

# Regional Conference “Social Inclusion and (Re-)Integration through 2030 Agenda and SDGs” Brdo, Slovenia, 17-18 April 2018



## Final Report

27 April 2018

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## 1. Background

The “Regional Conference on social inclusion and (re)integration through 2030 Agenda and SDGs”, took place on 17 and 18 April 2018 in Brdo, Slovenia focusing on the challenges in bringing 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) closer to community level, and looking at the way forward to achieve social inclusion in the countries of Western Balkans and wider in South East Europe. The conference was organised by the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS), supported by the GIZ regional project “Social Rights for Vulnerable Groups (SoRi)”, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The conference was attended by 120 participants including Mayors, local stakeholders, Local Government Associations, Civil Society Organizations and representatives of national government ministries and their agencies.

The Conference was moderated by Mr Stefan Friedrisch, a consultant engaged by NALAS, while the World Caffe and Work Group sessions were facilitated by NALAS and GIZ staff and hosted by participants.

## 2. Objectives

in order to (1) improve mutual learning on successfully implemented community-based approaches to social inclusion and (re)integration, (2) increase awareness on the challenges in the municipalities and acknowledge the importance of collaboration within and between the countries among various stakeholders, (3) create awareness on the SDGs and migration, and (4) recommend approaches on social inclusion and (re) integration in the form of a bottom-up policy advice following the do-no-harm principle.

## 3. Opening Addresses

The conference was opened by NALAS President Mr Mico Micic, Mayor of Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, who stressed the role of local governments in providing equal opportunities to all and involve all citizens in making it a place of wellbeing. He expressed NALAS expectations that the conference would bring new ideas and open up a debate on what Mayors and local governments in South East Europe can do to contribute to making the Sustainable Development Goals a reality. President Micic further stressed that this requires a strong commitment by all stakeholders, both at local and national level and invited them to join forces for the benefit of citizens. He underlined that SDGs provide a huge potential for local governments to contribute to sustainable development, which is only possible if we understand them and take actions.

Dr. Ute Boettcher, Head of Section Democracy, Policy Dialogue, Urban Development of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) during her opening address elaborated one of the core principles of the SDGs, “Leaving no one behind”. Dr Boettcher elaborated on the ways to reach to the ones that were used to be left behind, considering that it takes money, time and efforts. She stressed the need to reach the disadvantaged groups, remove access barriers and create supporting environment. Dedicating this conference to the core principle of “Leaving no one behind make the Balkans region a way ahead in understanding SDGs and taking actions.

At the opening session, Dr. Eva Dick, from the German Development Institute, focused on the relevance of SDGs for the local level, pointing out that 21% of the 169 targets can only be implemented by local actors, while 24% shall be implemented in partnership with them. Dr. Dick elaborated on why SDGs must go local, emphasising that they provide orientation for sustainable and integrated development planning; are a point of departure for monitoring, allow linking to sources of development finance and create a base for inter-sectorial exchange. Dr. Dick also shared best practices in localising SDGs from Germany, from cities like Cologne, Mannheim and Bottrop.

#### **4. Panel Discussion. From Theory into practice - Challenges in bringing 2030 agenda and SDGs closer to community level**

The Pannel shared various experiences in operationalising SDGs in different municipalities and improving services to vulnerable groups.

Ms. Kathleen Depoorter, a Councilor of Evergem Municipality in Belgium spoke about her municipality experiences in implementing SDGs, learning from and exchanging with the municipality Guaranda in Ecuador. The Evergem Municipality has started from its international cooperation department and widened their SDGs support circle in the municipality. Ms Depoorter noted that the Municipality has now appointed 17 employees, who, besides other tasks deal with localising SDGs.

Mayor Emanuil Manolov, from Pavlikeni, Bulgaria, presented the social services in Bulgaria and the innovative social services of Pavlikeni.

Mr. Thomas Prorok, from KDZ and the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns talked about the approach of the Austrian Association and Austrian cities and municipalities in localising SDGs. The Association works on developing Guidelines that provide advices and best practices for local governments on localising the SDGs. Mr. Prorok highlighted that SDGs are the vision and the compass for Municipalities as they show how the World will look like in the future, 10-20 years from now, which is a great starting point for all local governments in planning their local actions.

