

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MARGINALISED GROUPS

## TOOLKIT FOR EQUALITY CITY POLICIES AGAINST RACISM



International Coalition  
of Inclusive and  
Sustainable Cities – ICCAR



Why is it necessary?
Foundation
Putting into practice
Follow-up

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# TOOLKIT FOR EQUALITY CITY POLICIES AGAINST RACISM

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## IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MARGINALISED GROUPS

### THE CITY GETS ACTIVE IN ITS FUNCTION AS A

- democratic institution
- rule-maker
- employer
- **service provider**
- contractor

### ECCAR 10 POINTS ACTION PLAN

- 1 Greater Vigilance Against Racism
- 2 Assessing Racism and Discrimination and Monitoring Municipal Policies
- 3 Better Support for the Victims of Racism and Discrimination
- 4 More Participation and Better Informed City Dwellers
- 5 The City as an Active Supporter of Equal Opportunity Practices**
- 6 The City As An Equal Opportunities Employer and Service Provider**
- 7 Fair Access to Housing
- 8 Challenging Racism and Discrimination Through Education
- 9 Promoting Cultural Diversity
- 10 Hate Crimes and Conflicts Management

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Editors: Isabella Meier, Ingrid Nicoletti, Klaus Starl, Paul Lappalainen

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Toolkit for Equality is a manual to support cities in implementing local policies that successfully counteract racism and racial discrimination or in adjusting existing ones. The Toolkit provides experience-based step-by-step instructions for implementing concrete policies, starting from the conceptualization and ending with measuring their impact. All content is based on expertise shared by experienced city officials working in European cities.

Our aim has been to give suggestions that are as concrete as possible. We invite you to read the toolkit as the joint expertise of colleagues in other cities and take whatever seems useful for your city.

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# IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS

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# IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS

This policy model is about the provision of municipal services, in addition to regular services, in education, healthcare and social support, as well as facilitating offers in order to better access regular services. These special services aim to facilitate the access to regular communal services for marginalised groups. Concrete examples are coaching schools, early education programs, mobile health screenings and family relief services.

The services aim at establishing equal opportunities and they are basically open to everyone. Still they are designed for socio-economically disadvantaged groups or those, who are ascribed to be marginalised, because their purpose is fostering and improving accessibility to regular services. The concept is needs-based instead of based on personal characteristics, like ethnicity, gender or age. The services are usually accompanied by mentoring and coaching programmes.

A common feature of some of the cities' policies in this model is that they were initially designed and established as specific Roma services. However, the acceptance of these services was low with service users as well as in the municipalities. They became even more successful when they opened their target group and followed a needs-based rather than group-based approach in service provision. Thus, when designing and implementing such policies, the focus should be on ensuring equal opportunities and inclusion for all

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) defines that **“racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin [...]”**.

*“Distinction”* means to define a person as different on the basis of “race”, colour, ethnicity, descent, birth, religion or language (addressing biological and cultural ascriptions), justifying differentiated entitlements on a structural level. The opposite of distinction is *equality*. Equality is meant as a status as well as a process.

*“Exclusion”* means denying access to and enjoyment of human rights. The European Union adopted the term social exclusion defined by the ILO, but widened the definition stressing that social exclusion occurs when people cannot fully participate or contribute to society because of *“the denial of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.”* It is indicated in the definitions that exclusion results from *“a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, bad health and family breakdown.”* Participation is a precondition for as well as a purpose of human rights. The opposite of exclusion is *inclusion*.

“*Restriction*” means a limitation of enjoyment of human rights in practice. The positive counterpart is to have “equal opportunities”.

“*Preference*” privileges a person on grounds of “race”, colour, ethnicity, descent, birth, religion or language over another person. Symmetrically, it disadvantages one person compared to another. The positive answer to this formal understanding is “equal treatment”.

Policies successfully counteracting racial discrimination therefore need to contribute to the positive counterparts of the four dimensions of discrimination.

**Counteracting discrimination therefore means to increase *equality, inclusion, equal opportunities and/or equal treatment*.**

→ The policy of **IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS** as described in this chapter supports **equal opportunities** in order to **prevent** and **eliminate** restrictions in the enjoyment of human rights like education, social services or healthcare.

