

## ORTAKLAŞA: CULTURE, DIALOGUE AND SUPPORT PROGRAMME



### AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



### CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

LEADERSHIP, SUPPORT, EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES, RESILIENCE,  
PARTICIPATION, NATIONAL, STRATEGY, RESEARCH, CULTURAL RIGHTS,  
NATURAL DISASTER



## 1. Istanbul / Marmara Municipalities Union and culture

Istanbul's position as a bridge between East and West makes the city an ideal candidate to represent the spirit of cultural exchange and dialogue. Istanbul, the 2010 European Capital of Culture, is a cosmopolitan city and dynamic cultural hub marked by its historical legacy and wide cultural diversity, with a vibrant contemporary cultural scene, including art, music, film, and literature.

Türkiye made public policy reforms in line with the EU negotiation framework to encourage participatory approaches for a more sustainable and democratic governance. A new dimension of decentralization and civic participation has also been put into effect in the field of culture throughout the country. However, full decentralization and civic participation have not yet taken place in practice in terms of resource allocation, power delegation and civil-public dialogue. This is reflected in cultural policy-making as well, which is still highly centralized.

**ORTAKLAŞA PROMOTES FAIR COLLABORATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR, AIMING TO FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM ACROSS TÜRKİYE.**



## 2. Objectives and implementation of the project

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

Ortaklaşa, implemented by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSİV) in collaboration with Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) and financed by the European Union (EU), addresses the gap in fair collaboration between civil society and local governments in the cultural sector, aiming to foster an inclusive and participatory cultural ecosystem across Türkiye. It aims to promote “a functioning pluralistic, participatory and representative democracy and the consolidation of a resilient civil society by promoting a culture of fundamental rights and dialogue”, revitalizing and democratizing Türkiye’s cultural landscape by fostering collaboration and participation across the sector. Specific objectives are:

- i) To empower cultural professionals working in municipalities and CSOs in cultural policy and management.
- ii) To strengthen dialogue and collaboration in Türkiye’s arts and culture sector through joint practices between municipalities and CSOs.

### 2.2. Development of the project

The project provides necessary dialogue opportunities, professional knowledge and budget for cultural actors not just in Istanbul but also around Türkiye to develop a more nuanced understanding of the political and social context within which cultural policy is formed and implemented.

İKSİV and MMU joined forces to transfer their experiences in the field of local governance throughout the country. Other key stakeholders are city councils, the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) Ankara and Istanbul Clusters, the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, the public sector in Türkiye (Ministries, Directorates of Culture and Tourism in towns and counties), private sector and international networks on cultural policy.





The 36-month project duration consists of:

1. Field Research and the Publication of the Cultural Policy Report
2. Capacity-Building Programme
3. Advocacy Activities
  - » Regional Advocacy Round Tables
  - » Regional Search Conferences for an Inclusive Local Cultural Policy-Making
  - » Ankara Visits
  - » Brussels Study Visit
  - » United Cities and Local Governments Culture Summit Participation
  - » Policy Paper and Roadmap
4. Sub-Grant Programme
5. Communication, Visibility and Dissemination Activities

2023 marked a tumultuous yet successful beginning for the Ortaklaşa project. Confronted with the devastation of the February 6 earthquake, we pressed on, launching ambitious cultural policy research. Our research expanded to include five earthquake-stricken cities, interviewing 139 representatives from 79 institutions across 12 cities.

Under the Ortaklaşa sub-grant programme, the inaugural call for proposals in April 2023 attracted significant engagement, with 728 attendees participating in three webinars. This enthusiasm translated into 121 project applications from 33 cities across seven regions of Türkiye. Four sub-grant projects, representing different Turkish regions and cumulatively valued at €375,830, were supported, showcasing the diverse cultural initiatives across the country.



Significant strides were made in cultivating dialogue and understanding in cultural policy and management, as evidenced by seven round table meetings engaging 160 cultural professionals, and 34 focused group discussions, enriching the discourse in the cultural sector. The project's impact was further demonstrated at the UCLG Culture Summit in Dublin, where the findings of comprehensive field research were presented.

The project's first year was marked by substantial achievements in promoting participatory cultural policymaking, culminating in Marmara Urban Forum (MARUF) 2023, where capacity-building sessions were conducted, reinforcing the collaboration between civil society and municipalities. For the second call, held from 4 April to 4 June 2024, 131 project applications were received from 35 cities across seven regions of Türkiye. Approximately 1 million euros were allocated to support 9 projects selected in this second call and two open calls for proposals, with a total budget of 1.3 million euros, have been concluded.

