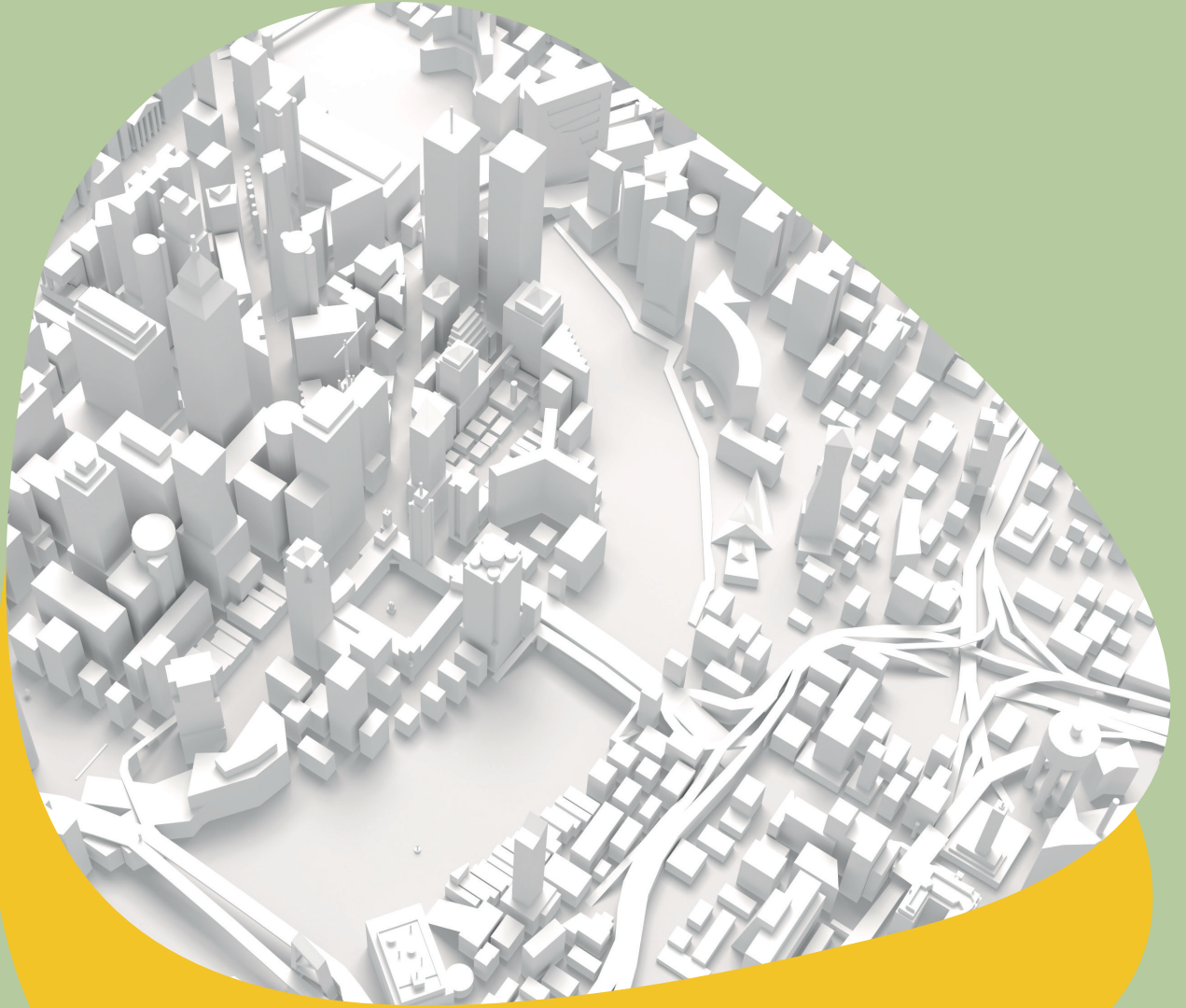





# HUMAN RIGHTS **IN THE CITY** 2022



# **THE INDICATOR-BASED PERFORMANCES OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES IN TURKEY**



 [www.kentlab.org](http://www.kentlab.org)  [info@kentlab.org](mailto:info@kentlab.org)  
 /kentlaborg  /kentlaborg

PROJECT CONSULTANT  
Assoc. Prof.Dr. Betül Duman Bay  
Yıldız Technical University, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union provided under the Etkiniz Programme. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Urban Strategies and Local Practices Association (Kent-Lab) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

# SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

INTRODUCTION 7

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
LEGAL FRAMEWORK 10

METHODOLOGY 16

HUMAN RIGHTS CITY PERFORMANCES  
OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES:  
INDICATORS AND RESULTS 21

INDICATORS ON HUMANRIGHTS IN GENERAL 21

INDICATORS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 23

INDICATORS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS 24

INDICATORS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE ELDERLY 26

INDICATORS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE DISABLED  
PEOPLE 27

THE SCORECARD OF METROPOLITAN  
MUNICIPALITIES 29

CONCLUSION 37

REFERENCES 40

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study, carried out by the Urban Strategies and Local Practices Association (Kent-Lab) with the support of Etkiniz EU Program, aims to examine the extent to which local governments in Turkey have adopted and implemented the concept of “Human Rights City”.

Covering 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, this study aims to review the indicators previously developed in Turkey in relation to the human rights city, and to measure the extent to which these indicators are accessible through open sources. In addition, the study aims to measure and publicize the performance of the metropolitan municipalities through indicators related to the human rights city, as well as to assess the knowledge and experience of representatives from city councils, the most important legally required participation mechanism of municipalities in Turkey, on the concept of the human rights city.

Within the scope of this monitoring:

We reviewed national and international legislation related to the concept of Human Rights City,

Based on the indicator sets provided in the study titled ‘Human Rights Cities Indicators’ prepared within the scope of the ‘Human Rights Cities’ project, which was initiated by the Raoul Wallenberg International Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the developed a new set of indicators that fall in line with the powers and responsibilities of metropolitan municipalities.

We collected and analyzed data on 30 metropolitan municipalities related to human rights in general and on the rights of the children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities by scanning websites, 2021 activity reports and current strategic plans, as well as related news reports.

We conducted the “Social Awareness Survey on Human Rights Cities for City Councils”, which aims to measure the vision of human rights cities among people active in city councils.

The results of this monitoring study show that:

The metropolitan municipalities in Turkey fail in recognizing the right to the city, ensuring participatory democracy and accountability, mainstreaming rights and establishing coordination between policies and practices in rights-based areas, dissemination and institutionalization of human rights trainings, and allowing the citizens exercise their right to effective remedy.

The metropolitan municipalities that engage with rights-based organizations through structured processes or those that have already built capacity in some rights areas are more successful in enabling citizens to exercise their human rights.

When central government institutions and local governments coordinate their efforts for disadvantaged groups, the variety and quality of services accessed by citizens improve.

The metropolitan municipalities do not approach human rights in a holistic manner. Municipalities service-focused approach to disadvantaged groups negatively affect their performance in protecting the rights of these groups.

Despite widespread civil society advocacy efforts on citizen participation, participation in the decision-making bodies and positions of municipalities and in the basic policy-making processes is quite limited and ineffective.