## CONTEXT INFORMATION

The material of this chapter is based on the information provided by several cities in Greece, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. The core parts stem from a city in Hungary and Agia Varvara (Greece).

Most cities have either physically or socially segregated areas or groups. The proposed policies of this chapter address segregation through improving accessibility of services. Thus, they are transferable examples on how to overcome marginalization and deprivation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

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## WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

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- Combatting or prevention of social problems caused by exclusion and deprivation (e.g. drug addiction, violence);
- The policy is able to address problems/limited opportunities that marginalised groups are facing in the municipality which cannot be addressed through the regular services;
- The policy establishes trust, communication and a close relation between the city residents and the municipality;
- This policy takes a holistic approach and is grounded on equality, citizenship and integration – advocacy here is not about special treatment but equal rights and opportunities;
- The policy is designed to address specific needs but not to stigmatise the service users or perpetuate socially constructed differences;
- The sense of participation in the community can prevent deviant and criminal behaviour;

### Educational coaching in particular

- Prevent dropping out of school;
- Well-educated inhabitants are more likely to participate in the life of the city, and are more successful in their lives and are easier employable.
- Development is made possible and talent management is provided in unique ways;
- These services foster tolerance and combat discrimination and prejudices between marginalised and non-marginalised people;
- Marginalised groups with insufficient skills in the official language may learn the language faster

## LIMITATIONS

A change of the situation takes time: do not expect quick changes and a quick impact. Particularly measures in the field of education and employment proved to be difficult to implement, as resistance and prejudices among the majority population prevent integration in these areas. Context factors, such as the economic crisis and the increase of extremist views and segregation policies around Europe hinder success. Particularly as these crises lead to austerity programmes, the economic integration of marginalised groups becomes even more difficult to achieve..

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# FOUNDATION

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## PLANNING AND ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

1

### STEP Ensure ownership

It is necessary to gain the support of the city mayor and the city council (headed by the mayor) for a political decision on the development and implementation of special services for marginalised groups. This is the main precondition for the provision of the budgets needed and in order to facilitate their acceptance in the city.

2

### STEP Form a core managing group

This group is tasked with the management and coordination of development, implementation and documentation. They can either be recruited from existing city staff who have knowledge about marginalised groups or be hired externally specifically for this measure. It is recommended that the managing group is to be made up of about 4 persons.

3

### STEP Involve all departments of the municipality

Integration is a general perspective even if the topic is formally assigned to a particular unit; thus all departments actually need to be included. Cooperation and a common approach in all departments is needed. Departments which are not directly involved should be informed and prepared to become involved temporarily on an ad hoc and task oriented basis. Examples of such temporary direct involvements are: the technical unit for checking real estate details which are used for the policy, the financial office for certain transactions or the cabinet of the mayor for protocol events.

4

### STEP Involve members of the target group

It is essential to the success of such policies to involve the target groups in designing the policy.

**Tip!** Do not include the representatives of target groups (e.g. NGOs) as external advisors only, rather seek to employ them as ordinary team-members. Do not treat the members of target groups as being in need or vulnerable, but rather as experts on their situation and daily environment and – self-evidently – as equal citizens within the community.

Why is it necessary?
<b>Foundation</b>
Practise
Follow-up

→ Planning and engaging stakeholders  
 Preparing the concept

Facilities, which provide access to the target group are churches and schools, they are important intermediaries between the municipality and its population. The parents are the most important target group of measures in the area of education, since their cooperation is crucial for the existence of these measures. Support from the families is essential for the successful implementation of the policy.

On a more general level, the public can be considered as stakeholder as well.

## PREPARING THE CONCEPT

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### STEP Carry out a study/needs assessment

A needs assessment is important to allow for the development of the policy concept based on empirical evidence and to gain acceptance for the policy.

This should be an active investigation of needs and a design of needs-based intervention measures with a strong inclusion perspective. Invest in knowledge on local needs and engage in good cooperation with social scientists.

6

### STEP Invite members of the target group to participate in conceptualisation

Not only should members of the target group be asked to participate in a needs assessment, they should also be invited to actively participate in the process of conceptualising the program. Create an open and honest partnership on equal terms. The participation of target group members leads to a deeper contact between service users and service providers already from the beginning.

