



MAPPING

EURODIACONIA MEMBERS' WORK ON SOCIAL INCLUSION IN URBAN AREAS

December 2017

Executive Summary

This mapping provides an **overview of the work done on social inclusion in urban areas** of Eurodiaconia members in six countries: Ukraine, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK. The report brings attention to the specific topics on which our members are active in their work on urban areas, the groups of people targeted and reached through social inclusion measures in urban areas, as well as providing examples on successful or innovative projects. The most prevalent areas of work outlined among Eurodiaconia members surveyed was unemployment, poverty, violence against women, homelessness, addiction, and loneliness. Work is also being carried out among some of the Eurodiaconia members surveyed in the area of **political radicalisation prevention through social inclusion**. A [Eurodiaconia event in the European Parliament](#) on 5 December 2017 also highlighted the increasing importance of this work among our membership.

Generally speaking, the work done by Eurodiaconia members in urban areas reaches a **broad array of vulnerable groups**, the most prevalent of which being the homeless, the working poor and refugees and migrants. Work in urban areas is seen as a valuable way to reach marginalized citizens and to foster inclusion through organizational activities, social centres and neighbourhood development initiatives. This work is often strengthened through cooperation with local authorities and international partners or organisations such as Eurodiaconia and its membership.

Nevertheless, **significant challenges** still remain concerning a mismatch between an overwhelming number of social challenges paired with a low capacity of resources for social services, or a welfare system that falls short of providing adequate social assistance to all groups. Further improvements are therefore seen as necessary among Eurodiaconia members in relation to stronger international and regional cooperation, better support from public authorities, more secure and accessible funding, and an increased focus on particular marginalized groups, including EU mobile citizens, third country nationals and the working poor.

Why this mapping?

The extensive work of Eurodiaconia members in urban areas demonstrates that civil society and diaconal organisations have a **pivotal role to play in fostering social cohesion** among marginalized groups in an urban setting. This mapping therefore seeks to emphasise how social inclusion can be strengthened in urban areas, by mapping the types of work and activities being done across our network to improve the access to housing, employment and social services for the most vulnerable people in our societies.

By taking up the work done among a selection of our members active in urban areas, the aim of this research mapping is to **gain further insight into the work being done to enhance social inclusion in urban areas**

Page 1 of 12



Eurodiaconia is a federation of 46 social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice.

Eurodiaconia is a registered aisbl in Belgium. This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for

Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

Copyright (C) 2017 Eurodiaconia All rights reserved.



among the Eurodiaconia network. The mapping will therefore present the work done among our membership, as well as highlighting innovative and successful examples of how social inclusion measures have been implemented in urban areas across Europe. The information gained on how our members are supporting vulnerable groups in urban areas will serve as valuable feedback into existing practices and projects, whilst also making several targeted recommendations for future improvement and development in this area.

Who is Eurodiaconia?

Eurodiaconia is a dynamic, Europe-wide community of organisations founded in the Christian faith and working in the tradition of diaconia, who are committed to a Europe of solidarity, equality and justice. We represent 46 members in 32 countries. Our members include churches, non-statutory welfare organisations and NGO's, providing social services to hundreds of thousands of individuals across Europe on a not-for-profit basis.

Many of our members are leaders in their countries on the provision of social services and many are partners with local and regional authorities and national governments in the fight against poverty and exclusion. As providers of social and healthcare services and social justice actors, Eurodiaconia members offer practical support to people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and are in a unique position to evaluate the social impact of EU and national policies on vulnerable individuals.

For any further questions on this mapping and/or Eurodiaconia's work on Urban Areas, please get in touch with our Policy, Projects & Research Officer Florian Tuder at florian.tuder@eurodiaconia.org.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Why this mapping?	1
Who is Eurodiaconia?	2
Contents	2
Mapping of members' work in urban areas	3
Living Hope NGO (Ukraine)	3
Helsinki Deaconess Institute (Finland).....	4
Diakonie Düsseldorf (Germany).....	6
Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber; IG Werke (Switzerland).....	7
Riskföreningen Sveriges Stadsmissioner (City Missions Sweden)	8
CrossReach (United Kingdom)	9
Recommendations	11
Conclusions.....	12



MAPPING OF MEMBERS' WORK IN URBAN AREAS

Living Hope NGO (Ukraine)