The fact that municipalities do not publicize their basic documents in a standardized format prevents accessing consistent information across different municipalities and making comparisons.

# 1. Introduction

As administrative units producing policies and services that directly concern the daily lives of citizens, local governments are generally considered to have a passive role in the field of human rights. According to this approach, local governments are the implementers and bearers of human rights and consequently rights of different disadvantaged groups.

A 2015 report prepared for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights titled “Role of Local Governments in The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights” draws attention to the relationship between local governments and human rights and underlines that the protection of human rights is part of the daily work of local governments and that the decisions taken by local governments significantly impact the extent to which people living within their jurisdiction can enjoy their existing rights. In other words, even if human rights legislation is developed at the international and national level, it is the local level that determines the extent to which these rights are realized in line with the standards set.

In the field of human rights, local governments are obliged not to violate these rights through their own actions, to prevent institutions and persons outside the local government from violating these rights and to facilitate the exercise of these rights.





“Human Rights City”, a conceptual framework that aims to localize human rights, recognizes the critical role of local governments in the implementation of human rights and embraces a holistic approach that includes different types of rights and different disadvantaged groups. What differentiates the “Human Rights City” approach is looking at the responsibilities and practices of local governments with a human rights-based approach. This approach transforms local governments from being mere implementers to becoming one of the critical actors in the field of human rights.

“Human Rights City” means that human rights norms and standards are implemented at the local level and taken as reference by municipalities in all areas from decision-making to policy design, from ensuring participation to improving service quality. A local government that follows such an approach sees citizens as individuals entitled to their rights and aims to protect and expand these rights in line with the principles of participation, equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness and accountability.

The concept of “Human Rights City” recognizes that the protection of the rights of people living within the boundaries of a local government depends not only on the diversification of services or the improvement of service quality, but also on the transformation of local governments themselves on the basis of human rights. In a human rights city, municipal policies, council decisions, strategic plans and programs, and practices must be in line with all standards set out in international and national legislation on human rights. This also means that human rights and disadvantaged groups are taken into account in all municipal decisions, from employment to service procurement.

This study, carried out by the Urban Strategies and Local Practices Association (Kent-Lab) with the support of Etkiniz EU Program, is the first comprehensive monitoring study aiming to measure the extent to which local governments in Turkey have adopted and implemented the concept of “Human Rights City”.

This study, which covers 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, aims to review the indicators previously developed for Turkey in relation to the human rights city and to measure the extent to which these indicators are accessible through open sources. In addition, the study aims to measure and publicize the performance of these municipalities on indicators related to the human rights city, as well as to assess the knowledge



and experience of representatives from city councils, the most important participation mechanism in municipalities in Turkey, on the concept of the human rights city.

With this study, which covers all documents in the field of human rights including the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and takes a holistic approach to themes like sustainable cities, social cities, healthy cities, smart cities, energy cities, walkable cities, intercultural cities, elderly-friendly cities, women-friendly cities, child-friendly cities, we aim to contribute to the efforts to create standardized indicator sets that can be used by all civil society organizations that work in different fields of rights and cooperate with local governments in Turkey and to monitor these indicators.

## 2. National and International Legal Framework

Although the human rights city is a relatively new approach, the “right to the city”, which has been discussed in the literature since the middle of the last century, has been a subject frequently emphasized by individuals and institutions aiming to protect the human rights of all people by ensuring equal access to urban space and to the economic, social, cultural and all opportunities provided by the city, participation in all decision-making processes and the realization of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all residents.

The right to the city is defined as the fair use of cities in line with the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice in the World Charter on the Right to the City, which was prepared in 2005 with contributions of organizations such as UNESCO and United Nations HABITAT.



The concept of “Human Rights City” was first used in 1997 by the People’s Movement for Human Rights Education, an international non-governmental organization based in the United States, and as a result of the program developed around this concept, in the same year Rosario in Argentina adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a guiding principle for the municipality work. Rosario was followed by Graz (2001), Montreal (2006), Mexico City (2010), Barcelona (2010), Gwangju (2011), Utrecht (2011), Vienna (2014), York City (2017) and Lund (2018). The concept of “Human Rights City” has been promoted regionally and globally through networks of local governments.

Since 2011, the World Forum of Human Rights Cities has been organized annually in Gwangju, South Korea. In the 2014 forum, guidelines<sup>1</sup> for the implementation of the concept of human rights city were determined:

#### Principle 1: The Right to the City

The Human Rights City respects all human rights recognized by the existing relevant international human rights norms and standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and national constitutions.

The Human Rights City works towards the recognition and implementation of the right to the city in line with the principles of social justice, equity, solidarity, democracy and sustainability.

#### Principle 2: Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action

- The Human Rights City respects the principle of equality and equity among all inhabitants within its administrative boundary and beyond.

- The Human Rights City implements the non-discrimination policy which includes gender-sensitive policies as well as affirmative action to reduce inequality and to empower the marginalized and vulnerable groups including migrants and non-citizens.

#### Principle 3: Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

- The Human Rights City respects the values of social inclusion and cultural diversity based on mutual respect among communities of different racial, religious, linguistic, ethnic and social cultural backgrounds

- The Human Rights City applies a conflict-sensitive approach to promote cultural diversity which is essential for the promotion and protection of human rights.

---

1 World Human Rights Cities Forum (2014) Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City (Gwangju Principles), <https://www.uclg-cisd.org/sites/default/files/Gwangju%20Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Human%20Rights%20City%20adopted%20on%2017%20May%202014.pdf>

#### Principle 4: Participatory Democracy and Accountable Governance

- The Human Rights City upholds the values of participatory democracy, transparency and accountability.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective accountability mechanisms ensuring rights to public information, communication, participation and decision in all stages of municipal governance including planning, policy-formulation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### Principle 5: Social Justice, Solidarity and Sustainability

- The Human Rights City respects the values of Socio-Economic justice and solidarity and ecological sustainability.
- The Human Rights City promotes social solidarity economy and sustainable consumption and production as a means to enhance socio-economic-ecological justice and solidarity among urban and rural communities within the country and beyond.

#### Principle 6 : Political Leadership and Institutionalization

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of collective high-level political leadership by the mayor and municipal councilors and their commitment to human rights values and vision of human rights city.
- The Human Rights City ensures a long-term continuity through institutionalization of adequately resourced programs and budget. Principle

#### 7: Human Rights Mainstreaming

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of integrating human rights into municipal policies.
- The Human Rights City applies a human rights-based approach to municipal administration and governance including planning, policy-formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### Principle 8: Effective Institutions and Policy Coordination

- The Human Rights City recognizes the role of public institutions and importance of policy coordination and coherence for human rights within local government as well as between national and local government.
- The Human Rights City establishes effective institutions and implements policies, with

adequate personnel and resources including the human rights office, basic local action plan, human rights indicators and the human rights impact assessment.

#### Principle 9: Human Rights Education and Training

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of human rights education and learning as a means to foster a culture of human rights and peace.
- The Human Rights City develops and implements various types of human rights education and training programs for all duty bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders.

