

Programme for Developing Local Plans for Social Inclusion in Catalonia

Discussion Paper

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Introduction

In 2006, the Department of Social Action and Citizenship of the Generalitat de Catalunya introduced a *Programme for Developing Local Plans for Social Inclusion*. It did not start from scratch; before 2006, some municipalities had already begun working with crosscutting strategies, such as 'Services for people' and 'Social Inclusion Plans'. Within the framework of this *Programme*, the *Plan for Social Inclusion and Cohesion* in Catalonia (2006-2009) was developed.

The *Plan* establishes *strategic and operational objectives*. One of those *operational objectives* is to boost, stimulate and generate resources for drawing up *Plans for Inclusion at the local level*.

The *Programme for Developing Local Plans for Social Inclusion* is an inter-administrative co-operation programme intended to realise these Local Plans. It develops the *governing principles* for action in the area of social inclusion as established in the Plan. Its co-ordination was assigned to the Catalan Institute of Social Assistance and Services (ICASS).

Through ICASS, the Department of Social Action and Citizenship makes available to local authorities a package of resources to facilitate the strategic co-ordination of local actions for social inclusion by 1° devising Local Plans for Social Inclusion and 2° taking the necessary initiatives for their effective development. The Local Plans for Social Inclusion are implemented through the local administration and in co-operation between the administration and other relevant actors in the area. These Local Plans seem to be a mix of existing projects and new initiatives; the really innovative part is that they are integrated into a common framework.

End 2009, 32 local authorities have developed such plans and nine more are planned to join in 2010; the aim is to extend them to all 103 local authorities in Catalonia. Therefore a Government decision is needed, which implies a political decision, conceptual development, technical leadership and a budgetary grant that guarantees their continuity. It does not only mean having a Plan; it also implies changes in understanding the phenomenon of exclusion and developing new forms of governance (co-ordination between public and social organisations and clear participation strategies).

Part A: The policy debate at European level

It is fairly artificial to discuss policy framework and policy debate at the EU-level separately, because the debate is part of the policy framework and vice versa, the policy framework is one outcome of the policy debate. What further complicates matters is that at least two strands are relevant in the context of the Catalonian PLIS; one concerns social inclusion, the other the local level. Both have gradually come closer and even have merged; in urban development programmes focusing on deprived neighbourhoods and in a social definition of cohesion joining the traditional territorial one. This development has been very much stimulated by research on the spatial dimension of social problems – such as poverty – and on the social impact of spatial characteristics – such as on opportunities (accessibility) and (deviant) behaviour. At the institutional level, however, both dimensions remain fairly strictly compartmentalised in two DGs, the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the DG Regional Policy.

A.1 The policy framework at European level

Not only are framework and debate very much interwoven, when it comes to identify the policy framework itself a wide array of institutions, actions and legislations are referring directly or indirectly to relevant elements for local plans that focus on social inclusion. We need to be selective.

The local level

But for the fact that they are concerned with urban forms of deprivation and poverty, urban development programmes come closest to this Catalonian initiative. Multidimensional approach, partnership and community involvement are central notions in those programmes. They represent a set of projects at the local level (city or neighbourhood) to be implemented within a certain period of time. They may focus on physical measures, such as rebuilding or renovating parts of the housing stock, or on social and economic targets, such as decreasing unemployment, but they usually use an 'integrated approach' of physical, social, economic and cultural initiatives¹.

At the EU-level, the URBAN and LEADER Community Initiatives addressed urban and rural development, respectively, by emphasising capacity building and empowerment of local actors. Local partnerships were involved in the definition of strategies and priorities, resource allocation, programme implementation and monitoring.

This first generation of programmes set up at the national or regional level now is being succeeded by local initiatives, such as the Dublin City Development Plan (2011-2017). This plan proposes a flexible framework to draw together the many diverse regeneration initiatives taking place in different locations; to nurture the development of a modern knowledge economy and work with its capacity to develop economic clusters in local areas; to embrace the emergence of

¹ A brief selection: England's New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programme, which took off in 1998 for an intended ten years; the Dutch Grootstedenbeleid (1994-2009); the French Politique de la Ville et Contrat de Ville (running since the 1970s); the German Soziale Stadt (since 1999); the Danish Kvarterløft (1997-2007); in Belgium, federal Grootstedenbeleid (2000-); the Italian Contratti di quartiere I & II (Neighbourhood Contracts, 1997 and 2002) and Programmi di recupero urbano e di sviluppo sostenibile (Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Development Programmes, 1998).

cultural clusters which are seen to be increasingly important in underpinning quality of life and developing depth in our international profile; to foster a sense of place and develop community identity in the city core and suburbs². Other illustrations can be found in Liverpool 2024, in the Masterplan for the Rehabilitation of Downtown Porto, in the Aire métropolitaine Lyonnaise, and in many others.

Although the Local Employment Development (LED) strategies focus – quite evidently - on promoting employment, their approach also is holistic and integrative (European Commission, 2007b). LEDs are expected to mobilise multiple stakeholders, encouraging committed local partnerships that identify with the localities they operate in. The Commission looks for good understanding and dialogue, combined with a commitment to management excellence that will bring out the best in citizens in local communities. Since about 2000, particular attention is paid to the principle of subsidiarity, meaning that there are regular checks to see whether an action taken at a higher level is justified in the light of what is possible at a lower level. The EU, its Member States, regional and local levels as well as social partners and civil society should, therefore, be involved in economic, employment and social policies by taking advantage of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The new cohesion policy regulations for 2007-2013 emphasise the need to involve local and regional authorities in the planning and implementation of programmes. National and regional authorities can devolve programme management, or parts of it, to local authorities, and private organisations of both the for-profit and the not-for-profit kind should be involved as partners.

There is an increasing importance of and need for territorialised interventions (Barca report³). It states that ‘place-based development strategy’ is important, that ‘a place-based strategy is the only policy model compatible with the EU’s limited democratic legitimacy’. Territorial units should, wherever possible, include functionally interdependent urban and rural areas. In such functional urban areas the larger cities will further play a prominent role as centres of innovation, creativity and the economic development of the area. They will, however, also harbour neighbourhoods that are characterised by forms of deprivation. Therefore, place-based development strategies should include among its objectives to reduce persistent underutilisation of potential (inefficiency) and persistent social exclusion.

In May 2007, the Leipzig Charter – in full the ‘Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities’ – was signed. It emphasises both the importance of integrated urban development policy approaches (cities should be compact in urban form, complex in functions, cohesive in social terms) and the need for interventions specifically in deprived neighbourhoods. It is the reference document in European urban development coordination efforts and will remain so for some time. The importance to take concrete steps towards the implementation of the Leipzig Charter was identified under the French EU Presidency. Following the Marseilles Statement of November 25, 2008 the European Minister responsible for Urban Development commissioned France and the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development to elaborate and monitor a high

² www.dublincity.ie/Planning/DublinCityDevelopmentPlan/Pages/CityDevelopmentPlan.aspx

³ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/future/barca_en.htm. The four main conclusions of the report are: there is a strong case for allocating a large share of the EU budget to a ‘place-based development strategy’; cohesion policy provides the appropriate basis for this strategy, but a comprehensive reform is needed; the reforms requires a renewed policy concept, a concentration of priorities, and a change of governance; three conditions for change to happen are: a new high-level political compromise is needed soon, some changes can/should start in this programme period, and the negotiation process must be adjusted.

level European working group to develop a 'Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities'⁴. This should be done with and for the cities.

