



*Governing Urban Diversity:
Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities*

Governance arrangements and initiatives in Istanbul, Turkey

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1 Introduction

Existing policies on diversity of both central and local governments in Turkey deal with issues related to the material inequalities between socio-demographic and socio-economic groups, with the main principle underpinning the formulation of such policies being “equity”. The terms *social cohesion*, the provision of support for *disadvantaged groups* and overcoming *income inequalities* are used often without a clear reference to policy measures. A review of the outcomes of the previous and current urban policies shows that the provision of facilities and support to disadvantaged groups disregards their ethnic and cultural characteristics (Eraydin et al., 2014). Concerns related to cultural and ethnic diversity are low, and limited attention is given to providing special rights and opportunities to different ethnic and cultural groups. The general approach has been to persistently devalue and stigmatise existing cultural, ethnic and religious diversities, and although this attitude has changed substantially in recent years, the *recognition of diversity* is still a matter of debate in Turkish society. This situation has been the main background of the emergence of different types of governance arrangements and a mushrooming of voluntary groups in order to enable diverse groups and their problems more visible in Istanbul and help economic mobility and economic performance of disadvantaged groups.

This report aims to explore different types of governance arrangements in Beyoğlu, which is one of the most distinctive residential and recreational areas of the historical centre of Istanbul with a very mixed demographic structure¹. The main aim in this report is to identify and analyse the characteristics of the different types of local initiatives that focus on using diversity in a positive way and define how they address diversity. The intention here is to define their areas of interest and activities, and to discuss the factors of success and failure so as to pinpoint their innovative policies, if any. The report aims to answer three main questions, namely;

- How is diversity conceptualised within the governance arrangements?
- Which are the main factors influencing success or failure of the governance arrangements?
- What are the innovative policies and governance concepts introduced by the different initiatives?

In this report, we present twelve governance arrangements among the 21 initiatives that are scrutinised; ten of them have a legal status of NGO and two of them are grassroots arrangements without an official status. The weight of NGOs in the selected cases is connected to the Turkish context. Although there are increasing numbers of ad hoc networks and temporary initiatives dealing with social issues in Turkey, in order to get funding from central and local governments or national and international organisations and even from individuals there is need for having a legal status. That is the main reason why most of the grassroots initiatives try soon to gain a status, acknowledged officially following a short start-up period. The initiatives presented in the report have a focus on social cohesion, social mobility or economic performance. However, it is not always easy to make a clear distinction, since in most of the initiatives a combination of these three aspects can be found.

The NGOs presented are selected from a database of governance arrangements in Beyoğlu, (Istanbul) as typical examples of existing non-governmental organisations, considering their field

¹ Beyoğlu is the core of the Istanbul Metropolitan Area and accommodates poor communities including immigrants mainly from eastern and south eastern regions, creative-professional middle income groups, foreign immigrants and refugees from Middle East and Africa and other communities mainly from earlier Soviet countries Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians as cheap employees (Saybaşı, 2006; Aksoy and Robins, 2011).

of activities and target groups. Unfortunately, there is no database for initiatives without any legal status. Therefore, during the interview studies with the 18 non-governmental organisations the respondents were asked for the names of prominent networks and governance arrangements with no legal status, since they are not easily visible. This data was evaluated with reference to the aims of this research, and three were selected for further study. The interviews with coordinators or members of NGOs were conducted in February 2014 and with representatives of governance arrangements in May 2014. Section 2 of this report presents twelve of the initiatives in detail.

The report is further organised in four chapters. The following chapter introduces the selected governance arrangements organised according to the main dimension of diversity, namely social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance. The third chapter aims to summarise the findings of the case studies. Finally, the conclusion seeks to evaluate the role of governance arrangements with respect to diversity.

2 Governance arrangements

2.1 Arrangements targeting social cohesion

Almost all the governance arrangements presented in this section are dealing with different disadvantaged groups, including the immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, women, people with different ethnic, cultural origin and sexual identity, who are particularly at risk of marginalisation and social exclusion. Empowerment of these groups, who are less likely to be in a position to make their voices heard or to have access the public services that they require, is critical for social cohesion, since if some groups in a society think that the existing system ignores their needs or if they feel excluded then democratic engagement can be diminished and social cohesion can be undermined (Frazer, 2011). Therefore, most of the existing governance initiatives work for different disadvantaged groups, as the following seven cases exemplifies.

ASAM Istanbul Initiative (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants)/ Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği-SGDD)

Strategy, focus and organisation

This initiative aims to provide support to asylum seekers from Syria. The Istanbul Initiative works as a partner of the national *ASAM (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants)*, organisation, which is concerned with the plight of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, regardless of race, religion, nationality or political conviction, and aims to defend the human rights of international migrants in Turkey (SGDD, 2014). ASAM was founded in 1995, with the ASAM Istanbul Initiative launched in 2014 to provide support specifically to Syrian people². The organisation develops public awareness projects, improves the living conditions of migrants (education, health, sheltering etc.), establishes communication networks between asylum-seekers and provides them with consultancy services (psychological, legal, educational). Among their target group of Syrian refugees, the initiative also concerns itself with the problems of Syrian LGBTT (Lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and transvestite) people and other diverse groups among the Syrian applicants.

² There were only 635 asylum applications from Syrian nationals between 1995 and 2013. This picture changed dramatically after April 2011, when the first Syrian refugees crossed the border into Turkey. Three years later, the country hosts some 900,000 Syrian refugees—220,000 of them living in 22 refugee camps with an additional more than 700,000 living outside of the camps (Kirişçi, 2014)

Syrian immigrants, especially the poor, are particularly at risk of marginalisation and social exclusion. While the rich families can find shelter and job opportunities, and can more easily be integrated to the local community, this is extremely difficult for the low skilled poor families. They are less likely to get access to the public services they require and live in a very segregated way. Social cohesion can only be achieved if people have access to quality public services that respond to their needs, particularly social and health services. Thus, investing in such services and enabling them to provide accessible and affordable services is essential to ensure their participation in society. That is what ASAM Istanbul is trying to achieve. According to ASAM Istanbul project coordinator, Gizem Demirci Al Kadaah, from January 20 to February 10, approximately 3000 Syrians applied to the organisation for guidance and consultancy services and received support (SGDD, 2014).

The organisational structure of the ASAM Istanbul branch comprises a project coordinator, two project assistants, two finance associates, four consultants and several community workers. It works in collaboration with the UNHCR as an “implementing partner”, besides with governmental bodies and local authorities for the provision of logistic support. To increase visibility and raise awareness on migration issues, the organisation works in collaboration with private firms, especially from the media and press. Its main financial³ backers are the UNHCR and the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, with secondary sources including funds and grants from EU projects, individual donations and membership fees.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

ASAM Istanbul contributes implicitly to the assistance of diversity by trying to empower the Syrian refugees, who do not have any channels to integrate with the local community, by initiating participatory projects and solidarity networks. With its guidance and consultancy services, the organisation supports Syrian migrants and expedites their social integration process by facilitating bureaucratic operations. The organisation also takes into account the diversity within its focus group (Syrian migrants). Socio-demographic, socio-economic, ethnic and cultural differences are identified among the focus group, and consultancy services are provided accordingly. The long-term objective of this organisation is to enhance social mobility (via solidarity networks) and social cohesion (via promoting participatory projects and the integration of disadvantaged groups into society etc.) of asylum seekers.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Having a well-defined target group is an important factor in enabling this initiative to reach people with real needs. It has served considerable numbers of refugees, although the initiative is quite new. According to Gizem Demirci Al Kadaah, the project coordinator, it is too early to talk about the successes and failures of the organisation, because ASAM Istanbul has been active only for a month, and still they face some organisational obstacles (lack of a sufficient database, structural problems in the building, etc.) in their efforts to carry out all activities.

Moreover, although there has been improvement in the legislation in regards to asylum and migration, in practice, the *deficiencies of immigration and Turkish asylum system* create problems in working with Syrian refugees. Although the decision in October 2011 by the government that defined a break from the initial practice of referring to the refugees as “guests,” to “temporary protection”, still the legal status for the refugees is not clear. The recent Law on Foreigners and International Protection is helpful to provide a comprehensive framework for protecting and

³ The total financial resources are not available. However, we know that the financial requirements for UNHCR's operation in Turkey have increased dramatically. The overall budget for Turkey in 2014 is set at USD 195 million, with the majority of the budget (USD 164.1 million) devoted to the emergency response for Syrians (Kirişçi, 2014).

assisting all asylum-seekers and refugees, but still the status of Syrian refugees has uncertainties. This situation is an important obstacle to find the ways to provide help the people who are asking for support, besides increasing financial needs for the provision of services.

Conclusion

ASAM Istanbul is one of the several initiatives that work for a specific migrant group in the provision of guidance and consultancy. It aims to enhance a tolerant and diverse society, and accepts that support for immigrants is very important in this respect, especially against the threats of racism. It addresses explicitly the problems of asylum seekers, who are almost invisible, and provides them with help. The personal socio-psychological consultancy services provided to immigrants seem quite innovative when compared to the group-based services of other organisations. ASAM Istanbul can be considered as more enthusiastic than other NGOs in its creation of new projects based on the problems and needs of Syrian migrants.

Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture/Göç Edenler Sosyal Yardımlaşma Ve Kültür Derneği (GÖÇ-DER)

Strategy, focus and organisation

The Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (GÖÇ-DER) was established in 1997 after the intensification of the fighting that forced a mass-displacement of people from their homelands in the east and southeast regions of Turkey. The conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the 1990s compelled a group of lawyers and doctors to establish the organisation to meet the basic needs of the displaced, to find solutions to their accommodation, health, education, communication and language-related problems, and to offer support in economic and legal issues. Although the initiative is focused on Kurds, it is also concerned with the problems of people that belong to other cultural and ethnic groups.

The main strategy of the association is to develop policy recommendations on issues in which the state has little interest. According to İlyas Erdem, head of the Istanbul GÖÇ-DER, the initiative aims to promote social cohesion by providing support to the migrants in economic, cultural and political issues, creating solidarity networks for effective cooperation among the immigrants and defending the rights of ethnic groups. The organisation also aims to increase the social mobility of immigrants through training programmes, offering them support in finding employment and improving their working conditions.

