

KS' International Projects

2015 Annual Report



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The Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities (KS) has an international unit called KS' International Projects. KS' International Projects receives support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and the European Economic Area (EEA) financial mechanisms through projects and participation in programmes. KS' International Projects consists of five full-time project managers. Professional expertise from KS itself as well as from KS' members is drawn into the projects when needed. The international project unit also co-operates with other relevant organisations and ministries in Norway, depending on the focus and theme of the project.

Eea And Norway Grants

The EEA Grants and Norway Grants are the contributions of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway towards reducing economic and social disparities and strengthening bilateral relations with 16 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe. Through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the Internal Market with the 28 EU member states. The countries also share common values and responsibilities with other European countries to promote equality of opportunity, tolerance, security, environmental sustainability and a decent standard of living for all. Funds are set aside in all beneficiary countries to support networking and foster

project partnerships on initiatives of mutual interest. The EEA and Norway Grants are set up for five-year periods. For the period 2009-2014 €1.8 billion was set aside under the Grants. The financial mechanisms are built in such a manner that there are programmes, and under the programmes there are pre-defined projects as well as open calls. For more see www.eeagrants.org

KS is a Donor Programme Partner (DPP) in the area of capacity-building and institutional co-operation in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania as well as in the area of children and youth at risk in Estonia. KS is also a project partner in numerous countries under the EEA and Norway Grants.

The programme period is from 2009-2014; however, the implementation phase includes 2015 and 2016.

Norwegian Ministry Of Foreign Affairs

KS has received funding for numerous co-operation projects from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). Norway has a solid local government sector and has a lot to offer in building strong and stable local democracy in other regions with local government associations as partners. KS' International Projects have NMFA-funded projects in several European countries outside the EU.

FOREWORD

A recent study undertaken by the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) on behalf of KS indicates that a very high number of Norwegian local and regional governments – over 60 % of municipalities and all county councils – actively take part in international projects in one way or another. Access to new knowledge and competences as tools for achieving strategic goals is commonly stated as a reason for this international interest. Participation contributes to regional development and a learning organisation. Usefulness is underlined by the fact that local governments that have successfully participated in international projects once tend to participate again.

New knowledge is acquired in many areas including youth work, development of inclusive communities and improved business attractiveness. Most internationally-oriented Norwegian local governments look to Europe when developing and delivering better policy. Many opportunities are available under the European Regional Development Fund, various EU-programmes and through partnering under EEA and Norway Grants. Norwegian local governments benefit from these opportunities.

Fewer opportunities for international local government partnering exist outside of Europe. The new international development agenda – the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) – approved by heads of states and governments from around the world at the 70th General Assembly of the UN in September 2015, however, advocates for a new global partnership where local governments have a rightful and significant place.

For example, in “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development, The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron and others have stated: “Local authorities form a vital bridge between national governments, communities and inhabitants and will have a critical role in a new global partnership.”

The Sustainable Development Goals integrate sustainable development with human rights and social justice. They recognise that local governments have an important role in generating inclusive and sustainable development. It is, nevertheless, necessary to support effective governance at the sub-



national level and to capacitate local governments to render them capable for the task. Thus, KS is engaging Norwegian authorities in a dialogue which we hope will lead to Norwegian local governments being part of the new global partnership working for a humane, just, inclusive and sustainable world by 2030.

In addition to the emphasis on local governments' significance in regards to the SDGs, the agreement from the 21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris was also historical for the local government sector: The agreement comes with a

direct recognition of the local government sector's significance to the nation states' climate work.

Please enjoy our annual review of KS' international projects with an overview of all our projects, some in-depth articles and, in part two, an outlook towards the future – where you can read more about the SDGs as well as the COP21.

Kindest regards
Gunn Marit Helgesen
President of KS

Projects 2015

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Bulgaria	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Bulgarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Technical Assistance Directorate, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria	Norway Grants € 42 000 for 2015
Bulgaria	Strengthening the Capacity of the National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Bulgarian Municipalities through Co-operation with Norwegian Local Authorities	The National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Regions - NAMRB	Norway Grants € 184 465 for entire programme period 2009-2014
Bulgaria	Children and Youth at Risk	Dobrich Municipality	Norway Grants € 10 350 for 2015
Estonia	Donor Programme Partner for Children and Youth at Risk	Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice	EEA Grants € 14 000 for 2015
Georgia	Effective participatory local government and regional development	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	NMFA € 400 000 for project period 2012-2015
Hungary	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Hungarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	National Development Agency	Norway Grants € 52 000 for 2015
Hungary	Capacity Building and Institutional Co-operation between Hungarian and Norwegian Local Authorities	The Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities-TÓOSZ	Norway Grants € 178 076 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Latvia	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development in Latvia	Norway Grants € 37 000 for 2015
Latvia	Smart governance and performance improvement of Latvian municipalities	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) and State Regional Development Agency in Latvia	Norway Grants € 285 650 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Lithuania	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Lithuanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania	Norway Grants € 46 000 for 2015
Lithuania	Pre-defined project for sustainable energy and environmental quality management in local governments	Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania	Norway Grants € 25 000 for entire programme period 2009-2014
Malta	Pre-defined project on Partnership for Creative Governance	Malta's Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government	Norway Grants € 15 000 for 2015

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Moldova	Effective, Consultative and Devolved Governance in Moldova	Congress of Local Governments of Moldova	NMFA € 820 000 for project period 2015-2017
Poland	Building competences for inter-municipal and inter-sectorial cooperation as tools for local and regional development	Association of Polish Cities in co-operation with the Association of Polish Counties and the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland	EEA Grants € 230 000 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Portugal	Sexual and moral harassment at the work place	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment and seven other Portuguese institutions	EEA Grants € 130 000 for the entire programme period 2009-2014
Portugal	Gender Equality in the municipalities Odivelas and Seixal	The University of Lisbon, Institute for Social and Political Science. The 2 municipalities Odivelas and Seixal	EEA Grants € 4070 for project period 2015
Romania	A Green Way to Sustainable Development	The Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu	EEA Grants € 587 360 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Russia	Presidential Programme: Internships for Norwegian and Russian public employees	The Presidential Academy for National Economy and Public Administration, North-West Institute, Saint Petersburg	NMFA € 740 000 for project period 2014 - 2017
Slovakia	Increasing Participation of Municipalities and Public in Environmental Impact Assessment Processes	Association of Towns and Communities in Slovakia-ZMOS	Norway Grants € 8 930 for 2015
Slovenia	Women in politics: Obtaining Political Equality by New Names	Peace Institute, Ljubljana Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia University of Ljubljana Women's Lobby	Norway Grants € 39 000 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Spain	Work-Life Balance	Women's Institute Federation of Spanish Municipalities and Provinces	EEA Grants € 196 096 for entire programme period 2009 - 2014
Ukraine	Efficiency Networks, with an applied research component and a Local Democracy Survey (2015 - 2018)	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)	NMFA € 1 400 000 for the project period 2011 - 2015
Ukraine	Local Government Reform Support and Capacity Building - Programme 2	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)	NMFA € 1 500 000 for the project period 2015 - 2018