The most recent important step is the Toledo Declaration of June 2010, under the Spanish Presidency (in Trio with Belgium and Hungary). It highlights the importance of integrated urban development and the urban dimension of cohesion policy. After 2014 there will be more focus on cities as key driver for delivery of EU2020, more responsibilities to cities for programme delivery, and cohesion policy will be used to support programmes for experimental solutions?

Social inclusion

At the core of EU inclusion policies is the 'Open Method of Coordination'. It is a so-called 'soft approach' to intergovernmental policy coordination. Policy decisions remain at the national level, cooperation is voluntary, and the European Commission's function is limited. Coordinating social policies at EU level is considered important because of the common challenges that are facing Member States.

The OMC is organised in cycles in order to support and stimulate cooperation between Member States and regular reporting to the European Commission. Its key elements are:

- common objectives;
- National Strategy Reports (before: National Action Plans Social Inclusion or NAPIncl⁵);
- which are assessed by the European Commission and the Council of Ministers in a Joint Report;
- Peer Reviews, in which representatives of relevant national ministries, assisted by some independent experts and Commission members, critically assess a selected 'best practice' programme or strategy in tackling specific problems;
- Information and data background (common indicators).

The process-analysis of the Social OMC 2008-2010⁶ shows the detailed structure of the three-years project cycle and the tasks the different actors have at the different steps.

Although developed to promote exchange of good practices and co-operation at the level of Member States, the OMC or elements from it are being used at infra-national levels – as is the case for PLIS – the Local Plans for Social Inclusion – in Catalonia. At present, the opportunity to apply the OMC at the city level – within the framework of the Leipzig Charter – is being discussed. Already in 2003 the European Commission emphasised the importance of the local level in the development of inclusion policies; in March 2006, the local area was identified as the best level for combating inclusion.

⁴ www.rfsustainablecities.eu/ Also: Sustainable Cities Reference Framework. Project Overview. 07. 10. 2009 (distributed at the UDG meeting in Stockholm 21 October 2009).

⁵ Spanish State creates in 2001 the National Action Plan of Social inclusion of the Spanish Kingdom (Plan Nacional de Acción para la Inclusión Social del Reino de España). Nowadays there are 5 national plans, the last one for the period 2008-2010.

⁶ Eurocities, 2009: The EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process 2008-2010: What's in it for local practitioners? September 2009.

EU2020

This new strategy for 'smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth' replaces the Lisbon Agenda, adopted in 2000, which largely failed to turn the EU into 'the world's most dynamic knowledge-based economy by 2010'. The main concern of Europe 2020 is to better focus efforts in order to boost Europe's competitiveness, productivity, growth potential and economic convergence'. Seven flagship initiatives have been selected 'to catalyse progress under each priority theme'. The seventh flagship initiative is the European Platform Against Poverty to 'ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society'.

A number of regional players have complained that the role of the regions is not visible enough in the 2020 strategy (EurActiv 23/06/10), with some arguing that it was too similar to the Lisbon Strategy (EurActiv 14/10/10). They are convinced that if local leaders are given the freedom and take the responsibility to create tailor-made solutions for making the 'Europe 2020' growth strategy work, it will be more successful than its predecessor. This could best be achieved by using stricter earmarking methodologies to allow for a more tailor-made approach by cities and regions. However, making this strategy work implies reciprocity; local policymakers should become more aware of their position and take more notice of the EU 2020 goals that fit their local priorities. This implies that regions become an important executive partner. EU Regional Policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn has proposed to give countries, regions and cities more flexibility to define the precise policy mix they need to reach those priorities.

Improvements could include the simplification of funding procedures: finding a better balance between risks and audit and control, applying simplified cost models more quickly and more easily, and easing the administrative burden of Article 55, which governs the treatment of revenue-generating EU-funded projects. Multilevel Governance and innovative approaches in programme management should go hand in hand.

Let us conclude that there is an increasing recognition and agreement that the numerous and conflicting challenges should not be addressed one-by-one; integrated strategies are needed which include all of them in a common long-term perspective and aim for improvements in some aspects without causing more problems in others.

A.2 A summary of the related policy debate at European level and an assessment of the contribution of the programme to it

The context in which *local* plans and programmes – on urban development, on employment, on social inclusion - have become a prominent feature of policy-making is characterised by the fiscal crisis of the (central) state, globalisation, the principle of subsidiarity, the opinion that the local level could be the best to tackle more complex problems through forms of local governance and that local differences are important to successfully implement policies. They all contributed to a transfer of some policy responsibilities from the central state to a lower, usually local, level. The fiscal crisis of the state has reduced the means of the central state, especially in matters of social policy. Important responsibilities – but often not the budgets – have been transferred to the local level and to 'welfare society' (private welfare organisations). This was especially so for initiatives targeting those hard to reach or outside the borders of legality. Secondly, it is implied that

globalisation results in shifting power from the nation state not only to the higher level of supranational conglomerates but at the same time also to the 'lower' level of (global) cities and regions. The increased importance of the principle of subsidiarity in the EU legislation and procedures has strengthened this shift.

Finally, there is the view that the local level is perhaps more appropriate to tackle more complex problems than that of the national state; approaches inspired by the governance model often are easier to develop and to become successful at this local level. The major motivation for a decentralised approach is the recognition that considerable differences exist among regions leading to specific and varying problems. The best level to tackle them is the one closest to these problems and therefore most familiar with them. Governance mechanisms are envisaging a 'sharing of power' and 'division of labour' in the policy-making process, through stronger interaction among governments and civil society as well as through the participation of other relevant stakeholders (sometimes including for-profit organisations).

As for the *inclusion* approach, it is a next phase is a longer history of shifting concepts. Towards the end of the last century, 'social exclusion' gradually replaced 'poverty' as a concept in the EU debate. Several reasons have been identified; the main one being that some member states did not like being reminded of the existence of 'old fashioned' poverty within their borders; social exclusion was meant to encompass a wider range of situations and to refer to the whole population and, above all, it had a less denigrating sound. In the host country report reference is made to the ideas of Beck on the democratisation of risks and of Bauman about the birth of a liquid society in which insecurity is a common factor.

Later, social exclusion was replaced by social inclusion, which was considered to reflect a more positive approach – an approach in terms of solutions, not of problems. Conceptual confusion has even increased by the use of 'social cohesion' as a synonym for social integration/inclusion in recent years. The concept of inclusion has gained some strength with the [*Recommendation 2008/867/EC of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market \[Official Journal L 307 of 18.11.2008\]*](#) confirmed by the European Parliament resolution of 6 May 2009. Linking this active inclusion approach more structurally to the urban and regional dimension of the Structural and Cohesion Funds could improve the framework even further and facilitate the successful realisation of initiatives such as PLIS.

The question is whether Structural and Cohesion Funds can actually be better linked to strategies such as the PLIS, and what the next steps should be at European level to achieve this? At local level, there will be attempts to promote mutual learning. Peer Reviews at the local level were already attempted last year and a network of local authorities that will promote studies and data collection has been launched.

A.3 European (and possibly international) comparative aspects

There are many local development plans active within EU's borders and elsewhere in the world; sometimes initiatives – in the form of a programme or a centre – are set up to better streamline the activities of these local plans, be it after they started to blossom (bottom-up) or from their very beginning. However, not all these local plans are concerned with social inclusion (or combating social exclusion & poverty); a majority of initiatives focuses on combating unemployment (or worklessness) or on improving the physical context of an area. One of these is the City Strategy in the UK, which has been the subject of a Peer Review.