The target group is defined as *disadvantaged immigrants* from less developed regions of Turkey, especially those of different ethnic backgrounds, who have experienced forced displacement. According to the interviewee, the organisation provides assistance to, on average, 500-600 people per year. Aggrieved people who have been forced to leave their hometowns can apply to the organisation for financial help, or support in finding accommodation, health services (through voluntary doctors), employment, education or legal services. A considerable proportion of its works aims to help the victims of forced migration to ensure their human rights. Additionally, the association helps migrants in the preparation and submission of petitions to the National Parliament and other authorities, including applications for compensation for material losses and psychological problems, and the arrangement of the necessary conditions for the ones to return to their villages (GÖÇ-DER, 2013). However, most of the immigrants want to stay in Istanbul. Therefore, the aim of this initiative not only providing them different public services they need, including accommodation, but also facilitating their contact with existing inhabitants and enabling them to participate to different social activities, which can be important for encouraging the social cohesion in their neighbourhoods.

The association has a chair and an administrative board that holds monthly meetings to discuss the problems encountered by the migrants and to search for solutions, often with the beneficiaries of the organisation and changing numbers of volunteers, nowadays about 500–600 people. The organisation works in cooperation with central and local government authorities, with the private sector, and with both national and international NGOs, especially those dealing with issues related to migration. The financial resources of the association come from membership fees and donations, although it is hoping to get project-based funding through the EU Commission in the near future.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

The organisation works with groups of people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds that face problems not only in becoming integrated into society, but also in surviving in a huge metropolitan area. The provision of different types of support to such groups is vital, but the initiative is aware of the need for recognition of the distinctive identities of its beneficiaries, in order to enable them to be integrated to the urban community, without being assimilated. The head of the initiative states that for the association, “*diversity is a positive feature of urban areas that should be supported, although recent government policies have tried to standardise and homogenise people within society*”. The different problems and individualities of their target audience are taken into consideration when making decisions related to the activities of the initiative. This approach ensures that the services they provide are tailored to the needs of the recipients, in awareness that they may have suffered considerably as a result of tensions between groups of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Working in such a challenging field – forced migration – and bringing the issue to the attention of the public has been the greatest success of the organisation. Neither the public authorities nor civil society organisations understand the real impact of forced displacement, and so works related to its victims have been rather limited in Turkey. The organisation has succeeded in assisting many victims of forced migration, producing policy recommendations and new concepts that affect public policies to address their problems, and encouraging them to work together to organise and express their opinions, problems and demands more explicitly. The volunteers working with GÖÇ-DER are seen as the main drivers behind the success of the association, who have managed to overcome the negative financial conditions and ineffective and insufficient legislation, policies, laws, regulations and the general negative attitude of the government to the issue. Most of the existing volunteers are the ones who have already experienced forced migration; therefore, they know certainly the problems of the new immigrants and willing to help them. They visit their homes and encourage them to get involved activities not only in their neighbourhoods, but also in other places in order to avoid a segregated type of living. However, its financial resources are very limited; according to the interviewee, it is only about €15,000 per annum.

Conclusion

The particular working field of the organisation, covering the issue of forced displacement, is seen as the most innovative side of the association. As stated by Erdem, the issue of forced migration is largely overlooked in Turkey, and GÖÇ-DER is one of the few organisations carrying out and supporting studies in that specific area. Although the organisation does not follow a project-based approach, a new EU-based project that will be conducted in 11 Turkish cities, in which an analysis will be made of the tendency and willingness of people to return their homelands, and to this end, attempts will be made to identify the optimum means of return.

The association is likely to develop and be more effective in the future. According to Erdem (head of the Istanbul GÖÇ-DER), the most significant development for the future works of the organisation will be the government's peace efforts to resolve the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, and claims that the government should encourage people to return to their villages with the help of new legislations. Since the peace process began, Erdem says that many displaced villagers have sought permission to return to their villages, and many of them have been able to return, raising hopes among the Kurds who suffered from forced migration and faced all manner of torture and maltreatment.

Gökkuşığı Women's Association/Gökkuşığı Kadın Derneği

Strategy, focus and organisation

The Gökkuşığı Women's Association was created in 2003 as a result of the rise in cases of abuse of women, rape and other sexual assaults in recent decades in Turkey. Unlike many other "women-based organisations" that advocate gender justice, the Gökkuşığı Women's Association was launched targeting a specific ethnic group: Kurdish women. Although the organisation now works for all women, without any distinction, the main reason behind the establishment of the initiative was to address the inequality faced by Kurdish women in sexual, economic (ethnic discrimination in employment, etc.) and political (restrictions on parliamentary seats) terms.

The main aim of this initiative is to increase the participation of women (especially those of different ethnic backgrounds) in social, political and economic life, reducing inequality between men and women, and fighting all kinds of discrimination and violence against women. It also aims to establish women's shelters as places of safety, support and hope for women and their children who are victims of violence and abuse, in cooperation with government agents. The organisation also arranges vocational courses (basic computer usage and reporting, wood painting and jewellery making courses, etc.) in order to increase their employment opportunities, and has launched production ateliers and cooperatives. Association representatives Deniz Göksel and Fitnat Durmuşoğlu state that their activities are based on the empowerment of women, with the intention being to contribute to an increase in social cohesion in society by strengthening the solidarity and cooperation among women and women's platforms.

Gökkuşığı Women's Association has no hierarchic administrative structure, with both the volunteers and the founders (10 women) working in collaboration. All decisions are taken collectively, according to the demands and problems of women in need of support. Annually, 480-500 women participate and benefit from the seminars, courses and activities of the organisation. The resources of the organisation are largely composed of the organisation's own revenues from book-selling etc. and grants coming from EU projects. Membership fees also contribute to revenues of the initiative. Gökkuşığı Women Association is actively working with other women platforms (KEIG) and NGOs (such as Mor Çatı), and most of the activities are focused on the problems of women in Turkey and are decided in joint platforms. Besides the women platforms, this initiative also acts as a consultant for local administrative bodies in policy-making and assists in organising joint seminars.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

The organisation perceived diversity as "*differences that shape society*", and has chosen to carry out its activities under the banner "*Together with our differences*". Members of the initiative state that differences should be expressed without restriction, and instead of assimilation policies, those supporting and enhancing diversity should be introduced. The initiative, while primarily concerned with differences in gender and ethnicity, also works for other fields of diversity, such as socio-economics, demographics, and cultural diversity concerning women. The organisation is

also considering a “hyper-diversity” concept. Durmuşoğlu states that women in Turkey are harassed due to their lifestyles, daily habits, points of view, and social relations, and so in their media briefs, reports etc., they express strongly that women should be free to do what they want, and that both central and local authorities should make sure that *women can live free of fear and violence* and can have different lifestyles.

Main factors influencing success or failure

The Gökkuşığı Women’s Association considers its success to be an outcome of collective action among such women’s NGOs and initiatives as Mor Çatı and KEIG (Kadın Emeği ve İstihdamı Girişimi/Initiative of Women Effort and Employment). Durmuşoğlu says, “*women’s platforms are very effective in introducing new issues* (like the problems of sex workers, the importance of genealogy), *new ideas* (creating joint platforms for every specific issue faced by women, such as sexual abuse, physical violence, etc.) *and new solutions* (call centres, district communication centres). Their research reports and media briefs serve as useful inputs for national and local level policies.

Similar to many local initiatives in Turkey, the support provided to this initiative by central and local governments is limited. Therefore, the deliberation of the organisers and volunteers are extremely important. The Gökkuşığı Women’s Association is a good example in this respect. The volunteers, mostly women, are dedicated to their work and think that what they are trying to achieve is extremely important for social cohesion. The main failure factor is the lack of sufficient financial resources. Since its establishment, the organisation has faced serious financial problems as many others, due to limited contribution of the local and central governments and limited donations by the individuals.

Conclusion

The initial activities of the Gökkuşığı Women’s Association focused on the most disadvantaged group in society, namely ethnic women (Gökkuşığı Kadın Derneği, 2014); but moving forward, and working in cooperation with several other initiatives, it now deals with the problems of other women who find themselves in need of support. This multi-partner network among women’s NGOs leads to an exchange of ideas, innovative thinking and new collaborative projects. For example, the “Fuhuş Konferansı/Prostitution Conference” drew attention to the problems of sex workers and, for the first time in Turkey, gave rise to further discussions related to the working conditions of women employed in illegal entertainment activities. Moreover, the Gökkuşığı Women Association, in partnership with many other NGOs, have been working hard to write a book on the “women’s history in Turkey- gynaecology”.

Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter Foundation/Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı

Strategy, focus and organisation

In 1987, a judge in Çankırı turned down a woman’s claim for divorce saying, “*a little ‘whip’ on the back or on the belly is of no harm to women*”, marking the beginning of many feminist movements in Turkey. That year saw, for the first time in Turkey, a group of feminists organising a resistance campaign against violence. First, they telegraphed protests to the court, demanding an appeal against the court decision, claiming that it legitimised violence against women, after which the struggle continued to grow. A solidarity network was established under the name “Solidarity against women’s violence” due to the large number of female victims of violence who needed the support of doctors and lawyers. In 1989, a telephone helpline was set up offering legal and practical support for victims of violence. As the solidarity network was unable to host all of these women, the need for a women’s shelter became clear. In 1990, the Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter Foundation was established by a group of feminists as a step along the road to ending violence against women, while also strengthening the fight against domestic violence. The initiative

express “*violence against women is among world’s most widespread of human rights violations*” (Mor Çatı, 2014).

Mor Çatı aims to support women living under the threat of violence through the provision of legal assistance and psychological support, while also providing shelter for battered women. Nacide Berber, who is one of the programme coordinators in Mor Çatı, states that “*promoting social cohesion by empowering women’s solidarity and creating solidarity networks are the main goals of the organisation*”. She claims, “*Social cohesion is not only a matter of combating social exclusion and poverty, but it is also protecting the dignity of each person and the recognition of their abilities and their contribution to society*”.

The policy agenda of the organisation has been established based on the information and experiences of its applicants, which help in the development of policies to combat violence against women. These policies are shared with the public and the central state departments responsible for ending violence against women, and are reaffirmed at every opportunity and on every platform.

The working practices of the initiative in providing support are as follows: the process begins with a phone interview with the woman applying for support, after which a face-to-face interview is arranged at the centre where the available options are evaluated together with the victim of violence. Mor Çatı provides either shelter or only psychological counselling to the victim, while lawyers are on hand to offer legal advice, and sometimes represent them in court. The foundation provides shelter to women and their children for a maximum of three months, although the duration may be extended if necessary to protect the woman safe from violence. The organisation has since 2009 launched three shelter projects in Istanbul with the support of local authorities.