* The EEA and Norway Grants programme period is from 2009-2014; however, the implementation phase includes 2015 and 2016.

PART 1: PROMOTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE



STIMULATING WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN SPAIN

KS has co-operated with The Spanish Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities (IWEQ), together with The Spanish Federation for Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), regarding mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance.

The project was based on a previous EEA-funded project (2008-2012) with the same focus on work-life balance and the same three partners. The previous project was deemed successful by all parties, and there was a general wish to continue the work. And the following

EEA and Norway Grants' period (2009-2014) included a pre-defined project in Spain focusing on the balance between private, family and working life. This balance is an important social and economic challenge as Spain has high unemployment rates and low birth rates. The financial crisis is making the situation even more complicated. Norway is in a more favourable situation with lower unemployment rates, higher birth rates and is less influenced by the financial crisis, but still has issues to work on in regards to this topic.



Work-life balance is also important for productivity, an important element for European competitiveness in the global market. Studies show that workers that have the possibility to balance professional, private and family have higher productivity.

–Johan Vibe, Ambassador, Norwegian Embassy in Spain

After an initial diagnosis the participating Spanish local governments – representing different sizes, regions and political colours – selected activities focusing on three specific elements of work-life balance and shared responsibilities between women and men:

- Change of attitudes
- Labour market
- Development of services

Each Spanish local government received project funds to develop and work with these selected activities, while the three Norwegian local governments – Kristiansand, Gran and Sagene (district in Oslo) – selected areas of concern related to their specific challenges, according to the Norwegian Local Government Gender Equality Index and according to the

Presenting our own experiences, challenges and solutions has given us the opportunity to reflect on our own work and policies

–Sagene District, Oslo Municipality

same priority elements as the Spanish local governments, as listed above. The Norwegian local governments did not receive any project funding to develop activities. The diagnosis, planning and reporting was done in co-operation between the three local governments and KS.

During his opening speech at the final project seminar in September, the Norwegian ambassador Johan Vibe underlined that the project had been constructive and successful. He continued to state that the contribution by the 18 local governments – 15 Spanish and three Norwegian – had been crucial for collecting and sharing experiences, good as well as bad. Even though Spain and Norway have different histories and experiences, the two countries share the same fundamental objectives when it comes to women’s inclusion and rights in the labour market as well as facilitating work-life balance as an investment towards the future. The European welfare state cannot survive without the participation of women in the labour market. The Norwegian participation of women in the labour market is above the OECD average, and this is more

important to the Norwegian economy than the income from the oil and gas sector.

Participation in the project has been very interesting for the Norwegian municipalities as well as for KS. The study tours and meetings have focused on the exchange of experiences and reflections have provided important learning. The project has shown that focusing on the balance between private, family and professional life is an interesting theme for international projects for Norwegian municipalities.

Apart from the project in Spain, KS has also been a partner in projects focusing on gender equality and work life balance in Slovenia, Portugal and Hungary.



HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE IN PORTUGAL AND NORWAY

Moral and sexual harassment in working life is a challenge in all countries and is the focus of an EEA-funded project between Portugal and Norway (2014-2016). The Portuguese project promoter has been CITE – a tripartite commission for gender equality in working life. KS has been the Norwegian partner, including other Norwegian organisations and institutions like the National Institute for Occupational Health, the Labour Inspection Authority and the Norwegian Union for Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE)

The concept of harassment refers to the situation where a worker is systematically being subjected to actions involving sexual harassment or moral harassment, i.e. degrading and disrespectful treatment. Both can have extremely serious effects, such as:

- Exclusion from society
- Depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Eating disorders

Portugal and Norway are interesting examples of harassment in working life as the situation in the two countries is

quite different. According to comparative European data, harassment is a serious problem in Norway, but a much less serious problem in Portugal.

The best available comparative data is the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) from 2012. This survey is conducted every fifth year and includes comparative data based on self-reported working conditions in 34 European countries, including Portugal and Norway. All data in the survey are from 2010 in addition to trends from 1991. The next survey will be published in 2017. The Survey focuses on three main themes:

- Working conditions (e.g. employment, segregation etc.)
- Working environment and organization (e.g. harassment and other psychosocial risk factors)
- Quality of work and employment (e.g. salary, training and work life balance)

To make comparison easier, an index of exposure to adverse social behavior was constructed. Portugal is at the low end of the index together with Kosovo,

Turkey, Cyprus and Italy. Norway is at the top end with Finland and Austria. However, it is difficult to interpret the differences between countries concerning the exposure to adverse social behavior, as the differences may reflect various factors:

- Variations in the actual prevalence of adverse social behavior
- Cultural differences with regard to the type of behaviour that is considered adverse
- Country differences in the likelihood of people reporting these types of behavior

There may be many reasons why the figures are higher in Norway:

- Relatively high level of gender equality and equality in general

- Specific legislation regarding working environment and whistle-blowing
- Strong organisations for employers and employees and extensive social dialogue
- Media focus on different forms of harassment

Nevertheless, these kinds of co-operation are vital in order to keep focus on inclusion and combatting social exclusion of individuals or groups of people. Social exclusion costs society a great deal of resources and anything that can be done to prevent this loss is crucial – for the individual in question and society as a whole. In part two of this annual review and outlook for KS' international projects you can find an article concentrating on social inclusion, which is a main focus area for KS at the moment.



