



Balkan Cities Network

ISTANBUL WORKSHOPS





B40 Balkan Cities Network Local Climate Action and Local Democracy and Migration working groups came together on 13-17 September 2022 in Istanbul. Distinguished participants of B40 Network member cities discussed the agendas of the working groups in detail at these workshops.



B40 Network Local Climate Action Working Group

Local Climate Action working group started to workshop by evaluating the working areas and agenda. It was emphasized that the working group should focus on the agenda issues. It was stated that it is important for the member cities to join their forces in the working group. Local Climate Action working group evaluated the importance of the member cities preparing a climate action plan. The advantages of preparing an inventory and preparing an inventory for the prevention of emissions are mentioned. Subsequently, topics such as categorization of emissions according to their capacities, calculation methodologies, emission factors were mentioned. It was also suggested the idea that basic information on this subject could be shared on buses and billboards to public.



Participants shared their projects to raise awareness about climate change. Head of IMM Environmental Protection and Control Department Prof. Dr. Mr. Ayşen Erdinçler said that a very comprehensive declaration including climate justice could be created. She stated that as a result of the workshops, a text that could be ready for the signatures of the mayors could be put forward. Local Climate Action working group discussed the issue of awareness raising and education on transport-related air pollution. It exchanged views by sharing good practices and suggested new views in this regard. For example, organizing joint activities in open green areas and city parks, installing solar panels and charging stations in parks, closing some pre-determined areas to traffic at the same time, organizing exhibitions, painting competitions, library events where children can actively participate, and encouraging municipal employees to use public transportation, a tree planting event symbolizing the growth of the B40 Network were shared. The idea of carrying out these mentioned projects in the model cities first and sharing the results with other member cities was advocated. After the workshop, a technical visit was organized to the air quality measurement center in Eyüp.

Local Climate Action working group stated the importance of carrying out awareness-raising activities on the effects of environmental noise on human and environmental health in cities. In order to provide technical support and sharing experiences on measuring environmental noise and resolving complaints they agreed to focus on the issue. On the last day of the workshop, a presentation on waste management of Istanbul was made. The responsibility areas of the municipality in waste management and the process of waste management were shared with the participants. Topics such as waste transfer, landfills, leachate treatment, energy generation from waste, heat treatment (incineration), medical waste management, special waste management, city cleaning, corporate zero waste management, electronic waste, awareness raising activities and round makerspace events titles are mentioned.



It has been mentioned that Istanbul's waste management strategy operates in the form of prevention, reuse, recycling and disposal. It was shared with the guests that various trainings and campaigns were organized, investments were made and projects were developed in the field of waste management. Istanbul's 2050 waste management targets were presented to the participants. Following the workshop, Yenibosna Solid Waste Transfer Center, Europe's largest "Waste Incineration and Energy Production Facility" in Kemerburgaz, and the Organic Waste, Medical Waste Facilities, Garbage Leachate Treatment Facility in Odayeri, etc. a large-scale technical visit was carried out.



B40 Network Local Democracy and Migration Working Group

Local Democracy and Migration working group made an assessment of the issues on its agenda and discussed the new issues proposed to be included in the agenda. The issue of migration came to the fore among the agenda. Member cities' policies, business plans and works on migration were evaluated. In this area, the sharing of authority and responsibility between local and central governments was evaluated. It was emphasized that the responsibilities undertaken by local governments are extremely important. It was also emphasized that it is important to cooperate among member cities in this regard.



It was stated that the issue of migration is related to many issues such as development, security, gender equality and urban transformation, and information was shared about the comprehensive strategies implemented in this regard. Applications made in member cities for the integration of immigrants into social life were discussed. The importance of cooperation between local governments and non-governmental organizations on migration was mentioned. In this respect, views were exchanged on what kind of collaborations are made in member cities.



Local Democracy and Migration working group discussed the issue of cooperative-based and entrepreneurial-based support of the local democracy on the basis of gender equality. It is stated that the aim of this issue is to support women's economic empowerment among B40 Network member cities. Therefore women entrepreneurs and cooperatives have to be supported by the member cities. The member cities have to take the issues of mapping of women's cooperatives, especially cooperatives that include immigrant women, encouraging the establishment of cooperative support centers and supporting commercial potential by establishing a joint database, fundraising activities will be held for joint empowerment works. In addition they stated the importance of sharing and promoting support activities and best practices of the member cities for women's cooperatives.



Local Democracy and Migration working group also discussed the issue of city council and participatory local democracy. Opinions were shared about the city council practices in member cities. It is stated that increasing city council practices and strengthening civic decision-making mechanisms through experience sharing is the main purpose of the working group. The expected result is to define methods, tools and good practices for inclusive and resilient local governance have been mainstreamed in the B40 Network member cities.

The importance of city councils to ensure interaction between non-governmental organizations and municipalities was mentioned. It was underlined that is extremely important for non-governmental organizations to increase interaction among themselves. Participants gave information about the city councils in their cities. The problems faced by the city councils and their solutions were evaluated. The most important elements during the establishment of city councils were discussed. The legal infrastructure, organizational governance structure and operational processes regarding city councils were discussed in detail. Local Democracy and Migration working group also discussed the participatory budget. The contributions of the participatory budget to the development of local democracy were evaluated. Participatory budget practices of member cities were examined in detail.



Local Democracy and Migration working group evaluated what kind of projects could be put forward in the next phase. It was emphasized that common points should be determined among the member cities. It was stated that the cities of Istanbul and Athens are in a similar situation in terms of refugees and migration, and that the two cities can carry out joint studies in this area. On the other hand, it was stated that the subject of the city council attracted the attention of all cities and it was stated that the B40 Network Local Democracy and Migration Group could carry out a joint project in this area. In addition, it was emphasized that it is important to integrate disadvantaged groups into society in terms of participation. In this context, it was stated that a project could be created that would include refugees as well as other disadvantaged groups and highlight the issue of participation.

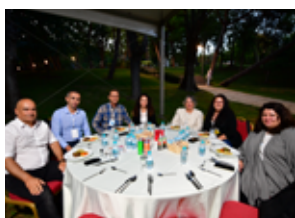


Participants stated that this workshop was extremely valuable in terms of learning about each other's problems. It was aimed to make joint studies on the city council project and share it with the member cities of the B40 Network. As the B40 Network Local Democracy and Migration working group, it was decided to continue the meetings and discussions to share ideas, best practices and experiences.



Participants attended the concert given in their honor by the famous harpist Meriç Dönük in the Şerefiye Cistern. Şerefiye Cistern is one of the oldest water structures in Istanbul's Historic Peninsula. It is Turkey's first museum with a 360° projection mapping and the oldest building in the world to integrate this system. The concert interacted with 1.600 years old historical monument while experiencing the three dimensional spatial features of the Şerefiye Cistern. Harpist Meriç Dönük performed on this special event for B40 Network.





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