#### Principle 10: Right to Remedy

- The Human Rights City recognizes the importance of the right to effective remedy.
- The Human Rights City establishes appropriate mechanisms and procedures including the ombudsman or municipal human rights commission for redress including preventive measures as well as mediation, arbitration and conflict resolution.

All international human rights treaties to which Turkey is a party, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Habitat III-New Urban Agenda are the primary texts that should be taken as reference for the implementation and monitoring of the concept of the human rights city. All rights-based conventions and jurisprudence developed by the Council of Europe, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the European Urban Charter I (1992) and II (2008) developed by the European Congress of Local and Regional Authorities within the Council, are the documents that form the basis for the human rights city approach at the European level.

The report published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2021<sup>2</sup> states that the three pillars of the framework of human rights indicators prepared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - foundations, structures and instruments - shape the commitment of local governments to realize human rights in a city, to integrate mechanisms and structures for the realization of these rights into the work of local government, and to provide methods and resources for the implementation of a human rights-based approach in everyday activities.

The report provided the following framework for being a human rights city:

Declaring a city a human rights city affirms the commitment to respecting, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights and dignity of everyone living there. The city applies a human rights-based approach in policies and actions.

A human rights city is an inclusive city that ensures equal rights for all. The city acts as a guardian and defender of human rights, focusing on the well-being of people. It ensures that everyone's rights are equally respected and protected, particularly for those people who are most vulnerable to human rights violations and social exclusion, in particular Roma and other minorities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, persons with disabilities, children and youth, elderly people and homeless persons.

A human rights city promotes the meaningful participation of all. It does this by engaging with civil society, in particular grassroots organizations, as well as business, faith and religious organizations and communities, through dedicated platforms and forums to promote and implement a human rights agenda defined together.

A human rights city supports cooperation among the relevant actors to make human rights-related initiatives in the city coherent with each other. That reinforces the implementation of human rights standards and public accountability.

A human rights city develops networking opportunities with other human rights cities. This lets them exchange practice and know-how regularly and pilot new approaches that can increase the impact of human rights on the everyday life of people in the society.

---

<sup>2</sup> European Union Agency For Human Rights (2021) Human Rights Cities in the EU: A Framework for Reinforcing Rights Locally, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2021-human-rights-cities-in-the-eu\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-human-rights-cities-in-the-eu_en.pdf).

Cities that decide to act in line with these principles make a commitment within their local framework through a “Declaration of Human Rights City”. There is no metropolitan, provincial or district municipality in Turkey that has yet drafted such a declaration; however, as will be seen later Kent-Lab’s monitoring study on metropolitan municipalities shows that there are local governments that have created the capacity to take such a step.

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, all international conventions to which Turkey is a party, and legislation for different disadvantaged groups set the basic framework for local governments in Turkey to be a human rights city. Law No. 5393 on Municipalities is the main document on legislation to ensure local governments’ compliance with this human rights framework. However, any study on local governments in Turkey around the concept of a human rights city should take into account that there are different scales of local governments in Turkey. Moreover, for Turkey, which has a central-government based approach in public administration and an administrative system shaped accordingly, any study on the human rights city should not ignore these local characteristics of the country. The monitoring work of Kent-Lab was carried out by taking all these elements into consideration.



## 3. Methodology

The ‘Human Rights Cities Indicators’<sup>3</sup> study prepared within the scope of the ‘Human Rights Cities’ project, which was initiated by the Raoul Wallenberg International Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law with the Union of Turkish World Municipalities and seven pilot municipalities, and then developed in cooperation with the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and the Council of Europe has serves as the basis of Kent-Lab’s effort to measure the performance of local governments in Turkey through the concept of human rights cities.

Within the scope of this study, indicator sets have been developed in collaboration with experts in different fields to localize international human rights norms applicable in their respective fields of work. In addition to general human rights indicators, the study includes indicator sets that address the relationship of five (vulnerable) groups identified as ‘women’, ‘children’, ‘disabled’, ‘elderly’ and ‘refugees’ with the city and municipal services in terms of “participation, accessibility and safety”.

The indicator sets developed by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute are quite detailed. While designing a study to measure the performance of municipalities based on these indicator sets, Kent-Lab first considered the extent to which the indicators in this study are available and accessible. For this purpose, first the basic documents, websites and other resources of the metropolitan municipalities were examined and an assessment was made on whether the metropolitan municipalities had the authority and capacity to produce the data required to follow these indicators.

In this early stages, Kent-Lab tried to test to what extent a study based on these indicator sets developed by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute could be realized by focusing on municipalities whose data are more accessible.

---

3 Günlük-Şenesen, et. al. (2021) İnsan Hakları Kentleri Göstergeleri, Raul Wallenberg

In the long term, Kent-Lab is determined to dedicate itself to the to the development of indicators and a monitoring methodology that will cover all local governments in Turkey. However, we also believe that disaggregating these indicator sets on the basis of the powers and responsibilities of different types of municipalities in Turkey and then progressing towards localization of these indicators is a more realistic approach.

Kent-Lab limited this study conducted thanks to the Etkiniz EU Program with 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey. The legislation in Turkey gives metropolitan municipalities the duty to ensure coordination among other district municipalities within their jurisdictional boundaries, as well as and beyond the services they provide locally. In other words, when analyzing the services of a metropolitan municipality on human rights grounds, it should also be taken into account whether the provision of that service by the metropolitan municipality is in line with the principle of subsidiarity -whether the metropolitan municipality should assume the role of a direct service provider or act as a coordinator in the service area in question-.

In that context, in the second phase of the monitoring work we established a working group made up of five local government experts. This commission took into account the indicator sets prepared by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute as well as our findings from the preliminary work and worked on simplifying these indicator sets. At this stage:

1. We eliminated indicators that may not be meaningful for metropolitan municipalities<sup>4</sup> in terms of their authority and responsibilities -those that may be more meaningful for district municipalities and fall within the responsibilities of the central administration and its local administration in terms of authority<sup>5</sup>.
2. Indicators that are important for metropolitan municipalities to progress towards becoming human rights cities, which we believe were to some extent overlooked in the indicators prepared by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and which are related municipalities' employment, service procurement and coordination practices were added to these sets.
3. Some indicators that are not produced or could not be produced by municipali-

---

4 When we say that it may not be meaningful for metropolitan municipalities, we mean metropolitan municipalities as an administrative unit; if the study included all municipalities within a metropolitan area, the indicator sets that Kent-Lab would monitor would also differ.

5 Unlike some other decentralized models in the world, local governments in Turkey are not responsible for certain services within their jurisdiction. In the context of human rights city, this factor primarily differentiates responsibilities related to security.

ties within the Turkish system were removed from these sets. However, we believe that these excluded indicators can be used in the future for a different monitoring study to measure the human rights-based well-being of city residents.

4. Indicators that, even if meaningful for the purposes of the monitoring study, but could not be effectively evaluated without local input were eliminated.<sup>6</sup>

5. Indicators that were not shared in a standardized way in open sources on local governments -i.e. strategy documents, activity reports, websites- or those that did not provide realistic information for monitoring purposes were eliminated.<sup>7</sup>

6. Finally, indicator sets prepared by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute categorized indicators in each area under the headings of “participation, accessibility and justice”. As Kent-Lab, we adhered to this classification in indicators related to the rights of disadvantaged groups, but we did not use this classification for general indicators covering human rights and instead used the United Nations Sustainable Development Principles - such as the right to housing, the right to clean water, the right to clean energy- as a guide.

