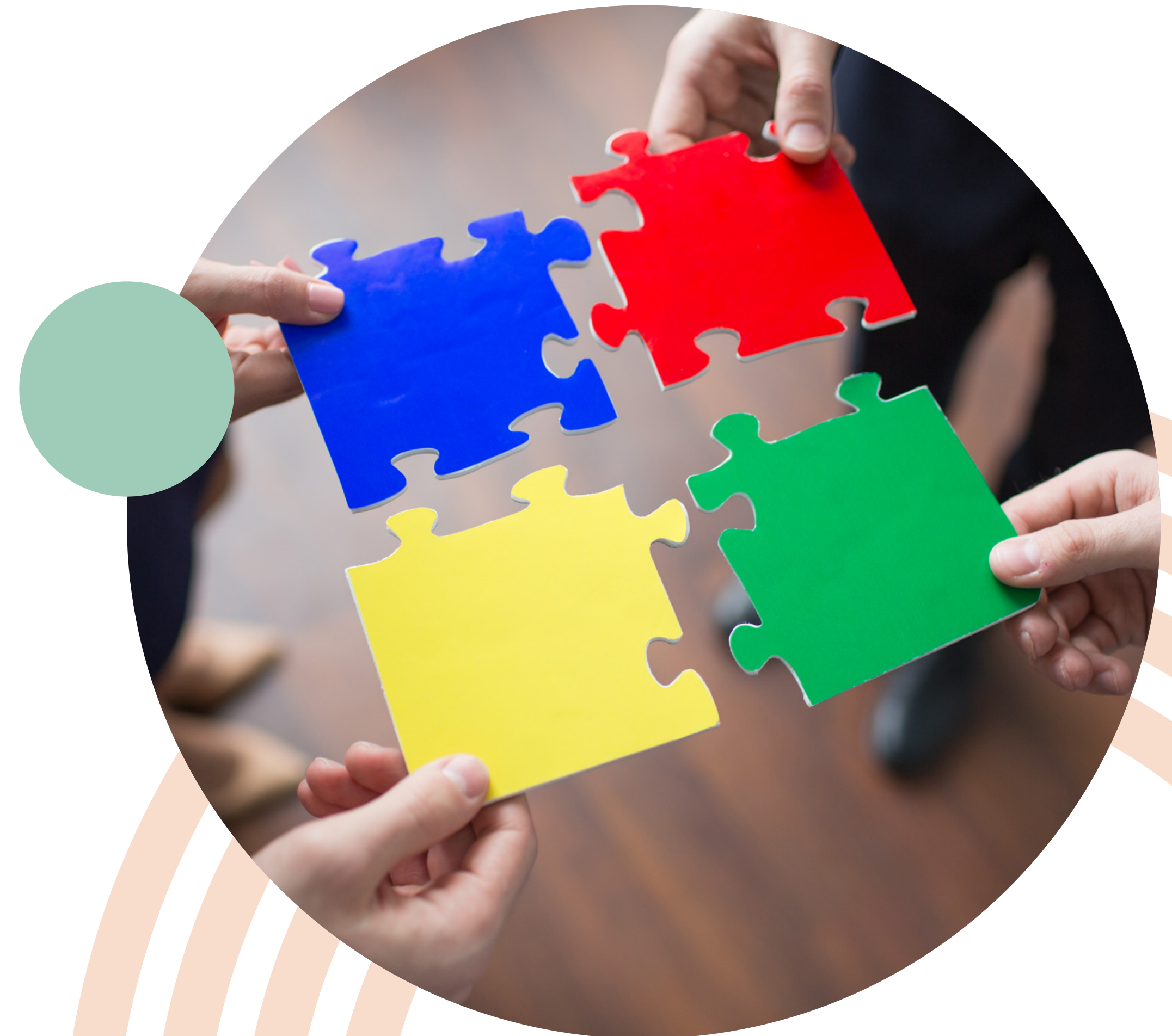
and personnel. This can be beneficial to both large and small CSOs, given the additional issues for social and legal counseling that have arisen as a result of growing migrant intakes, housing shortages, and consequent changes in migration and integration legislation.

Power imbalances and competing interests among local governments and CSOs offering integration services might make it difficult to execute collaboration effectively. Local governments and CSOs may still agree on core integration objectives in this instance, but CSOs may not be able to deliver their services according to their understanding and ideas. The OECD report on local integration has identified three major obstacles for local authorities working with CSOs. Firstly, they use long selection procedures. The length of public procurement procedures did not allow to adjust to changing needs. Secondly, cities have reported that clear standards for delivering integration services as well as monitoring procedures had been missing in many cases. Meeting high standards also implies striking the balance between government oversight and leadership of CSOs.

Thirdly, some cities in the OECD's sample have experienced obstacles related to potential competition with services provided by public agencies when responding to public calls for attributing service provision. For municipal authorities, it is therefore challenging to balance the advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing and to maintain the right level of competitiveness that might help to improve the quality of integration services. It is challenging for municipalities to maintain cooperation with CSOs in the long term, considering a lack of continuity in relations due to relatively short funding periods and changing projects. One major obstacle to efficient service delivery identified by CSOs is the difficulty to improve dialogue and coordination with local authorities but also among the non-state actors. A lack of dialogue might result in duplication of services and the fragmentation of local policies and calls for proposals, especially in bigger cities. Successful dialogue also requires a framework that allows for continuity in achieving overarching goals but also a certain amount of flexibility to respond to changing priorities and needs. Structured communication, according to our members, is



one of the most crucial strategies for maintaining excellent cooperation. Misconceptions and obstacles in the relationship with public authorities might be resolved by having frequent and open communication. Clear lines of communication between authorities and CSOs enable migrants to comprehend the various roles and duties of authorities, public service providers, and non-state actors, which is also beneficial to their comprehension of welfare provision. Local governments can learn from experience through collaborations with local actors, according to the so-called “local turn” in integration programs. Integration strategies must therefore be open to input from stakeholders with extensive experience in the field of integration, such as migrant communities, charitable and faith-based organizations, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as they are key actors in communicating best practices and recommendations for improvement to local governments.



