

**CIVIL
SOCIETY
EXCHANGE
REPORT**

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CIVIL SOCIETY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Civil society space – especially for the rights-based working organizations and/or initiatives – has been shrinking throughout Europe. Rising authoritarianism has become a direct threat to the European values. These new times gave birth to new needs in civil society. Organizations such as Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies as well as MitOst Verein have been adjusting their international programs accordingly.

As a tool to support civil society development, continuous engagement and exchange were always a part of our work. The national thematic study visits that the Youth Studies Unit (of Center for Civil Society Studies) implemented in 2008 to support young people within civil society organizations, as well as the NGO Training and Research Unit's (of Centre for Civil Society Studies) Brussels study visit in 2007 to endorse right-based organizations are two examples of such. The Tandem Cultural Programme, on the other hand, has been implemented throughout Europe by MitOst e.V.; a programme based on exchange of people and organizations working on arts and culture.

Nonetheless the catalyst of the Civil Society Exchange Program is based on the outcomes of the success indicators of the national exchange programme (2016) –also supported by Stiftung Mercator– during which non-profit organizations from several cities of Turkey came together to learn from each other for organizational capacity building. In this cross thematic programme, organizations from different fields exchanged best practices and experiences to find solutions to their internal organizational problems. This approach was founded on the assumption that people and organizations coming from different fields can and should learn from each other as they face similar organizational problems; and we have found out that our assertion was fulfilled.

However, as noted above, the societal landscape changes very rapidly. In addition to that, the vision of change is unknown. In this respect, the new era also forced organizations like us (working on capacity building) to reflect on our existing work and we have also come across several results on which we based the newly designed Civil Society Exchange Program in 2017 and 2018. Aforementioned results are as follows.

a. Acquired skills cannot fully deliver solutions as new times require new skills. However, individuals and organizations operate based on skills, and these skills make them who they are. So, it is not easy to let go old habits and reconceive oneself from scratch.

b. New alliances and coalitions are more important than ever. As the landscape shifts to uncertainty, the safe havens of existing networks cannot solve the complex problems of today. One needs to go beyond that, reach others not “similar” to oneself, and get in contact with them in order to create links between different organizations and people.

c. There are new actors in civil society. A new generation of young(er) people, raised in the 2000s are entering the third sector. So, exchange for dialogue between organizations, is not an end in itself. It also creates a situation where new people in civil society organizations negotiate their positions and thoughts with people within those organizations.

d. There is a need for new coalition forms: As civil society shrinks, the field dominated by traditional rights-based organizations is also getting smaller. In order to adapt, both traditional human rights organizations as well as “new actors” need new alliances from within and outside of civil society. The search for new alliances requires new forms of interactions on a national and international scale for expertise and knowledge exchange.

e. “How” is as important as “what”: The knowledge of tools that people and organizations use in their daily work is not a technical knowledge. On the contrary, epistemology of the tools determines the real impact of those tools. To realise this full potential, exchanging approaches rather than technicalities will have a significant impact on the civil society scene. As knowledge becomes a commodity that can easily be exchanged, the challenge is to offer a certain approach that advocates for more plurality.

f. Needs > Availability: While everything changes by leaps and bounds, solutions are created with a time lag. Yet change is so fast, one needs to cope up rapidly with contemporary problems. To do so, unlike in the old paradigm where you look outside to find a solution, certain capacity should be mobilized internally in a do it yourself approach to tackle problems. This needs a certain organizational capacity.



Based on these statements, we created the Civil Society Exchange Program; an exchange program that conceptualises Europe from Iceland to Armenia. The basic criteria for application was to have a desire to work on and develop an organizational capacity with a cross border approach; thus, focusing on mobility as a core element. Throughout two years, our programme gained an attention of 261 applications in two cohorts.

What we did was basic yet hard to master. We organised it in two cohorts and each cohort started and ended with a meeting during which all participants were able to meet each other physically. These events took place twice in Berlin, once in Istanbul and once in Athens. In between these meetings, partnerships had the freedom to organise their own “tracks of learning” based on their rhythm and needs. These tracks were implemented in the form of trainings, study visits and local projects. Participants were principally face to face but continued to communicate through online platforms. To support them, we provided a small grant to each partnership to be used in budget items such as accommodation, travel, food, etc. As the program was involved partnerships of organizations from Europe and Turkey, we also had the opportunity to support organizations in Turkey through a mentorship programme that we had developed beforehand. To realise this, we also organised a training for mentors; thus, enlarged our civil society network and our capacity to support it.

At the end, we had the privilege to support 16 partnerships consisting of 32 organizations. In the following pages you will know more about these people and organizations who are committed to social change regardless of the cost. You will also find good practices that –we believe– showcase concretely what this programme gave birth to. We believe our open source approach will also be a learning tool in itself, for the ones who would like to implement similar programs.

Although the process of learning seems to belong to the partnership processes between participants, it was also a learning journey for us.

Throughout the program, we took nourishment from the valuable inputs of our team members namely Andreas, Annegret, Erhan, Gizem, Hannah, Laden, Meghan, Merve Seda, Marischa, Sener and Yoruk. We were also able to benefit from the experience, help and input of the following people Halil, Esra, Kerim, Laura, Marou, Nurhan, Taras, Ufuk and all of the mentors in the Civil Society Exchange Program. In Stiftung Mercator we were able to work with friendly and responsive people, and we want to thank to Daniel, Jan and James. Additionally, we would like to thank everyone who showed us great patience and shared what they have with us.

MitOst Verein and Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies

The Program Process

The open call of Civil Society Exchange Program is disseminated widely and through all relevant channels, and both in partnership and individual applications are accepted.

The programme participants are selected by a jury consisted of Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies, MitOst Verein and Stiftung Mercator.

Three main activities are included in the programme; Opening Meetings, Partnership Works and Closing Meetings.

At the opening meeting, the participants of the CSE Program meet the project coordination team, non-partner participants and their own partners. So, the participants learn more about the process and the upcoming phases of the programme. In addition to this, they begin to work with partners on their capacity development area(s), working plan and strategy.

The participants of the CSE Program, work on tools and activities based on their needs during their own mobility and exchange processes.

Within the framework of partnerships, organizations deepen their knowledge and develop skills, particularly in prioritized areas such as strategy development, volunteer work, training methods, international coordination, networking, organizational capacity building methods, etc.

During the closing meeting, organizations evaluate the process, share their partnership experience; and discuss future contacts and potential collaborations.

In addition to this, throughout the partnership project, organizations from Turkey are supported by a mentor, all participant organizations are supported by coordinators, and every participant organization provides update reports.



PARTNERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Civil Society Exchange Program is a cooperation between the Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies and MitOst Verein and is funded by Stiftung Mercator.



Center for Civil Society Studies attached to Istanbul Bilgi University, the centre aims to develop the capacity of CSOs working on rights-based issues since 2003.



Currently, the center shelters four units and a MA programme, namely: NGO Research and Training Unit (STK Eğitim ve Araştırma Birimi), Youth Studies Unit (Gençlik Çalışmaları Birimi), Child Studies Unit (Çocuk Çalışmaları Birimi), Bilgi Social Incubation Center (Bilgi Sosyal Kuluçka Merkezi), MA programme on NGO Management and Social Projects (Sosyal Projeler ve STK Yönetimi Yüksek Lisans Programı). Each unit is specialized in a particular theme and collaborates with many civic partners all over Turkey and Europe.

MitOst

MitOst Verein is a non-profit organization based in Berlin. The organization promotes cultural exchange and active citizenship in Europe and its neighbouring regions. With 1,400 members in 40 different countries, as well as various partners, MitOst e.V. is part of a dynamic network. MitOst e.V. encourages activities and implements programmes which foster cultural exchange, active citizenship, social cohesion, and sustainable urban and rural development –beyond cultural, sectoral or linguistic borders.

STIFTUNG MERCATOR

Stiftung Mercator is a private and independent foundation. Through its work, the foundation strives for a society characterized by openness to the world, solidarity, and equal opportunities. In this context, it concentrates on strengthening European values; increasing the educational success of disadvantaged children and young people, especially those of migrant origin; driving forward climate change mitigation and promoting science and the humanities. Stiftung Mercator symbolizes the connection between academic expertise and practical project experience. One of Germany's leading foundations, it is active both nationally and internationally. Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.



HIGHLIGHTS

APPLICATIONS

Applications of 1st Cycle

TURKEY

93 ORGANIZATION
20 DIFFERENT CITIES

EUROPE

46 ORGANIZATION
22 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
37 CITIES

TOTAL

139 APPLICANT ORGANIZATION
57 DIFFERENT CITIES

Applications of 2nd Cycle

TURKEY

66 ORGANIZATION
20 DIFFERENT CITIES

EUROPE

57 ORGANIZATION
23 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
37 CITIES

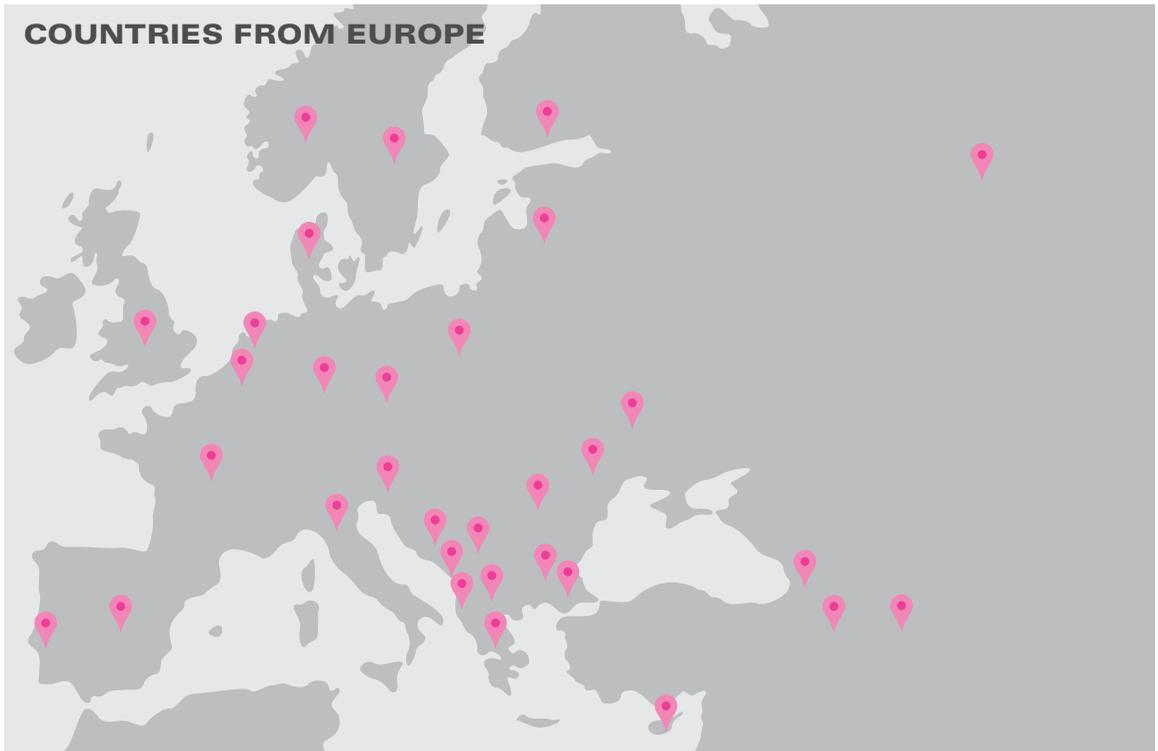
TOTAL

123 APPLICANT ORGANIZATION
57 DIFFERENT CITIES

TOTAL

272 APPLICATIONS
159 TURKEY **113** EUROPE

30 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES FROM EUROPE
32 DIFFERENT CITIES FROM TURKEY



Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine



Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Aydin, Balikesir, Batman, Bilecik, Bursa, Canakkale, Cankiri, Denizli, Diyarbakir, Eskisehir, Gaziantep, Istanbul, Izmir, Kastamonu, Kırklareli, Kırsehir, Kocaeli, Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Mersin, Mugla, Nigde, Ordu, Sanliurfa, Tokat, Trabzon, Van, Yozgat

MEETINGS

1st Cycle of CSE

- 7** PARTNERSHIPS
- 6** CITIES FROM TURKEY
- 6** COUNTRIES FROM EUROPE

- COUNTRIES**
POLAND, GERMANY, FRANCE, CZECH REPUBLIC, GREECE, BULGARIA
- CITIES**
CANAKKALE, ISTANBUL, IZMIR, DENIZLI, MUGLA, ANKARA