Ireland seems to represent a good practice (perhaps even a best practice) when it comes to local social inclusion plans. Already late 2000, the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA)⁷, in conjunction with the D/EH&LG (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and the OSI (Ordnance Survey Ireland), had established the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network, to support the implementation of NAPs at local level, including the embedding of social inclusion in local government. The overall aim of the Network was to promote and support the development of a strong anti-poverty focus within a reformed system of local government. It was managed by the CPA itself, with the assistance of an Advisory Committee and a Steering Group.

The objectives of the Network were to provide a forum in which local authorities can share experience and consider how to make the maximum contribution to policies to tackle poverty and social inclusion; to support and assist local authorities to incorporate a strong anti-poverty focus within their work; to enable local authorities to share information about developing new and innovative projects and initiatives; and to exchange different local experiences and best practice.

The total budget for this initiative was 1.474 million euro over a four-year period. The Network supported a range of activities including Network meetings, grants, information provision, training and research. In addition, the CPA, supported three local authorities - Donegal, Westmeath and Cork City - to develop a local anti-poverty strategy in 2003.

The handbook they published based on their experiences – 'To build a fair and inclusive society. Social Inclusion Units in Local Authorities' (Walsh, s.d.) – remains a very useful guide.

An interesting initiative at the EU-level is the EUROCITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO)⁸. Its main ambition is to inspire future policy developments on Active Inclusion at EU, national and city levels. It therefore investigates local strategies to promote the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market, and it monitors and analyses the situation in a broad range of relevant social services.

EUROCITIES-NLAO intends to cooperate with national and European stakeholders and policy-makers in the identification of trends, good practices and of challenges as experienced on the ground. Indeed, EUROCITIES-NLAO draws on the experiences and practices of the local administrations of – originally – Bologna, Prague, Rotterdam, Southampton and Stockholm⁹ in providing social services and in facing urban challenges for the inclusion of vulnerable people.

EUROCITIES-NLAO has three main objectives: informing, disseminating and awareness raising; research and policy analysis; implementing and promoting mutual learning. As for the first objective - informing, disseminating and awareness raising – each LAO will act as a national information hub, raising awareness on the EU Active Inclusion strategy. Research and policy analysis is about the identification of good practices, challenges and recommendations on the provision of quality services for the Active Inclusion of the most disadvantaged people, feeding into EU policy developments on this theme. A survey on cities and their understanding of the EU Active Inclusion strategy and its implementation was undertaken during summer 2010. Ten city reports on local Active Inclusion strategies will be produced, outlining local practices and challenges. These will be summarised in a report outlining the main trends for cities in implementing active inclusion strategies. Thirdly, a wide range of activities will be organised by

⁷ On July 1, 2009 the Combat Poverty Agency was integrated with the Office for Social Inclusion to form the Social Inclusion Division within the Department of Social and Family Affairs. On May 1, 2010 the Social Inclusion Division became part of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.

⁸ For more information, see <http://www.eurocities-nlao.eu/>

⁹ At present, they have been joined by Copenhagen, Birmingham, Lille-Roubaix, Barcelona, Cracow, Brno and Sofia.

the LAOs and EUROCITIES to promote mutual learning and raise awareness of the EU Active Inclusion strategy. Each city will organise a national event, presenting the main research findings and promoting the exchange of knowledge between national stakeholders. EUROCITIES will engage with key European stakeholders to present the EUROCITIES-NLAO research findings and conclusions.

In 2010 the EUROCITIES-NLAO research will focus on 'Quality of Social Services of General Interest' and on 'Social Economy' in cities, because cities are key actors in the delivery of social services. They are involved in the whole cycle of service provision, from procurement and commissioning to delivery and evaluation, as they are in policy-making. On the 8th of July, over 70 participants attended the EUROCITIES-NLAO milestone event, which took place in Brussels. The main project findings were presented, highlighting how cities design their housing and employment services for contributing to the social inclusion of those furthest away from the labour market.

Outside the EU, we would like to mention the 2010-2015 Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion in Québec¹⁰. Its goal is to pool and better coordinate all action to help the least fortunate Québeckers and to fight poverty. To achieve this goal, the Action Plan comes with a budget of close to \$7 billion over five years, \$1.3 billion of it in new investments.

It is the second action plan and it builds on existing initiatives; it was also inspired by the ideas expressed by the nearly 2,500 individuals and Québec and regional organisations consulted during the 'Rendez-vous de la solidarité'.

The results so far include improved income for individuals and families, better access to affordable housing, a more sustained effort to foster success in school, and greater support for people striving towards employment. In the new Action Plan structuring measures such as Child Assistance and the Work Premium have been maintained, and training and access to employment remain two core premises in combating poverty and social exclusion.

The new Action Plan has four thrusts: reviewing how things are done and making regional and local communities key players in the decision-making process; acknowledging the value of work and fostering the self-sufficiency of individuals; supporting the income of disadvantaged individuals; improving the living conditions of low-income individuals and families.

Its focus differs from that in Catalonia in that it includes a number of measures to keep Québec's social safety net intact and to reinforce it. On the other hand, its future focus will be more on preventative action and measures will be stepped up to integrate individuals in situations of destitution and isolation in the community. In order to enhance effectiveness and bring decision-making closer to the community, the 2010-2015 Action Plan provides for increased funding for local and regional action. Easing of the requirements of the *Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales* so as to realise a more flexible funding for territory-based action to combat poverty and social exclusion is also planned. Fighting poverty and social exclusion is considered to be a collective and shared responsibility.

A.4 A reference to related previous Peer Reviews produced under the programme,

Former Peer Reviews only treat the subject of local plans for social inclusion – tools, procedures or approaches that are used in Catalonia or problems that are addressed through its local plans – indirectly. We selected the following ones (in chronological order).

¹⁰ http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/plan-action/objectifs_en.asp

The City Strategy (UK, 06-07. 07. 2009)

'The City Strategy aims to improve support to the jobless, in the most disadvantaged communities across the UK, through a bottom-up approach that devolves more decision and funding powers to the local level. The idea is to test how best to combine the work of government agencies, local government agencies, the private sector and voluntary associations in a concerted partnership and to test whether local stakeholders can deliver more by combining their efforts behind shared priorities alongside more freedom to innovate. The aim is to provide the support jobless people need to find and progress in work by ensuring that local employment and skills provision services are tailored to the needs of both local employers and residents.

Initial appraisal of the programme has found that it acts as a catalyst in enhancing coordination between local activities and national policy, increasing the priority given to reducing unemployment, including increasing local resource both financially and in terms of staff capacity, and making those involved feel more accountable for achieving targets.'

The NAP Inclusion Social Inclusion Forum (Ireland, 15-16. 11. 2007)

'In particular, stakeholders have an opportunity to hear at first hand what is being done to combat poverty and social exclusion, both at the national and EU levels; to put forward their views and experiences on key policies and implementation issues; to identify barriers and constraints to progress; and to provide suggestions and proposals for new developments and more effective policies.'

Social Inclusion cross cutting policy tools – 'Document de politique transversale' (France, 29-30. 06. 06)

'At local level (region, county, metropolitan area) in accordance with a process of increasing decentralisation the coordination and consistency of the policies of inclusion is progressively ensured through the means of charters of social cohesion; thus 'the new 'Social Inclusion' Cross Cutting Policy Document' ('Document de Politique Transversale' = 'DPT'). Policy reform is a concrete answer to better coordination and mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluating process in the field of the social inclusion policies expected by the European Union.'