Living Hope is an NGO based in Odessa, Ukraine. The organization is active at the local level in the field of social inclusion of disadvantaged children, youth and families in need. Living Hope was founded in the Christian faith in 1999 by two young volunteers. It currently employs 6 permanent staff members plus 15 full-time volunteers. The NGO operates in Odessa, an urban area of over 500,000 inhabitants. The organisation has experience of working in an urban setting with a specific focus on urban challenges for over eight years, and is an area of work that has increased as a priority over recent years. Specifically, Living Hope works on a **broad range of issues**, including poverty, addictions, youth, refugees, violence and violence against women, loneliness, homelessness, community building, volunteering, and radicalisation prevention. Most of the work done is **targeted at children and young people**, and there are more female than male service users. It is estimated that Living Hope provides services for approximately 200 people per day, a figure that continues to increase. Regarding its service users, the organisation has seen increased numbers of internal refugees coming from the East of Ukraine and leaving the conflict zone.

Through its work and project, Living Hope works predominantly with several **groups who it sees as at risk of social exclusion in urban areas**. These include low income families, young people with low levels of education or school dropouts, and children from disadvantages households. The organisation also supports single parent families, most of which are single mothers, and people suffering from addictions, mental health problems, or women who have been victims of violence. The organisation also supports persons and children with disabilities.

To accompany its work with excluded children, young people and families, Living Hope works on the topic of **radicalisation prevention in urban areas**, which is not a primary field of work but is part of its holistic approach to diaconal work, mostly in the field of primary prevention. Through their experience they have found that radicalisation affects the following categories most prevalently between the ages of 6 and 30: young people and dropouts, people with low skills or qualifications, people with addictions, and even staff among the organisation itself. Living Hope works on radicalisation prevention within its existing actions of education, leisure time activities, camps, workshops and youth exchanges. Finding sustainable sources of funding is a challenge for the organisation, and its activities are largely funded through EU funding such as Erasmus+, and private grants. Access to EU funding can be further improved if accredited Ukrainian NGOs would be able to apply for Erasmus+ projects as a lead partner and not just as a partner country. Living Hope sees an added value of working on radicalisation prevention from a diaconal perspective, in that the religious context can provide a special approach that takes into account the ethics of the organisation and its faith-based identity.

LIVING HOPE UKRAINE

City:

Odessa
(Population: 1.016.515)

Areas of work, e.g.:

Poverty, addictions, youth, refugees, violence and violence against women, loneliness, homelessness, community building, volunteering, and radicalisation prevention

Biggest Challenges:

Opposition from neighbours
Corruption at political level

Best practice:

Playground-project in disadvantaged neighbourhood for children and youngsters from excluded families

Website:

<http://www.hope4kids.com.ua/en/>



With regard to its work with marginalised people in urban areas, Living Hope faces **opposition from neighbours** who have difficulties to understand the organisation's scope, their activities and how they can contribute to more social cohesion. Further, opposition has also been experienced from authorities, who, it has been felt, have expressed suspicion with regard to the motivations and expectations that Living Hope are communicating.

Further, a significant challenge for the organisation is the **existence of corruption at a political level** and the inability to change the system, which then impedes progress and access to resources. Another significant challenge noted is the overwhelming number of social problems faced when compared with the low capacity of resources available.

Living Hope cooperates within the Eurodiaconia network, of which they have been engaged as a member since June 2017. They cooperate also with public authorities, and the municipality provides facilities for their day care centres free of charge. Living Hope pays for the running costs, but is not required to pay rent for these facilities. Nevertheless, an increased level of cooperation with public authorities is seen as an area for improvement, which could benefit from reforming the political system and fighting corruption at all levels of governance.

Living Hope established a **playground-project** in a very disadvantaged neighbourhood in front of one of their day care centres for children and young people from excluded families. They kept the playground open, purposely not adding a fence, so that children not attending the day centre can still benefit from the space. The only 'rules' that users of the playground are asked to abide by are to not smoke or drink alcohol. The way that young people create a sense of ownership regarding the playground by telling adults not following the rules to leave the space or change their behaviour, was seen as a significant success. Living Hope feels that teaching young people that change starts with themselves, and by instilling slow but profound change in the area through participatory methods with the people living in the neighbourhood beginning with kids and youngsters is a successful method.

