A Road Map for Fair Cultural Cooperation

Ortaklaşa
Values and Actions

NOVEMBER 2025

İKSV

ORTAKLAŞA

A Road Map for Fair Cultural Cooperation

Ortaklaşa Values and Actions

NOVEMBER 2025

İKSV

ORTAKLAŞA

Contents

Foreword

Political fluctuations shaped by rising authoritarianism and populist discourses affect the field of cultural policies around the world. For instance, following the 2024 European Parliament elections, representatives of the far-right secured the majority in the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament (CULT) by exceeding 50% of its total number of members.[1] This picture increases the risk of shifting the emphasis in cultural policies from fundamental principles such as democratic participation and freedom of expression to discourses of cultural identity, anti-immigration, and the "preservation of European values".

The field of culture in Europe is on the one hand associated with inclusion, freedom of expression, wellbeing, and democratic participation, and on the other, it is framed with discourses driven by competitiveness, innovativeness, and economic contribution. This difference in approach demonstrates that cultural policies still need a strong common narrative. This lack of narrative is reflected in the fragmented and fragile nature of the funding models as well. In fact, the share allocated for culture in the European Commission budget remains at a mere 0.2%, revealing just how fragile the support mechanisms in the field of arts and culture are.[2]

At a meeting held in 2025, representatives of the cultural sector in Europe agreed on four fundamental priorities: "moving from words to action", "safe and courageous spaces", "surviving and existing", and "emancipation".[3] These trends shaped around democratic participation, freedom of expression, and social solidarity play a determining role in setting the agenda of cultural policies both in Europe and Türkiye. In parallel with the polarisation and budget discussions in Europe, the oppression of the freedom of artistic expression in Türkiye, low budgets and noncontinuous funding mechanisms, local collaborations becoming dependent on individual persons, and the transformation in the autonomy of local governments demonstrate that similar vulnerabilities and priorities are at the centre of the agenda here as well.

In such a context, the "Ortaklaşa: Culture, Dialogue and Support Programme" was devised as a model that develops principles and tools applicable on the local level to counter the lack of narrative in the field of arts and culture. This approach was aimed at responding to democracy's need for solidarity and collaboration.

Ortaklaşa sought to overcome the lack of cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture civil society organisations (CSOs), which constitutes one of the significant obstacles to the development of local democracy in Türkiye. Implemented by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) and supported by the European Union, this three-years long project was carried out in collaboration with the Marmara Municipalities Union and EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture).

The 13 projects implemented with the support of the Ortaklaşa Sub-grant Programme provided concrete examples of how municipalities and CSOs engaged in arts and culture can work together. Moreover, the regional search conferences organised in seven cities as part of the Ortaklaşa Dialogue Programme brought together a large group of people ranging from municipality representatives to CSOs, academics to artists, who discussed their needs, expectations and possibilities of collaboration. All these steps that contributed to the relationship of trust between municipalities and the civil society constituted the basis of this policy document.

1 Culture Action Europe (CAE), "New CULT Committee of the European Parliament is formed," https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/new-cult-committee-of-the-european-parliament-is-formed/

2 CAE, "Proposed €8.6 billion for culture and democracy in the next EU budget," https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/proposed-e8-6-billion-for-culture-and-democracy-in-the-next-eu-budget/

3 During the "Beyond 2025: Being Many" conference organised by Culture Action Europe in June 2025, the participants were asked, 'What will be the most urgent and determining issue for the cultural sector in the next five years?'. This question brought to light four main common trends.

The policy document places emphasis on the concept of "fair cultural cooperation". While identifying the encountered problems, it relays experiences from the field proving that a more equitable, participatory, and inclusive cooperation in the sphere of arts and culture is possible. It presents a common road map for the future. It suggests concrete steps, potential actors, and applicable mechanisms to develop fair, participatory, and inclusive local cultural policies. It offers solutions to strengthen the cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs and the local cultural ecosystem. It makes a call to build the future together, collectively, in cooperation, or in short, "ortaklaşa", as we say in Turkish.

Participatory and fair cultural policies can be realised only through cooperations where all parties assume responsibility. *Ortaklaşa* shows that this is possible. We hope that this experience spanning three years will inspire local governments, civil society organisations, and all stakeholders in the world of arts and culture.

The author of this policy document "A Road Map for Fair Cultural Cooperation: *Ortaklaşa* Values and Actions" Prof. Dr. Füsun Üstel informed the search conferences organised in various cities with her active participation. She joined conceptual depth with experiences from the field. She enabled the strengthening of the policy recommendations and the collaborative processes. We are most grateful for her inspiring vision of cultural policies and the added value she brought to *Ortaklaşa*.

ÖZLEM ECE
İKSV CULTURAL POLICY STUDIES DIRECTOR

1   Introduction

We are going through a period of rising authoritarian regimes and populist movements around the globe as rights and freedoms are increasingly curtailed. This conjuncture, which is witnessing a widespread deficit of democracy, further magnifies the importance of democratic institutions, mechanisms, and values to be built at the grassroots level. In this framework, along with a comprehensive change of mentality and structural and institutional transformations to be realised in the political and economic spheres, supporting the field of arts and culture through a pluralistic and rights-based approach is of great importance for the development of local democracy as well. In short, there is need for a holistic policy approach and specific solutions.

The *Ortaklaşa* project was developed based on the finding that the lack of fair, effective, and sustainable cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs constitutes one of the obstacles to local democracy in Türkiye.

The cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs in Türkiye, as in the rest of the world, have a multilayered and complex characteristic. In addition to the size of the towns, their demographics, socio-economic development levels, and the governance culture of the municipalities, there are a series of other factors that influence the will to cooperate and the processes and means of collaboration, particularly the CSOs' geographical scope, fields of activity, target groups, capacities, and visibility.[4]

Especially when it comes to arts and culture, the already ambiguous and multidimensional concept of "cooperation" becomes an issue marked by even more complex mechanisms and processes. This complexity arises from the equivocalness and contextuality of the concept of culture along with numerous factors, notably the diversity of the arts and culture actors'

---

4 On this subject see: "Sivil Toplum Örgütlerinin Kapasitesi ve Sınırlılıkları," [Capacity and Limitations of Civil Society Organisations] ed. Dr. Tezcan Eralp Abay, STGM, https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2023-06/sivil-toplum-orgutlerinin-kapasitesi-ve-sinirliliklari.pdf

expectations and demands from the processes of collaboration. On the other hand, the issue of culture is a historical field of conflict in Türkiye which further exacerbates the cooperation processes.

In *Ortaklaşa*, a conceptual framework was developed to overcome this complexity as much as possible and to build a common conception of the cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs. The notion of "fair cooperation"[5] was placed at the centre of this conceptual framework in order to highlight the asymmetrical relationships between different actors, notably the municipalities and CSOs, and to address these cooperative processes through an egalitarian perspective. In this context, fair cooperation was considered not merely as a body of result-oriented mechanisms and actions but a rights-based, dynamic, and open-ended process involving different actors.

