



PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL
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The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to its request dated 17th of July, has the honour to enclose herewith the input of the Portuguese authorities to its report on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work.

The Permanent Mission of Portugal avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

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MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
Direção-Geral de Política Externa

Call for inputs – Human Rights
Council resolution 51/12 on
local government and human rights

Input from Portugal

1. What capacity-building initiatives have been taken to implement/embed human rights in local administration?

- Training in the fields of: domestic violence; intercultural competences; gender equality in municipal action; conciliation management systems; sexual orientation and gender identity; Roma communities and intercultural dialogue; mental health and trauma.
- Implementation of the Social Network Program (Local Council for Social Action).
- Establishment of a Social Action and Social Inclusion Desk.
- Promotion of the rights and protection of children and young people in danger (CPCJ).
- Creation of Action Plans and Social Development Plans.
- Subscription of the Portuguese Charter for Diversity and Inclusion.
- Preparation and implementation of the Municipal Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination.
- Integration in the Municipalities for Peace Movement, which recognises that the *“defence of the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic are the fundamental basis for the promotion of freedom, democracy, the cessation of wars, the achievement of peace, the affirmation of national sovereignty and independence, the development of equitable and peaceful international relations and a policy of friendship and cooperation with all the peoples of the world”*.
- Creation of a Victim Support Centre and measures to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, Municipal Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination, Municipal Plan for the Integration of Migrants and related actions, always in conjunction with Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants, offices or reception rooms.
- Provision of information and support to help migrants in different areas.



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- Bridges Programme, a geo-referencing programme to support the elderly population and health promotion projects.

- Creation of an Employability Network, which aims to promote the employability of the most vulnerable population groups, to improve access to the labour market through the methodology of supported employment and to promote professional integration by involving the existing business and association sector.

a. Provide information on institutional structures for coordination and harmonisation of capacity-building initiatives.

- Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan.

- Implementation of the Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants programme.

- Application to the National Bank for Urgent and Temporary Rehousing.

- Access to the labour market for persons with disabilities through the Open Market Programme.

- Protocol with the Directorate-General of Social Reintegration – substitution of fines for community work.

- Elaboration and implementation of the Local Housing Strategy, which aims to solve the serious housing problems in the area.

- Existence of a Local Counsellor for Equality, reinforcing the commitment to ensure equality and equity.

- Promotion of Senior Universities and implementation of the Living Solidarity Programme for elderly persons.

- Activities carried out by the Associative Movement Office of Support.

- Universe D Programme | Rights in Children and Youth, which raises awareness of human rights and values, aimed at the entire population from the age of 5.

b. Provide information on the involvement of civil society, the private sector, academia, etc. in capacity building initiatives.

Various training sessions were held for municipal technicians, social network technicians, trade association technicians, teachers, and the population in general. The sports, leisure and cultural associations of the municipality develop activities to encourage the participation and the development of healthy lifestyles among children, young people and the elderly, thus promoting the exercise of citizenship and appropriate social behaviour. Social associations, in addition to their regular activities, provide subsistence goods to reduce social inequalities.



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Activities carried out within the framework of existing partnerships between municipalities in the same country and with municipalities in other Portuguese-speaking countries. The actions implemented have involved the school community, the business community, private social solidarity institutions and the community, prioritising the elderly population.

The Universe D Programme raises awareness and trains employees and the rest of civil society in human rights and values. It invites the participation of children, young persons and adults, namely through public and private schools, basic, secondary, technical-professional and higher education, community councils, leisure centres, third sector organisations, commissions for the protection of children and youth, among others. Recently, it has also collaborated with the Portuguese Network of Healthy Municipalities and the Network of Potentially Healthy Municipalities in Brazil.

Awareness-raising campaigns in articulation with field teams and in a logic of proximity to the population to promote civic culture, namely in the participation of collectives, schools, NGOs, private social solidarity institutions, and companies in civic actions and volunteering in the field of human rights.

c. Provide information on any monitoring or evaluation mechanisms assessing the effectiveness of capacity building initiatives and their impact on the promotion and protection of human rights at the local level.

The initiatives undertaken by the governing bodies of the sponsoring entities are assessed, but the impact on the promotion and protection of human rights is not recorded. Nevertheless, the Municipal Sustainability Index measures the performance of the municipality in relation to the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda. This analysis and monitoring document allow technicians to check which areas should be prioritised and which goals should be achieved. Local Housing Strategy, which contains the municipal housing diagnosis and the housing solutions envisaged according to the needs identified. Monitoring is carried out through photographic records and participation records and evaluation reports.