Helsinki Deaconess Institute (Finland)

The Helsinki Deaconess Institute (HDI) is **one of the largest service providers in Finland** and operates from Helsinki, where their main work on urban areas also takes place since their foundation in 1867 as a high priority activity, which is continuously increasing. The Institute works in a broad range of sectors like poverty, addictions, youth, migrants, refugees, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, community-development, homelessness, mental health, volunteering, human trafficking, unemployment, and radicalisation prevention. The age groups the HDI is working with range from young people between 16-29 and elderly people. The gender ratio is about 50:50. The number of people the HDI works with amounts to several thousands and is constantly increasing.

HELSINKI DEACONESS INSTITUTE FINLAND

City:

Helsinki
(Population: 642.045)

Areas of work, e.g.:

Poverty, addictions, youth, refugees, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, homelessness, mental health, volunteering, human trafficking, unemployment, and radicalisation prevention

Biggest Challenges:

Procurement procedures
Opposition from neighbours

Best practice:

VAMOS: Hybrid project for activation and rehabilitation which includes outreach based individual support and rehabilitative groups.

Website:

<https://www.hdl.fi/en/>



Due to the **fragmentation of the urban cultural and socio-economic landscape**, there is an increasing number of people facing social and health problems, which are increasingly difficult to address – such challenges go along with general psycho-social challenges. Traditional social work and psychiatric care have increasing difficulties to tackle those issues as they are approaching them on a diagnosis based model rather than through a social participation approach.

The HDI also faces **opposition** to its work, especially when new facilities are opened and neighbours fear such facilities might be a threat for the neighbourhoods' security or the value of their properties. To counter those concerns the HDI follows an active approach involving neighbours as early as possible already during the planning stage of a new facility. Structured meetings bring together neighbourhood associations, HDI employees, service users, and volunteers. In addition to those meetings HDI representatives are actively reaching out to people on the streets to talk to them. The HDI offers a 24/7 service for concerned neighbours either to ask questions or to report problems which needs closer attention.

The **biggest challenges** for their work are procurement procedures that are not targeting welfare impacts, but short term fiscal savings, the establishment of an architecture of service models where formal (public/private) services and civil/volunteer participation can form synergies, and in general to secure sustainable funding.

Besides their engagement in the Eurodiaconia network, **international cooperation** happens a lot through networking on topics like Roma inclusion and integration of migrants and asylum seekers. Also a community-building cooperation with South Africa is currently in place.

The **relation with public authorities** is very close and rather good. The HDI is working with municipalities on a regular basis, as HDI services form an integral part of the public service structure and the development of services is closely communicated, funded, and developed with them. Also the close and regular cooperation with ministries is described as good, currently the HDI is leading a nation-wide programme on developing services for young people suffering from mental health challenges. Only procurement procedures are described as to be improved.

One of the most successful projects of the HDI in urban areas working with young people is "[VAMOS](#)", a programme reaching out to young people between 16 and 20 years old, who dropped out of school or are unemployed (NEETs) and who often need psychiatric care. The HDI reaches more than 2.500 young people per year in six Finnish cities. More than 50% of people attending the programme are getting successfully back to school or into employment within less than one year.

The HDI implements further work on urban areas addressing the distinct field of **radicalisation prevention**, a priority area that has increased in recent years and supports the unemployed, the homeless, people with addictions, mainly between the ages of 16 and 33. There are increased challenges faced by certain groups including young people and third country nationals who are denied asylum, and for whom the risk of radicalisation remains high, and has seen HDI open a new service for asylum seekers in light of the increased need. The organisation addresses radicalisation, which tends to be on political grounds, through its new unit for young asylum seekers who have been granted asylum in Finland, and a drop-in centre for those denied asylum that implements a voluntary return project. The organisation also has a shelter for homeless people, and works against islamophobia in Muslim communities through empowerment. HDI feels that the lack of flexibility on EU funds lasting 7 years means that there is no room for improvement or change throughout the course of the project, and that it is hard to adapt to changing needs. Further, it can be difficult for smaller or new organisations to receive funding due to a heavy administrative burden at application. Although there is a need for more clear funding sources and enhanced training among workers to deal with the topic of radicalisation prevention and to address it properly, the HDI feels that diaconal organisations, in their respect for human dignity, are well placed to address this particular field given their values.