1 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In *Ortaklaşa*, while considering the issue of "fair cooperation" we refrained from making a normative definition and, owing to its dynamic and relational nature, treated the concept based on its components. Fair cooperation is enabled through the will to equality along with the cohesion of mechanisms that will in fact ensure equality. Equality of opportunity is no doubt a fundamental necessity in the realisation of fair cooperation. That said, in fair cooperation it is of critical importance to take into account the inequalities in cultural capital and cultural literacy that individuals experience due to their respective economic and social conditions. In this context, fair cultural cooperation rests on recognising that there is no

PRINCIPLES FOR FAIR CULTURAL COOPERATION:

1. Equality of opportunity

2. Equality of conditions

MECHANISMS FOR FAIR CULTURAL COOPERATION:

1. Access

2. Inclusion

3. Participation

hierarchy between the actors of collaboration who are coequal, albeit not de facto equal.

Ortaklaşa draws attention to the importance of three minimum and fundamental targets in the realisation of fair cultural cooperation: access, inclusion, participation. Here, "access" is addressed within the framework of the city residents' "right to culture"[6] as well as the guarantee of their access to "cultural rights".[7]

ACCESS

Access to the right to culture: Universalisation of the access to culture; shortening the distance between high culture and the masses; enabling the democratisation of culture.

Access to cultural rights: Safeguarding of religious, indigenous, etc. community members' access to the means of cultural production, consumption, and distribution, and the recognition and inclusion of diverse cultural expressions in creation and decision-making processes.[8]

5 The concept of "fair cooperation" was first introduced by Annika Hampel in her doctoral thesis titled "Fair Cooperation. Partnerschaftliche Zusammenarbeit in der Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik" (Fair Cooperation. Partnership-based cooperation in foreign cultural policy) to point at the asymmetrical power relations arising from processes of cooperation in foreign cultural policy. The concept was later employed in other fields as well, gaining wide international currency. https://www.academia.edu/40828447/Fair_Cooperation_Definition. Annika Hampel, *Fair Cooperation, A New Paradigm for Cultural Diplomacy and Arts Management* (Brussels: Peter Lang Verlag, 2017).

6 Culture was recognised as a fundamental human right following the Second World War, and the right to culture appeared for the first time in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights dated 1948 as "the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts". For detailed information on this subject, see: Füsun Üstel, *Kültür Politikasına Giriş: Kavramlar, Modeller, Tartışmalar* [Introduction to Cultural Policy: Concepts, Models, Discussions] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021), p. 69-74.

7 After the 1980s, especially with the influence of identity-based rights struggles, there was a transition from the "democratisation of culture" to the recognition of "cultural democracy". The term cultural rights refers to the shift from the emphasis on access to culture implied by the democratisation of culture, to the safeguarding of ethnic, religious, indigenous, etc. community members' access to the means of cultural production, consumption, and distribution, and the recognition and inclusion of diverse cultural expressions in creation and decision-making processes. Monica Gattinger, "Democratization of Culture, Cultural Democracy and Governance", https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Democratization-of-Culture-%2C-Cultural-Democracy-and-Gattinger/6d446013f265c122576061540749842446b27e74, p. 3.

8 Ibid.

"Inclusion", which is the second fundamental target in ensuring fair cultural cooperation, refers to principles and regulations designed to ensure "fairness, equity, and accessibility for all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics",[9] and the representation and inclusion of diverse cultural forms of expression.

INCLUSION

Questioning how, why, and who are not included

Distributing the means and resources among the communities pushed to the margins of the society

Ensuring the participation and access of all social segments to the right to culture and cultural rights

In the project, cultural inclusion is accepted as a fundamental value and mechanism to ensure the city residents' access to the right to culture and cultural rights without discrimination; to increase the visibility of different disciplines of art and culture, guaranteeing their enjoyment of equal respect and social recognition; and to institute cultural justice in the city.

Surely, the realisation of inclusive local cultural policies requires a firm political will as well as the provision of conditions for this political will to materialise in practice. In this framework, the local governments should first of all:

1. Have a rights-based perspective of inclusion; objectively evaluate the grounds on which the various social segments are not included;

2. Make the resources and opportunities available to the society at large, and primarily to disadvantaged individuals, by taking account of the existence and needs of different identities and life styles;

3. Anticipate emerging or new potential forms of inequality and employ a flexible framework to ensure that the mechanisms for inclusion have room for radical changes when necessary.

Third fundamental target in the realisation of fair cultural cooperation is "participation". Participation contributes to the development of cultural capital and literacy by encouraging encounters among the inhabitants of the city; the practices of thinking and learning together and co-creating experiences; and the processes of collaboration. It substantiates the different sensitivities and perspectives in the city; enables the exercise of the freedoms of thought, expression and association; and helps build urban awareness by instituting a sense of belonging based on common good and the culture of living together. In this framework, participation transforms the citizen from a passive "consumer" or "spectator" to subjects who will assume active responsibility in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies.

The multidimensional and complex character of participation presents a series of challenges to the policies and projects that aim to carry participation beyond a rhetorical discourse. This is because participation is first and foremost a dynamic process. The active participation of these actors in all stages of designing, running and monitoring the said policies and projects and these actors to take a stance to influence the decision-making processes may at times render the participatory processes and their results unpredictable. In participatory processes involving actors with different viewpoints and priorities, it may not be possible to foresee the direction in

PARTICIPATION

Promotes active citizenship.

Contributes to the sustainability and legitimisation of the policy in the eyes of the citizens.

---

9 "Inclusive Policy – Definition and Explanation", https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/inclusive-policy-definition-and-explanation/.

which the process will evolve. Therefore, policy and projects predicated on participation require flexibility, risk taking in the face of unpredictability, adaptation to new conditions, and creativity to render participation efficient and sustainable.[10]

In processes of fair cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs, access, inclusion, and participation are no doubt the minimum conditions. However, in *Ortaklaşa* we also kept in mind that these concepts are usually employed as mere clichés and there is a lack of consistency between words and deeds as well as semantic shifts resulting from the utilisation of these concepts by different actors for different aims (primarily, the continuation of neoliberalism under a more "humanitarian" guise).

Considering the importance of these concepts, which are products of centuries-long rights struggles but have been hollowed out over time and become clichés, *Ortaklaşa* embraced an approach to enable the readoption of the democratic and ethical values they represent.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS:

The indiscriminate use of the concepts often as mere clichés

The lack of consistency between words and deeds, claims and reality

The confusion resulting from the use of these concepts by different actors for different aims and intentions

1 2 WHY IS FAIR CULTURAL COOPERATION IMPORTANT?

Fair cooperation is recognised as a democratic principle and value both in the planning and implementation of the cooperation and also in view of its potential results which go beyond the field of arts and culture and contribute to social transformation.

It is seen that the lack of fair cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs constitutes a fundamental obstacle in the following fields:

- Enjoyment of cultural recognition by the city residents in all their diversity;

- Enabling social cohesion among the inhabitants of the city;

- Safeguarding the right to the city and urban rights based upon pluralism;

- Development of urban and active citizenship awareness and the institution of cultural justice on the local level;

- Full implementation of local democracy in all its aspects and primarily active participation in decision-making processes;

- Building a pluralistic life in common;

- Development of an effective and sustainable culture of cooperation.

CULTURAL JUSTICE

Increasing the visibility of different individuals, communities, and arts and culture sectors and ensuring that they enjoy equal dignity

Realising the diversity of cultural expressions

Eliminating the gender and age based, social, bodily, geographic, etc. obstacles

10 "Introduction," in *Kulturelle Teilhabe: Ein Handbuch* / *Participation culturelle: Un manuel* / *Partecipazione culturale: Un manuale* [Cultural Participation: A Handbook] (Zürich: Seismo Verlag, 2019), p. 21, 38.