Moreover, the study conducted by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute included indicators on children, women, the elderly, disabled people and refugees. Since municipalities in Turkey have different experiences in terms of refugee flows and they have very different ways in making their services for refugees public, we removed refugees among the disadvantaged groups covered by this study.

The working group of Kent-Lab, which shaped this monitoring study, took into account the following short and medium term goals while determining the indicators that were eliminated, modified, and added:

To establish a monitoring system that will allow to make comparisons between the performances of metropolitan municipalities, rather than being all-inclusive.

---

6 An example of such indicators is “suitability of transportation vehicles for disabled people”. As we know, the fact that the transportation vehicles used are suitable for the needs of the disabled does not mean that these vehicles can be used comfortably by people with disabilities in daily life. Such indicators, whose effectiveness cannot be determined without local information, have been excluded from the list.

7 In the context of gender equality, an example of this is the overall ratio between female and male municipal employees. Many municipalities provide this information in their reports, but even if they do, they do not disaggregate it by department and authority.

To establish a monitoring system that is easy to replicate and can be improved over time by standardizing the indicators which, through dialogue with municipalities, can be added in their core documents in the future.

To establishing a training program that includes indicators to be localized in the future by working with municipalities of different scales and civil society organizations active in those municipalities.

To identify indicators that would be useful for monitoring people's access to their rights in cities from different perspectives, even if they would not be meaningful for a monitoring study in terms of human rights cities, and laying the groundwork for future studies.

After the working group completed its study on the indicators sets, the project team started collecting data for the monitoring study based on the identified indicators. At this stage, indicators were sometimes eliminated or grouped in different ways for practical reasons. The project team made such decisions based on the following criteria set for the indicators: 1) Accessibility of the indicator; 2) Priority of the indicator; 3) Consistency of the indicator across different areas.

At this stage, due to their inaccessibility, we had to eliminate indicators that were based on periodic changes in some practices -for example the annual change in the share of the personnel that received human rights training-.<sup>8</sup> This was because the data needed for these indicators was sometimes not verifiable and municipalities often did not share those types of data in the sources we relied on. However, it will be important to track such indicators in a future monitoring study.

Again, the information we collected from the sources we used for this study sometimes contradicted with the information we had from the field. For example, we often realized that we knew that a municipality was providing services related to a particular area of rights, but we could not access information on those services from the sources we examined. In such cases, we tried to reach as much accurate information as possible, sometimes by searching the internet and sometimes by reaching out to our local contacts. However, even if we tried to do our best, there may be deficiencies and inaccuracies in the data we have collected; in some cases, this may be due to the mistakes or careless-

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, indicators such as the annual increase in the number of beneficiaries of services for a disadvantage group provided by a municipality.

ness of the Kent-Lab project team, but mostly they will be related with the problem that most municipalities fail in making the data required inaccessible. We would also like to point out that possible objections and corrections to the performance scorecards we have added at the end of this study will serve as a tool to explain and spread the concept of a human rights city to our target group.

We would like to make one last point in terms in relation to the way this study was conducted: When determining the indicator sets, it was possible to use a uniform format for indicators related to different disadvantaged groups. However, this option would only be meaningful for making comparisons between disadvantaged groups rather than for comparisons between different municipalities. Therefore, the indicators we used vary among disadvantaged groups, including the number of indicators used under different headings, and the indicators we used were decided in terms of their effectiveness for making comparisons between the municipalities in terms of the rights of a particular disadvantaged group.

Within the scope of this monitoring study, Kent-Lab also conducted a survey targeting people actively working in the city councils of 30 metropolitan municipalities to evaluate their familiarity to human rights cities. The “Social Awareness Survey on Human Rights Cities for City Councils” was repeatedly shared with the target group through e-mail groups, mobile applications and social media, yet we faced difficulties in getting the desired level of responses to this survey.<sup>9</sup>

When first designing this survey, Kent-Lab planned to reach a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 120 respondents. We reached that target, but when we examined the profile of the respondents, we realized that we received more responses from some municipalities compared to others. In order to prevent a bias in survey results, we eliminated some of the responses and only included the responses from 56 participants in our analysis.

The questions of this survey were prepared by taking into account the opinions of Etkiniz program experts and aimed to reveal the general picture in relation to human rights cities, participation in participatory processes and experience in monitoring/indicator studies.

---

9 As an association which can reach an extensive network of local governments and civil society organizations at the local level, we think that this situation is significant in terms of the indifference in society which is an outcome of the decline in human rights in Turkey.

# 4. Human Rights City Performances of Metropolitan Municipalities: Indicators and Results

## 4.1. Indicators on Human Rights in General

After eliminations and additions made, the general indicators on human rights cover the metropolitan municipalities' performance on human rights education, mainstreaming the concept of human rights, use of participatory mechanisms, transportation, participation to social/cultural life, disaster preparedness, sustainability, establishing complaint mechanisms and security. The indicator focusing on the access to clean water has been removed from the list for the time being due to difficulties in accessing reliable data.

The results demonstrate that municipalities make little effort in human rights education and making human rights a priority in their agendas set. Due to their performances, Ankara, Izmir and Mersin municipalities stand out as the most successful local governments under this heading. Yet, none of the metropolitan municipalities in Turkey have an action plan on human rights.

Of course, many of the municipalities have policy documents and equality action plans for different disadvantaged groups. In cases where such documents and plans do exist, it is frequently observed that they do not include a monitoring methodology and related indicators. The Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality is the only example that showed effort to develop its own indicators for different disadvantaged groups. The fact that local governments do not pay enough attention to developing localized indicators is a handicap for all types of monitoring studies.

The monitoring study also indicates that in terms of human rights in general and the rights of different disadvantaged groups in particular, the metropolitan municipalities see themselves more as service providers rather than agenda setters. In some municipalities, some in the staff are trained on different rights-based topics; however, the sustainability of these trainings is questionable and it is possible to assume that they are usually one-off trainings carried out as an activity of a particular project. The fact that such trainings should be compulsory for all municipal staff, not just for those working in specific departments, and should be made a permanent element of recruitment policies is an issue that should be kept in mind when designing advocacy work for municipalities on human rights cities.

Some indicators, on the other hand, provide insufficient information on the performance of municipalities. For example, the fact that every municipality is active in disaster coordination is related to the national structure established within the Ministry of Interior's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. The existence of practices established in coordination with the central government structure is not sufficient to understand the institutional performance of municipalities for disaster management.

Similarly, nearly almost every municipality has a high performance in the area of transportation, but the main reason behind this is the fact that municipalities are subject to central government's supervision in this area. Again, every municipality is active in sporting/cultural activities; however, it is impossible to obtain consistent data to answer essential questions like what percentage of the population in a city have access to those activities, or whether different groups within a city benefit from them equally. Every municipality is also active in health care, while the İstanbul Metropolitan Policy is the only local government that institutionally invests in housing. All municipalities have emergency call centers; however, it is impossible to assess how effectively those centers work without local feedback.