Integrated Services in Rehabilitation – On Coordination of Organisation and Financing (Sweden, 04-05. 12. 2006)

'Many people who have been out of work for a long time due to illness or unemployment need support from various different authorities. Launched in 1997, Sweden's DELTA project aims to help them by promoting cooperation among the various services concerned. Social insurance offices, the primary health care system and social services are cooperating on 26 related (local) projects (...) with the county labour board, psychiatric clinics and the adult education system. (...).'

Socio-Community Development – Mobilising all relevant bodies and promoting the participation of people suffering exclusion (Portugal, 12-13. 09. 2005)

'The measure includes three model actions: 1° Promotion of participation and community action. These actions are aimed at communities in run-down urban and suburban areas and impoverished rural areas, especially those where factors of social exclusion prevail; 2° Enhancing personal and social skills; and 3° Training and qualification of community development workers.'

Part B: Description of the main elements of the programme

B.1 Background, goals, objectives and target groups, evaluation of the results and achievements of the programme

Background

The writing of the Spanish NAPincl (National Action Plan for Social Inclusion) initiated a movement in several autonomous regions in Spain to embark on their own plan. A proposal for a Social Inclusion Plan for Catalonia was formulated in February of 2006; the Programme for the Development of Local Plans for Social Inclusion was established to offer economic and technical support to local authorities in Catalonia to develop their own (local) plans for social inclusion, as a concretisation of the European OMC (Open Method of Social Coordination). It started with 12 city councils followed by 8 more municipalities. In 2008, two municipalities joined this group and 10 more in the present year to arrive at a provisional total of 51 (see annex 1 for the names of the municipalities); there are 103 local authorities in Catalonia. Local Plans cover over two million people. During its first phase of three years, the programme had the status of a pilot programme, containing a series of ruling principles and framework actions to develop in the respective local plans.

The Department of Social Action and Citizenship, through the Catalan Assistance and Social Services Institute (ICASS), makes available to local entities, within the framework of the Programme for Development of Local Plans for Social Inclusion, a series of economic resources in the area of financial and technical co-operation aimed at developing the Local Plans. The organisational chart of the Programme is fairly complex; we refer to the host country report for details.

The ICASS covers expenses of the beneficiary municipal councils derived from following activities: establishment of a Technical Office for the Local Plan and the provision of human resources; development of participative processes for designing the Plan and for the revitalisation of spaces for co-ordination and follow-up; organisation of sessions for debate, reflection and dialogue with the public; execution of studies, analyses and diagnoses, or other knowledge mechanisms in the area of social inclusion; execution of training and interchange of experiences activities in the area of social inclusion.

Table 1: Financial data of the Programme for Development of Local Plans for Social Inclusion

	NEW PLIS	Total PLIS	Medium Value	Annual Amount
2006	12	12	65.563	786.762
2007	8	20	91.597	1.831.937
2008	2	22	108.439	2.385.649
2009	10	32	77.888	2.492.431
2010	9	41	72.903	2.989.046

Principles, Goals & Objectives

What we could call the 'mission statement' of the programme is presented under the headings of (guiding) principles, goals and (strategic and operational) objectives.

The *guiding principles* of the Programme are: community perspective, promotion of personal autonomy, multidimensional approach, strategic view, focus on causes, multilevel and cross-cutting perspective, stimulation of participation, and recognition of the territorial specificity.

The community perspective means that the physical and relational environment of the person is taken into account, going from policies addressed to the individual person to policies for the community. Secondly, the promotion of personal autonomy means that it does not only attend to discovered needs. Thirdly, because social exclusion today is conditioned by several factors, and not only by income, a multidimensional approach is needed. Next, the strategic view refers to the need to apply proactive or preventative policies as a complement to curative ones, because of the changing and dynamic character of society and of processes of social exclusion. A preventative approach includes a focus on factors that are at the origin of forms of social exclusion. Policies should use a multilevel and crosscutting perspective, which implies a change in the way civil servants act and in the creation of new spaces of dialog and cooperation in the formulation and implementation of social policies. Since processes of social exclusion are too complex to be handled by public authorities alone, it is necessary to create spaces of co-responsibility which stimulate the participation of for-profit organisations, the third sector and the citizens ('civil society'). Finally, policies have to adapt to the specific characteristics of a given area and also to the demands and needs of its residents; this also implies that the target area must relate to other areas in the city or municipality.

The *general goal* of the *Programme for Development of Local Plans for Social Inclusion* is 'to stimulate measures for social inclusion through a model of intervention in collaboration with all the agents of the territory, specially the local civil service'. More specifically, the *contents of the project are as follows*:

- The establishment of a local strategy for social inclusion to guide and co-ordinate local practices and policies with the capacity to have an impact at sector and/or global level on the causes and factors of the risk on social exclusion of any nature (economic, work, education, training, health care, residential).
- The transversal design and interdepartmental planning of municipal initiatives and projects to provide an integral response to situations of social vulnerability and inequality in the area.

- The territorial co-ordination and community structuring of actions for social inclusion and the establishment of mechanisms for participation and spaces for liaison with all agents operating in the territory; the aim is to foster co-responsibility and to guarantee as much social dialogue as possible and plurality in the design, implementation and assessment of local practices and policies for social inclusion.
- The implementation and development of measures to improve public services, facilitating access to resources and services, procedures and protocols for intervention and mechanisms for interdepartmental co-ordination.
- The production and transfer of information and knowledge on the risks of social exclusion and on the resources for social inclusion available in the area.
- Innovations in the objective and/or the procedure of interventions and the progressive establishment of criteria for good practices for social inclusion in the design and establishment of projects and the management of municipal services. Innovative aspects of the project are:
 - Models of intervention that require the involvement and co-operation of the agents operating in the area, particularly of local administrations;
 - Shared intervention models with an inductive approach, through learning and contrasting local work experiences in networks established, co-ordinated and projected by the agents intervening in the development of Local Plans for Inclusion.
 - Use by the participants of the programme and individuals of the e-Catalonia Platform, which integrates social networks technology and collaborative tools.
- Permanent training seminar and networking.

Local Plans for Social Inclusion aim at planning, realisation and coordination of initiatives, measures and actions of social intervention that allow to detect and to weaken factors of social exclusion and vulnerability, in order to achieve the social cohesion of all the citizens. This is done through an integral approach, through mainstreaming and through the development of a network of all relevant actors in the area. Prevention of risks of social exclusion stands at their centre, but special attention is paid to population groups that are already in a situation of vulnerability.

From this general goal are deduced *strategic* and *operational* goals.

Table 2: An attempt to relate principles, strategic goals, and operational goals¹¹

Principles	Strategic goals	Operational goals
Focus on causes Promotion of personal autonomy	Weakening of the factors that cause exclusion and stimulation of the autonomy of the persons.	
Strategic view Multidimensional approach	Overcoming the framework of the social services.	
Community perspective Recognition of the territorial specificity	Are actions adapted to the specific reality of the different areas?	
Multilevel and cross-cutting perspective	Stimulation of the network	
Stimulation of participation	Production and transfer of knowledge.	<p>Training and exchange of experiences in the field of the social inclusion.</p> <p>The organisation of conference of discussion, reflection and dialog with the citizenry, for the awareness and development of policies innovative of the phenomenon of the Social Inclusion.</p> <p>The realisation of studies, analyses, diagnoses or other products of knowledge on the subject of social inclusion.</p> <p>The creation of participative processes for the design of the plan and the stimulation of spaces of coordination and follow-up.</p>
	Awareness about the phenomenon of the social exclusion and development of innovative policies for the inclusion	

Target groups & themes

The Programme has two kinds of target groups: spatial units (Local Plans, of which the 'geographic scope' is the regional and the local level) and social inclusion (persons and groups in need of inclusion). We know that there is a strong interaction between both dimensions: residents borrow characteristics of deprivation from their area and vice versa, areas are often called deprived because of the characteristics of their residents.