IMPROVED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK IN ESTONIA

The current Estonian support system for children and families lacks good coordination between government and local agencies, there are few effective measures to support children and their families and the system does not improve community-based crime prevention. Local governments have low capacities in this area; specialists lack skills to detect children and youths at risk, parenting support is insufficient, there is little capacity for detection and remediation of youth problems in the educational and youth work systems, and aftercare for juvenile offenders is limited and incomplete.

With funding from EEA and Norway Grants (2009-2014), KS has partnered on the programme level with the

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, including the Ministries of Social Affairs and Justice, seeking risk reduction using preventive, knowledge-based and systematic cross-sectorial approaches on different levels (local, regional and national) to improve the well-being of Estonian children and youths. Programme outputs include putting in place legal and organisational frameworks and structures to support children and their families and to support and empower professionals dealing with children at risk in governmental institutions, local governments and NGOs, as well as in educational, correctional, welfare and youth work institutions. The programme approach consists of quality knowledge-based interventions to children, youths and

families, in order to support parenting skills, prevent school drop-out and reduce juvenile delinquency.

Shortcomings currently prevailing in the social, educational and justice sector – linking child protection, kindergartens, schools, youth centres, youth work and correctional institutions – in Estonia are improved through:

- Integrating systems for support to children and youths
- Analysing local support for children and youths
- Introduction of inclusive education
- Use of participatory models in youths and youth work organisations
- Use of intervention strategies for

children and youths at risk in formal education

- Roll out of a parenting programme
- Introduction of a family-based programme for juvenile offenders
- Establishment of community-based crime prevention measures
- Offering aftercare to youths being released from prisons or special schools

A total of 23 projects, with a wide variety of project promoters and project partners from Norway, Iceland and Russia, are being implemented under this programme, and about 40 % of Estonian local governments take part in these projects.



OVERCOMING UNEVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA

The small South Caucasus country Georgia embarked on economic transformation in the 1990s. Previously the country's mainly agricultural economy was fully integrated with the soviet system enjoying monopoly in soviet markets for its wine, tea and citruses. Georgia was less industrialised than other soviet republics and the economy collapsed totally when the USSR disintegrated. Industries were ruined and old economic links disintegrated. Agriculture experienced a major setback when ownership of previously state agricultural properties was transferred to rural residents. Hundreds of thousands of smallholders were left with archaic methods of farming. Georgian agriculture could no longer compete in post-soviet markets. GDP per capita therefore dropped dramatically and the newly established Georgian state faced macro-economic instability and huge public debt. The country descended into civil war.

Centralisation and consolidation of powers after the end of the civil war provided economic growth. From 2003 Foreign Direct Investments fueled this growth, which in particular picked up in 2004-2007 when the economy was liberalised and barriers for doing business were removed. Georgia saw annual economic growth rates of 12%, GDP increased by 40% and the state budget increased 10 times compared to the baseline year 1993. Negative effects such as growing social inequality were observed, however. The capital Tbilisi, with a third of the national population, became by far the largest recipient of foreign direct investments. Tbilisi's growth attracted workers from other parts of Georgia and the city now produces 75% of Georgia's GDP. A major disparity exists between Tbilisi and other regions which have limited potential for economic growth. The country therefore now seeks a

shift from an ultraliberal development approach to a new policy promoting productive employment and economic growth in all regions of Georgia.

KS has – in co-operation with the Georgian local government association (NALAG) and with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – worked with the Georgian national and sub-national governments to establish a practice of policy implementation and development planning since 2009. This assistance package includes technical assistance to Georgian local governments and the national government in regional development planning. Through targeted initiatives it has been possible to build awareness amongst Georgian stakeholders on the process of policy formulation and development planning. The Georgian government, under the

Prime Minister's leadership, has established a State Commission for Regional Development Planning. It includes all ministers and heads of political fractions in Parliament and is mandated to elaborate a national development strategy and consecutive policy for territorial cohesion.

This project ended in December 2015 with a joint KS and Georgian State Commission conference on "Overcoming Uneven Economic Development in Georgia" which sought to build awareness between Georgian central and local government officials on recent theories of economic development planning and the role of public institutions. In particular the conference discussed how efficient local and national policy can contribute to balanced economic development and territorial cohesion.



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN ROMANIA

In Romania, KS – together with the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and the Western Norway Research Institute – have been working with the Environmental Protection Agency in Sibiu, three pilot local governments (Sibiu, Brasov and Tg Mures), the University of Lucian Blaga in Sibiu and the Romanian National Meteorological Administration. The focus has been on preparing for development of strategies and actions plans for climate change adaptation.

A key part of the project is exchanging of experience and knowledge from adaptation efforts and methodology used at the local level in Norway. In addition, the project seeks to enhance the long-term preparedness by developing courses on climate change at the Lucian Blaga University, as well as piloting various adaptation measures.

In 2007 and 2012, Romania experienced the most severe droughts in the last 100 years; at national level more than 54% of the areas are currently affected by drought. In 2005, 2006 and 2008 the country also saw historic floods. The floods in 2005 caused 76 deaths, damage for €1.4 billion and affected over thousands of settlements. There is insufficient knowledge about climate change and the effects it will have on the country. This is particularly the case at regional and local level. Regional and local authorities are charged with implementing EU and national policies on climate change adaptation, but do not have the adequate competence and tools to do so.

The experiences from the Norwegian local government sector, combined with the knowledge and practices from regional authorities and research, have

been very beneficial in KS' cooperation project when training representatives from the three Romanian local governments in preparing for development of local adaptation strategies and action plans.

Four training sessions on adaptation to climate change have been implemented for 360 representatives from, among others:

- The three pilot municipalities (Sibiu, Brasov and Tg Mures)
- Several counties

- The prefects' offices
- The Romanian National Meteorological Administration
- The University of Lucian Blaga in Sibiu
- The Ministry of Environment and Forests

One training session on risk and vulnerability analyses has also been conducted, and Eid municipality from West-Norway participated and shared their experience and know-how.

Two study trips to Norway have been organised, where the participants were informed about Norwegian challenges and measures that are being developed and implemented. Both groups visited Oslo municipality, its' district Ensjøbyen as well as Fredrikstad municipality outside Oslo.

