



2025:15

Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Evaluation of “Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation” – GoFor

Final Report

Evaluation of “Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation” – GoFor

**Final Report
December 2025**

**Dana Peebles
Gözde Sevinc
Ayla Hekimoglu
Ceylan Inceoglu**

Authors: Dana Peebles, Gözde Sevinc, Ayla Hekimoglu & Ceylan Inceoğlu

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2025:15

Commissioned by Sida

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Date of final report: 2025-12-19

Art. no. Sida62835en

urn:nbn:se:sida-62835en

This publication can be downloaded from: www.sida.se/en/publications

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Visiting address: Rissneleden 110, 174 57 Sundbyberg
Postal address: Box 2025, SE-174 02 Sundbyberg, Sweden
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se Web: sida.se/en

Table of contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	ix
Preface.....	x
Executive Summary.....	xi
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Evaluation Context	1
1.2 Purpose, Objectives & Scope	3
1.3 Approach and Methodology.....	4
2 Findings.....	6
2.1 Relevance	6
2.2 Coherence.....	7
2.3 Effectiveness	8
2.4 Efficiency.....	17
2.5 Sustainability	20
3 Conclusions	28
3.1 Relevance	28
3.2 Coherence.....	28
3.3 Effectiveness	29
3.4 Efficiency.....	30
3.5 Sustainability	30
4 Lessons Learned	32
5 Recommendations.....	34
Annex 1 Evaluation Terms of Reference	37
Annex 2 Evaluation Matrix	50
Annex 3: Approaches and Methodology	58
Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Interviewed/Consulted	62
Annex 5: Evaluation Instrument	65
Annex 6: GoFor Thoery of Change.....	73
Annex 7: Excerpt from 12th National Development Plan	74

Annex 8: GoFor Updated Risk Assessment 77
Annex 9: References 80

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AKP	Justice and Development Party
CHP	People's Equality and Democracy Party
COP	Conference of the Parties for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EMEP	Labour Party
EU	European Union
EYC	European Youth Capital
GoT	Government of Turkey
GALE	Global Action Local Empowerment project
GoFor	Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu
HQ	Human Rights Based Approach
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex plus
LSU	National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MO	Member Organisation
MPs	Members of Parliament
NEET	Not Employed or in Education
QA	Quality Assurance
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOC	Theory of Change
TL	Turkish Lira
TÜİK	Turkish Statistical Institute

Preface

This evaluation was commissioned by Sida and the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara to assess the implementation of the “Expanding Spaces for Youth Political Participation” in Türkiye Contribution ID 16360). Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor) has been implementing the project. It runs from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2026, with a total Sida contribution of SEK 14.5 million.

The evaluation was undertaken from September to December 2025 by the following team:

- Dana Peebles – Team Leader
- Gözde Sevinc – Youth Political Participation Expert
- Ceylan İnçeoglu – Youth Organisations Expert
- Ayla Herkimoglu – Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist

Shalvi Sinha was the project manager at NIRAS and quality assurance was provided by Goberdhan Singh.

The evaluation would like to thank all those who participated in the evaluation, particularly all the logistics assistance and insights provided by GoFor and its Member Organisations. The support of the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara was also invaluable.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Sida commissioned an evaluation of the Sida-funded intervention “Expanding Space for Youth Political Participation” in Türkiye (Contribution ID 16360). Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor) is implementing the project. The project runs from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2026, with a total Sida contribution of SEK 14.5 million.

Evaluation Scope and Focus

The evaluation was conducted from mid-September to December 2025 and covered the time of 2023 to date. Sida tasked the evaluation with assessing how well and in what ways GoFor has implemented the project from the perspective of the core OECD criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness and Sustainability related to the project’s four main objectives of:

1. Strengthening youth organisations through capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support.
2. Expanding youth participation in decision-making by supporting advocacy initiatives and structured dialogue between youth and decision-makers.
3. Increasing cooperation and networking among youth organisations, and between youth groups and public institutions.
4. Developing GoFor as an institution with improved governance, strategy, and financial sustainability.

Methodology and Approach

The evaluation data collection and analysis approach are based on Youth Participation Framework, Contribution, Theory of Change and Empowerment and Inclusion Analysis and a review of Adaptive Management processes. Data collection used Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) a four-person interview team interviewed a total of 57 people from 54 organisations. These included GoFor staff, GoFor Member Organisations (MOs), other Turkish CSOs, international youth councils, political parties and Members of Parliament (MPs), a national government ministry, and diverse municipal level officials. A significant limitation is that all but one national ministry and ruling party MPs either did not respond to interview requests or were not available during the evaluation’s time frame. Analysis of national government youth policy, thus, is mainly derived from third-party sources. Analysis of the data collected was based, in part, on the concept of meaningful youth participation. This is defined as:

« an intentional process where young people are actively and equally involved as partners in decisions that affect their lives, moving beyond simple consultation to integrate their perspectives throughout all stages of a project or policy. It requires creating inclusive partnerships, ensuring youth are safe and informed, and establishing mechanisms for accountability and feedback.” (United Nations Youth Office)

Context

The project is being implemented within a political landscape that was somewhat restricted for civil society organisations (CSOs) at the beginning and rapidly became more so. An academic working on youth issues observes that the political, civic, and social dimensions of youth experience in Türkiye cannot be separated; in particular, the absence of guaranteed social rights significantly restricts young people's political and civic participation. In the political sphere, young people face multiple forms of pressure, including restrictions on freedom of expression, disciplinary and administrative sanctions, loss of scholarships, and the closure of organising spaces. In civil life, the government's family-centered (as well as their partisans and cronies) social policy model limits young people's autonomy; without secure access to housing, health insurance, or stable employment, they become economically and socially dependent on their families. These vulnerabilities are especially pronounced for young women, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex Plus (LGBTQI+) youth, and youth with disabilities.¹ The political situation is also highly polarised with rights-based organisations and opposition political parties on one side and the government ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) on the other pursuing an increasingly anti-gender and pro-family conservative agenda which does not yet include much room for youth empowerment.

Key Findings

Within this context, the evaluation identified strong evidence of the following key findings:

1. **Relevance** – GoFor's Theory of Change related to youth political participation and civic engagement is still valid within the current political context and GoFor has adapted it as needed in response to changes, following an adaptive management approach.
2. **Coherence** – GoFor takes an impartial stance in the work it does and works with a wide range of youth organisations and other political actors. Overall, given GoFor's mandate its work is more closely aligned with diverse rights-based organisations and like-minded political actors.
3. **Effectiveness**

Outcomes:

With GoFor's support and Sida funding, member organisations (MOs) have developed stronger capacities in diverse areas with an emphasis on improved operational and advocacy capacity and opportunities to form new partnerships with other youth organisations. Belonging to the GoFor network has also strengthened the ability of its MOs to engage in meaningful participation in decision-making. GoFor has also been able to successfully facilitate structured dialogue between local youth and municipal officials in three pilot municipalities. These municipalities are at diverse stages of adopting more institutionalised approaches to youth participation. Furthermore, GoFor has established a strong presence and influence in its international, and national advocacy efforts as well as has been very successful in establishing functional partnerships at the local, national and international levels that contribute to meaningful youth participation in diverse fora and in decision-making.

¹ KII with academic institution

Unexpected Results - GoFor has had strong unexpected positive results, particularly related to its influence at the international level and two additional municipalities requesting GoFor's support to develop youth participation strategies and mechanisms.

Inclusion: GoFor's membership is quite diverse and represents a wide range of interests and demographic characteristics with a few key gaps. Most MOs are empowered to participate fully and indicated that GoFor addresses their priority needs. However, while agreeing that GoFor needs to remain open for all youth groups this may require further discussion of what constitutes a safe space for all MOs and core values so that there is a common understanding.

Political and Reputational Risks - GoFor and by association its MOs do face some political and reputational risks but they have a clear understanding of these and have mitigation plans on how to address most of them.

GoFor – LSU Collaboration - Both organisations cited clear benefits arising from their collaboration and apart from funding GoFor is fully able to function well independently of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU.)

4. Efficiency

Efficiency of Partner Support - GoFor has an efficient and strong communications process with its partners, facilitates project proposal writing with MOs, and utilises a consultative advocacy process with its MOs and partners.

MEL System - GoFor's MEL system is able to identify and measure outcomes in a systematic way with credible evidence measurable within the framework of project and organisational resources using an adaptive management approach. However, its reports are so detailed that some results get buried in the wealth of information provided and still needs to find a systematic way to report unexpected results.

5. Sustainability

- **Sustainability** – GoFor's MOs are aware of international standards related to gender equality, HRBA and environment and work actively to promote these issues and incorporate them in their policies but there remains a need for further discussion to establish a common understanding of what gender equality and HRBA mean in different contexts.
- **Institutional Sustainability** - The restricted funding climate in Türkiye represents the most serious threat to GoFor's institutional sustainability, followed by potential staff burnout.
- **Local Youth Policy Initiative Sustainability** - Across municipalities, sustainability is strongest where there are political ownership, youth-led participation, strategic integration, and inter-institutional cooperation converge. GoFor's collaboration approach demonstrates close alignment among selected municipalities and political actors. This also contributes to sustainability of youth participation with these organisations. Of the multiple factors which limit or undermine sustainability of youth participation mechanisms at the local level the most persistent and structurally dominant barrier is economic precarity and insufficient municipal budgets.

The evaluation also identified the most effective and sustainable pathways to change related to youth political participation and civic engagement at the local level. The team observed that across the municipalities examined, the transition from visibility and public commitments to institutionalised change follows several identifiable pathways. This transition

is not automatic; it depends on political uptake, administrative embedding, budgetary anchoring, inclusive youth definitions, and meaningful representation.

Conclusions related to Change Pathways for Youth Participation

Based on this overall assessment, the evaluation concluded that the main pathways to sustainable, institutional change related to youth participation are the following:

- Pathway #1. From Existing Youth & Sports Departments to Youth Policy–Focused Institutional Transformation
- Pathway #2. Youth-Led Visibility → Direct Policy Adoption Without Institutional Capture
- Pathway #3. From Youth Visibility to Institutional Definition and Data Production
- Pathway #4: Youth visibility → data production → institutional definition → policy targeting → budget alignment
- Pathway # 5. Political Pledges, Elections, Strategic Plans, Budgets, and Meaningful Representation
- Pathway # 6: From Visibility to Formal Local Youth Policies and Action Plans
- Pathway #7: Youth visibility → participatory policy drafting → formal youth policy & action plan → institutional commitment → long-term implementation

Sustainable youth participation emerges only when these pathways operate simultaneously, combining institutional restructuring, strategic planning and budgeting, youth ownership, inclusive data, political accessibility, civil society coordination, economic stability, and safe civic space.

GoFor’s added value lies in stabilising this entire ecosystem, translating visibility into institutional design, protecting participation under political pressure, producing youth data, and maintaining long-term institutional continuity.

It also lies in the strong support GoFor has been able to give its member organisations, empowering them both as independent organisations and fostering strong leadership skills and consultative decision-making among them. This, in turn, continues to lay a foundation for youth-inclusive democratic governance and is serving to protect the remaining space left for youth civil society organisations.

More than anything, GoFor has given its member organisations a voice and safe spaces to use that voice. It takes the issues discussed and agreed upon by MOs to other influential fora such as the Turkish General Assembly, the Council of Europe, European Youth Forum and the UN Conference of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP). All of these are impressive achievements, sorely needed and are ones that merit serious consideration for future funding by donors.

Recommendations

Future Funding

- 1) In light of domestic funding challenges for rights-based CSOs in Türkiye, GoFor’s positive track record; the gap GoFor fills regarding advocacy for youth rights and participation; and the weak capacity of many of the youth organisations that constitute GoFor’s members GoFor needs to develop a multi-pronged fundraising strategy targeting diverse external sources that include a wide range of donors such large scale corporations not domiciled in

Türkiye, other donors and possibly an international Go-Fund-Me campaign. To this end, GoFor needs to:

- a. Find funding to hire a full-time development officer to develop and manage these fundraising efforts.
 - b. Build the business case for donating to GoFor which showcases the benefits of doing so. *Responsibility: GoFor Timeline: 3 to 5 years.*
- 2) Whichever sources of funding GoFor is able to obtain, future funding proposals should include:
- a. A sub-granting component with clear criteria regarding which types of projects and member organisations would be eligible for funding and placing an emphasis on ensuring the sub-grants are allocated to a diverse groups of youth organisations that represent and work on issues related to ethnic, religious and gender minorities, refugees, youth with disabilities, housing challenged, NEET youth, rural youth and those working on climate change and gender equality issues. Any future sub-granting programmes would also need to include funds to cover adequate staff to manage and administer the sub-grants as well as provide related member organisation capacity building in proposal development, small project management and reporting.
 - b. It should also include a legal support services fund.
 - c. Given that many interviewees highlighted increased polarisation throughout the field research, future funding should also support measures aimed at reducing misunderstandings, prejudice and the lack of constructive contact between youth organisations with differing viewpoints. This may include evidence-based dialogue methodologies, mediation/facilitation training and conflict-transformation-focused capacity building. Additionally, joint projects and mutual learning visits that enhance members' awareness of each other's work and foster collaboration around shared priorities should be encouraged.

Responsibility: GoFor. Timeline: Medium term

- 3) Future funding proposals should also include and support a structured and participatory process through which GoFor and its member organisations jointly define, clarify, and formalise their shared core values, ethical principles, and minimum standards of engagement especially on gender equality, HRBA and so on. Such a collective values-alignment process would strengthen internal cohesion, enhance trust among diverse member organisations, reduce the risk of internal fragmentation in a highly polarised environment, and provide a clear normative framework to guide advocacy, partnerships, and membership decisions. This would also reinforce GoFor's external credibility of vis-à-vis public authorities, donors and international partners, while safeguarding its rights-based identity.

Responsible: GoFor. Timeline – Medium Term

MEL System and Reporting

- 4) GoFor should discuss and review with the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara diverse reporting formats that have worked well with other Sida CSO partners so GoFor can work out more effective ways of determining what level of detail should be reported in what format, report

length, how to report on unexpected results and any delays in anticipated activities and results. This would help them revise their MEL system in a way that still fits well with their own internal monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning system.

- a. As a part of this process, GoFor staff reflect on and discuss what the **priority results** they need to **showcase** and more succinct ways of reporting on activity completion that show clear links to the change pathways in their Theory of Change and anticipated outcomes and impacts are (the latter only where applicable, given the longer time it takes to achieve impacts).
- b. GoFor needs to establish a clear protocol for **follow-up procedures** to ensure timely communication with partners and funders.
- c. **Yearly Planning:** Ensuring that well-defined and transparent yearly plans are effectively communicated to partners is essential. These plans should outline expectations clearly, enable partners to align their activities, and allocate resources efficiently and help eliminate uncertainty on the part of partners.
- d. To assist with the reliability of MO reporting data, GoFor could consider establishing clear protocols and quality checks to enhance data integrity.

Responsibility: GoFor, Sida. Timeline: medium term

- 5) **Good Practices:** GoFor could consider writing up good practices related to its local policy initiative in collaboration with youth organisations and the municipalities and disseminating these to diverse audiences. These would serve to showcase project successes and learning as well build ownership and capacity of the municipality staff and youth organisations.

Responsibility: GoFor, Municipality personnel, Youth Organisations. Timeline: By end of the project.

- 6) **International Lobbying:** for GoFor to realise its objective of full membership in the European Youth Forum, there is a need to dedicate some resources to lobbying diverse members of the Forum to help gain additional support, clarify the rationale for doing so and seek ways to find solutions to the current objections to this on the part of some other Forum members.

Responsibility: GoFor. Timeline: Medium Term

1 Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION CONTEXT

Sida commissioned an evaluation of the Sida-funded intervention “Expanding Space for Youth Political Participation” (Contribution ID 16360). Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor) is implementing the project.

GoFor is an umbrella organization established in 2015 with a mandate to bring together youth organisations from across Türkiye to promote young people’s rights and participation in democratic life. It represents a wide range of Turkish youth voices at the national, regional, and international levels.²

GoFor, its Member Organisations (MOs), and Turkish youth aged 18 to 35 operate within a political and civic landscape in Türkiye that has changed considerably in the last 20 years. According to the latest Official 2024 TurkStat (TÜİK) data, the extended youth population (15-29 age group) is approximately 19.4 million, representing about 22.6% of the total population. However, **while TurkStat officially defines 'youth' as the 15-24 age group, GoFor adopts a broader perspective, evaluating this demographic within the 15-35 age range.** Looking at the wider picture, nearly **45%** of the total population is under the age of 30, underscoring the potential of this young demographic.³

This demographic is highly diverse and faces discrimination not only due to age, but also intersecting identities such as religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and political affiliation. The proportion of youth in the demographic who are Not Employed or in Education in Türkiye is high, with a 31.3% NEET rate for the 18-24 age group. This is more than double the OECD average of 14.1%.⁴ This structural challenge is heavily gendered; the rate for women (**41.6%**) is nearly twice that of men (**22.1%**) — a sharp contrast to the **narrow 2-point gap** (roughly 13% versus 15%) observed across the OECD.⁵

Youth rights violations are rooted in various factors, with the political framework being especially influential. Article 58 of the Constitution is the only legal text that defines youth in Türkiye. It portrays young people as a group to be protected from addiction, crime, and harmful habits. The Ministry of Youth and Sports aligns with this perception and uses sport as a protective tool rather than focusing on youth rights⁶ and government-funded youth programming mainly focuses on sport and education and not on youth empowerment. Youth

² Sida, 25 Aug, 2025, Terms of Reference for the evaluation of “Expanding Space for Youth Political Participation” (Contribution ID 16360).

³ GoFor, 2023, “Expanding Space for Youth Political Participation” Full Application to Sida.

⁴ https://gpseducation.oecd.org/Content/EAGCountryNotes/EAG2023_CN_TUR_pdf

⁵ https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae/1c0d9c79-en.pdf

⁶ Gofor, op. cit.

are perceived to be a problem rather than a national resource that can and does contribute to community and national life.

GoFor's youth-focused research also reveals that only approximately 8% of young people participate in youth organisations.⁷ Membership in student clubs and societies is slightly higher, at around 10%. The main reason for this low participation is fear: young people worry they will be labelled as dissidents, face employment barriers, or risk arrest due to their association memberships.⁸

During the most recent national elections in 2023, youth participated more actively as candidates and in their support of political parties. However, their formal representation remains low, standing at 0.8% despite the size of Turkey's youth population.⁹ There are many reasons for this low participation level with financial precarity standing as the most significant as well as a prevalent belief amongst youth that one has to be well connected and wealthy to present oneself as candidate. In general, the political, civic, and social dimensions of youth experience in Türkiye cannot be separated.

The economic situation means that young people's autonomy is limited, as without secure access to housing, health insurance, or stable employment, they remain economically and socially dependent upon their families with some demographic groups being more vulnerable than others. Many Turkish youth no longer feel their future lies in Türkiye and that if they are to be financially successful, they need to leave the country.¹⁰

The economic situation means that young people often have to live with their parents past the age when many youth in other countries have established their own households. The 2026 youth budget strategy addresses this issue for students by focusing on privatising the student housing solution and has introduced a plan to mandate foundation universities to build dormitories for up to 20% of their quotas.¹¹ This is significant as it is government policy for there to be universities in every city.

Despite this, recently there have been some notable shifts with some youth-led mobilisations united around climate justice, gender equality, and university. This form of youth participation is classified as being outside traditional political channels and not counted officially as participation. Digital platforms have the capacity of amplifying these youth voices, facilitating rapid mobilisation and issue-based campaigns.¹² Combined with the surge of first-time youth voters in the 2023 national elections, these developments suggest that young people are actively reshaping modes of political participation.¹³

⁷GoFor, op. cit.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/3501/2021/en/>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <https://www.gsb.gov.tr/tr/haber-detay/294217-2026-yili-butcesi-tbmm-plan-ve-butce-komisyonunda-kabul-edildi>

¹² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/12/turkey-elections-a-guide-on-turkeys-electoral-system>

¹³ Ibid.

1.2 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

“Expanding Spaces for Youth Political Participation” is Sida’s first direct support to a youth network in Türkiye and the only Sida-funded intervention in Türkiye with a strictly youth participation focus. It started in 2023 with Sida support of SEK 14.5 million. The embassy needs this evaluation to assess how well, efficiently and coherently the project met its objectives thus far and has been adapting to a rapidly changing, sometimes volatile political context and increasingly restricted civic space as well as to inform its future funding decisions.

The evaluation was designed to assess how well GoFor and its partners have been meeting the project’s four objectives of:

1. Strengthening youth organisations through capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support.
2. Expanding youth participation in decision-making by supporting advocacy initiatives and structured dialogue between youth and decision-makers.
3. Increasing cooperation and networking among youth organisations, and between youth groups and public institutions.
4. Developing GoFor as an institution with improved governance, strategy, and financial sustainability.

The intervention is structured around three interlinked strands of work:

1. Advocacy and Representation: Coordinating campaigns and dialogues to amplify youth concerns in public debate and policymaking.
2. Capacity Building: Providing training, mentorship, sub-grants, and resources for member organisations, including the establishment of a youth expert pool.
3. Organisational Strengthening and International Cooperation: Enhancing GoFor’s governance and sustainability while partnering with LSU to exchange knowledge and connect Turkish and Swedish youth organisations.

