**Proposed Entry of Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation for the**

**OHCHR Report on Local Governments and Human Rights**

**to be Submitted to the Council prior to the 51st Session**

April 5, 2022

Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation ([TESEV](https://www.tesev.org.tr/en/home/)) is an independent think-tank providing evidence based policy recommendations on democracy issues in Turkey since 1994. Global Go To Think Tank Index ranked TESEV 27th think tank with most significant impact on public policy in the world on their last report published in 2021. TESEV has been highly ranked on various lists of that index since 2008. TESEV is a consultative member of the ECOSOC since 2003 and is collaborating with the UN agencies in Turkey since 1997.

Our featured topics include urban governance and sustainability, gender equality, climate crisis, empowerment of civil society, transparency and accountability, child policy, and migration policy. We produce reports, policy briefs, podcasts and gatherings of different stakeholders in all levels and all backgrounds in various formats for creating spaces of interaction and debates.

Since 2016, we advocate for data driven policy making. We work for empowering data ecosystems in local level as a mechanism for data driven decision making and for democratisation. Our reports, policy briefs, and interviews present recommendations for a democratic and inclusive (local) policy making in Turkey.

Most importantly, we develop digital policy tools, especially for local governments, for facilitating their use of data in informed policymaking, and for civil society for their informed participation in local democratic processes. One of these tools, [Urban95](https://map.kent95.org/), focusing on early childhood, transforms big spatial data into accessible interactive maps on which we place public services, assistance, and green areas. These interactive maps allow local decision makers to make sense of the data, to follow patterns and trends, to track their policies and work, and to ultimately better understand the city and its dynamics. The vulnerability maps allow local policy makers to make better policies and to use of resources more efficiently for equalities for vulnerable children and their parents. Urban95 is growing with different dimensions like accessibility (for better public transportation policies), and gender equality. Another tool, [My Purple Map](https://morharitam.ankara.bel.tr/), currently available for Ankara, the capital city, is only focusing on gender equality by mapping services, representation and social risk for women. We collaborate with UNWomen in that project and we are currently extending it to other cities. Finally, in our collaboration with the European Union, we developed [Model](http://kentekatilim.org/) as a digital tool for monitoring and evaluating the strategic plans of municipalities in Turkey. City stakeholders, especially civil society organizations working for various vulnerable groups benefit from seeing the achievements of municipalities in a user-friendly and transparent design. Accessible data on this digital policy tool also allow municipalities to follow each other and to evaluate their own strategic plans. We develop all these tools in participatory methods that makes us collaborate with municipalities in all over the country in different levels, and from different political backgrounds.

Below is our proposed entry for the Report on Local Governments and Human Rights to be Submitted to the Council prior to the 51st Session,especially for “key principles that should guide local and national governments in the promotion and protection of human rights” based on our extensive experience with local governments in Turkey.

As a prominent think tank working for democratic urban governance, we firmly believe and advocate for the *right to the city,* as suggested by Lefebvre , and to this end, for informed participation of all city stakeholders, including various units within local governments, as well as for informed policy making. For local governments to ensure the *right to the city*, human rights, and right to equality in their city, we believe they should adopt the following three key principles.

**Key principle 1: Access to information**

Insufficient policies for promotion and protection of human rights including right to equality and non-discrimination of vulnerable groups partly derive from lack of access to information. When local governments lack local information on limitations of human rights, *right to the city*, and rights to equality, they fail in making policies that would eradicate abuses. Information on various limitations of various vulnerable groups regarding human rights, *right to the city*, and right to equality should be made accessible by and to decision makers.

Therefore, local governments should;

1. Train their staff in charge of strategic planning and budgeting on human rights, *right to the city*, and right to equality,
2. Invest in making information on legal rights, legislation, and budget referring to human rights, *right to the city*, and right to equality, accessible to all city stakeholders, including the vulnerable groups,
3. Invest in collecting local information on vulnerable groups and their challenges in right to equality in their city,
4. Collaborate with civil society organizations and academia in collecting local information on vulnerable groups’ challenges human rights, *right to the city*, and right to equality in their city,
5. Make sure they use diverse and up-to-date information on vulnerable groups while making their policies,
6. Invest in and benefit from digital tools that facilitate flow of and access to information.

**Key principle 2: Data driven policy making**

Insufficient policies for promotion and protection of human rights including right to equality and non-discrimination of vulnerable groups might as well derive from lack of efficient monitoring and evaluation processes. These processes are mostly limited due to lack of data driven policy making. When local governments fail in using data in their strategic planning, determining indicators, and budgeting, they unavoidably fail in monitoring the impact of their policies efficiently. Consequently, local governments may not improve their policies, including those regarding human rights. Data driven policy making should be adopted in local governments.

Therefore, local governments should;

1. Collaborate with urban data experts in collecting, analysing and sharing data,
2. Collaborate with all relevant city stakeholders for creating and maintaining data ecosystems,
3. Develop platforms of Open Data,
4. Invest in interoperability of their units and those of other stakeholders in their city.

**Key principle 3: Monitoring and Evaluation**

Local governments need efficient monitoring and evaluation of their policies, including their policies on human rights, *right to the city*, and right to equality of vulnerable groups in the city. Efficient monitoring and evaluation is a prerequisite for improved impact of their policies. Local governments, once they ensure access to information and data driven policy making, should design efficient monitoring and evaluation processes.

Therefore, local governments should;

1. Design a monitoring and evaluation plan together with other public institutions, academia, and civil society organizations including representatives of the vulnerable groups,
2. Implement a participatory monitoring and evaluation process,
3. Publish the results of their monitoring and evaluation process publicly,
4. Make sure the results of their monitoring and evaluation reflect in their next strategic planning,
5. Invest in and benefit from digital tools that facilitate monitoring and evaluation processes.