

Work Package 2: International collaboration and knowledge creation

- ***Interim Project Learnings***

ICLEI

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Abstract	<i>[A]nalysis of learnings across the individual project cities in Work Package 1 and the synthesising of these learnings into knowledge products and policy guidelines for just and inclusive climate action.</i>
Keywords	Analysis, guidelines, interim assessment, outreach, uptake



INCLU:DE interim project learnings

1. There is a genuine desire within Climate and Energy departments to ensure that municipal climate actions are implemented in a socially equitable manner. This stems not only from the wishes of those working in these departments, but also from increased political recognition about the dangers of an (un)just transition.
2. While departments are being instructed to ensure that they implement their projects in a socially equitable manner, very little guidance is provided in this regard. Many with a background in pure environmental and climate concerns are thus being confronted with an entirely new series of (additional) priorities to consider.
3. One of the prerequisites for receiving citizen's income and social benefits is holding a residence permit.¹ However, even among those with residence permits, there is often insufficient data to understand the exact relationship between eligibility and actual receipt of social benefits. Consequently, social welfare recipients are frequently used as a proxy for disadvantaged groups. This approach has its limitations, as it is often unclear how accurately it reflects a true correlation. For instance, there is a risk that bureaucracy and language barriers may lead to the underrepresentation of individuals with a migration background.
4. Each INCLU:DE city has chosen an existing climate measure to focus on, and make more socially equitable. Yet there is a recognition in a number of the cities that this gets the order backwards - what is arguably needed is an in-depth understanding of the needs and capacities of their respective target groups, leading to greater guidance on which climate measures to fund in the future, and how to design them in a socially equitable way (based on residents' needs and with the close participation of the community from conceptualization stages).
5. Under INCLU:DE, the cities have been focussing on rendering the climate actions and their implementation more socially equitable. Considering this, the main entry points have been (i) redesigning the climate measures in question and/or (ii) better communicating them to disadvantaged groups. In many cases, the former needs to precede the latter, since there is little hope of success communicating opportunities (subsidies, etc.) to a target group, if the programme is not tailored to their needs and capacities.

¹ See section 24 of the Residence Act, explained here.



6. The re/design of climate measures to ensure social equity is a surprisingly complex question. The case of subsidies for cargo bikes is an instructive example. In a recent peer-exchange organised by ICLEI as part of the INCLU:DE project, various cities presented their version of a subsidy programme. What was striking here was the diversity of ways in which this could be implemented to better support disadvantaged groups.

For instance, cities like Aachen and Krefeld prioritise **specific target groups** such as low-income households, single parents, individuals from underrepresented neighbourhoods and those with mobility impairments. Several municipalities have adopted a tiered **subsidy structure based on income**, with an increased subsidy linked to the receipt of transfer payments or the possession of municipal social passes. Brussels (Belgium) and Stuttgart facilitate **application accessibility** through Step-by-Step Guides and visual aids. Moreover, socially-oriented **cost management options** such as bicycle leasing, discount vouchers and instalment payment agreements are integrated into subsidy programs in cities like Lünen and Marburg.

A major lesson from Stuttgart, widely recognised as the front-runner of the participating cities, was the need to take a dynamic and critical approach - continuously assessing and tweaking the design in question.