This project also contributes to Sida’s youth policy implementation, which views young people as "actors of change" and supports their political and community participation, employment, education, and overall well-being. It emphasises integrating youth into decision-making processes and promoting inclusive societies.¹⁴ It is also directly related to Sida’s policy on democratic governance, which focuses on advancing human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law to empower people.¹⁵ The project is also in line with the framework of the Strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Türkiye 2021–2027, in which Sweden prioritises democracy, human rights, rule of law, and gender equality as well as support for a pluralistic and independent civil society actors. A key focus of this Strategy has been to strengthen civic space and empower underrepresented groups, including youth, as agents of democratic resilience.¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://www.sida.se/en>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sida, op. cit.

1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Approaches Used

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach with a focus on collecting data through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and document review - all based on criteria outlined in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2 -the Evaluation Matrix). The evaluation used Theory-based, utilisation- and learning-focused, gender sensitive, rights-based and participatory approaches to underpin its methodology. The analytical approaches applied to the data collected included Theory, Contribution, Youth Participation, Adaptive Management Analysis and Power and Inclusion Analysis approaches to analyse this data and frame conclusions for each evaluation question (see Annex 3 - summary of these approaches).

1.3.2 Persons and Organisations Consulted

Through the KIIs and FGDs the evaluation team was able to reach 57 people and 54 organisations. The table below provides a summary of the types of stakeholders consulted.

Stakeholder Type	Numbers & % Consulted/Reached						Sub-Totals	
	F		M		O		#	%
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
GoFor Member Organisations	12	-	10	-	5	-	27	47%
Other Turkish CSOs	3	-	2	-	1	-	6	10.5%
Academic Institutions	2	-	1	=	-	-	3	5%
Political Parties /MPs	3	-	1	-	-	-	4	7%
Local governments & organisations	3	-	3	-	-	-	6	10.5%
National Ministries	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2%
Donors	4	-	1	=	-	-	5	9%
International Youth Organisations	4	=	1	-	-	-	5	9%
Totals	31	54%	20	35%	6	11%	57	100%

Of the 6 other Turkish CSOs consulted, 5 were rights-based organisations and 1 was another youth organisation. They were drawn from across the country and represent a wide range of demographic groups and advocacy interests (see Annex 4 for list of organisations consulted). The evaluation team was able to interview the 27 GoFor Members Organisations through 5 FGDs held at the margins of GoFor's Annual General Meeting 20 to 22 November. The FGDs were organised as follows – MOs working on: gender equality issues, climate and environment issues, representing minorities, representing LGBTQI+ youth organisations and a diverse group of Ankara-based organisations. Three members of GoFor's Board also participated in the FGDs. The total number of MOs consulted constitutes 46.5% of GoFor's membership. The other Turkish CSOs were all rights-based organisations. The 4 donors interviewed all either fund GoFor projects or work on similar areas of civic engagement. The team was also able to interview 2 opposition MPs from different parties. Only one national government official agreed to an interview. This is balanced somewhat by 6 interviews with

municipal level officials. Overall gender representation among all those consulted or interviewed stood at 54% women, 35% men and 11% other gender orientation.

1.3.3 Limitations

1. The evaluation time frame was extremely tight for the scope of work. Thus a 2-week delay in receiving contact information meant it was not possible to contact as many respondents as anticipated in the Inception Report. However, it was still possible to obtain a good representative sample of stakeholder groups and the team was able to establish credible triangulations of assertions made and information provided by different groups of stakeholders across the board.
2. It was only possible to obtain one interview with a national government ministry within the time frame available. The evaluation therefore is mainly dependent upon third party information and government policy and strategy documents to represent the government perspective on youth. This represents a clear data gap. The evaluation team was, however, able to review national government documents on youth policy and the new youth budget to triangulate this data to some extent.

2 Findings

2.1 RELEVANCE

2.1.1 EQ1a - Theory of Change:

EQ1a: To what extent is the TOC still valid in the evolving political context?

Finding # 1: GoFor's Theory of Change has become even more relevant due to the changes that have occurred in the evolving political context. The need for the type of support GoFor provides its Member Organisations has become greater.

As this is a mid-term review, our analysis of GoFor's Theory of Change focuses on the medium-term outcome level. The project has two main outcomes at this level. The first assumption is that **capacity of GoFor and its MOs and of youth organisations will increase if GoFor is able to:** i) Provide ad hoc support services for MOs; access to a pool of youth experts; ii) Hold annual general meetings (AGMs), Board Secretariat and Board evaluation meetings; iii) Organise International study visits to national youth councils; iv) Establish an exchange programme between MOs and LSU; v) Hold partnership meetings between GoFor and LSU; implement; vi) a strategic enlargement programme focused on inclusion and representation of diverse and under-represented youth in Türkiye.

Feedback from all five FGDs held with GoFor MOs indicated the MOs have found its support matched that outlined in the TOC and is exactly what they need and vital to their continued existence and ability to operate more effectively in terms of their advocacy, communications and human resource capacity. The GoFor network also provides MOs with moral support in an increasingly restricted civic space and access to other youth groups upon which they can call when they need help. There is a wide range of representation of diverse groups and regions among the MOs. This fills an important gap as few (if any) of GoFor's members would qualify for government funding. FGD participants concluded the support that GoFor offers is even more needed and relevant now than it was three years ago due to the current political environment.

Finding #2: GoFor's Theory of Change graphic remains relevant but is missing an explicit identification of the internal and external barriers to change and related risks.

The second assumption in the Theory of Change is that **advances can be made in the interests and capacity of duty bearers** by: i) Conducting visibility campaigns for young candidates in the 2024 local elections; ii) Conducting research on political preferences of youth in the 2024 local elections; iii) Developing a local youth policy program in 2024 and 2025; and iv) Providing capacity building of municipal youth workers for 2024 and 2025.

This section of GoFor's Theory of Change graphics identifies core activities to address some of the main barriers to youth political participation. However, it does not explicitly identify what these barriers are. Some are implied at the activity level presented in points i to iv above, e.g., municipal officials are older and do not have much experience working with youth or

knowledge of youth inclusion, empowerment and participation approaches beyond a sports and education approach.¹⁷ This represents an important barrier to youth civic engagement at the local level. The TOC graphic also does not reference risks directly but is accompanied by a detailed and high-quality risk assessment (see Annex 8).

2.1.2 EQ1b: Theory of Change

EQ1b: How have assumptions and risks been revisited and adapted?

Finding #3: GoFor has responded to the rapidly changing political environment and events by reviewing its TOC risk assumptions and approach to intersectionality.

GoFor has not made any significant changes to its TOC but found they needed to update it due to changes in Türkiye's political context related to ongoing protests and shrinking civic space, university student challenges, especially those affecting LGBTQI+ youth and young women, as well as local changes in government after the 2024 elections. In response, GoFor reviewed its risk assumptions and the impact these would have on outcomes. This review led GoFor to add gender and youth risks and change pathways into their TOC assumptions.¹⁸ This has also helped ensure that their TOC remains relevant.

2.2 COHERENCE

2.2.1 EQ 2-Municipal and Political Partnerships

EQ2: How coherent and strategically aligned is GoFor's collaboration with municipalities with diverse political actors?

Finding #4: GoFor is well aligned in its values and strategic approaches with rights-based organisations and like-minded political actors but in its work with municipalities is able to maintain an impartial approach in the promotion of local youth engagement and find common ground in their joint commitment to youth participation.

All stakeholder groups consulted indicated that the Turkish political context has become extremely polarised. This is also reflected at local levels with Türkiye's different regions being represented by diverse political parties and 13 opposition mayors already having been replaced by nationally appointed government trustees since the 2024 local elections.¹⁹

Within this context GoFor has been actively working with three municipalities, Antalya, Izmir and Eskişehir, to provide training and a youth policy and civic engagement checklist. The checklist is designed to help the municipalities develop youth inclusion mechanisms such as a municipal level youth policy and/or strategy, establishment of youth councils and research targeting youth. The three municipalities are affiliated with the Republican People's Party (CHP) party but GoFor's modus operandi and code of ethics is that it will work with any municipality or political actor that requests its support regardless of political affiliation.

¹⁷ KIIIs with 5 municipal officials, KIIIs with 2 donors.

¹⁸ KIIIs with 3 CSOs, 2 donors and 5 FGDs with GoFor Member Organisations.

¹⁹ Erkan's Field Diary, 2025, An updated list of Trustee Appointments to Opposition Municipalities. (<https://erkansaka.net/2025/03/24/an-updated-list-of-trustee-appointments-to-opposition-municipalities/>)

GoFor is a rights-based CSO and in response to recent developments in the country made a decision – with the full support of its MOs – to actively support youth and gender equality issues in its advocacy efforts. However, in its work with the municipalities, GoFor focuses solely on providing technical support. GoFor sees its role as showing municipalities and other political actors how to utilise and achieve rights in Türkiye and to support local parties to increase youth engagement using a non-partisan approach.²⁰

Finding #5: The GoT has agreed to have GoFor make selected presentations on youth issues to Parliament, an indicator of GoFor’s influence and credibility.

FGDs with GoFor member organisations indicated that GoFor having been able to represent them at this level and to include them in these processes. This has made them feel as if their voices are now being heard at the highest levels. This form of advocacy is something they consider to be strongly empowering of Turkish youth voices on diverse issues.

2.3 EFFECTIVENESS

2.3.1 EQ3: Outcomes:

EQ 3: To what extent has the intervention achieved intended outcomes?

GoFor’s project application outlines five distinct objectives. The evaluation found significant results in all five. Most of the results presented here, unless otherwise noted, are drawn from detailed feedback from the five FGDs with GoFor member organisations.

Finding #6: Member organisations have developed stronger capacities in diverse areas with an emphasis on improved operational and advocacy capacity and opportunities to form new partnerships with other youth organisations.

The impact that belonging to GoFor has on its MOs is profound. In the words of one MO, *“Without GoFor we would be nothing”*.²¹ There is scarce domestic funding available for many CSOs in general and less so for youth organisations, many of which remain as informal groups. This leaves many MOs in a weak position regarding implementing programmes or developing internal policies and human resources. Many lack experience in advocacy work and organisational and project management. The cost and challenges of registering officially as a civil society organisation mean many also remain as informal organisations.

Within this context, key ways in which GoFor has strengthened MOs’ capacities include:

- Provision of guidance and acceleration in creating basic organisational documents such as volunteer agreements.
- Provision of mentorship and experience sharing with the opportunity to receive insights and support from experienced network members or the Secretariat on association management, project development, and local differences.

²⁰ KILs with 4 municipal officials, 2 youth/rights based CSOs and 2 political parties.

²¹ FGD participant, GoFor MOs.

- Facilitation of communications within the youth network and across the country as some MOs do not have the capacity to host their own websites. GoFor issues monthly news bulletins which MOs use to announce their own events, seek volunteers and exchange experiences. All these helps them operate more effectively and give them greater reach within the youth and CSO community across the country.
- Provision of legal support and consultations, assistance in legalization processes, legal matters, and during crises (e.g., detentions or court cases), especially by quickly providing effective legal support and access to lawyers.

GoFor also provides ad hoc and on-demand technical support to assist MOs with issues and crises that arise. They complement this with ongoing youth-focused research which helps MOs make informed and evidence-based decisions, plans and advocacy strategies. MOs noted that GoFor keeps them informed about the rapidly changing policy environment and how it affects MOs and Turkish youth. It has created a space for young people and associations to sustain their activities and provides a platform for establishing partnerships that help them strengthen their capacity, be part of a wider community and to network of like-minded youth organisations.

GoFor is also in the process of setting up a Youth Experts pool upon which its MOs and other organisations can draw for inputs on youth policy, etc. This will be launched in early 2026.

On their own it is difficult for youth groups in Türkiye to find each other due to economic, communications and security challenges. It is thus, critical and significant that GoFor provides its MOs with an accessible network that facilitates communication and dialogue. GoFor also develops and offers resources to them such as the “*Learning My Rights*” booklet for Roma youth and supports newly joining organisations with their reporting or association-building processes. The evaluation found **MOs are stronger and have been able to improve their capacity in multiple ways as a result of becoming members of the GoFor network.**

Additionally, GoFor has enabled interaction among civil society organizations working in different youth fields and facilitated connections across political parties to increase youth political candidates’ visibility and participation. GoFor has also created opportunities for MOs to call upon one another for support based on their areas of expertise. These partnerships have facilitated MO project development at the intersection of youth rights in areas such as environment, culture and arts, and women’s rights.²²

Finding #7: Belonging to the GoFor network has strengthened the ability of its MOs to engage in meaningful participation in decision-making.

GoFor does this in diverse ways. The first is by creating a safe environment in which MO personnel can discuss sensitive issues affecting both youth in their respective constituencies and debate from different perspectives. They are consulted regarding which issues are a priority for advocacy through a combination of GoFor’s Commissions and working groups, twice-yearly assemblies, and ongoing communications through its news bulletins, etc. MOs highlighted the fact that through GoFor they have gained access to public authorities such as

²² KIIs with 3 youth CSOs, 3 donors and 5 FGDs with GoFor member organisations.

Members of Parliament, embassies and the Turkish Grand National Assembly and that GoFor accompanies them in these processes. They stated that this access would not be possible for them as individual local youth groups. **It both exposes them to local and national decision-making processes and has led to increased youth input into policy decisions.**

GoFor's support has also increased young people's political awareness and participation by organising political analysis panels and discussions during election periods. This was complemented by holding gatherings where young people come together and talk about participation, what it means and how to facilitate it. **These fora, discussions and information all provide young people with building blocks, skills, experience and confidence for participation in more formal decision-making processes.** GoFor has also organised open fora on diverse issue to which youth organisations that were not members of GoFor have been invited to ensure that theirs were also heard.

Their meaningful participation in decision-making is also fueled by the increased sense of motivation and belonging that GoFor fosters among its MOs. MOs in the FGDs reported the presence and national stance of GoFor has strengthened young people's motivation to participate in organised civil efforts and reinforced their sense of belonging to a youth community and to Turkish society. It gives them more hope in a context where many youths feel hopeless and they do not have much of a future.²³ MOs also observed that being a member of GoFor and being able to use its logo brings them credibility and a stronger reputation in the eyes of society. In turn, this makes it more likely that their voices will be heard and given credence when the MOs raise youth issues

FGD participants also reported that before the youth political participation visibility campaigns GoFor mounted in the 2023 and 2024 elections most thought there was no point in their presenting themselves as political candidates. There were few younger role models, and their thinking was that politics was only for the well-connected and wealthy. GoFor advocated to all political parties to sign a protocol to guarantee the parties would seek and support youth candidates in the 2023 national and 2024 local elections. Several political parties agreed to sign this. This support for youth candidates, however, changed the view of some of the MO FGD participants. They and their own membership now increasingly feel that there are more opportunities for youth to stand for election and to be heard.²⁴

Finding #8: GoFor successfully facilitated structured dialogue between local youth and municipal officials in three pilot municipalities. Municipalities are at diverse stages of adopting more institutionalised approaches to youth participation.

The technical support GoFor has provided in the three pilot municipalities has been positive. Institutional change to integrate youth's voices and participation takes time and involves an intense technical accompaniment process with multiple milestones along the way. GoFor's process starts with meeting with the municipal officials, local youth organisations and setting up youth data collection processes as well as providing training to municipal officials regarding how to work with youth, ways to facilitate youth civic engagement, youth data collection

²³ 5 FGDs with GoFor member organisations, 1 CSO and 1 donor.

²⁴ 5 FGDs with GoFor Member Organisations.

techniques using existing government data collection tools, other data collection tools, etc. Following these processes, the municipality can apply to sign a protocol which commits them to actively work towards the institutionalization of youth civic engagement and participation through the development of youth policies, strategies, and/or structures such as youth councils. Which pathway they adopt is different in each municipality.

GoFor has been to expand its reach to local youth organisations across different cities in all three municipalities. This has given them the opportunity to integrate them into the GoFor network. They have also been able to facilitate better communication between municipal officials and youth CSOs and groups in the three municipalities. To do this GoFor supported establishment of teams composed of young people and youth organisations and facilitated meetings both among these groups and with municipal officials.

Antalya was among the first the municipalities in Türkiye to establish a youth unit dating back to 2020. Together with young people, youth organisations, and GoFor, Antalya organised a youth strategy meeting and has developed youth indicators and targets specifically related to strengthening local youth policy as a part of its five-year strategic plan. Municipal officials reported that GoFor has shown people it is possible to develop a local youth policy. GoFor's work showed them that young people can be part of this and that it can be structured.²⁵ This is a significant outcome as Antalya has institutionalised these youth structures and processes. This includes rural youth representation in Antalya municipal decision-making processes.

GoFor was able to contribute to these changes in part due to their participatory approach and the push for a signed commitment and in part as the leadership in Antalya municipality has been interested in and has seen the value in working to engage youth more directly since 2020. As such, it represents a solid choice for a local level partnership.

In Izmir, GoFor engaged in its most intensive process of technical support at the local level. This contributed to Izmir municipality signing a cooperation protocol to ensure the municipality would develop processes and structures to include youth in city councils and enable them to voice and channel their needs, demands and concerns. Due to this and the technical accompaniment process GoFor has provided the municipality through regular, almost monthly meetings over a two-year period. The municipality started collaborating with all youth groups and other related CSOs. Their priority objective was to collaborate with these associations and listen to their concerns. This included meetings with the Izmir Metropolitan Youth Council and the Izmir Youth Municipality, both of which were existing structures, but which had not been consulted regularly previously. Through the capacity building, discussion, analysis and protocol processes, the municipality also decided to establish a separate Youth Unit that focuses on youth policies and collaborates with youth CSOs and GoFor as well.²⁶

The **Eskişehir municipality** applied to be European Youth Capital but failed to pass the pre-selection stage because they refused to use the term LGBTI+youth in the dossier GoFor had prepared for them although GoFor had informed them this was part of the criteria. However, GoFor provided consultancy services to the municipality which helped form a team consisting

²⁵ 3 Kİİs with municipal officials

²⁶ <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/tr/Projeler/genclik-belediyesi/2721/4>

of youth and youth organizations. Municipal officials in Eskişehir also reported that with GoFor's support for this process and that of the Local Polity Initiative they were able to:

- Strengthen the capacity of local youth workers and provide them with greater knowledge about youth work.
- Work on developing a youth policy document based on the problems and gaps identified by young people in the municipality. Their aim is to present this document to municipal councils so that it can become an official youth policy.
- Exchange of knowledge and experience between about local youth participation with other municipalities.
- Create a network among municipal staff from different political parties to discuss youth participation issues.
- Gain access to data that GoFor collected from municipalities through official channels (freedom of information requests) about youth centers, staff numbers, and ongoing activities. These data have helped them gain a more detailed understanding of youth policies across Türkiye.
- Use this data as a reference point for youth workers seeking guidance on youth policies.

Adana municipality approached GoFor to ask if they could provide support for increasing youth participation there. Municipal officials had heard about GoFor's work in this area at a presentation GoFor made on the work it is doing in the three pilots. Initial meetings with GoFor led to a request that the municipality provide youth statistics and develop a roadmap which would inform GoFor about which of their departments would be involved and in which kinds of activities. GoFor also met with the mayor and all departments.²⁷ Diyarbakir municipality also requested this assistance and is in the process of discussing signing a youth participation protocol. (See EQ1 1a on Sustainability for additional details related to local level outcomes).

Finding #9: GoFor has established a strong presence and influence in its international and national advocacy efforts.

National Representation and Policy Influence:

In all 5 FGDs MOs reported that GoFor amplifies the voices of its member organizations and the youth groups they represent (e.g., Roma youth, LGBTI+youth) in national platforms such as parliamentary budget negotiations, youth policy discussions and National Solidarity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission for the terror free Türkiye process. This has helped them contribute directly to policymaking processes. GoFor has also been able to make several presentations to the General Assembly related to core youth rights issues, including proposed legislation to criminalise LGBTQI+ identities. Passing of the legislation was paused in part due to GoFor and advocacy from other organisations, but the LGBTQI+ community believes there will continue to be pressure for the draft legislation to be enacted into law.

MOs also reported GoFor has offered them opportunities to set agendas, conduct policy work, and amplify the voices of young people in diverse fora and has made their voices heard. It provided a safe environment where young people can freely discuss all the challenges and

²⁷ 3 KILs with municipal officials, and a youth CSO.

injustices they experience. These discussions are shared as meeting notes and turned into advocacy actions. For the MOs this shows GoFor is taking concrete steps to bring these issues to authorities and are not merely talking and venting sessions. By voicing their problems collectively under the GoFor umbrella rather than individually it also makes it safer for them. It makes it possible for diverse youth groups to participate in local and national advocacy processes which would not otherwise be accessible to them. Overall, discourse related to the recognition of youth rights has increased in both parliament and local government. The participation of mayors in local and regional GoFor events is also an indicator of both GoFor's growing influence plus has served to increase the visibility of GoFor youth participation issues.