This heading also includes indicators on city councils; yet the city councils have been abolished in metropolitan municipalities where elected mayors have been replaced by appointed ones. The composition of city councils in terms of representation of different groups and areas is also an essential indicator for a monitoring study on human rights cities; however such an indicator is excluded in this study as it was impossible to access consistent data.



## 4.2. Indicators on Children's Rights

The results of the monitoring study reveal that metropolitan municipalities in general do not make much effort to mainstream children's rights and approach them from a service framework instead. For municipalities, children are largely service recipients; they are not seen as individuals who benefit from these services and have rights. Such an approach also affects the existence and effectiveness of participatory mechanisms targeting children.

In terms of participation of the children in municipality decision making and work, Eskişehir, İzmir and Mersin metropolitan municipalities stand out as the most successful ones. These three municipalities have a children's rights advisory unit, a budget and meeting place allocated for this unit, and rights-based rules for children. Again, those three municipalities and Bursa Metropolitan Municipality consult children when developing periodic strategy documents. Eskişehir, İzmir and Mersin Metropolitan municipalities also hold regular meetings with the child rights unit, monitor the impact of municipal projects on children's rights, operate complaint mechanisms accessible to children, and organize activities to inform municipal employees about children's rights. Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality is the only municipality that has conducted a study on the awareness of its service provision staff on children's rights.

The number of municipalities working to build the capacity of municipal staff on children's rights is very limited, and this is particularly important in terms of services provided to children. Given the municipalities's opportunities to reach local citizens, information activities of municipalities on children's rights are generally insufficient.

Every municipality is active when it comes to providing particular services to children. Almost every municipality has centers, sporting and cultural activities, courses and health services for children. However, without a basic guiding document, it is likely that there will be inadequacies in designing services for children that are equally accessible by all groups and take into account the needs of each group. Since the annual reports the municipalities only provide the number of children that have benefited from these facilities and services, it is not possible to understand how evenly these services are distributed within the city and among different groups.

Only the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality has a shelter for children. In general, there is a clear insufficiency in municipalities' awareness on and services for children exposed to violence.

There are municipalities working on children considered at risk, but there are differences in terms of target groups and approaches, including the way 'a child at risk' is defined.

### 4.3. Indicators on Women's Rights

Studies on the performance of local governments in the field of gender equality generally focus on services for women. However, from the perspective of the human rights city, this area is primarily related to the extent to which the municipality puts into practice the concept of gender equality within itself. The rate of female representation among elected administrators is of course important in this regard, but it is not a sufficient criterion. The ratio of women to men in municipal staff, units and management is one of the most important ways to measure how seriously a municipality takes gender equality. When we look at the practices of human rights cities around the world, we see that municipalities also set gender equality criteria for the companies they procure services. The rationality here is very simple; a municipality that excludes women in the workplace will also have an insufficient understanding of policies and services targeting women.

The total number of members of metropolitan municipal assemblies is 2.507, of which only 232, or 9,2 percent, are women. The share of female members in metropolitan municipality assemblies is not over 30 percent in any municipality added to this study. This inequality in the decision-making structures of municipalities is, of course, a factor that affects all municipal services and the ways in which these services are delivered.

There has been an increase in the number of municipalities that include women in municipal administration; however, the proportion of women in administrative positions is far from equal. Since the administrative units of municipalities differ and data on the number of women in managerial positions are not shared in similar ways, it is not possible to establish data on the ratio of women to men in administrative positions that are engaged in decision making. Sixteen metropolitan municipalities have women at the deputy mayor level, while 23 metropolitan municipalities have at least one woman at

the director level. Municipalities usually provide the ratio of women to men among total employees in the introduction of their annual reports; however, this ratio is insufficient to make a judgment on municipal performance on gender equality.

Unfortunately, we have not yet reached a stage where all municipalities include women's rights organizations in the process of developing strategic plans, which are the main policy documents of local governments. Monitoring data shows that this has been effectively done only in 13 out of 30 metropolitan municipalities.

The number of metropolitan municipalities organizing trainings on women's rights and gender equality is also insufficient. Only 12 metropolitan municipalities organize trainings on women's rights and gender equality for their own staff; however, information on the proportion of municipal staff who receive those trainings and the contents and the regularity of those trainings cannot be accessed through open sources. It is also found that 12 municipalities organize gender equality trainings for citizens living in the city.

Only one-third of metropolitan municipalities have an action plan focusing on services for women. Just like children, municipalities see women as service recipients not as people with particular rights. However, while most provide health services as well as physical and cultural activities for women, only a few organize activities to encourage women's participation in the labour market.

Nearly all municipalities in some way or the other carry out activities related to violence against women; however, if the data on the content of these activities were consistent, it would be seen that most of these activities are limited to specific days like March 8, the International Women's Day, and November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In other words, the issue of violence against women is far from being internalized within the services of metropolitan municipalities.

As organizations working in the field of women's rights frequently point out, there is a concerning insufficiency in terms of women's shelters operated by local governments. Our results show that only 11 metropolitan municipalities provide such shelter services.

The Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality is the only local government that conducts a spatial analysis of violence against women. Even if metropolitan municipalities in Turkey are not responsible for security services, spatial analysis of violence is essential for wom-

en's rights and the design of municipal services targeting the safety of women.

#### 4.4. Indicators on the Rights of the Elderly

Among metropolitan municipalities with active city councils, none has a council or commission on elderly rights. Some municipalities have councils for retirees and these councils are generally seen as bodies covering the rights of the elderly. This is important for understanding how municipalities view the elderly; firstly, retirement is considered as a threshold for aging, and secondly, since not all individuals have the opportunity to work in the labor market and retire, a significant portion of the elderly population is not represented in municipal decision-making processes.

However, there are municipalities which have directorates for the elderly. In some cases, those bodies cover both the elderly and the disabled people. The fact that these two groups have common needs in certain respects does not change the fact that there are also significant differences between them. Furthermore, this implies that these municipalities approach old age as a form of disability.

Under these circumstances, where the most basic participation opportunities of senior citizens are quite limited, we have left other indicators on participation out of this study. We believe that the above-mentioned indicators are sufficient for the time being to understand the general picture. Since there has been an increase in civil society activities on elderly-friendly cities, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, the participation of senior citizens in municipalities' decision making structures is an issue that should be prioritized by organizations advocating on elderly rights.

As a natural consequence of the fact that metropolitan municipalities approach the elderly population not as people above a certain age but as people outside the labor market, lifelong education and employment-based services for senior citizens provided by municipalities are quite limited. Only 12 metropolitan municipalities are found to provide lifelong education services, but it is unclear to what extent urban citizens aged 65 and over benefit from these services. Since there is a serious possibility of increasing poverty among the elderly population, especially in cities where their proportion is on the rise, it is necessary to create services that will enable elderly people to remain in employment if they wish to do so, and this issue should even be considered when designing municipi-

palties' recruitment policies.

Only Ankara and Mersin metropolitan municipalities have conducted activities to raise awareness on age discrimination among municipal staff. Meanwhile, only four metropolitan municipalities have organized in-service training for their staff on ageism, while six metropolitan municipalities have organized training activities for citizens on elderly rights. Elderly rights are seen as a service-related issue just like children's and women's rights.