Mr. Ugo Poli, from the Central European Initiative (CEI) spoke about the role of partnerships in addressing local needs. Mr. Poli stated that the issue of partnership is an issue of effectiveness of governance.

## 5. World Café Session Outputs

In the afternoon session, using the World Café method, 8 groups discussed various aspects of SDGs implementation at local level and integration of vulnerable groups. The discussion groups focused on scanning the current situation related to Awareness; Advocacy; Implementation and Monitoring.

### **Table 1: AWARENESS – We make people aware of their role in the 2030 Agenda and social inclusion**

#### **The Story of the Host:**

The objectives of this Table were to share experiences on awareness-raising and communication campaigns, to define their own role and responsibility in awareness raising strategy and to have recognized the importance of involving local authorities and civil society organizations as well as the private sector in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Initially the table Host Ms Hanne Alberts shared the experiences of the Flemish Association of Local Authorities (VVSG). Many Flemish municipalities have already started raising awareness on the SDGs towards their citizens. They put up banners and stickers in the town halls, develop SDG-games for children at local festivals, and use the SDG logo's on their websites and in municipal bulletins. In order to take this up a notch, VVSG has developed an SDG awareness raising campaign in which all Flemish local governments can get involved. In the week around the 25<sup>th</sup> of September (=3<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing Agenda 2030), local governments will present local SDG heroes, people or organisations within their municipality which already contribute to sustainable development. These heroes will inform the citizens about the SDGs by putting information cards in for example their business (such as a bakery). On the 25<sup>th</sup> of September these heroes will raise a large SDG-flag at the town hall. This flag raising will happen at the same time in every participating municipality.

Some of the main conclusions of the Flemish experience include:

- Make use of key moments. In Flanders for example, local governments are building up to the writing of a new 5-year policy plan. This is a crucial time to raise awareness on the SDGs so that the politicians and the municipal staff who will write the new policy plan will use sustainable development as their guiding principle.
- Use existing events to introduce the SDGs, such as staff parties, local festivals, local sports events, ...
- Make it concrete. The SDGs are a rather vague concept. Show people what it entails. At VVSG for example, we have a circle exercise which we often do with municipal staff. We ask them to link current actions/projects to the SDGs and in a second stage, think about which additional actions could be taken.

Participants define maximum three key messages as outcomes of the discussion. The key messages should be documented on long cards; thus, they will be pinned on pin-boards.

**Key messages/ideas identified during the World Café session:**

During the 4 rounds of the World Café Table on Awareness, the following key messages were developed:

1. **WHO does what?** The awareness building for SDGs should go both ways: top-down and bottom-up at the same time. It is a shared responsibility and a joint effort of 1) Central Government (to develop a general information guides and tools, including a website, and provide financial means); 2) local governments (to link actions to SDGs and thus make them understandable and tangible for citizens- which is the meaning of localization of SDGs); as well as CSOs (to communicate effectively with and to their target groups – vulnerable and socially deprived groups in particular).

2. **HOW to do it?** Messages need to be developed differently and separately for each target group. It is not always important to communicate about SDGs as a brand or a general concept, but to their meaning for the life of the target group. SDGs should not be communicated all at once, but rather through a selection and prioritization considering the local context and specific needs. The vulnerable groups can be reached on the field only by the specialized CSOs who know how to communicate with them in their language and in simple way using the existing communication channels.

3. **Linkages.** All other phases in the cycle are integral part of awareness building. During advocacy, the awareness is build for the specific policy that is discussed. During implementation of SDG, the citizens get more aware about what they mean as they experience the results. And of course monitoring and evaluation produces important information which can be used in more effective awareness building action.

**Table 2: ADVOCAY – We build local and national consensus**

**Key messages/ideas identified during the World Café session:**

The World Café table on Advocacy, through four cycles brought together representatives of local governments, central governments, institutions and civil society from various language groups throughout South-East Europe. The table on Advocacy was hosted by Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, the Director of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM) and facilitated by Mr. Boran Ivanoski, NALAS Programme Officer.

The discussion centered around the advantage of using bottom-up advocacy approaches for localizing SDGs and shaping 2030 agenda at national level so that it reflects better the local needs.