Internationally three national youth councils reported that there is now stronger cooperation between their organisations. They noted GoFor's influence at the international level is apparent from the fact that the European Youth Council is seriously considering GoFor's application for full membership status. GoFor has acquired several strong allies in this process, and they and several other national youth councils worked to get a motion about the situation in Türkiye accepted with almost no remarks or changes requested. GoFor is also now represented at COP 29, a forum where youth representation has been quite limited in the past. They were also invited to COP30 but were not able to attend. International partners speak highly of GoFor, noting that they have a good alliance and can reach out to each other for support and information, as well as to exchange different approaches to similar problems.²⁸ They perceive GoFor as a highly credible organisation.

GoFor's international partnerships with national youth councils have also helped shape some of GoFor's advocacy approaches, e.g., an exchange visit with the German Youth Council held meetings with German MPs. This showed GoFor it is possible to raise youth issues at the formal, national level. After this GoFor adopted an advocacy strategy of approaching MPs from different political parties in Türkiye in a similar way – with some success.

Finding #10: GoFor has been very successful in establishing functional partnerships at the local, national and international levels that contribute to meaningful youth participation in diverse fora and in decision-making.

GoFor has been setting up partnerships with several national CSOs. This includes Amnesty International Türkiye. GoFor also provides valuable insights and data to the European Union Delegation in Türkiye and responds to ad hoc requests about Turkish youth from EU headquarters. GoFor also has been working with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to promote youth labour rights. This project is the only one of 55 grants the ILO is operating through its Fundamentals Project that targets youth. In June 2025 GoFor started working with UN Women to help empower young women at the municipal level as well as working to counter the anti-gender movement.

2.3.2 EQ 4: Unexpected Outcomes

EQ4: Have there been any unintended/spillover positive or negative results or outcomes?

²⁸ Kİİs with 3 National Youth Councils

Finding #11: GoFor has had strong unexpected positive results in several areas as well as a few negative ones.

Positive unexpected results include the following:

- Gaining strong advocacy support from diverse European national youth councils and the European Youth Forum on critical issues as they have arisen.
- GoFor can reach the new EU Parliament re youth rights easily and its related statements are heard in this forum. At the European Youth Forum, a GoFor motion was also adopted with strong support. These represent a powerful form of international recognition for GoFor and are an indicator of their influence.
- The 2025 annual EU accession progress report on Türkiye cites GoFor as contributing to the expansion of Turkish youth policy. The EU considers this to be an indicator of progress towards helping Türkiye enter the EU. This mention is particularly significant given that last year the EU reduced the length of these annual reports by 50%.
- After its 2023 and 2024 visibility campaigns GoFor was asked to provide inputs and technical support into the development of youth policy for a political party.

GoFor was able to secure an invitation from the President of the National Assembly to present youth issues related to the terror free Türkiye process in the National Solidarity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission.

- At the international level GoFor and several key international partners (Belarus, Philippines, Germany and Sweden) have been able to keep in touch and maintain their network solidarity even after end of GALE project funding. This helped strengthen GoFor strengthen its international advocacy work as well as helped a National Youth Council operating in exile stay motivated.²⁹

At the MOs level, additional unexpected results reported included:

- A year ago, a proposed change in legislation for city councils potentially could have had an adverse effect on youth participation. GoFor prepared a briefing on this issue. MOs were able to use to argue against these changes and indicated that they had not expected this degree of support from GoFor.
- An elevator accident at a state-run university which led to the death of a young woman in 2023 led to student protests. GoFor's Secretariat set up a series of response meetings and follow-up actions and monitoring processes.
- Some GoFor commissions became ineffective over time. MOs find the working groups to be more functional so GoFor is now discussing restructuring its commission approach.³⁰

2.3.3 EQ5: Inclusion:

EQ 5: To what extent and how have the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, conservative, NEET youth, etc. been

²⁹ KIs with 4 national youth councils

³⁰ 3 FGDs with GoFor Member Organizations

impartially and equitably reached and represented in participatory processes (membership, leadership, agenda-setting and results)?

Finding #12: GoFor’s membership is quite diverse and represents a wide range of interests and demographic characteristics with a few key gaps. Most MOs are empowered to participate fully and feel that GoFor addresses their priority needs.

GoFor addresses the priority needs of diverse youth groups mainly through its MOs, many of which are focused on thematic areas such as women, Kurdish, Roma and youth or environmental issues. GoFor also has thematic commissions and working groups that decide on which diversity issues they will actively advocate, with a particular emphasis on gender equality and LGBTQI+ youth. Some MOs are quite influential groups within these areas.

Groups which remain under-represented within GoFor’s membership include rural and NEET youth, both groups which all stakeholders interviewed working on youth civic engagement indicated are difficult to reach.³¹ MOs noted that it is difficult to reach youth in the more conservative parts of the Black Sea region, and religious minorities such as the Alevi (although there is one Alevi group that belongs to GoFor). An FGD participant also noted that nomadic youth also do not yet have their own youth association and so are not represented in GoFor’s membership except as members of youth groups focused on other issues.

There are several Roma groups within GoFor’s membership but in the FGDs noted that “*we are here and we can share but we don’t feel as supported as some of the other groups as there are other more serious issues for them to address.*” The Roma representatives that attend the GoFor AGMs understand why this is so but find that the membership in their own individual Roma organisations do not. The Roma organisation members would like to see more advocacy support on their own issues from GoFor and its network. Apart from this observation, most MOs indicated that they can participate in all aspects of GoFor’s membership, and leadership and that they have found GoFor responsive to their expressed needs. One FGD participant summed up opinions expressed by many MOs – that the value added of their being a member of GoFor is so high that “*I owe my loyalty and debt to Gofor and so need to do something for them in return.*”

MOs observed that their need for GoFor advocacy support has increased since 2023 and that most MOs seek out GoFor themselves because of this need. There are also some youth CSOs that would like to join GoFor but they do not meet some of the criteria for membership. For example, there is a need to have several youth representatives on their boards of directors. In one case, the willingness to do this is present, but the CSO has found that the youth groups they serve are too transient to make a 2-year commitment to serving on a board.

MOs usually seek out GoFor for membership, but GoFor does issue a few invitations to join. This includes Amnesty International. Amnesty is interested as they want to be able to report effectively on the human rights situation of youth in Türkiye. However, they did not meet the age criteria GoFor has set for its MOs. GoFor is looking for an additional youth leadership criteria solution to address this issue for this type of CSO for organisations that could contribute to GoFor’s members in other ways.

³¹ KIIS with 2 donors, 3 CSOs and 3 municipal officials.

Finding #13: While agreeing that GoFor needs to remain open for all youth groups some MOs have concerns that participation of politically conservative youth groups could create a security risk for GoFor's less conservative and minority members.

MOs agreed that GoFor needs to remain open for all youth groups although some had concerns that if more politically or religiously conservative groups joined GoFor in more numbers it would make some members hesitant to speak up and voice their opinions. There is an underlying fear that politically conservative youth might not maintain confidentiality and could report what less conservative youth groups discuss within GoFor fora to the government, potentially leading to police harassment and arrest. However, GoFor has made a point of inviting conservative youth organisations (e.g., Havle Association) to its meetings to encourage more open dialogue. In a polarised country like Türkiye, this still creates a valuable space for diverse groups to come together.

E7: Value Added of GoFor-LSU Collaboration

EQ7: What is the Value Added and role clarity of the GoFor-LSU collaboration related to the strengthening of GoFor's organizational capacity and international reach and the realisation of mutual benefits?

Finding #14: Both organisations cited clear benefits arising from their collaboration and apart from funding GoFor is fully able to function well independently of LSU.

There has been a close, beneficial relationship between LSU and GoFor since 2017. Initially, LSU supported GoFor with funds and technical assistance through the Global Action Local Empowerment (GALE) project supported by Sida. When the two CSOs applied for Sida funding in 2023, they discussed which should lead the project and jointly decided to shift this responsibility to GoFor. This was in recognition of the growth of GoFor's capacity and influential role in Türkiye and internationally as well as due to the shrinking space for CSOs in Sweden. LSU now reports to GoFor instead of vice versa. This shift in power relationships has made their partnership more equal, with both regarding each other as respected partners.

Maintaining international relationships is important for both CSOs. They work on similar issues and with other national youth councils. They both find that they learn valuable lessons and skills from each other and the other partners with which they can network due to their collaboration. They both noted the challenge of the shrinking civil space for youth organisations and CSOs in general in Europe. This exchange of experience, policy briefs, and analysis has helped both CSOs develop strategies to mitigate this.

LSU has assisted GoFor establish itself as a credible and respected voice for Turkish youth within European and International fora as well as connect with other national youth councils. This has been particularly critical in terms of supporting GoFor's application for membership in the European Youth Forum, initially as an observer as well as GoFor's current application for full membership. The two organisations also collaborate on responses to different advocacy issues that arise.

LSU has also been able to set up exchanges between Swedish and Turkish youth which also benefits both organisations and their respective networks. Initially, the plan was to hold alternating meetings between LSU and GoFor in each country for project planning purposes. However, as the political situation in Türkiye became more restrictive, this became more difficult due to visa issues and increased risk exposure for some youth representatives.

Finding #15: LSU and GoFor now have an understanding of their respective roles and which organisation provides what kind of support and what the collaboration process is. However, it took time at the beginning of the project to make a smooth transition from LSU acting as the lead organization to GoFor taking on this role.

While their respective roles are clear and written in their mutual workplans, occasionally there is some overlap as both CSOs work on similar issues. This is more related to smaller tasks as opposed to the overall process. There were initial challenges working out financial procedures as the way Sida in Sweden and through the Embassy in Ankara operate are different. This led to an almost a year-long delay before the Embassy approved financing for the portion of LSU salaries the project covered. This created a risky situation for LSU.

Finding #16: GoFor's institutional capacity has strengthened steadily during the time they worked with LSU.

LSU meets with GoFor several times a year either in person or virtually to discuss administrative, management and advocacy issues. This process has provided some degree of support as GoFor has increased its staff complement from 5 to 9 persons. In turn, this larger staff size has allowed GoFor to provide stronger support to their MOs, respond to emerging issues and crises quickly, strengthen their communications with their network and to diverse other partners and allies.

2.4 EFFICIENCY

2.4.1 EQ 8: Efficiency of Partner Support

EQ 8: How efficient is GoFor's support for its partnerships with other actors in terms of their access to funding, capacity building and learning, efficiency of reporting and communications and advocacy capacity?

Finding #17: GoFor has an efficient and strong communications process with its partners, facilitates project proposal writing with MOs, utilises a consultative advocacy process with its MOs and partners which has a local, national and international reach.

For MOs, the only issue raised regarding partner support is one outside of GoFor's control and that is funding. This project does not include a sub-granting process or budget. GoFor provides technical assistance to MOs on how to write project proposals and seeks ways to help them obtain their own funding. However, many are not legally registered as the Ministry of Interior Affairs registration requirements are beyond their capacity and financial resource base. Thus, they are not eligible for the small donor grants programs available. In one of the FGDs, one MO also noted that sometimes GoFor and some MOs are in competition for the same funds and that the MOs are unlikely to be selected since they are weaker in capacity than GoFor.

Donors interviewed that provide sub-grant or third-party funding arrangements for CSOs indicated that they prefer this type of arrangement as then the lead organisation that acts as the umbrella organisation for this funding has responsibility for ensuring the necessary financial and reporting capacity is in place for the sub-grantees or plays this role itself.

MOs find GoFor's in all other areas to be both efficient and have strengthened their own capacities as CSOs and their ability to operate. They noted that GoFor is quite responsive to ad

hoc and emergency requests and has provided the MOs with considerable and timely support, particularly regarding legal advice and accompaniment in court.

2.4.2 EQ 9 - MEL System

EQ9: To what extent does GoFor's MEL System function as an effective and sustainable mechanism (capturing outcomes, ensuring adaptive management, enabling useful reporting and learning)?

The evolution of GoFor's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system from framework development to practical application has catalysed a shift towards real-time learning and transparent accountability. The organisation's commitment to integrating M&E into its operations has not only strengthened compliance with Sida's standards but has also increased strategic agility and transparency.³² This includes the following:

Routine Monitoring and Learning: GoFor utilises tools such as participant feedback forms, surveys, tests, interviews, and FGDs for monitoring and learning activities. They provide regular quarterly updates and hold biannual meetings with Sida to support ongoing discussions and programme improvements. In addition, in 2024, GoFor made significant strides to institutionalise its M&E system and transitioned from development to implementation and internal integration of its key components. The enhanced M&E framework aims to align with their updated Theory of Change and emphasises real-time learning and adaptive management.

Key Developments:

1. Appointment of a dedicated M&E focal point established within the Secretariat to oversee data coordination.
2. Collaboration with an external M&E expert led to the finalisation of a comprehensive M&E Plan with key indicators and a realistic implementation timeline.
3. Revision of the Results Framework ensured alignment with the Theory of Change and Sida's results-based approach.
4. Pilot testing of monitoring tools across core programs, including GoFor's Strategic Enlargement Program to reach a wider range of youth organisations and the Local Youth Policy Program.
5. Holding of internal learning sessions which boosted results-based thinking among staff and board members, and integrated M&E into programme design.

Current Status (2025–2026): With its M&E system now internalised, GoFor no longer collaborates continuously with an M&E external expert. A final meeting is planned to update the M&E table for the 2023–2026 period evaluation.

External Organisational Assessment (June 2024): There was an institutional assessment by EY Sweden focused on internal control systems, how to enhance internal accountability and M&E structures. The assessment findings benefitted GoFor's governance, risk management, reporting, and financial control and are reflected in GoFor's M&E system.

³² EY: Assessment of Internal Management and Control of GoFor – National Youth Council of Turkey, 2024-06-12

Looking ahead, GoFor plans to conduct a mid-term review, develop a centralized M&E database, and bolster analysis and reporting capacity to enhance long-term outcome tracking and connect M&E data with strategic priorities.

Finding #18: GoFor's MEL system can identify and measure outcomes in a systematic way with credible evidence measurable within the framework of project and organisational resources. However, its reports are so detailed that some results get buried in the wealth of information provided.

GoFor's has a robust Result-Based Monitoring framework that enables effective progress tracking. In addition, GoFor's thorough documentation and assessment through post-activity forms ensures systematic outcome measurement.

The collaborative approach GoFor used with M&E consultants at the project's inception also showcases commitment to continuous improvement. It is a complex project with many activities being implemented to contribute to its projected outputs and outcomes. Thus, it can take considerable time for the funders to identify the key outputs and outcomes and how each input is contributing to these.

GoFor itself has found that consistency of data from MOs to ensure accurate and reliable reporting still needs improving.³³ At the same time, diverse partners noted that GoFor's feedback mechanism in its MEL system provides a sense of inclusion to all its stakeholders.³⁴

Finding #19: GoFor's MEL system is able to inform management, design, and implementation decisions in response to a changing environment as needed and in a timely manner (use of adaptive management approach).

There has been a clear evolution from framework development to practical application which catalyses real-time learning and transparent accountability. It is, however, sometimes difficult to readily determine which activities/inputs/outputs have experienced implementation delays and why. GoFor does however, hold internal learning sessions that boost results-based thinking and aid their adaptive management process. This is particularly critical given the rapidly changing and volatile environment in which they work. GoFor's ability to reflect on and apply lessons learned has also enhanced their integration, enhancing responsiveness to the changing context in which they work.

Finding #20: GoFor's MEL system is able to report results effectively against its logframe and performance measurement framework but still needs to find a systematic way to report unexpected results.

GoFor's MEL system's feedback mechanism provides a comprehensive understanding for all stakeholders and places an emphasis on learning through shared experiences which promotes inclusivity and transparency. The thoroughness of its monitoring activities and adherence to work plans highlights GoFor's institutional capacity and reliability albeit still being in need of streamlining for greater clarity of results reporting.

³³ KIIs with 2 youth CSOS.

³⁴ KII with 1 youth CSO, 5 FGDs with GoFor Member Organisations.

GoFor personnel themselves indicated that they are still looking for an effective way to capture and report unexpected results. These do not always fit under the key objectives outlined in their Theory of Change and logframe and have been significant.³⁵

Some partners also indicated that a clearer, consistent yearly work plan would give them a better idea of expectations and timing, reduce uncertainty, and improve their own internal planning. However, they appreciated the collaborative approach which GoFor uses in the planning process. Donors spoke highly of GoFor's M&E capacity with one noting, however, that it takes time to develop a closer trust relationship.³⁶

2.5 SUSTAINABILITY

2.5.1 EQ 10: Institutional Sustainability of GoFor

EQ10: What factors are contributing to or hindering institutional sustainability of GoFor and MOs?

Finding 21: The restricted funding climate in Türkiye represents the most serious threat to GoFor's institutional sustainability, followed by potential staff burnout.

Many factors that potentially affect GoFor's institutional sustainability are external to the organisation. This includes the extreme difficulty of obtaining domestic funding for diverse reasons beyond the control of GoFor. Youth in general are not in a position to contribute financially although they do provide some volunteer labour. There, however, remains a need for GoFor to maintain its core professional staff complement to be able to provide consistent and quality support for its MOs. To be able to do this there might be some limited possibilities with large scale corporations not domiciled in the country or through an international GoFundMe campaign. These types of campaigns would require, however significant staff resources to develop and implement.

In this context, at this time, however, GoFor is heavily dependent upon external donor funding to keep its doors open. The evaluation observed that this situation is likely to continue in the medium term. At the same time, it should be noted that donor funding as a source is also shrinking rapidly as several major donors have had significant budgets cut.

An alternative used in some countries is for the CSO to develop a social enterprise arm which once profitable they can use its profits to help fund the organisation. Feedback from government, CSO, other donor and GoFor MO sources about this option, however, was that the business registration process in Türkiye is quite difficult and that it would be unlikely to be a viable alternative source of revenue as a result. Setting up viable social enterprises also requires start-up capital not readily available to youth and typically these social enterprises take at least two years to break even. This process would require considerable external support in and of itself to get any such social enterprises well established enough to make a difference in the long term.

³⁵ KILs with 2 youth CSOs and 1 donor.

³⁶ KILs with 3 donor organisations.

Currently the only immediately viable option for GoFor is to diversify its donor funding base. It has done this by applying for project support from the ILO and UN Women and by providing consulting services to the EU. GoFor is well regarded by the donor community. If these donors have access to funding themselves and their respective headquarters continue to place a high value on rights-based work with youth, they are likely to continue some financial support for GoFor's work. However, there remains a high risk in the future that these funds could be reduced. Diversifying external donor sources also places an increased reporting burden on GoFor as each donor has its own distinct reporting requirements. If successful, more donor diversity also implies a need for more GoFor staff to respond to these reporting requirements in a timely and efficient way.

GoFor has increased its staff complement over time and has a reputation for having a strong capacity. As long as funding is available to pay them, GoFor's staff competency and capacity is contributing to its institutional sustainability. They continue to build GoFor's reputation among available funders. Given the volume of work that GoFor does, the strong commitment of its staff to youth advocacy and support and staff also remain at serious risk of burnout. GoFor has made contingency for this too but may also need to consider adding some degree of succession planning to respond to these and other issues.

The training that GoFor has provided to its MOs and municipal staff also provides some degree of institutional sustainability, since it is leaving these organisations with a stronger capacity in many areas. The main challenge there remains staff turnover. This can be high in government, especially after elections and among youth organisations, particularly those dependent upon youth volunteer-based, are more vulnerable to the high level of mobility of this age group. They will, however, take the skills and knowledge they have acquired with them to other organisations, thus creating an indirect multiplier effect.

The networks GoFor has fostered among its members are also likely to continue. MOs spoke repeatedly about the value of these, and the new partnerships they have developed internally through the exchanges GoFor facilitates. These networks have also fostered strong friendships among GoFor members. For youth cohorts this is a critical part of their life cycle development and will likely stand them in good stead as a source of support for years to come.

GoFor staff have also shown themselves willing to learn new skills and are highly committed to strengthening the way they work through both this and the other projects they are implementing. MOs in the FGDs all mentioned the fact that GoFor staff are quite responsive to any requests for support made and to feedback on how to do things better. They come across as highly transparent and accountable to their membership.

There is also clear interest and demand from their MOs and municipalities to extend the project's scope in a second phase with increased funding on a larger geographical scale. This, however, will continue to be dependent upon availability of external funding. There may be some scope for some of GoFor's work to be included under the umbrella of future work planned for local-level civic engagement by other donors.

2.5.2 EQ 12: Integration of Cross-cutting Issues

EQ 12: How likely is it that gender equality HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches will remain embedded in partner's policies and practices?

Finding #22: GoFor's MOs are aware of international standards related to gender equality, HRBA and environment and work actively to promote these issues.

GoFor's MOs represent close to the full spectrum of demographic groups among youth. Many focus on specific issues related to gender equality, Human Rights Based Approaches, and environment/climate issues. New organisations that apply to GoFor also receive an orientation on GoFor's (and indirectly also Sida's) policies and requirements related to gender equality, environment/climate issues and human rights. One potential weakness in this area however, is that not all the MOs share the same understanding or views of what gender equality and HRBA covers and how to respect these principles in discussions with other members.