Local and regional governments have the expertise to act on environment and climate change issues as diverse as urban planning, consumption, transport and environmental quality, as well as combatting 70% of all global CO2 emissions related to the daily life of the inhabitants. Their participation cannot be ignored, nor can their results and cooperation across borders go unnoticed. Finally the importance of involving local governments was stressed in the 21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris at the end of 2015. You can read more on this in the second part of this brochure.





A STABLE FUTURE FOR UKRAINE LIES IN THE HANDS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

A key prerequisite for successful decentralisation and territorial structure reform is consensus and demand for change among the population, as well as the accumulation of social capital in society which can support the implementation of the reforms. These factors are largely present in Ukraine at the moment.

Most oblast councils have approved plans for community amalgamation, a process required to establish viable self-governance units instead of the current fragmented network of villages and settlements. As a consequence of the local government reform, the total number of local governments on community-level is expected to fall from 11 000 to 1 500. During the local government elections in October 2015,

159 of the newly amalgamated local governments elected their very first councils.

When Mr. Poroshenko held his inaugural speech as the newly elected president in summer 2014, he emphasised increased local autonomy and decentralisation as one of its highest priorities, as has been highlighted numerous of times by him during 2015. Yet, it is not enough to delegate authority from central to local levels. Decentralisation requires implementing multiple reforms simultaneously: Legal, taxation, budget, competences and so forth. The health, education, and social policy ministries began to develop sectoral reforms to improve the funding and administration of their key delegated programmes. These reforms are intended to address

the mismatch between decentralised funding and centralised sector regulation, introduce input-based budgeting, and eliminate conflicts of interest in service delivery. Some initiatives exist but not a full concept or a procedure for the implementation of the reforms in these fields.

The continued co-operation between Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), KS and the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) – financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – focuses on capacity building of local governments in service provision and evidence-based policy dialogue within health, education and social protection. During the launch of the USAID-funded project Policy for Ukraine Local Self-Governance (PULSE) Project in January 2016, Poroshenko also underlined the importance of AUC work: “It is important to actively join the work on legislative support for

decentralisation, prior to amending the Constitution. We will need to approve almost 500 new laws. And it has been an ambitious and proper task for the Association of Ukrainian Cities to collect opinions, formulate the position, prepare draft laws, and together with National Deputies, together with the Cabinet of Ministers prepare and implement these amendments in the legislation.”

As part of this long-lasting co-operation project on local democracy in Ukraine, AUC, KS and NIBR conducted a survey among inhabitants and local politicians in 20 Ukrainian local governments – offering an indication of the condition of local democracy in Ukraine. The results confirmed the impression of a country with great challenges in the area. Only 15% fully or partly agreed with the statement that inhabitants can influence local decisions, while 85% totally or partially disagreed. More than three

quarters completely or partly agreed that local authorities are abusing their position for personal enrichment. This testifies widespread corruption in Ukrainian local governments.

Although many of the findings were also positive in regards to local democracy, the survey revealed very large differences between the individual local governments with regards to local participation and inhabitants' assessment of them. It is interesting to note that there are no significant differences between big and small local governments, or between east and west of the country. Political culture of the local government seems to be more vital than finances, political composition or geographical location.

The positive findings from some local governments suggest that one cannot just fault the central government for poorly developed local democracy. Local governments that have achieved high local participation and good contact between the authorities and the population can be an inspiration to other cities and local governments.

In order to have a viable and stable local democracy, local governments must be open and accessible to their inhabitants and give room for meaningful participation. Besides, the effective implementation and operationalisation of the territorial structure and decentralisation reforms, requires strong, competent and capable local governments. Hence we believe that Ukraine's stability and future success

lies in the hands of its local government sector, and KS will continue to cooperate with AUC and NIBR on:

- Evidence-based policy dialogue between AUC and the central government in regards to the situation of the local government sector in Ukraine and the ongoing reforms
- Increasing the quality of services to the inhabitants by building capacity and competence of local governments in networks – allowing local governments to make decisions based on evidence through employee and user surveys, as well as hard data
- Increasing real citizen participation by informing and exchanging experiences – through working with local governments in networks on local democracy
- Councillor training for amalgamated local governments

Decentralisation is the key element for the preparation of Ukraine for its future membership in the European Union.

Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, Press Release of the launch of the Policy for Ukraine Local Self-Governance (PULSE) Project (USAID) (January 2016)



Tomasz Potkanski, Deputy Executive Director and Project Manager at APC

INTER-MUNICIPAL AND INTER-SECTORIAL CO-OPERATION IN POLAND

KS and the Association of Polish Cities (APC) are working together on a project funded by EEA-grants. The aim of the project is to increase capabilities in inter-municipal and inter-sectorial co-operation among local governments in Poland. Below, Deputy Executive Director and Project Manager at APC, Tomasz Potkanski, gives us an update on the challenges of Polish local governments and opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation in the country.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE PROJECT AND WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE UNDERTAKEN IN THE PROJECT?

Our joint project with KS, which draws from the Norwegian experience, aims at building capacity for Inter-Municipal Co-operation (IMC) as a tool to solve development problems in a local and sub-regional scale. Our advisers assisted groups of local governments

in joint-planning for socio-economic development of co-operating local governments, and in managing grants from the Ministry of Regional Development (the EEA funded) used for preparing technical documentation for infrastructure investment projects – which are crucial for development of these co-operating communities – and which would be able to apply for EU funds to cover infrastructure costs.

Special emphasis is placed on wide participation of local inhabitants, NGOs and entrepreneurs in this strategic planning process. Besides supporting the process, a parallel pillar of our activity is focused on developing methodology for improving capacity for co-operation (a model for IMC, description of a set of tools that should be used by co-operating actors, and key principles of good co-operation in terms of managing relationships in the partnership), as well as a tool for self-evaluation of the current

status of IMC – in order to reflect on quality of co-operation. To support identification and dissemination of good practices in this area, as well as foster the learning process, two rounds of National Competition of Good Practices in IMC were organised. Winners in these competitions were invited – as an award – for a study visit to Norway.

Good practices identified through all these activities are documented and disseminated widely to other local governments within Poland. Norwegian experiences, both within Poland and presented during the study visits to Norway, capture attention of professional local government managers in Poland. We have also submitted proposals for soft legislative changes that would lower existing barriers for co-operation between local governments in Poland. The Polish National Local Governments Associations were also instrumental in improvement and passing the law on cooperation in metropolitan areas, which is a first step in good direction.