Also, the participants discussed about the main (policy) obstacles, multi-stakeholder partnerships and formal coordinating structures in charge of SDGs at the local or national government level.

The three key messages identified by the group, lead by the table host and the facilitator, and presented in the plenary discussion were the following:

- **Applying of the bottom-up approach** in identification of citizens' needs and priorities in shaping the national strategies on localizing of the SDGs. In this regard, the local governments should use the capacities of the LGAs by which the political influence will be avoided.
- **Ensuring necessary capacities and resources** (human and financial) of Local Governments for planning and implementing SDGs, especially in creation of data bases of vulnerable groups. In this regard, the Inter-municipal Cooperation as an alternative service delivery approach was recommended in order to overcome the challenges related to HR capacities in terms of know-how and number, but also the lack of financial resources. Capacities of the local CSO should be utilized in implementation of the SDGs at local level by provision of local grants allocated within the municipal budgets.
- **Local Platforms** recognized as an advisory coordination multisectoral mechanism should be established by the **municipal councils** in order to support the localization of the SDGs. Donor driven SDGs activities should be avoided and donor aid coordination strengthened through this kind of local mechanism.

The discussions of the four groups also included the following:

1. What is the advantage of using bottom-up advocacy approaches for localizing SDGs and shaping 2030 agenda at national level so that it reflects better the local needs?
  - The LGs are in close communication with the citizens, so they know their needs and priorities which could be used in improvement of the legal framework for better service provision, localizing and achieving the SDGs.  
In this regard, the capacities of the LGAs should be used. The bottom up approach will make the implementation of the SDGs easier.  
CSO capacities could be used in identification of the vulnerable groups and their needs within the planning process for achieving the SDGs within particular local context. The adaptation of the SDGs in respective local context is considered as a challenge.
2. What are the main (policy) obstacles for your organization to have a more active role in ensuring equal social rights for vulnerable people in the context of the Agenda 2030?
  - The main obstacles recognized by the local actors are lack of competent HR on the SDGs, but also no enough HR that will be dedicated to ensure equal social rights for vulnerable people in the context of the Agenda 2030.

- Lack of financial resources will strongly influence on proper implementation of the SDGs at local level in ensuring social rights.
  - Lack of data on vulnerable groups at local level affects the planning process and implementation of social inclusion activities.
  - Donor driven activities are also recognized as an obstacle in achievement of SDGs which not necessary fit the citizens needs and priorities. In addition to this, there is no donor aid coordination, so very often overlapping of the same activities occur.
  - Legal framework does not always support the achievement of the equal social rights for vulnerable people.
3. Can multi-stakeholder partnerships serve your organization to voice the needs of disadvantaged groups and thus overcome the identified obstacles? If yes, in which way?
- Good practices of establishment of the local platforms (multisectoral coordination and advisory bodies) as mechanisms for strengthening the multi-stakeholder partnership should be identified and replicated.
  - Inter-municipal Cooperation as an alternative service delivery approach is recognized as way to overcome the challenges related to HR capacities in terms of know-how and number, but also the lack of financial resources.
  - Active involvement of the local SCO in the multi-stakeholder partnerships mechanisms will ensure to voice the needs of disadvantaged groups.
4. Is there a need for formal coordinating structures in charge of SDGs at the local or national government level?
- The LGAs are recognized as one of the formal coordination structures that should be in charge of localizing the SDGs.
  - Local coordinative and advisory bodies which will be established by the municipal councils should include strategic and operational level of social protection, by including relevant stakeholders from local and central government level present at the municipal level. Local CSO should be also involved in the formal coordination structures.

**Table 3: IMPLEMENTATION – We go local and get the work done**

**Key messages/ideas identified during the World Café session:**

The World Café table on Implementation brought together various language groups during the 4 table rounds and was composed of participants from the sub-national government level and civil society.

During the 2-hour lasting table rounds the focus of exchange of experience and ideas of local and regional governments to prepare for SDGs in their communities with emphasis on integration of

vulnerable groups considered topics like needs assessment, cooperative governance and shared priorities, the mobilization of local resources and the alignment of local and regional plans.