Some MO FGD participants reported lacking enough staff to create policies in several areas. They are, however, able to call upon the guidelines GoFor provides on these and other critical themes. In general, however, it was clear from the FGD discussions that most of the MOs that participated adhere to international standards regarding gender equality, HRBA, and other critical rights-related areas whenever they felt it was possible and safe to do so.

2.5.3 EQ11a: Municipal Level Sustainability Factors

EQ 11a: What factors (e.g., ownership, budgets, political will) are contributing to or hindering the sustainability of municipal youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/councils, and other mechanisms)

Finding 23: Across municipalities, sustainability is strongest where there are political ownership, youth-led participation, strategic integration, and inter-institutional cooperation converge.

The evaluation found strategic institutionalisation within municipal planning frameworks constitutes a crucial enabler. The team observed this in both the three pilot municipalities and several others where the team interviewed municipal officials. In Çankaya, for example, the municipality established a Youth and Sports Directorate and integrated youth priorities into strategic planning to create a formal governance framework for youth participation beyond temporary projects. With GoFor support, Antalya incorporated youth participation into municipal strategic planning by developing indicators and local youth policy development processes. İzmir received support from GoFor with a similar process. These examples demonstrate placing youth policies in strategic plans translates into budgetary allocations and shows both commitment on the part of the municipalities and contributes to sustainability.

Sometimes it is also possible to use the desire for external recognition to drive strategic change. Young people in İzmir have a higher level of civic participation compared to the national average. Seeking recognition for this, İzmir applied for the title of the European Youth Capital over a two-year period with assistance from GoFor. To support this application, the municipality and GoFor conducted several studies resulting in production of youth demographics and a youth situational analysis. The Gençİzmir (Young İzmir) platform was established and used to conduct a field study focused on the question "What do young people want?" using both face-to-face and online surveys. The municipality and Gofor organised meetings with diverse youth. They formed working groups consisting of representatives from the municipality, GoFor, and external experts, and different sections of the application were divided among these teams. A significant political outcome of this process is that the theme of the 92nd İzmir International Fair (2023) was designated as "youth."

Independent and youth-owned participation models also significantly strengthen sustainability. Eskişehir offers a robust model through the Eskişehir Youth Platform, an

autonomous structure established to respond to young people's demands, that runs its own elections and agenda. It receives logistical support from the municipality, but structure produces its own independent policies. The platform has generated concrete policy outcomes—such as night-time public transport services and student subscription systems—and ensures continuity through youth ownership rather than bureaucratic dependency. One political party informant emphasised that independent youth formations are more resilient than municipal council-based structures, as they reduce political capture, protect pluralism, and sustain motivation.

Visible political will and leadership accessibility further reinforce sustainability. In Diyarbakır, co-mayors maintain direct engagement with youth by talking to them. Despite difficult political conditions, this strengthens institutional trust and legitimises participation. Nationally, for example, the main opposition party, has expanded youth quotas, promoted young mayors, and prioritised “women, youth, and science” within its leadership framework.

Civil society partnerships and inter-municipal networks also play a crucial role in supporting sustainability. The Antalya, İzmir, and Eskişehir experiences underline that cooperation with youth NGOs, volunteer structures, and inter-city communication networks strengthens institutional learning, diversifies participation, and professionalises youth work. Municipalities consider GoFor to be a technical and political reference point for establishment of common standards, data production, and capacity development. In İzmir, this network effect intensified during the European Youth Capital process. As a result of GoFor's sustained follow-up and technical support, they established a municipal-level Youth Directorate in 2022, enabling lasting communication and mutual recognition among youth organisations (both GoFor members and non-members). This directorate has become a permanent institutional focal point for youth–municipality relations.

The pilot municipalities as well as several others have also set up a municipality WhatsApp group to exchange their experiences and good practices.) These municipalities have demonstrated that they are keen to share their experiences and to learn new things and ways of working with youth as well as to be recognised for doing so.

Ultimately, youth motivation and ownership are the most fundamental sustainability factors. Both municipal practitioners and political actors stress that no formal mechanism can be sustainable unless young people perceive it as meaningful, representative, and worth investing their energy in. GoFor has been very effective in fostering and nurturing this sense of motivation and ownership.

Finding 25: GoFor's collaboration approach demonstrates close alignment among selected municipalities and political actors. This also contributes to sustainability of youth participation with these organisations.

Municipalities describe GoFor as a reliable and politically neutral partner. İzmir and Antalya report a substantial overlap between GoFor's participatory and rights-based approach and their own strategic priorities. GoFor's co-leadership of İzmir's European Youth Capital applications and its support for the establishment of the Youth Directorate constitute a concrete example of structural contribution to sustainable youth governance. Despite being at earlier stages of collaboration, Diyarbakır and Adana state that they are open to and expect GoFor's support in developing institutional roadmaps and designing youth policy.

At the national political level, GoFor is consistently defined as a bridge institution between unorganised youth, civil society, and formal politics. One MP emphasised that GoFor fills the structural gap between politically engaged youth and elected representatives in contexts where this is not possible in university and public institution contexts. One political party representative further confirmed that GoFor provided inputs into the participatory drafting of national youth policies through focus groups, civil society workshops, and youth–NGO coordination. From the perspective of another political party, GoFor’s reports and field data directly inform parliamentary advocacy, enabling youth issues to be raised beyond party boundaries, including with ruling-party MPs.

In İzmir, youth organisations now also plan to cascade GoFor’s youth worker training internally to reach 30 youth workers, demonstrating the sustainability of GoFor-supported capacity development.

Finding 25: There are multiple factors which limit or undermine sustainability of youth participation mechanisms at the local level, but the most persistent and structurally dominant barrier is economic precarity and insufficient municipal budgets.

Çankaya, Adana, and İzmir identified budget shortages as the primary obstacle to staffing, continuity, and programme expansion. Nationally political actors repeatedly emphasise how deepening youth poverty, housing insecurity, and survival-level economic pressures suppress civic participation. For example, the Havagazi Youth Space in İzmir which previously functioned as a vital youth gathering hub, was leased out due to municipal public debt, resulting in the loss of a direct participation infrastructure.

Structural weaknesses of municipal youth councils also limit sustainability. Many municipalities report rapid turnover of youth representatives, weak mandates, and declining engagement among active participants once they leave. One MP interviewed noted these councils also often reproduce hierarchical and partisan dynamics which fail to adequately represent marginalised youth groups.

Ongoing barriers to reaching disadvantaged youth groups continue to be a critical limitation. Antalya struggles to reach rural youth and politically sensitive groups. Eskişehir also reports serious access problems regarding high-school youth due to family pressure, rural youth due to political concerns, and youth with disabilities due to structural limitations in programme design that limit accessibility.

İzmir, in contrast, presents targeted inclusion practices, including specific initiatives for Roma youth and LGBTI+ visibility and programming, which they have been able to sustain with community support. However, the institutional capacity of marginalised youth groups remains fragile. At the political level, both the CHP and EMEP underline that young workers, apprentices, and NEET youth have become nearly invisible due to constant job turnover, the influence of religious sects, and economic survival pressures.

Weak data systems and the loss of institutional memory also constrain sustainability. Antalya and Çankaya particularly stress the lack of reliable youth data and the destructive impact of staff turnover on long-term planning. In İzmir, the European Youth Capital process temporarily enabled production of the city’s most detailed youth demographic profile to date. Türkiye however, lacks a comprehensive national youth policy, while local youth policies remain weakly institutionalised. Through the monitoring tool “yerelgenclikpolitikasi.org,” data

and policy updates are carried out in selected provinces. Work is underway for the development of structural youth policies (youth action plans) in the three pilot provinces by 2026.

2.5.4 EQ11b: Pathways to Institutionalised Change from Visibility and Pledges

EQ 11b.1 What are the clear and successful change pathways established from visibility and pledges related to youth participation which are leading to long-lasting institutional change

Finding 26: Across the municipalities examined, the transition from visibility and public commitments to institutionalised change follows several identifiable pathways. This transition is not automatic; it depends on political uptake, administrative embedding, budgetary anchoring, inclusive youth definitions, and meaningful representation.

Pathway #1. From Existing Youth & Sports Departments to Youth Policy-Focused Institutional Transformation

While Youth and Sports Departments have existed in Turkish municipalities for decades, these structures have traditionally focused on courses, recreational activities, and sports services, rather than development of youth policy. A critical institutional shift has occurred in recent years with the establishment of municipal Youth Affairs Branch Directorates mandated to work on youth participation, youth policy, and coordination with youth civil society. This marks a qualitative transformation from service delivery to governance-oriented youth work.

In Antalya, the activation of the Youth Affairs Branch Directorate in 2020, driven by the municipality's own political will, was identified as a key turning point, accelerating youth participation and policy-oriented youth work. **In İzmir**, although a Youth and Sports Department already existed, the establishment of a dedicated Youth Affairs Branch Directorate followed a different pathway. Here, GoFor's persistent advocacy, combined with the political momentum generated by the European Youth Capital application process, translated youth visibility into permanent administrative restructuring.

Following this institutional shift in İzmir, communication between GoFor-member and non-member youth organisations improved significantly, inter-organisational youth cooperation intensified, the municipality's provision of shared physical spaces strengthened collective youth work, and the designation of "youth" as the theme of the İzmir International Fair enhanced public legitimacy and political visibility. These cases demonstrate that institutional change is not triggered by the mere existence of a department, but by the creation of youth policy-focused sub-units with participation and coordination mandates.

Pathway #2. Youth-Led Visibility → Direct Policy Adoption without Institutional Capture

A second pathway operates through independent youth platforms, most clearly observed in Eskişehir. Here, youth visibility is channelled through a self-governed and politically autonomous youth platform, whose concrete demands were directly adopted by the municipality. This suggests that autonomous youth mobilisation can lead to public legitimacy, executive adoption, and the institutional normalisation of specific policies, even without the full bureaucratic absorption of youth structures, thereby allowing for policy institutionalisation while preserving youth autonomy and reducing political capture.

Pathway #3. From Youth Visibility to Institutional Definition and Data Production

Across cases, visibility alone does not generate institutional change unless accompanied by reliable youth data and a clear, inclusive, institutional definition of “youth.” A major institutional bottleneck³⁷ identified is the systematic lack of municipal youth data and narrow institutional framing of youth as being primarily students or within a limited age group. This narrow definition leads to the structural exclusion of hard-to-reach youth, including NEET youth, young workers and apprentices, rural youth, and youth living in poverty. Without data on these groups, municipalities are unable to design evidence-based youth policies, allocate budgets accurately, or evaluate policy impact in an inclusive way. Through youth data collection, participatory mapping, and local youth profiles, GoFor has contributed to the institutional re-definition of who “youth” are for municipalities, enabling the pathway:

Pathway #4: Youth visibility → data production → institutional definition → policy targeting → budget alignment

Without this step, visibility remains politically visible but administratively unusable and therefore fails to institutionalise.

Pathway #5. Political Pledges, Elections, Strategic Plans, Budgets, and Meaningful Representation

A fifth change pathway operates through political pledges made during electoral periods. Mayoral candidates often sign (youth participation) pledges before elections. However, whether these pledges lead to institutionalised change depends on cumulative conditions.

First, electoral outcome and post-election political ownership are decisive. A pledge becomes operational only if the candidate is elected and actively assumes responsibility for implementation. **Second**, inclusion of youth policies in the municipality’s Strategic Plan is more effective than stand-alone promises as strategic Plans are directly linked to budgetary frameworks. While not every policy is guaranteed to be realised, strategic inclusion creates a formal financial and administrative reference point, distinguishing budget-supported, institutional actions from one-off activities dependent on short-term funding. **Third**, how “youth” is defined within strategic plans determines who benefits from those budgets. Narrow definitions systematically exclude vulnerable youth groups, rendering data and definitions gatekeepers to budget justice. **Finally**, quotas and political representation only produce institutional meaning³⁸ when young people hold representative political roles (e.g., municipal council members) rather than symbolic appointments. When quotas operate as substantive representation, political commitments become enforceable.

³⁷ This reflects a well-documented institutional bottleneck in policy implementation, where the absence of reliable data and clearly defined target groups constrains effective budget allocation and service delivery (OECD, 2020; UNDP, 2019)

³⁸ KII with MP.

Pathway # 6: From Visibility to Formal Local Youth Policies and Action Plans

Institutionalisation reaches its most durable form through formal, local youth policies and local youth action plan development. In Türkiye, absence of a stable and consistently implemented national youth policy means local governments lack an overarching framework that guides youth policy development. Thus, local youth policies are generally either fragmented or entirely absent.

Through GoFor's Local Youth Policy initiative, this structural gap is now being addressed at the municipal level. The three pilot municipalities are expected to publish their first comprehensive Local Youth Action Plans by 2026. They are developing these plans through participatory processes involving municipalities, youth organisations, and young people themselves, and are designed to include policy priorities, implementation responsibilities, budgetary commitments, and monitoring mechanisms. This pathway transforms youth participation from project-based visibility into formally recognised policy frameworks more resilient to electoral cycles and administrative turnover and establishes:

Pathway #7: Youth visibility → participatory policy drafting → formal youth policy & action plan → institutional commitment → long-term implementation

Where the movement from visibility and pledges to institutionalisation breaks across municipalities is when:

- Youth data are absent or unreliable,
- Youth is institutionally defined too narrowly,
- Budgets remain unstable,
- Youth spaces are physically lost,
- Youth councils lack decision authority, or
- Poverty and political repression prevent sustained participation.

3 Conclusions

3.1 RELEVANCE

There is substantial evidence that the inputs and outputs GoFor has implemented to date are already contributing towards the achievement of the two medium-term outcomes the ToC outlines. This stands as a strong indicator that GoFor's theory of change is based on valid assumptions and change pathways. GoFor has enhanced the relevance of their Theory of Change's since 2023. They did this both by discussing the changes in approaches needed on a regular basis in response to a rapidly changing political and economic context, and in how they apply their ToC to project actions. GoFor has placed increased emphasis on ensuring diverse intersectional groups of youth can participate in and benefit from the key activities/inputs identified as the first steps in the diverse change pathways posited. This was needed as several of these groups face increasingly serious threats from changes in government policy. However, this heightened focus on intersectionality still needs to remain balanced against the needs of other minority groups who experience ongoing discrimination such as the Roma. Overall, however, it is clear that **GoFor's TOC is even more relevant today than it was when it was drafted in 2023. (See Findings 1,2 & 3)**

3.2 COHERENCE

GoFor's approach and values align well and strategically with like-minded partners at the local, national and international levels. While GoFor applies an impartial approach to working with partners across the full political spectrum, they also apply a systematic rights-based approach in everything they do. Across both municipal and national levels, the evaluation also found that GoFor's bridging role is sorely needed and that GoFor not only supports impartial operational alignment but is a key actor that stabilises political access to youth demands within a restricted civic space. (See Findings 4 & 5).

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

Outcomes

Sida's funding for this project has helped make it possible for GoFor to become more visible internationally, among Türkiye's diverse political parties and at the national and local levels. **GoFor's use of this funding has also led to a demonstrable strengthening of MO capacity.** Working together under the GoFor network and umbrella has enabled these organisations to have a stronger voice at the local, national and international levels, enabled the formation of new partnerships, and is building youth confidence and skills in decision-making and access to technical and legal support and accompaniment when it is needed. This is truly contributing to youth political participation and civic engagement at multiple levels and in multiple ways. GoFor practices what it preaches, and both acts as a youth-led organisation as well as fosters the growth and capacity of other youth-led organisations.

Local Youth Policy Initiative

GoFor's approach to increasing local youth civic engagement and political participation is an effective one but requires intensive technical accompaniment and a long-term approach. Institutional change and changes in attitudes often take years to effect. GoFor has had success in mainstreaming youth participation at the local level even though the project has only been in operation for two years. This is, in part, as some of the foundations for this built on prior work done while LSU was the lead organisation and, in part, as GoFor wisely selected municipalities that had already indicated support for increased youth participation. It is also a tribute to a lot of hard work and effective and strategic approaches on GoFor's part. This is paying off as other municipalities are now expressing interest in receiving this support. GoFor's work at the local level has also made it possible to identify seven different pathways to change at the local level which could be readily applied in other municipalities in as well as be further adapted to aspects of similar institutional change processes nationally.

The GoFor model can and does work but will take both time and money to expand to other municipalities in significant numbers. Donors will need to decide if the positive building blocks for democratic governance and transition to institutionalised youth participation mechanisms this local youth policy approach is creating are a future priority for them. There are strong arguments in favour of continued support, particularly given the challenges in effecting change at the national level in the current political and policy environment.

While GoFor is not reaching all groups, it is reaching most and the groups not yet included have proven elusive for most organisations that work with youth – i.e., rural and NEET youth. There are some valuable lessons to be learned from sharing experiences with organisations such as the UNDP which is also working with these groups in other contexts.

Regarding impartiality, GoFor maintains its programming and support open to all. However, not all youth organisations and other political actors are attracted or willing to participate in events organised by a rights-based organisation. The challenge remains that there is a need for GoFor to capitalise on the entry points that emerge for increasing youth political participation when they arise, e.g., their visibility campaigns for youth during the 2023 and 2024 national and local elections. While the commitment protocol to support increased youth participation as candidates in these elections was shared with all political parties, only some signed. For some actors this created a perception that GoFor was closely aligned with those political parties. This

was not the case and most GoFor MOs acknowledge that GoFor is impartial in its approach. This alignment, however, will continue to be an ongoing debate for GoFor moving forward. (see Findings 6 through 11).

3.4 EFFICIENCY

Services to Partners

GoFor's delivery of services and technical support to its partners is done efficiently and is highly responsive to partner needs within the parameters of the resources available. This is not an easy process given the need to maintain strict security protocols to protect partners from adverse attention. Given the terms of this project and the challenges in obtaining domestic and external funding, GoFor is not yet able to respond to the stated priority need from MOs for access to small project grants. To do so, GoFor would need to establish a third-party relationship with a donor and set up a sub-grant process so that GoFor MOs could apply to GoFor for small grant funding to address their individual programming and human resource needs. For many, this would be the only way they would be able to obtain external donor funding since they operate as informal organisations. To do this, however, GoFor would need to obtain sufficient funding to hire additional staff to administer and oversee this youth organisation sub-funding programme effectively and efficiently. (See Finding 17).

MEL System and Reporting

GoFor's MEL system is well set up, and the organisation uses monitoring and evaluation information collected on a regular basis to inform its planning and implementation decisions. The few challenges encountered with its reporting system reflect an enthusiastic desire to showcase all the organisation's achievements as opposed to a lack of competency. One challenge that Sida sometimes encounters in partner progress reports may stem in part from Sida's desire to treat the organisations it funds as genuine partners as opposed to applying a more top-down, hierarchical arrangement. As a part of this approach, Sida has left the structure of partner progress reports open-ended. This can lead to some frustration on both sides of the partnership as Sida/the Embassy may receive reports that are too detailed and sometimes difficult to follow and the partners are not sure of which style, length and format of progress report they should be using.³⁹ The few weaknesses that the evaluation found in how GoFor reports on its progress are readily fixed through a clearer understanding of how to better showcase results versus activities completion and a mutual agreement on the most effective formats to use. GoFor is aware of these and already working on improvements. Their organisation has a strong learning and consulting culture (see Findings 18 through 20).

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

Institutional Sustainability

GoFor's institutional sustainability over the next 3 to 5 years will highly remain dependent on external donor funding. Domestic fundraising options are extremely limited and would not

³⁹ Diverse KIs with Sida and Embassy officials and CSOs over the course of 5 major evaluations of Sida-funded programmes.

be able to cover any but a small fraction of operating costs and possibly not enough to cover the costs of the related fundraising efforts. Recognising this immutable fact and that the GoFor fills a critical gap in the country related to advocacy for and the protection of youth rights and participation, as one means of fulfilling its core regional strategy objectives related to democratic governance GoFor needs to build a business case to support future external fundraising efforts, particularly for core funding. As a part of this the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara might be able to provide some direction and contacts related to diverse funding sources. Some core points to underpin this business case for future external funding include that:

- ✓ GoFor has been able to use past project-based funding to grow from being a minor partner of LSU to a significant, independent player regarding youth rights and participation locally, nationally and internationally. Its strong capacity is acknowledged and respected by multiple donors. The organisation has gone from strength to strength.
- ✓ Project-based funding can sometimes undermine the sustainability of results, as there can be gaps between project phases. Some outcomes require a longer-term approach than is possible with shorter term project funding. This is particularly the case for the kind of institutionalised change GoFor and Sida are seeking to effect at the local municipal level.
- ✓ GoFor is one of a small handful of CSOs in Türkiye that continues to stand strong on its public support and advocacy for youth organisations at a time when this community is under increasing threat and potential criminalisation.

Sustainability of Institutionalised Change at the Local Level

Across municipalities, sustainability of youth participation is shaped through the interaction of **institutional, political, economic, and social pathways**, rather than through visibility or projects alone. Participation becomes durable where **political ownership, administrative embedding, budget anchoring, youth ownership, safe civic space, inclusive data systems, and civil society cooperation** converge. When any of these pathways break down, participation becomes fragile, episodic, or symbolic. Both the municipalities and GoFor's will need to reflect on which of the seven pathways or combination of pathways to change that the evaluation identified constitutes the most effective strategy for each specific municipality and for additional municipalities seeking to increase youth civic engagement.