The PLIS wants to focus on the whole societal context and not only on who is already socially excluded. This necessitates both initiatives (measures) for who already is in a situation of special vulnerability and more strategic and preventive actions, so that future situations of social

¹¹ This table would be even more informative and stimulating if it would specify the relation between the transversal principles and the strategic and operational goals. This could not be done due to insufficient data.

exclusion are anticipated. It explains why 'population in general' is checked under the heading 'targeted beneficiaries' in an identification form, although it also mentions children, single-parent families, the unemployed, the elderly, youth, the disabled, immigrants & refugees, the Roma, the homeless, persons suffering from specific illnesses, persons with drug addictions, and other (please specify) as other options.

More in particular, the host country report points to the fact that the perspective on social exclusion has been broadened from the economic situation to a multifaceted approach. Some causes are the weakening of the welfare state, changes in the family composition, and the transition from an industrial society to a knowledge society. They have increased not only the feeling of insecurity, but have led to a real generalisation of the risk on social exclusion. Very much linked to these developments is the increased unpredictability of people's life cycles. The traditional transitions in the life of the persons – education, entering a job, leaving home, marriage, having children - may now appear in a different sequence and several times during a person's life. Because of this changing reality new tools of approach are needed to understand and handle the diversity of factors and causes that may lead to situations of social exclusion.

The host country report refers to a framework developed by the (Catalan) Institute of Government and Public Policies (IGOP) that includes seven areas of social exclusion; the economy, the labour market, residence, training, health care, social networks, and policy and community.

Evaluation

A critical assessment – in terms of strengths and weaknesses – of the first three years of the Social Inclusion Plans (2006-2008) – its pilot stage – was carried out in 2008. It was commissioned by the Catalan administration (the Technical Office for Social Inclusion of the Social Action Department) to an external body (the Institute of Government and Public Policy - IGOP) depending on the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (Autonomous University of Barcelona)¹². Its goal was to identify the practical difficulties met by municipalities, in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, so as to assist them in improving their local plans. The main problem, however, is that this critical assessment consists of rather general statements, without empirical data to specify or to support them.

Since this evaluation took place two years ago, we expect that its results have had an impact on later stage of the Programme and certainly on the further development of Local Plans (PLIS). At the time of writing this discussion paper, however, we only had very little information on the post-2008 period.

We will focus on the most important points of this evaluation from 2008 and already add some comments, to which we will return at the end of this discussion paper.

¹² The Action Plan for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Catalonia and the Programme to develop the Local Plans for Social Inclusion have also been designed in collaboration with this University Centre.

*Strengths*¹³

It is true that the **very existence of the Programme** - its design, creation and implementation - is highly positive, if only because of the obstacles such a programme usually is confronted with. Inclusion is not very high on most political agendas; most politicians do to have a long-term perspective; co-operation between different departments, partnerships between public authorities or multi-level governance are not part of the traditional toolbox of policy-making.

A second strength is the **respect for local autonomy** and the opportunities to increase its array through providing local authorities with more responsibilities. Local autonomy offers local bodies the opportunity to review and improve traditional policies and mechanisms and supports them in their efforts to construct new ways of combating different forms of social exclusion and of fostering social inclusion. This desire to involve local bodies in strategies of inclusion across the Catalan territory to participate and their acknowledgment as key operators indeed is an important point.

The Programme tries to combine a top-down and a bottom-up approach. It is at the same time a tool to realise an operative objective from the Plan for Social Inclusion and Cohesion (regional government) and it gives local bodies an active role in substantive and operative developments. In doing this, it brings recognition and responsibility to these local bodies; it stimulates municipalities to participate in the process of defining a Catalan model of social intervention through their practices and their learning.

In the case of the Catalonian programme, it seems that the **budget** was expanded according to the new needs and that the money attached to being selected for a Local Plan suffices to carry out the tasks that come with it. The Ministry of Social Action and Citizenship has invested over ten million euro since 2006 (the ongoing year included) on the design and development of now 41 local projects. In addition, it has made financial resources of around 150,000 euro annually available to financially weaker municipalities. These are infrastructural resources not directly meant to finance social services or to cover citizens' needs. This is unlike what often has happened in other places, where the budget was not always **devolved with responsibilities** because the hidden agenda was to lighten the financial burden of the higher authority.

Apart from financial and infrastructural resources, one of the aspects most appreciated by local technicians is the conscientious attention and accompaniment received from Programme technicians during procedures of access, renovation, or justification. That municipalities have

¹³ The original formulation of these strengths is as follows:

- a) The very existence of the Programme;
- b) The desire to make local bodies involved in strategies of inclusion across the Catalan territory participate and their acknowledgment as key operators;
- c) The degree of substantive and operative autonomy conferred to the municipalities for the trialling of innovative practices;
- d) Financial efforts by the Department and budget provisions for projects;
- e) Desire for rigour in the selection of candidate municipalities;
- f) Flexibility of the Programme to take on projects with differing degrees of development, rhythms and priorities;
- g) Support and administrative assistance to local bodies;
- h) Technical efforts with the creation of the new ICASS technical structure;
- i) Model of economic justification provided by the Programme;
- j) Positive evaluation of the training seminar;
- k) Availability of e-Catalonia;
- l) Support and empowering of the OTL and social services.

more substantive and operative autonomy, stimulating their capacities for experimenting, innovation and learning, also implies risks of dispersion and fragmentation and makes it necessary to live with uncertainties and to understand how to manage them. These risks can be controlled if mechanisms for technical cooperation are designed and used: for example, the monitoring and active accompaniment of projects, continuously extracting information and making it flow between network agents, analysing practices and returning the knowledge generated. It looks as if this has not yet been fully realised.

Has the Programme succeeded in **bringing together both the need for general criteria and the differing degrees of development, rhythms and priorities of the projects?** According to the evaluation one of the strongest points was the capacity of the Programme to adapt to the differing degrees of development of the projects at the moment of accessing. Timetables have been set up taking into account the institutional and social contexts and the priorities and focus of the local partner. However, the lack of a minimum and unambiguous timeframe, and also the absence of the obligation to schedule objectives, phases and products or expected performance could leave too much leeway to the local level.

Nevertheless, efforts have been done to introduce some common framework in the programme. A new technical structure was made available by the ICASS, which has generated greater assurance and new expectations in local bodies concerning improvements in monitoring and technical consultancy. Moreover, the Programme had provided a model of economic justification. This model is reasonably flexible and facilitates the comprehensive control of all local body products at the end of the year. All necessary information is collected in one single document with summary tables. The training seminar is much valued by the majority of local bodies.

Another element that contributes to the transferability of good practices is the availability of the e-Catalonia platform in two directions: as support to work in a developing network and as a mechanism for entering and managing information amongst agents. Also, some local bodies have noted that being assigned to a Generalitat of Catalonia Programme and the opportunity of having access to cross-cutting knowledge has contributed to empowering municipal areas in the social sphere and has facilitated their access to other areas that are traditionally more socially recognised and less permeable. This form of 'mainstreaming' is highly valued when attempting to move social inclusion to the centre of the public agenda.

