

Survey of Migrant Representations and Municipalities

Taking stock of the intercultural opening of municipal administrations, as well as structures and strategies of municipal migrant representation boards at the federal state level



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“Survey on Migrant Representations and Municipalities”

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Background information

Title	Survey on Migrant Representations and Municipalities
Geographic area	Federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany
City	Different cities within the federal state of Baden-Württemberg
Organization	The municipality of the city of Stuttgart and LAKA-BW, an umbrella organization of migrant representations in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg
Contact person or organization	Ayse Özbabacan, Integration Officer of the city of Stuttgart Argyri Paraschaki-Schauer, Director of LAKA-BW
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Start Date	April 1, 2023
End Date	Dezember 29, 2023

Summary

A survey takes stock of the intercultural opening (ICO) of municipal administrations and strategies of municipal migrant representation boards¹, as well as their structures at the federal state level. It aims to improve networking and exchange of information between municipal migrant representative boards, identify issues and good practices, and foster exchange of experiences and good practices. Municipal administrations and municipal migrant representations are addressed by separate questionnaires. The main part of the survey report consists of a descriptive stocktaking that facilitates the set goals. An analysis of the compiled data occupies a minor space, since the limited resources and the non-representative character of the survey cannot facilitate a scientific analysis.

Goals

Stakeholders in the field of political participation of migrants identified the need to gather information on the needs of migrants and municipalities. The addressed issue is the fact that very little knowledge about the state of intercultural openness of regional municipalities and the strategies and structures of municipal migrant representation boards is feasible accessible. Hence, issues could not be identified and subsequently not be precisely addressed. Furthermore, dissemination of knowledge and good practices, as well as networking with other stakeholders was barely feasible.

The initial assumption was that especially small cities have little experience and resources to advance intercultural opening of municipalities and political participation of migrants. Thus, the project goals were set accordingly to tackle these issues.

The goals in a nutshell

1. Promote and facilitate networking between municipal migrant representation boards, and between municipalities.
2. Identify issues and backlogs in order to specifically address the respective municipalities and/or migrant representations.
3. Identify good practices that are already practiced by municipalities and migrant representations.

¹ German: "Kommunale Migrantenvertretungen"

4. Identify successful strategies that grant migrant representations greater political participation.
5. Raise awareness on ICO and the need for implementation of respective measures.
6. Set the basis for a future scientific study that conducts in-depth analysis.
7. Disseminate the findings.

How does it work?

During the SHAPE project and in a participatory process, an open call for suggestions for projects that foster improvement in the field of integration and political participation of migrants was made. Due to many project applications, a preselection of 21 eligible projects was made. The eligible applications were evaluated by stakeholders in the field of political participation of migrants. As an innovative pilot project, the survey was chosen to be conducted because of the direly needed project's goals.

The survey questions were drafted and constantly feedbacked by practitioners in the field of integration and political participation of migrants, as well as the municipal administration of Stuttgart. Municipal migrant representations were addressed with a different questionnaire than municipalities. The largest part of the survey reports is descriptive stocktaking which satisfies the set goals. An analysis of the compiled data occupies a minor space, since the limited resources and the non-representative character of the survey cannot facilitate a scientific analysis.

The survey that targeted municipal migrant representation boards in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg was send to them by their umbrella organization LAKA-BW. Within the survey, participants were asked to provide their addresses and to describe their structures, their political and public relation strategies, and to present their work, issues, and good practices. In exchange for their participation, they receive the state of affairs of all other municipal migrant representations in the state of Baden-Württemberg, their address data and an overview over their conducted good practices and projects, once the survey is completed. The thereby produced easily accessible handbook should enable them to locate themselves, learn from each other and enter exchange, or to support other migrant representations boards.

The questionnaire that targeted municipalities gathered information on the respective municipalities' state of the art and strategies for intercultural opening. It was not expected that new data would be collected by the municipalities, but they were asked to use the information they already had available. This survey was

then sent to municipal Integration Officers² in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg by the municipality of Stuttgart.

Furthermore, both questionnaires touched upon topics such as

- ICO as a cross-cutting issue in municipal offices/ units and migrant representative boards.
- Cooperation, networking and exchange between municipalities and migrant organizations.
- Training offers on intercultural and racism-critical competence for municipal staff.
- Municipal recruitment strategies for migrants.
- Municipal services provision for different population groups.
- Municipal public relations work on migrant and integration issues.
- Municipal political bodies to promote political participation.

