CHECKLIST FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT ON ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
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This checklist is intended to support the representatives of local authorities in planning and implementing their own communication strategy, including communication campaigns. It covers written and visual communication as well as physical meetings, and should be used as a tool for self-reflection. The checklist incorporates the key principles of inclusive communication, with the purpose of ensuring the consideration of inclusion, diversity and accessibility aspects within public communication.

ACTIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES

Discrimination takes many forms and can impact the daily lives of its victims in a multitude of ways. Discrimination can take place in education, employment, housing, political participation, healthcare, and many other areas, which makes it complex and difficult to tackle. There is also systemic discrimination that hides in structures, policies, and procedures in organisations, including local authorities.

Is non-discrimination a central component of all municipal features, including any systemic discrimination? This is the case if:

☐ The municipality has the data needed on inequalities and discrimination in the city to plan its services and activities.

☐ The municipality is reviewing all of its aspects to consider structural discrimination and how this could be mitigated.

☐ The municipality has considered what other relevant power structures may cause discrimination and are within the city's powers to mitigate.

☐ The municipality has created opportunities for different units to offer advice and support such as human resources or the equality department.

☐ Individuals who may have experienced discrimination have the opportunity to provide input into the planning, implementation, or evaluation of the municipal services.

Were services reviewed for structural or other inequalities that could restrict participation in their development, delivery, use, or evaluation and how these may be mitigated? This is the case if:

☐ The municipality has an equality plan or other framework to assess, plan and measure any interventions that may be needed to address structural inequalities that would restrict access and participation in services provided.

☐ Structural barriers in terms of transport and location for citizens from certain areas or neighbourhoods are identified.

☐ The municipality has planned positive measures to address inequality and informed those groups exposed to inequalities and their representative organisations.

☐ Additional financial, human, or other resources needed to support access for particular groups are identified.

☐ The municipality is an active promoter of equality and diversity and encourages the employment of representatives of vulnerable communities to support the planning and delivery of local services.

Is there a communication plan within the municipality to ensure that information reaches all members of the community, and that communication is done in an as inclusive way as possible? This is the case if:

☐ The municipality's communication strategy emphasises positive elements of the diversity and inclusion policies implemented to a broader audience.

☐ The municipality's communication strategy ensures that communication about the services is accessible to as broad a range of people as possible.

☐ The municipality uses inclusive language – for example, gender-neutral language, symbols, non-verbal communication, such as pictures, colours, etc.

☐ Information is accessible and made available in ways that can be accessed by people who are illiterate or have lower literacy skills.

☐ The municipal activities are promoted in events or forums that are regularly attended.

If relevant, does the local authority work in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims as part of local level inclusion policies? This is the case if:

☐   The municipality has considered the involvement of a range of organisations and institutions who work to combat different types of discrimination in local decision-making and policy planning.

☐   Organisations advise on the planning of municipal activities or feed into their implementation, monitoring or evaluation.

☐   The municipality plays a leadership role in mainstreaming specific issues of human rights and equality into local life.

☐   The municipality participates in or is involved in local platforms for exchange on good practice.

☐   Legal bodies or institutions such as ombudspersons or anti-discrimination bodies advise on methodology or are informed in the results of local governance.

Was the usefulness to work with a range of community and other civil society groups on antidiscrimination duly considered? This is the case if:

☐   The municipality considers involving organisations working with hard-to-reach communities such as self-help groups, neighbourhood groups or refugee or other community groups to help extend the local authorities reach.

☐   There is a clear strategy on when and how to involve people from diverse groups and communities.

☐   There is space to review to ensure that no groups (e.g., smaller groups within groups or at the intersection of different groups) have been left behind.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY – STATUS QUO ANALYSIS

As a second step towards a diverse and inclusive local community, a more in-depth status quo analysis can be carried out, using but not limited to the below listed questions. Based on the results of the status quo analysis, new and updated policies and services can be implemented to further strengthen anti-discrimination efforts within the municipality.

1.   Identification

☐   What vulnerable communities exist in the municipality?

☐   What groups face stigma or discrimination? Do any groups face denial or invisibility? Are any in danger of being left behind?

☐   Create a list of the minorities or other groups threatened by discrimination or bias-based exclusion existent in the municipality. How can the municipality strengthen the position of these groups?

2.   Recognition

☐   Are any minorities or other groups threatened by discrimination or bias-based exclusion particularly at risk of being left behind? For example, have any groups been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including by social or economic effects resulting from the pandemic? If yes, which people or groups?

☐   Is there denial that certain minorities exist? How is this denial expressed and by whom?

☐   Is there a desire to be recognised as a particular group that has been denied? If yes, which groups?

☐   Is there a fear on the part of certain groups to being identified as minorities? If yes, which groups?

3.   Discourse analysis

☐   What negative or positive discourses exist in society, including hate speech and incitement to violence?

☐   How can the municipality work with or challenge, as relevant, available or prevalent discourses in society?

4. Participation and access to opportunities

☐ Has the municipality employed representatives of vulnerable communities to support field work and/or service provision to lower the barriers and ease the access to citizens of fewer opportunities?

☐ Is there sufficient disaggregated data on the situation of certain vulnerable groups facing systemic discrimination in the municipality, and in particular on their ability to exercise in practice all civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights in practice?

☐ Do vulnerable communities in practice participate at all levels in decisions affecting them?

☐ How can the municipality promote full and effective participation of marginalised communities in local decision-making process?

5. Special measures

☐ Are there any special measures, affirmative or positive action to create equal opportunities for groups or individuals facing discrimination on the ground of ethnicity, xenophobia and related intolerance in the economic, civic, cultural, political or social spheres?

6. Information

☐ Are all communities, including linguistic minorities, provided information in languages they understand, such that they may participate equally and effectively?

The Checklist for Self-assessment on Anti-discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion was elaborated by the elected representatives of the Georgian Forum of Exchange on human rights within the Learning Path for local authorities on antidiscrimination policies and practices in 2023. The document is based on excerpts from Intercultural checklist: Real equality within the Intercultural cities programme by Council of Europe.

The Georgian Forum of Exchange on human rights at local level is a unique platform for dialogue among thirteen Georgian local authorities to address challenges for improving social inclusion, promoting equal opportunities and incorporating a gender perspective in local political action, in order to eliminate discrimination. The Forum was created in the framework of the project "Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia", implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Directorate General of Democracy, Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy, within the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2020-2023 with the financial contribution of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

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