Sustainable youth participation emerges only when these pathways operate simultaneously, combining institutional restructuring, strategic planning and budgeting, youth ownership, inclusive data, political accessibility, civil society coordination, economic stability, and safe civic space.

GoFor's added value lies in stabilising this entire ecosystem, translating visibility into institutional design, protecting participation under political pressure, producing youth data, and maintaining long-term institutional continuity. (See Findings 22 through 26).

4 Lessons Learned

For GoFor:

1. Exchanges although an expensive activity, provide a critical broadening of experience and opportunities for youth participants and can be life-changing in positive ways.
2. The networking opportunities which GoFor provides its MOs are important not only for solidarity and knowledge building reasons but also for the chances it provides MOs to develop personal friendships GOFor members can call upon to help see them through both challenging times and a time of life. The importance of this cannot be underestimated.
3. Some government agencies consider that FGoFor has some innovative and useful ideas, but they do find GoFor too critical. There may, however, be selected windows of opportunity to collaborate more closely.

Good Practices - Türkiye

The **UNDP Türkiye Civic Engagement Programme** is an EU-funded initiative designed to strengthen the roles of the CSOs and volunteers in local governance in Türkiye. The project programme offers many lessons learned which GoFor could use in its future local youth policy initiative. It includes a small grants component, support for developing action plans, sharing best practices, and measures to improve the environment for overall civic participation. While not focused on youth, it still includes initiatives that are youth-inclusive.

During the local youth action plan development process in Eskişehir, the youth requested the ability to establish an **independent Eskişehir Youth Platform**. This platform operates entirely independently from the municipality, conducts its own elections, and determines its own projects. The municipality provides financial and in-kind support for these projects. **Of critical importance when working in a highly polarised political environment, this platform is designed as a non-partisan structure and includes young people from different political perspectives.** The Municipal Youth Center provides space for the platform's elections and meetings without imposing political restrictions. To protect independence, it is not permitted for any young people who sit on the executive boards of any political party to serve on the platform's executive team.

Global

From 2018 to 2022, **UN Women in Ukraine** oversaw a series of projects that promoted democratic governance related to Women, Peace and Security which together formed one overall programme that used the same approach in different regions working through the same CSO. Two of these projects were overseen by UN Women and a third by the EU. While the CSO still had to submit different progress reports to each funder, there were some efficiencies for all parties gained through the CSO and donors being able to use the same programme

proposals, methodological approaches and logframes.⁴⁰ A similar consolidated approach might work well in Türkiye for GoFor.

Council of Europe Co-Management System (Europe)

The Council of Europe applies a formal co-management system in youth policy, based on structural equality between government representatives and youth delegates. Through the Joint Council, both sides hold equal voting rights on youth policies and budget allocations. No youth policy decision or funding allocation can be adopted without the consent of youth representatives.⁴¹

Youth Bank International (Balkans / Global)

Youth Bank International is implemented widely in the Balkans through the **Mozaik Foundation**. The model empowers local youth committees (ages 15–25) to manage grant funds, launch open calls, evaluate proposals, and independently determine which community projects to fund. The programme focuses on inclusive, community-oriented projects and youth-led financial decision-making.⁴²

Sangguniang Kabataan Reforms (Philippines)

The Sangguniang Kabataan system legally establishes youth councils in every village in the Philippines. With the 2015 Reform Act, anti-dynasty provisions were introduced to prevent relatives of elected officials from holding positions on youth councils. The reform also mandates the direct transfer of 10% of the village budget to the youth council, ensuring financial autonomy.⁴³

Youth Lead the Change (Boston, USA)

Youth Lead the Change is a youth participatory budgeting programme implemented by the City of Boston. Each year, young people aged 12–25 directly decide through voting how to allocate USD 1 million of the municipal capital budget for local infrastructure and community projects. The process is facilitated by the Mayor’s Youth Council.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ UN Women, Gender-Responsive Cluster Evaluation for the Projects “Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender Equal Society in Ukraine” (2017–2021) & “Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Ukraine (2018-2022).

⁴¹ KII International Youth Organisation

⁴² [Mozaik Foundation \(Bosnia & Herzegovina\)](#)

⁴³ [Department of the Interior and Local Government \(DILG\) - SK Operations](#)

⁴⁴ [City of Boston: Youth Lead the Change](#)

5 Recommendations

Future Funding

1. In light of domestic funding challenges for rights-based CSOs in Türkiye, GoFor's positive track record; the gap GoFor fills regarding advocacy for youth rights and participation; and the weak capacity of many of the youth organisations that constitute GoFor's members GoFor needs to develop a multi-pronged fundraising strategy targeting diverse external sources that include a wide range of donors such large scale corporations not domiciled in Türkiye, other donors and possibly an international Go-Fund-Me campaign. To this end, GoFor needs to:
 - a. Find funding to hire a full-time development officer to develop and manage these fundraising efforts.
 - b. Build the business case for donating to GoFor which showcases the benefits of doing so. *Responsibility: GoFor Timeline: 3 to 5 years.*
2. Whichever sources of funding GoFor is able to obtain, future funding proposals should include:
 - a. A sub-granting component with clear criteria regarding which types of projects and member organisations would be eligible for funding and placing an emphasis on ensuring the sub-grants are allocated to a diverse groups of youth organisations that represent and work on issues related to ethnic, religious and gender minorities, refugees, youth with disabilities, housing challenged, NEET youth, rural youth and those working on climate change and gender equality issues. Any future sub-granting programmes would also need to include funds to cover adequate staff to manage and administer the sub-grants as well as provide related member organisation capacity building in proposal development, small project management and reporting.
 - b. It should also include a legal support services fund.
 - c. Given that many interviewees highlighted increased polarisation throughout the field research, future funding should also support measures aimed at reducing misunderstanding, prejudice and the lack of constructive contact between youth organisations with differing viewpoints. This may include evidence-based dialogue methodologies, mediation/facilitation training and conflict-transformation-focused capacity building. Additionally, joint projects and mutual learning visits that enhance members' awareness of each other's work and foster collaboration around shared priorities should be encouraged. *Responsibility: GoFor, Timeline: Medium term*
3. Future funding proposals should also include and support a structured and participatory process through which GoFor and its member organisations jointly define, clarify, and

formalise their shared core values, ethical principles, and minimum standards of engagement especially on gender equality, HRBA and so on. Such a collective values-alignment process would strengthen internal cohesion, enhance trust among diverse member organisations, reduce the risk of internal fragmentation in a highly polarised environment, and provide a clear normative framework to guide advocacy, partnerships, and membership decisions. This would also reinforce GoFor's external credibility of vis-à-vis public authorities, donors and international partners, while safeguarding its rights-based identity.

Responsible: GoFor. Timeline – Medium Term

MEL System and Reporting

4. GoFor should discuss and review with the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara diverse reporting formats that have worked well with other Sida CSO partners so GoFor can work out more effective ways of determining what level of detail should be reported in what format, report length, how to report on unexpected results and any delays in anticipated activities and results. This would help them revise their MEL system in a way that still fits well with their own internal monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning system.
 - a. As a part of this process, GoFor staff reflect on and discuss what the **priority results** they need to **showcase** and more succinct ways of reporting on activity completion that show clear links to the change pathways in their Theory of Change and anticipated outcomes and impacts are (the latter only where applicable, given the longer time it takes to achieve impacts).
 - b. GoFor needs to establish a clear protocol for **follow-up procedures** to ensure timely communication with partners and funders.
 - c. **Yearly Planning:** Ensuring that well-defined and transparent yearly plans are effectively communicated to partners is essential. These plans should outline expectations clearly, enable partners to align their activities, and allocate resources efficiently and help eliminate uncertainty on the part of partners.
 - d. To assist with the reliability of MO reporting data, GoFor could consider establishing clear protocols and quality checks can enhance data integrity.

Responsibility: GoFor, Sida. Timeline: medium term

5. **Good Practices:** GoFor could consider writing up good practices related to its local policy initiative in collaboration with youth organisations and the municipalities and disseminating these to diverse audiences. These would serve to showcase project successes and learning as well build ownership and capacity of the municipality staff and youth organisations.

Responsibility: GoFor, Municipality personnel, Youth Organisations. Timeline: By end of the project.

6. **International Lobbying:** for GoFor to realise its objective of full membership in the European Youth Forum, there is a need to dedicate some resources to lobbying diverse members of the Forum to help gain additional support, clarify the rationale for doing

so and seek ways to find solutions to the current objections to this on the part of some other Forum members.

Responsibility: GoFor. Timeline: Medium Term

Annex 1 Evaluation Terms of Reference



Terms of reference for the evaluation of “Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation” – GoFor (Contribution ID: 16360)

Date: 25 August 2025

1. Introduction

The democratic and civic space in Türkiye remains under pressure, with youth organisations facing significant barriers to participation in political processes and policy dialogue. Despite young people representing a large share of the population, their opportunities to influence decision-making remain limited, and civil society organisations working on youth issues operate in a restrictive and polarized environment.

Recent developments have highlighted both the potential and fragility of youth engagement. In particular, the March 2024 local elections saw significant mobilisation of young people, who played an active role in campaigning and monitoring. The 19 March 2025 incidents, where youth-led demonstrations were met with restrictive measures, underscored both the vibrancy of youth activism and the risks of backlash in the shrinking civic space. These events illustrate the dual reality in which youth organisations operate: a rising willingness among youth to engage, set against a political environment that often constrains their participation.

Within the framework of the Strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Türkiye 2021–2027, Sweden prioritises democracy, human rights, rule of law, and gender equality. Supporting pluralistic and independent civil society actors is central to this strategy. A key focus has been to strengthen civic space and empower underrepresented groups, including youth, as agents of democratic resilience.

It is within this context that Sweden, through Sida and the Embassy of Sweden in Ankara, engages with Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor). GoFor is the only youth network supported under Sida’s Türkiye portfolio and occupies a unique position as an umbrella platform for youth organisations nationwide. Through its advocacy and capacity-building work, GoFor seeks to expand democratic space for youth participation and strengthen the voice of young people in public life. This evaluation will assess Sida’s support to GoFor for the ongoing project period (May 2023 – April 2026, with this evaluation commissioned in August 2025), with the aim of ensuring accountability to Sida while also generating lessons that can inform GoFor’s institutional learning, sustainability, and Sida’s future funding decisions.

2. Evaluation object: intervention to be evaluated

The evaluation object is the Sida-funded intervention “Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation” (Contribution ID 16360), implemented by Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor) in

cooperation with LSU The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations where GoFor forwards funds to LSU. The intervention runs from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2026, with a total Sida contribution of SEK 14.5 million .

GoFor is a youth-led umbrella organisation established in 2015, bringing together youth organisations from across Türkiye to promote young people's rights and participation in democratic life. It aspires to function as a de facto National Youth Council, representing a wide range of youth voices at national, regional, and international levels. Sida has partnered with GoFor since 2023; this is Sida's first direct support to a youth network in Türkiye and the only Sida-funded intervention in the country with a dedicated youth participation focus .

The intervention has four stated objectives:

- Strengthen youth organisations through capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support.
- Expand youth participation in decision-making by supporting advocacy initiatives and structured dialogue between youth and decision-makers.
- Increase cooperation and networking among youth organisations, and between youth groups and public institutions.
- Develop GoFor as an institution with improved governance, strategy, and financial sustainability .

The intervention is structured around three interlinked strands of work:

1. Advocacy and Representation: Coordinating campaigns and dialogues to amplify youth concerns in public debate and policymaking.
2. Capacity Building: Providing training, mentorship, sub-grants, and resources for member organisations, including the establishment of a youth expert pool.
3. Organisational Strengthening and International Cooperation: Enhancing GoFor's governance and sustainability while partnering with LSU to exchange knowledge and connect Turkish and Swedish youth organisations .

The direct target groups are GoFor's member organisations, youth leaders, and staff engaged in advocacy, training, and network-building. The end-beneficiaries are young people in Türkiye, particularly underrepresented groups such as women, regional and minority youth, and LGBTQI youth. Other stakeholders include public authorities, political parties, and civil society organisations that engage with GoFor's advocacy and programmes .

The project has national coverage, with outreach to regions outside Ankara and Istanbul. It also includes international exchange and learning through cooperation with LSU in Sweden and participation in European youth networks. Sida is the primary donor for this intervention; no other donors provide comparable large-scale funding .

The intervention is guided by a Theory of Change (ToC) and Results Framework (RAF). These documents describe how advocacy, capacity building, and international cooperation are expected to strengthen youth organisations, increase youth participation, and expand civic space. The evaluation shall take the project documents including ToC and RAF as reference points for assessing results, and examine how effectively these frameworks have been applied in practice including their clarity, efficiency, and use for monitoring, learning, and adaptation.

Key issues for evaluators to be aware of include:

- Review of the organisational capacity and ability to achieve program objectives.
- Sustainability of GoFor as an institution, including funding diversification beyond Sida.
- Integration of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems.
- The effectiveness of GoFor–LSU partnership in delivering mutual benefits.
- Ensuring inclusion of diverse youth groups (regional, minority, women, LGBTQI) across activities .

For further information, the full intervention proposal, including the ToC and RAF, is attached as Annex D.

3. Evaluation purpose: Intended use

The evaluation has three main purposes:

1. **Learning for GoFor:** To generate actionable insights that strengthen GoFor's institutional capacity, ensure long-term sustainability, and support refinement of its strategic direction.
2. **Decision-making for Sida:** To provide Sida with robust evidence on the results achieved, the effectiveness of approaches used, and the sustainability of outcomes, thereby informing Sida's decision on continued funding beyond the current project period.
3. **Accountability:** To assure Sida and Swedish taxpayers that the contribution has been managed in line with requirements for compliance, governance, and financial responsibility.

The evaluation is thus intended to fulfil both learning and accountability functions. It will also help Sida and its partner GoFor assess progress of the ongoing intervention and learn from what works well and less well. The evaluation will be used to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved.

4. Evaluation users

The table below lists the primary and secondary users of the evaluation. The **primary users** will use the findings of the evaluation directly, and will be involved in the evaluation during the whole process. The **secondary users** will only use the end results (e.g. as readers of the final report).

	Who	Why	How to interact with them
Primary users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Embassy of Sweden in Ankara - GoFor 	Achieve the purpose of the evaluation (as in section 3)	See section 13 (organisation of evaluation management)
Possible secondary users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sida HQ, - LSU, - and potential future donors (such as the EU) 	If deemed necessary in the future	

5. Evaluation purpose: Timing

The evaluation shall cover the entire Sida support period with particular focus on results and developments up to the contracting date.

6. Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope will include:

- All outcomes of the Sida-funded programme. The evaluation should focus on results and impact in the following areas:
 - Advocacy and political participation of youth.
 - Capacity and sustainability of youth organisations.
 - Network building at national and international level.
 - Financial efficiency and governance
- **Geographical area and target groups:** The evaluator should propose the most relevant scope in terms of geographical coverage and priority target groups, while ensuring sufficient attention to inclusion of diverse youth constituencies.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Special attention should be given to how GoFor has used its Theory of Change, Results and Resources Framework, and MEL systems in practice, both for accountability and for internal learning and adaptation.
- It is important to briefly assess the cooperation with LSU, focusing on the mutual added value of the partnership, and to examine the extent to which GoFor has strengthened the capacity and influence of its member organisations in youth participation and advocacy.

If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

7. Evaluation questions

Relevance

- How well does the intervention respond to the current constraints on civic space and the priority needs of diverse youth (women, Kurdish/Roma/minority, LGBTQI, NEET), and to what extent were these needs systematically assessed and updated during implementation?
- To what extent is the Theory of Change still valid in the evolving political context, and have assumptions/risks been revisited and adapted?

Coherence

- **Municipal and Political Partnerships:** How coherent and strategically aligned is GoFor's collaboration with municipalities and political actors, and to what extent are these partnerships functioning in practice and contributing to youth participation?
- **Civil Society Complementarity:** How well does GoFor's work complement the efforts of other youth and civil society organisations, avoiding duplication and fostering synergies in advocacy and capacity-building?

- Partnership with LSU: What is the added value and role clarity in the GoFor–LSU partnership, and how well are responsibilities, timelines, and mutual benefits realised?
- To what extent are safeguards in place to maintain impartiality (e.g., perceived proximity to specific parties) while engaging duty-bearers?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the intervention achieved intended outcomes: stronger youth-CSO capacities; meaningful youth participation in decision-making; functioning youth councils/structured dialogue; and tangible advocacy influence (e.g., pledges, policy/strategy processes, practice changes)? Are there any unintended/spillover results or outcomes?
- What credible evidence (indicators, baselines, targets, contribution analysis) links key outputs (e.g., pledges, MoUs, research/briefs, fora, expert-pool matches) to measurable changes in behaviour, relationships, and decisions by target actors?
- Inclusion: Are marginalised youth groups equitably reached and represented in results (membership, leadership, agenda-setting), and what barriers remain?
- How effectively are political and reputational risks (including media attacks) identified, mitigated, and acted on without diluting rights-based commitments and gender/human-rights standards?

Efficiency

- How economically are resources converted into results, i.e inflation/exchange-rate volatility, travel choices, and the administrative burden of reporting and MEL?
- Are management processes (work-planning, timely requests/approvals, procurement, audit etc.) proportionate and timely, reducing delays and last-minute changes?
- Does the GoFor–LSU collaboration, and partnerships with other actors, represent good value for money relative to their costs and realised results?
- To what extent does GoFor’s MEL system function as an effective way of working, capturing and framing results, and ensuring systematic follow-up while also producing concise, outcome-focused reporting that is useful for both Sida and internal learning?

Sustainability

- Institutional: To what extent has GoFor reduced reliance on a few key individuals in its Secretariat or leadership, and instead developed resilient organisational systems and broader ownership across the Board, member organisations, and staff? To what extent are routines, knowledge management, and decision-making processes embedded in ways that make results less vulnerable to turnover, political pressure, or personal networks?
- Are municipal youth strategies/councils and other mechanisms likely to endure (ownership, budgets, formal mandates), and are there pathways from visibility/pledges to institutionalised change?
- Is MEL embedded (routines, skills, indicators) to sustain adaptive management and outcome tracking?

- Cross-cutting: How likely is it that gender equality, HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches remain embedded in partners' policies and practices?

Questions are expected to be further developed in the tender by the tenderer and further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation. Please note that in line with Sida's utilisation-focused approach, the final evaluation questions should always serve the overall purpose of the evaluation (the intended use and the primary users).

8. Evaluation quality

Evaluation quality concerns both the **evaluation approach**, i.e. how the evaluation work is implemented, and **evaluation methodology**, i.e. how the conclusions are made.

When it comes to the **evaluation approach**, the evaluation shall:

- be utilisation-focused
- take Sida's development perspectives into account
- make sure no one is harmed

The evaluation shall be utilisation-focused which means that the evaluators must facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how all aspects of the evaluation will affect the use of the evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation must be planned and conducted in ways to enhance the utilisation of both the findings and of the process itself, to inform decisions and improve performance. This approach entails close interaction between the evaluators and the primary users in the evaluation assignment. The interaction must last throughout the entire evaluation process. An important component of this participatory approach is to enable joint knowledge creation between evaluators and the users of the evaluation. The evaluation process shall be adapted to major context changes if needed, so that the evaluation always continues to serve the overall purpose/intended use.

Whenever relevant the evaluation shall take Sida's five development perspectives into account, when they design and implement the evaluation.⁴⁵ The perspectives shall be integrated in all Sida's operations and shall therefore be considered in the evaluation design and implementation of the evaluation.

The evaluators must consider if any part of their work can harm any group, especially groups that face discrimination. If so, they need to mitigate these risks. In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators have to ensure an evaluation design and process that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk in any step of the evaluation process.

When it comes to **evaluation methodology**, the evaluation shall:

- be reliable
- be transparent

Reliable means that the ambition at the outset is that the evaluators will handle all relevant methodological challenges so that each conclusion can be trusted beyond reasonable doubt and can hold up against external scrutiny. A lower level of reliability for specific questions is only

⁴⁵ The five development perspectives are: poor people's perspective on development, human rights based approach, the conflict perspective, the gender equality perspective and the climate and environment perspective. Please note that what we are speaking of here is how the evaluation is implemented. Any of the perspectives could also be examined by one or several of the evaluation questions.

acceptable if it is due to reasons that was not foreseeable at the outset or if it was agreed at start of the evaluation.

Transparent means that it shall be clear to the users of the evaluation how reliable each conclusion is. Hence, when a conclusion is stated it shall be clear if it is speculative or whether there are some other specific methodological considerations that affect the reliability.

Furthermore, it shall be possible for the users to understand how the evaluators handle relevant methodological challenges for each conclusion. The methodological challenges includes (to the extent relevant):

- How data was collected and processed. This includes sampling methods, interview techniques and cleaning protocol, as required by the chosen evaluation design.
- How source criticism was applied. This includes assessing the potential biases of the sources, and assessing how the sources know what they claim. When a source is triangulated it includes an assessment of whether the triangulated sources are independent from each other and/or have opposing biases.
- How the evaluators arrived at descriptive conclusions. This includes the operationalization of concepts, e.g. a description of how concepts are defined in terms of observables.
- How the evaluators inferred causality. This means describing how the evaluators move from observations (e.g. observing that the cause happened and that the effect happened), to inferring that there is a causal link between cause and effect. A respondent claiming that there was an causal effect is not, in itself, sufficient evidence, unless there has to be some reason to believe that the respondent were able to infer causality.
- How generalisation beyond the collected data is made (e.g. through representative sampling or some theory based argument). If the generalisation is based on an informal assessment, then this should be made clear to the users.