Diakonie Düsseldorf (Germany)

Diakonie Düsseldorf has been working in the German city of Düsseldorf since its establishment in 1916. The work in **urban areas is given a high priority** and is constantly increasing over the past years. Diakonie Düsseldorf works on a large variety of areas covering poverty, addictions, youth, migrants, refugees, violence, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, community-development, homelessness, mental health, volunteering, prostitution, unemployment, and radicalisation prevention.

When looking at the **group of users** that faces increased challenges in the context of urban areas, Diakonie Düsseldorf refers especially to refugees, homeless people, and the working poor. The lack of affordable housing is the main reason for their increasing difficulties. The gender distribution varies a lot, depending on the service offered: In “Horizont”, a café and counselling centre for homeless people 91% of users are male, the same goes for the day centre for homeless people called “Shelter”. Users of another homeless centre called “Café Pur” are to 81% male, while there are centres especially for women. The number of users has constantly and significantly increased in the above mentioned centres: “Horizont” has worked with 2.372 users in 2016, while there were 1.903 in 2015 and 1.069 in 2010. Similar developments can be observed in “Café Pur” (655 users in 2016) and “Shelter” (1.150 users in 2016). Refugee centres work with approx. 5000 persons per year, this number is decreasing, but an increasing challenge in working with refugees is traumatisation. 3 food banks run by Diakonie Düsseldorf serve about 420 people per year. The open support and advisory centre at Düsseldorf main station registers 27.000 users in 2016.

Opposition to large refugee accommodations or centres for homeless people sometimes come from affected neighbours. Diakonie Düsseldorf tries to counter such oppositions at the earliest possible stage by informing neighbours as soon as possible about a new facility and to actively listen to their concerns and bringing neighbours together with people working at the facility and also with users. Open meetings are organised regularly and continuously to involve everyone and invite people to share their ideas and to participate in projects as volunteers.

The **biggest challenges** for their work are recruitment issues (finding staff especially in the fields of elderly care and child care) as well as the relationship with parishes in Düsseldorf that are continuously losing members, while Diakonie Düsseldorf itself is growing.

International cooperation happens through Eurodiaconia and with other organisations especially in the field of working with migrants, e.g. with Libraries without borders. Other international cooperations took place with the University of Applied Sciences Nijmegen and Arnhem (The Netherlands) and with partnering Hungarian protestant organisations.

DIAKONIE DÜSSELDORF GERMANY

City:

Düsseldorf
(Population: 612.178)

Areas of work, e.g.:

Poverty, youth, refugees, violence, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, homelessness, mental health, prostitution, unemployment, and radicalisation prevention

Biggest Challenges:

Recruitment of staff
Opposition from neighbours

Best practice:

“Youth Supports Youth” is a project to bring together young refugees with German students for language training.

Website:

<https://www.diakonie-duesseldorf.de/diakonie-auf-englisch/>



The relation of Diakonie Düsseldorf with **public authorities** is described as very good and close. There is a constant exchange between the municipality on formal and informal levels. Many experts of Diakonie Düsseldorf are members of the relevant committees of the town's administration.

A currently run **project** of Diakonie Düsseldorf is called "Jugend fördert Jugend" ("Youth supports Youth"): Young refugees are supported by students and older pupils to learn German and therefore to be better equipped to attend and follow lectures in German at schools and universities. Diakonie Düsseldorf matches refugees with tutors, the latter ones receive financial support for their teaching activity. The project is supported by the local Rotary Club.

Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber; IG Werke (Switzerland)

The Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber in Switzerland is a member of the umbrella organisation IG Werke, a **forum of diaconal workers, and communities working in the tradition of diaconia**. The organisation works mostly on the topics of tackling poverty, unemployment and homelessness, and on providing health care services in its work on urban areas, which has been in ongoing for over eight years. Other areas of work it undertakes in urban areas, which is a priority area within the organisation, include youth, addictions, migrants, violence against women, loneliness, mental health, prostitution and volunteering. The principal age group reached in their work are over the age of forty, of which 80% are estimated to be male. The organisation supports an estimated 5,000 people through its service, a number that is growing due to increasing numbers of EU migrants looking for jobs. With this change in the profile of service users, both from EU migrants from Eastern Europe, that has been a focus in providing additional support on writing CVs, and increased use of foreign languages from Eastern Europe.

Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber works with a **large spectrum of people at risk of social exclusion in urban areas**, the main categories of which include people with low or very low skills or qualifications, the unemployed, the elderly, the homeless, people suffering with addictions, third-country nationals, women who have been victims of violence, and people experiencing mental health issues. Through its work, the organisation has witnessed how homeless people whose are also suffering problems with their mental health face significant challenges in urban areas.

The **rise of nationalist parties** has added raised opposition to the organisations work with marginalized people in urban areas. The organisation sees the way to tackle this pressure is to show that service users are not here to disappear or to die, but to live and grow as human beings with dignity. As such, they feel that the strength of each society is shown by the way they handle the poor and the weak. Nevertheless, the increasing existence of poverty continues to pose as a challenge for working with people in urban areas, as well as physical and mental health and loneliness.

SOZIALWERKE PFARRER SIEBER SWITZERLAND

City:
Zürich
(Population: 402,762)

Areas of work, e.g.:
Poverty, unemployment, homelessness, provision of health care services

Biggest Challenges:
Opposition from nationalist parties

Best practice:
"Reschteglück" is a project tackling food waste, fosters distribution to homeless persons.

Website:
<https://www.swsieber.ch/>



As well as being a member of Eurodiaconia, Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber is also a member of the European Association of Urban Ministries, an exchange and knowledge-transfer platform for different organisations across Europe. The organisation feels that the relationship with public authorities is good.

When asked about a **successful & innovative project**, Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber explained its "[Reschteglück](#)" project, which is an action against food waste. The project collects food that would otherwise go to waste and creates meals out of it, in cooperation with unemployed or homeless persons, therefore supporting marginalized people whilst also combatting the issue of food waste.

Risikoföreningen Sveriges Stadsmissioner (City Missions Sweden)

The City Missions Sweden work in **different urban settings all across the country**, but mostly in large communities since 2007, where the priority of this area is high and constantly increasing. The **areas of work** covered by the City Missions Sweden are numerous: poverty, additions, youth, migrants, refugees, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, community-development, homelessness, mental health, volunteering, human trafficking, and unemployment. An increasing **group of people** are unaccompanied minors which are moved from one refugee centre to another one in different regions and find it therefore hard to maintain healthy relationships which consequently causes problematic behaviour. Another group of people that faces increasing challenges are persons who are not eligible for social support by the state especially in terms of mental health being unable to live independently and who have no social network of family or friends to support them otherwise. Also, the group of elderly people facing poverty is increasing. One specific reason identified by the City Missions is the lack of knowledge of how to use the internet or smartphones in order to get in touch either with family and friends but also with public authorities in order to seek for social support. Despite this group, City Missions are mostly supporting young or middle-aged people, of which the vast majority are men. The support for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers becomes more important, especially for young persons.

Opposition to their work is often experienced by City Missions Sweden for example when homeless shelters are about to be established. Neighbours fear decreasing security in the neighbourhood and also loss of value on their properties. In terms of Housing First initiatives landlords are usually very critical – in both cases a structured dialogue with persons affected was established by the City Missions at early stages of initiatives in order to counter prejudices and to include everyone involved in the development of projects. General opposition is faced by organisations like the City Missions which support migrants fuelled by media and public opinion.

The **biggest challenges** faced by the City Missions Sweden are related to the welfare system in general. New groups of people are in need of help through the system, which is not always capable of providing assistance. Also, an increasing amount of people in need are not eligible for help through the welfare system, which puts

CITY MISSIONS SWEDEN

City:

Various cities across Sweden

Areas of work, e.g.:

poverty, additions, youth, migrants, refugees, prisoners, health care, violence against women, loneliness, community-development, homelessness, mental health, volunteering, human trafficking, and unemployment

Biggest Challenges:

Changing demands for welfare the system
Opposition from neighbours

Best practice:

Project on distribution of information about the rights and obligations for EU migrants and Third Country Nationals who intend to apply for employment in Sweden

Website:

<http://www.sverigesstadsmissioner.se/>



them into difficult and precarious situations. An increasing amount of persons benefit from the system, although it was designed as a short-term support, which together with an increased demand pushes the system to its limits. The groups of people in need of help through the welfare system is rapidly changing, whereas the system itself is not able to keep pace with those changes.