WHY IS IMC IMPORTANT IN POLAND?

The last 25 years of rapid development of Polish Local Governments has been marked by fierce competition among local governments – for investors, for inhabitants, for grants, for new opportunities, to mention a few. A typical

liberal market economy approach transferred to public administration, with no incentives for co-operation. And it was working quite well until recently. But nowadays these old methods are no longer sufficient to cope with current problems – which cover areas wider than single local governments – ageing population, unemployment among the low skilled part of the population, rapid development of infrastructure, which raises operational costs beyond capacity of a single local government to carry it, and too small consumer market or labor market for big investors to get interested. This is why it is important to work together among local governments.

Some of the mayors already understand this need, however others do not. Spreading this approach among Polish local governments is an important task. Single local governments will not be able to provide conditions for sustainable development, especially in poorer and more remote areas, though they are still several times bigger than that of the smaller Norwegian local governments. Theoretically, European Union programmes assist this so-called “territorial-based” approach to development, but still incentives for individualistic behaviour remain strong. Our joint activity with KS is one of the key and grassroots efforts to alter it, and we are supported by Ministry of Development in Poland.

Key recommendations from the research report on inter-municipal partnerships in Poland delivered by Foundation for Research and Social Innovation (SHIPYARD):

1. Legislation that promotes inter-municipal partnerships is needed
2. Establishing partnerships and building their identity – making municipalities identify themselves with actions of the partnership and believe that the partnership is a constant mechanism of cooperation in dealing with local problems and challenges
3. There is a need to support partnerships by providing them with specific tools or knowledge that will allow them to properly manage their goals and actions.

IMC IN POLAND IS NOT WIDESPREAD, NOR SUSTAINABLE, ACCORDING TO EXTERNAL EVALUATION – HOW WILL APC FOLLOW UP ON THESE FINDINGS?

The report on the established IMC was commissioned by APC and delivered by an external company in 2015. The conclusion was that IMC is not widespread and sustainable.

As mentioned above, the legal conditions and socio-cultural set-up still favours individualistic behavior, which is described in the report. Legal competences of mayors are very strong in Poland, which has a lot of positive consequences – we are a truly decentralised country with a strong local democracy – but this does not

help to foster IMC since. There is still just no compelling urgent need to do so. Even if Ministry of Development supports it, the EU funds are administered by self-governing regions, which do not always think in new ways and still often favor individual projects over joint actions. But this is changing. At the same time a large portion of mayors engaging in joint socio-economic planning, do it because they expect that it will help them to access EU funds for needed individual investments, that raise quality of life of their inhabitants (voters), rather than truly believing in integration of services among local governments.

What will happen when the EU funds end? And here we come to the source of the problem – which is a socio-cultural



background, which is a soft matter and cannot be regulated in the law. This is why our joint project – APC, KS, and two other local government associations in Poland together with the Ministry of Development – are placing so much effort on promoting a new approach to cooperation. We develop and promote self-assessment quality of cooperation, and promote good examples of partnerships which are sustainable showing long term advantages that steam from this approach. We organise a series of workshops around the country providing tools developed by the project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, which help in proper long term infrastructure development planning, and promote advantages of IMC. In the final year of the project (2016) we plan a series of large conferences around the country as well as publications.

Our project is the key vehicle in the public sphere to promote IMC, but we also support engaging inhabitants and NGOs in these processes. We very strongly promote and support Community-Led Local Development (CLLD approach), which engage local partners and make them co-responsible for the future of our local governments. Such initiatives were among the winners in both rounds of the National Competition for Best Practices in cooperation at the local level.

These were the words of Tomasz Potkanski, Deputy Executive Director and Project Manager at APC (as in photograph).

INTERNSHIP FOR NORWEGIANS IN RUSSIA AND VICE VERSA

KS has organised the so-called Presidential Programme since 2000, and many Russian civil servants have been able to take part in an internship over three weeks in Norway each year. In 2010 the possibility also opened up for Norwegians employed in the public sector, and a new dimension to the programme was introduced. The North-West Institute of Management of the Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in St. Petersburg and KS are co-operating on the organisation and implementation of the Presidential Programme in Norway, and in Russia.

The internship programme is tailor-made for the individual participant and the person's work place. The programme increases understanding and knowledge about two neighboring countries, and allows for more co-operation and contact, and new project opportunities across the border.

For more information on the possibility for an internship in 2016, please do not hesitate to get in touch. The Norwegian internship in Russia is usually organised in spring, and the Russian internship in Norway is usually organised in September.

PART 2: OUTLOOK – LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE



THE NEW SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Selected Norwegian local governments have been working with capacity-building in local governments abroad for two decades, under the umbrella of a KS' programme. KS has revised and improved its Municipal International Co-operation (MIC) programme several times and expanded it to local governments in Southern Africa, East Africa, Central America and the Western Balkans – totaling 11 countries. In its later years the programme supported devolution as a means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015).

The Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) – approved in September 2015 – were formulated and negotiated through a long, open and participatory process. KS met with Norwegian aid authorities in April 2015 to convey a message underlining the importance of sub-national authorities in setting, localising, implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, 12 Norwegian mayors addressed a letter to the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in September 2015, requesting a government initiative be launched to bring

“KS has throughout 2015 been working towards creating a future programme for the empowerment of local governments in order to enable them to fully take action for SDG achievement.”

local governments into the SDG implementation process.

SDG 16 emphasises peaceful and inclusive societies with effective, accountable and transparent institutions as well as inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making. Other SDGs give local governments a role in the unfinished business of MDGs, such as eradication of poverty and access to basic services. Institutional capacity at the local level of government is important for achieving all 17 goals. National commitment to the SDGs must be localised through devolving tasks to local governments, decentralising or de-concentrating national tasks to regional state institutions or through delegating tasks to sub-national levels of government. Amongst sub-national bodies only local governments are policy-makers.