The evaluators shall have an **independent quality assurance** during the evaluation process. One aim of the quality assurance should be to ensure that the evaluation meets the quality expectations that are outlined in these ToR. Evaluators should be prepared to share the evaluation data and analysis in a GDPR compliant manner, with Sida upon request.

In addition to the criteria outlined above, the evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC (2010) “Quality Standards for Development Evaluation” and OECD/DAC (2014) “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation”, as well as the OECD/DAC (2021) “Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully”.

9. Time schedule

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting VIRTUAL	Embassy, Evaluators	11-09-2025
2. Draft inception report	Evaluator	26-09-2025

3. Deadline for comments from intended users to evaluators	Embassy	02-10-2025
4. Inception meeting VIRTUAL	Embassy, Evaluators	03-10-2025
5. Deadline final inception report	Evaluators	10-10-2025
6. Debriefing meeting	Embassy, Evaluators	After the field visits, TBD.
7. Participatory workshop(s) for joint knowledge creation	Evaluators, GoFor, if deemed necessary also LSU	Date to be suggested by the evaluators (to be agreed with participants)
8. Submission of draft evaluation report	Evaluators	17-11-2025
9. Deadline to submit comments to evaluators	Embassy, GoFor	24-11-2025
10. Results Presentation Meeting	Embassy, GoFor, Evaluators	TBD
11. Submission of final evaluation report	Evaluators	01 December 2025

10. The deliverables

The evaluators shall, during the course of the evaluation, produce a number of deliverables. These are outlined below.

10.1 The proposal

Before the evaluation starts the evaluators shall submit their proposal (call-off response). This is described in the call-off inquiry document.

10.2 The inception report

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation team proceeds with the implementation. The inception report should be written in English. The inception report should be maximum 10 pages excluding annexes.

The inception report should further develop the **evaluation approach**, including:

- how to apply the utilisation-focused approach e.g. how the intended users will participate in and contribute to the process
- how to apply Sida's development perspectives to the evaluation process
- how to make sure no one is harmed by the evaluation

The inception report should also develop and refine the **stakeholder analysis** that is outlined in section 4 above. The stakeholder analysis should describe:

- the different stakeholders' interests or values in the evaluation process
- the stakeholders' roles in the evaluation process

- a clear process description of stakeholder participation

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users shall agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation and how to ensure their participation.

The evaluators should develop the **design and methods** in detail during the inception phase and present them in the inception report. This involves describing how the methodological challenges in section 8 will be handled for each evaluation question:

- how to collect and process data
- how to apply source criticism
- how to make descriptive conclusions
- how to infer causality
- how to generalise beyond the data generated

All limitations to the evaluation design and methods shall be made explicit, in addition to any remaining underlying assumptions. The consequences of these limitations and assumptions for the evaluation outputs should be discussed. This information should usually be presented in the form of an evaluation matrix.

As a general rule, the evaluators should develop the **theory of change** of the intervention in the inception report. The inception report should at a minimum include:

- a description of the rationale for the intervention
- the objectives of the intervention
- how the evaluated intervention has – or is expected to – support end-beneficiaries
- major underlying factors/assumptions that affect the success of the intervention

The inception report should include a reassessment of the **evaluability**⁴⁶ of the evaluation questions. The reassessment can lead to that Sida agrees to adjust the evaluation questions or the scope of the evaluation, but only under the following conditions:

- the reassessment of the evaluability is based on information that was not known when the evaluators accepted the proposal and which could not have been foreseen by the evaluators when they wrote the proposal, and
- the reassessment is based on things that are verifiable (at least in principle) by Sida

The inception report should include a detailed **time and work plan**, including:

- number of working days for each team member for the remainder of the evaluation
- space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation

10.3 Deliverables during the data collection and analysis phase

During the data collection and analysis phase, the evaluators will implement the data collection and analysis plan developed during the inception phase.

As mentioned above, an important component of Sida's utilisation focused approach is to enable joint knowledge creation between the evaluators and the users of the evaluation. The evaluators therefore need to plan for and conduct **participatory workshop(s)** with different key stakeholders in a relevant manner to the particular evaluation.

⁴⁶ Evaluability is defined as "the extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion."

10.4 The final report

The final report should be no more than 30 pages excluding annexes. It shall be written in English. The report should be written in a plain, clear and unambiguous language. It should be easily understood by the primary users of the evaluation, as defined in these ToR, and the form of the report should be appropriate given the purpose(s) of the evaluation. It should have a clear structure and follow the format and instructions outlined in Sida's report template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). To assure these goals the report should be professionally proof read.

The executive summary of the final report should be maximum 5 pages. In the executive summary the key findings should be presented as early as possible in the text. It should be clear to the reader how reliable each conclusion is, especially if a conclusion is based on less reliable evidence.

The executive summary should easily be understood by all intended audience(s), including both primary and secondary users. Hence, in terms of the accessibility of the language, the requirements are higher for the executive summary than for the rest of the report.

The main body of the report shall present the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned separately and with a clear distinction between them. Recommendations should flow logically from conclusions and be specific and directed to relevant intended users. It should be clear which recommendations are most important / priority to address.

Evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis, meaning each finding should be presented in a way that clarifies what evidence it is based on and how reliable that evidence is. Hence, the reader should be able to understand how the evaluators handled all the methodological problems outlined in section 8 above, to the extent relevant (i.e. data collection and processing, source criticism, descriptive conclusions, causal inference and generalisations).

The **final report annexes** shall always include:

- the ToR
- the stakeholder analysis⁴⁷
- the evaluation matrix (or equivalent presentation).

The inception report does not have to be included in its entirety in the final report annexes. However, major diversions from the assignment as outlined in these ToR, should be described in the final report annexes. The annexes shall describe:

- the purpose of the evaluation, specifically who is supposed to use the evaluation and for what
- how the utilisation-focused approach has been implemented during the evaluation, including how the intended users participated in and contributed to the process and how process use was facilitated, i.e. how the evaluators created space for reflection
- how the evaluators applied Sida's development perspectives to the evaluation process, and how they made sure no one was harmed by the evaluation

⁴⁷ The stakeholder analysis can be excluded if there is a good reason to do so, e.g. where it includes sensitive information. If so, this should be discussed and agreed with Sida before delivery of the final report.

The final report annexes can also include evaluation management issues e.g. who was consulted when and key meetings that were held. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personally identifiable data if this is deemed safe and relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit/embassy. The inclusion of personally identifiable data in the report must always be supported by written or otherwise recorded consent.

11. Publication of the final report

The evaluator shall, upon approval by Sida/Embassy of the final report, and using Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C) and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication database. The order is placed by sending the approved report to Nordic Morning (sida@ljungbergs.se), with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ6150031".
4. Type of allocation: "sakanslag".
5. Type of order: "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas."

12. Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by Swedish Embassy (Embassy) in Ankara. The primary intended user are the Embassy and GoFor.

The evaluator and GoFor has not contributed to the ToR and will be provided an opportunity to comment on the inception report as well as the final report, but will not be involved in the management of the evaluation. Hence the commissioner will evaluate tenders, approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The start-up meeting and the debriefing/validation workshop will be held with the commissioner only.

13. Evaluation team qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

- In-depth knowledge of human rights, youth rights, democracy, and civic space in Türkiye, including risks of polarization and shrinking civic space.
- Proven experience evaluating youth participation, civic engagement, and advocacy programmes in restrictive environments.
- Strong understanding of Turkish youth civil society networks and coalition dynamics, including representativeness, legitimacy, and inclusion of marginalized youth (e.g. Kurdish, Roma, LGBTI+).
- Knowledge of Turkish governance structures at both national and local administrations/municipal levels (e.g. local youth councils), and ability to assess municipal practices, youth policies, and policy commitments.
- Documented expertise in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (RBM/MEL), including outcome harvesting, ToC testing, and adaptive management in politically sensitive contexts.
- At least one local consultant with first-hand experience of Türkiye's youth, civil society and governance context.
- Proven communication and report writing skills,
- Ability to work in English and Turkish.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local evaluation consultants are included in the team, as they often have contextual knowledge that is of great value to the evaluation.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

Please note that in the tender, the tenderers must propose a team leader that takes part in the evaluation by at least 25% of the total evaluation team time including core team members, specialists and all support functions, but excluding time for the quality assurance expert.

14. Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 800.000 SEK.

Invoicing and payment shall be managed according to the following:

The Consultant may invoice a maximum of 30% of the total amount after approval by Embassy of the Inception Report and a maximum of 70 % after approval by Embassy of the Final Report and when the assignment is completed.

The contact person at Swedish Embassy is Selin Yasamis, NPO selin.yasamis@gov.se. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by the Embassy.

Contact details to intended users (GoFor and Embassy) will be provided by the Embassy.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics for booking interviews, preparing visits etc. including any necessary security arrangements.

15. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation (to be included in the email)

- Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021–2027
- Review of the internal control of GoFor.

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention)	
Title of the evaluation object	“Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation Project”
ID no. in PLANIt	16360
Dox no./Archive case no.	UM2022/40737/ANKA
Activity period (if applicable)	2023-05-01/2026-04-30
Agreed budget (if applicable)	14 500 000 kr

Main sector ⁴⁸	Democracy, human rights and gender equality
Name and type of implementing organisation ⁴⁹	Go-For Youth Organisations Forum Association
Aid type ⁵⁰	C01 Project type interventions
Swedish strategy	Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2021– 2027

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Embassy in Ankara
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Selin Yasamis
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post, or other)	Other
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	16360

Annex C: Template for decentralised evaluations

Annex D: Project/Programme document (to be included in the email)

⁴⁸ Choose from Sida's twelve main sectors: education; research; democracy, human rights and gender equality; health; conflict, peace and security; humanitarian aid; sustainable infrastructure and services; market development; environment; agriculture and forestry; budget support; or other (e.g. multi-sector).

⁴⁹ Choose from the five OECD/DAC-categories: public sector institutions; NGO or civil society; public-private partnerships and networks; multilateral organisations; and other (e.g. universities, consultancy firms).

⁵⁰ Choose from the eight OECD/DAC-categories: budget/sector support; core contributions/pooled funds; project type; experts/technical assistance; scholarships/student costs in donor countries; debt relief; admin costs not included elsewhere; and other in-donor expenditures.]

Annex 2 Evaluation Matrix

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
Relevance				
Question 1a. Theory of Change To what extent is the Theory of Change still valid in the evolving political context?	<p>1.1 Extent to which priority needs of MOs and other youth organisation actors related to limited space for youth political participation in decision-making remain the same as those identified in GoFor's original Theory of Change and Problem Analysis Tree</p> <p>1.2 Clarity of the change pathways in the project's Theory of Change</p> <p>1.3 Extent to which the project and GoFor have been able to achieve key outcomes and objectives following the main change pathways outlined in the project Theory of change</p> <p>(4 point scale – Completely achieved, Mostly achieved, somewhat achieved, limited achievement)</p> <p>– will reference with results documented for EQs 5 and 6 on project outcomes</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents</p> <p>Review of background documents re Turkish political context</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, Political Parties, LSU, Donors (including Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye)</p> <p>FGDs - MOs</p>	<p>Government and CSOs likely to have different views of what the problems related to youth political participation are as well as what the levels and types of youth political participation are. The evaluation will need to present both sets of data and viewpoints and present with explanatory footnotes related to any significant differences.</p> <p>Donors and some CSOs will likely have more up to date data. Government data definitions of political participation may be more narrowly focused than that of GoFor.</p> <p>While external reports on Türkiye's political context are widely available and credible (e.g., Human Rights Watch, Freedom House), GoFor's internal documentation on how the organization has formally revisited its core assumptions and political risks appears limited. As a result, assessing the ongoing relevance of the Theory of Change (ToC) will require careful triangulation of available documents with stakeholder interviews to ensure that it reflects current realities and remains adaptable to evolving contexts.</p>
Question 1b. Theory of Change.	1b.1 GoFor has revised its Theory of Change to reflect changes in the political and funding context	Document review	Review of project documents KIIs – GoFor, staff	As above.

ANNEX 2 EVALUATION MATRIX

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
How have assumptions and risks been revisited and adapted?	<p>1b.2 GoFor's MEL system/processes has clearly identified any new, heightened or decreased risks that have emerged since 2023.</p> <p>1b.3 Types and timing of changes made by GoFor related to the underlying assumptions behind its Theory of Change and the five key pathways to change identified in its logframe</p>	KIIs FGDs	FGDs – MOs	
Coherence				
Question 2: <u>Municipal and Political Partnerships:</u> How coherent and strategically aligned is GoFor's collaboration with municipalities and diverse political actors?	<p>2.1 Extent to which GoFor collaboration approach and actions are well aligned with the youth political participation objectives and strategies of municipalities and diverse political actors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GoFor's collaboration approach and actions are aligned across most municipalities and a wide range of political actors (left, centre, right wing, diverse demographic groups). - GoFor's collaboration approach and actions are mainly aligned with selected municipalities and selected political actors that are like-minded 	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents, municipal and political party youth strategies</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, Political Parties, Municipal governments and national government actors</p> <p>FGDs - MOs</p>	<p>Municipal governments in Türkiye reflect a wide range of political affiliations and approaches to youth participation as do the main five political parties. Not all municipalities will have a youth strategy or council and there may be limited data on youth policies, etc. in each municipality. The evaluation will focus on the municipalities in which GoFor and/or its MOs have been working.</p> <p>Municipal strategy documents and political party youth wing programs are usually available, but they often reflect aspirational commitments rather than actual practice. Their reliability is therefore partial and should be tested against GoFor's and MO's lived experiences on the ground.</p>
Effectiveness				
Question 3: <u>Outcomes</u> To what extent has the intervention achieved intended outcomes? i) Stronger youth-CSO capacities; ii) Meaningful youth participation in decision-making;	<p>3.1 Key results achieved related to the five intended outcomes</p> <p>For each of the five outcome streams (pathways to change):</p> <p>(5 point scale –1 = Few or no anticipated outcomes achieved, 2 = Less than half of outcomes achieved, 3 = Most anticipated outcomes achieved, 4 = All anticipated outcomes achieved, 5 = Anticipated results exceeded targets)</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, Political Parties, LSU, Donors (including Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye)</p>	<p>For each outcome stream we will need to identify any outcomes not yet achieved and why. This assessment would be based on based on the outcome indicators outlined in GoFor's Log frame complemented by indicators based on the Youth Participation Framework</p> <p>GoFor's progress reports document a large number of project results at the outputs level and it will not be possible to verify all of these. The evaluation will focus at the outcomes level to the extent possible. In some</p>

ANNEX 2 EVALUATION MATRIX

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
<p>iii) Functioning youth councils/structured dialogue;</p> <p>iv) Tangible advocacy influence (e.g., pledges, policy/strategy processes, practice changes, participation in international fora) and;</p> <p>v) Functional partnerships that contribute to meaningful youth participation</p>	<p>i) Increased Financial Capacity of the Youth NGO's; Sustainable Human Resource support system established to assist youth CSOs; Youth CSOs empowered to take more active leadership role; Active participation of youth leaders/representatives in advocacy processes</p> <p>ii) Inclusion of different youth groups ensured; Increased sources of knowledge and empowerment for youth CSOs; Number of functioning youth councils at municipal and national levels in regions GoFor and its MOs operate</p> <p>iii) Provision of new spaces and sources of information to increase the contact and communication of the duty bearers with young people; Provision of new opportunities to reach sources for capacity development for municipalities/duty bearers; Adoption of youth participation pledges, strategies and councils</p> <p>iv) Increased opportunities for national & international representation and recognition (visibility) for youth organisations and their members</p> <p>v) number of partnerships established which promote youth leadership both within their organisations as well as through external advocacy</p>		<p>International youth organisations</p> <p>FGDs - MOs</p>	<p>instances, we will need to assess the relevant outputs and how these are contributing to the intended outcome.</p>
<p>Question 4: Unexpected Outcomes</p> <p>Have there been any unintended/spillover positive or negative results or outcomes?</p>	<p>Number and types of untended /spillover positive or negative results</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, Political Parties, LSU, Donors (including Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye)</p> <p>International youth organisations</p>	<p>Unintended outcomes are unlikely to be systematically documented in project reports. Evidence will primarily be qualitative, derived from KIIs and FGDs. The main reliability challenge lies in distinguishing between isolated incidents and recurring, unintended consequences and establishing credible causal links to the intervention's activities.</p> <p>The analysis of unintended results will need to include a brief explanation of why these results occurred as</p>

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
			FGDs – MOs	well as evidence that these unexpected results occurred. In some cases reports of these unexpected results may be mainly anecdotal and will require further triangulation to verify. The main credibility challenge is separating isolated cases from recurring unintended consequences and linking them to programme activities.
Question 5 Inclusion: To what extent and how have the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, NEET, conservative, NEET youth, etc. been impartially and equitably reached and represented in participatory processes (membership, leadership, agenda-setting and results)?	5.1 Number of youth organisations involved as GoFor MOs or that participate in GoFor events that represent women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, NEET, conservative youth (also compared to their proportion of MO membership) 5.2 Number of youth organisations that represent women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, NEET, conservative, etc. youth that have directly benefited from GoFor support and activities. 5.3 Ways in which youth organisations that represent women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, NEET, conservative youth have been involved in GoFor activities and processes (membership, leadership, agenda setting). 5.4 Identification of any types of youth organisations and youth that have not participated in GoFor activities or membership and reasons for their lack of participation. 5.5 Youth organisations that represent women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, NEET, conservative youth indicate that GoFor activities and processes are addressing their priority needs.	Document review KIs FGDs	Review of project documents KIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, Political Parties, municipal and national government officials LSU, Donors (including Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye) International youth organisations FGDs – MOs	It may be challenging to find youth population data disaggregated by intersectional characteristics. Where this exists, the evaluation team will use this data to inform the related analysis. Where it does not, the team will need to use either more generic data or make informed estimates. Disaggregated data is scarce, and there is a risk of social desirability bias, as organisations may overstate engagement with marginalised youth. Credibility will be improved by collecting concrete examples of meaningful participation directly from youth representatives Involvement of or targeting gender and ethnic minorities, etc. is often a sensitive issue in Türkiye and it may not always be possible to ask direct questions about these issues during KIs and FGDs.

ANNEX 2 EVALUATION MATRIX

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
Question 6: Risks What are and how effectively are political and reputational risks (including media attacks) identified, mitigated, and acted on without diluting rights-based commitments and gender/human-rights standards?	6.1 GoFor has clearly identified and acted on political and reputational risks and can provide multiple examples of what these risks are 6.2 Types of actions GoFor has taken to address these political and reputational risks 6.3 GoFor's actions to address political and reputational risks maintain rights-based commitments and gender/human-rights standards. (4 point scale – 1= Few to no actions do so, 2 = Some actions do so, 3 = Most actions do so, 4= All actions do so)	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents and relevant media reports KIIs – GoFor, MOs, Turkish Youth CSOs, International , municipal and national government officials, youth organisations, Media, donors (including Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye) FGDs – MOs	There is substantial data on political context in Türkiye the team can use to frame this part of the assessment. Reputational risk is partially based on perceptions so discussions with GoFor, etc. will need to be clear about whose perceptions are being documented and to include a representative range of views.
Question 7: Value Added: What is the Value Added and role clarity of the GoFor–LSU collaboration related to the strengthening of GoFor's organisational capacity and international reach and the realisation of mutual benefits?	7.1 LSU and GoFor have a clear understanding of what their roles are in this project in terms of division of labour and which organisation provides what kind of support and what is the collaboration process. 7.2 GoFor has strengthened its organisational capacity related to MEL, the types of support they can provide to their MOs, financial management, etc.due to the collaboration with LSU. 7.3 GoFor and LSU have increased their international reach due to their collaboration 7.4 Both organisations are able to cite clear benefits arising from their collaboration	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents KIIs – GoFor and LSU, Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye	The two organisations may have differing views on the answers to this question. If this is the case, both views will be presented as a part of the analysis.