1st OPENING MEETING JULY 2017, ISTANBUL

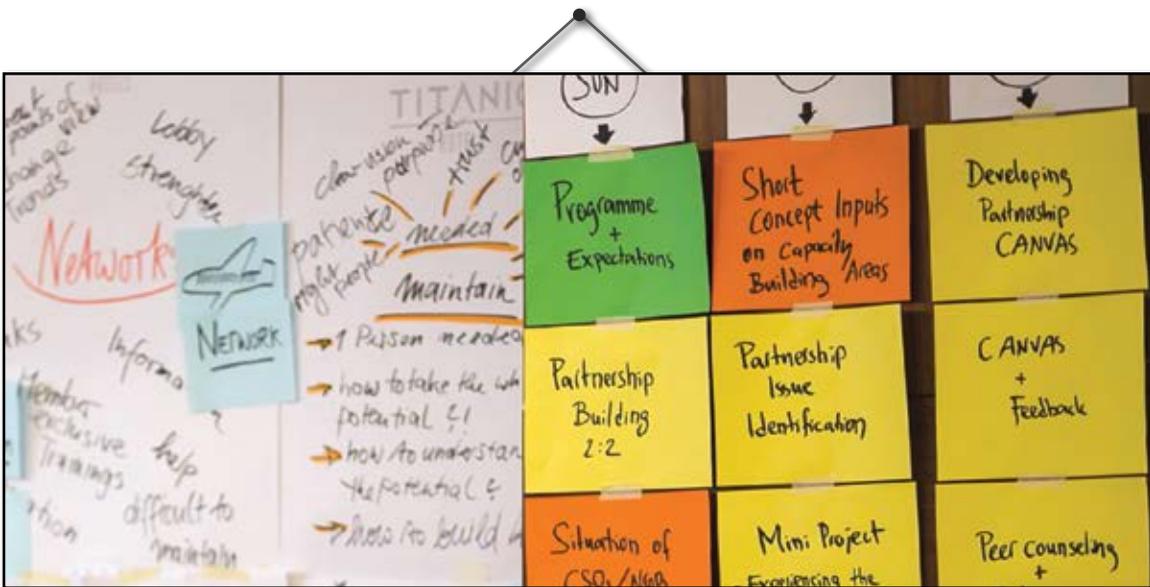
- 16** PARTICIPANT FROM TURKEY, **9** FEMALE AND **7** MALE
- 17** PARTICIPANT FROM EUROPE, **12** FEMALE AND **5** MALE

1st CLOSING MEETING MARCH 2018, BERLIN

- 12** PARTICIPANT FROM TURKEY, **5** FEMALE AND **7** MALE
- 15** PARTICIPANT FROM EUROPE, **11** FEMALE AND **4** MALE

TOTAL **33** PARTICIPANT
5 COORDINATION TEAM
2 FACILITATORS
1 EVALUATOR
25.594 KILOMETERS

TOTAL **27** PARTICIPANT
6 COORDINATION TEAM
2 FACILITATORS
1 EVALUATOR
44.108 KILOMETERS



2nd Cycle of CSE

9 PARTNERSHIPS
4 CITIES FROM TURKEY
7 COUNTRIES FROM EUROPE

COUNTRIES
FRANCE, SPAIN, GERMANY, ENGLAND, DENMARK, BULGARIA, ROMANIA

CITIES
ISTANBUL, IZMIR, MERSIN, ANKARA

2nd OPENING MEETING MARCH 2018, BERLIN

18 PARTICIPANT FROM TURKEY, **14** FEMALE AND **4** MALE
18 PARTICIPANT FROM EUROPE, **8** FEMALE AND **10** MALE

2nd CLOSING MEETING MARCH 2019, ATHENS

14 PARTICIPANT FROM TURKEY, **10** FEMALE AND **4** MALE
16 PARTICIPANT FROM EUROPE, **8** FEMALE AND **8** MALE

TOTAL
36 PARTICIPANT
6 COORDINATION TEAM
2 FACILITATORS
1 EVALUATOR
67.632 KILOMETERS

TOTAL
30 PARTICIPANT
4 COORDINATION TEAM
2 FACILITATORS
1 EVALUATOR
52.688 KILOMETERS

EXCHANGES

Mobility between partnerships from

15 CITIES EUROPE
Warsaw, Thüringen, Podgorica, Oberhausen, Ostrava, Athens, Sofia, Marseille, Toledo, Baden, Staffordshire, Hurup Thy, Plovdiv, Bucharest, Berlin

6 CITIES TURKEY
Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Denizli, Mugla, Mersin

Organizations are working on;

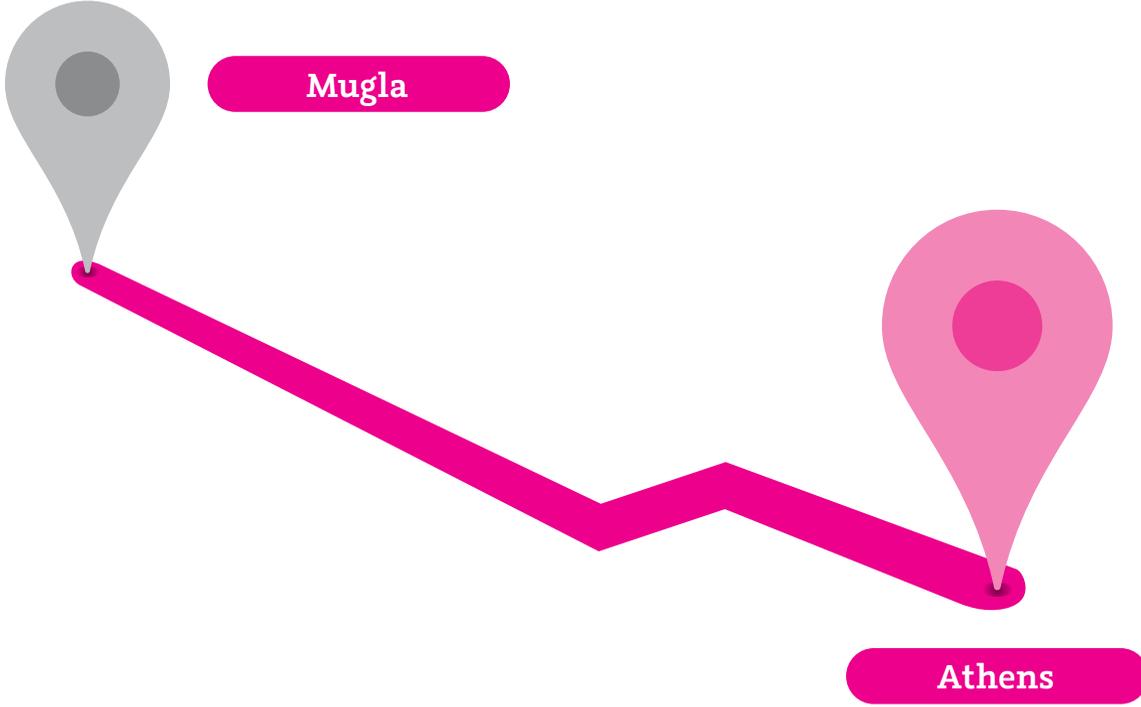
Ecology, Renewable Energy, Youth Participation, Democracy, Participation, Community Building, Refugees, Social Inclusion, Foster Care, Poverty, Animal Rights, Activism, Economic Rights, Social Rights, Art and Activism, Cultural Rights, Alternative Education, Fact Checking, Gender Equality, Local Policies

PARTNERSHIPS

1st CYCLE PARTNERSHIPS







BODRUM'DA İNSANCA YAŞAM DERNEĞİ

(Bodrum Humanity)

<http://bodrumdainsancayasam.org/>

Turkey's coastal touristic town on the Aegean Sea, Bodrum, is also a departure point widely used by refugees when crossing to Greece. Bodrum'da İnsanca Yaşam is an organization that has been working with socio-economically disadvantaged women and children, mainly with domestic migration background or Syrian refugees.

The organization has been running a community centre to support the refugees by providing basic survival needs, health and legal services, and Turkish language classes. All activities are free and open to everyone as the organization wants to encourage peace building and contribute to social cohesion.

Ο ΑΛΛΟΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ

(Social Kitchen “The Other Human”)

<http://oallosanthropos.blogspot.com/>

Social Kitchen “The Other Human” works together with people having economic issues, dealing with addictions, health issues and other forms of difficulties in their everyday life. The initiative mainly focuses on refugees and rough sleepers.

Social Kitchen is an idea and action of solidarity. In that perspective, they cook every day on spot and share the food with the ones that are in need. These kitchens cook every day in 11 different spots in Athens and in 15 other places in the rest of Greece.

Additionally, they support the access to health and legal services, and they organize workshops and trainings with and for the communities they are working with.

EXCHANGE



Both teams, working with similar target group in different sides of the Aegean Sea, met in Bodrum at first. They organized a 3-day volunteering festival, proposing social activities and volunteering workshops, and food cooking, sharing and eating together on the spot.

In October 2017, Bodrum'da İnsanca Yaşam volunteers went to Athens for 3 days to share in Social Kitchen's daily programme and participate to the Street Festival. They started with a cooking action in the Scaramanga Refugee Accommodation Center. The cooking activity reached almost 500 children and also offered face-painting, children's games and other workshops for parents. Afterwards, during the Street Festival organized by Social

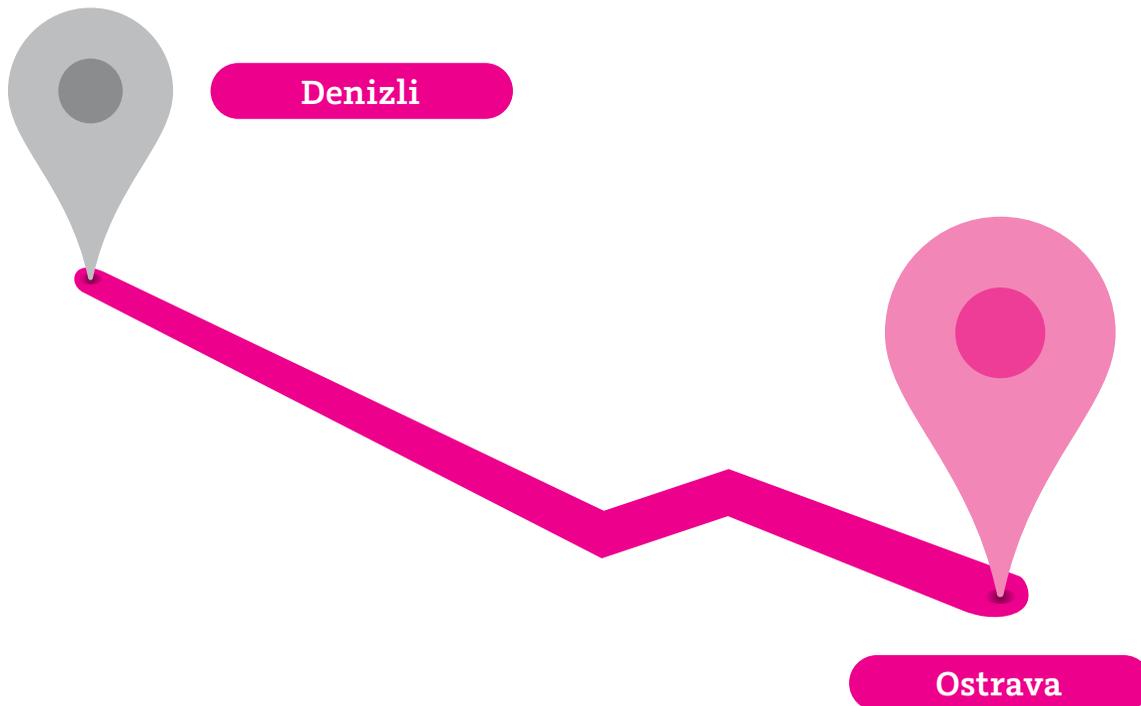
Kitchen in the public space (*dimosio sima*) of Kerameikos, various workshops and seminars were held with the participation of collectives and initiatives from all over Greece. The main activities included but were not limited to selling second-hand clothes, cooking free food, demonstrating crafts including cloth recycling, and theatre and music performances. During the festival, Bodrum'da İnsanca Yaşam also sold bracelets created by the attendees of their own community centre.

During the exchange, the partners had the chance to see how each other work, how they can collaborate and they searched for new ways to resolve their problems.

“Our activities of mutual visits and sharing the events with Social Kitchen was very energizing, inclusive and motivating. Most importantly, we have learned that we are not alone; we can reach out to other groups who face the same problems.”
Bodrum'da İnsanca Yaşam Derneği

“We gained useful experience on collaborating with another initiative from another country. And now it is easier for us to do so again and create future partnerships from abroad.”

Ο ΑΛΛΟΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ - Social Kitchen



DENİZLİ KORUYUCU AİLE DERNEĞİ

(Denizli Foster Care Association)

<https://www.koruyucuaille.org.tr/>

Denizli Koruyucu Aile Derneği advocates for a better functioning foster care system, works for maintaining international standards for children benefiting from foster care, and focuses on strengthening the foster carers in the city of Denizli in the Aegean region of Turkey. The association provides psychological, social and legal support to foster carers in order to solve problems that they face throughout the process.