E.g. organise conferences together with associations of marginalised groups or ethnic minorities and generate knowledge on reasons for social exclusion and specific problems and needs. Invite members of the target group, politicians and staff of the municipality to sit at one table in order to diagnose the existing conditions in the city.

This participation does not necessarily have to take place on a formal level, but conditions need to be in place to allow for meaningful participation.

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### STEP Motivate volunteers

It is also recommended that volunteers are motivated to help in establishing these services. It is important that the volunteers belong to different groups (not only members of the marginalised groups/target groups), in order to foster inclusion from the beginning. Voluntary help adds the experience and professional knowledge of the volunteers. Make use of existing regulations, such as young people's obligation to do community work or other forms of personal services or assistance.

Keep contact with the volunteers, this enables you to be immediately informed about existing problems or pending issues and prevent them if possible.

8

### STEP Definition of targets and approach

Marginalised groups particularly need support in the field of education/trainings, qualifications for and integration into the labour market. If coaching schools for marginalised groups are part of the concept: focus on actual teaching and not on other caring or leisure activities. Always reflect on discrimination and racism with the pupils.

Furthermore, services to achieve political and societal participation are recommended. This works best through the establishment of contacts between marginalised and non-marginalised groups. One important aim is to develop a sense of citizenship in and belonging to the community.

Thus, conceptualise services, which make members of marginalised groups feel that they live in the same city as equal citizens, with the same rights and duties as anyone else. Municipal services need to prove that the local government works for all residents alike, and that they are welcome to come to city hall and express their concerns. Particularly these participatory actions proved to be the most sustainable in regard to trust building.

In any case, it is essential to design or dedicate your services to a group based on needs, and not based on social characteristics, such as ethnic origin, religion or gender. E.g. special services for only the Roma will not be equally accepted and successful. Perpetuation of stigmatisation for certain groups through the provision of specific services should be avoided.

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### STEP Staff and budgeting

At least five employees from the social services and 2-3 mediators, many volunteers and the deputy mayor are needed as minimum.

One municipality described a coaching school in a city with a population of 30,000 people. Its staff consists of 1 executive director (part-time), 4-5 lecturers, 3 official volunteer teachers and 12 volunteers from secondary schools or universities/retired teachers. Its infrastructure consists of 1 community building in which 3 rooms are used for teaching and an appropriate number of computers.

**Tip!** Provide all services for all residents and do not conceptualise group specific extra services. Otherwise these services will be accepted neither by marginalised nor by nonmarginalised groups. Develop specialised programmes or services justified only by specific needs on an individual basis. Follow a needs-based rather than characteristic-based approach when conceptualising these programs.

**RISKS, CHALLENGES**

**MEASURES TO MITIGATE RISKS**

Lack of willingness by stakeholders to support the policy

Refer to human rights standards, as they are accepted and obligatory for policies in all areas

The measure has been developed and implemented with EU funds or other funds. The funds stop and the continuation of the service is at risk

Integrate the separate services for marginalised groups into the central municipal services.

Prejudices between marginalised and non-marginalised groups

Citizenship education based on rights and obligations, involvement of marginalised and non-marginalised members

Conflicts within marginalised groups

Social work and active cooperation with and involvement of all stakeholders

To convince those who insisted on separate services for marginalised groups specifically

The municipality addressed all its initiatives to all residents and involved members of marginalised groups and others.

To make work visible in a way that people will become involved

Identify the best multiplier for every specific topic, e.g. public figures that receive acceptance and thus are able to engage people

Problematic reactions: everything new creates some tension

It is important to signal that the special services are not in competition with the regular services. Rather they aim at supporting the regular services.

**Tip!** If possible, take advantage of the existing knowledge and studies, programs, networks of voluntary services, neighbourhood help, etc. in the municipality. The establishment of networks can provide complementary or additional services to what is already in place. E.g. if marginalised groups have no access to healthcare services, the municipality could enter into programming agreements with local health centres and hospitals in the community and in this way can cover a concrete need through networking.

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## PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

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### **STEP Found a one-stop-shop**

Find a place to be used as central service point, where members of marginalised groups and others can come to pose questions and to get informed about city services, procedures and their rights. It should be designed as a one-stop-shop.

The permanent management staff should have their workplaces here. Staff should be educated on the needs and concerns of the target group, and inform the target group about their rights and obligations and help them understand and become familiar with public services. It is important that members of marginalised groups are employed here in order to build trust and include specific expertise.