In general, home care and home-based health services for the elderly population are available in every municipality. This positive picture is largely the result of the central government's program in this field.

There is a serious lack of diversity in care services, while special services for certain diseases related to old age and nursing homes are also insufficient. Seventeen out of 30 metropolitan municipalities have nursing homes; the available data makes it impossible to evaluate the adequacy of the capacity of these nursing homes.

None of the metropolitan municipalities has a shelter for elderly victims of violence and abuse. Only the metropolitan municipalities of Ankara and Mersin provide legal support to elderly people in this situation.

The performance of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality on the rights of the elderly is noteworthy and is a good example of how targeted collaboration with civil society organizations can make a difference in the approach and services of municipalities as the Mersin Municipality has been a part of such a structured long-term project on elderly rights.

#### **4.5. Indicators on the Rights of the Disabled People**

While municipalities generally see the elderly and the disabled people as two groups with similar needs, persons with disabilities have more opportunities to be included in municipalities' participatory bodies and mechanisms. More than half of the 30 metropolitan municipalities have a disability council/commission within their city council. Data on the proportion of persons with disabilities among municipal staff, which is an important element in terms of participation, is not available in a consistent way.

Only five of the metropolitan municipalities have action plans for persons with disabilities. As the spaces and services of all municipalities are required to be designed according to the needs of persons with different disabilities, it is inevitable that there will be gaps in the services provided without an overall plan in this area. The absence of such plans also makes it difficult to make sure that the available services meet the needs of persons with disabilities, as the preparation of such action plans provides important opportunities for participation that can provide local governments critical information on real needs.

However, every municipality has a unit exclusively focusing on the services for the disabled people. These units appear to work in greater coordination with other municipal units than those for the remaining disadvantaged groups. As it is the case for senior citizens, home care services for the disabled persons are available in every municipality and those services are also an outcome of the policy implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. It is also observed that the municipalities are very active in improving transportation facilities and in organizing sportive/cultural activities for the disabled persons.

Information on urban space arrangements for persons with disabilities could be found in the documents of 14 metropolitan municipalities. This does not mean that some spatial arrangements were not made in other municipalities; however, it indicates that these 14 municipalities prioritize these services more compared to others.

The number of municipalities operating in the field of access to information technologies for persons with disabilities is 20. However, the number of municipalities that produce special services for the disabled by using these information technologies is quite limited. It was observed that only three municipalities produced special city maps for the disabled people and provided trainings for the to use those maps

The number of municipalities making efforts to train municipal staff on the rights of the disabled people is 14. On the other hand, it is understood that 28 municipalities have organized either a congress, or a meeting or a workshop on disability in 2021.

It is observed that there are deficiencies in diversifying services for the disabled people.

For example, only two municipalities have developed projects to use guide dogs to ease the lives of the disabled people.

Only 11 metropolitan municipalities have developed services for persons with disabilities who have been subjected to violence. Again, only 7 metropolitan municipalities assumed that people with food allergies have special needs and made changes in their services accordingly.

#### 4.6. The Scorecard of Metropolitan Municipalities

Table 2 summarizes the overall results of the monitoring study on metropolitan municipalities' performance related to the concept of the human rights city. For each indicator set, the number of indicators associated with the performance of the relevant municipality can be followed from this table.

Based on 26 indicators on human rights, Ankara (24) and Izmir (21) metropolitan municipalities performed the best in terms of implementing a rights-based approach in general. The lowest performers are Mardin (10), Aydın (11) and Diyarbakır and Van (12) metropolitan municipalities. The average performance of municipalities on human rights is calculated as 15,6 out of 26 indicators. However, as stated in the relevant section, this positive rate is largely the result of indicators that do not provide sufficient information on the effectiveness of municipalities in prioritizing human rights. As stated earlier, the metropolitan municipalities in general have a problem in adopting a holistic approach to the field of rights.

Based on 24 common indicators, Eskişehir (23), İzmir and Mersin (22) and Bursa (18) metropolitan municipalities perform the best in terms of children's rights. The lowest performer is the Ordu Metropolitan Municipality (3). Only six municipalities received positive evaluations for half of the total number of indicators. The average performance of municipalities on child rights indicators is 7,9 out of 24 indicators.



**Table 1: Human Rights City Scorecard of Metropolitan Municipalities in Turkey**

	Human Rights(Numbe r of indicators: 26)	Children (Number of indicators: 24)	Women (Number of indicators: 30)	Elderly (Number of indicators: 31)	Disabled People (Number of indicator: 24)	Overall Score(Numb er of indicators: 135)
Adana	17	6	23	3	13	62
Ankara	24	16	24	18	17	99
Antalya	15	4	11	14	23	67
Aydın	11	6	21	7	4	49
Balıkesir	17	9	9	6	15	56
Bursa	19	18	24	7	17	85
Denizli	18	6	11	3	9	47
Diyarbakır	12	4	1	2	6	25
Erzurum	14	5	6	4	7	36
Eskişehir	19	23	27	5	19	93
Gaziantep	19	9	25	20	17	90
Hatay	16	4	10	6	9	45
İstanbul	17	12	22	13	17	81
İzmir	21	22	25	20	21	109
Kahramanmaraş	15	4	7	7	11	44
Kayseri	13	5	2	4	7	31
Kocaeli	16	7	9	10	11	53
Konya	13	5	6	3	6	33
Malatya	15	4	8	9	11	47
Manisa	16	5	8	3	10	42
Mardin	10	4	3	3	11	31
Mersin	19	22	21	25	21	108
Muğla	16	5	11	8	12	52
Ordu	14	3	9	4	9	39
Sakarya	15	5	1	7	8	36
Samsun	13	5	11	10	11	50
Şanlıurfa	17	6	16	8	10	57
Tekirdağ	16	5	3	5	12	41
Trabzon	18	6	21	5	11	61
Van	12	4	3	2	7	28

Based on 30 common indicators, the metropolitan municipalities of Eskişehir (27), İzmir and Gaziantep (25) performed the best in terms of women's rights. In the area of women's rights, 19 municipalities had a positive score for less than half of the indicators. The average performance of municipalities on women's rights indicators is calculated as 12,6 out of 30 indicators.

Based on 31 common indicators, Mersin (25), Gaziantep and İzmir (20) metropolitan municipalities performed the best in terms of the rights of the elderly. In this area, only four municipalities received positive evaluations in more than half of the indicators. The average performance of municipalities based on the indicators for the rights of older persons is 8 out of 31 indicators.

Based on 24 common indicators, Antalya (23), Mersin and İzmir (21) metropolitan municipalities are the best performers in terms of the rights of persons with disabilities. In this area, only four municipalities received positive evaluations in more than half of the indicators. Twelve out of 30 metropolitan municipalities had a positive score for at least equal to half of the number of indicators. The average performance of municipalities on the rights of the elderly is calculated as 12 out of 24 indicators.

Given the number of municipality services designed for different disadvantaged groups, one might question why performance score turned out to be so low. This is, of course, a natural consequence of approaching all these groups only as service recipients. The majority of municipalities fail on indicators that focus on issues that go beyond service provision and are important for human rights cities. The main reason for this poor performance is that a holistic and inclusive approach to human rights has not been developed and internalized by the metropolitan municipalities.