The three key messages identified by table host and facilitator with the help of the translator were as follows:

- **Creation of Local Offices or Councils for vulnerable groups** as a one-stop-shop to provide services to the beneficiaries, including NGOs in service delivery.
- **Fiscal decentralization of resources:** assignment of funds for social inclusion from central budget for local governments. Search for external resources (International donors, PPP models)
- **Include vulnerable groups in local development process:** active involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluation activities. Local Action Plans for vulnerable groups require involvement of beneficiary groups and NGOs.

### **Relevant points from the discussion during the 4 rounds of the world café**

Common points shared during the discussions of the 4 table rounds among the participants can be wrapped up as following:

- In general, there are insufficient funds available at national and sub-national level to face the challenges to attend vulnerable groups and to foster social inclusion and (re)integration.
- The lack of national strategies for vulnerable groups; where they exist the requirements for the local level are not sufficiently taken into account, or altogether neglected or ignored.
- There was a common understanding for the central level to design long term policies and the local level to elaborate Action Plans according to identified challenges with resources for implementation and in line with national policy.
- Cross-border and inter-municipal cooperation were rated high on the agenda of priorities for implementation to enhance local capacities and competencies according to best practices with support of peer-to-peer learning and complementary aid provided by international donors.

### **Table 4: MONITORING - We evaluate and learn from our experiences**

#### **Key messages/ideas identified during the World Café session:**

The World Café table on Monitoring, through four cycles brought together representatives of local governments, central governments, institutions and civil society from various language groups throughout South-East Europe. The table on Monitoring was hosted by Mr. Viorel Furdui, the Director of the Congress of Local Authorities in Moldova (CALM) and facilitated by Ms. Jelena Janevska, NALAS Knowledge and Communications Manager.

The discussion centered around the experiences of participants in monitoring and measuring the results of the municipal strategies and action plans, the tools they use to collect data on various social issues in the municipality and what are the main challenges in these processes.

The three key messages identified by the group, lead by the table host and the facilitator, and presented in the plenary discussion were the following:

- Monitoring systems need to be in place, beyond projects, on municipal strategy and action plan level, including: indicators, timeline, roles, staff's capacities, resources and tools. Unfortunately, although there are some exceptions, monitoring at local level is done at project level (forced by donors), but not at strategy and action plan level, so nothing proves the degree to which the developed strategies are implemented in practice, the results achieved, the reasons for failures, nor how this is reflected in the new planning cycle.
- Capacities of the local level to implement SDGs must be strengthened through enhancing decentralization. In other words, we have to have what to monitor and it is not possible without adequate competences and resources.
- Working with the results that we get from the monitoring system is crucial. Local governments and other stakeholders involved in implementation of local strategies and action plans must use the findings to design new, better actions, measures and policies.

**The discussions of the four groups also included the following:**

- Do we have what to monitor? The implementation of the designed strategies and action plans is a huge challenge.
- Different institutions at local level must have clear roles in monitoring. Who monitors what?
- Building implementation capacities is key (i.e. fighting poverty, where LGs do not have the competences and skills)
- There is a link between decentralization and implementation and monitoring of SDGs
- Monitoring system must determine how much is being implemented and why not
- LGs rely on partnership with other actors on social issues
- Action planning is often done without (sufficient) funding
- NGOs could play a role of watchdogs for the implementation of LG's action plans, also play a role in mapping and data collection
- Central institutions often have the data and tools that might be used by the local level
- Focus on achieving results, instead on over-planning
- Go public with the results of the monitoring
- Little priority is given to monitoring, usually there are no funds allocated
- There are practices of objective monitoring and evaluation of results by partnership (Tuzla example), where different stakeholders are involved in monitoring activities of other stakeholders, with clear monitoring plan, roles, and reporting by a monitoring team

- Needs of vulnerable groups are usually identified when they come to the institution (LG or Centre for Social Work), by collecting data on different users/target groups, by field workers and working groups
- Mapping needs is usually done in cooperation with NGOs, by doing a research (as well as impact research later). It is important to map needs, not wishes.
- It is a challenge that different vulnerable groups appear over time, so the focus needs change and the institutions and their staff need to adjust
- Vulnerable groups focus only on certain needs, not all
- The sensitivity of the institutions' staff related to the detailed needs of various groups needs to be developed
- Niksic has a best practice in monitoring local strategy and running a social council
- Citizens committee for M&E might be a best practice
- Kosovo has a good experience in designing and implementing a repatriation strategy
- Social plans in zones/communities might be a good approach in identifying specific needs of vulnerable groups, now growing to a regional level (Albania)
- Gender Responsive Budgeting is a good practice
- Sombor has a best practice in addressing Roma issues, by: dedicated staff to deal with Roma issues, needs identification, action planning, implementation (directly by the LG or in cooperation with NGOs), setting indicators, measurement, and changing the strategy based on the results