## **6. SELECTED CASES FROM SINC PROJECT**





*The following section showcases the projects in which remarkable implementations of strategies that might foster social inclusion in collaboration with local authorities and CSOs.*

## **6.1. CASE STUDY: YUVA'S SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES**



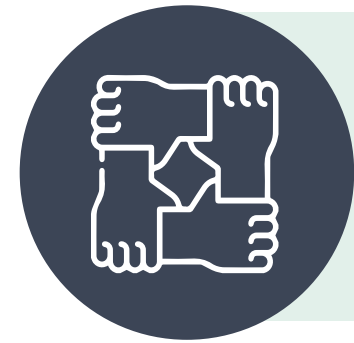
Yuva Association, as the lead applicant, implemented an online three-hour training to increase awareness of social cohesion. The main target group was municipal employees and civil society organizations. The learning objectives of the training focused on increasing the knowledge and awareness about social cohesion and migration.



***Yuva Association declared the training objectives as follows:***



***Increasing level of knowledge about migration and migrants.***



***Broadening the vision of participants about social cohesion.***



***Increasing participants' motivation to contribute to the social cohesion of disadvantaged people.***

***For this purpose, along with the evaluator, Yuva Association set some affirmations to check the impact of the training. These affirmations were as follows:***

***Participants understand the right-based approach while talking about forced migration.***

***Participants can define what social cohesion means.***

***Participants know the necessary conditions to realize social cohesion.***

***Participants understand that social cohesion needs a systemic and social effort.***

***Participants know the necessary conditions to realize social cohesion.***



Migration Awareness training was held online on Zoom Platform and realized five times. The training targeted mainly civil society and municipal employees. Yuva Association delivered two pieces of training exclusively to municipal employees, the other three pieces of training reached various participants by an open call from the association's social media accounts. One-third of the training participants were from municipalities such as Buca Municipality (İzmir Province), Edremit Municipality (Balıkesir Province), İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Çine Municipality (Aydın Province), and Efeler Municipality (Aydın Province). Apart from İzmir, all other municipalities are sub-provincial or district municipalities from the western part of the country. The participants who attended the training individually are mostly university students, school teachers, social workers, etc. There were also representatives from small size civil society organizations working on the environment, nature, and social services.

The awareness training reached its objectives, the participants increased their knowledge about basic terms of migration, the definition, and aspects of social cohesion, and basic laws about migrants and they develop thoughts to contribute to social cohesion in a society. The training could be scaled up and deepened, and the target groups can be segmented in the future because this training may remain too basic for some participants. If another training with an advanced level is to be prepared, some experts and some migrant representatives can be included in the training. The attendants of the second training may be volunteers for implementing projects to increase the social cohesion in their province and/or place of duty.





## 6.2. CASE STUDY: SUPPORT GROUP NETWORK (SGN)

**SGN** is a non-profit organization that serves as an umbrella for associations, groups, and individuals who want to empower and help asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, and migrants in Sweden and abroad by encouraging their initiatives, and helping them to establish local Support Groups in their temporary or permanent areas of living, make them part of this Umbrella and support them in all fields: (social, cultural, educational, health and psychological care) and gather advocacy for their cases in all levels. The organization is democratic and independent of political, national, and religious parties.



## To understand the background of the success attained by the SGN, we should have a glance at their goals and objectives:

Empower and encourage asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants' initiatives and support them in all fields: (social, cultural, educational, sports, health, and psychological care).

Encourage communities to explore the skills and expertise of refugees and immigrants for the sake of better and more colorful multicultural communities that help achieve social sustainability.

Make refugee actors and main stakeholders for their own matters.

Gather advocacy for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants' cases at all levels.

Promoting the understanding of society's norms to create better integration and inclusion of children, youth, adults, and families and provide them the tools to become active members of the society, with the main focus on diversity, gender equality, women and youth empowerment and Children Rights safeguarding.

Cooperate with other organizations and initiatives in Sweden and Europe that share the same objectives.








SGN possess an influential and diverse communication strategy by which they conduct advocacy campaigns, utilize social media and website, news reports on national and international TV and newspapers, and publish advocacy and debate articles for newspapers and CSOs or government departments' websites. Besides, they broadcast short movies (advocacy films and projects and activates short films), and give lectures at national and international conferences relevant to their theme of social inclusion. They both organize conferences and seminars and workshops, create manifestos, and participate in different cultural public activities to advocate their goals.

As one of the most remarkable CSO performances in setting and pursuing strong collaborations with municipalities for social inclusion, SGN's story started in a refugee camp (asylum accommodation) in 2014 in Sweden. The focus of the SGN (Support Group Network) idea was to create a sense of meaning and hope that would help the refugees cope with the long waiting times in the camp, and also build capacities for the future. A group of people who founded the SGN





believed in the necessity of reminding refugees that they are strong individuals, who survived wars and smugglers, death boats, and death roads to arrive in Europe, support them not waste all that they already sacrificed, and surrender to depression, help them to do something about their situation, and encourage them with their ideas and initiatives. Initially, they have organized independent activities by getting in contact with local organizations and volunteers who share the idea that refugees should be treated survivors with a lot of competence, potential, and force. Secondly, rather than solely conducting activities for refugees, the Support Group planned social inclusion and development activities in which refugees were involved by creating their own activities. As the Support Group started to connect refugee initiatives to the local community, the organization and activities evolved very rapidly. In a few months, the Support Group had 13 sub-divisions that arranged several inclusion activities regarding culture, education, health, and sports.

After organizing hundreds of activities with volunteers, churches, sports clubs, councils, and companies and reaching thousands of refugee people, the Support Group started involve in projects at local and international levels. At the beginning of 2016, Save the Children Sweden Region West supported the Support Group to spread the self-organization concept to other refugee camps and cities in Sweden. Within a year, the self-organization model spread all around Sweden, and 16 Support Groups were created in 13 cities. Namely, the model relied on the idea that refugees are capable and that they should be the subject of their own matters. At the end of 2016, all the Support Groups in different cities and camps came together at a ReAct conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, and decided to form a formal CSO called the Support Group Network (SGN). With the support of Save the Children Sweden, SGN is now continuing to spread the ReAct concept in Sweden as well as other countries, and working to support the





inclusion of refugees in host countries by creating need-based activities and projects, empowering refugees' initiatives, and to support them in all fields; social, cultural, educational, sports, health, and psychological care. For their work with refugees and society, SGN received the Human Rights Award from Västra Götaland Region, and in Brussels, SGN introduced ReAct to the European Integration Network (EIN); a committee of the European Commission. SGN was selected as one of the best ten inspiring initiatives in Europe. In addition, they received the Lifelong Learning Award (LLLAwards) in the category of Best Practice. ReAct and the Support Group concept spread not only in Sweden but also to other European countries. For instance, at the time we write this handbook, the Support Groups are active in Stuttgart, Germany.