Weaknesses¹⁴

That 'different visions on the scope and implications regarding the roles, functions and types of activities' would exist, could be expected; as is the case for differences of opinion regarding the **degree of centralisation or decentralisation**. The evaluation team seems to opt for more homogeneity. They prefer a framework in which local bodies become, on the one hand, bearers of the guiding principles of the autonomous plan; and on the other, participants in the substantive and operative development of this strategic process across Catalonia through on trials and innovation in their practices. In their opinion, the Programme's principal objectives and proposed plans also lack written operationalisation, and the role the different agents should play in the process needs to be better clarified. They should contribute to the development of a model of intervention in issues concerning fighting exclusion, the need to innovate, the guiding principles in actions for social inclusion, and the fundamental importance of local bodies.

Is 'the lack of greater clarity, precision and explicit development in the proposed plans and objectives of the Programme' that the evaluation team has discovered, responsible for difficulties in achieving the principal objectives of the Programme? Or is there a more substantial problem with **the way in which the objectives have been defined**? They notice that many local projects opt for well-known and trusted strategies, methods and actions - often used in other projects financed by the same Programme - and expect to be managed, steered and monitored from above (i.e. by ICASS). This goes against the initial intention of the Programme to experiment with new methods; that is means living with uncertainty is an inherent element in innovation and an opportunity for creativity.

The evaluation team thinks that one of the factors for this uncertainty is the **timing** of the local projects, their financing and the Programme itself. It is true that the Programme sought to guarantee the financing of projects for minimum three years and that recently the ICASS has demonstrated its will to continue cooperating with local bodies through co-financing afterwards. But at the time of the evaluation (2008), the Programme had not defined any minimum time limit for the development of projects, their phases, the products, or for achieving objectives. They also note the absence of any specification of later Programme development and if phases in the cooperation process need to be distinguished. Furthermore, local bodies were not informed about the duration of the Programme (of pilot schemes, at the time), who would decide which models would be finally considered valid, and with what procedures.

Candidate municipalities were **selected through the application of a series of basic criteria**. Already in 2006, indicators of poverty and social exclusion to invite local actors to participate in the development of local plans for social inclusion were considered, which explains the boost of other projects of the Generalitat of Catalonia (Catalan Government) such as the 'Ley de Barrios' (Law of Neighborhoods) and the Planes de Entorno Educativos (Educational Plans) in those

¹⁴ The original formulation of the weaknesses is as follows:

- a) The lack of precision on the role of agents, implicit plans and the proliferation of differing guidelines;
- b) Ignorance of and (in some cases) concern by local technicians concerning the expectations placed on them and their work (OTL);
- c) Imprecision in the timetabling of the local projects, financing and the Programme itself;
- d) Some deficiencies in access to the Programme and in candidate selection;
- e) Discontinuity of formal monitoring, lack of process monitoring and local disenchantment;
- f) Non-specification of the type of technical support, lack of provision and displacement of institutional referents;
- g) Failure to take advantage of information available and lack of transfer;
- h) Awareness of the lack of visibility of the Programme and the PLIS within the framework of the Generalitat; reproduction of difficulties for mainstreaming, integral response and work in a network at a local level.

areas that had higher levels of poverty and social exclusion. However, the evaluation team observed a number of weaknesses. The selected local bodies did not know which criteria were used for selection and what remained was a technical pre-selection *ex officio* on basis of quality criteria, interest and motivation. In the practical application of access criteria *de facto* changes took place without the candidates being informed.

In the end, it was decided to extend the program to all local actors (103) ensuring continuity (which was a cause for concern) going further than the three-year timetable of financial and technical support decided at the beginning.

Since 2008 the remaining original three selection criteria have been *de facto* modified. Whereas before large and small municipalities were invited, in order to guarantee representativeness and heterogeneity, this year no pre-selected municipalities of less than 20,000 inhabitants have been invited through the calculation and prioritisation procedure used. This brings with it a substantive change in the Programme that should be formalised. Similarly, the complexity of the pre-selection procedure should be taken into account, as this calculated a certain number of candidate municipalities per section of population according to, amongst other factors, the total number of municipalities to be invited every year (20) and the population weight of the groups with respect to the distribution of the Catalan population from the results.

ICASS seems not to have had another option than to pre-select candidates on its own initiative. During this process one of the four originally selection criteria had to be left aside, that of the qualitative evaluation of the project content by interested municipalities. This is a major shortcoming, because the real interest by local bodies for innovation is underscored.

Although it seems that ICASS is not held responsible for this lack of transparency, the evaluation team nevertheless believes that the overall ignorance and the fact that they are not explained in the Informative Document is a deficiency that ought to be resolved.

In spite of the inclusion of **monitoring** in the different agreements, there has been no continuity and regularity in the public calls for Technical Monitoring Committees (CTS) Records show that in 2006 all CTS public calls were made, but this was not so in 2007 and 2008. In fact, some technicians from local bodies who joined in 2007 state that they have never formed part of these formal areas of monitoring. Their large majority state that the ICASS has never contacted them to discover more about or show any interest in their projects, or the difficulties that these present or about any progress made. Due to this lack of monitoring and technical accompaniment given by the ICASS the evaluation team noticed a generalised disenchantment and even feelings of abandonment amongst local technicians. Neither did it discover any proof that systematic, regular and continuous internal monitoring has been carried out.

During the first years of the Programme, there seems to have been a **lack of technical support** received or given; only administrative-financial support and training was provided. A more recent assessment identified improvement since the establishment of the Technical Body, both directly and through Permanent Training Seminars and Networking that has become a forum for exchange of practical experiences. In 2007 and 2008, sessions were theoretical but in 2009, on requests of local offices, theoretical and practical sessions were combined so participants could learn from each other, listening to their experiences. During 2010, resulting from a proposal from the assessment 2008, collaboration with the Ministries of Housing, of Economic Benefits and of Work of the Generalitat of Catalonia has started; they are invited to meetings, so that they can explain their policies, the objectives agreed in the Plan of Action for Inclusion and Social Cohesion and they can improve cross-cutting actions.

The **management and use of** - an enormous amount of - **information** that is directly or indirectly generated through the Programme also was subject to serious criticism in the 2008 evaluation report. There was no system available to record, classify and encode the dispersed information. This hinders any follow-up or project control, and also the transfer of knowledge produced by local bodies (for example, studies) among the network. Another weak point is the absence of standard specifications, although these were intended at the start of the Programme. The use of the e-Catalonia platform constitutes a major advance, but there many channels and/or sources of information could be optimised - especially related to monitoring.

Deficiencies to provide skills to Programme technicians and to define criteria of substantive **evaluation** have been noted by the ICASS and the need for project content evaluation criteria has been recognised - both for the assessment of records, their use and processing, as well as for a systematic and rigorous evaluation of the most substantive part of the application forms.

There is a lack of **visibility** of the Programme and the PLIS within the Generalitat. The multidimensional perspective seems to generate problems. Difficulties in financial and technical cooperation with other departments at the Generalitat within the framework of their projects are observed; in the administration, the vertical segmentation logic is reproduced and fed back.

B.2 An assessment of its transferability to and learning value for other Member States

Because of its closeness to the European concepts and methodology but also because Catalonia has a long tradition of reflecting on items of social exclusion and social cohesion - best illustrated by the existence of a Catalan Observatory on Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Inclusion - this programme has a high potential of transferability. We must, however, distinguish between the very interesting setup of the programme and its suboptimal functioning, at least during the first phase. Lessons can as well be drawn from weaknesses as from strengths, however. In the end, that is what evaluation is all about.