## 6. Work Group Session

The second day of the Conference focused on action planning, providing recommendations and conclusions in each of the four areas on the bases of the previous days discussion in the World Café respective table. The task of each of the 8 Work Groups on each topic (advocacy, awareness, implementation and monitoring) was to answer the following guiding questions: 1. What needs to be done to implement yesterday's findings on local level? 2. What needs to be done to implement yesterday's findings on national level? 3. How to coordinate effectively activities on local and national level? 4. What are the concrete steps to implement corresponding activities? Who needs to be involved? How to attract these groups or individuals to join in? In addition, the group on monitoring looked at the question on how can we also learn from good practices around the world? And how do we feed in or monitoring results to this global exchange?

The following outcomes were presented by each table host at the last plenary session of the conference:

**Work Group Table 1: AWARENESS - Roadmap as a result of the work groups session**

	What	Who
PHASE 1: Create Conditions	Align EU Integration Process with SDGs	NALAS, LGAs, CSOs should Advocate for it. EU and National Governments should decide
	Introduce a regulation to make an obligatory Impact Assessment of every legislation in terms of effects and contribution to SDGs	National Parliament
	Establish an SDG Coordination Body all inclusive (include all relevant stakeholders)	National Government. Perhaps should be initiated by the Local Government Association (LGA)
	Engage UN Agencies to provide resources, information, practices on SDGs	National Government. LGAs
	Assign Municipal staff dedicated for SDGs	Local governments
	Train municipal staff on SDGs	National Government, LGA
PHASE 2: Concrete Awareness Building Measures	Sharing of good practices of municipalities working on SDGs	NALAS, LGAs create the platform for that. CSOs and LGs engage
	Capacity building of government staff on SDGs	National Government
	Identifying and labeling existing activities in the SDG framework	Joint action: CSOs, LGAs, LGs
	Development of a unified communication strategy for SDGs including resources and materials	National government, LGAs, UN
	Practical guidelines for implementation of SDGs at local level	NALAS, LGAs, CSOs

**Work Group Table 2: ADVOCAY - Roadmap as a result of the work groups session**

During the second day of the conference, the group, consisted of representatives of local governments, central governments, institutions and civil society from Moldova, Romania and Albania focused on designing an action plan for the three key issues identified during the World Café, as summarized below.

Evidence based dialog should be main principle in advocating for local needs to be reflected within the central government plans related to achieving the SDGs.

<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>
Improvement of the methodology for collection of data on vulnerable groups at local level.	Advocating to national level institutions to improve the system and methodology for collection of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working groups on Social Protection of the LGAs</li> <li>- CSOs</li> <li>- Academia</li> </ul>
Strengthening the Human Resources' capacities on Social Inclusion at local level	Establishing administrative units on Social Protection in the local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGs</li> <li>- LGAs to provide technical assistance</li> </ul>
	Capacity Development Measures on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data collection</li> <li>- Action Plan Development</li> <li>- SDGs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGAs</li> <li>- Line ministries</li> <li>- CSO</li> <li>- Donor community</li> </ul>
Advocate for national strategies to reflect LGs' needs and priorities.	Development of Local Action Plans for social inclusion and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGs</li> <li>- CSO</li> <li>- Projects</li> <li>- Expert communities</li> </ul>
	Development of Recommendations for inclusion of LGs' needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommendations developed by LGAs</li> <li>- Sharing the recommendation through: direct consultative process between LGs and Central Gov Institutions – line ministries</li> <li>- LGAs</li> </ul>
Advocate to ensure enabling environment at national level for localizing SDGs (good governance)	Formulation of Recommendations for integration of local needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGAs' expert bodies to prepare the recommendations</li> <li>- LGAs' governance bodies to approve the recommendations.</li> </ul>
Promote multi-stakeholder partnership for better cooperation	Establishing Multidisciplinary Group for social inclusion at local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGs (municipal councils)</li> <li>- LGAs</li> </ul> <p>In close cooperation and participation of CSO, private sector and academia.</p>
	LGAs' expert bodies (commission) on Social Protection will also include different stakeholders in their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGAs' commissions</li> <li>- National level institutions,</li> <li>- CSOs,</li> <li>- Private sector</li> <li>- Academia</li> </ul>
	Participation of the LGAs representatives in the National Coordination Bodies on SDGs initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGAs</li> </ul>