Both questionnaires can be found in Germany by the following links:

<https://forms.gle/3psNGxapexj22sRr9>

<https://forms.gle/6d834LLBdHEbbwo96>

An English translation of the questionnaire can be provided by the Integration Officer of the city of Stuttgart upon request (Ayse.Oezbabacan@stuttgart.de).

The project results are to be disseminated through the network of Stuttgart and LAKA-BW by their homepages, social media, and printed leaflets. The project and its results will furthermore be presented to relevant regional stakeholders in a symposium and networking event.

Results

An easily accessible digital handbook, that gathers relevant data about all migrant representation boards in the federal state, can facilitate networking between municipal migrant representations, as well as between municipal administrations.

Furthermore, good practices that are conducted by municipalities and migrant representations are identified and get more public visibility through online and offline dissemination, e.g., in symposiums. Hence, awareness for these good practices raises, and the practices can be disseminated between migrant representation boards and between municipalities.

² German: “Integrationsbeauftragte”

The umbrella organization LAKA can advise its members on the bases of identified successful strategies that granted migrant representations greater political participation. It also can facilitate exchange and monitor challenges that their members face.

Evaluation

No external evaluation was carried out. However, several learnings were made within the project during its conduct.

One learning is that ICO as a rather fuzzy concept is understood in different ways by each actor. Hence, to enable efficient work conduct, all stakeholders should determine from the very beginning what they want to learn, and what they mean when they use keywords that are abstract concepts.

Furthermore, realistic goals must be set. The actors should ask themselves:

- *What are our goals, i.e., what knowledge can be produced by that survey?*
- *Did we delineate and limit sufficiently what we want to learn in order to realistically meet the goals?*

To sum up, it is crucial to create conceptual clarity from the beginning and to always ensure that all involved actors understand the concept, the goals, and the limitations that this project has. This helps to keep the survey questions concise and focused.

Then, it should be thought from the beginning about what is going to happen with the results once the survey is completed. The actors should ask themselves:

- *How do we expect our results to make a difference?*
- *How can we ensure that our results make a difference and monitor that after the dissemination of our results?*

The survey and the dissemination of the results themselves do not make a direct impact on the ground but can only identify issues and provide guidance. Hence, it is of high importance that changes on the ground are advanced in cases where issues are identified. It would make sense to include a plan from the very beginning on how to advance the identified issues after the end of the survey, how to ensure that steps taken into action, and to include a respective staff position.

Another experience made was that since municipal migrant representation boards are usually voluntary committees with very limited resources and time, a low turnout must be expected. Hence, it is important to grant them at least two months to complete the survey and to regularly remind them to do so by individual and collegial addresses.

Who benefits?

- Migrant representation organizations
- Municipalities
- Migrants that are already politically active within migrant representation organizations

On the long run, the project is supposed to be one component of a broader improvement of the lives of all migrants, regardless of age, education, social class, gender. However, its impact remains of course diffuse and very likely not directly observable. Most probably, the most immediate direct impact will be on migrants that are already politically active within migrant representations.

Source of funding and resources used

The project was funded by the SHAPE-Project through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund of the European Commission.

Replicability

As a prerequisite, several separate migrant representations organizations need to exist. The structures and well-connected actors such as a federal migrant representation with good contacts to the municipalities, seem important to conduct this project. LAKA-BW, an umbrella organization of migrant representations in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, is the official representative body of municipal migrant representations in the state of Baden-Württemberg. Thus, it can rely on established structures and contacts, and enjoys legitimacy as a representative body of migrants vis-à-vis the administration, politics, and civil society.

However, it is also thinkable that other structures and organizations could conduct the survey and disseminate the relevant information to stakeholders.

Migrant organizations as well as municipalities are busy and understaffed. Very likely, they have limited resources to answer the questionnaire. At this point, it helps to have well-connected and trusted actors in charge, that can support and remind actors to hand in the responses. In this project, it was valuable to have LAKA-BW, as well as the municipality of Stuttgart, namely the Integration Officer of the city, to oversee the project.

Lastly, considerable human resources are needed to conduct this project, which of course implies considerable financial resources. To conduct this project, we suggest providing a 30% part-time job position

for four months. It must be expected that the actual workload per month varies. Planning and drafting the survey during the first month will be time-consuming. After disseminating the survey questions, we suggest spending two months for the collection of responses, supporting the respondents, as well as preparing and drafting the report, which requires less manpower. The evaluation and dissemination of the handbook during the last month will again be more time-consuming. Further expenses are neglectable since the survey software and publishing and disseminating online is mostly free of charge.