Many collaborations are running within the portfolio of SGN that can be categorized into three categories: public authorities (municipalities and local governance of the region), education bodies and universities, as well as civil society organizations. These collaborations usually target increasing social inclusion and participation of marginalized groups in society. Collaboration with local governance has successfully created a platform for social inclusion as well as inclusion in the labor market. Support Group Network succeeded to collaborate with the regional governments to support newcomers and people born outside Sweden to enter the labor market by either starting their own



business, finding a job, or at least starting studying at the university level to increase their employability. Here we can also talk about another remarkable project called “Strong Women Network”, which has been implemented in many cities in the region and has been successfully funded several times on different occasions, because of its unique method that is both flexible and applicable in variable circumstances. It is about gathering local and migrant women to create a network. This network aims to support newcomer women in their new society, even for women who have been living in the country for a long time but did not find the opportunity to participate in society. The network starts to create need-based activities. Members of the network meet regularly and plan the next steps together. One of the most remarkable results is creating leaders who lead future activities and become a mentor for new members of the network. Moreover, this project won TTELA’s integrations Award 2019, which is a remarkable award in the region and distributed by the TTELA newsletter. As one of the other remarkable inclusion projects conducted by SGN, the ÖDE project was selected by Länsstyrelsen Västra Götaland (regional governance) as one of the best practices in the field.





## 6.3. CASE STUDY: SWEDEN: ÖDE PROJECT FROM TROLLHÄTTAN, SWEDEN

***One of the other local projects selected to be reported in this White paper is ÖDE Project from Trollhättan, Sweden implemented by Support Group Network (SGN). The specific objectives of the ÖDE Project were determined to provide both advisory services for entrepreneurs, business owners, and newcomer job applicants, and correct information about the higher education system in Sweden.***

In other words, the goal of the project was to give all the newcomers to Sweden a faster way into the job market. This could be possible by giving the correct knowledge and correct tools earlier in the integration process. To elaborate, the Project also aimed to increase the self-sufficiency of the

aimed target group by offering supervision and guidance to suitable educational paths, improving the conditions for employment/internship, or creating one's own employment opportunity by starting or operating a sustainable and profitable company. The ÖDE project started with a small collaboration that grew into a large project. The first collaboration between the City of Trollhättan and the Support Group Network opened the door to several collaborations with the City of Trollhättan and other municipalities in Fyrbodal. Both the municipality and the Support Group Network needed to spend time anchoring the project within their organizations, but it was an advantage that we already knew each other from previous collaborations. This made that process go faster than if we had been completely new to each other. Public actors funded the project: the Västra Götaland region and Fyrbodal's municipal association (14 municipalities). The main partners are Trollhättan and Vänersborg municipality in the steering group)



and University West (steering group). Other partners such as education providers, employers, and local entrepreneurs collaborated in different activities for the project's goals of self-sufficiency through training, internship, employment, or the start of own company.

As the main organization implementing the project, the SGN group had a pilot project that was extended for 9 months that provided the ground for the application of the ÖDE project. SGN notes that it took 9 months to prepare the concept, gain the relevant partners, apply for funding, and to implement the project. The duration of the project was 2020-03-02 to 2021-12-31. The project team included 1 project manager, 3 mentors (and 1 consultant attached to the project team), and a Steering group: 7 representatives from local businesses, Trollhättan and Vänersborg municipalities, the Employment Office, University West, and Support Group Network.

The project is expected to provide valuable results and experience to help more new arrivals / foreign-born come to work, receive education or initiate entrepreneurship in Sweden. ÖDE has also attempted to create a more efficient collaboration between the actors so that collaborating actors





gain an increased cultural understanding of the conditions of new arrivals / foreign-born in the country. Similarly, it aimed to provide new arrivals / foreign-born with better knowledge of the role and importance of the collaborating actors for their development. Besides, ÖDE wanted to exemplify a method for municipalities to implement working methods and methodology. As for the target groups, ÖDE was set out to provide open lectures in adult education through the educational content providers to support disadvantaged people regarding lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, employment, and livelihoods. Frankly, there was no other organization that provided such services in other languages and the early stages of integration. Thus, there was a need to supplement and adapt the already existing Swedish business support, educational system, and labor market to create other paths, or “one way in”. As a newcomer, it can be difficult to orientate oneself in the different systems, at the same time as one’s social and professional networks have not yet had time to build up. Besides, the parametric objective of the project was determined to reach at least 600 individuals in the target





group. When we look at the quantitative consequences; we can postulate that the ÖDE project achieved the pre-defined targets in all senses. Namely, so far 40 individuals began education, 60 people got employment/internship, 50 entrepreneurs started companies, and 20 existing companies had the chance for developing their company to the next step. In total, the project affected 170 people to create self-sufficiency for a better life. The project was never about just giving them information, yet it was always about how the participants sustain their achievements therefore they also provide services for those who have participated before to update their information to become more sustainable. Most of the target group needed jobs or to learn how to create their own jobs to become a part of society as fast as they can. The project provided the opportunity to become a part of this society faster than the traditional integration ways. The experience and competence available in the Support Group Network have been crucial in reaching the target group of foreign-born and new arrivals. Through this competence, it has been possible to develop and adapt the systems to the







needs of the target group. Public actors can find it difficult to reach everyone with their information and service. In collaboration with civil society, we reached many more and thus increased inclusion. The project was able to generate critical affordances and outcomes to enhance the inclusion of the target groups. Firstly, an advice Hotline in different languages was set up in which people can receive advice for employment and prospective entrepreneurship. Additionally, short movie clips were produced in different languages with Swedish text to inform people about job searching, and starting their jobs. Movies provided information on how to start a business that is subject to approval from the environmental department in the municipality. Throughout the project cycles, mini job fairs were conducted in collaboration with Trollhättan and Uddevalla labor market unit where many employment opportunities were provided for the target groups. According to the project team members, collaboration through the steering group has worked well where the common challenges we see have been the focus. The activities have been an important and adapted complement to the existing



systems. The municipality had a stable system for start-ups, but the system needed to be supplemented to suit individuals who are new to the system and the Swedish market. CSOs have a completely different network than the municipality and reach easier target groups that the municipality may have difficulty reaching. Through collaboration, ÖDE managed to connect the system with the individuals. This model possesses the potential to convey its design to other local governance systems to foster entrepreneurship and come up with a good collaboration model. The collaboration has worked perfectly where the municipalities send the participants to SGN to get the services that they need. By offering professional contacts in the labor market, new arrivals could gain an insight into Swedish working life and have the opportunity to build their network. It also allowed employers to find the right skills. Through guidance and information, new arrivals could also gain a better understanding of the business community in Sweden. The project opened the door for more discussions about future collaboration. The project created the bases of trust between the municipality and the CSO. There is a crystal

clear need to continue the project, but it is always a challenge to find sustainable financing. Most projects are financed in 1-2 years, which makes it difficult to sustain the efforts.