The administrative board of Mor Çatı is known as the Collective (*Kollektif*) Mor Çatı, the leadership and membership of which is on a rotating basis. All decisions are made through a collective process during meetings of the *Kollektif*. As the workforce of the foundation is all volunteers, projects are carried out depending on the availability of people to take part. Berber says that there are nine volunteers, although the number is not fixed, in that it changes according to the availability of individuals. On average, 2,000 women apply to Mor Çatı for assistance each year. The foundation has run its own independent shelter project since 2009 with the backing of Şişli Municipality and the European Commission Delegation of Turkey, and with the help of other supporters and volunteers, while private sector companies support the project through social responsibility programmes. Mor Çatı collaborates with such international organisations as the European Union and with several consulates, and is a member of the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) Network. However, Mor Çatı is unwilling to cooperate with the central government as a partner, considering that such partnership would be in conflict with its independent status. In contrast, the organisation collaborates with Şişli Municipality and other local authorities in the provision of its services.

The average annual income of the foundation is around € 400,000, made up of EU-based project grants and donations from individuals and different institutions (in kind and in cash). It also raises revenue from its own company, in which the products (such as T-shirts, cup, bags) are marketed, and has been the recipient of grants from the Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights⁴.

⁴ Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights was established in 1997 following requests by activists from around the world. The Fund has granted more than \$5 million to support women’s and LGBT human rights defenders in 110 countries around the world. It is located in San Francisco, CA.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

The different support requirements of victims of violence against women should be attributed equal importance, and this reflects how Mor Çatı perceives and deals with diversity – *recognising the difference, yet still pursuing equality* among women, without making any distinctions. All women, regardless of their ethnic background, culture, socio-economic status, lifestyle, opinion, habits or other characteristics, can apply to Mor Çatı for assistance, so long as they have experienced violence. Diversity is seen as a positive factor that should be supported, in that “*people with different characteristics in their different material conditions (gender, age, etc.) should be treated equally, and these differences should not be used to create a hierarchy among people*” (Mor Çatı, 2014).

Main factors influencing success or failure

Domestic violence, defined as a pattern of abuse by a partner/ex-partner or family member, can take many forms and protecting women from any form of violence, including “honour-based”⁵ violence, helps to raise their standards of living and gives them new start in life. Empowering women and helping them to fight against violence are the most important aspirations of this initiative. The support provided by this initiative is very important in this respect. Among its success factors the power and determination of the women who apply and ask for help constitute an important factor, since leaving an abusive relationship and overcoming cultural or religious pressures from the family and community to make a new start in life no easy task, requiring the full determination of the person in question. The willingness of the volunteers on the other hand is the main determinant of its success. However, the organisation faces several failure factors. While financial problems are important from time to time, organisational problems based on the voluntary nature of the workforce are inescapable, due to the frequent turnover of existing volunteers. Moreover, having an NGO status sometimes prohibits Mor Çatı from acting independently, making it subject to certain restrictions once in a while when it is forced to follow certain regulations and official procedures, as with any other NGO.

Conclusion

Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter Foundation is a feminist initiative that has been established to address the issue of violence against women. It adopts an integrated approach when addressing the needs of women from many distinct ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. All of the volunteers define themselves as feminist women, and in this regard, the Mor Çatı organisation is built upon a foundation of solidarity, aimed at strengthening women against violence and other forms of abuse. The decision-making processes are collective, and rotational assignments are made among the members of the initiative. As Berber states, the organisation’s partnership structures and generic cooperation models (e.g. social responsibility projects, cooperation with international NGOs, partnership model with Şişli Municipality, etc.) make Mor Çatı stand out among other organisations with similar goals.

Istanbul LGBTT*Strategy, focus and organisation*

The Istanbul LGBTT Solidarity Association is a self-organisation that promotes the rights of sexual and gender minorities, namely lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transvestite people. The Istanbul LGBTT was founded as a civil initiative in 2007 by a group of activists who have been fighting for LGBTT rights for more than 20 years. The same group of people have founded

⁵ “Honour” based violence or “honour” crime is an act of violence perpetrated with the intention of protecting or defending the “honour” of the family/community.

other organisations with similar goals, e.g. Lambda Istanbul, which is its project partner in “Trans Pride” (see below). Hülya Taştekin, social works coordinator of Istanbul LGBTTT, says that Istanbul LGBTTT aims to provide a non-hierarchic social environment for transgender people, lesbians and gays, and to focus on their specific problems in Turkish society (difficulties in finding a job, sexual abuse, public ignorance, etc.). The main goals of Istanbul LGBTTT include fighting transphobia and homophobia, making transgender people visible, preventing homophobic and “transphobic motivated murders”, as so-called hate crimes, and creating pressure groups for the investigation of crimes against the LGBTTT community. The Istanbul LGBTTT Solidarity Association provides legal and psychological support for LGBTTTs that have been subjected to violence and discrimination in the community. The initiative has connections with Amnesty International/Germany, and works directly with other initiatives that aim to provide support for LGBTTTs.

LGBTTT Istanbul finances its activities with the help of donations and funds provided by the Europe Union and other countries, with the main beneficiary being multi-partnered EU projects. The organisation receives no financial or other support from the government or local authorities, but works with various partners, including private firms with transgender employees, and national and international NGOs and LGBTTT organisations. The total financial resources available are about €30,000 per annum. Every year, the group organises pride marches, meetings and entertainment events to draw attention to so-called “sexually marginal groups”⁶.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

Istanbul LGBTTT believes that the social integration of the LGBTTT community is vital for the enhancement of diversity in Istanbul and the support for social cohesion. Engineers, musicians, doctors, artists, in fact, people from all occupations and lifestyles face pressure for their sexual orientation, and the cultural norms embodied by society can have incontrovertible effects on the mental health of those who do not conform.

However, dealing with the problems of the LGBTTT members is not easy. They consider themselves to be the most marginalised and alienated group in society, and so have developed strong connections and solidarity networks. Given the social exclusion and marginalisation they experience in society, they are reluctant to establish peaceful relationships with the public. According to Taştekin, many of Turkey’s largest private companies have approached them, seeking to hire lesbian or gay people to prove that they give importance to “sexual diversity”, however their members have declined to be a part of this positive discrimination. They declared that they wanted to be assessed according to their skills, not their sexual orientation. Such positive discrimination, they say, prevents social integration and alienates LGBTTT members from society.

Main factors influencing success or failure

The initiative believes that they have a long way to go before they can claim success. The social coordinator of the initiative admits that they have been effective in reaching thousands of people, but adds that there are still many people, who are not even aware of the existence of LGBTTT people. Their greatest success, she claims, has been the organisation of the “Trans Pride” march along İstiklal Street in Beyoğlu. During a press briefing to promote the attention-grabbing event, the Istanbul LGBTTT members were able to highlight their daily problems and social pressures they have to endure. The basic aim of “Trans Pride” was show that LGBTTT people exist all over the world, thus also in Turkey, and they should be accepted as they are.

⁶ <http://www.istanbul-lgbtt.net/lgbtt/haberler.asp?katID=41>

These activities show how the deliberation of one's target audience is important in the success of initiatives working with "disadvantaged" groups. That also means that enabling a good collaborative environment is a vital success factor to reach the people who feel themselves segmented from and humiliated by the rest of the society. The failure factors, on the other hand, are also related to interactions between the LGBBT people and the existing neighbourhood residents. Not all local residents are interested in having interactions, let alone good relations with LGBBT people. The hostility towards these people and a long history of not mixing with them in the local community are the major failure factors. Organising the Trans Pride march, which has difficulty to find financial sponsors, will not be enough to break the social boundaries between existing residents and LGBBT people.

Conclusion

Creating different projects to address human rights violations and working on the visibility of transgender people is extremely difficult in Turkey, since those that express their identity can easily find themselves socially excluded, leading to poverty, conflict and insecurity. For this reason, to fight against the social exclusion of LGBTT people, make them more visible and encouraging public tolerance is very important. The launching of a campaign for a change in the Constitution to add provisions for "gender identity" and "sexual freedom" was an important contribution of this initiative, not only for LGBTT individuals, but also in the promotion of tolerance in society of people who are "different".

Roma People Platform / Roman Platformu

Strategy, focus and organisation

Roma People Platform is one of the main ethnicity-based, human rights platforms in Turkey. Since 2012, the platform has been working on the behalf of Roma people who have been regarded as a minority group in Turkey over centuries. It was founded when an urban renewal project was initiated by the central government in Sulukule, Istanbul, where thousands of Roma people had lived in this district for many years. Roma-based NGO's all over Turkey protested the Sulukule Renewal Project and underlined the possible negative social outcomes of this "displacement" project. The consensus among different NGOs led to the formation of the Roma People Platform (an umbrella organisation covering 50 Roma-based NGOs) to defend the rights of Roma people in districts designated as redevelopment areas by the Housing Development Administration (HDA) and to struggle against these type of projects that end up displacement of the existing inhabitants from inner city centres. For Roma people to be able to live in the centre of the city is very important, since they are mostly engaged in the entertainment sector, largely localised in the centre of the city, and work on a temporary basis and being pushed away to the periphery of Istanbul makes them to loose their employment opportunities as well. Roma People Platform gives legal consultancy to people related to renewal process and informs them about their health, education, sheltering, security and other democratic rights.

Roma People Platform aims to create a civil forum that enables Roma people to discuss their problems, needs or any kind of questions they have with local authorities and help them to find out operational solutions. The Platform organises meetings in different neighbourhoods where face-to-face contact can be achieved and where all stakeholders can interact without any pressure or official intervention. Places (neighbourhoods) of meetings (bimonthly or quarterly) are being selected according to the urgency of their problems. There is not a hierarchical decision-making process. Final decisions and action plans are developed according to the outcomes and reports of these meetings. The Platform publishes reports that cover the positive and negative impacts of urban renewal projects in Roma neighbourhoods and makes press releases to create awareness.

In order to achieve their activities they get support from different non-governmental organisations, but not from the central and local governments. The annual income of this platform is about €25,000-35,000.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

Roma People Platform pays *explicit attention to the existing ethnic diversity* and defines the provision of support to Roma people to protect their identity and enable them to participate in urban life, which is very important to sustain the “*colours of Istanbul*”. Although the platform is Roma people-based, its members have diverse backgrounds. For example, one of the leading figures in the platform, Hacer Foggo, who defines herself as a defender of Roma people’s rights, is not a Roman. Regardless of ethnicity or culture, the members of this platform are sensitive to the difficulties of minority groups faced in times of displacement, share their concerns and provide support the ones who were residents of an urban renewal area.