Surely these results may manifest in different forms in different localities. Therefore, while evaluating the lack of fair cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs, it is important to consider the existing political and economic conjuncture as well as the local characteristics, needs, priorities, and expectations. In this context, *Ortaklaşa* addressed the consequences of this lack of fair cooperation as an issue that needs to be evaluated in terms of the variable effects they create in the specific place, time, and conjunctures, without subjecting them to any hierarchy of significance or priorities.

1   3   THE DETERMINING SOCIO-POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF *ORTAKLAŞA*

The *Ortaklaşa* project was launched at a conjuncture of significant problems on the global and national level. In this process where the social and economic damages of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect the field of arts and culture,[11] the Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes of 6 February 2023, which resulted in a huge loss of life and affected a vast territory, brought about the damage and destruction of cultural assets, caused the arts and culture organisations in the area to lose their physical spaces, and hindered and sometimes put an end to their production and activities.[12]

Meanwhile the field of arts and culture entered this period accompanied by the government's strategy of building cultural hegemony around the conception of a "local and national culture".[13] The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 2023 and the local elections held less than a year later in 2024 caused politics to permeate every sphere of social life, including arts and culture, and led to social polarisation.

This period was marked by widespread rights violations, oppression, and censoring mechanisms against freedom of expression in the field of arts and culture where various activities began to be cancelled by governorates and district governorates on grounds of possible disturbance of public order or danger to public safety.[14]

In this environment, municipalities, arts and culture CSOs and professionals, and artists had to operate in a field open to political intervention and subject to securitisation. Despite the relevant provisions in the Constitution (articles 27 and 64)[15] and the international conventions (foremost the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UNESCO Convention of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions) that Türkiye is party to, freedom of artistic expression was largely violated.

11 Özlem Ece, "Pandemi Sırasında ve Sonrasında Kültür-Sanat," [Arts and Culture During and After the Pandemic] *Dergi Akademi 5*, no. 10 (July 2020), p. 883, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1262504.

12 For detailed information on this subject, see: *Local Cultural Ecosystem in Türkiye* (İstanbul: İKSV, 2024), p. 114-118.

13 On this subject, see: Erdem Çolak, "'Homegrown and national culture': The Cultural Policies of Erdogan's 'New Turkey'," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 31(3) (2025), p. 267-283.

14 On this subject, see: Pelin Başaran and Asena Günal, "Kültür sanat alanı daralırken," [The shrinking sphere of arts and culture] *Birikim*, no. 347 (March 2018): 80; Alara Sert and Nur Tüysüz, "Sanatta Sansür Mekanizması Nasıl İşliyor: OHAL ve Sonrası / How the Censorship Mechanism Works in the Arts: State of Emergency and its Aftermath," *Reflektif Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4, no. 3 (2023); "Türkiye'de Sanatsal İfade Özgürlüğü 6 Aylık Raporu: Sanat alanına baskı geçen yıla göre artış gösterdi," [Biannual Report on the Freedom of Artistic Expression in Türkiye: Pressure on the arts has increased compared to last year] https://www.evrensel.net/haber/522763/turkiyede-sanatsal-ifade-ozgurlugu-6-aylik-raporu-sanat-alanina-baski-gecen-yila-gore-artis-gosterdi. According to the report of the Platform for Monitoring Artistic Freedom (SÖZ) supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation İstanbul Office, "In the first 6 months of 2024, a total of 126 violations of artistic freedom were reported. These included 22 instances of targeting/attacks, 21 cases of censorship/self-censorship and bans, 21 event cancellations, 21 economic/political pressures, 21 legal obstacles, 13 gender-based violations, and 2 visa restrictions."

15 "Article 27 – Everyone has the right to study and teach, express, and disseminate science and the arts, and to carry out research in these fields freely. Article 64 – The State shall protect artistic activities and artists. The State shall take the necessary measures to protect, promote and support works of art and artists, and encourage the spread of appreciation for the arts." *Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye*, 1982; *Official Gazette*, 9 November 1982, no. 17863 (Repeated edition), articles 27 and 64.

In the Local Elections of 31 March 2024 held during the second year of the *Ortaklaşa* programme, for the first time after many years, the main opposition party Republican People's Party (CHP) emerged as the leading party and came to power on the local level while a significant change was experienced also in the metropolitan, provincial and district municipalities. In the new conjuncture after the elections, the following problems arose, directly or indirectly affecting the already fragile processes of cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs:

Setbacks in services and cooperation processes caused by the new municipal administrations' lack of experience;

Hardships to clear debts inherited from the previous municipal administrations;

The financial difficulties for municipalities brought by the Austerity Measures Circular of May 2024;

The Ministry of Interior's dismissal of mayors in a number of municipalities won by DEM (Peoples' Equality and Democracy) Party and CHP, and their replacement by government appointed trustees;

Political instability resulting from the arrest of mayors and municipal employees in connection with investigations into corruption and terrorism.

2   Breaking the Cycle, Building the Trust

Although relative changes can be observed during periods of different governments, we can say that in Türkiye the state usually has a troubled relationship with CSOs due to structural and conjunctural reasons. The centralised structure of government as well as the frequent interruptions to democracy and the suspension of fundamental rights and freedoms shape the character and boundaries of the state's relationships with CSOs.

In addition to structural issues, there are also problems that become salient especially in connection with changes in the political conjuncture. In this sense, both the central and the local governments' distrust of CSOs and the organisation of their relationships with CSOs largely on the basis of political affinities constitute an important obstacle to the development of civil society. Moreover, the sphere of rights-based civil society has become even more fragile during the recent years as a large number of CSOs working in the field of arts and culture, many of which were advocating for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, were closed down.[16] Besides the obstacles to freedoms of thought, expression, and association arising from the existing legislation, the lack of a legal framework to contribute to the development and institutionalisation of relationships between municipalities and CSOs also generates adverse outcomes for the cooperation processes. This situation affects a range of different actors including the locally elected representatives, arts and culture employees of municipalities, arts and culture professionals, independent artists, city residents, and therefore the entire arts and culture ecosystem.

---

16 İnsan Hakları Derneği / Human Rights Association (İHD), "Yüzlerce Derneğin Kapatılması Hakkında," [About the Closure of Hundreds of Associations] 22 November 2016, https://www.ihd.org.tr/yuzlerce-dernegin-kapatilmasi-hakkinda/.

2 1 CSOs: DILEMMA OF BECOMING A MUNICIPAL SUBSIDIARY VS. MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE

There are significant differences between the cooperation capacities and experiences of arts and culture CSOs located in different cities. As revealed in the fieldworks conducted as part of *Ortaklaşa*, these differences arise from complex reasons that cannot be explained merely by the scale, socio-economic structure, etc. of the city or the characteristics of the CSOs. The priorities of the municipalities and CSOs in the field of arts and culture and the values they espouse vary according to the political identity of the locality and municipality.

The arts and culture CSOs' relationships with municipalities are usually infrequent and irregular.[17] That said, in some regions/cities, both the number of CSOs and their capacity, cultural and social capital, and fundraising skills are higher.[18] Meanwhile in some towns, the culture of solidarity built over time and the strong collaborations between CSOs, city residents, and activists both force the municipalities into cooperating and reinforce the democratic nature of cooperation.