Out of 135 indicators under all headings, the metropolitan municipalities of İzmir (109), Mersin (108) and Ankara (99) achieved the highest scores. The lowest performers are Diyarbakır (25) and Van (28) metropolitan municipalities. Municipalities whose elected mayors have been removed from office fail nearly in all areas. The average performance of all metropolitan municipalities is 56,5.

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality not only has the best overall performance, but also consistently has high scores under each heading. The municipalities of Ankara, Eskişehir and Mersin also demonstrate a consistent success under all headings. These municipi-

palties seem to have reached the capacity to realize the idea of a human rights city in Turkey in the future.

In almost every area, the good performance of a small number of municipalities raises the average scores. Therefore, metropolitan municipalities in general give the impression that they are far from achieving the goal of a human rights city.

The overall picture based on this very narrow sets of indicators would have been even more disappointing if the study covered a higher number of indicators. Thus, even our simplified monitoring exercise shows that metropolitan municipalities in Turkey are not able to perceive the rights of their residents and to design and implement instruments to realize these rights.

The results indicate that municipalities that consistently work with civil society organizations, actively engage in international networks, and “make project implementation purposeful and learning oriented” are more successful. The results also show that policies designed by the central government for services for specific groups and require coordination with local governments have a positive impact on each municipality.

The information obtained from the monitoring study should also be evaluated together with the results of the Social Awareness Survey on the City of Human Rights organized by Kent-Lab. The survey targeted individuals who are already active in city councils, i.e. individuals who are more advantaged in terms of access to participatory mechanisms of metropolitan municipalities.

As explained in the methodology section, Kent-Lab conducted a survey targeting individuals who are active in city councils and analyzed the responses of 56 participants. Of these 56 respondents, three are presidents of a city council, one is a former president, six are general secretaries, 11 are executive board members, one is a coordinator, three are members of the women’s assembly, and the rest are members of the city councils or volunteers.

According to the existing legal framework in Turkey, the preparation of strategic plans is one of the most important mechanisms for municipalities to ensure citizens’ participation. Some municipalities give a particular importance to use such methods to ensure

participation in strategic plan preparation processes. However, according to the survey results, 32 out of 56 respondents participated in the strategic planning process of their municipalities. Considering that the respondents are already active people in municipality affairs, this rate is actually quite low.

Strategic plans also provide an opportunity to get an overall picture of all the services of a municipality and to identify indicators for these services. Strategic plans should be integrated with action plans for different themes or target groups, and there should be commonalities in such plans, especially in terms of the indicators to be used for monitoring purposes. No matter how well a municipality's strategic plan is prepared, it is difficult to monitor its implementation if indicators are not properly identified and a monitoring strategy is not established. Again, municipalities' attention to indicators within strategic plans will facilitate the incorporation of such monitoring methods into the institutional culture and increase the shorter-term documents', like annual reports, capacity to provide comprehensive information on municipalities' performances.

Even if municipalities use participatory methods in strategic plan preparation processes, they often fail to design and implement a monitoring method for the implementation phase of the plan and avoid conducting such monitoring studies in a participatory manner. This is a serious handicap for participation in municipal decision-making processes, as it makes it difficult to ensure the continuity of policies and services and deprives those involved in these processes of the opportunity to understand to what extent their recommendations have been implemented and, if not, to understand why. Strategic planning training for both municipal staff and civil society widely emphasizes the importance of monitoring processes, and many methods have been developed over the last 20 years to make these monitoring processes more effective. The lack of such processes is in itself an obstacle for people to enjoy their rights in accordance with universal standards set; it also negatively affects the development of holistic approaches and the implementation of stable and sustainable policies and practices that do not change from one mayor to another.

The results of the survey show that while some municipalities ensure some level of citizen participation during the preparation of the strategic plans, they neglect participatory monitoring methods. Only 17,9 percent of respondents said that they had been involved in the monitoring efforts for strategic plans. Similarly, nearly 90 percent of re-

spondents have never participated in their municipality's indicator setting/data collection processes. In addition to the issues mentioned above, this creates a serious problem for civil society work. Indicator setting, data collection and monitoring require skills that can only be learned through trial and error. Therefore, the less importance a local government attaches to participation in monitoring efforts, the more inadequate the skills of civil society working with that local government will progress. We have already touched upon the importance of decentralization when conducting monitoring work in the field of rights, and while discussing the results of monitoring work, we have shared examples of how some indicators do not actually provide any information on the quality of services. The results of the survey draw attention to the necessity of capacity building activities for both municipalities and individuals working actively within municipalities in order to conduct effective monitoring work in the field of human rights and, of course, the rights of disadvantaged groups under this umbrella, and to produce effective policies as a result.

The questions related to different disadvantaged groups show that only 19 out of 56 respondents think that their municipality is involved in policy implementation/development processes for a disadvantaged group. Seventeen out of 50 respondents have not received any training in the field of rights. The majority of those who have received training have participated in trainings on gender equality. This is followed by trainings on the rights of the elderly and the disabled people. Three people attended trainings on equality action plans. Considering that the participants of this survey are people actively working in city councils and that these councils are the most important institutional structures established for civil society in terms of achieving human rights standards in cities and protecting the rights of disadvantaged groups, it is necessary to implement standardized and continuous training activities for city councils in order to ensure a progress in expanding human rights in the city.

Sixty-four percent of the respondents said that municipalities do not provide trainings on human rights or the rights of different disadvantaged groups to their staff. This result is consistent with the results of the monitoring study which shows that municipalities usually provide these trainings to a small number of staff as part of a project or activities designed for specific days. The concept of the human rights city requires that municipal staff in all departments and at all levels of seniority receive basic human rights training and trainings on the rights of disadvantaged groups, and that their performance in

these areas is recognized as part of their overall performance measurement. It is therefore important that municipalities, in cooperation with appropriate civil society organizations, build the capacity to make such trainings a regular activity of their institutions, and that rights organizations consider ensuring this as a priority.

According to the survey results, 66,1 percent of the participants have never heard of the concept of “Human Rights City”. While 82,1 percent of the respondents do not know what the “Human Rights City Declaration” is, 87,5 percent of the participants stated that their municipalities do not have any activities (information meeting, strategy document, action plan) that can be associated with the concept of ‘Human Rights City’. Seventy-five percent of the participants stated that the city council they are a part of does not have any such work. On the other hand, all of the participants agreed with the statement ‘Local governments should incorporate universal human rights norms and standards into urban policies, practices and services, and adopt them to local and daily life’. These results highlight the need for advocacy activities targeting to raise awareness of municipalities on the concept of human rights cities.

In the survey, 60,7 percent of the respondents marked “neither agree nor disagree” to the statement “Our municipality takes into account national and local indicators in the plan/implementation development processes”, while 12,5 percent agreed and 10,7 percent strongly agreed with the same statement. The rate of those who “neither agreed nor disagreed” with the statement “Our Municipality monitors and reports the effects of plan/implementation activities by taking into account the national/local indicators” is 55,4 percent. The 71.4 percent of the participants disagreed with the statement ‘I have sufficient knowledge on the importance of indicators, development of indicators and data collection’. As Kent-Lab, our conclusion based on these responses is that there is a serious need to prioritize activities to build local monitoring capacity in the short and medium term.