The organization is one of the leading NGOs of the country working in this field and supports the establishment of foster care associations in different cities of Turkey.

RODINNE A KOMUNITNI CENTRUM

(Family and Community Center
Chloupka z.s.)

<http://www.rodinavchaloupce.cz>

Rodinne a Komunitni (RKC) aims community development and supports children who cannot live with their biological families in Ostrava; Czechia. The association also works with people living in socially excluded communities, single parents, large families, unemployed people, persons with disabilities, and foreigners who need support to overcome their difficult life situations.

The organization provides consultancy including tutoring, lectures, psychological support, and social group work in their community centre. RKC is also involved in different partnerships in Czechia's various cities, municipalities and regions.

EXCHANGE

The partnership organized exchange visits to Turkey and Czechia to improve their capacities while working with volunteers. Denizli Koruyucu Aile Derneği organized a workshop called “We Are Planning Our Future” to focused on developing a long-term strategy of working with volunteers. A parallel workshop was organized in Ostrava by Rodinne a Komunitni in cooperation with experts on volunteering.

During the visit to Turkey, RKC and Denizli Koruyucu Aile exchanged experience and ideas about CSOs and the foster care systems. Aiming to incorporate potential volunteers to the organization, Denizli Koruyucu Aile organized an event called “Garage Sale”.



“We felt stronger after this project and we really focused on volunteering for the future sake of our organizations.”

Denizli Koruyucu Aile Derneği

“The most important thing we have learned is that we should provide space to the volunteers to express their ideas, and give them responsibility, not just little insignificant tasks.”

Rodinne a Komunitni Centrum Chloupka z.s.



Istanbul

Oberhausen



HERKES İÇİN MİMARLIK DERNEĞİ

(Architecture for All Association)

<https://herkesicinmimarlik.org>

Herkes için Mimarlık (HiM) is an association from Istanbul, facilitating democratic and collaborative design processes between government representatives, professionals and citizens.

The association focuses on creative ways to raise awareness about social challenges and try to suggest solutions to social problems through architecture and space design. HiM works together with communities in the rural and urban areas of Turkey for women empowerment, supporting local economies and resolving the basic spatial needs of educational institutions mostly through functionalization of existing buildings. The association also assists activists and civil society organizations that are working with disadvantaged and underrepresented communities on issues of gender, early childhood education, disability rights, equality for women and children, and refugees.

HiM builds community spaces in the rural areas and organizes workshops for collective memory, participatory architecture and awareness of common rights.

KITEV

(Kultur Im Turm e.V)

<https://kitev.de/>

Kitev is based in the old water tower at the central train station in Oberhausen, Germany and collaborates with artists from the city and from all over Europe to transform the area into a vibrant quarter through arts and culture.

Kitev gets visible in architectural interventions in public spaces (redesigning and reinterpreting abandoned urban places), in using buildings (for events and exhibitions) and in the water tower itself. They work together with social activists, architects and citizens with a high sensibility for the issues that refugees, migrants and other disadvantaged groups have.

The association explores art forms and architecture statements to raise public awareness for solving social issues and mobilize citizens to get involved in building a fair society.

EXCHANGE

During the exchange process, three visits were organized. In Germany, a workshop was implemented in Unterhaus with refugees and international master students from the Royal Academy of Art of The Hague, Amsterdam. HiM had the opportunity to meet with the Oberhausen Municipality, visit places like industrial areas of Ruhr with museums, join New Media and Journalism Festival to share the experience of Refugee Kitchen Project, and make a contribution to a discussion about Turkey - EU Relations.



In Turkey, Kitev made a presentation as part of 15th Istanbul Biennial Neighbouring Programme, also met with the Vice Mayor of Kadıköy Municipality (for a possible collaboration between HiM and Kadıköy Municipality using the Germany Model) and with groups working on similar issues of refugees, art and architecture (organizations such as Mülteciyim Hemşerim Dayanışma Ağı, Oda Projesi, SALT). Also, partners travelled to Soma, a small town in the Aegean region, where in 2014, 301 miners were killed in a controversial mine disaster, to observe the construction site of Yırca Hanımeli El ve Ev Ürünleri cooperative organized in cooperation with HiM.

Additionally, two organizations made another visit to Italy (Roma, Riace, Napoli) to observe alternative systems, open structure models and occupied spaces when working with refugees and migrants.

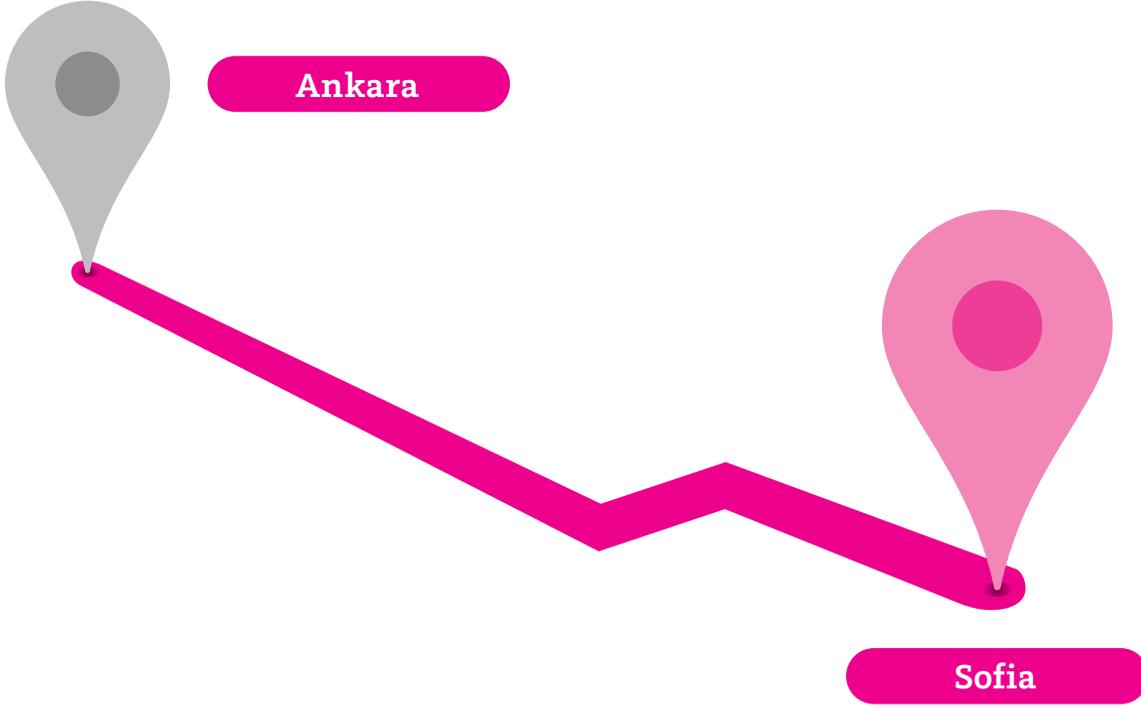
“The unification of artists, architects and activists working with communities increases the power of solidarity.”

Herkes için Mimarlık Derneği

“Our exchange programme was intense with a lot of things together. We travelled to three different countries and wanted to see positive examples.”

Kultur Im Turm e.V





SAĞLIKTA GENÇ YAKLAŞIMLAR DERNEĞİ

(Association for Youth Approaches
to Health)

<http://sagliktagenc.org>

Sağlıkta Genç Yaklaşımlar Derneği was founded in 2015 in Ankara by a group of mostly young women working within the network of Y-PEER Turkey. The association has been working with young people in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as on issues of active citizenship, human rights and gender mainstreaming on local and national level. It is the one and only CSO in Turkey that focuses totally on young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. The association advocates sexuality as a significant part of human development and integrity.

Within the framework of its Peer Education Programme, the association reaches out to young people and provides sexual health knowledge –a form of knowledge that is not currently provided by the national education system in Turkey.

DREAMERS' MORNING

<https://dreamersmorning.wixsite.com>

Dreamers' Morning works with young people and children in the 22 municipalities of rural Sofia region in Bulgaria. The organization focuses on the needs of youth participation in community life and youth empowerment where almost everything is run by "the elders". The association makes young people care for their hometowns and aims to include them in decision making processes for using public spaces and organizing social activities.

Dreamers' Morning is the only regional youth CSO active in Sofia region and it organizes workshops in different villages. The organization managed to get recognition by at least 7 mayors and the regional governor and to involve young people from Sofia as volunteers in their activities at least once a year.

EXCHANGE

Based on their organizational needs, the CSOs worked on developing a model that improves their internal capacity to work with volunteers. As an outcome of the visits and meetings, the partners created an orientation programme for new volunteers comprising a training programme, and an ethical code for volunteers and for the board.

Both CSOs mainstreamed this new programme into their existing work to become more effective and inclusive when working with volunteers.



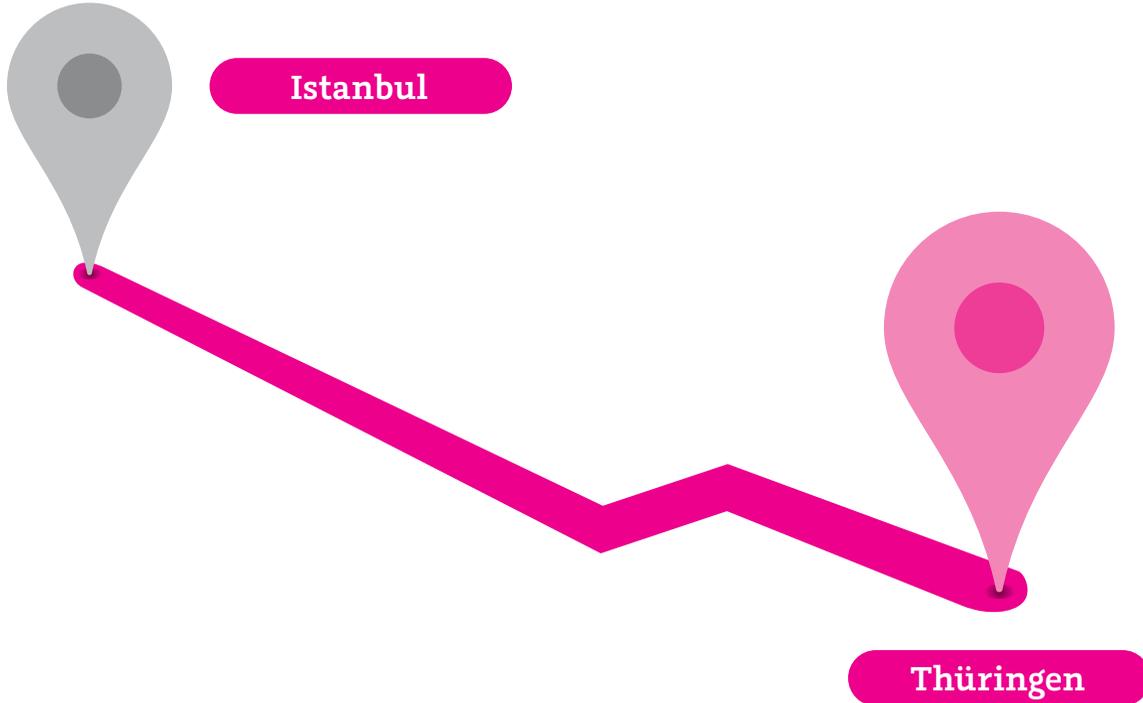
“We were working on different topics but we had one common problem about volunteering. For our part, the visits and the collaboration were also a really good motivation.”

Sağlıkta Genç Yaklaşımlar Derneği

“The most important thing we got from the programme is the experience of a longer partnership with another CSO, for sharing funds and responsibilities for the first time. Running at the same pace with a partner was a challenge, but we learned to do it with patience and mutual understanding.”

Dreamers' Morning





TOPLUM GÖNÜLLÜLERİ VAKFI

(Community Volunteers Foundation)

www.tog.org.tr

Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TOG) works with the mission of empowering the youth in order to achieve social peace, solidarity and change together with the young people. As TOG volunteers, young individuals organize in clubs, groups or communities in their universities as branches in Turkey to carry out social responsibility projects.

TOG gets in touch with young people through peer to peer trainings, volunteer work projects, face to face support in university clubs and/or communities. These projects not only contribute to the society, but also empowers the young people. TOG mobilizes young people in Turkey and abroad around certain themes in order to uphold sustainability and create spaces where the youth can learn from each other.

EINE WELT NETZWERK THÜRINGEN

www.ewnt.org

The Eine Welt Netzwerk Thüringen works on developing a discourse and an understanding on themes such as sustainable development, human rights, global equity and justice with young individuals in local level. The association tries to create a critical perspective which includes aspects like postcolonialism, global order, unequal access to resources, environmental degradation, etc.