The municipalities' priorities and approaches to the field of arts and culture also affect the cooperation processes. In cases where the municipalities become what CSOs call "cultural entrepreneurs" and produce content, it is more difficult for the CSOs to tend toward collaboration. In the cooperation processes, the municipalities' tendency to determine and control the model and methods of collaboration inhibits the CSOs from taking initiative independently.[19]

As shown by the survey carried out in scope of *Ortaklaşa*, a significant part of the CSOs think that they have no influence over decisions pertaining to the arts and culture events held in their towns.[20] Their foremost expectation from the municipalities is to have a say in the determination of cultural policies.[21] Facilitation for building common platforms and projects to enable their broader and effective participation in decision-making processes is among the foremost demands articulated by the CSOs.[22]

The lack of fair cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs has multifaceted consequences primarily in terms of the capacity, impact, and sustainability of CSOs. A significant number of municipalities do not have a vision of cultural policy or cultural governance and organise the field of arts and culture through momentary and temporary interventions, which in turn makes it more difficult for the CSOs to develop projects geared toward cooperation.

The meaning and values attributed to "local culture" vary depending on the CSOs. There is a general consensus on the necessity of protecting cultural and natural assets and tangible and intangible cultural heritage, however, a significant part of the rights-based arts and culture CSOs address the protection of local culture as an issue of cultural justice as well. Especially when it comes to certain regions/cities, arts and culture turns into an almost existential issue of identity and an important line of struggle for the CSOs.

17 "**How often do you contact the local government of your town about arts and culture events?**" Never: 24%; Rarely: 17%; Occasionally: 21%; Often: %18; Quite often: 18%; No idea/No response: 2%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#18.

18 "**How determinative are the following factors in CSO-Municipality cooperation?**" Personal connections: 8%; CSO's field of activity: 16%; CSO's expertise: 18%; Power of access to the target audience: 14%; Political connections: 15%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#26.

19 The CSOs' primary criticisms regarding the cooperation processes concern the municipalities' indifference towards cooperation; instrumentalisation of cooperation towards their own aims; unfulfilled promises; and interference in the content and method: "**How often did you encounter the following situations during the cooperation?**" Unfulfilled promises: 32%; Municipalities' insufficient interest in cooperation: 25%; Instrumentalisation of the event towards the municipalities' own aims: 24%; Demands to intervene in the content: 16%; Lack of publicity for the event: 16%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#24.

20 "**Do you think you have an influence on the decisions taken about the arts and culture events held in your town?**" No, we have no influence: 66%. Main reasons cited for the lack of influence were: insufficient information and communication; inability to organise active events; difference of aims; communication problems; problems about cooperations with the municipality; insufficient participation in decision-making processes; attitudes of the mayor; political differences. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#32.

21 "**What are your foremost expectations from the local governments?**" Having a say in the determination of local cultural policies: 53%; Venue allocation: 46%; Financial support: 39%; Visibility support: 37%; Coordination among similar organisations: 24%; Support in building international relationships: 22%; Infrastructure support: 21%; Vehicle allocation: 11%; Expertise support: 7%; Other: 6%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#25.

22 "**How would you rank the significance of the factors that will enable the broader participation of CSOs, collectives, and initiatives in decision-making processes?**" Establishing common platforms: 91%; Conducting joint projects: 91%; Establishing relevant municipal units: 88%; Creating advisory boards: 87%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#33.

The practice of government appointed trustees curtails both the municipality-civil society cooperation and the dialogue and collaboration among CSOs.[23] Even though the arts and culture CSOs agree upon the antidemocratic nature of replacing elected representatives with appointed trustees, they have different views about the approach to be adopted in the post-trustee period. Despite the general opinion that the practice of appointing trustees will cause cultural destruction in the East and Southeast, some CSOs have developed unique strategies to "continue without the municipality" via alternative methods aiming to "not seal their fate on the municipality". On the other hand, in some towns of the same regions, there is a growing tendency to "stop working on the local level" in the event of a trustee appointment. This difference in approach is not merely a reactive attitude but stems from complex reasons related to the historical and geographical characteristics of the locality as much as the capacity and acquired experience of the CSOs.

Some CSOs working in the field of arts and culture are not sufficiently equipped in subjects such as legislation, project writing, and advocacy which affects the processes and sustainability of cooperation with municipalities. The limited number of their professional staff, the fact that they largely work on a volunteer basis and are not equipped to deal with complicated procedures restrict their capacity for cooperation. Especially the flexible and collective nature of rights-based CSOs' organisational and administrative structures makes it difficult to adapt to the bureaucratic structure and official procedures of the municipalities. A large number of CSOs do not have independent and sustainable sources of funding, which may lead to an asymmetric power relationship in the collaborations established with the municipalities. Therefore, apprehensive of becoming municipal subsidiaries and losing their independence, CSOs may keep a distance from engaging in cooperations.

2 2 MUNICIPALITIES: DILEMMA OF "PREFERRING NOT TO" VS. ACTING PROACTIVELY

The centralised structure of government in Türkiye causes the local governments to be heavily influenced by the changes in the political conjuncture. It is usually the field of arts and culture that gets affected by this situation the most. Therefore, changes in the political conjuncture also interrupt the already limited and fragile cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs.

In addition to the fact that arts and culture is not a priority area of urban services, some municipalities do not have a cultural governance vision and sometimes not even an action plan, which prevents them from developing cooperation projects.

Among the reasons that curtail cooperation is that only a part of the municipalities have an arts and culture office/unit.[24] According to the CSOs, the cooperations are mostly run through the municipality's arts and culture unit and to a lesser extent through the mayor's office or the city council.[25]

The efficacy and sustainability of cooperation processes are also impeded because the employees of the arts and culture units at the municipalities whose previous positions were not related to the field are not sufficiently equipped and their on-the-job trainings are neglected.

---

23 Ulaş Bayraktar, *Strengthened Civil Society and Effective Cooperation in Democratic Urban Governance*, TESEV, 17 January 2020, p. 20. https://www.tesev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/rapor_demokratik_kentsel_yonetisimde_guclenen_sivil_toplum_ve_etkin_is_birlikleri.pdf.

24 "Belediyelerin ancak %52'sinin müstakil bir kültür sanat müdürlüğü/birimi var." [Only 52% of the municipalities have a separate arts and culture office/unit] https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#5.

25 "**With which unit of the municipality did you carry out this cooperation?**" Culture unit of the municipality: 76%; Mayor's office (mayor, private secretary): 33%; An arts and culture unit affiliated with the municipality: 24%; City Council: 20%; Deputy mayors: 18%; Mayoral advisors: 16%; Another unit of the municipality: 9%; Municipal corporation: 9%; Municipal council members: 2; Other: 8%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/stk.html#23. Nevertheless, municipality representatives think that mayors are the most influential actors in activity planning and design at the rate of 89%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#10.

The changes of personnel in municipalities through dismissals and new appointments obstruct the building of cadres with expertise in the field of arts and culture, the transfer of information and experience, and therefore institutionalisation. They also hamper the impact and sustainability of cooperations.

The insufficient emphasis municipalities place on research-based studies in the field of arts and culture also creates a severe shortage of data-driven information and impedes the impact and sustainability of collaborations.

