

7. Izmir Province, Turkey

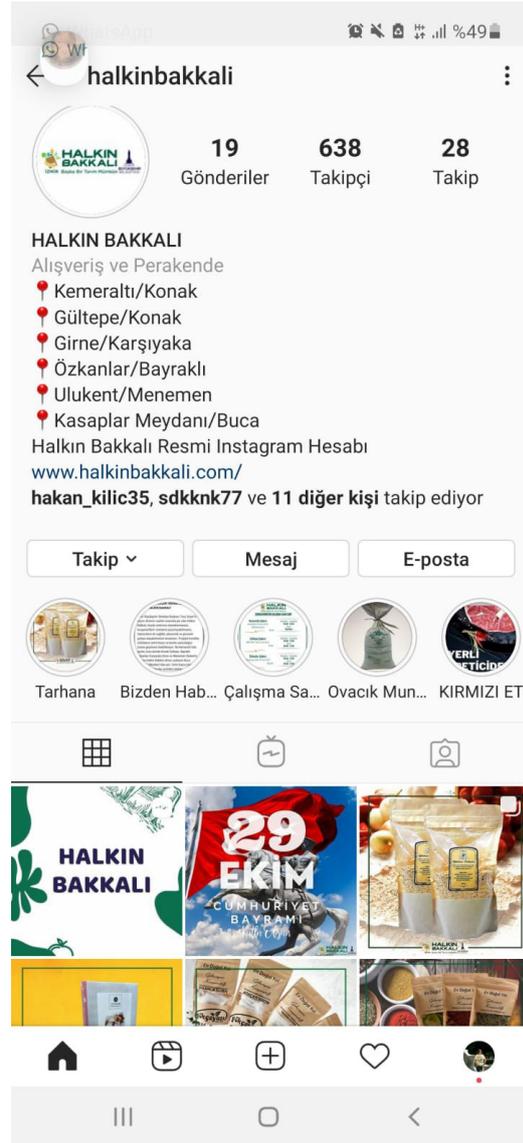
Sustainability of Local Governance for the People of Izmir

Challenges

An economic recession is among the most daunting challenges of the lockdown measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions in production, logistics and consumption have brought about unprecedented problems in the economic ecosystem of Izmir, as it has in many other cities in Turkey and around the world. This has greatly impacted people's ability to make ends meet, whereby increased poverty rates are associated with a decline in the income of the middle-class population. The disruptions in national and international economic supply-and-demand chains have increasingly underlined the importance of local and regional economies. In Izmir, these challenges have paved the way for the increased responsibility of local governments for economic activities. As elsewhere, the increased demand for face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) also constituted a major problem at the beginning of the pandemic that called for urgent, effective measures to address the shortages.

Towards a Solution

The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality People's Groceries Project was launched to play a facilitating role between people living in growing poverty and the producers of agricultural products. The project is a model in which local agricultural cooperatives in Izmir can supply safe, affordable food to the local population through the six People's Market shops operated by the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality in different locations in Izmir Province. On 29 October 2020, the Mayor of Izmir announced that an e-shopping platform was being developed to expand those market opportunities.



People's Grocery shop's catalogue on Instagram
Source: Izmir Metropolitan Municipality

Furthermore, to address the shortage of face masks and other PPE, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality initiated the “Maskematic application”. Under that initiative, regular public-transport vending machines used for the card systems of Izmir public transportation (KentKart) were upgraded to enable the local population to access enough free hygienic face masks (packages of 5 for one week). Thus, major public transportation routes and hubs as well as metro-tram-bus-ferry stops have become access points for the public to access adequate free face masks. Mask manufacturing was mobilized through the infrastructure of Job Factory, the leading vocational training centre with all the necessary equipment for production. A total of 40 volunteers were mobilized for the manufacturing process, including vocational trainers and trainees at Job Factory and members of several worker unions in Izmir.



Source: Izmir Metropolitan Municipality

The need to improve the coordination of those efforts gave rise to the Izmir Sustainable Urban Development Network (SUDN), which was established to ensure the localization and comprehensive governance of those initiatives. SUDN covers 25 district municipalities in Izmir and a variety of public, academic and business organizations as well as several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grass-roots organizations. SUDN has been a coordination hub for all efforts related to the mobilization and coordination of funds aimed at the neediest people in the aftershock of the pandemic.

The structure of SUDN was established in a highly inclusive manner, and the Network was committed to the localization of the SDGs by increasing the power of the local people. The main objectives of SUDN are to: (a) find solutions to the common problems of district municipalities; (b) provide information and knowledge transfer; (c) establish constant communication among all the stakeholders; and (d) ensure that the adopted policies are aligned with the SDGs. That makes SUDN an initiative that is relevant beyond the immediate urgency of dealing with the pandemic and its effects; it will be a crucial component in post-pandemic recovery efforts. Indeed, as part of the Turkey Sustainable Development Network, the Izmir SUDN could offer knowledge and transfer experiences to other member cities in Turkey.

As of April 2020, some of the concrete achievements included:

- 46,189 food packages had been delivered to families in need.
- 40,000 families had received 400 Turkish lira in direct financial aid.
- 12,000 families had received soup and bread over ten days.
- 105,189 bottles of milk had been distributed to families with children between one and five years of age.
- More than 300,000 masks had been distributed to the citizens on public transport and in open-air markets.
- The municipality had provided accommodation to 305 health-care professionals in three different locations.
- 634 people had received support from the Metropolitan Psychological Support Line.
- A total of 3,273 kilometers of streets and pavements had been sterilized.
- The Izmir Water and Sewage Administration had halted the disconnection of water services of 2,752 subscribers for non-payment.
- The Izmir Water and Sewage Administration also had granted payment extensions on water bills to 45,443 subscribers.

Project title	Sustainability of Local Governance for the People of Izmir
Spatial scale of the initiative	Izmir Province
Population involved	4.3 million
Cities/Provinces/Countries/Territories/Regions involved	Izmir Province, Turkey
Sustainable Development Goal target(s)	1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17
Supported/Funded by	Izmir Metropolitan Municipality
Implementing entities	30 district municipalities, all related units of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, chambers of commerce in Izmir and relevant business umbrella organizations, United Nations Development Programme in Turkey
Project status	Ongoing
Project period	Throughout the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic
URLs of the practice	https://www.halkinbakkali.com/ https://surdurulebilirkentselgelisimagi.org/



Source: Izmir Metropolitan Municipality