Eine Welt works through educational projects, capacity building workshops, advocacy campaigns, and web-based mediums to reinforce global perspectives on developmental issues. Also, the association encourages youth participation and networking.

EXCHANGE

During the programme, the partners organized study visits to Germany and Turkey. They worked on improving youth participation within their organizations.

The first study visit was held in Thuringia, Germany where workshops and visits were conducted at youth work related organizations such as AWO Thüringen, Landesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung, Europäische Jugend Bildungstätte Weimar, Red Roxx Die Linke. The workshop that Eine Welt co-organised covered issues of

sustainable consumption and future resilient cities through ad busting technique. A significant number of participants in this workshop were associated with youth work. Throughout these days, TOG also had a chance to meet the local organizations in Thuringia.

In Istanbul, TOG organised a workshop on the issue. Also, Eine Welt had the chance to meet organizations from Turkey working in the same field such as Habitat and Türkiye Çocuklara Yeniden Özgürlük Vakfı.

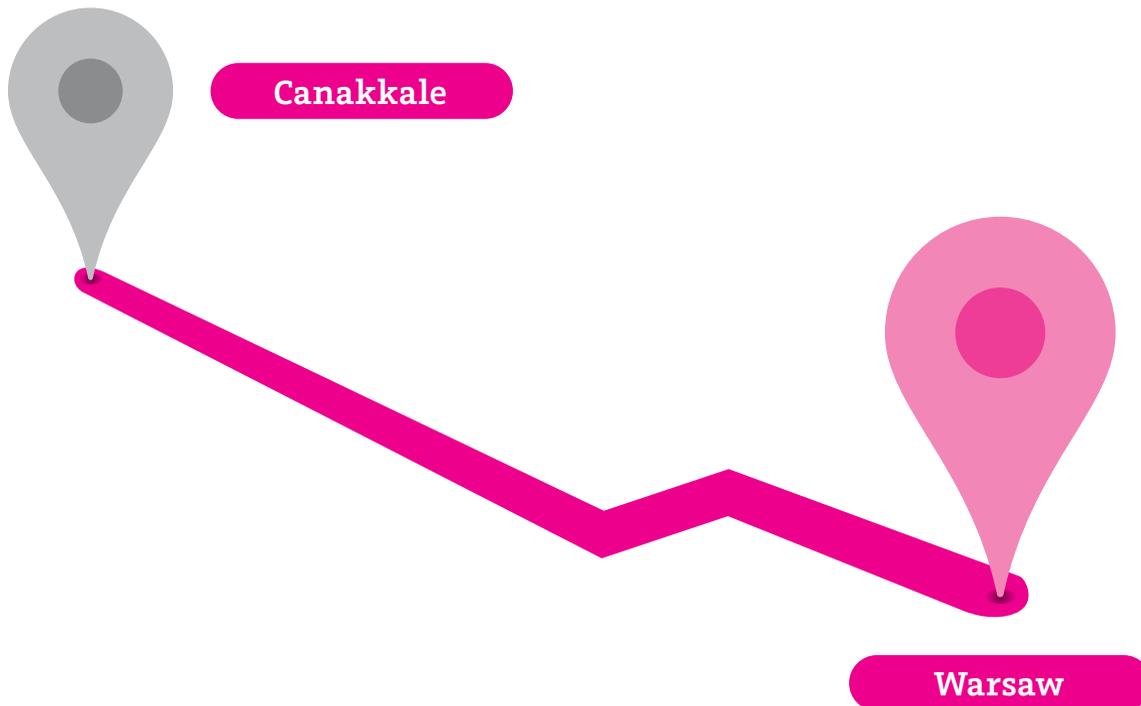


“We had the chance to see new models in Europe, and our approach in youth work had been affected positively.”

TOG

“Keeping aside all the nice things about youth participation, we also learned how to be nice to people and how to accept all the challenges that come to you.”

Eine Welt



TROYA ÇEVRE DERNEĞİ (Troy Environment Association)

<http://www.troyacevre.org/>

Troya Çevre Derneği works on climate change and renewable energy. The association focuses on how to diminish the effects of the climate change process. Lately, they started to work on renewable energy with a focus on energy cooperatives. They are active in Canakkale, a town that faces Dardanelles in the Marmara region. They have been contributing to legislation processes of renewable energy cooperatives.

The association organizes projects about rural development and supports local citizens to access their rights on healthy and sustainable environments.

SPOLECZNY INSTYTUT EKOLOGICZNY

(Social Ecological Institution)

<http://www.sie.org.pl>

Spoleczny Instytut Ekologiczny (SIE) is an association with 25 years of experience. The institute has been working on ecology, biodiversity protection and natural heritage; supporting sustainable development especially in rural areas; running and supporting various forms of ecological education.

SIE focuses also on senior people in rural areas who face social and digital exclusion, and supports young people who are interested in agriculture. The institute aims to eliminate the reasons of exclusion, to reduce the impact of exclusion, and supports young people for agricultural production.

EXCHANGE

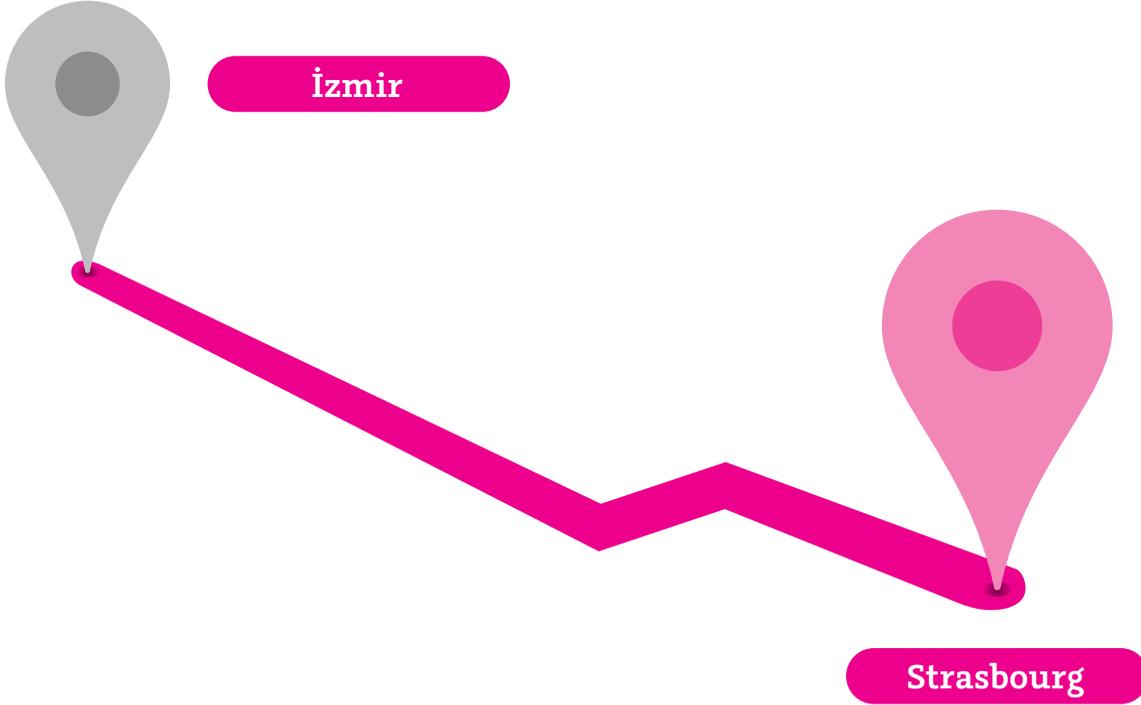
During the exchange process, associations worked on their internal communication and visibility capacities. The first event was held in Canakkale: Both teams met for a workshop that focused on the requirements of a possible new strategy for organizational capacity building. They also had the chance to visit local CSOs and cooperatives, and to meet representatives from several other organizations in Turkey.

The second visit was held in Poland and provided the opportunity to meet local organizations working on environmental issues and sustainability. Both visits were important for participant organizations since they could get in contact with international partners.



“It was really interesting to see the same difficulties in another organization: the visibility issue. We worked together for a new and effective result.”
Troja Çevre Derneği

“To work with people having another cultural background was a significant experience for us. We learned that it is important to accept the cultural differences.”
Społeczny Instytut Ekologiczny



YAVAŞ YAŞAMI DESTEKLEME DERNEĞİ

(Association for Supporting Slow Living)

<https://yavasyasa.com/>

Yavaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (YAYADE) advocates a way of life with traditions, history, nature, local production that does not harm human beings and other living things. The association from İzmir believes it is needed to reverse the outcomes of speed and consumption and works to preserve and develop natural, cultural and historical environment; increase the quality of culture, art and tourism; support the preservation of local historical textures; preserve structures and works of art with a democratic understanding, while supporting disadvantaged groups and promoting human rights.

The association supports active citizenship and mainstreams the idea of slow living by implementing awareness campaigns about overconsumption, organizing projects and public availability sessions that brings together migrants and local inhabitants.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY

<http://www.alda-europe.eu>

European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) is a European non-profit association, created by initiative of the Council of Europe, and dedicated to the promotion of good governance at the local level. By using a multi-stakeholder approach, it fosters the cooperation between local authorities and CSOs in order to find efficient solutions to local problems. Its project-based actions cover diverse issues, from active citizenship and promotion of the European values to sustainable development, gender issues, youth and migration.

Since the 1990s ALDA coordinates a network of Local Democracy Agencies based in the Balkans, Eastern Partnership countries and North Africa, which are locally registered independent organizations working on the field to promote local democracy with the same approach of ALDA.

EXCHANGE

A study visit to several Local Democracy Agencies in the Balkans were organized for the representatives of YAYADE. The representatives observed activities of Local Democracy Agencies (LDA) in Podgorica and Niksic, Montenegro; met with Niksic, Bar, Ulcin municipality representatives; and visited two more CSOs (Young ecologists of Montenegro in Niksic, and Forum MNE (Forum Youth and Non-formal Education in Podgorica) to understand how they work, exchange skills and establish partnership opportunities. Then, they travelled to Kosovo Peje and Pristina on the occasion of the Regional Youth Forum, where they participated in several meetings and workshops, and met delegates of other organizations, youth workers and volunteers coming from 8 LDAs from Western Balkans, and their partner municipality representatives.



The second part of the exchange included a 2-day intensive training organized by representatives of ALDA+ in Izmir targeting representatives from YAYADE, the local municipality and local CSOs. The training was focused on partnership building, effective communication strategies and fundraising.

Besides learning from each other, both organizations had the chance to share their experiences.

“The training was a really fruitful experience for ALDA to get to know the realities of Civil Society of Turkey and expand its network.”

ALDA

“We believe one of the unique characteristics of this programme was the connection between participant organizations. We had many opportunities to interact, and it was wonderful to learn from the experiences of so many CSOs.”

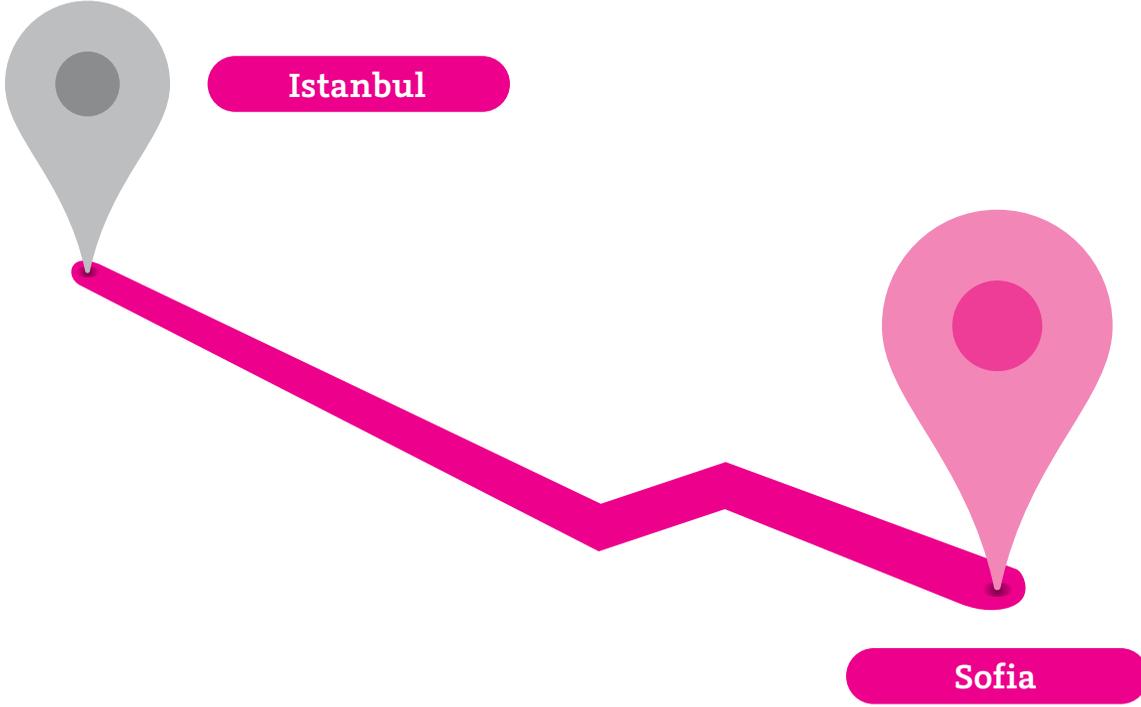
YAYADE



2nd CYCLE PARTNERSHIPS







BAŞKA BİR OKUL MÜMKÜN

(Another School is Possible)

<http://www.baskabirokulmumkun.net/>

Başka Bir Okul Mümkün (BBOM) is an association based in Istanbul that aims to spread participatory and peaceful learning by focusing on early childhood and primary school education in Turkey. To do so, it provides support to the schools that were formed by cooperatives within their network. BBOM proposes an alternative by building a movement of parents, educators, children and volunteers who are striving for a child-centred, democratic, ecologically friendly and non-profit primary education.