International cooperation is an important part of the City Missions' work. Besides Eurodiaconia, they are members of FEANTSA, the Nordic City Missions, the European City Missions, the World Forum of City Missions, CAN and EAPN.

When it comes to the **cooperation with public authorities**, the relations are described as good and close. Public procurement resulted in cooperation with the City Missions in terms of labour market integration, accommodation facilities for people in need, and detoxification and care facilities for people with addictions. Partnerships with public authorities are implemented through common Housing First projects and actions to support EU migrants and Third Country Nationals like leisure and counselling centers for refugees. Such centers are also offered of children, young people, families, and elderly people. Although the relation with public authorities is describes as good, City Missions Sweden would like to improve the structured dialogue, for example being involved in the actual set-up of policies and initiatives and not just to act as the executive agent.

The City Missions Sweden are currently running a **project in cooperation with a municipality and other NGOs**. The City Missions part was to offer information about the rights and obligations for EU migrants and Third Country Nationals who intend to apply for employment in Sweden. This project included counselling on who to deal with public authorities and in legal matters, this included also the advice to public authorities about EU Directives in relation to this specific group of migrants. This was very well perceived by the authorities and showed that this kind of information was needed as civil servants were party lacking the necessary knowledge of current EU legislation. The project contributes significantly to the simplification of the procedure for migrants who intend to apply for work in Sweden.

CrossReach (United Kingdom)

CrossReach was launched in June 2005, and was previously known as the Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility. The organisation continues the Church of Scotland's long tradition of providing care and support, a tradition which began back in 1869. The organisation employs more than 2,000 staff and supports some of the most vulnerable people in Scotland, from the elderly to substance abusers. The organisation works with a **wide range of urban settings**, from small towns of 5,000 inhabitants, to large cities of over 500,000 inhabitants, and has been active in tackling urban challenges, which remains a priority area, for over 8 years. Considering their work in urban areas, CrossReach works mainly on the areas of youth, loneliness, homelessness, addictions, prisoners and mental health. The **organisation works with people of all ages**. In general, the gender distribution remains even, however among its elderly service users, there is a higher proportion of females, and among its homeless service users, a higher proportion are male. CrossReach estimates that 4,500 are reached through its services. The demand for services has increased since the economic crisis, however the capacity of the organisation has not grown at the same rate.



CROSSREACH UNITED KINGDOM

City:

Various cities across
Scotland (Population 5.000-
500.000)

Areas of work, e.g.:

Youth, loneliness,
homelessness, addictions,
prisoners and mental health

Biggest Challenges:

Sustainable funding
High demand for services

Best practice:

The "Heart of Art" project
provides creative activities
for people with dementia

Website:

<http://www.crossreach.org.uk>

The **categories of users** that the organisation works with are people with low or very low skills or qualifications, the unemployed, young people and dropouts, persons with disabilities, the elderly, the homeless, people suffering with addictions, people experiencing or at risk of poverty, prisoners, and people suffering mental health issues. Among these groups, those seen as facing increased challenges in urban areas are people with low skills due to lack of employment opportunities, older people living in social isolation, and people with addictions who were unable to move to another location due to practical or financial difficulties, a move which might have helped break negative relationships associated with addiction.

Most of the CrossReach services are well established and some have benefited from political support. The organisation is currently seeking new locations for small services supporting children who are looked after by the state and have faced some opposition from neighbours of the potential sites. This has been addressed through community meetings and support from local community leaders.

The **main challenge** faced in their work on urban areas is finding adequate funding. The increasing demand for services due to population increase, coupled with reduced state provision is the most significant obstacle the organisation experiences.

Aside from being a member of Eurodiaconia, CrossReach does not engage in any further **international exchanges or cooperation** on the topic of urban areas. Rather, the organisation has contracts in place funded by the local government, and therefore has good working relations with public authorities in Scotland. This cooperation could still be improved by increased delegation of decision-making and greater influence over types of service commissioned by public authorities.

A specific action which has seen particular success is the [Heart for Art project](#). This initiative involves creative arts classes for people living with dementia, providing opportunities for communication and expression that would otherwise not be possible, as well as informal access to expert support.