### Work Group Table 3: IMPLEMENTATION - Roadmap as a result of the work groups session

Due to diverging perceptions on the way how to implement the key messages identified the day before in the world café and the reluctance of a couple of participants to recognize the viability for their specific scenario at local level, proposals for the next steps for two out of the three key messages were discussed.

Creation of Local Offices or Councils for vulnerable groups		
What	How	Who
Set-up of committee comprising LGs, NGOs and Financial Institutions.	To start from the highest level of government. National level to be first instance in providing necessary funds.	<u>Dilemma</u> : Initiative can/should be taken either from local or national level.
Identify and mobilise resources (human, material and financial).		LGs (in coordination with NGOs) to check legal acts on competencies in social inclusion.
Provision of funds for social inclusion and (re) integration at national level.		Involvement of central government level acc. to specifics of countries: Ministry of Human Rights Ministry of Labour & Social Welfare
		Involvement of local level: Public institutions Centers for Social Welfare NGOs, CSOs and Media.

Include vulnerable groups in local development process		
What	How	Who
Unite all identified groups in ONE Consultative Body at local level.	Set-up of consolidated database of vulnerable groups on national level.	Clarify understanding at national and local level: Consensus what are and who belongs to vulnerable groups.
Set-up of Consultative Body comprising vulnerable groups at national and local level.	Identify legal representatives of vulnerable groups to become part of planning & monitoring at local and national level.	Local level: Inform vulnerable groups about planning and monitoring process for local development.
		Local level: Inform vulnerable groups about opportunities of being involved in planning and monitoring process for local development.
		Local level: Support capacity building and training of vulnerable groups to assure effective involvement in planning and monitoring process for local development.

## Work Group Table 4: Monitoring - Roadmap as a result of the work group session

During the second day of the conference, the group, consisted of representatives of local governments, central governments, institutions and civil society from Macedonia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Turkey focused on designing a more detailed action plan for the three key issues identified during the World Café, as summarized below.

What	How	Who
Fostering decentralization (social services at local level are not possible without it)	Advocacy	-Development partners -National government -NALAS -LGAs -NGOs
Social mapping (identifying needs)	Field work	-LGs -NGOs -Ministries/institutions
Collecting best practices in involvement of vulnerable groups (in planning, implementation, advocacy, monitoring local action plans)  <i>Examples of best practices from the group included: Pavlikeni, Bulgaria-labor and health moderators; Gemlik, Bursa, Turkey-employment of people with disability, local school for people with disability; Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Macedonia-employment, peer to peer support</i>	Capacity development (peer to peer)	-Local level: LGAs and NALAS -Central level: Ministries/institutions
Collect best practices on monitoring local strategies and action plans  Prepare case studies + Guidelines for LGs  Possible content: -Elements of good monitoring system, including: indicators, timeline, roles, staff's capacities, resources and tools -Project monitoring as experience -Mixed monitoring teams -Appropriate funding -Database management (baseline + progress) -Coordination body for social protection within the City Council (Macedonian experience) -External monitoring Involvement of media (from needs assessment to promotion of results)	Capacity development (peer to peer)	-Local level: LGAs and NALAS -Central level: Ministries/institutions
Develop LGs' staff capacities in social issues/services	Capacity development	-LGAs' training centres -Development partners -Ministries/institutions -NGOs