Hacer Foggo says that they are fighting against the “*assimilation*” and “*unification*” policies of the government, indicating that ethnic groups are forced by the government to “*adapt*” to the majority of the society. According to her, urban redevelopment/renewal projects are used as a means to this end, since the displacement of Roma people to different peripheries of the metropolitan areas makes them to lose their social networks and living culture. The Roma People Platform emphasises the need for tolerance, solidarity and understanding between ethnic groups and the dominant group. Instead of one way of acculturation, which is a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviours of another group, reciprocal acculturation – that is the dominant group also adopts patterns typical of the minority group should be enhanced.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Roma People Platform is an example and symbol of resistance to urban renewal projects that directly targets different ethnic and cultural groups. The resistance in Sulukule attracted a great deal of attention of media and the society. Former journalists like Foggo and academicians, who are against the renewal of Sulukule, made press briefs, informed all sorts of media channels and made the society to listen their problems. Since then, with the great support of NGOs (Human Rights Association, women rights foundations etc.), other ethnic groups that undergone the same displacement processes have followed the same way of protesting. Even though Roma People Platform could not prevent the redevelopment process, their protests informed millions of people all around Turkey about the social consequences of such projects which have been later discussed largely by media, academia and governmental bodies. The main factors behind its success are the determination of the members of the platform, collective action and most importantly face-to-face contact with 50 different NGOs and Roma people. The failure factors, on the other hand, are mostly related to the attitude of central and local governments, especially Housing Development Administration. The increasing importance of Istanbul as the core of property development and the interest of the government to use urban land for income generation, are the main failure factors.

Conclusion

Roma People Platform is a civil initiative that enables collaboration among fifty different Roma people-based associations. The way of protest, organisation structure and impact on society about the social negative outcomes of urban renewal projects make this platform a good example for other ethnicity-led initiatives, which are also facing problems of displacement and residential segregation problems. Without any governmental or local financial support, the Platform runs its activities via the contributions of NGOs within the platform and members/volunteers own

payments out of their pocket. The level of voluntary actions can be seen as the remark for their determination and commitment to be integrated to the urban community by their identities.

Anatolian Culture/Anadolu Kültür

Strategy, focus and organisation

Anadolu Kültür has been founded as a non-profit initiative in 2002 by several people from different areas of fine and commercial art, business and civil society organisations with the aim of promoting shared production of cultural and art activities in cities across Turkey and abroad. The founding members believe that “*working through the medium of culture and arts can enable Turkey to become a more democratic, pluralistic and free country*” and cultural and artistic exchange will contribute to the development of mutual understanding and the elimination of prejudices, which destroy social cohesion in Turkey. The main aims of this initiative are to build bridges between people from different religions, cultural and ethnic backgrounds through culture and art, contribute to regional initiatives, which are interested in supporting cultural diversity and human rights and strengthening cooperation among them.

To reach its aims, Anadolu Kültür carries out work under the following four headings⁷:

- *Arts and Cultural Dialogue in Anatolia* organises events such as exhibitions, film screenings, performances, concerts, public talks and art workshops; and also long-term culture and art projects in collaboration with different initiatives and non-governmental organisations.
- *Cultural Diversity and Human Rights* arranges, amongst others, photography exhibitions that emphasize the multicultural structure of cities, performances and activities that reflect Armenian cultural heritage, screenings and debates supporting Kurdish cinema and publishing bilingual children’s books.
- *Cultural Collaboration with Europe* covers projects that support collaborative activities between cities in Europe and Turkey in a diverse spectrum of fields including performance, art workshops with children, literature research, contemporary art exhibitions and projects on cultural heritage.
- *Arts and Cultural Dialogue with Armenia* initiates activities for artistic and cultural cooperation between civil society organisations, independent artists and academic institutions from Turkey and Armenia since 2005, aiming to consolidate friendly relations between the two countries and enhance mutual understanding.

Anadolu Kültür consists of a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, seven Board Members, six project coordinators and three project assistants, besides a consultant. The initiative also has 30 employees and nearly 200 volunteers. Serra Özhan Yüksel, who is a project coordinator, argues that “*the decisions are often taken collectively with beneficiaries and participants can actively involve all the activities and decision-making processes*”. The initiative works in cooperation with governmental bodies and local authorities. It also collaborates with the private sector, as well as national and international NGOs, which are interested in cultural issues and art. The financial resources of the initiative consist of grants from EU-based projects, donations from foreign countries and from temporary sponsorships.

⁷ <http://www.anadolukultur.org/en>

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

Anadolu Kültür especially works for building bridges between people from different background and identity. The initiative imagines a society free from prejudices and tolerant towards distinct communities. Its understanding of diversity is mainly based on cultural differences and human rights to practice cultural, religious and ethnic differences. In this respect, it pays special importance to diverse groups' activities and helps their events (i.e., cultural activities of both Kurdish and Armenian communities). Besides, it supports projects on human rights such as film screenings, exhibitions, workshops and conferences by giving specific attention to children and young people.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Since its foundation, Anadolu Kültür has undertaken several successful projects such as the publication of bilingual children's books, which aimed Kurdish and Armenian languages to be included into the curriculum of primary schools. The main objective of this project is to create consciousness for school-aged children of the diverse nature of their community. Although the project was not supported by the state and many people thought that it a big risk to highlight issues on ethnic languages, the project became an important source for discussions on democracy in recent years. Besides, Anadolu Kültür pinpointed the problems of Armenians and other ethnic minorities and organised activities that aimed people with different identities and ethnic background to know each other's daily life and culture. Therefore, it is possible to say that risk taking is an important success factor of Anadolu Kültür, besides the support and dedication of the people who believe that increasing tolerance of different groups to each other is the most important issue in Turkey. However, Anadolu Kültür has faced several failure factors, particularly also the negative stance of the state or local governments and legal constraints in all its working fields. On the other hand, the higher level of annual income compared to other governance arrangements, namely €750.000 per annum, enables it to carry its wide range of activities.

Conclusion

Anadolu Kültür is one of the initiatives that emphasises the positive features of diversity by providing support to culture and arts events in Anatolian cities. Through its activities, it tries to enhance communities' tolerance against diverse cultures. In this respect, it explicitly addresses the problems of some ethnic groups such as Kurds and Armenians and supports their organisations, projects and activities in order to increase their visibility in the society. With the support of the European Union, Anadolu Kültür participates in 'the Armenia-Turkey Normalization Process' programme, which is expected to contribute to the resolution of fundamental problems between these two countries via certain collaborations in different fields such as economy, social, cultural, education and arts.

2.2 Arrangements targeting social mobility

In this section two interesting governance arrangements are introduced, which aims to enhance the social mobility of disadvantaged groups. However, their concerns are quite different, while the first governance initiative, Tarlaşaşı Community Centre, aims to enhance the social mobility of families via increasing their skills by different types of training, the second arrangement, Association for Solidarity with Tarlaşaşı Property Owners and Tenants, aims to enable the people living in Tarlaşaşı neighbourhood to defend the property rights of the people through negotiations with the municipality and the construction company and make them to benefit from the ongoing renewal project.

Tarlabaşı Community Centre/Tarlabaşı Toplum Merkezi (TTM)

Strategy, focus and organisation

The Tarlabaşı Community Centre (TTM) was initiated as a project by the Istanbul Bilgi University Centre for Migration Research in September 2006, aimed at developing a model for social coalescence and multicultural coexistence, fostering participation in urban life. After the finalisation of two terms of the EU project since 2007, the TTM has been operating through funds raised and projects run by Tarlabaşı Community Support Association (TTDD). This was one of the first Community Centre models focused on improving the quality of life in the Tarlabaşı neighbourhood.

The main aim of the TTM is to enhance social mobility, and to accomplish this it provides educational, social and psychological support to residents of Tarlabaşı, especially children, young people and women, most of which belong to disadvantaged groups. TTM also tries to enhance solidarity networks among the neighbourhood residents, promoting participation in social projects and assisting disadvantaged groups in resolving the diverse problems they face.

Since its inception, the TTM has provided assistance to 5,000 children and adults. Ceren Suntekin, Secretary General of the TTDD, explains that the scepticism of people in speaking with NGOs was a primary hurdle they had to overcome. The approach they adopted was for social workers from the Centre to organise home visits, which in time served to change the attitude of the people towards the Centre from negative to positive. After this, the local residents started gradually to visit the TTM to explain their problems and ask for help, which allowed them to launch appropriate activities.

The main activities of the TTM are as follows: organising free courses and workshops on different topics, providing guidance and support on legal and health issues and delivering psychological counselling services. The Centre offers courses on reading and writing, jewellery, sewing, knitting, modelling and carpentry, and organises such recreation activities as concerts, city tours, exhibitions and meetings in order to increase social integration. The Centre has also organised art, rhythm and creative drama workshops for children, besides prenatal care services for women. In addition to all these, within the scope of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture the TTM launched two further projects: “Kadınlarla Resim Çalışması” (Painting with Women), established specifically for women; and “Tarlabaşı’nda Gitar Sesleri” (The Guitar Voices in Tarlabaşı) for children. Vocational courses provide new skills to the unemployed, while the provision of legal services helps ethnic groups and those with different identities, cultural norms and ways of life to protect their human rights.

The TTDD, which undertakes the administrative, organisational and financial duties of the TTM, consists of a chairperson, an administrative board and 52 members. The activities at the TTM are managed by a social worker, two psychologists (one working as a counsellor, the other as volunteer activities coordinator), an administrative assistant, a security guard, five professional trainers and several local and international volunteers that today number about 300. The TTDD also works with various partners in both the private sector and national and international NGOs. Moreover, it maintains good relationships with almost all the residents of the neighbourhood, whose problems are always taken into account during decision-making processes and activity programmes.

In the beginning, the TTM benefitted from EU funding, but since 2007, it has managed to increase its own sources of revenue, including donations collected through the TTDD and financial support from temporary sponsors, including both public and private companies, which

has allowed it to finance its own projects. Membership fees are very low and contribute very little to the upkeep of the Centre. In 2013, the TTM saw a sharp decline in annual revenues: from € 400,000 in 2012, to € 40,000 in 2013 (Tarlabaşı Community Centre, 2014).