The actions carried out in Universe D are evaluated by filling in a questionnaire, which varies according to age group, by all participants over the age of 7. In addition, the evaluation of the initiatives carried out by the participants assesses their level of compliance and satisfaction, as well as their contribution to strengthening collective awareness in the field of human rights, particularly in the areas of diversity and equality.

The municipal plans developed include a mechanism for evaluation by external organisations. For actions carried out directly by the municipality, continuous evaluation is encouraged through participatory processes in the design of actions, their development and the results of their implementation.



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2. What are the capacity building gaps and needs of local governments in relation to the implementation/incorporation of human rights at the local level?

- Inadequate mechanisms for information/training/capacity building of social entities on the issue.
- Shortage of housing available on the market, which affects the effective guarantee of the right to housing for all citizens.
- The need for training to empower ethnic minorities and migrants so that they can be better integrated and empowered.
- Difficulties in accessing financial and technical resources to support the implementation of human rights policies and programmes at the local level.
- Bureaucratisation of the processes resulting in delays in social response.
- It is considered necessary to improve the promotion of training and dissemination activities in the field of human rights (on human trafficking, domestic violence, children's rights), as well as the channels of communication and regular articulation between the bodies dealing with the matter.
- Human and technical resources.
- Lack of knowledge of human rights principles and standards.
- The need to create more effective citizen participation mechanisms for community consultation and engagement to promote people's active involvement in decision-making processes.
- Lack of community awareness of the differences (elderly, persons with disabilities), and of the integration of persons with disabilities and ex-prisoners into the labour market.
- Lack of awareness among social entities/agents to provide clear information on the rights and support available and adapted to the recipient.
- Lack of adequate funding instruments/mechanisms that are sustainable over time, allowing for the training of human resources and the implementation of continuous work.

3. What measures are needed to further strengthen the capacity of local governments to implement/incorporate human rights at the local level?

- Develop training in education and human Rights for municipal technicians to facilitate the adoption and application of measures to protect citizens in this matter and to promote better knowledge of human rights principles and standards and on equality, non-discrimination, and diversity.

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- Accessible and free resources for the training of professionals from multidisciplinary teams working in the field.
- Empowering local leaders by providing tools that enable them to develop local policies, regulations and laws that are consistent with human rights and reflect the needs and concerns of the community.
- Establishing more effective mechanisms for community consultation and engagement to promote people's active participation in decision-making processes. Develop effective communication strategies to inform the community about human rights, including awareness-raising campaigns and the provision of accessible information.
- Establishing effective systems of access to justice at the local level so that people have the means to respond and seek redress in the event of human rights violations. Provide technical and legal assistance to citizens who are victims of human rights violations.
- Continuing human rights education programmes in schools and communities can be helpful in promoting a culture of respect for human rights.
- Work with civil society organisations (social partners) with human rights expertise to share knowledge, resources and experience.
- Carry out regular impact assessments of human rights policies and programmes to ensure that the desired results have been achieved.
- Guarantee the necessary technical conditions for the submission of applications for funding of innovative projects in the field of the defence of human rights.
- Create a channel for information and reporting of possible situations in the workplace that violate human rights.
- Involve civil society by creating consultation mechanisms for insight, cooperation and independent monitoring of human rights policies and actions.
- Implement policies and practices that promote diversity, inclusion, and equality, ensuring that all people have equal opportunities and fair treatment.
- Maintain transparency policies that make local decision-making processes more accessible to the public and implement effective accountability mechanisms to ensure that actions are consistent with human rights principles.
- Establish international cooperation partnerships to share experiences, best practices and resources, as well as funding mechanisms for human rights-related initiatives.
- Develop specific human rights indicators that can be used to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.



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- Financial empowerment of municipalities, by strengthening their staff and providing them with specialized training. This was followed by the training of specific groups such as young people, teachers, security forces and others.

4. What are the existing procedures and practices for engaging local governments in the work of UN human rights mechanisms and in implementing, reporting and following up on relevant recommendations?

It is important to note that the participation of local authorities in UN human rights mechanisms is generally facilitated by the Government. Therefore, cooperation and dialogue between the government, local authorities and UN bodies is key to the effective involvement of local authorities in the promotion and protection of human rights at the local level.

How could the existing level of engagement be enhanced?