The association also contributes to the transformation of the approach to the education system in the country. To do so, it has been organizing a training of teachers programme in collaboration with esteemed institutions and universities. The association also publishes books on issues like alternative education, democratic schools, child participation, ecological curriculum, community building and children's rights.

IDEAS FACTORY

<https://ideasfactorybg.org>

Ideas Factory is based in Sofia. Its mission is to develop the creative potential for change in societies, communities and individuals through enhancing skills for collective learning, systematic thinking, social innovation and social entrepreneurial solutions. The organization's understanding of social change includes interdisciplinary approaches for which they collaborate with artists, architects, designers, communicators, psychologists, advocacy experts, climbers, anthropologists, etc. They also have a mentor pool to support the network of social change.

The association's expertise is in gamification and innovative instruments for civic participation that accelerate processes with visible social impact.

EXCHANGE

During the partnership Başka Bir Okul Mümkün and Ideas Factory organized reciprocal visits. Both partnering organizations had their own organizational problems, yet both were endowed with different tools, networks and capacities that enabled a beneficial partnership.

BBOM representatives had a chance to visit four schools in Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas where they observed classes, conversed with people and documented the skills, methods and materials that they developed. Also, BBOM organized meetings with different schools and organizations in Berlin.



Ideas Factory visited BBOM's cooperative in Bodrum. The visit was combined with an experiential training on the use of non-violent communication in personal and professional life, introduction to the basics of sociocracy in organizations and inclusive decision-making. Throughout the workshop, they decided to change their organizational structure and deepen in certain areas.



“This was our first time to work with an organization outside of Turkey. The experience was very stimulating for us with regard to the capacity of our organization.”

BBOM

“One of the most positive things we realized was the importance of finding what you have in common with another civil organization and to add international horizons to our local work.”

Ideas Factory





Istanbul



Marseille

HAYVAN HAKLARI İZLEME KOMİTESİ

(Hakim)

www.hayvanhaklarizileme.org

Hayvan Hakları İzleme Komitesi (Animal Rights Watch Committee) is an initiative from Istanbul, Turkey that defines all animals as individuals having rights.

HAKİM owns the principle of “total liberation”. The association argues that speciesism is a form of discrimination like sexism or racism that should be fought against. The association, as a result of evidence-based observation, reasons that speciesism is less common among children. Therefore model workshops are developed for children about animal rights and anti-speciesism.

HAKİM also works on legal issues, campaigns and media discourse, organizes demonstrations and cooperates with other CSOs and activists.

ASSOCIATION POUR LA LIBÉRATION ANIMALE

(Association for the Animal
Liberation of Marseille’s Region)

<http://alarm-asso.fr/>

Association Pour La Libération Animale (ALARM) is an association in Marseille working mainly on anti-speciesism. It aims the abolition of animal exploitation. The team tries to promote animal liberation via education, and veganism as a way to achieve it.

They think many organizations working for animal liberation without inclusive activism may have the potential to regress the work of vegan anti-speciesism, and harm oppressed minorities.

ALARM organizes workshops, demonstrations, international meetings, film projections, and monitors institutions.

EXCHANGE

Throughout the program, the partners organized reciprocal study visits to France and Turkey.

The first study visit was in Turkey and focused on preparing a new workshop model about animal rights. The visit provided ALARM a first-hand experience about the culture, activism and animal rights environment in Turkey as well as challenges that HAKIM faced.

The visit organized by ALARM for HAKIM in Marseille, made both teams notice the differences of local regulations between countries, and the similarities of the obstacles they encounter.

The outcome of the partnership was the completion of the workshop called “Model of Speciesism and Animals Rights.” The workshop aims to underline the idea that life is connected and needs to be



protected. It provides tools to raise awareness about discrimination and speciesism –especially– particularly present in mainstream media discourse. The workshop’s handbook is offered in English, Turkish and in French.

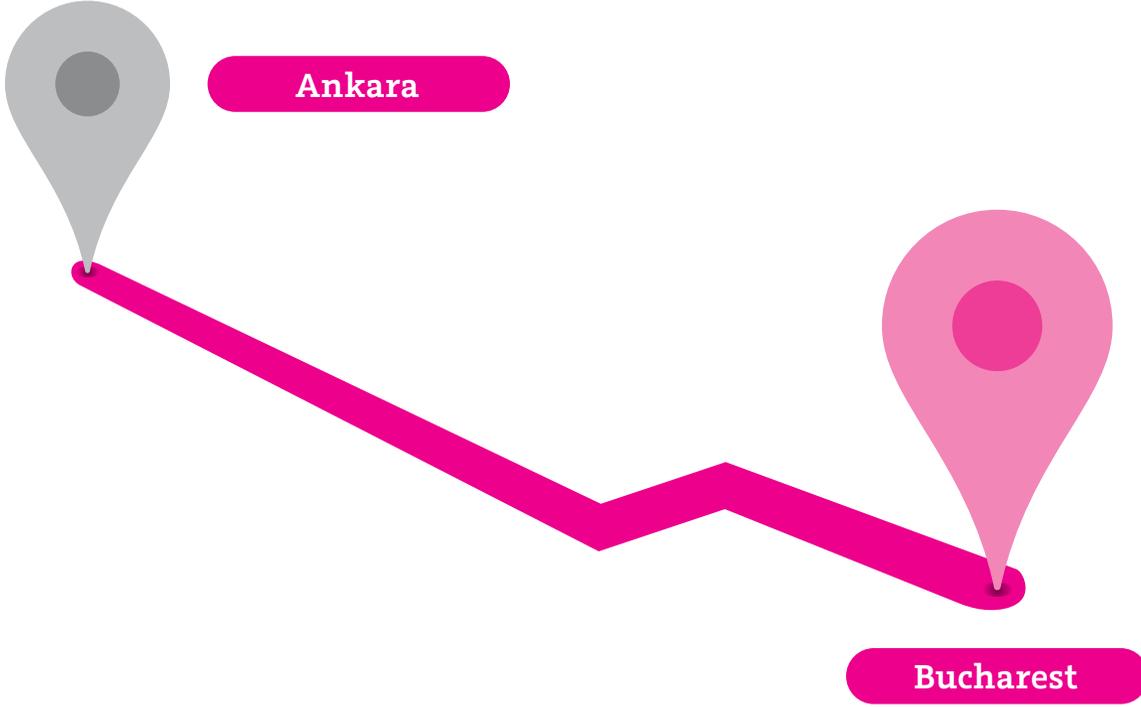


“Before we had prepared a workshop model for children. Yet for the first time, we prepared a workshop model for adults. This process provided us experience for building workshop models.”

HAKIM

“As we never worked on a workshop format before, this was a new thing for us. It will be a useful tool for us to use in France. Thanks to our partners, we also acquired experience as workshop facilitators.”

ALARM



İNSANCA YAŞAM VE DEMOKRATİK TOPLUM DERNEĞİ

(Humane Life and Democratic
Society Association)

<http://iyader.org.tr/>

İnsanca Yaşam ve Demokratik Toplum Derneği (İYADER) is established in Ankara, Turkey; and it aims to organize activities and projects for human rights on a national and international scale.

In accordance with its purposes and principles, the association adopts a gender perspective. Thus, it tries to develop women's strengths, provide opportunities and encourage women's entrepreneurship in various fields.

İYADER organizes gender awareness trainings and workshops for middle school and high school students in collaboration with experts. The association also aims to cooperate with young volunteers and activists and create a volunteer network for future projects.

REALITY CHECK ASSOCIATION

www.realitycheck.ro

Reality Check implements evidence-based advocacy to improve laws and programs in the socio-educational field. It also aims to help severely impoverished communities develop through direct work and mobilization of volunteers. It is established in Bucharest.

Reality Check's mission is to improve public policies through applied monitoring, on the ground. Field monitoring of what works and what not, verifying how laws or programs are being applied on the ground and how public funds are spent, documenting problems, and identifying good practices are its main activities.

The association also supports communities that need help the most –brings together schools, city halls, or groups of people from such communities with companies, people, or civic groups who can help.

EXCHANGE

During the exchange process İYADER realised a visit in Bucharest with the support of Reality Check. İYADER got in touch with 4 different institutions working generally on gender equality. And also, Reality Check shared the methods of impact measurement that they used.

Before the visit, İYADER had a training about fund raising in Ankara; and within the framework of the capacity building activities, the association shared the latest acquisitions with Reality Check. Besides that, after visiting Romania, İYADER prepared a brochure, including their activities, as well as places and associations they visited during this exchange project; and distributed this brochure during the final meeting held in Athens to other participant organizations of Civil Society Exchange.

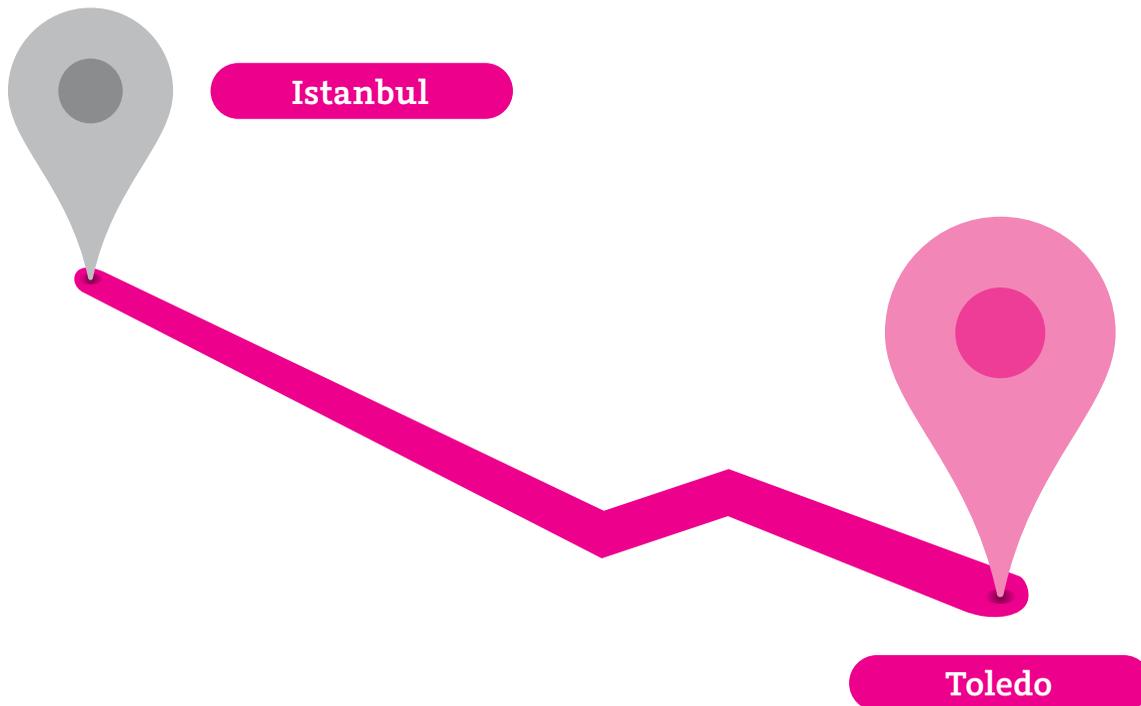


“This exchange project means for us, different partnerships, new projects in the future and a good network. Also, we have had a nice mentoring process that adds a lot to our association. As Humane Life and Democratic Society Association, it is good that we have participated in this project. Thanks to everyone involved!”

İYADER

“We’ve got quite a good connection with some organizations. Now we are discussing a project about culture in Turkish-Romanian community.”
Reality Check





JANA

<https://4carma.com>

JANA is a program under C@rma in Istanbul, focusing on supporting refugee women to develop their own women led businesses.