Because we had no information about concrete local plans, we could not answer a number of questions that we consider relevant. In the meantime, two local experiences - Sant Boi de Llobregat City Council and Lleida City Council - were presented during the Peer Review meeting¹⁵. The results thereof will be used in the synthesis report.

These are the original statements and connected questions.

- The development of partnerships and synergies at local level, the activation of local stakeholders, the empowerment of local institutions, and the development of integrated local strategies have proved particularly useful.

Question: What are the main obstacles and problems when trying to transfer responsibilities from the central to the local level, such as the lack of budgetary resources to cover liabilities that have been delegated?

- Another valuable dimension is the opportunity for local actors to formulate local policies on the basis of local needs. This could lead to the development of a local inclusion policy that is shared and to local actors taking active responsibility for achieving concrete results in their area.

¹⁵ A sample of only two local plans may seem small and perhaps somewhat distorted, but they represent different regional realities and experiences.

Question: defining and implementing specific local targets requires enough local capacity both for the formulation and the implementation of policies; are these equally present in all areas?

- Insufficient cooperation among (local) partners has often obstructed combating situations of social exclusion. For this reason, partnerships between local stakeholders are the backbone of any local strategy; local partners can achieve more together than separately, especially with regard to social inclusion. Thanks to its strategy of involving stakeholders from different levels, encouraging cooperation among local partners, and involving the hard-to-help directly in projects, a programme could have a positive impact on establishing a culture of partnership and dialogue at the local level.

Question: How to involve all relevant stakeholders in such partnerships? How to be sure that they are well embedded within the local community? How to guarantee that they have enough expertise? How to regulate unequal power relations between the partners? How to avoid the risk of 'overlapping partnerships' that could lead to 'partnership fatigue', especially if the actors are involved in several parallel programmes.

- There is an urgent need to develop and to apply tools for sound reporting, monitoring and evaluation; also for a flexible management of emerging problems during implementation at the local level. This requires a rigorous data collection and production system, that not only relies on quantitative indicators, but that includes individual biographies – i.e. the 'human stories' of disadvantaged people in disadvantaged places. Success stories could then be disseminated through the website, serving to encourage social workers and local authorities to seek out similar solutions for the integration of other excluded families¹⁶.

¹⁶ The evaluation team concluded its 2008 report with a list of challenges and proposals for the present and future.

- To specify, develop and publish the principal objectives and plans set out in the Programme and the role that the different agents should play in this process;
- To set a minimum timeframe for the development of projects and objectives;
- The commitment to technical cooperation, monitoring and support for local bodies in accordance with the Programme's proposed plans and objectives;
- To dispose of integral systems for information and knowledge capture and processing;
- To dispose of tools and criteria for the recognition and exchange of inclusive practices;
- To debate the financing of direct care actions designed within the PLIS framework and possible new challenges;
- To assisting and accompany local bodies in a specific manner that are newly incorporated into the Programme;
- To create cooperative strategies at a local level with other departments at the Generalitat.

Part C: Some key issues for debate at the Peer Review meeting

Let us first consider some general issues, which are not directly related to this particular programme but which are important pieces of the theoretical framework for such programmes. The first two are of a fairly theoretical nature; the others are illustrated.

1° Although it is not the intention of the Catalonian programme to oblige people to adapt to or to integrate into some social system - the Action Plan for Inclusion and Social Cohesion only puts it forward as a priority on the political agenda in terms of 'to promote strategic and complete actions to weaken the structural factors that generate social exclusion processes' - we should consider the possible **negative effects of inclusion, especially in a very cohesive context**. Strong cohesion may exclude inhabitants from opportunities outside the group (community, neighbourhood). A high degree of social cohesion within a neighbourhood (strong bonds between the inhabitants of a neighbourhood) may lead to a low degree of social cohesion on the city level (inhabitants of one neighbourhood are not interested in those living in other neighbourhoods). Strong ties between people within communities may lead to social, racial, and religious conflicts between these communities and those who are perceived as outsiders. It will increase the risk of exclusion both for individuals from those highly cohesive communities and of these communities from the rest of society. However, if non-conflicting relations between these diverse groups could be structured at lower spatial levels, a high social cohesion is possible in the larger area.

2° Usually, in literature on poverty and social exclusion the supportive functions of **networks** are highlighted. Strengthening the networks of the poor would increase their opportunities to fully participate in relevant sectors of society, such as the labour market, education and health care. Inherent restrictions of networks are often overlooked, although they help us to better understand social exclusion. One of them is that the 'inclusive' function of networks sometimes turns sour, and 'encloses' people in their present position. This is their fate if they did not succeed in cutting off close ties with their former network, including their family of origin, when they want to move up the social ladder. Moreover, successful upward mobility depends very much on the presence of both an instrumental and an expressive dimension. If only the former (a job, education, a new relation) is present but the latter (integration into the new networks of the non-poor and emotional support) stays behind, social climbers are doomed to return to their original position.

3° **Participation** from local authorities, residents and target groups is a priority of the Action Plan for Inclusion and Social Cohesion, at least in its intentions. *Strategic Axis 8* ensures to all citizens the full exercise of citizenship, promoting the inclusiveness of the community action and of political and social participation. *Strategic Objective 1* ensures social inclusion and the practice of citizenship by promoting community action and participation of citizens in the diagnosis, formulation and implementation of public policies. These strategic considerations are also translated into a number of *operational objectives*, such as 'to promote active participation of the citizens, on equal terms, in the mechanisms of regional and local participation expected' (1.1); to establish specific participatory processes to facilitate the participation of people in social exclusion in programs and services designed to attend their needs (1.2); to ensure that deliberative participation mechanisms at local and regional level are inclusive and include social diversity (1.3). Municipalities and region councils are expected to promote dialogue spaces for the citizens taking into account the specificity of each country, including people who are suffering poverty or other forms of social exclusion.

Very little, however, is known about what is realised. It was mentioned that in 2009, in the 'Integra-acúa' programme launched by the Ministry of Health and Social Policy and managed by the Luis Vives Foundation, the subject of the annual conference in Catalonia was: The participation of the Third Sector in Local Plans for Social Inclusion.

Is participation limited to just informing these actors? In that case, participation strategies are on the lowest rungs of the participation ladder. Maximal participation is about 'concerted decision', 'partnership', 'delegated powers', and 'citizenship control'; only then is participation a form of empowerment.

Organising elaborated forms of participation in this Programme is important for several reasons. The first, and in actual practice the most important, is making the strategy more efficient. In this case, local authorities expect to be better informed about residents' needs. This form of participation can be terminated when local authorities think they have collected enough relevant information. From then on, continuing participation of residents becomes useless or even counterproductive.

Another more ambitious reason is that participation is used as a learning process about the fabric of (local) society and also about constraints and opportunities. In many cases, this learning process tends to be biased because the 'higher' level (regional vs. local authorities, local authorities vs. local organisations and/or residents, organisations vs. their members) tends to impose its conception of what constitutes a problem and which are the appropriate solutions.

Finally, a major reason for participation is the promotion of active citizenship. Participants act as citizens when they try to reach an agreement on a project that shapes their 'common good'. This form of participation remains pure tokenism in most cases. On the other hand, it should remain a frame of reference, a 'concrete utopia' (Bloch), showing how things could or should be.

