

Call for input to report on Local Government and Human Rights

1. Laws, policies and programmes that have been developed by local authorities explicitly to promote and protect human rights, including those related to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations.

The organizational framework of the local government in Turkey is described by the 1982 Constitution in the articles 123 and 127. According to general provisions, the organization, functions and competences of local government shall be regulated by the law.

There is no specific regulation related to cooperation between local government and central government regarding the implementation of the human rights at local level. However, city councils and regional development agencies which include central and local government representatives in their executive boards can be accepted as collaboration examples when we take into account their duties.

Chapter 28 of “Agenda 21” produced by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the “Earth Summit”), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, called upon local authorities in every country “to undertake a consultative process with their populations and achieve a consensus on Local Agenda 21 for their communities”. The history of city councils dates back to 1996 in Turkey when the Habitat II Conference was held in Istanbul. Following the conference, in some pilot cities like İzmir (Urla and Aliağa City Parliaments, Karşıyaka City Councils), Muğla (Milas City Council), Bursa, Antalya, Çanakkale, there had been established the city councils or similar structures.

However, some municipalities have individual good practices. Some sample studies are shared below.

1.1 Women Friendly Cities Joint Program

The United Nations Population Fund and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Turkey carried out the Women Friendly Cities Program in 2006-2011. The project has spread to different provinces after the studies carried out with municipalities in 6 provinces of Turkey (Kars, İzmir, Van, Trabzon, Şanlıurfa, Nevşehir). “Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme” was initiated in 2006 with the aim of mainstreaming gender equality in planning and programming processes of local administrations.

In parallel with this process, the Women Friendly Cities UNJP aimed at empowering local administrations and women's organizations for establishing strong collaboration among them. After the completion of the 1st phase in 2010, the 2nd phase of the United Nations Women Friendly Cities Joint Programme was initiated in April 2011. The main aim of the project is to create an atmosphere forming a basis for the creation women friendly cities by including gender equality in the planning processes of the local administrations as a result of the local activities carried out with women NGOs, grassroots organizations, governmental institutions both on national and local levels.

- To increase the capacities of local administrations (governorships and municipalities), in order for them to include gender equality activities in their planning processes.
- To develop the capacities of women's CSOs that focus on gender equality to strengthen bilateral cooperation between domestic women's CSOs, grassroots organizations and local administrations.

Project Activities

1. Provincial Situation Analysis
2. Capacity Building for Local Institutions
3. Increasing Capacities of Women NGOs
4. Setting up Local Mechanism
 - Provincial Women's Right Coordination Committee
 - Equality Units (Governorship, Provincial Special Administration, Municipality)
 - Equality Commission (Municipal Council, Provincial Council)
5. Developing Local Equality Action Plans
 - Identification of problems
 - Developing plans with the local stakeholders
 - Approval of the plans on the local councils and integrating them with the strategic plans
6. Implementation of Local Equality Action Plans
 - Grant support
 - Development Agencies' support
7. Informing the public
 - Women's organization on neighbourhood level
 - National events
8. Legislative Work on National Level

1.2 Human Rights Cities Project

Due to the rapid population increase and urbanization, local authorities of Turkey feel the need for up-to-date planning in order to follow increasingly improving technologies and pecuniary resources. On the other hand, because of the migrations emerging for various reasons, human mobility in cities, by putting pressure on local services, increases the social conflicts. Against this and this kind of current issues identified as a problem area, "Human Rights Cities" project aims for offering local authorities to create sensitive and inclusive solution areas for different social groups that live there.

As much as emerging as an answer to the increasing and complicating questions of cities as a result of the majority of increasing world population's starting to live in the cities, Human Rights Cities also draws the attention of people in cities in order to enable them to live their rights guaranteed by international law to the fullest. It's a relatively new but, with increasing variety, a concept that has recently found itself an area of implementation.

Within this scope, Human Rights Cities Project aims for the implementation of the rights of elderly people, people with disabilities, woman, child and refugee/migrant groups, guaranteed by national and international laws, and for adaptation of these rights to daily life and for reflecting those rights to municipal services.

The Project aims for forming inclusive and participatory shared platforms where municipalities and the academy being the first place, Professional organizations, public enterprises, NGOs and international organizations can take place in order to come up with solid policy suggestions in the said areas.

This 3-year-long Project which covers the period between 2018-2020 is carried out by the collaboration of Swedish Lund University, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Union of Turkish World Municipalities and Research Worldwide Istanbul.

The relationship of 5 different groups, "Woman", "Disabled", "Child", "Elderly", "Refugee/Migrant", with the help of different actors and local authorities, according to the needs in that city considering the aspects of (i)security, (ii) accessibility, (iii) participation, has been tried to be improved.

The Project stakeholder municipalities below aim to work at least two of these five target groups:

- Ankara Altındağ Municipality: Child / Woman
- Ankara Çankaya Municipality: Child/Disabled/Woman/Elderly
- Antalya Muratpaşa Belediyesi: Child/Woman/Elderly
- Gaziantep Şahinbey Municipality: Child/Refugee
- İstanbul Maltepe Municipality: Child/Woman
- İstanbul Zeytinburnu Municipality: Child/Woman/Refugee

- Mersin Metropolitan Municipality: Child/Disabled/Refugee/Woman/Elderly

3. Key principles that should guide local and national governments in the promotion and protection of human rights.

There are guidelines and principles produced by the two good practices/programs given above.

The [Official Commitment on Women Friendly City from this link. \(Linked document content is in Turkish\)](#)

[Women Friendly Cities - Gender Sensitive Data Collection and Analysis Guidebook](#)

Realizing that civil society organizations, universities and private sector organizations should develop social policy-oriented and social benefit cooperation with the local governments, the Local Monitoring, Research and Implementation Association (YERELİZ) transfers its experience to local governments, CSOs and the academia. The association placed human rights and climate justice at the center of all its work for inclusive, participatory and sustainable cities. While carrying out its studies, it considers the Sustainable Development Goals as a roadmap and conducts monitoring, research, implementation and advocacy studies for the localization of the Global Goals in Turkey. It produces reports, guides and books for municipalities and CSOs.

References:

1. <http://www.kadindostukentler.com/project.php>
2. <http://www.rwistanbul.org/en/human-rights-cities.php>
3. <http://yereliz.org/hakkimizda/>
4. 11 Bayram Coşkun, "Kent Yönetimine Katılım Ve Kent Konseyleri", *Küresel Esintiler Ve Yerel Etkiler Sarmalında Türk Kamu Yönetimi*, Ed. Abdullah Yılmaz, Yavuz Bozkurt, Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2007, P.102.
5. [Women Friendly Cities 2010 \(Project Completion Book - English\)](#)
6. [Gender Sensitive Local Service Delivery 2009](#)