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

One of the main concerns of the TTM is to prepare projects and organise activities related to issues in which the government has limited interest, following the guiding principle of “*class, social, economic, culture, gender identity and orientation, ethnic, etc. – all types of diversity should be met respectfully by everyone in society.*”⁸ As such, its activities not only cover children, young people and women, as the most vulnerable groups, but also immigrants, ethnic groups and the LGBTT community. In other words, it provides different support schemes to people of different cultures, identities and sexual orientations. While activities aimed at immigrants, ethnic groups and the LGBTT community are limited, the Centre is able to provide information on relevant organisations to any applicants. Suntekin claims that the initiative would like to help all people living in the neighbourhood, but it is impossible to prepare projects and activities for each of them. Accordingly, priority is given to the most vulnerable, being women, children and young people. She goes on to say that to eliminate the prejudices towards people living in Tarlabaşı, the TTM tries to develop projects that enhance collaboration among the residents of the neighbourhood, and with those located in other parts of the metropolitan area.

Main factors influencing success or failure

The TTM is one of the first and most successful non-profit organisations providing support to the inhabitants of Tarlabaşı. Its main success has been its ability to reach the social groups that receive limited attention. The Centre brings together different segments of the society, including those of different religions, sexual identities and social groups, who are unable to express their problems. The enthusiasm of the volunteers, employees and members of the TTM administrative board have been vital to the success of the Centre, as overcoming the problems of the disadvantaged groups depends greatly on the energy and passion of those involved. According to Suntekin, “*without them, sustaining the activities of the association would be impossible*”. That said, the TTM has faced serious financial problems, and has sometimes run into problems with the public authorities. “*The Turkish Government has no social service culture, and considers non-governmental organisations like ours to be a threat,*” says Suntekin. Since there is not a regular source of funding and no government support, it is rather difficult to sustain its activities. Therefore, in 2013, they left their office and relocated to a much smaller building since they had difficulty to pay rents.

Conclusion

This Centre can be counted among the initiatives in Istanbul that introduce interesting projects to deprived areas, where diverse groups, mostly disadvantaged, live. Although some of its projects may be defined as a dream for people living in this deprived part of the city, such as painting courses for women, it is interesting to see the level of interest activities that the programme has attracted among the neighbourhood women. The ideas put forward by volunteers are rather important in this respect, and according to members of the TTDD, the “*Training Programme for Volunteers*” is their most innovative project. This programme enables volunteers to learn how to practice the existing working schedule, while encouraging them to come up with new ideas and initiate new workshops and courses. Although the organisation has recently faced financial problems, they aim to continue their activities in the future (Tarlabaşı Community Centre, 2014). In the meantime, the TTDD continues its search for local and international funds that will allow the Centre to continue its activities.

⁸ <http://www.tarlabasi.org/tarlabasi-toplum-merkezi-hakkinda.html>

Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Tenants/Tarlabası Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği

Strategy, focus and organisation

In 2006, Beyoğlu Municipality informed people living in Tarlabası of its decision to initiate a renewal project in the neighbourhood. Between 2006 and 2007, the municipality held meetings to give details of the project to the people who owned buildings in the district. In the same year, 2007, the property owners learned that the municipal government had opened an invitation to tender for the construction of nine blocks and 278 buildings. After the tender, the owners were asked by Beyoğlu Municipality to sell their properties to the GAP Construction Company. After many of the owners declared a reluctance to sell, the authorities threatened them with expropriation under Law No. 5366, “Preservation by Renovation and Utilisation by Revitalising of Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties”, which allows local authorities to expropriate property in dilapidated areas in order to implement renewal projects, without the consent of the owners. Fearing expropriation, some of the owners sold their properties to the GAP Construction Company, after which the Solidarity of Tarlabası Property Owners and Tenants was established by the stakeholders in 2008 to prevent the possible demolition of the buildings under the “Tarlabası Renewal Project” of Beyoğlu Municipality⁹ This initiative is no longer active. The legal status of the organisation ended in February 2014.

This initiative, which aimed to protect the rights of property owners in the Tarlabası neighbourhood, would transform into a struggle against the violation of the people’s rights to live in Tarlabası. Although it was established originally to defend the rights of the property owners, over time, the coverage of the association came to include also the tenants residing in Tarlabası, who are mainly from a diverse array of disadvantaged groups. The target group is now anybody who believes that the project, which will require the demolition of buildings, will lead to their forced expulsion from the neighbourhood, and thus a loss of living standards. The main goal of the initiative is to prevent any undesirable outcomes of the Tarlabası Renewal Project, regardless of whether the aggrieved person is a property owner or a tenant. The fight for against urban renewal projects in this neighbourhood means also the fight against the loss of advantages of local residents having lived in a central location where job opportunities are, as well as opportunity to get benefit from the increasing values of their property.

Ahmet Gün, the founder of the initiative, claims that their main strategy is to fight against the renewal project and defend the property rights of the people through negotiations with Beyoğlu municipality and the construction company. Gün claims that the initiative promotes social mobility of residents by enabling them to get benefit from the increasing values of their property and social cohesion by creating a solidarity network of both property owners and tenants who are likely to suffer from the results of the renewal project. The initiative applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) for support, with the claim that the project violates the property rights of the disadvantaged groups. The association also applied to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to halt the possible demolition of houses and the eviction of poor people, who already live in this neighbourhood. The initiative has prepared a report that includes the opinions of academicians and researchers on the existing renewal project, the views of architects who are against the project, and academic research that emphasises the historical importance of the district.

⁹(http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/28/greathomesanddestinations/redevelopment-but-at-what-cost.html?_r=0).

The association had 225 members, with an elected chair and an administrative board. Since all members were either property owners or tenants in Tarlabaşı, they were all involved in the decision-making process, and most participated in the board meetings. The initiative formed collaborative networks with other non-governmental organisations working against other urban transformation projects initiated in Istanbul (for example: Association for the Protection of Property Owners and Tenants in Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray), with whom they launched collaborative activities to share experiences and to find ways of preventing the suffering of people living in neighbourhoods where such projects were carried out. The initiative had access to no financial resources, other than its own revenues (the personal incomes of the members).

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

The renewal project initiated by the municipality was, as claimed by the initiative, in contradiction with the existing multi-cultural, multi-ethnic composition of the neighbourhood. As such, although the key objective of the initiative was to secure the rights of the people living in the neighbourhood, resistance to the project also meant defending its existing diversity, which was seen as a positive feature of the neighbourhood that had to be preserved. As defined by Gün, *“diversity is inherent in life, and a uniform structure of a single religion, ethnic origin, etc. does not and should not exist in any part of the world”*.

Main factors influencing success or failure

According to Gün, the enthusiasm of the founders and the volunteers working for the initiative was the most important asset behind the success of the group, besides their ability to disseminate the possible negative outcomes of the renewal project and attract the support of different intellectuals. This was coupled with a good knowledge of legal procedures and urban transformation legislation that led many other organisations working against urban renewal or transformation projects to seek the advice of the initiative on matters related to legislation, and the necessary procedures to halt renewal projects, thus preventing negative outcomes. Although it was unable to prevent the expropriation of properties and the evictions of many residents, the organisation can still be regarded as successful in the sense that it has created a collective action and resistance against a renewal project that failed to address the needs of all the diverse groups living in Tarlabaşı. As Gün states, *“there are many victims of such urban transformation projects, since the government makes no effort enact legislation that would recognise the needs of the diverse social groups”*.

Conclusion

The most innovative side of the works of the organisation was raising public awareness on the possible negative social consequences of the renewal projects, and uniting people against projects that would destroy the existing social fabric. Although the association is no longer active in terms of its legal status, it continues to struggle for their property and human rights. The lawsuit brought against the project is currently with the Turkish Council of State, and Gün, along with the other members, are following the case and awaiting the final decision. The court decision is seen as key to the future of this struggle. If it goes in the favour of the property owners and tenants, people will have the opportunity to discuss the nature of renewal processes and the context of the ongoing projects in Istanbul.

2.3 Arrangements targeting economic performance

In this section, three NGOs are presented to highlight the governance arrangements to enhance the economic performance of disadvantaged socio-economic and socio-demographic groups. The first two deal mainly with the problems of women, aiming to make them stronger economically through the provision of different kinds of support and opportunities. The third

example is a compatriot association, which is a type of governance arrangement that is unique to Turkey.

Women's Solidarity Foundation (WSF)/Kadınlara Dayanışma Vakfı (KADAV)

Strategy, focus and organisation

Following the earthquake of 17 August 1999 in Marmara, the Women's Solidarity Foundation (WSF) was initiated by a group of volunteers in order to create solidarity among women who had been affected by the disaster. The intention was to provide support to those who had lost their families and homes in the earthquake, beginning with psychological and physical health aid programmes that ran for nine months in the "Women's Tents" set up by the government in Gölcük and Düzce¹⁰. Besides the health program, the initiative also offered vocational courses in such fields as accounting, sewing, computing and candle making, after which volunteers opened Decorative Candle and Home Textile Workshops in Gölcük at the Şirinköy Temporary Shelter Region. As a result of this activity, 45 women started businesses producing goods for the market, and in October 2001 a group of women who had participated in the workshops set up a cooperative named the "FİSKOS Çevre Kültür ve İşletme Kooperatifi" (Environment Culture and Management Cooperative). In 2002, the WSF built the "Yeni Adım – Women Education and Consultation Centre" in Kocaeli-Köseköy that was used not only by the WSF, but also by other women's organisations. The centre provides psychological and legal counselling services for women and children, while also running courses in computing, literacy, creativity and artistic production, and theatre-drama. Moreover, the WSF coordinates an employment generation programme of the Business and Employment Preparation and Orientation Unit. In 2004, the WSF moved to Istanbul launched activities there, specifically in the Beyoğlu District.