Since all three projects described here are based on social interactions where people meet and communicate face to face, the pandemic has caused problems in the implementation of the activities. However, the team members performed fabulously to overcome the barriers and managed to carry out the activities. Inevitably, there have been restrictions on how many people can meet at the same time. Throughout the projects, drop-ins, smaller meetings, lectures, and workshops have been able to be carried out in smaller contexts and certain activities have been able to be carried out digitally. However, we should keep in mind that digital activities can be exclusive to certain groups.





## 6.4. CASE STUDY: STUTTGART CITY'S FUNCTIONAL MODEL FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

As this paper was set out to shed light on efficient approaches and implementations regarding social inclusion at the local level, we perceive Stuttgart City's perspective of enhancing social inclusion through various collaboration channels with CSO's is undoubtedly worth to mention about. Stuttgart (ST) is an international, integrative and inclusive city. In 2020,

Stuttgart signed a new pledge to principle 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, reaffirming its commitment to equal opportunities for all people with a focus on integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees. Moreover, Stuttgart has adopted its integration model known as the 'Stuttgart Pact for Integration' by which the city commits to direct



about € 77 million from the municipal budget each year to social integration measures for supporting refugees in all areas of life from housing, access to childcare and schools, language courses, healthcare, and cultural life, by working in partnership with welfare organizations. Currently, the city is hosting 6,000 refugees in decentralized accommodation in 100 housing units across 23 city districts. ST supports refugees to enter the local labor market through personalized counseling, vocational skills training, and accompanying language learning by the Stuttgart Job Center. Stuttgart is committed to empowering refugees right from their arrival in our city so that they can contribute to actively taking part in society with their competencies and potential. The high immigrant shares of 45% are seen as an asset and capital for the further development of Stuttgart society to strengthen social inclusion. STs' motto reflecting the value of social inclusion is that 'everyone who lives in Stuttgart is a citizen of Stuttgart'. That is to say, all residents in Stuttgart should be enabled to live a dignified life regardless of their origin or their background. Therefore, the whole society has the responsibility to support the arrival and integration into

society from the first day on. The foundation of this approach/philosophy is the integration policy concept "Stuttgart Pact for Integration" as a holistic and cross-departmental approach to promote the integration and participation of newcomers. Partners of the Pact are politics, administration, businesses, civil society (Germans and migrants), and NGOs (associations, cultural/sports clubs, etc.). In Stuttgart, they strive for barrier-free and self-determined access for all people equally, including people with disabilities. City administration believes all citizens, independent of their disability or their age, ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or ideology, have the right to timely and individual support to achieve full participation in society. The participation of people with disabilities has been at the heart of the city council of Stuttgart for many years. In 2015, Stuttgart adopted an action plan to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and agreed on guiding principles to make processes, structures, and services accessible to all, including people with disabilities. Over the next years, the city will invest over €3 million into measures for the inclusion of people with disabilities:



As observed during the study visit to Stuttgart, CSOs are crucial partners due to their long experience integrating newcomers into society, focusing on the needs, and interests of immigrants, and designing and implementing measures and policies for the different policy levels (local, state, federal) on how to promote the arrival and integration/participation of newcomer and immigrants. CSOs working at the municipal level in Stuttgart are welfare organizations such as Caritas, Protestant Church, mosque associations, citizens foundation, adult education centers, and immigrant associations. CSOs are perceived as experts in bridge-building and reaching out to different target groups in Stuttgart. ST mainly cooperates with CSOs in the difficult field of activities like language promotion, education, intercultural dialogue, reception and social care of refugees, counseling (e.g. recruitment, recognition of foreign diplomas, domestic violence, LGBT, etc.), facilitating access to municipal services via interpretation services, volunteering, etc. CSOs are involved in the development and implementation of policy measures, programs, and campaigns. As for sustainability, CSOs receive

financial support to develop and implement different services for newcomers e.g. the training camps to promote vocational training for young newcomers, housekeeping, and social care to promote the integration of refugees, and shelter for women suffering domestic violence. Thanks to the cooperation with CSOs, the ST could manage successfully the pandemic and recently the arrival of Ukrainian refugees communicating solidarity, and humanitarian responsibility, and promoting voluntary activities to strengthen social inclusion. A good example of CSO-Municipality Cooperation is the Welcome Center of Stuttgart as a first initial service for living and working for newcomers.





## 6.5. CASE STUDY: GERMANY: WELCOME CENTER FOR REFUGEES IN STUTTGART, BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG, GERMANY

***Another case selected by the project partners as a critical example is the Welcome Center unit in Stuttgart, Germany. Stuttgart is an international, intercultural and welcoming city. Due to demographics and economic factors (shortage of skilled workers), the city needed a service point to attract newcomers to work and live in Stuttgart.***

The Welcome Center Stuttgart is a first initial service point for newcomers from Germany and abroad on the issues of working and living in Stuttgart and is a good practice on how to establish a welcoming culture in an international city. It is a joint service center run by the State Capital Stuttgart and the Stuttgart Region Economic Development Cooperation (WRS). To provide a good service, the consulting team offers comprehensive assistance on a wide range of issues on

language support, employment, schooling, housing, leisure activities, etc. in 11 languages. A Buddy Program of Welcome-Buddies for newcomers in the Welcome Center has been established to accompany the people, help them with their paperwork and forms, assist, but also going to concerts with them or simply help them to learn German by talking. The Center is a real initial service point with open doors for all newcomers but also established residents. It is a one-stop-shop to receive information on all issues at stake as the Center is closely working with the different administrative units and divisions: Labour agency, Foreigners' registration office, housing office, adult education institutions, etc. As it is next to the world cafe and the world shop (fair trade shop) it also promotes encounters between the host society and newcomers and is the place to meet. The motto of the Welcome Center is put as follows; 'You come with a question and leave with a perspective'.