Except in metropolitan municipalities, the main source of municipality budgets are the subsidies distributed according to population criteria, which is a factor that increases inequalities among municipalities. Municipalities not only allocate insufficient funds to arts and culture but also fall short of efficient resource management. As revealed also by the *Ortaklaşa* survey conducted with municipality representatives, some municipalities do not have a separate budget for arts and culture services while some allocate only a limited budget.[26] It is seen that participatory practices play a limited role in the budget preparation process.[27] The cuts made within the framework of the Austerity Measures Circular of 2024 also rendered the field of arts and culture even more vulnerable and curtailed the cooperations.

As they carry out arts and culture services, municipalities adopt discourses that highlight democratic values such as access, inclusion, and participation, however, in practice they exclude various segments of the society which in turn affects the processes of cooperation and the quality of these processes.

The municipal services in the field of arts and culture are usually event-based[28] organisations. The design and execution of the activities are marked by populist concerns; participatory processes are not sufficiently exercised.

In their arts and culture services, municipalities do not employ a holistic perspective to consider the principle of horizontality and the relationality of arts and culture with other public policies, which limits the transformative potential that cooperation processes may create also in fields outside arts and culture.

The municipalities' cooperations in the field of arts and culture are usually concentrated on specific disciplines and target groups. Usually, municipalities either do not prefer to cooperate with CSOs or expect them to take the first step[29] and do not act proactively to develop a cooperation.

26 In response to the question "**What was the budget or share allocated to arts and culture in your municipality's overall budget last year?**" 27% of the municipality representatives said "None", %5-9% said "17%", 13% said "1%". https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#25.

27 In response to the question "**Was there a participatory process in budget preparation?**" 40% of the municipality representatives said "Yes" and 54% said "No". No Idea/No Response was 6%. In response to the question "**Were preliminary consultations held with local arts and culture professionals, CSOs, collectives, or initiatives during the budget preparation process?**" 68% of the municipality representatives said "No". https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#26.

28 "**What was the nature of your cooperation?**" Joint activity (planning/organisation): 93%, Venue allocation: 44%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#16.

29 In the survey conducted with municipality representatives, two highest ranking responses to the question "**What was the reason you could not cooperate?**" were: We did not receive any proposals: 58%; We did not prefer to cooperate with CSOs: 22%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#17. Moreover, their expectations from CSOs concentrated on project proposals (19%) and joint activities (15%). The percentage of those who said "Contribution to policy making" was 4%. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#18. In response to the question "**Are there any local or national level CSOs, collectives, or initiatives working in the field of arts and culture that you cooperated with in your city over the last 3 years?**" 43% of the municipality representatives said "No", 35% said "Only local ones". https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/belediye.html#20.

3   *Ortaklaşa*: Actions, Obstacles, Solutions

The projects that received grants as part of the *Ortaklaşa* programme conducted their cooperations in four main fields of action: building spaces, events, communities and policies. These four fields of action, which have specific aims but are not independent of each other, were addressed through the perspective of an ecosystem where each one nourishes the others and enables a chain reaction and transformation.

3   1   BUILDING SPACES

Actions of "building spaces", which have a fundamental importance for the right to the city and urban rights, were designed with a view to respond to the local needs and expectations in the field of arts and culture based on the principles of participation and inclusion; to reinforce the sense of belonging to the city; and to create nature-human centred public arts and culture spaces.

Ortaklaşa's projects of building spaces employed methods such as identification of spaces, architectural design, assigning a function to existing spaces, refunctioning of idle spaces for multiple purposes geared toward different target groups (children, youth, etc.), and the development of governance plans regarding the use of spaces. As these methods require significant human resources and funding, the cooperation process called for the support of local chambers of commerce and industry, arts and culture actors, and architects. During the stages of architectural design and functionalisation, sometimes the municipality units other than the one responsible for cultural affairs and the arts and culture actors living in the city also participated in the process, which increased the efficiency and democratic quality of the cooperation. New governance and funding models were developed taking steps towards sustainability.

The most important difficulty in creating spaces was experienced in the use of municipality owned venues. In some projects, the municipalities' turnabouts regarding the function and management of the site caused disruptions in cooperation. In some situations, this problem was resolved by making protocols.

On the other hand, the ambiguities and confusion of jurisdiction regarding the zoning process in the earthquake-affected area also led to difficulties on matters such as the construction and allocation of space.

Even though significant challenges were encountered during the cooperation processes and the problem of insufficient venues, especially in small towns, could not be completely solved due to various reasons, foremost the limited resources and the inability to create new funds, ultimately, new spaces were created which will increase access to culture in rural areas and encourage the diversity of cultural expressions and the artistic production of the people.

3 2 ORGANISING EVENTS

Event organisation, which is the most frequently used model of cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs, constituted an important field of action in *Ortaklaşa* as well. As manifested also by the fieldworks conducted within the framework of *Ortaklaşa*, the municipalities to organise arts and culture events is a contested issue that must be addressed with its positive and negative aspects. Free-of-charge or inexpensive events offered by the municipalities can provide a great opportunity for city residents with low incomes; these may also be effective in supporting the production processes of young artists and increasing their public visibility. Nevertheless, as often expressed by the CSOs, municipalities to become content producers, their tendency to dominate the events, and their populist approaches can cause the exclusion of certain sectors, disciplines, and especially independent artists; it restricts the protection of the diversity of cultural expressions.

In *Ortaklaşa*, the methods employed in event-based cooperations between municipalities and CSOs emerged from a wide range of activities such as festivals, biennials, exhibitions, talks, art education and workshops for children and youth, and artist-in-residence programmes, each of which requires a different

cooperation model, mechanism, and contributors. Depending on the type, scope, and target audience of the event, the planning and design process of the activities not only involved the CSOs and the metropolitan and district municipalities, but also secured the contribution of arts and culture communities, business world, and the media.

The shortage of resources in this field, the necessity to raise new funds, the lack of spaces, and sometimes the confusion of jurisdiction experienced in cooperation processes constituted the main organisational problems. The municipality's resolve to cooperate as much as the capacity and local influence wielded by the CSO were determinant in the steps taken towards resolution. In cases where the municipality employees were committed to the project, there was a visible increase in the efficiency and sustainability of the cooperation. Certain problems encountered in this process were resolved through the intervention of third parties who acted as mediators and facilitators between the CSOs and municipalities.

It is possible to say that overall, event-based cooperations enabled the municipalities to commune with the people and the CSOs to strengthen their relationship with the municipalities. Moreover, the event-based cooperation model requires less procedures as compared to other fields of action and is geared toward getting fast results; therefore, it constituted an important stage for the CSOs to gain experience in cooperation.

In some projects, the events laid the groundwork for the protection of the diversity of cultural expressions, and in some others, they created space for the innovative and experimental art forms of different arts and culture groups. Meanwhile, the fact that the organised events did not always find favour with the people revealed the importance of using audience development mechanisms in this field.

3 3 COMMUNITY BUILDING

During the cooperation processes, the network of relationships that the municipalities, CSOs, local arts and culture actors, and the local public established around the common good and goals promoted community building. Thinking and producing together strengthened the CSOs and municipality employees in the fields of cultural policies and management. In some projects, the development of cooperation networks among provinces and districts both facilitated the transfer of experiences and carried the practice of community building beyond the local borders; through a holistic ecosystem perspective, it paved the way for the emergence of regional cooperation lines.

However, the process of community building has a fragile character and is open to the influence of local power relationships, which in turn necessitated various actions geared to safeguard sustainability. In addition to problems encountered in community management, the fact that in some cases the CSO which owned the project was not located in that town caused setbacks in community building as it resulted in an approach of management from the outside and hindered the local actors' commitment to the process.