Some concrete illustrations:

- Let me start with the abstract of an interesting article on participation in Catalonia, which presents an analysis on local participatory experiences, both online and in-person taking into account political variables (not usually considered in this kind of analysis) and also classical socio-economic variables that characterise municipalities. Hence, the authors add a quantitative analysis to the numerous case studies on local e-participation experiences. The authors have chosen Catalonia 'because it is one of the European regions with more initiatives and a considerable local government support for citizen participation initiatives since the 1980s'. (Borge, Rosa; Colombo, Clelia; Welp, Yanina (2009), *Online and Offline Participation at the Local Level. A quantitative analysis of the Catalan municipalities*. In: *Information, Communication & Society*, 12(6): 1 – 30).
- The CLEAR model is intriguing as it links three models explaining public participation; the civic voluntarism model (citizens are prepared to participate if given sufficient opportunity, are politically active and are encouraged), the rational choice model (citizens are prepared to participate if the advantages outweigh the disadvantages) and the social capital model (citizens are prepared to participate if there is sufficient trust in the entities involved and in each other). CLEAR stands for:
 - C: Can citizens participate? Suitable (skills)
 - L: Do they Like to participate? Involved (commitment)
 - E: Are they Enabled to participate? Organised (collaboration)
 - A: Are they Asked to participate? Asked (by public authorities)
 - R: Are they Responded to if they do participate? Appreciated (by public authorities)

Consequently, there are five factors to be studied and for each factor, there are a number of variables: suitability (level of education, profession, age and group, sources, skills and knowledge), sense of involvement (identity, homogeneity, trust and citizenship), degree of organisation (type of organisation, its activities and its organisational structure), whether the citizens have been asked to participate (forms of participation, strategy and diversity) and whether the citizens' participation is appreciated (listening to citizens, prioritisation of public opinion, feedback and training).

- Participation was a central concern in the Danish Kvarterloeft Programme, a large-scale attempt to 'lift' deprived urban areas out of deprivation through a holistic initiative based on public participation and public-private partnerships. The programme began in 1997, lasted for about ten years and comprised projects in 12 areas covering a total population of about 120,000 people. There were several motives for citizen involvement (or participation): democratic & educational, a social, a scientific exploration or 'mapping' of relevant factors in the area, and finally an efficiency motive (better results if residents are involved in the urban regeneration). In practice the motives were often mixed.

The evaluation (Jensen, E.H. (2007), *Kvarterloeft. 10 Years of Urban Regeneration*. Copenhagen, The Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration Affairs) arrived at the conclusion that it is important – from every point of view – that a large number of residents invested time and effort in the preparation of an urban regeneration plan for the neighbourhood. This was done in an interaction between residents, experts and local politicians. If, however, the residents' proposals are seen as just an input to the process, and not as a determining factor, it is important that this message is passed on clearly to the residents, in order to avoid disappointments.

Many different ways of participation have been tried. Efforts have also been made to make active participation more attractive for everybody, but in the end it became clear that even more differentiation might be needed. Experiments with intensive participation over a short time span are recommended to reach groups (the generational poor, the homeless, elderly persons, single mothers, non-western immigrants) who are reluctant to participate in the traditional ways.

3° To what extent are **forms of governance** contributing to a more effective promotion of social inclusion at the local level? The simple definition of governance refers to some form of co-operation between actors (public authorities, civil society, and for-profit organisations), levels (EU, national, regional, local), and domains (in practice: departments).

In reality, governance covers a wide range of forms: from ad hoc arrangements for one particular occasion (an 'issue network') to a long-term strategy for a set of agents (a 'policy community'). Sometimes local policies may even be identified as the product of an enduring urban 'regime'. Some of these 'real existing forms' of urban governance remain fairly close to traditional government; although sector-bound coalitions may be identified, there is no encompassing regime.

Moreover, governance is not only about reforming institutions and finance; it is also about changing attitudes and a new political culture. One of these changes is the growing emphasis on active citizenship, a new localism, and the mobilisation of communities. It is expected that within governance frameworks individual citizens and communities will take more responsibility for their own welfare and the local policy processes that shape their lives and the places in which they live. Old models of representative democracy, associated with the era of powerful local

government, are being replaced, albeit gradually, by more participative modes of democratic engagement and accountability.

- The governance issue was very strong in a Communication that the EC published two years ago, on 'A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion' – COM (2008) 418/4. It proposed improvements in four areas: improving political commitment and visibility; strengthening the positive interaction with other EU policies; reinforcing the analytical tools and; better ownership through Peer Reviews, mutual learning and involvement of all relevant actors.

This strategy implies that member states commit themselves to set targets, to listen to EC recommendations, and to reinforce the involvement of all relevant actors in the process. Some member states involve Social NGOs in the policy planning process, some in implementing the policies but some do not see Social NGO as relevant partners at all. Particularly in view of the 2011 being the European Year on Volunteering it would be advisable to speed up the development of voluntary guidelines to improve governance aspects.

The EC could have an even more important role in convincing member states of the importance of improving social inclusion and social protection, for example via the Social Protection Committee. Strengthening the Social OMC would then also imply putting the Social OMC at the heart of post-Lisbon strategies.

The governance dimension of the Social OMC would also be enhanced by the adoption of quantified targets. Correctly formulated targets, supported by robust quantitative and qualitative indicators would facilitate measuring performance, if well supported by member states. These would make policy scrutiny more effective, transparent and credible – also in Local Plans for Social Inclusion.

Recommendations would assist in obtaining the needed political commitment and in improving the ability to monitor progress. The introduction of robust impact assessments on new policy initiatives, in order to assess their impact on poverty and inclusion, would constitute a big step forward; it is very positive that the EC proposes supports this procedure in its Recommendation.

ANNEX 1Specific questions regarding of transferability*How powerful is of the local level?*

What degree of autonomy did the local Civil Service possess before entering the programme?

Decentralisation or deconcentration?

How strong are principles of local self-determination and subsidiarity embedded in Spanish and Catalan political culture?

The type of partnerships at local level, with special attention to the position of NGOs:

How strong is civil society (NGOs) and, in particular, what is the role of 'welfare society' – meaning NGOs as providers of services?

How are the partners selected?

Who decides who will take the lead?

From a Local Civil Service perspective, a number of key principles should inform all public actions including partnerships: accountability, subsidiarity, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, and citizen participation.

What kind of activation strategy dominates?

How important is activation as a principle (active versus passive approach of target groups).

Is it rather 'disciplining' or 'emancipatory'?

Is the latter more concerned with personal empowerment and social emancipation of the target groups?

How relevant is the concept of 'active inclusion' in this context?

The relevance of the spatial context for understanding the genesis of exclusion and inclusion policies?

The spatial context refers to the difference between urban and rural and between neighbourhoods in (larger) cities; how important is it in generating poverty & social exclusion?

Which experiences does the Peer Review country have with programmes linking the spatial to the social dimension?

The level and characteristics of social exclusion and poverty in the peer country

What are the main types of social exclusion in the Peer Review country and which type prevails?

Is there strong ethnic discrimination, or other forms of social stigma?

What are the main production lines of poverty and other forms of social exclusion?

Which factors do most directly lead to poverty and how do existing policy measures slow down or increase the speed at which this happens?

Has the Peer Review country developed a coherent anti-poverty strategy?

How important is gender in the generation of social exclusion and in the promotion of social exclusion?

This question refers to the position of women in society and to the risk they run to become poor or to suffer other forms of social exclusion.

Which role do they play in inclusion policies in general and in the Programme in particular – as target group but even more so as actors?

Does their participation have a significant impact on how the Programme and the local Plans are run?