The Project was piloted between 2014 to 2018, and it functions as a regular service of the city administration since 2019. The annual budget of the project is 100.000 Euros for rental costs, conducting measures and initiatives (welcome Club for international students, information events for different target groups on working and living in Stuttgart, welcome buddy project, PR) + staff costs for 6 personnel. The Welcome Center Stuttgart is a cooperation between the City of Stuttgart and the Stuttgart Region Economic Development Corporation. The Center works with 4 migration counseling services, they are part of the advisory team during our opening hours. In addition, the center works with different migrant associations and communities to offer information events e.g. legal and professional issues such as residence permits, successful job applications, health insurance, and more. The Center has been funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Ministry for Economic Affairs, and the City of Stuttgart providing staff costs and facilities. In addition, the City of Stuttgart has an agreement with four welfare organizations (AWO, Caritas, AGDW, and VIJ) as partners, which offer migrant advisory services. Furthermore, migrant organizations are important partners of the Welcome Center. Good cooperation and synergies between the partners, and building networks in Stuttgart led to greater social inclusion in Stuttgart Region. Authorities intend to use the expertise



of migrants and their organizations to further develop the work of the center by utilizing documentation and annual reports. The Welcome Center is a good practice for the intercultural opening up/orientation within the administration. The close cooperation of the municipality with CSOs is an important approach to evaluating the current needs and interests of different target groups and using the expertise to further develop municipal services.

counseling (families with children, refugees). Moreover, during the closure times, many people lost their jobs and needed legal information regarding labor issues and legal status, etc. Luckily, the Welcome Center could open its doors again after the normalization and the main topics now are access to the labor market, social and psychological health, and language courses (as many language courses had been interrupted for a serious time and people need to refresh now).

When we look at the statistics of the Welcome Center there have been more than 23000 consultations (face to face, by email, phone) since October 2014 about various life issues in Stuttgart such as language education, residency, job application, recognition of foreign qualifications, school system, education needs, and employment opportunities. There have been people from 174 nationalities who received service listed in the center's database so far. Within the work of WC, over 200 different thematic events have taken place. Due to the pandemic, the welcome center had to close down its doors and work mainly in online mode. The staff declared that it was hard for certain groups as they had no access to hardware and needed face-to-face information and





## 6.6. CASE STUDY: TURKEY: ORGANIZING SOLIDARITY FROM LOCAL: ŞİŞLİ (ISTANBUL) NEIGHBORHOOD KITCHENS

*The ‘neighborhood kitchens’ project, the first good example selected from Turkey, was implemented by the Istanbul Şişli Municipality Social Support Services Directorate Migration Unit together with Neighborhood Solidarity Food and Business Cooperative (Komşu Dayanışma Gıda ve İşletme Kooperatifi). The relevant unit has been established in 2015 to provide services to asylum seekers, immigrants, and refugees.*

The Migration Unit, emphasizes the social municipality understanding of Şişli Municipality and the importance of human rights-based service. The number of Syrian refugees under Temporary Protection Status in Şişli is estimated at approximately 8 thousand. Textile is one of the areas where refugees are mostly employed. This profession is followed by the construction and service sector.

The concept of ‘neighborhood kitchens’ is the initiative of each neighborhood to establish its kitchen, process safe food, and create its local staff in achieving the goal of access to healthy and safe food. The “Neighbour Kitchens” project, which aimed to bring a solution to the work and food problem in the region, was implemented



by Şişli Municipality in cooperation with the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). The project acts as a “school” where professional chefs participate in their training processes. The project aims, by leading a “kitchen” that includes Syrian migrants in the process, aims to strengthen vulnerable groups. While Neighborhood Kitchens aim to access clean and healthy food, they also have the mission of “creating a profession”. Within the scope of the project, where women’s employment is prioritized, the women of the neighborhood who receive training can produce their food products and sell them through cooperatives. One of the important innovations of the project is that it provides an opportunity for the residents of the neighborhood to open their kitchens by encouraging cooperatives. Neighborhood kitchens are also a pioneering example in terms of rights-based struggle and social cohesion. Moreover, neighborhood kitchens are a unique model in terms of their participatory structure in the establishment process and transforming people from a mere consumer status to “prosumers”.





## 6.6.1. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD KITCHENS PROJECT

***The project carried out by Şişli Municipality in cooperation with the Neighborhood Solidarity Food and Business Cooperative is supported and funded by the United Nations World Food Program and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) to increase the self-sufficiency of vulnerable groups and to strengthen social cohesion between Turkish-Syrian individuals.***

In this exemplary model, it is ensured that all individuals who are responsible for the consumption of the food produced -depending on its processing- are organized under the roof of consumption cooperatives, farmers who produce with

traditional farming methods using heirloom and local seeds are included in organized structures such as unions and cooperatives, and producers are directly articulated to the food chain on a local basis. The establishment of kitchens, the first of which was established in the Merkez District of our district, in 25 districts of Şişli, the widespread use of natural cleaning and hygiene products that have not been subjected to chemical processing, the production of products such as “sour leavened bread, yogurt, pickles, tarhana, tomato paste” from unprocessed and semi-processed foods, production It is aimed to prefer traditional methods such as brine, smoked, drying and marinating processes, to create healthy and nutritious tables by reviving the traditional cuisine, which is on the verge of extinction due to industrial ready-made foods, to create employment in the neighborhoods, to reduce local unemployment and urban poverty. A total of 4 personnel, including 1 (one)



Syrian and 1 (one) LGBTI+ individual, have already been employed in the Neighborhood Kitchen. With this structure, it is a pioneering example in terms of rights-based struggle and social cohesion. 136 of our citizens benefited from professional vocational training in the Merkez Neighborhood Mufağı and within the scope of cooperation. During the preparation phase of the project, various cost and budget calculations were made after the duration of the project and the number of individuals who would benefit from the project was determined. Each beneficiary staff member is interviewed. As a result of the interview, the personnel of Turkish nationality completed the necessary documents and started to work. Work Permit Applications have been made for Syrian nationals and candidates with positive results have been employed.