In the chapter on foreign aid, Norway’s government highlighted SDG 16, and underlined the interrelations between

peace, security and development in its national budget proposal to Parliament for 2016. Amongst important items on this new development agenda which contribute to peace and security institutional capacity, the rule of law and good governance are explicitly mentioned. KS’ earlier work with Norwegian local governments to strengthen local government capacity in developing countries was included in the budget proposal as a best practice example. KS’ ability to have a dialogue between tiers of government and its learning from past experiences – coupled with capacities which can be shared with others – represents a solid foundation for experience-based action of multi-stakeholder initiatives for SDG 16 attainment.

KS has throughout 2015 been working towards creating a future programme for the empowerment of local governments in order to enable them to fully take action for SDG achievement. The programme will aim to devolve powers paired with fiscal decentralisation and local capacity support. KS desires – in co-operation with sister associations and local governments in Norway and abroad – to generate skills and products which will make local governments better able to take part in SDG implementation.

Such a co-operation between KS and local government associations abroad would then aim to contribute – through the establishment of a new international co-operation framework for local governments – to strengthen inherent capacity in democracy, service delivery and local development. This will in turn allow local governments to be empowered to formulate policy, strengthen their institutional capacity, mobilise

resources and put in place monitoring and accountability systems, in order for SDGs to be efficiently and effectively met at the local level.

Local models and experiences could, through these local government associations, be spread and disseminated to other local governments – contributing to establishing a critical mass of experiences at the local level, which will have national significance. Also, local experiences and results can add to improving national policy and thus constitute a vital national asset for SDG attainment.

KS supports decentralisation processes and facilitates co-operation and exchange of good practice between local governments or their associations in Europe and the world. Based on broad experience, KS has developed tailor-made services enabling local governments to compare their performances and learn from each other. Available tools can help councilors make local democracy more effective and transparent. Local governments can use existing tools to improve their administrative organisation and to better implement local policies and services.

The idea is that such a new programme can run on triannual cycles and in the first period just cover one country with a limited number of partnerships. It can – if successful – be expanded to additional countries. It is hoped that support can be received from the Norwegian Government for KS to organise such a programme. KS would then enter into agreement with other partners, such as sister associations and participating Norwegian local governments. Norwegian local govern-

ments would be paired with foreign local governments under binding contracts specifying goals, outcomes and expected output from cooperating as well as partners’ role in the partnership. Partnerships would be based on reciprocity, equality, mutuality and shared benefits. KS would manage projects and document results, and for technical input KS can draw on a vast in-house pool of competence or practice as well as substantial input and experiences from member local governments.

“KS will continue the work to shape and establish a new Municipal International Co-operation (MIC) Programme in 2016”

At the moment KS has a MIC-project in Moldova, where a seminar for local governments took place in Chisinau in September 2015 for interested Moldovan local governments. And these selected Moldovan local governments will be invited to a partnering workshop with pre-identified Norwegian local governments in 2016 – where concrete partnerships with goals and outcomes will be designed.

KS will continue the work to shape and establish a new Municipal International Co-operation (MIC) Programme in 2016, which aspires to encompass more Norwegian local governments and be of added-value to the SDGs attainment from the Norwegian side.



GLOBAL FUND FOR DECENT WORK AND TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has publicly announced that there will be a continuation of the Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue in the next EEA and Norway Grants period, and KS is eager to continue the work with this theme internationally.

KS and the Norwegian Union for Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE) have co-operated closely during the Norway Grants-funded Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue Programme 2011-2014. Both organisations are important social partners in Norway; KS as the second largest employers' organisation and the largest one in the public sector, and NUMGE as the largest trade union for municipal employees.

KS and NUMGE have participated in a total of seven projects in the following six countries:

- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Lithuania
- Hungary
- Poland
- Romania

Three of the projects focused on improving social and tripartite dialogue, and the remaining four on threats and violence at the work place, so-called third party violence. All projects ended in December 2014, and the evaluations are all very positive. A publication was made to present all 7 projects.

(See this [link](#) for full brochure)



The former programme period disclosed that it was an advantage for the Decent Work projects to focus on similar themes, in order to facilitate exchange of experiences between the projects. All projects should of course focus on Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue, but may use specific themes as entry points, such as:

- Strengthening Social and Tripartite Dialogue at the local level
- Strengthening of employers' organisations and trade unions
- Reduction of unemployment – especially among young people
- Reduction of social dumping and ensuring decent working conditions
- Combatting poverty and social exclusion
- Safety at the work-place, including combatting third party violence, i.e. threats and violence from users and clients

Hence, KS and NUMGE will – in the next period – include participants from other Norwegian organisations and institutions when that is relevant, mainly Norwegian municipalities, but also the National Institute for Occupational Health (STAMI), and the National Labour Inspection Authority and other relevant Norwegian Ministries and Directorates.

During the former project period (2012-2014), KS and NUMGE coordinated the projects through meetings organised by the two European umbrella organisations CEMR for employers, and EPSU for trade unions. This coordination will continue in the next period in order to ensure the sustainability of results and networks, as well to strengthen the European Social dialogue institutions.



RESPONDING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE AND COP21

Through the current EEA and Norway Grants, more than €50 million has been set aside to respond to climate change impacts through programmes in nine EU countries. Furthermore, over €200 million has been allocated under the EEA Grants funded “Energy efficiency and renewable energy” programme that also contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

There is reason to believe that there will be continued focus on this theme in the coming EEA and Norway Grants programme period (2014-21), and the significance and importance of involving and working with the local government sector in order to adapt societies to the impacts of climate change, is becoming increasingly emphasised. Improving the preparedness at local level is a key element of adaptation efforts.

There is general agreement that the Paris Agreement from the 21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21) – approved 12 December 2015 – was as good as it was realistic to achieve. The Agreement sets a clear direction for climate work in all countries, and states that global warming be limited to well below 2°C, striving to pursue a 1,5°C target. Moreover it represents a breakthrough for local governments as essential international actors in regards to climate issues.

For the first time a direct recognition of the local government sector’s significance to the nation states’ climate work has been underlined in the text of the agreement: “Recognising the importance of the engagements of all levels of government and various actors, in accordance with respec-

“Recognising the importance of the engagements of all levels of government and various actors, in accordance with respective national legislation of Parties, in addressing climate change”

COP21 Agreement, Paris, December 2015

tive national legislations of Parties, in addressing climate change”. In addition, the agreement also emphasises the importance “to uphold and promote regional and international cooperation in order to mobilise stronger and more ambitious climate action by all Parties and non-Party stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities, local communities and indigenous people.”