Today, the WSF takes steps to strengthen the social, economic and cultural conditions of women to give them more independence. To this end, it provides consultation services on judicial issues, with the objective being to defend the rights of disadvantaged groups, while also initiating participatory projects aimed at social cohesion, and runs vocational courses to enhance the economic performance of women. In line with these aims, the WSF coordinates "Women's Human Rights" seminars and other activities in collaboration with local governments and non-profit organisations in Istanbul, and cooperates with other Women's Organisations to initiate common activities and campaigns. The WSF has participated in campaigns calling for amendments to the Civil Code, Turkish Criminal Law, Social Security Law and other legislation related to women's rights. It is a member of both national and international platforms, including the European Women's Lobby, the Women's Initiative for Peace, the Working Group on Stopping Violence, the Solidarity Group with Foreign Women and the Feminist Istanbul Collective, besides many others. Furthermore, since 2007 the organisation has taken over the tasks of the Women's Labour and Employment Platform (Kadın Emeği ve İstihdamı Girişimi) on organisational matters. The Foundation has led a number of diverse projects, including "Solidarity Network for Refugee Women", "Body Workshops", "And After" and "Let's talk first – Meetings on Sex Work".

The initiative has a flat organisational set-up of 38 members, and Beyza Bilal, a WSF representative, asserts "*participants can become actively involved in all the activities and decision-making processes*". The WSF has long-term and short-term relationships with different stakeholders and partners that include private sector entities and other NGOs. The foundation is financed through

¹⁰ Gölcük, Düzce, Kocaeli-Köseköy are neighbouring subprovinces/provinces. In administrative terms. However, without any doubt they are a part of Istanbul City Region.

EU-based project grants and donations from foreign countries and government departments, and from the income it earns from a building in Kocaeli. The total revenues of the WSF vary between € 50–80,000 per annum, with which it provides assistance to 150-200 women every year.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

The WSF describes itself as a feminist, socialist and collective organisation, with a target audience that is mainly women, although it also initiates projects for children, and different ethnic and LGBTT groups. From this perspective, although diversity is defined as one of the concerns of the organisation, it aims to support as a priority women from the most vulnerable groups in society. The WSF operates under the guiding principal that “*no group has the right of domination over any other group*”, indicating that the foundation’s perception of diversity is shaped by the notion of equality.

Main factors influencing success or failure

The WSF is one of the most successful foundations in Turkey working on the many problems faced by women. According to Bilal, their greatest success factor is the volunteers who work to reach the hundreds of women in need of support. The foundation, however, needs more volunteers to increase its ability to monitor discrimination, violations, etc. and to organise workshops (for female employees in textile factories, and eco-feminism workshops), conferences, meetings on women’s employment policies) and to raise awareness on women’s rights in different fields. In addition to these, it seeks to introduce new concepts and ideas related to women’s solidarity, to develop different strategies to affect public policy making, to support groups, which are unable to express their problems themselves, to help people who are hesitant or afraid to express their identity, and so on. The WSF faces many problems in reaching its targets, including those related to organisation, the labour force and legal regulations. In particular, associations and foundations are generally spurned by the state, since it believes that such organisations are geared up to turning society against the state. For this reason, the state is reluctant to provide support to such groups. The lack of financial support by local and central government, where still very important, is one the main failure factor of this initiative as other cases studied in this report.

Conclusion

The WSF is a bottom-up initiative, although after a short period it took on an official status in order to continue its activities in collaboration with different public and semi-public organisations, which gave it access to financial support. Today, the work of the WSF covers many different issues related to empowerment of women, believing that the economic empowerment of women is the key to social cohesion. To this end, it prepares various projects, workshops and courses, and gives great importance to reporting its activities and making them accessible to all. These reports were defined by the interviewee as the most innovative work of the foundation.

Foundation for the Support of Women's Work/Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı (KEDV)

Strategy, focus and organisation

The Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work has, been working since 1986 to improve the quality of life of women and children living in deprived areas. To this end, it helps women become economically independent and improve their leadership skills, encouraging them to start businesses and supporting grassroots initiatives. KEDV provides women’s cooperatives information on legal procedures and how to deal with local authorities, besides training on reporting and accounting. The foundation also assists cooperatives in analysing existing market

opportunities or creating their own markets (shops to sell products made by women, creating online e-commerce opportunities, etc.). KEDV also assists the *Women's Cooperatives Communication Network* by organising regular meetings of different women's cooperatives, allowing them to share their experiences, exchange opinions and discuss existing problems. The Foundation has linked approximately 80 women's cooperatives across Turkey, each of which has their own administration, with KEDV providing only intermediary support. The Foundation runs a micro-credit institution named MAYA that offers credits to women who are interested in starting or expanding their businesses. Its aim is to help small groups of women to bring their own savings together as seed money for initiating a business or a cooperative. The foundation also operates "NAHIL", which is a shop in Beyoğlu that sells the products produced by women's cooperatives from all around Turkey. The revenues generated by NAHIL and MAYA are used to support women's cooperatives.

The organisation also develops alternative methods for early childcare and education services, delivering these services especially to low-income communities. It has also opened and operates day-care centres (named *Women and Children Centres*) in deprived neighbourhoods, through which it runs a "*neighbourhood mothers*" programme to train and support mothers who work as volunteers in these centres, providing childcare services for children aged from zero to six. Neighbourhood mothers also conduct home visits, give training seminars to mothers and steers them towards professional organizations or institutions where they can get professional help related to childcare. Each year, the foundation reaches almost 3,000 women and children. The childcare services are very important for women's economic deliberation, since they enable women to work outside home and become active economic agents of community in different ways.

According to Ayşe Coşkun, who is one the Program Officers at KEDV, the foundation aims to promote social cohesion through solidarity and cooperation. It aims to contribute to social projects, to increase participation in social, economic and political decision-making processes and to enable women to become active members of the local community. Furthermore, it encourages women to get involved in the economic development process, while providing leadership training and financial literacy programmes to promote the social mobility of women.

The organisational structure of the foundation comprises a director, an administrative board and paid workers. In general, there are between 20 and 40 paid workers in the initiative, supported by occasional volunteers (around 10). The Foundation participates in collaborative activities with national and international organisations such as the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, local government, national and international NGOs, women's collectives and private companies, with which it has entered project partnerships. Recently, women cooperatives have produced mannequins for display in the shop windows of Boyner, a famous Turkish retail company. The organisation is financed through project-based EU grants and other international funding bodies, while additional funding is provided by its supporters and project partners in the private sector, and through the donations of individuals and private companies. In 2013 its annual income was €330,000.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

In this initiative, the perception of diversity is focused on socio-economic diversity of its target groups, namely women with different identities, ethnic and cultural characteristics that belonged to poor families. Therefore, most of their activities are conducted in deprived areas. They help women living in deprived parts of the urban area, regardless of whom they are or where they come from. This approach is a reflection of the *equity* principle in the provision of equal opportunities for all, and concerns *equality*, believing that disparities between disadvantaged groups and the rest of the population should be removed or at least reduced.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Enthusiastic coordinators (e.g. cooperative founders), workers, volunteers and trust-based relationships constitute the main factors of success of the initiative. It is through their hard work that the foundation has managed to reach many women and children, helping them to launch businesses and make use of their labour power to make money. It has also helped the women to improve their living standards, and encouraged them to express their opinions, demands, problems and identities more explicitly. This initiative, however, has experienced the common drawbacks of a lack of volunteers, and the restrictive regulations and bureaucracy faced when initiating women's cooperatives, which can be understood as the main obstacles in the way of sustainable success.

Conclusion

This is one classical example of a governance arrangement being initiated to provide support to disadvantaged communities. In initiating new activities, it follows quite innovative projects, one of which is *women's cooperatives*. What makes this initiative distinct is its status as one of the first organisations to provide micro-credits to women's cooperatives in Turkey; but further to this, it has also opened Women and Child Centres, through which the foundation carries out such programmes as parent-managed day care centres, neighbourhood mothers and playrooms. With these programs, KEDV strives to develop new methods in early childhood care and education, and has already developed a programme called *Respect for Diversity in Early Childhood* that aims to raise children who are respectful of diversity through high-quality, affordable early education.

Alucra Development and Education Foundation (ADEF)/Alucra Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı*Strategy, focus and organisation*

Economic growth and industrialisation policies resulted in rapid urbanisation and rural-urban migration in Turkey between 1950 and 1980. The period saw many people from less-developed regions move to the country's metropolitan areas, especially Istanbul. Alucra, one of the districts of Giresun Province, was among the settlements that were affected heavily by outmigration, with around 60,000 of its population having moved to Istanbul by the late 1980s. Many of these immigrants faced severe socio-economic problems in Istanbul, since most of them were illiterate, unemployed and had no social security. In an attempt to mitigate the many problems faced in such a large metropolitan area by the incomers, and to increase the solidarity, relationships and communication between these people, the Alucra Development and Education Foundation (ADEF) was established in 1998. The initiative declares its aims as "to provide education and health support and moral assistance to students, poor, underprivileged and homeless immigrants from Alucra, while also addressing the need of the people still living in the district, protecting local Alucra customs and traditions, and improving social, economic and cultural facilities in the district."¹¹ Although the list of aims is long, the main motivation of this foundation is to enhance the economic performance of all immigrants from Alucra with the help of economic solidarity networks.

In this regard, ADEF develops projects to promote common values, solidarity and assistance, such as the *Flag Day* organised by the organisation to raise money for the poor, students, homeless people, etc. In addition, in order to increase economic potential of people from Alucra, during these activities, ADEF facilitates the creation of economic networks between businesspersons of many different sectors. Moreover, to enhance social mobility of workers,

¹¹ <http://www.alucravakfi.com/kurumsal/tuzugumuz.html>

ADEF establishes solidarity networks between workers and employers to highlight new job opportunities.

The organisational structure of ADEF comprises a Board of Trustees, an Assembly, a Board of Directors and an Honorary Committee. The Board of Trustees is the highest decision-making agency of the Foundation, and has the authority to elect or dismiss members of the Board of Directors and approve any changes in the statutes of the Foundation. Although the organisation chart depicts a hierarchy of authority, Bekçi says that the views of the board trustees and grassroots demands have always been taken into consideration in the decision-making process. *“The total membership of the foundation is about 600, and all of the members are also volunteers”*, says Bekçi. All branches of the Foundation, such as Youth and Women’s branches, are involved in the decisions and preparations related to the Ekin Cultural Festival, which is a cultural event that is organised each year. The financial resources of the foundation include grants, aid and donations, including some financial assistance from the central government for the organisation of cultural events. In total the income was about €42,000 in 2013. On average, some 500 people benefit from the support provided by the Foundation each year.