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### **STEP Build up infrastructure for voluntary services**

Provide the infrastructure to support volunteer efforts, supporting them with administrative and organisational matters. Support doctors, who offer medical examinations to marginalised people for free, provide facilities for voluntary child carers, while the parents are in trainings, motivate local enterprises for sponsorships, advice local supermarkets/restaurants on the possibilities of handing out excess food etc.

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### **STEP Coordinate opening hours and availabilities of voluntary services**

Support the coordination of the availabilities of voluntary working professionals (such as teachers, healthcare staff). This could be done by providing a computer software and management of appointments: voluntary professionals declare in which time slot during the week they are available. The service users can call or come to the one-stop-shop to sign up for an appointment.

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### **STEP Public relations and reaching the target group**

The operative staffs inform beneficiaries about the municipality's activities. Besides providing written information via the internet or media, outreach efforts in regard to the communities are important. Participate in community festivals and other events to promote the policy and advertise for volunteers and participants. Suggest to local media to report about the policy programme.

# SUSTAINABILITY

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## STEP Consolidate the service by a council decision

Bring about a city council decision for all issues related to financing and the disbursement of funds for specific activities. The service should be named according to its activities and not point out a specific user-group, such as e.g. Roma. Do not differentiate between different groups of the population. Make sure that these services are reflected in budget planning and planning of the technical programme of the municipal government. Include the policy in the regular services of the municipality.

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## STEP Establish a network of municipalities with marginalised populations

The marginalisation of population groups is most likely not a mere local but a societal issue. Thus, the successful improvement of the situation of marginalised groups requires a supra-local approach. A (national) network of municipalities is therefore recommended.

The cooperation with various ethnic minority and vulnerable group associations throughout the country to establish a network at national level, which can engage in policy lobbying, was reported as a promising strategy. A country-wide association of marginalized groups is well suited to analyse social exclusion, gain knowledge, create awareness, and provide a network of contact points.

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## STEP Cooperate with scientists

Long-term implementation and continuation of a policy rely on a number of factors: an important one is to work together with scientists who can analyse and record needs and identify trends; experts can provide scientific knowledge and feedback to politicians and politicians can synthesize these into a vision of what should happen and what the society needs. The outcomes of this cooperation between scientists and politicians should inform the next steps of further developing and sustainably implementing the policy.

**RISKS, CHALLENGES**

**MEASURES TO MITIGATE RISKS**

The measure has been developed and implemented with EU funds or other funds. The funds stop and the continuation of the service is at risk

Integrate the separate services for marginalised groups into the central municipal services.

Conflicts within marginalised groups

Social work and active cooperation with and involvement of all stakeholders

The target groups are difficult to reach

Even if it sounds exhausting: walking from door to door works best.

Societal problems, such as poverty, drugs, excessive television and internet use affect the success of the policy as it influences the target group's service use.

Seek support of social workers and professionals in the respective fields

A challenge reported is the changing power of local governments through national policies, in the course of which self-governing powers may be restricted.

Base the policy on different pillars of financing to be independent (at least in terms of budgets) from the city.

## TRANSFERABILITY

The main elements of the policy are transferable to every other municipality: participation, openness to adapt planning to real needs, acceptance, use of funds and resources as an investment with multiplying effects and a clear and realistic vision. It is important to ensure common objectives, communication channels and common values.

## DAILY WORK

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### STEP Cooperation and coordination

Cooperation and meetings with all services and stakeholders are the most important part of daily work. Coordination and cooperation also helps monitoring achievement of goals. Other cities however report that ad hoc meetings a few times per month between stakeholders are sufficient for achieving the goals. It depends on the concrete measures.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the central stakeholders are invited to city council meetings to talk about the successes and outcomes achieved. This motivates the political actors who are not directly involved to further support the policy.

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### STEP Constantly involve the community in daily work

Invest in measures which build the trust of the local population in this policy. This is a difficult process that requires a local presence and continuous communication with the people, listening to their concerns, recording their needs, formulating intervention measures. Even if you have a vision, you constantly need to make the beneficiaries a partner in this vision.

Participate in community events, e.g. in teacher's days, festivals or in the local radio and television.