Furthermore, “Parties recognise that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all with local, subnational, national, regional and international dimensions, and that it is a key component of and makes a contribution to the long-term global response to climate change to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems.”

Parallel to the COP21 the local governments’ Climate Summit was organised in the town hall in Paris, in conjunction with UCLG and CEMR Political Summits. Some 1 500 participants, including 700 mayors from around the world participated, and the summit concluded with the adoption of a proactive declaration on increased local climate efforts. In addition,

mayors committed themselves to fully support the goals outlined in the Paris agreement, and beyond.

The President of KS Gunn Marit Helgesen, Deputy Bjørn Arild Gram, and committee member Torhild Brandsdal, as well as representatives of the KS’ administration were present at the summit. Oslo municipality was also represented, and KS and Oslo organised a seminar on innovative transport solutions, with both Norwegian and international experts. The feedback after the seminar verified that the theme attracted quite a lot of interest.

Inside the COP21 – were you would need UN-accreditation to enter – there were also many seminars on local government sector and their work with the climate challenges. The local government sector was also prevalent at the UN’s own side-events, and it was clear that the nation states’ goals could not be met unless the local government sector was involved.

Now the agreement needs to be translated into action, and KS and its members have experience to exchange – both nationally and internationally.

SOCIAL INCLUSION: IMMIGRATION

Being excluded from society has serious economic and social consequences – both for society and the individual concerned. People standing outside communities, labour markets and education systems are a waste of resources for society. The economic ramifications are significant on so many levels, and for the individuals concerned, it is disheartening and demotivating. Social inclusion is one of KS' main focuses for the coming years, and consequently this will also be emphasised in KS' international projects.

There are many reasons for exclusion from society, with mental health problems, substance and alcohol abuse, loneliness, poverty and lack of integration being the main reasons in Norway.

KS' International Projects has been cooperating with Spain on work-life balance – stimulating the understanding that a working place allowing for a good balance between private, family and working life permits a more inclusive working environment, fostering increased participation in the labour market. In addition to this KS has also worked with a project in Portugal where the focus lay on harassment at work. You can read more about these two projects in the first part of this 2015 review.

There is no one solution or answer to how the challenge of exclusion can be prevented or overcome, but local governments have local knowledge, visibility and closeness to the inhabitants that make them well-suited to



preventing and reducing exclusion. Local governments play an important role in solving issues together with the national government and voluntary sector. KS and the Norwegian local government sector have experiences to share, but are also very much interested in learning and cooperating with other countries on this theme.

There has been an increase of migrants and asylum seekers to Norway in 2015, which will probably continue in 2016, and in order to avoid future social exclu-

sion there is a need for a good reception and a plan for inclusion for the people whose application for asylum is approved. Local governments in Norway play a major role in this.

NORWEGIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

In 2015 Norway received more asylum seekers than ever before, and since local governments are responsible for housing and integration after approval of an application for asylum, this has become an important concern for KS

and its members. Integration is challenging but it can also be enriching and a positive influence for the Norwegian society, and KS will – under the umbrella of “Social Inclusiveness” – work on aiding the local governments in solving their responsibilities in this regard in the best possible manner.

The local governments face many challenges in the settlement of their new inhabitants, the two major ones being finding appropriate accommodation and access to work. Work is a key factor for integration, together, of course, with knowing the language. It is important to solve these issues swiftly, as the longer someone is passive and just waiting – not being able to work or contribute towards society – the harder it is to break out of the inactivity and nonparticipation. The Norwegian local governments are also responsible for a mandatory introduction programme, in which the objective is to prepare the new inhabitants for Norwegian society through language learning and general knowledge about the Norwegian society. This programme is the subject of a new project for KS.

THE INTRODUCTION PROGRAMME AS A THEME FOR KS’ EFFICIENCY NETWORKS

KS has been offering the opportunity to participate in Efficiency Networks for its members for many years, and the methodology has also been used extensively in some of KS’ international co-operation projects. This particular way of working in networks can be tailor-made to fit any situation, any service and the reality of any country. During a network cycle the local governments define their own particular needs, challenges and goals. Through comparisons with other local governments and the analysis of indicators and survey results, the participating local governments are offered an extensive overview of the status of a specific service, and subsequently it gives the local governments a good idea of what can and should be done in order to improve these services. A network is always led by an experienced facilitator, aiding the participating local governments in debate and exploration of results.

KS saw the need to support its members by finding ways in which to

improve the quality of the Introduction Programme, and efficiency networks were announced with this as a theme. The participating local governments will be learning from one another, but also receive other valuable knowledge about what characterises a good introduction programme and how different ways to organise it can have significant effects on the outcomes. Experience and co-operation between the participating local governments in the network will provide valuable knowledge on various ways to organise the programme, and various ways to meet challenges that arise.

The local governments define goals for their own development work concerning the Introduction Programme and also make sure they work with their own organisation between meetings. KS contributes with tools, development expertise and process management, while the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) supports the work financially and academically.

Over 60 local governments applied to the networks on the Introduction Programme, and 40 were offered a place in a network. The local governments were then divided into three networks, which were all established in autumn 2015.

UCLG – the global network of cities, local and regional governments – had the refugee crisis at the top of their agenda during the UCLG World Council on 5 December 2015. The UCLG World Council – the largest democratically elected international body of local leaders – was held in Paris in the context of the COP21 climate negotiations. It became clear that the participating local and regional governments believed that there lies a legal and moral responsibility for local governments to welcome those seeking refuge from natural and man-made catastrophes, especially when state governments fail to act. UCLG will thus set up a working group “to coordinate local action on refugees and allow cities to exchange



knowledge, as well as to undertake joint advocacy directed at state governments regarding their competencies in the area.”

There also exist examples of good practice from individual local governments with regards to immigration and integration, one such is Sagene district in Oslo.

SAGENE DISTRICT – AN EXAMPLE

The district of Sagene in the capital Oslo has been one of the Norwegian local governments involved in the Spanish Work-Life Balance project. The Sagene input in the project was on capacity-building, motivation and work for immigrants, who represent 25% of the population in their district.