Questions raised in ToR	Indicators to be used in Evaluation	Methods	Sources	Availability and Reliability of Data / comments
Efficiency				
Question 8 <u>Partner Support</u> How efficient is GoFor's support for its partnerships with other actors in terms of their access to funding, capacity building and learning, efficiency of reporting and communications and advocacy capacity?	8.1 GoFor has been able to support its MOs achieve what they set out to achieve with the funding provided within the time frame agreed and reporting requirements in line with MO capacity. 8.2 GoFor provides capacity building (including for advocacy skills) and learning support to its partners and other actors in ways that are readily accessible in terms of clarity, cost, location and timing. 8.3 Project implementation benefited from good communication between Go-For members and partner institutions and other actors with systematic coordination between the key stakeholders, Go-For and LSU.	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents, including monitoring and progress reports. Review of 2024 Management Assessment Report of GoFor KIIs – GoFor and LSU, MOs, Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye, other GoFor actors/partners FGDs with MOs	The team will make use of the information provided in the Dec. 2024 Management Assessment Report of GoFor . Otherwise findings for this EQ will be based on interviews with GoFor the MOs, Sida and LSU. Quality and competence of the progress and monitoring reports will be a significant factor determining reliability of evidence. Will be triangulated with MO FGDs and KIIs with other key stakeholders
Question 9 <u>MEL System</u> To what extent does GoFor's MEL system function as an effective and sustainable mechanism (capturing outcomes, ensuring adaptive management, enabling useful reporting and learning)?	9.1 GoFor's MEL system is able to identify and measure outcomes in a systematic way with credible evidence measurable within framework of project and organizational resources. 9.2 GoFor's MEL system is able to inform management, design and implementation decisions in response to a changing environment as needed and in a timely way (use of adaptive management approach).	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents KIIs – GoFor and LSU, Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye FGDs with MOs	The cooperation of GoFor will constitute an important factor to obtain relevant information, as it will be also for the other EQ criteria. GoFor has submitted lengthy progress reports to Sida which should provide a basis for related evidence that can be verified with KIIs and FGDs with GoFor MOs. Credibility also hinges on whether MEL captures outcome-level change or mainly outputs. Reliability

ANNEX 2 EVALUATION MATRIX

	<p>9.3 GoFor's MEL system is able to report on results effectively against its logframe and performance measurement framework clearly and concisely.</p> <p>9.4 GoFor's MEL system is able to identify, analyse and share lessons learned from project implementation and from the work done by its MOs</p>			may be uneven due to differing MO practices and MEL capacity.
Sustainability				
<p>Question 10 <u>Institutional Sustainability of Go-</u> What factors are contributing to or hindering institutional sustainability of GoFor and MOs?</p>	<p>10.1 Institutional arrangements are in place at GoFor to ensure retention of capacity building activities of MOs and for their own staff.</p> <p>10.2 Go-For exhibits strong policy support and ownership to further build on the improvements and objectives addressed by the project</p> <p>10.3 Go-For and LSU have willingness, plans and sufficient funds from diverse sources to extend the project's scope in a second phase with increased funding at a larger geographical scale</p> <p>10.4 Networks are strengthened between Go-For members and other actors (municipalities, local State institutions, NGOs) to collaborate and facilitate continuous knowledge sharing and learning from experiences gained throughout project implementation.</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor and LSU, MO's, other GoFor partners and actors, Youth CSOs in Türkiye Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye, International youth CSOs and networks</p> <p>FGDs - MOs</p>	<p>Strategic and financial documents are available, but they provide limited predictive value. More credible insights come from stakeholder perceptions of political will, donor interest, and organisational capacity. There will be a need to triangulate the GoFor staff inputs with those of LSU, the MOs and the Embassy of Sweden.</p>
<p>Question 11a <u>Municipal Level</u> What factors (e.g., ownership, budgets, political will) are contributing to or hindering the sustainability of municipal youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/councils, and other mechanisms</p>	<p>11a.1 Identification of factors and/or processes established that are contributing to the sustainability of municipal processes GoFor and its partners have established that contribute to the sustainability of youth mechanisms such as strategies/councils, and other mechanisms.</p> <p>11a.2 Identification of factors and/or processes that hinder or limit the sustainability of youth mechanisms</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Review of project documents</p> <p>KIIs – GoFor, Municipal partners, political parties and MPs, other youth CSOs in Türkiye,</p>	<p>Municipal governments exhibit diverse political affiliations and attitudes towards youth participation. Not all municipalities are equipped with a youth strategy or council, and sustainability will differ from municipality to municipality. Will need to measure/collect qualitative data related to willingness and capacity to actively engage and support the youth population. This ,au not be available for all municipalities being sampled.</p>

	such as strategies/councils, and other mechanisms established by GoFor and its partners 11a.3 GoFor's collaboration approach and actions are aligned across municipalities and a wide range of political actors (left, centre, right wing, diverse demographic groups).		Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye FGDs - MOs	
Question 11b What are the pathways from visibility /pledges to institutionalized change?	11b.1 Clear and successful change pathways established from visibility and pledges related to youth participation which are leading to long-lasting institutional change.	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents KIIs – GoFor, MO's, other GoFor partners and actors, municipal governments, Other Youth CSOs in Türkiye Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye FGDs - MOs	Written pledges and strategies are available, but are weak indicators. Budget allocations, staff positions, or formal regulatory changes would be more substantial and credible evidence. This information will be obtained from KIIs and FGDs as well as related documentation and can be considered reliable.
Cross-cutting issues				
Question 12 How likely is it that gender equality HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches will remain embedded in partners' policies and practices?	Impact created / expected to be created at Youth organisations that represent women, Kurdish/ Roma/ minorities, 12.1 LGBTQI, NEET, minority, conservative, etc. youth that have directly benefited from GoFor support and activities are sustained. 12.2 Identification of which and how many of these approaches are embedded in partners' policies and practices and partners' expect these to be sustained.	Document review KIIs FGDs	Review of project documents KIIs – GoFor and LSU, MO's, other GoFor partners, Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye, International youth CSOs and networks FGDs - MOs	Obtaining youth population data broken down by intersectional characteristics can be difficult. If available, the evaluation team will utilize this data to enhance the related analysis. Policies on gender, HRBA, and climate exist but are unreliable indicators of practice. More credible evidence comes from project reports, training, and interviews showing implementation. Data from the KIIs and MOs will be supplemented by documentation from each MO/ partner (MO gender policies, etc.).

Annex 3: Approaches and Methodology

A. Design and Conceptual Frameworks

The evaluation team the **Youth Participation Framework** outlined below as the main conceptual framework for this evaluation and have used this to help inform the evaluation conclusions. This Framework posits that there are five different youth participation levels within organisations and communities. These levels are not hierarchical in nature, and organisations and groups may support youth participation more than one level at the same time or just the one depending upon the organisation's structure, decision-making processes and mandate. The Framework focuses on what is meaningful youth participation, i.e., what is the quality of the participation.

The evaluation team used this framework to develop relevant indicators to assess the extent and quality of youth participation to which the project is contributing. The team also reviewed the diverse project outcomes from an overall youth participation lens as one means of assessing three of GoFor's objectives: i) Strengthening youth organisations through capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support; ii) Expanding youth participation in decision-making by supporting advocacy initiatives and structured dialogue between youth and decision-makers; iii) Increasing cooperation and networking among youth organisations, and between youth groups and public institutions. The fourth objective would be covered primarily through the efficiency and effectiveness questions.

The related indicators are both aligned with and used in addition to the key indicators outlined in GoFor's logframe and the other indicators the team developed along with data gathering tools as a part of the evaluation matrix.

Youth Participation Framework⁵¹

1. Youth are assigned actions to do but inform adult decision-making	Actions are adult initiated & run. Adults direct youth's actions. Youth have some understanding of the intentions, who makes decisions & why, and engage voluntarily ⁵² . Youth people have no control of the process, but influence adults through direct and indirect communication.
---	---

⁵¹ Excerpt adapted from: Fletcher, Adam. n.d., Youth Voice Toolbox. FreeChild Project. <http://www.freechild.org/YouthVoice/index.htm> unless otherwise referenced.

⁵² Roger Hart, N.D., Ladder of Youth Participation, UNICEF.

2. Youth are informed and consulted, and adults take action	Adult initiated and run. Youth have some understanding of issues and actions, and are consulted, but agenda and mandates are set by adults and adults determine and take action. Hart refers to this as tokenism. What this one-way flow of information does not do is to nurture cross-accountability between Youth and adults.
3. Adults initiate change and share decisions with youth	The leadership of adults is predominant, but Information is shared with youth. Their input helps informs planning, decision-making and evaluation of community actions and services.
4. Youth initiate change and take action	By focusing on the skills and leadership of youth this approach leverages the power of youth with the ability of youth to affect change in the whole community/society. Youth are the impetus and generators of action that reach other adolescents and people of all ages, as well as throughout their communities.
5. Youth initiate change while sharing decisions and action with adults.	This approach leverages youth skills and leadership with the power of adults to benefit the whole community. Youth are recognized as social change motivators and adults are engaged for their experience, abilities and access to resources.
6. All community members equally make decisions and take action.	This approach engages every person within an organization or community in decision-making and action using consultative and democratic processes. Through these processes all community members experience inclusive, meaningful, and empowering participation.

For each level of participation there is also a need to assess the degree of connectedness and meaningful engagement taking place and what degree of control youth have over the process and decisions made. *Connectedness* refers to the relationship youth have with the staff in the organization(s) concerned, their relationship with other people involved in the programme plus their direct connection with the wider community.⁵³

The evaluation team will use these criteria as well as more traditional criteria related to institutional capacity to help assess the institutional growth and status of GoFor's Member Organisations (MOs). This will include assessing any changes in their capacity to advocate to diverse institutions and organisations about youth issues and participation.

Diverse research has also identified diverse benefits of youth participation for organizations and communities. Some of these include:

⁵³ Gardner, Rebecca. *Youth in Philanthropy Seminar*. Session #19. 2 to 4 August 2004, Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre. Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Benefits to Organisations:

- Clarifies and brings focus to the organisation's mission.
- Organisations become more responsive to the needs and priorities of diverse youth, resulting in programme improvements.
- Diversification of outreach strategies
- Improved credibility
- Increased visibility in the community
- Provides a new source of energy and enthusiasm
- Enhances the commitment and energy of adults to the organisation.
- Leveraging resources
- Creates new networks⁵⁴

B. Analytical tools

The first two analytical tools outlined below are complementary in that one analyses the GoFor's project Theory of Change and the other the causal links between the intervention and its observed outcomes.

B.1 Theory Analysis

Theory analysis in evaluation is the process of breaking down an intervention's underlying theory of change (or logic model) to understand its structure, content, assumptions, and associated risks that could prevent achievement of results as well as to determine its strengths, limitations, and applicability.⁵⁵ In this instance, this theory analysis also includes a component based on a review of the intervention's Theory of Change and MEL system from an Adaptive Management perspective.

B.2 Contribution Analysis

Contribution analysis is also a theory-based approach that establishes a "plausible association" between an intervention and observed outcomes to answer "how and why" the change/results occurred as well as possible pathways to change. It does not seek to prove causation but to build a credible, evidence-based narrative by testing a theory of change, identifying other contributing factors, and eliminating alternative explanations.⁵⁶

B.3 Adaptive Management Analysis

Adaptive Management Framework (AMF) refers to a formal, cyclical process for improving management practices by systematically learning from the outcomes of operational programs. It involves a cycle of assessing problems, designing and implementing plans, monitoring results, evaluating outcomes, and adjusting plans based on what is learned. The goal is to reduce uncertainty in complex ecological and social systems, allowing managers to make evidence-based adjustments and improve management over time.⁵⁷

The evaluation team would assess the extent to which and in which ways GoFor has been able to apply Adaptive Management processes to the work

⁵⁴ Gardner, op cit.

⁵⁵ Melanie McEwan, 2012, Chapter 5: Theory Analysis and Evaluation

⁵⁶ Marina Apgar and Carlisle Levine, 2024, Contribution Analysis, Better Evaluation

⁵⁷ Province of British Colombia, 2025, Adaptive Management.

it does and in its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system (MEL). This is particularly critical given the rapid growth of its membership and the changing political and civil society space in Türkiye.

B.4 Power, HRBA and Inclusion Analysis

The evaluation uses a Power Analysis from an Inclusion and HRBA perspective to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the GoFor intervention results. The team has adapted this analytical framework to assess and analyse institutional empowerment and diverse youth's participation, empowerment and realisation of human rights. We looked specifically for evidence that the GoFor intervention contributed and/or directly led to increased empowerment regarding:

Targeted Institutions

- Institutional capacity to convene and engage in dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders and citizens on issues related to youth participation and rights
- Institutional knowledge about diverse aspects of inclusive and rights-based youth participation
- Institutional capacity to advocate for development and adoption of inclusive youth policies, strategies and programmes both internally and externally.

Targeted rights-holders'

- Ability to advocate for their human rights
- Ability and space for them to take part in governance processes at the municipal and national levels
- Their power over, to, with and within to make and influence decisions affecting their daily lives and rights.

This analysis will be based on data gathered and triangulated through the document review, KIIs, and FGDS.

Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Interviewed/Consulted

List of Persons/Organisations Interviewed

Please note: While we will maintain a list with complete information for the evaluation report itself we do not include people's names and generally only include the name of the organisation consulted – for confidentiality reasons. We can add or delete rows as needed.

No.	# of Persons Interviewed	Role/Organisation
National Youth Councils		
1.	2	National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organisations (LSU)
2.	1	Deutscher Bundesjugendring - German Federal Youth Council (DBJR)
3.	1	Belarusian National Youth Council (RADA)
4.	1	European Youth Forum
National Government Ministries		
5.	1	Directorate of EU Affairs – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Other Turkish CSOs		
6.	1	Ceza İnfaz Sisteminde Sivil Toplum Derneği (CİSST)
7.	2	Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi Derneği (STGM)
8.	1	Four Seasons Learning Association
9.	1	Hafıza Merkezi
10.	1	STDV (Support to Civil Society Foundation)
11.	1	Human Rights Association
GoFor Staff		
12.	5	GoFor
Political Parties		
13.	1	People's Equality and Democracy Party (CHP)
14.	1	CHP MP

15.	2	Labour Party (EMEP) MP
Donors		
16.	1	ILO
17.	1	UN Women
18.	1	UNDP
19.	1	Embassy of Sweden in Ankara/Sida
Municipal /Local Officials		
20.	1	Antalya
21.	1	Izmir
22.	1	Diyarbakir
23.	1	Cankarya Ankara
24.	1	Adana
25.	1	Eskişehir
Academic Institutions		
26.	2	İstanbul Bilgi University
27.	1	İstanbul Yeditepe University
GoFor Member Organisations		
28.	1	Association for Romani Memory Studies
29.	1	Queer Studies and LGBTI+ Solidarity Association for University Students
30.	1	Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association
31.	1	Romani Community Youth Education and Development Association
32.	1	Roma Youth Education, Culture, and Solidarity Association
33.	1	Great Youth Movement
34.	1	Climate Pioneers
35.	1	Amnesty International Turkey (Observer)
36.	1	Back to Nature Youth and Sports Club Association
37.	1	Toy Youth Association
38.	1	Development, Education and Merit Association (GEL)
39.	1	Mardin Young Women's Initiative

40.	1	Young Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex Youth Studies and Solidarity Association
41.	1	Diyarbakır Environment and Development Association
42.	1	Imece Network Education and Culture Association
43.	1	Sof Mountain Youth and Sports Club Association
44.	1	Volunteer Services Association (Former Gençtur)
45.	1	Ali Ismail Korkmaz Foundation
46.	1	Gençlik Servisleri Merkezi Derneği (GSM)
47.	1	Topluma Destek Derneği (TDD)
48.	1	e-Gençlik Derneği
49.	1	Çanakkale Koza Gençlik Derneği (Koza)
50.	1	Nilüfer Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi
51.	1	Türkiye Gençlik Birliği Derneği (TGBDER)
52.	1	Toy Gençlik Derneği
53.	1	Gelişim Eğitim ve Liyakat Derneği (GEL Derneği)
54.	1	Doğaya Dönüş Gençlik ve Spor Kulübü Derneği (Doğaya Dönüş Derneği)

Annex 5: Evaluation Instrument

Semi-Structured Key Informant Interview Guides

Name: Organisation:

Position/title:

Date:

For GoFor

1. Have you found any need to revise or reflect on the project Theory of Change since the project started in 2023? If so, why and in what ways did you adapt it? (EQs 1a, 1b).
2. Can you describe in what ways GoFor's collaboration approach aligns with the youth political participation objectives and strategies of municipalities and diverse political actors in Türkiye? (EQ2)
3. What are the key outcomes GoFor has been able to achieve related to the project's main objectives that stand out for you? EQ3
4. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative? EQ4.
5. How has GoFor been able to address have the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/ Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, conservative, NEET youth, etc.? EQ5
6. Are there any of these groups you have not been able reach or work with? If so, what are the challenges in reaching these other groups of youth? EQ 5.
7. What kinds of political or reputational risks has GoFor faced since the project started? How have you and the MOs been able to address these? EQ6
8. What has been the benefit for GoFor of working with LSU? Are your respective roles in this collaboration clear? EQ7
9. Have you experienced any delays, communications challenges or funding issues in providing project support to the MOs? If so, what was the cause of these? What has gone well with these processes? EQ8
10. What do you think works well about GoFor's MEL system? What do you think might need improving? EQ9
11. Are there any factors that you think limit GoFor's institutional sustainability in the long term? EQ10
12. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of municipal youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms? What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
13. What do you see as the main pathways and entry points to institutionalised change at the local level? EQ 11b.
14. To what extent do you consider that your partners' policies and practices related to gender equality, HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches will remain embedded in their work? EQ 12

For GoFor Member Organisations

1. When you look at the main challenges and opportunities for young people in political and civic life in Türkiye today, how well does GoFor's overall approach, its core mission and strategy, match the reality you experience on the ground? (EQ 1a).
2. How does GoFor's collaboration approach aligns with your organisation's approach to the youth political participation? (EQ2)
3. What are the key outcomes/results you have been able to achieve with GoFor's support? EQ3
4. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative? EQ4.
5. Which specific groups of youth does your organisation address and how do you encourage their political participation? EQ5
6. Are there any of these groups you have not been able reach or work with with GoFor's support? If so, why? EQ 5.
7. Have either your organisation or GoFor faced any political or reputational risks since the project started? If so, what are these and how has your organisation and GoFor been able to address these? EQ6
8. Have you experienced any delays, communications challenges or funding issues in receiving support from GoFor? If so, what was the cause of these? What has gone well with these processes? EQ8
9. Do you find reporting requirements for GoFor easy to follow and useful? EQ9
10. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of municipal youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms? EQ 11a.
11. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
12. What do you see as the main pathways or entry points to institutionalised change at the local level? EQ 11b.
13. What policies and practices do you have in place related to gender equality, HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches? EQ 12

For Other Turkish Youth Organisations

1. What do you see as being the main challenges for young people in political and civic life in Türkiye today? EQ1a
2. What are the main opportunities for youth in political and civic life? EQ1a
3. Are you familiar with GoFor? How does GoFor's collaboration approach align with your organisation's approach to youth political participation? (EQ2)
4. Which specific groups of youth does your organisation address?
5. How do you encourage their political participation and/or civic engagement? EQ5
6. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of municipal youth mechanisms, such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms? EQ 11a.
7. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
8. What do you see as the main pathways to institutionalised change at the municipal level? EQ 11b.
9. What policies and practices do your organisation have in place related to gender equality, HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches? EQ 12

For International Youth Organisations/Network Members

1. In what ways does your organisation collaborate with GoFor?
2. How does GoFor's collaboration approach align with your organisation's approach to youth political participation? (EQ2)

3. What are the key outcomes/results you have been able to achieve together with GoFor? EQ3
4. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative? EQ4.
5. Which specific groups of youth does your organisation address and how do you encourage their political participation and/or civic engagement? EQ5
6. Are there any specific groups of youth your organisation would like to be working with but have not yet been able reach? If so, why? EQ 5.
7. Has either your organisation or GoFor faced any political or reputational risks since 2023 due to the work you are doing together? If so, what are these and how has your organisation and GoFor been able to address these? EQ6
8. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
9. What do you see as the main pathways to institutionalised change for youth political participation at the local level? EQ 11b.
10. What policies and practices do you have in place related to gender equality, HRBA, and environmental/climate approaches? EQ 12

For Political Parties/MPs

1. What do you see as being the main challenges and opportunities for young people in political and civic life in Türkiye today? EQ 1a
2. What has changed in this regard in the past three years?
3. How does your party address these challenges and make opportunities available for young people in political and civic life in Türkiye today? EQs 1a and EQ2.
4. Which of these strategies do you think has been the most effective in encouraging youth political participation and engagement in civic life? EQ 3
5. How does your party encourage political participation of diverse youth groups? EQ5
6. Are there any specific groups of youth you have not been able reach or engage? If so, why? EQ 5.
7. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local level youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms? EQ 11a.
8. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
9. What do you see as the main pathways or entry points to institutionalised change at the municipal level? EQ 11b.
10. What policies and practices do you have in place related to equality between women and men, human rights, and environmental/climate approaches? EQ 12

For Embassy of Sweden in Türkiye:

1. What has changed in the political situation and operating environment since the project started? How do you think these changes need to be reflected in the project's Theory of Change? (EQs 1a, 1b).
2. In what ways do you think GoFor's collaboration approach aligns with the youth political participation objectives and strategies of municipalities and diverse political actors in Türkiye? Do you see any key gaps in this alignment? (EQ2)
3. What are the key outcomes GoFor has been able to achieve related to the project's main objectives that stand out for you? EQ3
4. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative that you know of? EQ4.
5. How has GoFor been able to address have the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/ Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, conservative, NEET youth, etc.? EQ5

6. Are there any of these groups that you think GoFor is not reaching or working with? If so, why? EQ 5.
7. Has GoFor faced any political or reputational risks since the project started? If so, do you know GoFor and its MOs been able to address these? EQ6
8. What do see as having been the benefits of the GoFor and LSU collaboration? EQ7
9. Have you observed any significant delays, communications challenges or funding issues in GoFor's project support to the MOs? If so, what was the cause of these? What has gone well with these processes? EQ8
10. What do you think works well about GoFor's MEL system? What do you think might need improving? EQ9
11. Are there any factors that you think limit GoFor's institutional sustainability in the long term? EQ10
12. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local level youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms?
13. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
14. What do you see as the main pathways or entry points to institutionalised change at the local level? EQ 11b.