Citizens, who cannot afford the materials to be used in the pieces of training in the Neighborhood Kitchen due to financial inadequacies, have been identified by the social service specialist and are supported by our Municipality as a result of the social examination. The first applied pieces

of training in the Merkez Neighborhood Cuisine started in March 2021 under the names of 'Traditional Turkish Cuisine' and 'Chef Apprentice' and the trainers are guided by Public Education. 48 of our citizens benefit from the training and the training continues between 10:00 and 16:00 on weekdays. Workshops are held in the Central Neighborhood Kitchen with a quota of 10 people on Fridays. Training and workshop announcements are published on Şişli Municipality's social media accounts. Since Neighborhood Kitchens are structures established by neighborhood residents through cooperatives, sustainability will be ensured with new products and foods through these structures. With the training given, it is aimed to create a permanent income model throughout the process, as women who are not in employment can produce and sell their products. Thanks to the continuity of the training and the certification system, Neighborhood Kitchens will become widespread with an efficient and proactive working model.



## 6.6.2. NEIGHBORHOOD KITCHENS AS A PARTICIPATORY EXPERIENCE

***Neighborhood Kitchens, which support women's employment, ensured their participation in the project by making positive discrimination against women who do not work in this context. A grassroots organization was created by activating the awareness of urbanity, neighborhood, and solidarity. It contributes to the culture of living together as Turkish and Syrian employees participate in employment together.***

In an initiative such as the Neighborhood Kitchens, in which the citizens participate directly, it is very important to include the locals in the decision-making process. Effectively using the solidarity networks and public leaders in the neighborhoods

during the spread of the idea directly affects the reliability and participation of the initiative. The support of the District Directorate of Agriculture is also very important in the implementation of the idea. During the establishment and implementation process, professional chambers/organizations shared their valuable experiences and guided the process. Şişli City Council, principals, opinion leaders, and civil initiatives created awareness during the participation and organization phase. Working with strategically correct stakeholders in the Neighborhood Kitchens project ensured the successful implementation of the idea. These institutions have directed the individuals they serve to benefit from the project, especially in terms of finding beneficiary candidates of Syrian nationality. This cooperation played a major role in increasing the visibility of the project and facilitating its operation.





## **7. CONCLUSION**



***This White Paper aimed to explore how local authorities and civil society organizations can better work together to create integration models and more inclusive social services for not only migrants and refugees, but also all vulnerable groups.***

Admittedly, municipalities and cities are key independent actors in the inclusion and integration field. They are often the first point of contact for newly arrived migrants and refugees, providing a range of basic services that are necessary for settlement and the integration of newcomers. Local authorities have critical capacities to find tailored solutions for the actual inclusion needs of migrants based on their local assets. They do so by mobilizing local multi-stakeholder networks: CSOs, migrant associations, charities, universities, and especially private businesses.

Local authorities gain experience in working with national, regional, and in some cases supranational levels of government that most often define the legal and policy frameworks.

Either societal tensions or the establishment of new and meaningful relationships with the local people can be used to actualize the goal of living together in peace. Social cohesiveness is not defined by one side's domination, superiority, or greater acceptance than the other. Rather than exclusive methods, it is vital to focus on activities that may be done throughout the integration and inclusion process. Municipalities should be involved in the harmonization process to ensure that it is carried out at the lowest possible social and economic cost. The national or federal governments and local governments have significant responsibility in resolving the legal and economic issues that populations under risk face as they seek to integrate into society. Local governments have an



important role in developing long-term solutions and resolving immediate issues.

The most obvious finding to emerge from civil society interviews is that alliance-building is important because it allows for a more inclusive society by providing a voice and validity to migrants' needs and acting beyond disparities between those with and without documentation (Agustn and Jorgensen, 2019). Furthermore, past research suggests that alliance-building is also used to combat undocumented refugee exclusion (Fry and Islar, 2019). Horizontal cooperation, from this perspective, may enable better-suited answers to the circumstances of refugees, so supporting the formation of a more socially cohesive and inclusive city. This paper also highlights the chances for inclusion that come with forming alliances amongst civil society groups as depicted within the SGN case. Building alliances provides for better-coordinated solutions to refugee needs because it allows civil society organizations to create an imagination outside legal





categories, bringing vulnerable people's claims to light who would otherwise be invisible in local governance.

In line with the findings of the relevant literature and the outcomes of the focused projects and initiatives in this paper, we can postulate that CSOs can act as a bridge between the state, the general public, refugees, and affiliated organizations by employing information-sharing methods and establishing communication channels (Humer and Agatiello, 2019).

Furthermore, collaborating with civil society players has advantages for local governments which include additional knowledge and solutions to integration difficulties. CSOs may provide high-quality services and are more responsive to changing requirements and are adaptable in personalizing services to varied target groups.

The qualitative data gathered from the SINC Project partners substantially underscored that efficient collaboration between local authorities and CSOs that is well-managed strengthens all actors' skills and knowledge regarding migration, which is

critical for adapting services to changing conditions. Besides, the growing importance of the local level in supporting the needs of migrants and refugees has created new issues for local actors, such as collaboration barriers.

A lack of conversation, in particular, can lead to fragmented services. Correspondingly, our observations noted that a lack of communication typically limits effective collaboration.

Furthermore, some other papers in this field of the study argue that CSOs are ineffective owing to a lack of communication/coordination with government agencies, as well as a lack of institutionalization (Seyidov, 2021).

Governmental organizations and foreign money, they claim, are less interested in partnering with tiny local CSOs and are more interested in collaborating with larger ones. This has prepared the way for monopolization in the civil society arena, preventing tiny civil society organizations (CSOs) from being institutionalized. It is vital to facilitate good cooperation among partners and to improve the efficacy of CSOs, notably in offering work possibilities for refugees. The



relationship between the state and civil society is based on a vicious cycle. Multidimensional cooperation is required for the social integration process. Otherwise, neither the government nor non-governmental organizations (CSOs) will be able to successfully create social relationships between refugees and members of the host society.

A common subject in the interviews with representatives of the civil society sector was the problematization of project-based collaboration. This is deserving of further attention and scrutiny. Two civil society respondents, for example, expressed concern that short-term, project-based cooperation makes it difficult to influence long-term policy change to address the institutions that keep migrants in precarious and vulnerable situations. Cooperation may benefit all parties concerned, first and foremost in terms of integration results for migrants and refugees, but also in terms of cost and time efficiency for authorities and civil society organizations. Cooperation is thus beneficial not just in achieving the aim of integration, but also in fostering public participation and engagement. Collaboration, in the end, enhances the sense of public ownership and can be beneficial to democracy. Furthermore, a broader





local cooperation platform might boost local civil society actors' positions as contributors to policy creation targeted at promoting social cohesion and inclusion at the local level. Expanding on this, we suggest that horizontal partnerships should incorporate long-term collaboration and comprehensive aims if they are to be used to promote social cohesion and inclusion. It is critical that civil society groups not only carry out municipal tasks but also have the ability to challenge exclusive migration management approaches and introduce fresh imaginaries into policy creation.