Perception and use of the concept of diversity

ADEF is one of the compatriots (*Hemşehri*) associations in Istanbul, initiated by people born in Alucra. Its main objectives are to enhance solidarity among the people from the Giresun district of Alucra who now live in Istanbul, but also to mitigate the problems faced in their region. Rather than developing projects and policies to address directly the differences in lifestyles, attitudes or habits, the aim is to help immigrants from a relatively less developed region to adapt to metropolitan conditions, thus making a substantial contribution to the economic development of Istanbul, both at a metropolitan and neighbourhood level.

Main factors influencing success or failure

Bekçi says that the successes of ADEF may be listed as follows: providing services to the people of Alucra; obtaining scholarships for the children of people from Alucra; and providing support to groups that may be unable to express their problems, such as the elderly, women or illiterate people. The enthusiasm of the founders, project employees and volunteers is the key contributor to the achievements of the Foundation, while the failure factors in the way of expansion are financial limitations and the levels of skill of the labour force. To reach necessary amount of financial resources has been a critical issue for this initiatives, similar to others. Moreover, the people working for the foundation and volunteers do not have experience and skills on specific issues, especially on managing economic support programmes and legislation on economic incentives and other regulations: Therefore, the efficiency of the support provided cannot reach to expected levels.

Conclusion

ADEF is a good example of a bottom-up initiative that aims to support immigrants who may have difficulty adapting to the working and living conditions in a large metropolitan area. The organisation enhances solidarity networks among the Alucra immigrants, which is expected to facilitate improvements in their social mobility and economic performance. According to the head of the foundation, arranging student scholarships is the most significant activity of the foundation: *“these students will get good jobs and earn more money in the future, and they will make a major contribution to the Foundation”*. The support provided for cultural activities, on the other hand, allows the beneficiaries to integrate into a different urban environment without losing their cultural characteristics or identities. The most important (according to Bekçi, the most innovative) activity of the foundation has been the yearly organisation of the Ekin Cultural Festival, although the Foundation would like to organise further festivals and activities in Istanbul

and Alucra, for which they are collaborating with various village associations. Overall, their activities may be considered as contributing to economic performance and participation of disadvantaged groups to the social and economic strength of the city.

3 Synthesis and analysis of the results

Synthesis of the investigated governance arrangements

With few exceptions, most of the initiatives presented above deal with social cohesion in one way or another, even if this is not always straightforward. The general idea shared by the initiatives is the empowerment of target groups and enabling them to have access to public services and an acceptable level of life quality can help a higher social cohesion in the society. It is parallel to the understanding by the Council of Europe (2004: 1) “*social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation*”. According to the Council of Europe, welfare implies not only equity and non-discrimination in access to human rights but also the dignity of each person and the recognition of their abilities and their contribution to society. However, neoliberal public policy, which centres on the goal of economic efficiency, disregards social citizenship and provision of welfare services for all. Therefore, the initiatives introduced above try to empower disadvantaged groups, increase their economic performance and provide assistance for social mobility by respecting the diversity of their cultures, opinions and identities. In this respect, they undertake a very important role to build a cohesive society. The initiatives presented in the report although have different foci, namely social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance, as it is clear from Table 1 most of them try to achieve all of these three dimensions.

Table 1: Contribution of the governance arrangements towards the three main objectives

Governance arrangements	Social cohesion	Social mobility	Economic performance
ASAM Istanbul Initiative (Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants)	***	*	*
Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (GÖÇ-DER)	***	**	**
Gökkuşluğu Women's Association	***	**	**
Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation	***	**	
Istanbul LGBTTT	***	*	
Roma People Platform	**	*	*
Anatolian Culture	***		
Tarlabaşı Community Centre	**	****	**
Association for Solidarity with Tarlabaşı Property Owners and Tenants	*	***	**
Women's Solidarity Foundation (WSF)	*	**	***
Foundation for the Support of Women's Work	**	**	***
Alucra Development and Education Foundation (ADEF)	**	**	***

* = low contribution; ** = medium contribution; *** = high contribution

Moreover, as can be understood from the short portrayals of governance arrangements introduced in the previous section, there are several target groups that are receiving more attention and have become the focus of these arrangements.

Of the twelve initiatives, seven aim to enhance social cohesion. These initiatives work in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, but they mostly serve the whole metropolitan area. Among them, two define women as their target group, but with different perspectives. These initiatives try to support women, increase their economic performance and enhance their social mobility in order to create a more cohesive community. This commitment to women's rights dates back to Turkey's foundation more than 80 years ago, when intensive reforms were enacted to provide women with equal rights and opportunities as a founding principle of the new Republic. It was in 1934 when women in Turkey were given equal voting and election rights, long before their counterparts in some Western European countries (Bozkurt, 2011). That said, women in Turkey still face problems, although of different kinds. According to the official statistics for 2009, only 26 percent of adult women in Turkey are active in the labour market, and the participation rate for women in the urban area is even lower (22 percent) (Ilkcaracan, 2012). The issue of unemployment seems to be a specific phenomenon for the overwhelming majority of Turkish women, who tend to stay out of the labour market as homemakers. A low level of education and a lack of skills are important factors in this regard, besides the patriarchal relations in the family. Furthermore, marriage also serves as an institutional barrier to participation in the labour force, and the need to acquire a husband's consent to work, along with further restrictions related to the social environment and social control mechanisms (Ilkcaracan, 2012). Moreover, women are generally discouraged from entering the labour market by the difficulty in reconciling work and family life, the limited childcare facilities, unequal pay for female labour, traditional hindrances for working women (such as pregnancy and night work) and existing tax-benefit systems (Acar et al., 2007). In this regard, it is the intention of the initiatives studied in this report to increase education among women, to provide them with the skills necessary for employment and compensating the limited facilities provided to working-women.

Some women are obviously more vulnerable than other women are, such as immigrants or women that belong to different ethnic origin. Abadan-Unat (1977) claims that most of the women, who migrated to metropolitan areas or to large settlements from rural areas, are both personally and mentally unprepared for a new life in an alien environment. Moreover, the changing nature of the social environment and social control mechanisms all affect intra- and inter-familial relationships. Migration appears to be a factor affecting both family life and the status of women; however, whether or not structural familial changes and need for women to contribute to the family income lead to the emancipation of women is a critical question. According to Abadan-Unat (1977), migration, as a component of modernisation, has a dual function: promoting the emancipation of women; and creating a false climate of liberation, which actually is restricted to increased purchasing power. In this situation, there is need to provide support and institutional help to women that face significant problems in urban areas. During this process of urban integration, a reversal of family roles occurs, raising questions related to the patriarchal relations and unchallenged position of the male members of the family, and it is these changes in roles and the increasing degree of emancipation sought by women are the main reasons for violence against women. To address this issue, various NGO women's groups in Turkey since the 1980s have initiated different activities to address domestic violence, playing a significant role in raising public awareness on the issue.

Ranking second among the focus groups of the initiatives related to social cohesion are immigrants of different ethnic origins, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status, including international immigrants and asylum seekers. Although Turkish society refers to itself as "a

society that tolerates differences”, a comparative research on this supposed tolerance does not support this claim, although there is an increasing tolerance of diversities (Yılmaz, 2006). Studies show that most people do not want to live in a neighbourhood with people who differ from the majority, and so in many Turkish metropolises, people from different ethnic groups, origins, religions and cultural backgrounds prefer to form ghettos in different parts of the metropolitan area, although Istanbul has a more cosmopolitan character. It is inevitable that this type of residential segregation enhances exclusionary attitudes, especially against immigrants with disadvantaged conditions, and it would be fair to say that the central government does not consider this issue to be among its responsibilities. Of the initiatives introduced in the previous section, two of them work with different immigrant groups, namely international immigrants and asylum seekers, forced immigrants from the Southeast regions of Turkey.

The third target group of social cohesion initiatives is the LGBTT (lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and transvestite) community and Roma people, which, it can be said, constitutes the most vulnerable parts of society as the most prone to exclusion. Activities to increase their integration into society without repression of their identity are important, and the initiatives introduced in this report aims to make them more visible, which can be considered an important step in their integration without discrimination. The Roma People Platform is also important in this respect. On the other hand, Anatolian Culture is an important platform that aims to support social cohesion in order to create a medium of exchange of cultural activities among people that belonged to different cultural backgrounds.

While the initiatives that focus on social cohesion define their target groups based on disadvantages of people, two of the social mobility initiatives focus on particular neighbourhoods that are home to a number of diverse groups, namely Tarlabaşı Community Centre and Association for Solidarity with Tarlabaşı Property Owners and Tenants. The two initiatives introduced are highly relevant, since protecting the diversity of a neighbourhood and encouraging social mobility of different groups, including excluded and marginalised groups, to become members of the same community is important for the creation of diverse and creative urban centres.

Among the three governance initiatives that focus on economic performance, two of them aim to support women to be active members of the labour market. The third case is the initiative that aim to enhance economic performance of immigrants from a small town on the Black Sea coast of Turkey (Alucra), aiming to create solidarity networks. However, all of these initiatives see the increasing economic performance of these disadvantaged groups as a means of social mobility.

Conceptualisation of diversity

Although the targets groups are different, there are no significant differences among the initiatives in their conceptualisation of diversity, with all declaring that diversity is a positive feature that should be supported. Furthermore, they all complain about government policies, suggesting that *“recent government policies try to standardise and homogenise people within society”* (GÖÇDER interviews). Another common assertion is the need for the enhancement of *“social cohesion and social mobility by protecting the distinct identities”* (ASAM-Istanbul). The diversity perception of the initiatives is expressed as *“differences shape society”* and *“we are together with our differences”*, with such comments being very common among the initiatives organised to defend the rights of different disadvantaged groups and to provide them with support.

The common approach when organising their activities is to ignore the differences among the target groups, with priority given to none, and nobody excluded. In fact, most of the initiatives

try to encompass different groups facing same problems, in order get support from different social groups. Equality, in this regard is a common concept shaping the activities of NGOs. For example Mor Çatı (the initiative focused on violence against women) declares that “*the different needs of support of women facing violence should be treated equally*”, while WSF claims that “*class, social, economic, culture, gender identity and orientation, ethnic, etc., all types of diversity should be met respectfully by everyone in the society*”. While the society has problems to recognise the diversity, it has also difficulty to provide new perspectives on hyper-diversity. Especially the increasing political discourse on “others” and “otherness” is the main obstacle to introduce policies on hyper-diversity.

Most portrayals of governance arrangements involve people or groups seeing and reacting to the disadvantages faced by certain target groups, and organises to *help* them. Although most insist that they maintain horizontal relations, often, different roles and levels of power are necessary in an organisation. Even when people organise together for mutual benefits, such as in the case of the Association for Solidarity with Tarlabaşı Property Owners and Tenants, the importance of different roles for different people in governance arrangements becomes apparent.