Sagene is one of 15 districts in Oslo, with 40 000 inhabitants, with its own administration and political council.

It used to be a typical working class district, but is now becoming populated by the middle class, like most districts in the centre of Oslo. However, the district has kept its public housing and still has 2 400 public apartments, owned by the municipality and let to people who cannot afford to buy or rent apartments on the open market – this includes mainly immigrants and people with health and drug related problems.

When it comes to the composition of the population of Sagene 25% are immigrants, slightly below the average 30% for Oslo as a whole. The main countries of origin are non-western countries; Somalia, Morocco, Algeria, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan – the largest group being Somalis. Most of the immigrants in Sagene live in public apartments. This is due to the fact that many came as political or humanitarian refugees after the year 2000, most with a very low



KS believes local governments participating in these kinds of networks receive a scientific basis for altering their resource priorities. The networks are built up with a broad participation from each local government, so that expertise remains in the organisation after the network cycles are finalised,

says Veslemøy Hellem, Special Adviser KS' Efficiency Networks

educational level, and quite a few are illiterate. While immigrants who have been in Oslo for a longer time have been able to buy their own flats in the eastern suburbs, the recently arrived Somalians, for instance, depend on public housing.

Sagene has a high persistent relative poverty rate for families with children, i.e. poverty lasting more than three years. 25% of all children in Sagene live in relative poverty compared to 15% for Oslo as a whole, but less than 1% according to the United Nations absolute poverty rates. Relative poverty in Norway, as well as absolute, is closely linked to employment. Even though unemployment in Norway is much lower than in most European countries, it is seen as a key challenge, especially for local and regional governments with a high rate of immigrants from non-western countries, like Sagene.

KS highlights social inclusiveness because the consequences of exclusion are so great. Exclusion can prevent an individual from living a full life and deprives society of an inhabitant who can mobilise resources to address important social issues.

*Gunn Marit Helgesen, KS' President
(Varden, November 2015)*



Sagene district has adopted a double strategic approach for their local community:

1. Keep the middle class happy and make them want to continue to live in the district:
 - Sagene will deliver quality, professional and empowered services
 - Sagene will focus on municipal development and culture, creating an active and interesting community
 - Sagene will engage the elderly middle class as volunteers

2. Inclusion and participation against marginalisation and family poverty
 - Sagene will activate and educate unemployed immigrants
 - Sagene will activate both parents and children in learning arenas such as kindergartens and extracurricular school activities
 - Sagene will develop communities in the public housing areas

Integrating political and humanitarian immigrants from non-western countries, especially with a weak educational background, is a long, time-consuming and expensive process. It requires

a comprehensive total activation approach working with many elements at the same time: motivation, education, Norwegian language training, health issues and employment. The National Labour and Welfare Service (NAV) is a key part in this process.

NAV Sagene has a special focus on:

1. **Youth:** The actual labour market initiatives for young people all focus on activation: motivation, skills development, job training. Many need help with health issues, psychological assistance,

physical exercise and training, and sometimes drug problems. Many of them have unemployed parents and need long time activation in order to be integrated in the labour market. The team also assists with other issues when necessary, e.g. housing and health issues. Financial benefits are paid out according to attendance.

2. **School Drop-Outs:** There is a special programme for school drop-outs. It is called "The New Possibilities Initiative" and focuses on preventing dropouts through closer

co-operation between the education authorities and the labour and welfare services (NAV). It implies close contact between schools and NAV; only one phone call is needed to make an appointment the following day. NAV receives a list of names from the schools in Sagene district every semester – of pupils dropping out of schools who then need to be followed up.

3. *Adult immigrant women: The adult women represent two different groups: (i) adult women who came as humanitarian or political refugees from the year 2000; and (ii) women who arrived later to join a husband living in Norway. Most of the women have little education and many are illiterate. Most are unemployed,*

and therefore are poorly integrated into Norwegian society and speak little Norwegian. The key objective for this group is also activation: motivation, language training, literacy training, elementary school education – and exposure to the labour market. Many have health problems, needing a psychologist, a doctor or just physical training.

Sagene district can see the results from their highly focused work, and also have an international outlook: They see the benefit of cooperating internationally in order to learn from others, broaden their horizons and be able to look at themselves and their work in a critical manner, so that they can improve.



INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

KS' International Projects see different possible means for co-operation under the umbrella of Social Inclusiveness, especially perhaps with a focus on local governments, immigration and integration, through sharing of expertise and experiences. The work now being done on the introduction programmes, for instance, could be useful for other countries – in addition to sharing the actual idea behind the Introduction Programme, which more than 70% of the local governments are able to offer their new inhabitants within three months.

Many European countries are less well-equipped than Norway, yet face the same challenges. They lack fair and efficient asylum and protection

Inclusion requires locally adapted solutions.

*Lasse Hansen, Director of KS
(Commentary Kommunespeilet
2015)*

systems. Also, settlement and integration systems are very rudimentary. Capacities and skills in authorities, structures and institutions which are mandated to provide protection and integration leave a lot to be desired. KS' international projects see opportunities for improved quality in working with asylum seekers through cooperating internationally, as well being aware that Norway has good practices and experiences to share with other countries.



Ms Elita Cakule, Director
KS International Projects, elita.cakule@ks.no

Mr. Bjørn Rongevær, Special Advisor
KS International Projects, bjoern.rongevaer@ks.no

Ms Gunnbjørg Nåvik, Special Advisor
KS International Projects, gunnbjorg.naavik@ks.no

Ms Liss Schanke, Special Advisor
KS International Projects, liss.schanke@ks.no

Ms Pernille Nesje, Advisor
KS International Projects, pernille.nesje@ks.no

Web KS' International Projects: <http://www.ks.no/fagomrader/samfunn-og-demokrati/internasjonalt-samarbeid/prosjekter/>

Visiting address: Haakon VII's gate 9, 0161 Oslo
Postal address: P.O. Box 1378, Vika, 0114 Oslo
Telephone: +47 24 13 26 00
E-mail: ks@ks.no
Web: www.ks.no

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Visiting address: Haakon VII's gate 9, 0161 Oslo
Postal address: P.O. Box 1378, Vika, 0114 Oslo

Telephone: +47 24 13 26 00
E-mail: ks@ks.no
Web: www.ks.no