Within the implications derived from the projects focused in this paper, all of the projects/programs can be scaled up through a variety of techniques, including increasing outreach in new or comparable contexts, forming new alliances or sustaining existing ones, enhancing institutional capacities, and implementing new tools or activities. The significance of planning, conducting needs assessments, and tracking the effect of scale-up programs/projects should also be considered in the further projections.







## **8. SUGGESTIONS**



***The findings of this research provide insights for the CSOs and local authorities as outlined below:***

- Social marginalization is pervasive. As a result, inclusion policies must ensure universal access to essential services and protection of citizenship rights in terms of design and management criteria; they must also be oriented toward the transformation of social reality based on values of equality, solidarity, and respect for differences.

- Local actors should facilitate new forms of solidarity and solutions to the pressing need for socially creative policy reforms that promote social cohesion and inclusion. Civic solidarity refers to how civil society, which includes refugees, CSOs, local communities, and individuals. Institutional solidarity refers to the formalization of solidarity between civil society and policymaking, as well as the creation of mechanisms that foster links between the government and civil society.

- Local governments should establish committees to encourage policy discussions, sharing of experience, and joint knowledge production to design innovative local policies for social inclusion, participatory democracy, and human rights, and to form the main principles of common ground in the field of social inclusion, human rights, and participatory democracy, and to enable local governments to share their knowledge and experience on these issues.

- Policy documents should lay the groundwork for collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations. Such documents have the advantage of expressing a clear political commitment to improving interactions between public and non-state entities. They should include precise aims and allow for adaptation to the local circumstances to contribute to actual integration achievements.



- To ensure that the role of CSOs is not confined to service provision and filling the gaps left by governmental failures, successful collaboration should stress a partnership relationship above task commissioning.

- Multistakeholder platforms can be a practical way to share information among service providers and promote civil society participation in integration initiatives.

- Capacity building for all professions that contact migrants daily is also required when implementing integration strategies and programs. Intercultural training for municipal employees has shown to be an effective technique for raising knowledge of the many facets of the issue of integration and sensitizing municipal employees to their role in facilitating integration.

- Local governments' culture and art duties in collaboration with CSOs should be viewed as a driving factor for overall community development and a tool for social inclusion. Local governments, on the other hand, do not effectively use this tool, which is extremely effective in the development of their towns and the social cohesion of those who have been socially excluded.

- Multi-stakeholder platforms with institutionalized governance are one real strategy for coordinating the knowledge and skills of all parties involved in delivering integration services at the local level. These platforms should bring together local governments, civil society leaders, migrant organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that services are accessible, inclusive, and relevant regardless of immigration status. If they were organized around issues like labor market integration, education, or language acquisition, and included relevant specialists, their full potential might be realized.



- When local authorities commission CSOs to offer services, it should be ensured that the CSOs will be able to efficiently satisfy the requirements in an atmosphere of mutual trust. One approach to accomplish this is to utilize clear and transparent contracts that establish a common ground and specify project roles and expectations. Contracts should also allow for learning from previous experiences and be flexible enough to accommodate changes and new goals as needed. A contractual period should ideally include a piloting phase followed by renewable contracts that allow for long-term service delivery stability, including investments in service quality and employee recruitment and retention.

- Finally, local governments and civil society organizations should collaborate on inclusive urban development strategies that include diversity and promote intercultural conversation in public areas. Affordable housing and inclusive schools should be included in such efforts in the long run.



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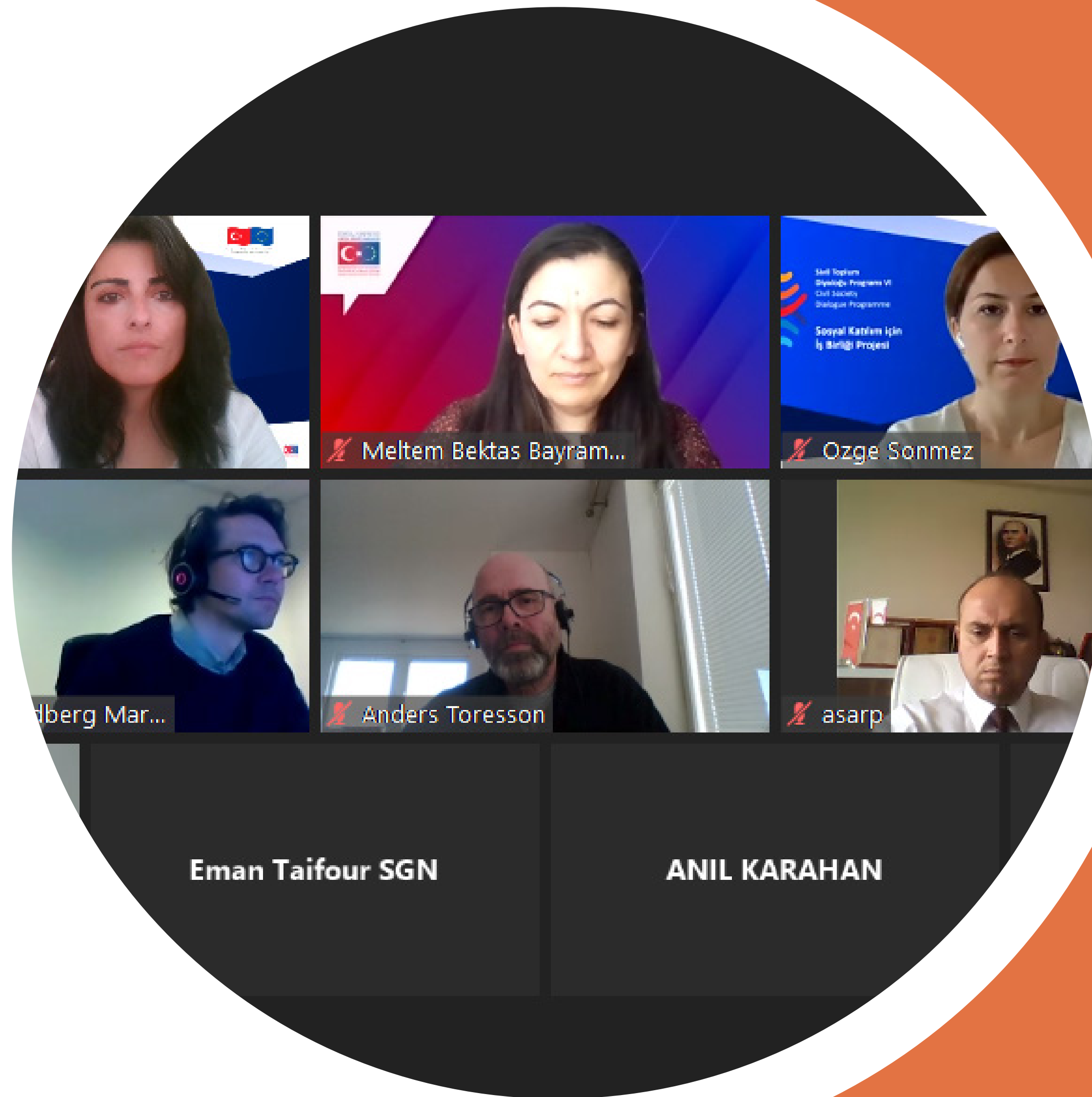
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# 1. THE WHITE PAPER PROCESS



