

Local Welcoming Policies for EU mobile Citizens

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Workshop 6: Cooperation with NGOs (City of Gothenburg)

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Presentation of Cooperation with NGOs in Gothenburg, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, as well as on national and EU levels

Cooperation with NGOs at local level: Gothenburg

Traditionally: operating grant support and public procurement;

More and more: Voluntary Sector Organisation Public Partnership (VSOPP)

In the partnerships there is an exchange of resources on several levels: Municipality facilitates financial resources and has large network and organization, while NGOs bring knowledge and a strong network of volunteers etc.

The city of Gothenburg works with NGOs through the strategic group for social issues (all social issues);

However, the issue is the influence cast by who is in power and which political party makes the decisions. Recently, a right wing party came into power and has a different view on some policy issues.

There are two ways of working with NGOs:

- One umbrella agreement regarding cooperation and decision-making;
- Subcontracts with participating partners on 1 year basis

What services does the VSOPP offer for EU migrants?:

- advice centre;
- day care centre (washing clothes, cheap food, etc.);
- Night shelter;
- Preschool for migrant (Roma) children, that also functions as a social office, advice for the parents;
- Field workers (social outreach) for people living in illegal settlements.

Question from the audience: How is the evaluation of the project done and how does the collaboration actually work between the city and the NGOs?

This is difficult because all NGOs have their own perspective (e.g. some are religious, others aren't). Who has the money also has the power (and NGOs are mostly funded by the municipality).

There has been a bad experience with an NGO that disagreed with the municipality, and after a meeting immediately spoke to the local news media. After this incident, the City of Gothenburg used a different approach, it was important to have meetings and make sure there are no disagreements.

Question from the audience: what are the criteria for NGOs to work with the municipality?

No criteria, most NGOs have a history of working with the municipality. Usually, the NGOs call the municipality. The only thing is that the NGO has to have a common goal with the municipality and the other NGOs.

Important issues with this kind of partnerships:

- Common goal, this should be the focus for the collaboration;
- Dialogue and good relationships, all partners should benefit in one way or the other;
- Early definition of resources and roles (to avoid possible conflicts);
- Cooperation and transparency, no room for competition (again, to avoid conflicts);
- Only a means to an end.

Recommendations:

- Cooperate with NGOs;
- Invest in equal partnerships (for sustainable partnerships);
- See NGOs as a complement to the municipality's work (not to have the NGOs do the work for the municipality);
- Anchor the partnership in the management, so anchor in both sides of the partnership;
- Formalize the cooperation with routines (rules and regulations etc.).

Cooperation with NGOs at the local level: International House Copenhagen

- New in Denmark project events are all organized in collaboration with NGOs;
- Using volunteerism (active citizenship, co-creating events with citizens, innovation and developing, greater diversity in tasks, multiple tasks can be lifted jointly, increase the impact of activities);

There are three types of volunteering: leisure guides, family tour guides and events.

The municipality's website offers information on how to become a volunteer in Copenhagen and provides volunteer positions.

Good tips:

- Keep volunteers motivated, give them something in return, focus on fun tasks, have activities for the volunteers (courses, network meetings, etc)
- Stay sharp on the tasks, be clear on what you ask
- Note language and cultural barriers → all volunteers are international
- Use their stories and experiences → all volunteers are international

IHC also organizes a Volunteer Fair (two annual events), like a big job fair in which a lot of NGOs are

also invited, to network and to socialize. Providing information and experiences on volunteer work. Lots of organisations from different backgrounds involved.

Flyer on offering cultural activities for the volunteers (free ticket, for example for a museum).

Motivations mostly to socialize and to network, sometimes also the migrants don't have a job and having done volunteer work looks good on the CV.

Also cooperation with different sports clubs, trying to find places where you don't necessarily need to speak Danish. Also, all of the volunteer spots are with organizations for which the volunteers do not necessarily need to speak Danish.