JANA targets disadvantageous refugee women, willing to earn a sustainable income but experiencing difficulties to do so. Since 2016, the organization has supported women to understand the challenges and realities that they face. JANA has been providing trainings and mentorship for financial literacy, setting up businesses and entrepreneurship. They create communities and make them have access to networks and tools to make them work independently.

Within these supports, many of women have now progressively developed a sense of self-confidence in their ability to earn a living and the courage to push their business further.

FUNDACIÓN CIESS

(CIESS Foundation)

<http://www.ciess.org>

CIESS was established in Toledo and works on the design and implementation of initiatives that reduce the vulnerability of groups having particular difficulties. The foundation promotes access to education system and labour market for people at risk of social exclusion. They also encourage citizens to volunteer and participate, and intermediary agents of the community to favour the implementation of social responsibility actions.

The main contribution of CIESS was the production of social innovation tools such as Training Services: design of professional systems of individual support, Moviliza-t: application for the management of volunteering, Social Business Factory: a to support and protect the entrepreneur with disability or at risk of exclusion, and Specificity Observatories: a social research and development tool managed and coordinated in collaboration with University of Castilla La Mancha and University of Granada.

EXCHANGE



The partner organizations implemented two study visits. JANA visited partner universities and funding foundations (Santander, BBVA, etc.) in Toledo. As for CIESS, it went to Istanbul and Ankara to get in touch with organizations actively working on refugee issues and visited also United Nations Refugee Agency and World Bank offices.

They built a consortium (in collaboration with Istanbul Bilgi University and other Spanish and Turkish partners) and were funded by the World Bank for a project called EKIP aiming to support refugee women setting up healthy food cooperatives.

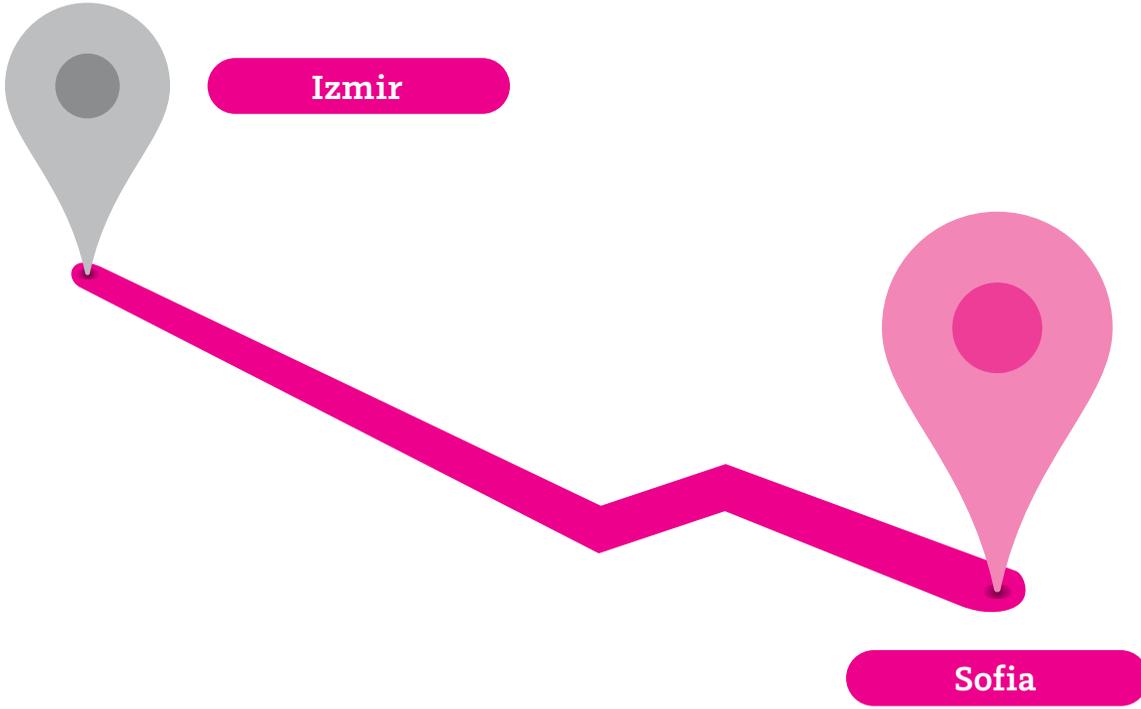
“We mainly got aware of the passions of other organizations and how they address their challenges.”

JANA

“This is such a good experience because now we are thinking what happens if we try something in Asia, in Africa.”

CIESS





SANATTA GÖRÜNÜRLÜK FESTİVALİ EX ART FOUNDATION

(Visibility in Arts Festival)

<https://www.sanattagorunurluk.org/sgf-izmir>

Sanatta Görünürlük Festivali (**Visibility in Arts Festival**) is a performance arts festival with free events –encompassing different art disciplines. As a volunteer-based audience development organization, Visibility in Arts Festival is held in various random locations by independent initiatives. It aims to remind the public that the artist-audience relationship has lost its intensity because of mass media, popular culture, and monotonous and low-quality flow of information. The festival tries to re-establish the relationship and increase the visibility of the performance. The initiative involves itself in performances, productions and workshops. It converts places and opens up space for contemporary performances.

<https://exaf.org/>

Sofia Underground is a festival serves as a critical bridge between the local and the international art scenes and between performance art practitioners, activists and enthusiasts held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Using the means of art and education the festival aims to raise awareness on current issues of corruption, ecology, gender and human rights. The conceptual frame of the festival consists of three parts: education, exhibition and performance.

The festival takes place at various places with the participation of various institutions and the independent sector, in order to highlight the variety of audiences. So far, it hosted around more than 100 performance art projects, 20 lectures and many public space interventions as well as informal meetings, public screenings, concerts and interactive installations evoking social change.

EXCHANGE

Within the framework of Civil Society Exchange Program, firstly, Visibility in Art Festival made a presentation and did a performance during Sofia Underground Performance Art Festival. Then, eX Art Foundation went to Izmir and the partners developed the content of the festival called Bak-15/ The Look. Bak-15/The Look festival took place in Izmir from the 9th to the 21st of September 2018. During the festival, different workshops and performances were presented by various artists from all over Turkey.

Thanks to the exchange process, participant organizations' international networking and collaborating capacity was increased.

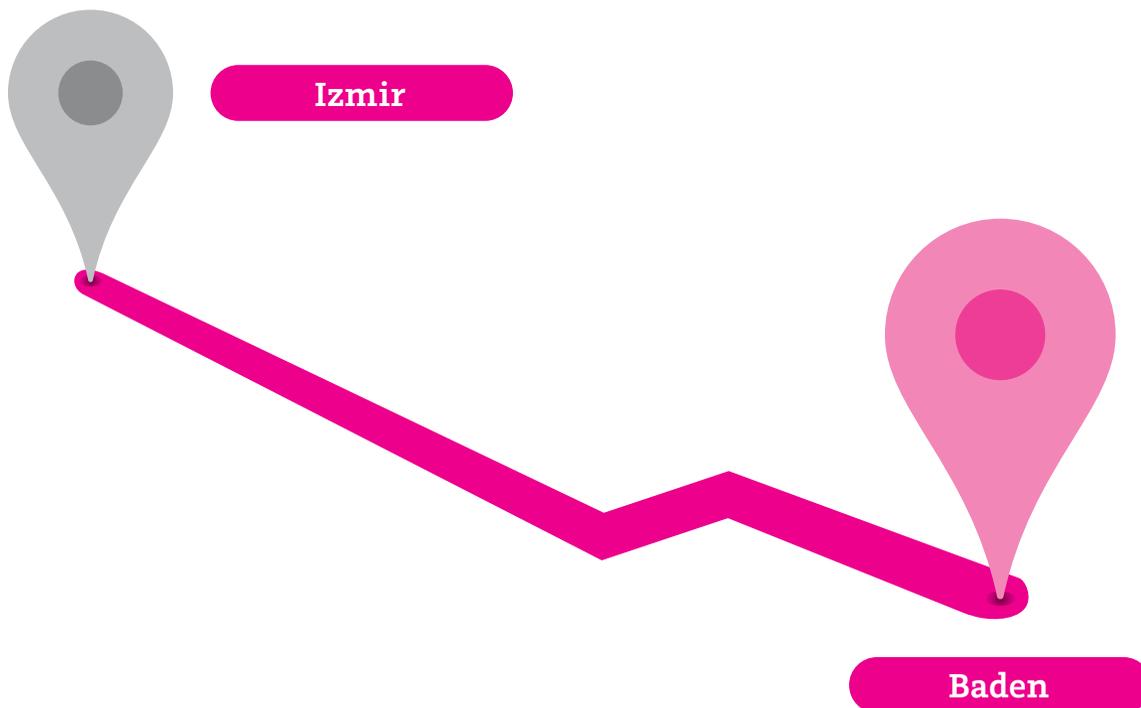
“We had the chance to remember that, working with CSOs and/or cultural initiatives that seem to operate on completely different fields are able to open up brand new perspectives within a network.”

Sanatta Görünürlük Festivali

“It was great to be able to travel, meet each other, learn from each other, explore the scenes in both cities and work together on both festivals.”

eX Art Foundation





TIAFI

<https://tiafi.org/>

Izmir has been a gateway for refugees attempting to cross to Europe. Approximately 120.000 migrants and refugees reside currently in the city, where they have been facing difficulties accessing medical care, education and employment. There are many women who had lost their husbands and families, and now find themselves living alone with their children.

TIAFI is an association from Izmir, working to empower and integrate women refugees and migrants, and their families. The association has a community center in one of Izmir's central neighbourhoods where many refugees from Syria have settled. Within the community centre, there is a counselling service which provides individual assistance for medical, legal and educational services.

To provide employment support, the association has also a training center where women can learn basic vocational skills that can make them enable to access employment, for instance in textile industries. Besides, TIAFI runs literacy courses in Turkish, and provides meal for up to a hundred people on a daily basis.

DREI MUSKETIERE

www.3-musketiere.info

Drei Musketiere is an association in Reutlingen and aims to help refugees from the Syrian crisis area and other vulnerable people from crisis and disaster zones, directly where help is urgently needed. Their primary objective is to provide support to the local people with the essentials, such as water, oil, bread, rice, toiletries, as well as clothing and shoes.

The association works together with their partner organization TIAFI, and they are committed to strengthen and integrate especially the vulnerable refugee women and their families in Basmane, Izmir.

Together, they try to fill the gap and offer a variety of services to offer a holistic, secure space. Since they believe that integration is the key to empowerment, their project intends to bring together all the nationalities that stand side by side and make them work equally on the projects.

EXCHANGE

There were 3 visits which happened in Istanbul, Hatay and Izmir. With the support of TIAFI, Drei Musketiere visited ASAM Women and Girls Safe Center in Antakya, Yuva Community Centre in Kırıkhan and the refugee camp in Reyhanlı.

After the visits, the partners made a training course at TIAFI for 25 women. The intention was to come up with products to sell and to find promotion methods for these. During the training, Boundless Bags were created, and now, the bags are sold online on Drei Musketiere's website. Anyone interested can buy these bags and support refugee women in Izmir.



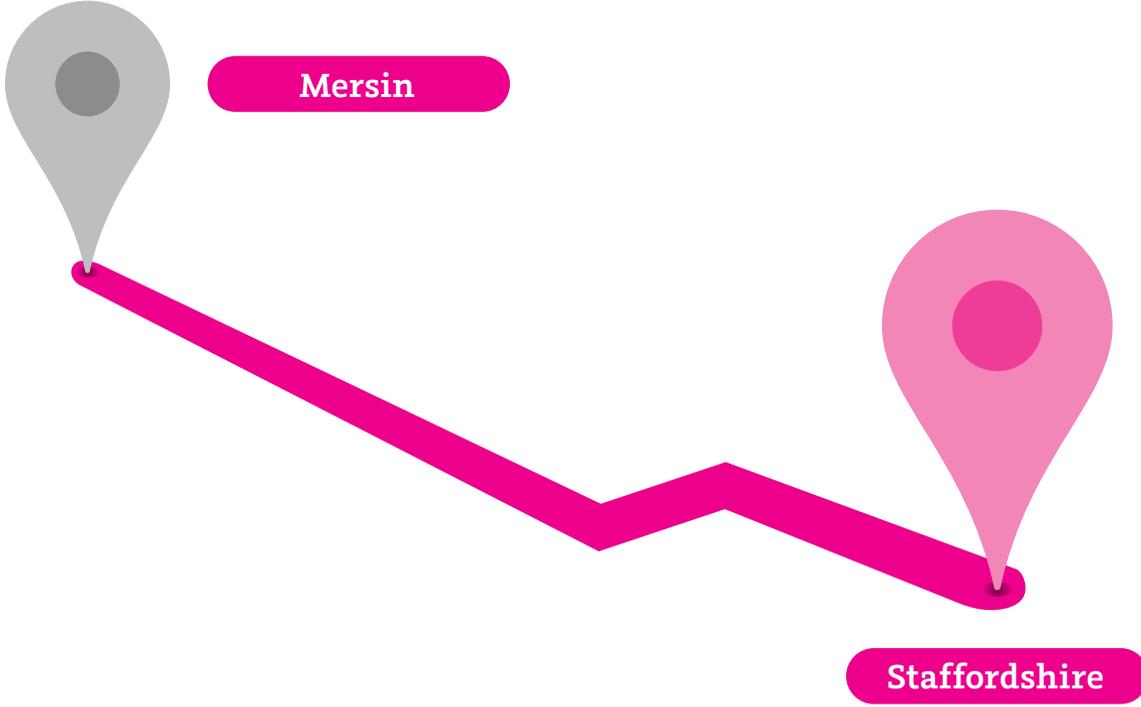
“The biggest contribution of this project was enabling vulnerable Syrian refugee women to get away from the stressful situation in which they found themselves. At the same time, the products they designed during the workshops returned to them both as material and moral support.”