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Within the SINC project proposal, a white paper in English elaborating on the different ways of working and concepts envisaged during the study visits and summarizing the discussions and recommendations from the workshops and the feedback from the panel was located. The lead applicant led the actual writing with the feedback of the co-applicant. The White Paper is considered to include 6 good practices from the EU and Turkey on social inclusion and CSO - municipality cooperation. The final draft was sent to Steering Committee members for final approval. Throughout the writing process, first of all, the design and the detailed content determination of the draft white paper were clarified through reviewing the relevant literature. This step included lessons learned during study visits and past experiences of the applicants and associates regarding the information on EU Social Policy and Employment Acquis.





## 2. METHODOLOGY





***This study is designed as a qualitative case study to gain an in-depth understanding of the context and complexity of the case. The data were collected employing an online survey and semi-structured interviews conducted online. The online survey was available between February 2nd and 28th 2022 in two languages (English, and Turkish).***

The survey consisted of open-ended questions to collect information on the Project/program on issues such as aims, target groups, strategies for expanding constituencies, the nature of activities, and the monitoring and evaluation process. Key program outcomes, elements that make the work with refugee communities a good practice example, and the potential for those practices to be scaled up were also covered in the survey questions. Participation in the survey process was limited to the organizations that could be reached through professional networks. Completion of the survey might have been influenced

by the number of open-ended questions, which required respondents to dedicate a certain amount of time to complete the necessary information.

Qualitative methods tied to the Interpretivist paradigm allow the researcher to interpret data by referring to experiences and perceptions of the selected sample. In this vein, an in-depth semi-structured interview technique was used to discover what the participants think about the social integration process within their projects, and how to improve the role of CSO in building social integration. The importance of this qualitative method is related to the comprehensive understanding and analysis of the perception of the participants concerning any issue. In total, 6 main questions were specified for the interviews. The duration of the interviews varied between 25 and 40 minutes. The participants are anonymized. All interviews were conducted in English and Turkish language by using a voice recorder. The interviews were converted into texts by the author. The texts used in the article have been translated into English. Overall, this study



includes a total number of four participants who have taken part in eleven different semi-structured interviews. 3 of the participants are from the civil society sector and one is from the municipality. Participants were selected on the criteria that they were key actors of the “social inclusion” management in SincProject. We aimed to understand the dynamics of horizontal migration governance through conversations with those involved in creating it. Hence, whilst some of the interviewees may have a background as asylum-seekers, they were not interviewed based on this but rather based on their involvement in migration management. Moreover, interviewees from the municipality came from the agency for public management, a public-private coordination program, and the department for housing and establishment. All of them had been directly involved in work related to reception and integration. Interviewees from the civil society sector came from more and less institutionalized groups, networks, and organizations.

The interview questions followed the topics of (i) generally about their role in migration management; (ii)

experiences of horizontal collaborations; (iii) relations with the municipality/ the civil society sector; (iv) views on social inclusion and cohesion; (v) their experiences of working with different groups (e.g., asylum-seekers, new-comers, and undocumented refugees). All interviews were conducted in Swedish and the quotes used in this study have been translated into English by the researchers.

## 2.1. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A qualitative research method is selected to reach the findings and analyze them under specific categories. The analysis has followed a thematic approach, meaning a search for themes in the data that can be used to answer the research questions. The analysis was initiated with an open coding in the software program NVivo in which data was broken down and categorized, creating a great number of codes. The codes were then reviewed and some codes covering the same phenomena were deleted. In a third review of the data, the relevant codes were put into larger themes which all had a connection to the theoretical literature.



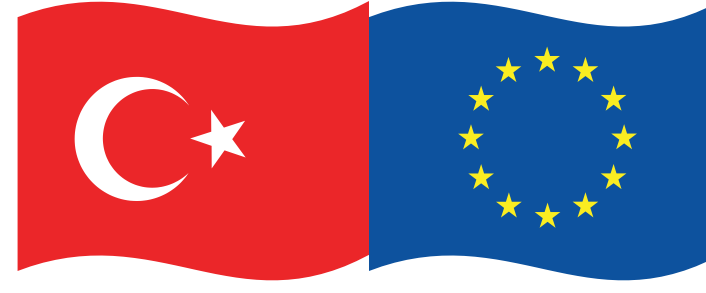
## 2.2. STUDY VISITS AND THE SELECTION OF THE PROJECTS FOR THE WHITE PAPER

*Three study visits were conducted throughout the project cycle to the following countries and cities; Germany (Stuttgart), Sweden (Möln dal, Trollhättan), and Turkey (Şişli, Avcılar). The rationale for these visits was to observe and explore a group of running collaboration models between municipalities and CSOs for the sake of social inclusion.*

The first study visit was held in Germany. The second study visit was conducted in İstanbul, Turkey in the January of 2022. All partners were represented with the participation of team members and municipal employees for a couple of days. The third study visit was held in Trollhättan, Sweden in the April of 2022. Throughout the Sweden visit, a variety of collaboration incidences aiming to foster the social inclusion of refugees were observed and examined.







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