- Incorporate frequent contacts between the structure for debating the topic.
- Designation of interlocutors or focal points at local level to monitor the implementation processes of the measures taken in this area and to have a good level of knowledge on the subject in question.
- Existence of formal circuits for the exchange of information. Articulation, creation of own spaces for dissemination, fostering more effective, transparent and faster communication channels.
- Create a centralised mission structure to articulate a strategy of action with the municipalities.
- Promote the transversality of human rights issues in all the organic bodies of the municipality.
- Creation of a specific working group that integrates elements of academia, business and associative sectors.
- Greater dissemination and communication of the guidelines set out in national and international resolutions, plans and recommendations to combat the widespread illiteracy in these areas.
- Articulation and networking with services essential to the realisation of human rights, such as health care, social and educational services, to ensure access for all, taking into account cultural differences, language barriers and discrimination.

5. What are the capacity building gaps and needs of local governments in relation to engaging with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and in implementing, reporting and following up on relevant recommendations?



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- There is a need for systematic training modules in this area and better dissemination of training activities to enable the training of human resources who are or will be involved in these issues.
- Dissemination of UN human rights mechanisms and recommendations, through the central bodies, on a regular and consistent basis, in order to promote effective articulation and timely intervention.
- Promote training and capacity-building activities for municipal technicians on the implementation, communication and follow-up of United Nations recommendations.

6. What are the main challenges in your country in the promotion and protection of human rights at the local level?

- The social integration of ethnic minorities, including the Roma community, and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion remain major challenges.
- Intergenerational harmony between older and younger persons.
- Tackling entrenched stereotypes to enable effective equality of opportunities and non-discrimination.
- Domestic and gender-based violence can be a persistent problem that affects the safety and well-being of people in a community.
- Limited access to justice due to financial, geographical or cultural barriers can hinder the exercise of legal rights.
- Inadequate working conditions, exploitation, and lack of protection of workers' rights.
- Ensuring access to decent housing for all citizens, as lack of adequate housing and forced displacement can be obstacles to the realisation of human rights.
- Environmental issues, such as pollution, environmental degradation, and climate change, can have a direct impact on human rights, including the right to health and life.
- Lack of qualified human resources to respond to and address the needs of the wave of immigrants of different nationalities and cultures.
- Difficulties in accessing health care (scheduling and availability of appointments and language and cultural barriers for migrants).
- The integration of excluded social groups.
- Increasing civil society awareness of human rights policies and programmes.
- Lack of responsiveness of care institutions to persons with disability between 45 and the age of admission in Residential Facilities for the Elderly.



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- Maintaining social cohesion in the face of increased migration and the difficulties caused by situations of economic vulnerability.

7. Provide examples, good practices, challenges, and recommendations with regard to the above-mentioned issues.

- Development of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan.
- Municipal and Intercultural Mediators Project.
- Celebration of thematic days: International Women's Day, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, Municipal Day for Equality, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
- Local Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants with the support of the High Commission for Migration.
- Establishment of a Goods Collection Centre for Refugees from Ukraine.
- Ongoing support and contact with refugee families from Ukraine, whether in terms of food, regularisation of documents with the Foreigners and Borders Service, support with Social Integration Income, finding accommodation, contact with educational institutions.
- Development of a humanised and transparent human resources policy and promotion of a healthy organisational environment, with the collaboration and commitment of all its managers, employees, and their representatives, in which everyone actively assumes a fundamental role in the municipality.
- Code of Good Practice for Preventing and Combating Harassment at Work.
- Participatory workshops on equality and non-discrimination under the following themes: "Reconciling work, family and private life", "Responding to violence against women and domestic violence, awareness-raising" and "Training to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence"; "Gender representation in local organizations", "Pay – gender pay gap", "Sexual segregation in educational choices, school and federated sports".
- Within the framework of the work of the Local Social Action Council of the municipality, the various dimensions of human rights have been taken into account, in particular in territorial planning instruments, such as the Social Diagnosis and the Social Development Plan.
- Implementation of the Personal Data Protection Law, thus complying with the Guiding Principles for a human rights-based approach in the design of public services to ensure the privacy and protection of citizens' personal data.
- Development of sessions on the promotion of active citizenship.



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- Integration of persons with disabilities in local government through the Supported Employment in the Open Market programme.
- The Universe D Programme privileges a space of mutual learning, whose methodology leads to the responsible participation of the participants in the construction of their learning process as actors of change.
- Participation in the Human Trafficking Network, training in the areas of equality and non-discrimination, participation in the WAP Equality Working Network.

Adhesion to:

- Regional Network of the Centre for Support and Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking.
- Network of Municipalities in Solidarity with Victims of Domestic Violence.
- European Charter for Equality in Local Life for Women and Men.
- Collaboration Protocol with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality.
- Partnership with local IPSS, in the Permanent Intervention Group on Domestic Violence.