Localisation of the main factors influencing success or failure

The main factors influencing the success of governance arrangements can be given under six headings.

- First, the characteristics and determination of the target groups are indicated as vital by many of the arrangements. While a well-defined target group can be considered an important factor in reaching people with real needs, the “determination of women who apply and ask for help” is emphasised as significant in defining the success of the initiative by Mor Çatı. This issue was raised also by Istanbul LGBTI, which emphasised how the deliberation of the target audience is important in the success of activities based on work with “disadvantaged” groups, since the target group should not conceal their diverse nature and characteristics, but aim at the emancipation of their diversities.
- Second, almost all initiatives agree on the importance of numbers and especially skills of volunteers, with many declaring that without volunteers, their activities would not be possible. In fact, only a few of the organisations studied in the report employ workers in order to achieve their aims.
- Third, collective action and collaborative activities among the initiatives working for the same purposes strengthens the position of such groups. According to Gökkuşığı Women’s Association representatives, their success is an outcome of collective actions among women-based NGOs and initiatives such as Mor Çatı and the Initiative of Women Effort and Employment (Kadın Emeği ve İstihdamı Girişimi [KEİG]).
- Fourth, the organisational structure and enthusiasm of the leaders of an initiative are indicated as an important issue in its success. In this regard, non-hierarchical relations, contributions of the volunteers and the focal target group are the organisational characteristics that define the level of success of these initiatives.
- Fifth, a good knowledge of existing legislation and technical expertise are defined as imperative in the support of target groups. The interviewees indicate that existing legislation on diversity related issues are not clear, and necessitate expertise when attempting to resolve people’s problems, especially those related to immigration.
- Sixth, trust relationships are deemed vital for the success of any initiative.

The failure factors indicated by the initiatives can be grouped under three headings.

- For all the initiatives, regardless of focus, the lack of financial resources was voiced as a problem. The contributions of members, volunteers and other supporters are usually limited, and some organisations engage in revenue-raising activities in order to increase their resources. Interestingly, the contributions of international organisations, especially the EU, were deemed significant for many of the initiatives, and one of the reasons why voluntary groups organise as an association or foundation is so that they can receive support from such organisations.
- Restrictive legislation and bureaucratic procedures are defined as another failure factor. Existing legislation is often cited as giving no support for government arrangements, and this has been given as the reason for missed targets. The Women's Solidarity Foundation defines the most important factor in their failures as "*organisational, labour force and legal regulations*", while many initiatives complain about *bureaucratic procedures*.
- The third issue raised by the different initiatives is the attitude of the government. As the Tarlabaşı Community Centre asserts, the "*Turkish Government does not have a social service culture and it considers non-governmental organisations like ours to be a threat*". Although there is a substantial change in the attitude of local and central governments towards non-government organisations, local initiatives and ad hoc networks in recent years, still shared decision-making between governments and local initiatives is not common. Many government officials are sceptical about the activities of local initiatives and think that they are not intended to fill a gap in government services or to collaborate with them, but mobilising the people to raise their voice in protest against government policies.

Identification of new ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts

It cannot be said that governance arrangements come with innovative ideas, as their main features of innovation lie in their activities and practices. For example, the Tarlabaşı Community Centre claims that their *training programme for volunteers* is rather new and innovative, while the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work states that the *women's cooperative* model they introduced, as the first of its kind in Turkey, makes it distinctive and innovative. Besides cooperatives, Women and Child Centres are claimed as innovative, especially those that are managed by parents. Moreover, MAYA, the micro-credit institution that offers credits to women to start or expand their businesses, seems quite new for Istanbul.

4 Conclusion

The issues focussed upon by governance arrangements are those in which local and central government either have no interest, or lack efficiency. Governance initiatives serve as counteracting mechanisms to address areas in which the neoliberal state is lacking. As such, the focus of governance initiatives and the way they are organised is crucial for understanding how diversity is understood and practiced in a certain urban setting and in a certain country. Although the initiatives introduced above are categorised as arrangements for social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance, it is possible to see, either explicitly or implicitly, two particular issues, namely, employment and human rights.

Improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged, while also preparing them for the labour market or assisting them in raising their capacity for self-employment, are the common targets of these governance arrangements. The main reason for such a consensus is the belief the only way to integrate minorities into society is through employment. In particular, the governance arrangements dealing with women's issues or with the problems of people of different ethnic backgrounds and identities (including illegal immigrants and LGBTT people) believe that the

only means of emancipation is via the labour market. While many consider employment to be essential for integration into a certain society or for advancement in status, Syrett and Sepulveda (2012) assert that this type of thinking has certain drawbacks, since most of these people can only access the lower ends of the labour market with very low wages. Recent neoliberal policies and practices reveal that unskilled and lower educated people compete for low-paid jobs, which opens them up to even more exploitation. During the roundtable discussions on 15 May, this issue was emphasised with reference to the Syrian immigrants, who accepted work for very low wages, leading to a fall in the average wages of unskilled workers. İhsan İlze from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the discussions indicated that these people accepted wages that were less than half the average, which led entrepreneurs to replace their existing employees with Syrian immigrants.

The above evaluation of cases from Istanbul-Beyoğlu reveals that *human rights* constitute the leitmotiv of the different governance arrangements, being the major theme of many of the governance arrangements, although not declared explicitly by some. This emphasis on human rights raises an important issue, namely, the accountability of the state. If the state cannot provide basic human rights to all groups, it is possible to legitimate the existing neoliberal policies. Ethnic groups in particular claim that the state refrains from undertaking its responsibilities, and this prohibits certain groups from accessing public services due to language barriers. İlyas Erdem from GOÇ-DER highlights this issue for those who have been forced to leave their villages due to terrorist activity in Southeastern Anatolia, emphasising that the problems of ethnic groups have been transferred to NGOs with access to only limited financial resources. Similarly, human rights and equality between residents and citizens are not among the priority issues of the government, which has led to a mushrooming of different kinds of governance arrangements related to human rights.

In this report, most of the cases presented are formal arrangements that can be defined as NGOs. This is no coincidence, as the way they are organised indicates us, soon after the beginning of the initiatives, they tend to gain status as an association, foundation, union etc. As Ayşe Yetmen of KADAV claimed during the roundtable meeting, having a legal status facilitates the initiative in becoming more visible, allowing it to forge closer contacts with local and central government departments and, most importantly, to receive funding from both national and international bodies. For many institutions and private firms, a legal status is a necessary condition for obtaining funding from such governance initiatives; however, this may sometimes prevent an organisation from acting independently, and may restrict some of the activities they consider important. The interview results show that instead of staying as a voluntary group, many initiatives prefer to formalise their activities. Networking among organisations focused on similar issues is considered important by certain initiatives, and many claim membership of international alliances.

An evaluation of the nature of governance arrangements and their relationships with local and central government helps to understand the way issues of diversity are dealt with. Most governance arrangements seek to form contacts with central government, believing, somewhat optimistically, that they can affect government policies and practice. That said, most governance arrangements have uneasy relationships with central and local governments and expect support, especially in the form of financing.

Governance arrangements face a difficult task in their attempts “*to recognise and preserve difference, yet still pursue equality*”, in that the two sides are contradictory, and as such, their goals can be considered as rather ambitious. Despite this, almost all of the participants from the different

governance arrangements cited this as their primary aim, emphasising that a significant driver of their success is the demands and deliberations of the people asking for help.

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6 Appendix

List of the interviewed persons and the dates of interviews

- *Gizem Demirci Al Kadaab*, Project Coordinator, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants/Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği (ASAM/SGDD) 10.02.2014
- *Ilyas ERDEM*, The Head, Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture/ Göç Edenler Sosyal Yardımlaşma Ve Kültür Derneği (GÖÇ-DER) 13.02.2014
- *Deniz GÖKSEL*, *Fitnat DURMUŞOĞLU*, Representatives of the Association, Gökkuşluğu Women Association/Gökkuşluğu Kadın Derneği 14.02.2014
- *Nacide BERBER*, Programme Coordinator, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation/Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı 13.02.2014
- *Hülya TAŞTEKİN*, Social Works Coordinator, İstanbul LGBTT Solidarity Association/İstanbul LGBTT Dayanışma Derneği 14.02.2014
- *Hacer FOGGO*, Activist, Roma People Platform/Roman Platform, 15.05.2014
- *Serra ÖZHAN YÜKSEL*, Project Coordinator, Anadolu Kültür/Anatolian Culture, 15.05.2014
- *Ceren SUNTEKİN*, Secretary General, Tarlabası Community Centre/Tarlabası Toplum Merkezi (TTM) 10.02.2014
- *Ahmet GÜN*, The Founder, Association for Solidarity with Tarlabası Property Owners and Tenants/Tarlabası Mülk Sahipleri ve Kiracıları Kalkındırma ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği 14.02.2014
- *Beyza BİLAL*, Representative, Women's Solidarity Foundation (WSF)/Kadınlarla Dayanışma Vakfı(KADAV) 11.02.2014
- *Ayşe COŞKUN*, Programme Officer, Foundation for the Support of Women's Work/Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı (FFSW/KEDV) 13.02.2014
- *Halil BEKÇİ*, Volunteer, Alucra Development and Education Foundation (ADEF)/Alucra Kalkınma ve Eğitim Vakfı 10.02.2014

List of participants of the round-table talk

Date: May 15, 2014

Place: Ramada Istanbul

- *Ayşe Yetmen*, Women's Solidarity Foundation/Kadınlarla Dayanışma Vakfı(WSF/KADAV)
- *Ceren Suntekin*, Tarlabası Community Centre/Tarlabası Toplum Merkezi (TTM) 10.02.2014
- *Ayşe Coşkun*, Foundation for the Support of Women's Work/Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı (FFSW/KEDV)
- *Nacide Berber*, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation/Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı
- *Ilyas Erdem*, Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (GÖÇ-DER)
- *Tüzün Baycan*, Istanbul Technical University, Department of City and Regional Planning
- *İrfan İlze*, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Urban Transformation, Directorate of Urban Planning
- *Zeynep Erdal Caner*, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Urban Transformation, Directorate of Urban Planning
- *Neslihan Küçükdemiral*, Department of Urban Transformation, Directorate of Urban Planning