Recommendations

Despite the diverse work done by Eurodiaconia members to foster social cohesion in urban areas, a number of issues to be improved upon were identified, mostly in relation to enhanced **cooperation with local authorities** and **more stable sources of funding**. The following recommendations will therefore address potential ways that diaconal organisations may increase their capacity for social inclusion in urban areas, either through support from European networks such as Eurodiaconia, or through enhanced cooperation with public authorities or local communities:

Recommendations for enhancing social inclusion measures in urban areas

- Further **dialogue between public authorities** was considered as a vital way to improve the capacity and reach of work in urban areas, and it was seen as vital to include civil society organisations not just as partnership but also in design and set-up of policies and initiatives. It was further proposed that members of diaconal organisations gain **positions as members of the relevant committees within local or regional administrations**. Enhanced cooperation would as such ensure clear understanding and communication surrounding the motivations and expectations between diaconal organisations and authorities regarding social assistance in urban areas.
- Several Eurodiaconia members felt that **sources of funding remain limited, unstable and do not account for many of the vulnerable groups requiring support**. A need was therefore seen to adapt social assistance to accommodate for emerging or under-represented groups such as third-country nationals, single parent families, and the long-term unemployed, in order to ensure more adequate support. This could be remedied through **increased flexibility on EU funds** that give more room for improvement to adapt to changes in needs, users and emerging challenges.
- Eurodiaconia members highlighted the importance of **ongoing communication and involvement of local communities at all stages of social service provision in urban areas**. This would include for example informing local communities and neighbours of proposed sites for social centres such as refugee accommodation, homeless centres or care facilities, actively listening to concerns and bringing neighbours together to understand the proposed facilities, share their ideas and increase interaction with its users where appropriate.
- Eurodiaconia members expressed a wish for **further support and representation from Eurodiaconia** and other European networks active at EU Institutional level. Through lobbying and cooperation at EU level, members hope that Eurodiaconia raises the questions asked by diaconal organisations, and showcases their expertise on topics such as the movement of EU migrants, improving local economies in poorer parts of Europe, and supporting affordable housing.
- Participants in the survey felt that making further **use of the Eurodiaconia platform for the sharing of best practice, study visits to existing projects among members, and to develop common strategies or partnerships** among the network would strengthen exchange and innovation in the work on urban areas.
- A targeted recommendation was suggested regarding giving users increased **digital skills** and knowledge of how to reach social support services using the internet or using smartphones or other devices to seek social assistance, contact public authorities, and stay in touch with family and friends.



Conclusions

This report has showcased the work done by selected Eurodiaconia members in urban areas to enhance social inclusion of marginalized groups across Europe. It looked at organisations working in Ukraine, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK.

The surveyed members carry out work in urban areas under the following topics, including unemployment, poverty, violence against women, homelessness, radicalisation, addiction, and loneliness. As such, the following groups are the main recipients of our members work in urban areas: the homeless, refugees and migrants, young people, single parent or low-income families, people with low levels of education, the working poor and people living with substance addiction or mental health issues. To a lesser extent, our members also work with the elderly, with prisoners, the disabled, and on the topics of volunteering, prostitution and gender-based violence.

Eurodiaconia members generally perceived the relationship with local authorities and local community leaders to be a good one, with many projects or venues being funded or co-financed through partnership with public authorities. Nevertheless, improvement in the cooperation with authorities was seen as necessary with regard to procurement procedures, and on improving communication between authorities and civil society organisations on the motivations and expectations of diaconal work in urban areas. Opposition to their diaconal work was encountered by neighbours of potential sites for care facilities, homeless centres or refugee accommodation, as well as the rise of nationalist parties who oppose work done to support marginalized people in urban areas.

Several innovative projects being implemented among Eurodiaconia members were described, including creative art classes for people living with dementia in the UK, working with young school drop outs or unemployed persons requiring psychiatric care in Finland, and serving food that would otherwise go to waste to homeless persons in Switzerland.

Despite the diverse work being carried out to strengthen social inclusion in urban areas, several challenges were nonetheless outlined regarding our members' work in urban areas, including inadequate or reduced funding, saturation of the existing resources available, recruitment issues, and emerging groups of people requiring social support not previously accounted for in welfare state models and therefore at risk of precariousness or vulnerability.

The insight on how our members are supporting vulnerable groups in urban areas will help to further feed existing practices and projects, and to enhance collaboration and exchange among our network on the ways in which social inclusion can be developed in urban areas.