More than three quarters of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement ‘Municipality staff have sufficient information about the needs of different groups’. The same percentage of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement ‘Our municipality provides information about its policies and practices for different groups in an adequate and easily accessible manner, taking into account the needs of these groups’. In response to the question “Which methods does your munic-

ipality use to identify the needs of different groups?” 28,6 percent of the respondents listed meetings and other consultations, while 30,4 percent listed cooperation with civil society among the methods used. According to 32,1 percent, petitions for complaints are also one of the methods used.

Twenty-four out of 56 respondents answered “none” or “don’t know” to the question “Which indicators have been identified for different disadvantaged groups in your municipality’s strategic plan?”. Among those who said that there are such indicators in the strategic plans, most mentioned indicators on women’s rights, followed by indicators concerning the right of the children, the elderly, the youth and the persons with disabilities. Forty respondents answered the question ‘How many directorates/units in your municipality carry out work specific to different disadvantaged groups?’ Sixteen respondents said one, seven said two, five said three, two said four, one said five, two said six and two said seven directorates/units within their municipalities carry out such work.



## 5. Conclusion

While evaluating the results of Kent-Lab's study to monitor the "Human Rights City" performance of 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey through indicators, it is useful to recall the 2014 guidelines for human rights cities mentioned in the second part of this report and the framework for human rights cities drawn by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Considering the 10 principles included in the first document, Kent-Lab's study was able to measure mostly the ones mentioned under the headings "Principle 1: Right to the City", "Principle 2: Prevention of Discrimination and Affirmative Action", "Principle 3: Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity", "Principle 4: Participatory Democracy and Accountable Governance", "Principle 7: Mainstreaming Human Rights", "Principle 8: Effective Institutions and Coordination of Policies". The results of the monitoring study indicate that metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, irrespective of the scores obtained in the indicator analysis, are generally unsuccessful in recognizing the right to the city, realizing participatory democracy and accountability, mainstreaming rights and ensuring coordination between policies and practices touching different types of rights, disseminating and institutionalizing human rights trainings, and fully exercising the right to effective remedy. This makes it difficult for a municipality - whether it has embraced the idea of a human rights city or not - to protect the rights of people living within its jurisdiction in line with international standards. The research shows the need for an approach that takes a holistic view of rights, ensures coordination between them, sees ensuring rights as a responsibility of every unit within the municipality rather than the responsibility of a directorate within the municipality, and seeks to strengthen the capacity of all staff from the top to the bottom on human rights and the rights of the disadvantaged groups.

The current political environment in Turkey has negatively affected and limited the relations between civil society organizations working in the field of rights and local governments in the last decade. The results of this research show that metropolitan municipalities that are not affected by this political polarization in the country, that engage with rights-based organizations through more structured processes rather than short-term projects, or those that have already built capacity in rights concerning particular disadvantaged groups, even if they are affected by this polarization, are more successful in enabling citizens to exercise their rights.

The results of this research also demonstrate that when relations are established between opportunities provided by the central government and the activities of local governments even on a service-based basis for certain disadvantaged groups, the quantity and quality of services accessed by citizens improve.

Since the early 2000s, participation has been one of the priority issue of rights-based organizations in Turkey have been working on the most is participation and local governments have been the main target group of civil society activities that have aimed ensuring citizen participation. If one were to review the projects currently being carried out in Turkey by rights-based organizations, one would see that almost all have some components focusing on citizen participation. Again, the effectiveness of city councils, assemblies or commissions established under these councils or within municipal assemblies for different groups in making rights a part of municipal policies is questionable. In an environment where the rate of women's representation in municipal assemblies does not exceed 30 percent in any metropolitan municipality, what a women's commission of a municipal assembly can achieve will certainly be insufficient. Some of the indicators that we had to eliminate in the monitoring study due to our inability to access consistent data were related to the extent to which such structures within municipalities can influence the decisions of municipal assemblies. Even the difficulty in accessing this data is an indication that participation remains largely on the surface with almost no effect on decision making and practices.

As Kent-Lab, we think that not only the extent of our initial aims achieved in this study and the results it generated but also our failure in achieving in some of the aims provide critical information on municipalities' performance to realize human rights cities. In the end, we were able to include only a small portion of the hundreds of indicators

developed for each heading in the study. We had to eliminate many indicators because the information they provided did not have any practical meaning other than a tick on a checklist. Creating indicators that are practically meaningful and truly measurable for a rights monitoring study is a difficult endeavor in itself; however, during this study, we had to eliminate even indicators related to information that should be easily accessible because we could not access them in a reliable and consistent way. However, all this effort has created a large resource for future monitoring studies and, as an association, we hope that we can continue our work by using this resource in an effective way.

One of the factors that created difficulties in conducting this study is that the basic documents and tools of the municipalities that constitute an important source for monitoring efforts are not prepared and shared with the public in a standardized way that is crucial for accessing to and comparing information of the same type and quality. For this reason, as Kent-Lab, through advocacy work we plan to encourage at least the more institutionalized metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities to share information in a standardized manner that will enable effective and meaningful monitoring activities.

While preparing this monitoring study, we also worked with some district municipalities on monitoring and localization of indicators related to human rights cities. With these activities, we wish to build on the knowledge and experience we gained during the monitoring study and to develop capacity both within municipalities and within civil society, especially in indicator diversification, and development, data collection and ensuring continuity in data on indicators.

In addition, we aim to contribute to capacity building in the field of the human rights city through the existing European networks and through the translation of publications that will enable the proliferation of resources on the human rights city available in Turkish.

In closing, we would like to express our hope that this monitoring study will make at least a minimal contribution to efforts to change approaches to urban governance in Turkey, to protect and promote the human rights of citizens living in cities and, of course, to ensure that the efforts of rights-based civil society organizations and all local governments adopting a rights-based perspective lead to effective results.

# REFERENCES

Akay, Hale (2016) Yerel Yönetimler İçin İnsan Hakları Temelli Yaklaşım: Kavramsal Çerçeve ve En İyi Uygulama Örnekleri, Türkiye-Avrupa Vakfı, [http://turkiyeavrupavakfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Matra\\_Kitap2.pdf](http://turkiyeavrupavakfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Matra_Kitap2.pdf).

European Union Agency For Human Rights (2021) Human Rights Cities in the EU: A Framework for Reinforcing Rights Locally, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2021-human-rights-cities-in-the-eu\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-human-rights-cities-in-the-eu_en.pdf).

Günlük-Şenesen, Gülay; Arun Özgür; Aykara, Aslıhan; Sunata, Ulaş; Arkadaş Thibert, Adem; Yücel; Yelda (2021) İnsan Hakları Kentleri Göstergeleri, Raul Wallenberg Institute.

World Human Rights Cities Forum (2014) Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City (Gwangju Principles), <https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/sites/default/files/Gwangju%20Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Human%20Rights%20City%20adopted%20on%2017%20May%202014.pdf>