TIAFI

“It’s wonderful to see how many people works on different issues; it doesn’t matter if it is human rights or safe planet. It is great to see that you are not alone.”

Drei Musketiere





YENİLİKÇİ GİRİŞİM DERNEĞİ

(Innovative Initiative Organization)

<http://yegid.org/>

Mersin is a city with one of the highest immigrant populations from Eastern Turkey and Syria. The employment opportunities and the industrialization rate in the city are restricted. Within the perspective of social, economic and environmental policy development, Yenilikçi Girişim Derneği seeks for methods of empowering people in their own neighbourhood. They work with people who have socio-economic disadvantages, cultural differences and difficulties to access education.

The association makes connections between different educational methods, trainings and workshops with different target groups.

B ARTS

<https://www.b-arts.org.uk/>

B Arts has been working with communities to develop projects that improve life opportunities for all since 1985. The charity takes a holistic approach developing projects that aim to have a positive impact on many different aspects of people's lives: mental well-being, education and skills development, employability, advocacy and giving people a voice, and raising aspirations.

The charity engages with the communities through starting conversations and informal meetings. They move on to practical accessible arts workshops in spaces that are familiar to the participants. Among others, the activities include making paper cuts –images that tell stories, puppets and carnival images, writing songs, poetry, baking bread and cooking together.

EXCHANGE

In Mersin, the partner organizations met the mayor, They also proposed a 3-day workshop for potential women entrepreneurs in Down Café, a venue conceived for and operated by employees with down syndrome, many of whom joined in with the workshops.

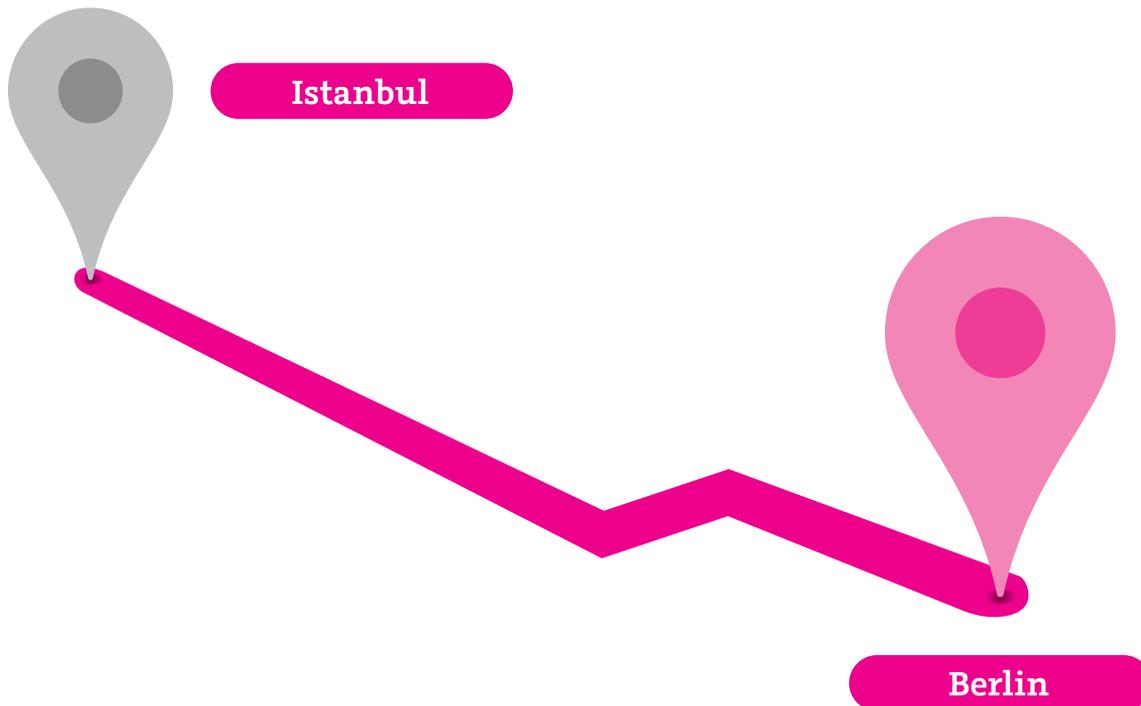
They also organized lantern making workshops with the women from villages, Syrian migrants and Romani who make arts and crafts to sell them. This was a skill based cultural learning; yet they also exchanged practises and learned from their peers.

The partner organizations travelled outside Mersin into the mountains to visit smaller towns, which they studied for future projects.



“We exchanged best practices in using arts to develop communities, and in building active and sustainable networks to support such work.”
YEGİD

“We learned to navigate in a more complex socio-political landscape in a country which is unfamiliar to us.”
B Arts



YERELİZ

(We are local)

<http://yereliz.org/>

The association Yereliz was established in Istanbul, Turkey and is one of its kind since it focuses on local governmental issues and youth participation. The organization's main objective is to encourage transparency and accountability applied in local policies. It also strives to strengthen local governments' and CSOs' capacities in working with the principles of participation, openness and anti-discrimination.

The association organizes capacity building trainings for citizen councils, CSOs and local governments, and implements research studies on monitoring and evaluating the performance of local governments for the application of aforementioned principles.

The association's work contributes to the establishment of human rights friendly cities and neighbourhoods.

POLIS 180

<https://polis180.org/>

Polis 180 was founded in 2015 in Berlin, Germany by a team of young professionals and graduate students. It is a grassroots think tank about European and foreign policy.

Its focus areas include; European Union, peace, security, migration, digitalization and data security; and it endeavours to understand and shape foreign and European policy according to the perspectives, interests and values of the younger generation.

The organization aims to use innovative and interactive event formats, of fishbowls, teatimes, speed dating and storytelling events, public screenings and workshops. In the German parliamentary elections of 2017, its members organized a democracy tour which stopped in several German cities, conducted an analysis of the election programmes of six political parties, implemented an Instagram campaign, launched a petition and a postal vote online challenge. During the European elections of 2019, they also ran a campaign to inform and empower younger voters.

EXCHANGE

The partners decided to work on improving their advocacy and lobbying skills. The focus was on the method of storytelling in the context of policy making and engagement in politics.

The partners got practical tips and advice from the experts in the UK, Germany, Canada, Belgium and Georgia via face-to-face and online meetings. They identified the ways on how to use the storytelling tools appropriately in order to reach out to target audiences, in accordance with own organizational aims and objectives. They also implemented study visits, workshops in Berlin and Istanbul as well as the best practices conference “Global Vision, Local Action” organized by Yereliz in Istanbul, where Polis 180 was also presented. The conference aimed to raise awareness of best practices on localizing the UN’s sustainable development goals.

“We learned how important and essential it is for the organization to use appropriate methods of communication in order to deliver messages properly and clearly to your target audience.”

Polis 180

“Civil Society Exchange helped us understand the role of storytelling in lobbying activities. It also opened up a whole new network of people and resources.”

Yereliz





Istanbul

Hurup



YEŞİL DÜŞÜNCE DERNEĞİ

(Green Thought Association)

<http://yesildusunce.org/>

Yeşil Düşünce Derneği is a non-profit organization founded in 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey to promote green thought and green policies. The main working fields of it are ecology and sustainability, democracy and media, climate change, green energy and green economy.

Yeşil Düşünce has been working on a community-based level in renewable energy policies that creates fair, clean and green, cheap energy policies, and strengthen the local people when producing their own energy. The association advocates politics that have a holistic understanding of an energy system from the stage of production to consumption. The association targets especially women and young people.

They implement national (ex. Face the Sun at Work, Canakkale, Turkey) and international projects (ex. Green Climate Green Economy, EU) and campaigns. The main activities of involvement are workshops, conferences, meetings (such as Green Economy Conferences, Green Dialog Meetings, Green Summer Camps), training programmes and policy report publishing.

NORDIC FOLKECENTER FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

<http://www.folkecenter.eu/>

The organization is in Hurup Thy, Denmark, and its long term goal is a complete replacement of fossil fuels and atomic power with renewable energies and energy savings while promoting sustainability, resilience and development of local communities around the world.

Renewable energies do not only provide the possibility to decarbonize and clean the current energy system, but they also provide the opportunity to transform the current centralized, undemocratic, exclusive energy model into a democratic and inclusive energy model that promotes the sustainability of local communities. Accordingly, all the activities and projects of the organization put special focus on energy democracy and active participation of local stakeholders including citizens, especially women and young people.

The organization team offers renewable energy trainings, transfer of know-how and best practices, collaboration with ecopreneurs, research and development, testing and demonstration, implementation of renewable energy in developing countries. They also collaborate with local CSOs, companies, professionals, education centres and national-local authorities.

EXCHANGE



The first exchange visit took place in Istanbul and Izmir for conferences about energy cooperatives in which they were one of the speakers.

Then the partner organizations went together to Milan to participate to the Energy Cooperative Conference.

The last visit took place in Denmark as the partner organizations participated in various activities to learn about best practices and models. Lastly, they prepared a new project application together.

“The experience of being a partner with an organization as well as meeting other organizations working in different fields as part of the exchange programme was a very instructive and inspiring process.”

Yeşil Düşünce Derneği



“We have a much clearer overview of the situation in Turkey and the challenges in establishing energy cooperatives.”

Nordic Folkecenter

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

1. Developing models for organizational capacity building

Denizli Koruyucu Aile Derneği, from Turkey and Family and Rodinne a Komunitni, from Czechia are two local organizations targeting children and families in the foster care system. Both organizations are in need of working with volunteers to strengthen their impacts. However, they had difficulties engaging volunteers for long periods of time, even though they were able to engage with volunteers, there were a lot of turn over.

The partnership decided to collaborate to improve their capacities on working with volunteers. They focused on the organizational need to engage volunteers in the long term. To do so, each organization developed their own volunteering strategies and a model, which focuses on adapting an internal system.

Model development is, designing methods and tools that civil society organizations can utilize in order to level their impact on target groups, or to improve their organizational capacity. Model development improves organizational capacity building, as it provides adaptable tools for various needs and properties (structure, culture, values etc.). If these models were to be open sourced, they would have the potential to be used by other stake holders in civil society, can be replicated and/or localized according to different needs. The models developed can be related to various organizational capacity development areas such as resource management, strategy development, cooperation with volunteers, communication and networking etc.

The model that was developed in this partnership included; co-developing a code of conduct for volunteers, a database of volunteers, a monitoring system of volunteers and an orientation programme for the new volunteers. The model was created through the involvement of volunteers in these organizations to guarantee an inclusive and horizontal approach. Each organization has their own volunteering strategy regarding their realities and each adopted the tools of this model based on these strategies.

2. Study visits for conceptual capacity building

Both Herkes için Mimarlık (HİM) and Kitev are interested in local communities and the emancipating impact of collective and inclusive approaches. They decided to explore each other's civil society environment that they operate in and what these environments provide. To do so, they implemented three thematic study visits to three different cities in three different countries. The study visits to Germany, Italy and Turkey were based on architecture, occupied spaces, living spaces for refugees, art and reproduction. The relationships between these concepts were enlightening as well as the impact of the environment.

Study visit is a learning tool that provides an experiential learning environment cycle. Unlike conventional learning environments such as lectures, the visits initially provide a space for an experience. That specific experience can be in the form of a visit to a field site where a certain programme is taking place. It can also be a dialogue with a representative or an expert who tell about her/his experience and then the organization itself. In every visit, participants ask questions and also learn from the answers that were given to other questions asked. In addition, each visit includes a period of time where participants get to reflect on issues that they think they have learned. The cycle of learning is finalized after this reflection session. Then the participants incorporate the knowledge and skills that they have acquired and adapt them into their existing work.

Study visits may focus on an organization or include several organizations that work on relevant issues. The main idea is sharing the organizational experiences, methods, tools and approaches that are used between two or more organization in a peer based direct relationship without any intermediaries.