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The closing remarks of the Conference were delivered by Mr Kelmend Zajazi, NALAS Executive Director and Mr. Michael Samec, Team leader of the Regional Project on Social Rights for Vulnerable Groups (SoRi) of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Mr. Zajazi noted that Three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda it becomes clear that SDGs will not “go local” on their own unless local governments take firm action to mobilize their communities to engage for joint action. During the Conference it became clear that the Local Government Associations have a key role to play in both engaging with the national government to streamline the SDGs into national strategic documents and instruments to make them operational, while at the same time guide the member municipalities to start localizing SDGs and utilize opportunities it brings. Mr. Samec underlined that the results of the working group show that partner institution are already doing a lot in the field of social inclusion, however more work has to be done to link these results with the SDG framework on a more strategic level. Social issues are not high on the agenda at local level, therefore, the connection with the SDG framework is expected to help local actors in making social inclusion more prominent at municipal level. Mr. Samec thanked all participants for their contributions and hard work.

Additional recommendations were provided by the Conference moderator as follows:

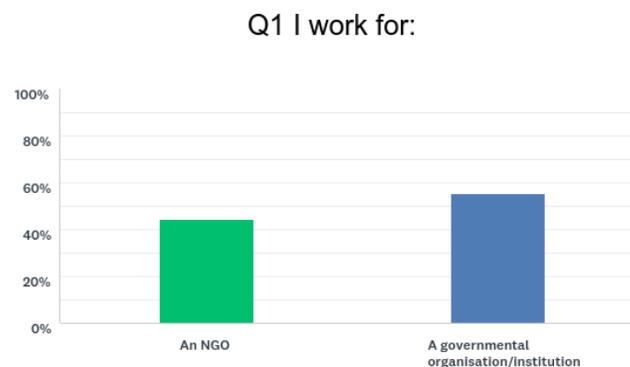
- Identify and document best practices in terms of SDG implementation / localisation in the region. These good approaches should be published in a leaflet or should be presented in a retrievable database.
- A simple tool would be to start a Facebook group “#Western Balkans SDG Watch”. On this online platform all recent developments, events and projects on localising SDGs would be featured.
- Develop a “how to guide” on organising dialogues platforms and events on local level with stakeholders from marginalised groups, schools, civil society and private sector. In this guideline for local government and public administration key methods, tools and process how to initiate and sustain stakeholder exchanges dialogues are describe in a simple manner.
- Link the 2030 agenda to the South East Europe (SEE) 2020 strategy of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). At least some synergies can be used to fuel the implementation of both.
- In an follow-up event with national governments of the region their contributions to the 2030 Agenda would be scrutinized and the in-depth dialogue with local government representatives and civil society would be continued.

## 8. Evaluation Report

The objectives of the evaluation were to collect feedback from the conference participants on their own impressions about the usefulness of the conference and if and to what extent were the conference objectives and goals achieved. The evaluation form was administered to all 120 participants at the closing session. We received a total number of **74** responses.

The findings from the evaluations are as follows:

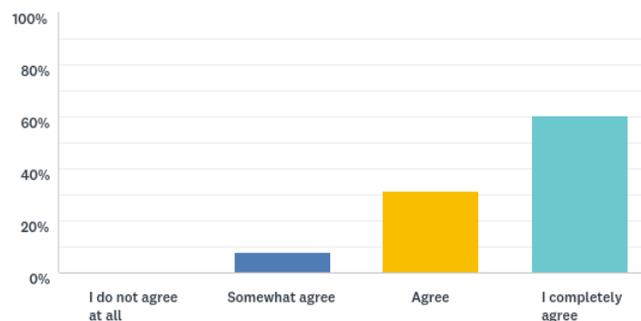
**Q1.** The first question was inquiring the type of the organization the participant is representing. We received only **27** responses. Many of the respondents disregarded this question, since they didn't distinguish it as a separate question.



**15 (55, 56%)** out of the 27 respondents said they worked in a governmental organization / institution, and **12 (44, 44 %)** said they come from a non-governmental organization.

**Q2. The objectives/goals of the conference were clear to me prior to the conference.**

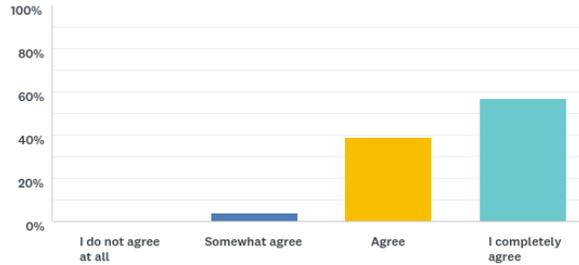
Q2 The objectives/goals of the conference were clear to me prior to the conference.