Cooperation with NGOs at the local level: Amsterdam

There are different groups, different needs and different ways of seeking information (e.g. students, expats, skilled or unskilled labourers, self-employed, etc)

Important role of the organizations: a platform where the migrant groups can meet and get information in an informal way.

Activities of the NGOs, Information methods, Questions and problems

Good practice from one Spanish/Latino organisation for providing cross media, small leaflet with basic info and links to the website and QR-codes. Possibility for other NGOs, to make use of exchange students and EU-paid internships.

Small discussion on the role of social media/Facebook groups as a communication tool for NGOs with their target groups. It has limitations, but there's also an advantage in that it doesn't need a lot of time and money to set it up and you can use the volunteers as "ambassadors" by liking the posts.

Surprisingly, there is no structural cooperation between NGOs and municipality. Incidental contact and cooperation take place, but it lacks continuity and it is not formalized.

Remark: the municipality is focusing too much on the day-to-day business and not looking for long term relationships, no long term vision. Only when there are problems then the municipality contacts the NGOs and urge them to do something quickly about it. No notion of reciprocity there.

Again, the (local) political constellation influences this greatly. Also, the media attention given to the issues is very important on how much action is taken by the (local) governments.

Room for improvement:

- make better use of each other's competences and possibilities
- exchange of information can be improved
- more visible connection/relationship between NGOs (better access to the target groups) and municipality (the authority)

Recommendations at the national level:

- National agreement: 6 “ground rules” for cooperation between government and NGOs. Initiated by State, together with municipalities and NGOs.
- socialforum.se: forum can be used as an information platform. If there is already a well-functioning platform, use this as an information channel too.

- ➔ Establish a national level agreement and standards
In Sweden, it was the national government who took the initiative.
- ➔ Create online forum
- ➔ Involve NGOs in decision making (for example through national workshops/round table discussions)

Recommendations at EU level:

- ➔ Civil participation in the decision making process (launched by the EC in 2009)
Matrix of civil participation (Council of Europe)
So there is already a recommendation at the EU level on how to work together (municipalities and NGOs)
So, the recommendation is to follow the code of good practice.
- ➔ Develop an informal portal with information about how NGOs work in each country.
There are portals that can be used, but they need to be developed to make them more accessible or more clear for the target groups.

Workshop discussion:

- ✓ permanent institutionalized policy instead of incidental policy aimed at smaller, sometimes temporary groups. Within NL, only subsidies for NGOs or temporary “opdrachten”;
- ✓ VSOPP as a good practice example, which is only possible caused by a national level framework;
- ✓ in Brussel, the unique situation where there are so many actors that there needs to be a platform;
- ✓ increase cooperation between NGOs with the same target group;
- ✓ NGOs always have a social function, not necessarily logical to act as a civil service;
- ✓ NGOs should not only expect funding/finances from government. Also private funds can be possible, like the private/public cooperation of the Copenhagen House;
- ✓ Volunteering organisations/platforms can also help NGOs.

Workshop recommendations:

At local level:

- A platform that makes organisations and their activities visible with the aim to stimulate cooperation and sharing resources/experiences. Municipalities should take the responsibility of getting them together;
- Structural policies for cooperation, long-term sustainable solutions (on all levels);
- Practical implementation and application of the juridical framework;



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- Involve NGOs in decision-making, for example national workshops;
- Permanent institutionalized policy instead of incidental policy, sustainability of policy regardless of political constellation.

At national level:

- Structural policies for cooperation, long-term sustainable solutions (on all levels);
- Forum between NGOs, public authority and municipality level;
- Juridical framework and game rules between NGOs and public authorities

At EU level:

- Structural policies for cooperation, long-term sustainable solutions (on all levels);
- Website with information on what NGOs offer in different countries, NGO user based content administration, e.g. Your Europe portal;
- Make EU funding more accessible, micro-funding for NGOs. Make the application process worthwhile, easily approachable. Perhaps through umbrella organisations.