3. International and multi-partnered festival coordination

eX Art Foundation and Sanatta Görünürlük Festivali prepared and developed the content of the festival in Izmir called Bak-ış/ The Look during the project planning process. The partners co-organized the festival in 2018. The festival included various workshops and hosted different artists from different countries.

Organizing an international festival with multi-partners also means to adequately address the need and the systematic implementation of a capacity building process within the organizations. In the process of such an event organization, the partners got a chance to find new resources and also new ways to manage resources. The learning process involves a complex web of relations between the co-organisers; an approach that can also be summarised as learning by doing approach.

As the organizers were physically located in Bulgaria and Turkey, capacity-building framework was streamlined to emphasize the participatory approach and empower the objects within the context of art and expression. Collaboration with multi-partners creates solidarity in civic space. In this partnership, eX Art Foundation and Sanatta Görünürlük Festivali not only organized an art festival but also supported the capacity of their own organizations and set up a democratic space for various international artists and participants.

4. Networking on multi-partnered project management

As a Civil Society Exchange, Jana and CIESS organized study visits both in Turkey and Spain. The partners' focus were the refugees and women empowerment. They got in touch with different institutions and also had a chance to contact their counterparts' stakeholders.

Since their first meeting, their intention was to develop a solid programme that can provide the basis of a possible cooperation that is fundable by donor institutions. Their ideas through visits matured into a programme proposal. The two partners from Turkey and Spain built a consortium with Istanbul Bilgi University. They applied to a World Bank funding which focuses on providing support to refugee women to set up their own food businesses. The consortium - now called - EKIP was granted close to 600.000 USD funding.

Networking on multi-partner project management is a recursive process where people or organizations work together in an intersection of common goals by sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus.

This project enabled Jana and CIESS discover new areas of resources, regional and international solidarity and cooperation in every sense, and continues to mutually deepen their influences and impacts.

5. Developing training methods for strengthening the impact

HAKIM and ALARM are two activist organizations from Turkey and France. They are both working on animal rights and freedom through campaigning. They co-developed a training method advocating anti-speciesism for children and adults.

Initially developing a training method and continually developing a training kit in order to open source the training method to give other actors in the field access is a way to enhance social awareness on a subject and a way to disseminate an idea through creating a learning environment. Training environments provide a space for learning and have to be focused as they have a limited time frame. Therefore, trainings are to be designed prioritizing efficiency considering the training environment. The approach of a training as well as the training environment has a direct affect on the training itself and need to fit each other. Thus, the training environment should be emancipatory and inclusive to equally provide organizers and participants a chance to participate. Developing a training kit after the training itself is a process that involves developing certain skills as doing it. Open sourcing what's done afterwards is a different process, where the training kit does not belong to a single organization anymore. Once it is open sourced, design, editing and organizing becomes the process.

The training kit was translated to French, English and Turkish and have been used several times with different target groups.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Civil Society Exchange (CSE) Program, is a capacity building and sustainability programme for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Turkey and Europe, designed and implemented by Istanbul Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society Studies (CCSS) and MitOst Verein with support of Stiftung Mercator from January 2017 to May 2019.

The political and social conjuncture of Turkey and Europe has affected both the framework and goals of the project along with the learning outcomes.

The civil sphere of Turkey and Europe has changed, particularly, with the beginning of the 2010s. On the one hand, the 2010s has witnessed the rise of the right-wing tendencies and ideologies along with the retreat of the liberal values which caused shrinking of the civil society sphere for some of the CSOs working on the democratic, intercultural and human rights-based values. This development created a more powerful need for a safe and open environment and/or channel for CSOs in order to meet, discuss and exchange their ideas, positions, experiences and learnings.

On the other hand, starting with the 2000s the number of CSOs has increased rapidly in parallel to the expansion and differentiation of their focused areas. While the numbers and focused areas of CSOs varied, their organizational needs and the depth of their organizational needs were also differentiated widely. This development turned to respond the organizational needs of CSOs with familiar and common tools comprehensively difficult.

The CSE Program was developed to provide a learning environment for the CSOs to exchange their experiences and their needs from different backgrounds such as different fields, countries and organizational capacities. In total, 32 organizations from 10 European countries participated to the CSE Program.

The Civil Society Exchange Program aimed to provide a learning framework for the CSOs with non-formal methods through mobility, in order to develop their organizational capacities. In line with this goal, the programme aimed at providing tailor-made mutual learning environment to its beneficiary organizations, for determining their prioritized organizational capacity areas and improving their capacity through mobility and international partnership.

Therefore, the specific objectives of the programme enabled participant organizations to:

- Develop and learn new organizational approaches, methods, skills and tools in their prioritized capacity building areas such as financial sustainability, working with volunteers, communication and visibility, networking.
- Cooperate in partnership and learn from each other
- Practice and/or develop international networking
- Expand their vision

The project ended with two sets of results: one for the participant organizations and the other for the whole programme.

The outcomes of the programme can be summarized under three elements which are also closely related to the goals of the programme.

1. The learning of the CSOs regarding the organizational development

The learnings of the CSOs regarding the organizational development can be discussed under two main titles. The first one is the learning method which combines both the nonformal and informal learning processes, and the second one is about the contribution of the exchange process in the capacity of the CSOs.

Concerning the learning method: The exchange process was built upon a unique method which provides both a structural learning environment and an open space for the participants following their own needs and experiences. In the exchange process, the CSOs were asked to identify the individual needs of the organizations in addition to the goals of the exchange process, using structured question forms, need assessment sessions and close consultation with the project team and facilitators. After the identification of the learning objectives for the organizations and partnerships, the partnerships were asked to form their own exchange process which would focus on their organizational needs, and also on the experiences they preferred to share with the partner

organization. For each partnership, particular methods –i.e. tracks– were chosen such as participating in a training, organizing study visits, and developing a particular model for a particular need (for example working with volunteers).

Rather than providing a generic curriculum, the exchange process was designed as a unique model allowing both CSOs to structure the process on their individual needs. Also, it enabled the partner organizations to share individually developed solutions for common and/or similar problems with their partner organizations, and this has strengthened peer learning among the participants.

Concerning the learning outcomes: The CSOs strived to improve their capacity in different areas such as financial sustainability, fundraising, working with volunteers, organizational communication, networking, organizational structure, advocacy, lobbying. In order to achieve their goals, the CSOs conducted a diverse range of activities like organizing workshops, trainings, study visits; applying for new project and/or programmes; taking new organizational actions (strategic planning, communication planning); organizing festivals; participating in seminars, congresses, festivals; organizing local activities (street cooking events, garage sales, etc.), and fundraising activities.

Each partnership planned their activities separately and independently, based on their strategy and organizational capacity building areas.

The CSOs were provided the learning space to share their in-programme developed skills, models and knowledge; and to set a basis for future collaborations.

At the end of the exchange program, the CSOs gained knowledge about how they could share and transfer their knowledge, and experience about tools and methods developed for workshops and assessment methods with other participant organizations.

2. Intercultural learning

Intercultural learning occurred on two levels in the programme. The first one is the organizational level and it is in the scope of the programme goals. The second one is on the individual level as an added value to the gains of the programme.

On the organizational level, the participant CSOs gained a much clearer overview of the context and situation of the partner organization's country as well as other participant countries; and this allowed the participants to realise that they were facing similar challenges, and to get a sense of belonging to a wider community. Moreover, they realized that the other participants as well as the facilitators and organizers were striving to find solutions for social issues just as they did. They understood that they were not alone, hence, their hope and motivation increased; and their sense of isolation decreased. The increasing awareness regarding common problems raised the sense of solidarity and also provided an enabling and favourable environment for building future partnerships.

On the operational level, the CSOs perceived the principles of international teamwork, different approaches to civil society, interacted with partner's local network. Some of them even had the experience of working in another socio-political culture.

3. Networking among participant CSOs

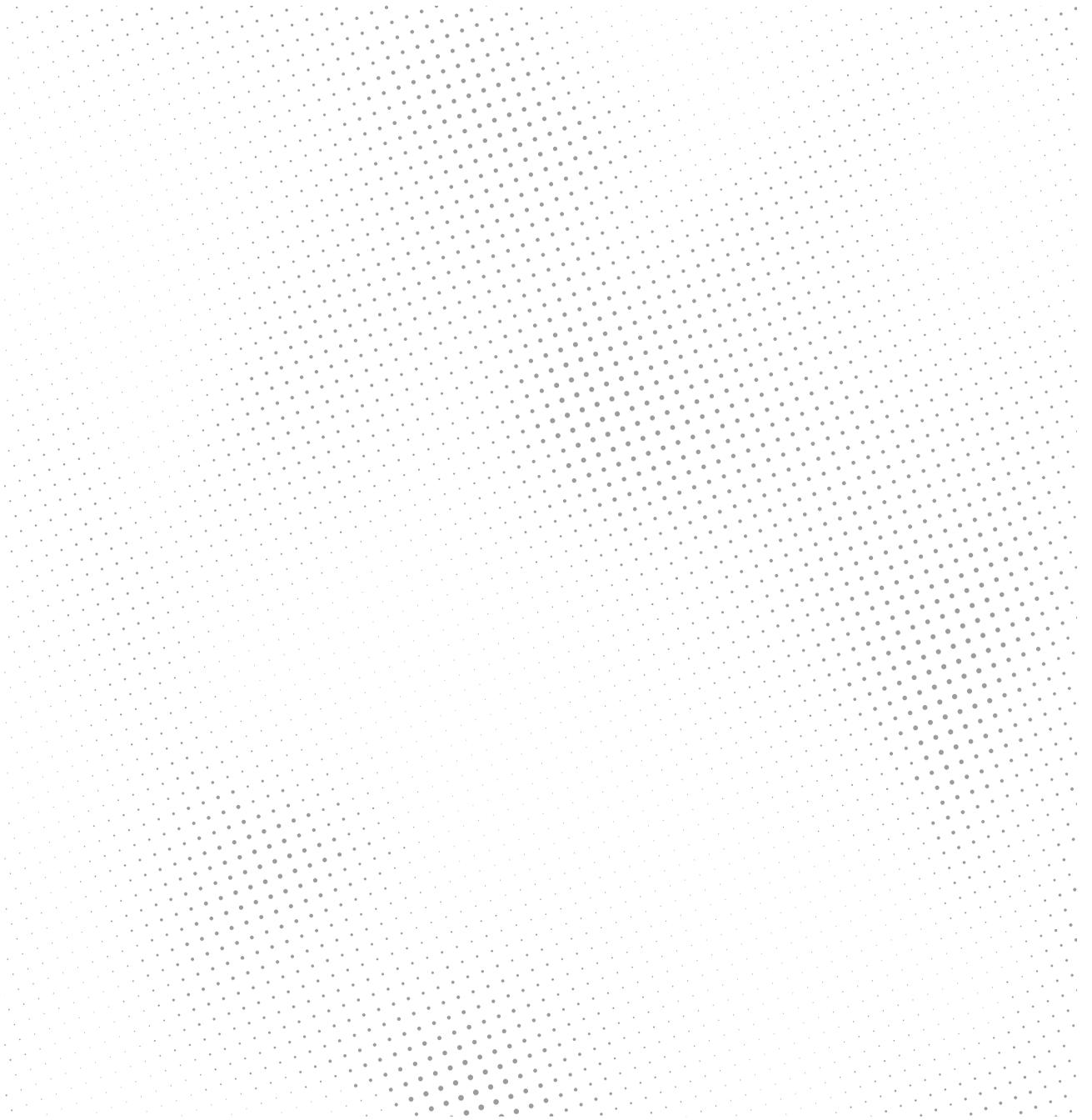
The programme was designed to provide bilateral and multinational networking opportunities through joint meetings at the beginning and at the end of each cycle, and also supported the process through social media tools in order to strengthen the feeling of community among the participant CSOs. With the help of the joint meetings, the CSOs were offered the chance to learn in a diverse and international network; and provided the opportunity to develop new ideas for future collaborations.

After the CSE Program: The CSE team aims to continue with “the capacity building through mobility” programme since the above-mentioned social and political conditions still continue and since the CSOs from both sites need a safe and open channel to meet, discuss and share.

In the next programme cycle, the team aims to focus on three participant groups. The first participant group will consist of grassroots organizations since they are the most disadvantageous groups considering their limited access to mobility. In this part of the programme, the team aims to tune in the capacity development model based on comments and feedbacks of the participants.

The second part will be related with the alumni of the programme. As participants openly affirmed both in the closing meetings and in the evaluation, they want to stay in touch with other participant CSOs and, moreover, to develop future collaborations. In order to provide them a platform to ensure the continuity of the communication, the team aims to form a network with former participant CSOs as “alumni”.

The third part of the programme will be a collaboration with multiplier organizations. First of all, the multiplier organizations will run a hands-on exchange programme with the project team to gain experience about the process participate to the programme and then, they would start to share the model and the knowledge gained through the partnership process. The project team will be supporting the multiplier organizations as mentors to the exchange programmes.



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