During community building, not only the municipality's strong relationships with local CSOs but also the CSOs' view of cooperation as an opportunity to enable a holistic civil transformation yielded positive results. This process paved the way for strengthening the institutional relationships between municipalities and CSOs; increasing the participation in decision-making processes; developing the CSOs' local legitimacy and capacities; and to some extent, for the protection of the diversity of cultural expressions.

3 4 POLICYMAKING

In *Ortaklaşa*, "policy" was not addressed in the strict sense of concrete policy outcomes but as a dynamic, relational, and open-ended process shaped by negotiations and tensions and involving different actors with their specific political agendas who participate in every stage of the space, event, and community building actions. That said, some projects also yielded concrete political outcomes toward the development of local cultural policies and governance.

During the processes of concrete policy development, studies were conducted to identify the local needs and expectations through mechanisms such as field research involving municipalities, CSOs, and sometimes universities; consultations with local CSOs on their fields of expertise; needs assessment and self-evaluation workshops; exchange of international experiences; pilot implementations; and ecosystem meetings. Monitoring the municipalities' arts and culture investments and spendings; developing cultural planning criteria; drafting cultural planning and spatial design guidebooks; and establishing arts and culture advisory boards in municipalities constituted the foremost fields of action in the policymaking process. An important development in this framework was that in an, albeit limited, number of municipalities, cultural policy documents with forward-looking concrete targets were accepted by decision of the municipal council. The employment of policy documents in strategic planning and their inclusion in activity reports constituted noteworthy examples signifying the municipalities' commitment to the field of arts and culture and a declaration of intent towards implementation.

4   Legacy of *Ortaklaşa*: Accumulation of Experiences, Repertoire of Practices

At the end of three years, the *Ortaklaşa* programme, which aimed for the development of fair, effective, and sustainable cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs, generated an accumulation of experiences and a repertoire of practices that involved the participation of a large number of local actors with their respective ideas and actions. This accumulation and repertoire, which is based on the grantee projects' space, event, community, and policy building actions and the challenges encountered on the ground as well as the devised solutions, presents a framework that can be developed for similar cooperation projects.

Firstly, we should emphasise that the fact *Ortaklaşa* was a project with a well-defined scope, funding, timetable, and fields of activity created an impetus both for the municipalities and CSOs to lean toward cooperation and led them to act more proactively. In the design and implementation of the project, a holistic approach was adopted which cared for the results but was centred on the process. In this framework, strengthening the knowledge and skills of the arts and culture actors in different cities; monitoring the cooperation processes; giving feedback when needed; and assuming the role of facilitator along with the local actors to solve the emerging problems between the parties constituted the main stages of this holistic approach implemented through the Sub-grant Programme, and the Learning and Dialogue Programmes.

As is the case in all cooperation projects, *Ortaklaşa* also experienced problems caused by a variety of reasons, particularly the instabilities in the economic and political conjuncture, differences in the parties' institutional cultures, and discordant perspectives and expectations from the cooperation. The project treated fair cooperation as a specific form of collaboration based on democratic values, the common good, and collective commitment, which also created certain challenges. Despite the care taken to uphold the principles of access, participation, and inclusion in the cooperation projects, various difficulties were encountered due to the local power

relationships, the municipalities' resolve, and the CSOs' capacities. In this process, albeit limited, there were also operational setbacks such as the cooperating actors' inability to fulfil their commitments, cancelled protocols, and contributors pulling out of the project. A significant part of the problems was resolved through flexible project management by taking the specific dynamics of the locality into account. Those that could not be resolved were recorded in institutional memory to be of guidance in similar cooperation processes.

Despite certain problems experienced during the process, the implementation of all aspects of fair cooperation between the municipalities and CSOs that partook in the project created a space of opportunities for both parties. The cooperation enabled a change, even if partial, in the way municipalities and CSOs view one another. It encouraged the municipalities to raise their awareness on the transformative potential of cooperations in the field of arts and culture and to incline toward participatory and inclusive practices. Concurrently, it prompted the CSOs to increase their capacities, expand their fields of influence, and move toward cooperations with institutions and organisations other than municipalities by building on the experiences they acquired on the local level. The CSOs to benefit from each other's cooperation experiences and knowledge strengthened the synergy in the field of arts and culture. It lent impetus to initiatives of forging regional bridges of culture geared toward expanding the scope, actors, and geographic span of the cooperations.

In fair cooperation, providing an environment of trust and transparency among stakeholders is important for the democratic, effective, and efficient execution of the process. Consideration of alternative perspectives and critical points of view through a conception that is grounded in access, participation, and inclusion, helps to balance the asymmetrical power relationships between the stakeholders to some extent and contributes to the sustainability of the process.

The cooperations between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs are clearly crucial to deepen local democracy at large, however, for temporary projects to lead to a sustainable culture of cooperation there needs to be regulations to strengthen the field. In this framework, based on the demands and expectations expressed during the *Ortaklaşa* process by the local arts and culture actors and foremost the municipalities and CSOs, we believe that the implementation of the following regulations can present middle and long-term solutions to increase the potential for cooperation and reinforce its democratic character.

5   After *Ortaklaşa*: Suggestions

5 1   NEW INSTITUTIONALISATIONS– STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING INSTITUTIONS

a. Municipality-CSO Cooperation Office: Defining the role of municipalities in cultural life through their regulatory and infrastructural functions can pave the way for a cultural management model in international standards, shaped by needs, and promoting the participation of all local cultural actors in the process. To this end, the processes of cooperation in the field can be promoted by: the introduction of necessary legislative regulations to the Municipalities Law no. 5395 for the constitution of an Office within the municipalities to coordinate the collaborations with CSOs; the establishment of a transparent and reliable open data system by this Office to enable the capacity building of CSOs by providing information on space inventory, budget, events, legislation, project writing, application requirements, legal support; and the preparation of a Cooperation Action Plan featuring specific and concrete aims in line with the needs and demands of the locality.

b. Specialised Commissions on Arts and Culture: It is of great importance for the decision-making processes to be shaped with the participation of civil society and different experts active in the field and to pursue policies that bring together relevant actors through an inclusive approach. Accordingly, necessary regulations can be introduced to the Municipalities Law no. 5395 to ensure that the CSOs working in the field of arts and culture also have a seat on the Specialised Commissions on Arts and Culture to be established within the municipalities.

c. Creation of New Spaces Focused on Arts and Culture: In cities and rural areas that do not have an adequate number of sufficiently equipped arts and culture venues, the transformation – not privatisation – of public properties into public service areas allows for the emergence of new spaces

of social life which will flourish with arts and culture. To this end, rather than cultural centres constructed with no regard to function or operational needs, the municipalities can create new spaces with quality acoustics, layout, technical equipment, and stages designed for arts and culture events. It is also of critical importance to consider the city's needs and the opinions of experts in the field while transforming the existing spaces to be used for arts and culture purposes.

d. Municipalities' Venue Allocation to CSOs: Effective and sustainable cooperations require the implementation of mechanisms that will eliminate the difficulties CSOs face in accessing municipalities. In this framework, the municipalities to allocate venues for the CSOs to come together with specialised personnel and cite as their address may encourage fair cooperations.