One of the first granted projects was the Adıyaman Kömür 1st Children and Youth Festival, which seeks to repurpose a vacant municipal building in Kömür into a culture and art centre to provide essential cultural and artistic activities to young residents. In a region deeply affected by the 2023 earthquake, the centre will offer activities, including educational workshops and training sessions for children; music, musical instruments and rhythm lessons; and training sessions in theatre and acting.

**THE PROJECT PROVIDES NECESSARY DIALOGUE OPPORTUNITIES,  
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND BUDGET FOR CULTURAL ACTORS.**





## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

Through the regional roundtable meetings and search conferences, this project has brought together cultural professionals from CSOs and municipalities all around Türkiye; with the sub-grant mechanism, it provides CSOs with beyond simply having a seat at the table but the power to set and control the agenda regarding the key issues. Thus, cultural democracy has implied the idea of opening up the governance of culture and arts in this project. In order for the public resources to be used more consistently and democratically and to reveal the potential of the cultural field, it is essential to pave the way for CSOs to play more active roles in the decision-making and management processes pertaining to culture. Ortaklaşa itself and every sub-granted project will be a unique local CSO-local government collaboration example of its own local and positioned problems, needs, and solutions where all cultural agents understand the differentiated identities and characteristics of their own places.

### 3.2. Evaluation

There are three approaches operationalized in the monitoring and evaluation process:

- » Theory of Change is a large-scale approach that sketches a generic roadmap from the beginning of the project to the target, highlighting assumptions and focusing on the context in which change can occur.
- » Outcome Mapping draws the focus of the Theory of Change towards the project itself. Inputs that are directly in the area of impact, such as behaviours, relationships, and project activities, are centrally positioned.
- » Most Significant Change is a participatory monitoring and evaluation approach. It involves collecting change stories from project stakeholders, analyzing them systematically, and trying to understand the project's impact through these stories.



### 3.3. Key factors

Although the project has only been underway for 26 months, Ortaklaşa has taken a historical step towards social participation in the field of arts and culture, democratisation, realisation of cultural rights, and the improvement of cultural policies and the cultural ecosystem in Türkiye. CSOs and municipalities have begun to collaborate, fostering meaningful dialogue and developing partnerships to jointly apply for the grant program, a crucial component of the project. If these joint projects would result in continuing the dialogue and cooperation between CSOs and municipalities; and increase the number of cultural policy papers ratified by municipalities, Ortaklaşa will succeed:

1. Political Participation Score in Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index.
2. Number of joint CSO and municipality cultural projects undertaken.
3. Number of cultural policy roadmaps or action documents adopted with joint municipality and CSO input.

### 3.4. Continuity

Ortaklaşa has significantly enhanced its expertise in grant management and expanded its network of stakeholders. Consequently, the organization intends to execute the policy recommendations and the roadmap derived from its field research, roundtable discussions, search conferences, capacity-building trainings, and sub-granted projects. This will be accomplished through the design of Ortaklaşa's second phase at the project's conclusion. Additionally, the sub-granted projects have established their own networks and mechanisms, enabling the continuation of these collaborations across various localities in Türkiye. For instance, the GOLA Culture, Arts, and Ecology Association developed a local cultural policy document following a workshop, which was then ratified by the Borçka Municipality council.

Financially, İKSV and MMU plan to continue similar projects post-completion, leveraging existing partnerships and seeking new international grants. Local private sector involvement, including industrial enterprises and chambers of commerce, will be cultivated for support. Additionally, the project aims to establish sub-grant programs within Development Agencies, fostering collaboration between local governments and CSOs.

At the policy level, MMU and İKSV provide concrete data and best practices to inform cultural policy environments at local and national levels. Recommendations and proposals will be shared with relevant public authorities, and İKSV and MMU will continue advocacy efforts and monitoring post-project. The project also aims to strengthen civic participation skills among CSOs and cultural professionals with local governments, fostering long-term impacts on policy-making. Through these strategies, the project aims to create lasting impacts beyond its duration, offering models and recommendations for sustainable cultural development.

**ORTAKLAŞA HAS FOSTERED SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN ARTS AND CULTURE, DEMOCRATISATION, CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF CULTURAL POLICIES AND THE CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM.**

## 4. Further information

Marmara Municipalities Union was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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