**91,78 %** of the respondents either completely agree (60%) or agree (31%) with the statement that the objectives/ goals of the conference were clear to them prior to the conference. **Only 8,22%** responded that they **somewhat agree** that the objectives/ goals of the conference were clear to them.

**Q3. The objectives/goals of the conference were achieved and the expected results were produced.**

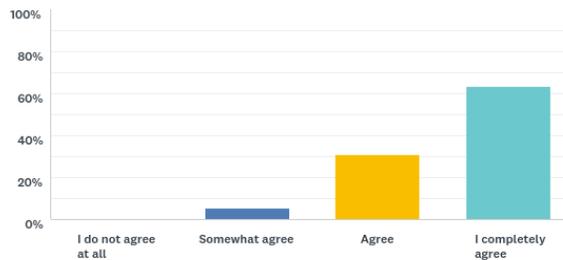
Q3 The objectives/goals of the conference were achieved and the expected results were produced.



**56.76%** of the participants **completely agree** that the objectives/goals of the conference were achieved and the expected results were produced. Additional **39.19%** **agree** whereas only **4.05%** **somewhat agree** that that the objectives/goals of the conference were achieved and the expected results were produced.

**Q4. The methods used in the different sessions were appropriate.**

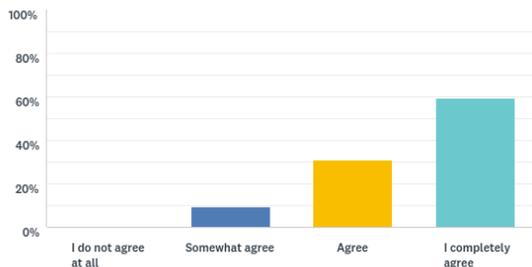
Q4 The methods used in the different sessions were appropriate.



**94.59%** of the respondents **completely agree or agree** that the methods used in the different sessions were appropriate. **5.41%** **somewhat agree** that the methods used in the different sessions were appropriate.

**Q5. The contributions from other participants were helpful.**

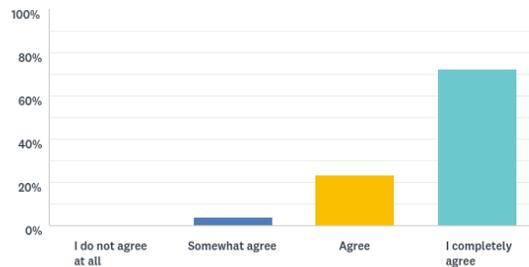
Q5 The contributions from other participants were helpful.



**59.46%** of the respondents **completely agree** that the contributions from other participants were helpful and **31.08%** of the respondents **agree** the statement. Yet **9.46%** **somewhat agree** that the contributions from other participants were helpful.

**Q6. I think that the content of the conference is relevant for my work.**

Q6 I think that the content of the conference is relevant for my work.

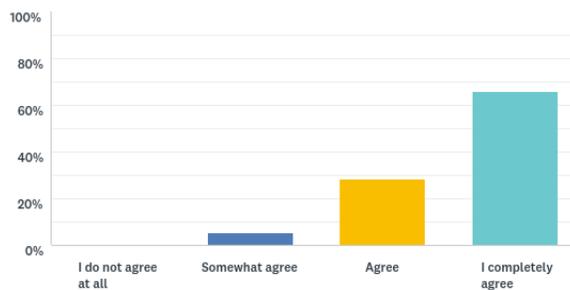


On the question if they find the conference relevant for their work, the following answers were summoned from the respondents:

1. **72,60%** completely agree
2. **23,29 %** agree
3. **4,11%** somewhat agree

**Q7. I feel capable of applying some of the conference results in my work.**

Q7 I feel capable of applying some of the conference results in my work.



Out of **74** respondents, **49** correspondingly **66,22%** completely feel capable of applying some of the conference results in their work. **21** of them or **28,38 %** agree and only **4** respondents respectively **5,41%** somewhat agree that they are capable of applying some of the conference results in their work.