e. Platform of CSOs: The establishment of a digital system where arts and culture collectives, platforms, and networks can be actively involved through their own organised movements and collaborate in areas such as fundraising, information-document exchange, and formulation of trainings and policy texts may increase the CSOs' means of working together and capacities of cooperation. At this point, the municipalities to assume not a decision-making but a facilitative role, to provide the suitable digital infrastructure, and contribute to the participatory and transparent evolution of the process will significantly increase the impact and sustainability of the cooperations.

f. City Councils: For the City Councils to be more effective and functional in the field of arts and culture, they should be systematically and regularly involved in the municipalities' strategic planning and monitoring-evaluation processes. The CSOs working in the field cannot directly monitor the municipalities' various activities, particularly their arts and culture expenditures, however, the City Councils may be considered as the structures to assume this task. In this framework, the role of City Councils can be reinforced with

functions of participation in processes of governance, checks and balances, and joint brainstorming. In this regard, awareness-raising on the role of the City Council can be conducted both among the municipal organisations and the citizens.

g. Strategic Plans: The field of arts and culture should be incorporated into the public planning processes through a strategic and holistic approach by prioritising its public benefit. The municipalities that have the capacity to directly contact the citizens and command of the socio-cultural dynamics of the region under their administration can highlight the transformative power of arts and culture as they produce inclusive policies through a human and nature centred egalitarian understanding of sustainable development. To this end, it will be crucial to include culture-oriented goals in the strategic plans as well as concrete mechanisms to improve the cooperations between municipalities and CSOs; to allocate time, budget, and human resources to meet these goals; regularly monitor the works of the municipal teams responsible for cultural affairs and their compliance with the strategic plan; ensure the City Councils assume active role in this process and the checks and balances mechanisms are running; and finally to develop instruments that enable municipalities to hold self-assessments and regularly measure how their arts and culture services produce value for the society, how they can amplify this value, and to what extent they are able to attend to the needs and interests of different stakeholders. Such an approach may improve the quality of public services provided by the municipalities, increase efficiency in resource allocation, and enable the cultural policies to be addressed with an effective approach based on holistic, efficient, and fair cooperation.[30]

5 2 ONGOING TRAINING–CAPACITY BUILDING

a. On-the-job Training: It is important to conduct regular on-the-job trainings both in and outside the workplace to improve the arts and culture-oriented knowledge and skills of employees working not only in the arts and culture offices of the municipalities but in other related units as well. However, every municipality may not have the means and qualifications to organise such trainings on its own. Therefore, the Municipality Unions that can act on the basis of inter-municipal cooperation may play a critical role in this field. For instance, as in the founding aim of the Marmara Municipalities Union, the approach of using shared wisdom, cooperation, and coordination to develop policies, manage processes, and produce holistic solutions for the problems that municipalities are hard put to resolve on their own can be implemented in the field of arts and culture as well.[31] Ongoing Training units to be established within the Municipality Unions can offer regular trainings on common subjects needed by the municipalities. Moreover, they can create a certified and free-of-charge education portal containing materials prepared in cooperation with municipalities and universities to develop the knowledge, competence, and literacy of the arts and culture actors and municipalities.

30 For detailed information, you may consult the İKSV report titled "Cultural Planning for Local Authorities". Istanbul, February 2016. https://www.iksv.org/i/content/229_1_Cultural%20Planning%20for%20Local%20Authorities.pdf.

31 Marmara Municipalities Union's activities include the employee exchange and experience sharing programme titled "Mentor" geared toward capacity building and inter-municipal cooperation; the "Culture and Art Platform" active since 2017; and the "Local Government Academy" which provides practice-oriented trainings. For detailed information, see: https://www.marmara.gov.tr.

b. Workshops: The municipalities to hold regular meetings with arts and culture actors, experts, city residents, and disadvantaged groups based on participation and inclusion and to increase the opportunities for dialogue on the local level would accelerate the cooperation processes and enhance their democratic quality. To this end, municipalities can organise workshops creating a platform of discussion around specific themes and involving different communities, particularly women, youth, and people with disabilities. The workshops' outputs can be regularly and systematically recorded, and relevant data can be integrated into cultural policies/urban planning. Planning agencies can provide support in workshop coordination, data analysis, and the integration of outputs into policy processes.

5 3 MAPPING AND INVENTORY

For the development of arts and culture, it is important to create a comprehensive inventory of not only the physical spaces but also the institutions, scientific works, and personal archives. The inventory to be in a constantly updateable format and to contain all disciplines of art is indispensable for inclusion.

Moreover, working groups can be established within the planning agencies of municipalities in coordination with the Cultural Affairs units to produce data on subjects such as cultural participation, employment in the field of arts and culture, and the contribution of culture to the urban and national economy. In addition to strengthening an inclusive, data-based, and participatory management approach in the field of arts and culture, such an initiative can help municipalities develop policies using comparative datasets on the national and international levels.

5 4 COOPERATION PROJECT COMPETITIONS

There is need for transparent, fair, and innovative mechanisms to enable the more active and creative participation of CSOs and arts and culture actors in processes of cooperation with municipalities. To this end, municipalities can hold project

competitions conducted through blind review, give trainings on project writing before the competitions, and organise regular project camps where the projects can be drafted as the stakeholders find the opportunity to discuss the projects and develop cooperations.[32]

5 5 FUNDRAISING FOR THE FIELD

New funding models are required on the local level to be able to develop sustainable projects in the field of arts and culture. To this end, new regulations can be introduced to the legislation to create funds that make public-private sector cooperation possible on the local level; the public resources to be allocated to the field of arts and culture can be made available for the use of not-for-profit arts and culture organisations, artists, or artist initiatives through an auditable and transparent mechanism rather than tenders, which prevent independent initiatives and CSOs from participating in the process.

5 6 COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

The communication support to be provided for the productions of cultural institutions and artists is also of crucial importance for consolidating the municipalities' unifying and facilitatory role in the field of arts and culture. In this framework, municipalities can make a part of their announcement sites and channels (display areas in public transports, billboards, utility poles, overpasses, etc.) available to the productions of cultural institutions and artists free of charge.

The processes of fair cooperation between municipalities and arts and culture CSOs make undeniably significant contributions to the democratisation of the field. However, to ensure democratisation in the field of arts and culture, cooperations should no longer be understood as stand-alone goals or "target and time-specific

---

[32] For informative examples on project competitions that can be implemented in the field of arts and culture, see İKSV's report titled "Art in Public Space: Proposed Models and Recommendations for Istanbul". Istanbul, July 2011. https://www.iksv.org/i/content/237_1_1_art-in-public-space-2011-en.pdf.

projects"; rather, they should be recognised first and foremost as an ethical value paving the way for egalitarian, inclusive, and participatory cultural policies and local cultural justice. In this context, it is of critical importance for the cooperation initiatives and projects to enable the development of a cooperation culture that will bring about a holistic transformation in the field.

Ortaklaşa is the story of a three-years long odyssey, and this story does not consist merely of the thousands of kilometres travelled or the cooperations painstakingly woven thread by thread. *Ortaklaşa* is also the story of learning together and transformation, of obstacles and solutions, and of human bonds that reach unexpected depths over time. As a compilation of what we have learned from this three-years long story and what we can suggest looking forward, we hope that this document reflects also these very bonds that sustain the foundations of the project and are shared by everyone who partook in the work, and which we have established together, collectively, in cooperation, or as we say in Turkish, "ortaklaşa".