Further accompanying measures suggested by cities:

- Reducing the dropout rate in schools

Measures include: literacy programmes that are integrated in coordinated activities in education. Close cooperation with schools that includes the involvement of the beneficiaries. An important measure to reduce dropout rates in schools was dialogue with parents on the importance of going to school.

A coaching school for marginalised children operated by a foundation, working complementary to the regular education system, helps to counteract dropping out from school. Local schools are thereby responsible for acknowledging the coaching schools as partners, maintaining daily contact with them and supporting their legitimacy. Coaching schools should serve to prepare for and/or support the children in their regular school career.

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→ Daily work

- Addressing unemployment  
Internships, individualised interventions by the social service, measures to acquire new skills etc. Be realistic regarding the capabilities of individuals and consider obstacles like prejudices of employers.
- Consulting  
Consulting support to families (provided again for all residents and not only for specified “groups”) in difficult situations, including initiatives for health promotion and prevention of illnesses, medical check-ups, and individualised support.
- Support of local artists  
Support cultural events, the founding of associations of arts, festivals and events. Encourage people to show their talents.

## FOLLOW-UP

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### STEP Follow-up on the implementation

Evaluate the policy on an informal day-to-day basis through regular meetings and reflexive methods of evaluation. Formally evaluate the policy annually based on regular contact between all designated authorities (different departments of the municipality). Based on the findings, the policy can be adjusted. E.g. the circumstances may change after a while and the priorities need to be adapted accordingly. It is important to always remain flexible and take nothing for granted. The needs of residents may change within the framework of integration. The outcome of the monitoring should be part of the annual reporting. Relevant adjustments should be made in the design of the next annual plan.

### KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS

- It is a policy of integration and consequently rejects the characteristics-based provision of additional support services. Only a needs-based service provision is in line with this approach.
- Collaboration of all stakeholders and involvement of the target group (not as external experts, but as partners and employees)
- Respecting diversity
- Networking within the municipality
- Flexibility of all actors
- Sufficient funding
- Participation of the people concerned and bottom up processes
- All parties are bound by a common purpose but everyone does their part of the job equally

## IMPACT AND OUTCOME

Indicators to measure outcome:

- The number of marginalised children at school, who achieve higher education after being supported
- The performance (grades) of pupils in regular school increased since they have been attending coaching schools
- Reduced drop-out rates within schools
- Children's behaviour in school improves (better concentration, lower aggression)
- Members of marginalised groups in professions like lawyers, doctors, technicians participate in increasingly greater numbers
- Diversity of occupations within marginalised groups
- Marginalised group members apply for social services; number and kinds of requests by members of marginalised groups
- Increased number of job applications from target groups in public administration
- The change of image of the city / population by groups
- Parents are empowered in supporting their children and the relationship between parents and children improves
- Parents are better connected among each other and have closer relationships in their neighbourhoods.

## RESOURCES AND EXAMPLES

**B (HU): School in B** The School in B. is an educational institution existing since 1998. It provides help and promotes equal opportunities for children and youngsters facing obstacles in their school performance, as well as organizes outdoor and cultural activities for them. The municipal government of B., a city of roughly 28,000 inhabitants including a considerable Roma population, has been one of the most fervent advocates of the School since its conception. Not only has it been a donor, a service and publicity provider for the institution, it also forms part of a large coalition of actors/stakeholders whose common cause is to further the project. The School was operated and funded primarily by the Municipal Government (MG) from the beginnings, although it successfully applied for grants from the Open Society Foundations, other private entities and the then-Ministry of Education as well. In September 2004, upon the suggestion of the MG, a foundation was established with the explicit purpose of creating more favourable conditions for the municipality to aid the project. Also in 2004, the Foundation also signed an agreement on the provision of services with the MG which, among others, includes the salaries of the paid teachers, the costs of utilities and cleaning, reaching 19,920,000 HUF in 2016.

**Attika (GR): Mainstreaming of social services to fit the needs of Roma (CECL)**

The policy concerns the city as a service provider and deals with mainstreaming of social services to fit the needs of Roma population. A Municipality in the broader region of Attika has a large Roma population who are well integrated in mainstream society (which is quite rare).

<http://www.agiavarvara.gr/portal/page/portal/ab/>

The Rom Network: <http://www.oikokoinonia.gr/en/action.asp>

<http://budaorsitanoda.webs.com/>