Bibliography

Abay, Tezcan Eralp, ed. *Sivil Toplum Örgütlerinin Kapasitesi ve Sınırlılıkları.* [Capacity and Limitations of Civil Society Organisations] Ankara: Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi (STGM), 2023. https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2023-06/sivil-toplum-orgutlerinin-kapasitesi-ve-sinirliliklari.pdf.

Başaran, Pelin, and Asena Günal. "Kültür sanat alanı daralırken." [The shrinking sphere of arts and culture] *Birikim*, no. 347 (March 2018): 78-87.

Bayraktar, Ulaş. *Demokratik Kentsel Yönetişimde Güçlenen Sivil Toplum ve Etkin İş Birlikleri / Strengthened Civil Society and Effective Cooperation in Democratic Urban Governance.* Istanbul: TESEV, 2020. https://www.tesev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/rapor_demokratik_kentsel_yonetisimde_guclenen_sivil_toplum_ve_etkin_is_birlikleri.pdf.

Culture Action Europe (CAE). "New CULT Committee of the European Parliament is formed." https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/new-cult-committee-of-the-european-parliament-is-formed/.

CAE. "Proposed €8.6 billion for culture and democracy in the next EU budget." https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/proposed-e8-6-billion-for-culture-and-democracy-in-the-next-eu-budget/.

Çolak, Erdem. "'Homegrown and national culture': The Cultural Policies of Erdogan's 'New Turkey'." *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, v. 31, no. 3 (2025): 267-283. https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2024.2345372.

Ece, Özlem. "Pandemi Sırasında ve Sonrasında Kültür-Sanat." [Arts and Culture During and After the Pandemic] *Dergi Akademi*, v. 5, no. 10 (July 2020): 882-887. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1262504.

Gattinger, Monica. "Democratization of Culture, Cultural Democracy and Governance." 2012. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Democratization-of-Culture-%2C-Cultural-Democracy-and-Gattinger/6d446013f265c122576061540749842446b27e74.

Hampel, Annika. *Fair Cooperation: A New Paradigm for Cultural Diplomacy and Arts Management*. Brüksel: Peter Lang Verlag, 2017. https://www.academia.edu/34203986/Fair_Cooperation_A_New_Paradigm_for_Cultural_Diplomacy_and_Arts_Management.

İnsan Hakları Derneği / Human Rights Association. "Yüzlerce Derneğin Kapatılması Hakkında." [About the Closure of Hundreds of Associations] *İHD*. 22 November 2016. https://www.ihd.org.tr/yuzlerce-dernegin-kapatilmasi-hakkinda/.

Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV). *Local Cultural Ecosystem in Türkiye*. 2024. https://www.iksv.org/i/content/28189_1_Local_Cultural_Ecosystem_in_Turkiye.pdf.

Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV). *Cultural Planning for Local Authorities*. 2016. https://www.iksv.org/i/content/229_1_Cultural%20Planning%20for%20Local%20Authorities.pdf.

Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV). *Art in Public Space: Proposed Models and Recommendations for İstanbul*. İstanbul: İKSV, 2011. https://www.iksv.org/i/content/237_1_1_art-in-public-space-2011-en.pdf.

Marmara Municipalities Union. https://www.marmara.gov.tr/eng.

Nationaler Kulturdialog. *Kulturelle Teilhabe: Ein Handbuch / Participation culturelle: Un manuel / Partecipazione culturale: Un manuale*. [Cultural Participation: A Handbook] Zürich: Seismo Verlag, 2019.

Sert, Alara, and Nur Tüysüz. "Sanatta Sansür Mekanizması Nasıl İşliyor: OHAL ve Sonrası Sonrası / How the Censorship Mechanism Works in the Arts: State of Emergency and its Aftermath." *Reflektif Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4, no. 3 (2023): 643-652. https://dergi.bilgi.edu.tr/index.php/reflektif/article/view/276/163.

Republic of Türkiye. *Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye*. Official Gazette, 9 November 1982, no. 17863 (Repeated edition).

Üstel, Füsun. *Kültür Politikasına Giriş: Kavramlar, Modeller, Tartışmalar*. [Introduction to Cultural Policy: Concepts, Models, Discussions] İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021.

"Inclusive Policy – Definition and Explanation." *Oxford Review*. https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/inclusive-policy-definition-and-explanation/.

"Türkiye'de Sanatsal İfade Özgürlüğü 6 Aylık Raporu: Sanat alanına baskı geçen yıla göre artış gösterdi." [Biannual Report on the Freedom of Artistic Expression in Türkiye: Pressure on the arts has increased compared to last year] *Evrensel*, 8 July 2024. https://www.evrensel.net/haber/522763/turkiyede-sanatsal-ifade-ozgurlugu-6-aylik-raporu-sanat-alanina-baski-gecen-yila-gore-artis-gosterdi.

Türkiye'de Yerel Kültür Ekosistemi Araştırması (STK ve Belediye'lere yönelik anket sonuçları). [Research on the Local Cultural Ecosystem in Türkiye (Results of the survey conducted with CSOs and Municipalities)] *Ortaklaşa: Culture, Dialogue and Support Programme*. https://ortaklasa.iksv.org/turkiyede-yerel-kultur-ekosistemi-arastirmasi/.

About the Author

Prof. Dr. Füsun Üstel attended the Notre Dame de Sion French High School for Girls and graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University. In 1982 she became a research fellow at the Department of International Relations of the Faculty of Economics at İstanbul University. She received her doctorate from the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University with her thesis titled "Türk Ocakları (1912–1931)" [Turkish Hearths]. She worked as faculty member in the Department of Public Administration (French) at Marmara University and the Department of Political Science at Galatasaray University, where she also served as department chair. She worked on the Advisory Board of İKSV's Thread of Culture project. She retired in 2017.

She is the author of *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912–1931)* [Turkish Nationalism from Empire to Nation-State: Turkish Hearths] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997); *Yurttaşlık ve Demokrasi* [Citizenship and Democracy] (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 1999); *"Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet'ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi* [In Pursuit of the "Acceptable Citizen": Civic Education from the Second Constitutional Era to Present] (İletişim Yayınları, 2004); *Eleştirel Düşünme* [Critical Thinking] (with İpek Gürkaynak and Sami Gülgöz) (Education Reform Initiative, 2003); *Türkiye'de Ermeniler: Cemaat, Birey, Yurttaş* [Armenians in Türkiye: Community, Individual, Citizen] (with Günay Göksu Özdoğan, Ferhat Kentel, and Karin Karakaşlı) (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009); *Kültür Politikasına Giriş: Kavramlar, Modeller, Tartışmalar* [Introduction to Cultural Policy: Concepts, Models, Discussions] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021) as well as numerous articles on nationalism, citizenship, and cultural policy published in national and international social science journals.

For her work titled *"Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet'ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi*, she received the Afet İnan History Studies Award and the Notre Dame de Sion Alumni Association's Achievement Award in 2004, followed by the Mülkiye Grand Prize in 2018.

We thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ulaş Bayraktar, who moderated the roundtable meetings, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökçe Dervişoğlu Okandan, who moderated the search conferences held within the scope of the Ortaklaşa Dialogue Programme, as well as all the participants who gave us their valuable time and contributed to these meetings.

All online sources in the document were last accessed on 29 September 2025.

Intended for scientific and educational purposes.

ORTAKLAŞA