For LSU

1. Please describe your collaboration with GoFor since 2023.
2. Have you found that there has been any need for LSU and GoFor to revise or reflect on the project Theory of Change since the project started in 2023? If so, why and in what ways? (EQs 1a, 1b).
3. How does GoFor's collaboration approach aligns with the youth political participation objectives and strategies of municipalities and diverse political actors in Türkiye? (EQ2)
4. What are the key outcomes GoFor has been able to achieve related to the project's main objectives that stand out for you? EQ3
5. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative that you know of? EQ4.
6. How has GoFor been able to address have the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/ Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, conservative, NEET youth, etc.? EQ5
7. Are there any of these groups GoFor has not been able reach or work with? If so, why? EQ 5.
8. Which political or reputational risks has GoFor faced since the project started, if any? What are these and how did they address these? EQ6
9. What has been the benefit for LSU of working with GoFor? Are your respective roles in this collaboration clear? EQ7
10. What do you think works well about GoFor's MEL system? What do you think might need improving? EQ9
11. Are there any factors that you think limit GoFor's institutional sustainability in the long term? EQ10
12. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local level youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms?
13. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
14. What do you see as the main pathways and entry points to institutionalised change at the local level? EQ 11b.

For Government Institutions – Municipal

1. Could you briefly describe what is the situation of youth participation in civic life and engagement in your municipality?
2. What kinds of programs or policies does your municipality have in place to encourage or support youth civic engagement?
3. (for the three pilot municipalities) Can you describe in what ways GoFor's collaboration approach aligns with the youth civic engagement and participation objectives and strategies of your municipality (EQ2)
4. What are the main changes your municipality has been able to achieve related to youth civic engagement with GoFor's support? EQ3
5. Have there been any unexpected results either positive or negative? EQ4.
6. How have you and/or GoFor been able to address have the priority needs of diverse youth groups? EQ5
7. Are there any of these groups you have not been able reach or work with? If so, what are the main challenges in reaching these other groups of youth? EQ 5.
8. What are the main challenges you have faced in seeking to increase youth civic engagement at the municipal level? How have you been able to address these? EQ6
9. Have you experienced any delays, communications challenges or funding issues in your youth civic engagement work with GoFor? If so, what was the cause of these? What has gone well with these processes? EQ8
10. How do you report to GoFor on your youth civic engagement work? What works well about this reporting system and what do you think might need improving? EQ9
11. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local level youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms?
12. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
13. What do you see as the main pathways and entry points to institutionalised change at the municipal level? EQ 11b.

National Government (line ministries)

1. Could you briefly describe what is the situation of youth participation in civic life and engagement in Türkiye?
2. What do you see as being the priority needs of diverse youth groups? EQ5
3. What kinds of programs and policies does the Government of Türkiye have in place to encourage or support youth civic engagement?
4. What are the main changes the Government of Türkiye has been able to achieve related to youth civic engagement ? EQ3
5. What factors have contributed to these successes? EQ3
6. Are there any specific groups of youth the Government is still trying to reach or engage? If so, what are the main challenges in reaching these specific groups of youth? EQ 5.
7. What are the main challenges you have faced in seeking to increase youth civic engagement at the national level? How has the Government of Türkiye been able to address these? EQ6
8. At the local level, what factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local youth mechanisms including municipal ones such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms?
9. What factors might be limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a

10. What do you see as the main pathways and entry points to institutionalised change at the local level? EQ 11b.

For Other Donors

1. What kind of programming does your organisation support that promotes youth political participation or engagement in civic life?
2. What has changed in the political situation and operating environment related to youth political participation since 2023? (EQs 1a, 1b).
3. What are the key outcomes your organisation has been able to achieve regarding enhancing youth political participation and/or engagement in civic life? EQs 1a,b & 3
4. What factors have contributed to these successes? EQs 1a,b & 3
5. Are you familiar with the work that GoFor does? If so, in what ways do you think that does GoFor's collaboration approach align with the youth political participation objectives and strategies of municipalities and diverse political actors in Türkiye? (EQ2)
6. What do see as being the priority needs of diverse youth groups such as women, Kurdish/Roma/minorities, LGBTQI, conservative, and NEET youth regarding political participation and/or civic engagement? EQ5
7. Are there any of these groups it is difficult to reach? If so, why? EQ 5.
8. Has GoFor faced any political or reputational risks since the project started? If so, do you know
GoFor and its MOs been able to address these? EQ6
9. What factors do you think are contributing to the sustainability of local level youth mechanisms such as youth strategies/ councils, and other mechanisms?
10. What factors are limiting the sustainability of these youth participation mechanisms? EQ 11a
11. What do you see as the main pathways and entry points to institutionalised change related to youth political participation and decision-making at the local level? EQ 11b.

Member Organisation Focus Group Discussion Guide

Evaluation Questions (EQs) Focus Group Script 1:

"Good morning/afternoon, everyone, and thank you for taking the time to join us today. My name is X, and I am part of an independent team evaluating the GoFor "Expanding Space for Youth's Participation" project. We are incredibly grateful for your presence.

Before we begin, let's quickly go around the room. Could you please share your name, the organization you represent, and perhaps one key goal your organization has for young people in Türkiye?

(Allow time for introductions)

Thank you. As I mentioned, we are here today as part of an independent evaluation. Your experiences and insights as key Member Organizations are essential for understanding the project's real-world impact and its role in the youth sector. Our goal today is to learn from you about your journey with GoFor—the successes, the challenges, and the lessons learned along the way.

To make sure we have a productive and open conversation, I'd like to suggest a few ground rules:

- **Confidentiality:** This is a safe space. Your names and the names of your organizations will not be directly linked to any specific comments in our final report.

We will analyze the discussion for common themes and general findings to ensure anonymity. (The session will be audio-recorded, but this is solely for our note-taking purposes to ensure we accurately capture your valuable contributions and we will delete the recordings after we have written the report.

- **Sensitive Issues:** If there are any issues or experiences you would like to share with us you consider too sensitive to include in a written report that could be read by third parties other than the Swedish Embassy, please let us know and we will ensure that this information is not included in any formal, written reports.
- **Respectful Dialogue:** There are no right or wrong answers here. We are interested in your honest opinions and diverse perspectives. Please feel free to agree or disagree with each other but always do so respectfully. We want to hear from everyone, so please try to speak one at a time.
- **My Role:** My role as the facilitator is to guide our conversation, ask questions, and make sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts. We have several important topics to cover, so at times I may need to move the discussion forward gently.

Do these ground rules sound acceptable to everyone? And do I have your verbal consent to proceed with the discussion (and the audio recording)? Excellent. Let's begin."

Script 2:

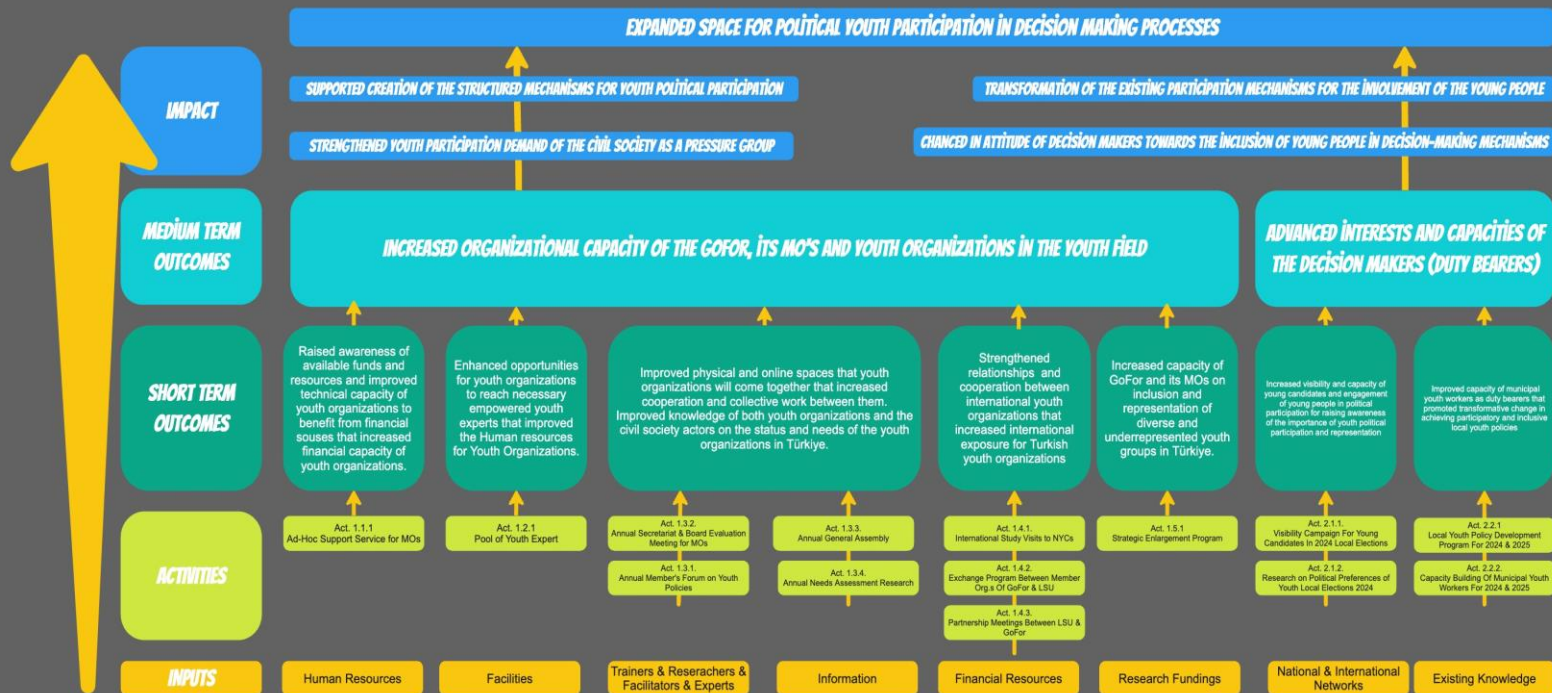
Same as above but using the small group and coloured card method.

1. Let's start by thinking about the big picture. When you look at the main challenges and opportunities for young people in political and civic life in Türkiye today, how well does GoFor's overall approach, its core mission and strategy, match the reality of your experience on the ground? **(EQ 1a)4.**
2. Thinking about this work you have done with GoFor intervention, what are the most important results or changes that GoFor has helped your organisation has achieved either internally or externally with GoFor's support to advocate for broader youth participation and civic engagement? **EQ3**
3. Looking back on your journey with GoFor, are there any significant *unintended* or unexpected consequences of your involvement, whether positive or negative? **(EQ 4)**
4. Thinking about the entire process of your organisation working with GoFor, from applying for technical support, to participating in capacity-building and learning opportunities, and your regular communication and reporting, what aspects of this process have worked well and made your life easier? **(EQ 8)**(any that need improving?) **(EQ 8)**
5. Looking back on your journey with GoFor, are there any significant *unintended* consequences of your involvement, whether positive or negative? **(EQ**
6. The social and political environment we all work in is constantly changing. Can you share some examples of how GoFor (or your organisation) has—or has not—adapted

its approach in its support for your organisation in response to significant shifts you've witnessed, whether these are political, social, or related to domestic or external funding? **(EQ 1b)**

7. A significant part of this work involves engaging with municipalities and various political actors. Thinking about your own experiences and observations, how would you describe GoFor's overall strategy for building and maintaining these crucial relationships? **(EQ 2)**
8. Projects rarely go exactly as planned. Looking back on your journey with GoFor, what have been the most significant *unintended* consequences of your involvement, whether positive or negative? **(EQ 4)**
9. GoFor's mission includes supporting diverse youth groups, such as young women, LGBTQI youth, Kurdish and Roma youth, NEETs, and conservative youth. From your organization's perspective, where has the project been most successful in helping you reach and empower specific communities such as young women, LGBTQI youth, Kurdish and Roma youth, NEETs, and conservative youth?
10. On the other side, which youth groups or perspectives do you feel have been harder to reach or might be underrepresented in the project's work? **(EQ 5) (or should this be in their own organisation? (EQ 5).)**
11. Working on youth rights and political participation in Türkiye can sometimes attract negative attention or create political and reputational risks for organizations like yours. Have you ever faced such challenges as a result of your work or your affiliation with GoFor? If so, how were you and/or GoFor able to address these ?**(EQ 6)**
12. Let's turn to the practical side of the partnership. Thinking about the entire process of working with GoFor, from applying for technical support, to participating in capacity-building and learning opportunities, and your regular communication and reporting, what aspects of this process have worked well and made your life easier? **(EQ 8)**
13. In your view, what are the main barriers to sustaining youth strategies and councils or other municipal mechanisms for youth participation and civic engagement in the long term? **(EQ 11a)**

Annex 6: GoFor Thoery of Change



Annex 7: Excerpt from 12th National Development Plan

3.3.7. Youth

a. Objective

745. The main objective is to ensure that young people are raised with strong life skills, education and employment opportunities, humanitarian and national values, and are engaged in active participation in economic and social life and decision-making mechanisms.

b. Policies and Measures

746. Young people will be encouraged to participate in science, arts, culture and sports activities that support their physical, social and judgmental development as well as their innovative and entrepreneurial qualities.

746.1. Programs will be developed to ensure that young people are oriented towards sports, culture and arts activities and especially mathematics, science, technology and engineering.

746.2. Programs will be developed to help youth gain the necessary skills to adapt to the impacts of green and digital transformation and the needs of the future and to support their productivity.

746.3. The number of youth centers and youth offices will be increased according to need and partnerships will be developed with organizations conducting similar activities.

746.4. The number and quality of environments that improve young people's reading, comprehension and thinking skills and enable them to express themselves verbally and in writing will be increased.

746.5. Activities aimed at increasing the participation of young people in projects and activities and developing their responsibility and leadership skills will be expanded.

746.6. The physical facilities and human resources of schools will be made suitable for the use of young people for social, cultural and sports activities during extracurricular time.

746.7. The number and quality of mechanisms to ensure the active participation of young people in decision-making processes will be increased.

746.8. Mobility programs will be expanded and diversified, especially considering the demands and special circumstances of disadvantaged young people.

746.9. The number and quality of programs and activities contributing to the personal and social development of young people, especially programs conducted in youth centers and youth camps, will be increased.

746.10. Efforts to operationalize the "National Youth Council of Türkiye" will be completed.

746.11. Efforts will be conducted to raise awareness of young people on volunteering activities and increase their participation.

746.12. Governance models that gather relevant public institutions and organizations, NGOs, universities, private sector and young people will be developed to conduct studies in areas that can be developed in Türkiye.

746.13. The institutional structures, communication capabilities and project implementation capacities of NGOs active in the field of youth will be improved.

747. Psychological counselling and guidance services tailored to the characteristics and problem areas of young people and parents will be expanded, and competency building and informative trainings will be increased.

747.1. Awareness-raising activities and programs to strengthen skills on health, first aid, technology, social media, financial and legal literacy will be conducted in schools, higher education student dormitories and youth centers.

747.2. Youth and parents will be informed about risks in digital environments.

747.3. The employment of experts in the fields of psychological counseling and guidance will be expanded in youth centers and services for young people and parents will be provided.

748. Fight against addictive substances will be carried out effectively and social rehabilitation and adaptation services will be developed.

748.1. The harms of addictive substances such as tobacco and alcohol will be highlighted and their accessibility for young people will be made difficult.

748.2. Efforts will be maintained to inform and raise awareness of young people and professionals in the field of youth on the fight against addiction.

748.3. The number of professionals working with young people in the fight against addiction will be increased 748.4. The quality and quantity of social cohesion services will be increased, and services will be expanded through legal arrangements needed for the activation of post-treatment rehabilitation and follow-up services.

748.5. Academic studies will be supported to design evidence-based policies for the fight against behavioral addictions, and evidence-based measures will be considered in the design of protective and preventive policies and the shaping of treatment services.

748.6. Training and guidance efforts will be carried out to enable children and young people to use technology more consciously and for their development.

749. To minimize the social cohesion problems of the youth under international or temporary protection; awareness, intercultural interaction and skill of coping with difficulties will be increased.

749.1. Sports, cultural and educational activities and programs will be implemented for young people under international or temporary protection.

749.2. Vocational guidance will be provided for young people under international or temporary protection.

749.3. The number of programs that promote inclusion and interaction among young people will be increased.

749.4. Activities aiming to ensure that young people under international or temporary protection in Türkiye harmonize with the values of the society they live in and contribute to the development of the country will be increased.

750. Within the framework of the analyses conducted for young people who are not in education and employment, programs and projects that support their participation in education or employment will be developed with a holistic approach focused on the individual, family and society.

750.1. Incentive programs will be implemented to increase the participation of young people in the labor force and employment according to the reasons why they are not in education and employment.

750.2. The leadership skills of young people will be developed and activities will be conducted to support their entrepreneurship.

750.3. Young people who are not in education and employment will be directed to open jobs and professions.

750.4. Short-term certification and diploma programs will be arranged related to the youth's skills and abilities, especially in innovative areas such as software.

750.5. Young people will be referred to the occupational referral, entrepreneurship, and vocational training services of KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) and İŞKUR.

750.6. Cooperation activities will be conducted with NGOs for young people who are not in education and employment.

750.7. Programs will be implemented to contribute to the personal and social development of young people and their career planning, including the professions of the future.

750.8. Young people, especially young women living in rural areas, will be supported to enter the labor force and projects will be developed to ensure reverse migration to rural areas and revitalize economic and social life.

750.9. Studies will be conducted to improve the life skills of young women who are not in education and employment and to ensure their participation in employment.

751. The number and quality of regularly collected data on youth allowing international comparisons will be increased.

751.1. Surveys will be carried out and research will be conducted to measure the needs and expectations of young people.

751.2. The number and quality of data showing the current situation of young people and allowing comparison with other countries will be increased.

Annex 8: GoFor Updated Risk Assessment

GoFor MEL System – Risk Assessment Summary

Since 2023, GoFor has operated in an increasingly restrictive civic and political environment in Türkiye. This context has shaped both the organisation's internal MEL mechanisms and the participation of its member organisations (MOs). Based on 2023–2024 reports and current observations, the following risk categories and organisational responses define the evolution of GoFor's MEL-related risk landscape.

1. Political Pressure and Institutional Security Risks (Increased)

Growing political volatility, shrinking civic space, and pressure on rights-based civil society have heightened risks of sudden inspections, fines, legal sanctions, or attempts to delegitimise GoFor. Visibility in national political debates and international mechanisms led to targeted reactions from pro-government media.

Mitigation:

- Biannual internal audit simulations;
- Legal counsel hired;
- Institutional continuity planning informed by RADA (**Belarusian National Youth Council**); GoFor has drawn on the expertise of the RADA, a well-established youth network that has experienced severe political repression, forced relocation, and repeated attempts by the Belarusian authorities to shut down independent youth civil society. Over the past years, RADA has developed robust continuity, security, and emergency governance models to ensure that their organisation, membership structure, and advocacy functions can continue even under threats such as office raids, legal liquidation, forced dissolution, or digital access restrictions.
- Maintaining Schengen visa readiness for Secretariat and Board;
- Strategic risk-based timing of sensitive publications (e.g., budget reports);
- Increased operational security protocols in MEL data collection.

2. Human Rights Advocacy Risks (Increased)

GoFor's explicit stance on LGBTQ+ rights, discrimination generated hate speech, online harassment, and political backlash. Acceptance of LGBTQ+ right based organizations as members and publication of youth attitude data intensified risks but reinforced GoFor's values-based position.

Mitigation:

- Strong anti-discrimination clauses integrated into the Youth Rights Agreement;
- Safe membership procedures;
- Data minimisation and secure storage in MEL processes;
- Safety-aware communication strategies.

3. MO Participation and Perceived Political Risk (Ongoing / Increased)

New or smaller youth organisations often fear political repercussions for joining a rights-based network. Questions around GoFor’s political positioning, “risk profile,” and state relations are common.

However, interest in membership has simultaneously increased due to GoFor’s strong collective identity and policy influence.

Mitigation:

- Clear articulation of GoFor’s rights-based and non-partisan political stance;
- Secure, transparent membership processes;
- Capacity-building for MO governance

4. Data Security, Confidentiality, and MEL Capacity Risks (Ongoing)

Unequal MEL capacity among MOs, concerns about sensitive information being recorded, and episodes of limited access to field meetings have impacted the consistency of data.

Mitigation:

- Simplified and tier-based MEL tools;
- QR-based micro-MEL systems;
- Clearly stated “do not record” safety protocol in interviews;
- Hybrid meeting formats and region-specific adaptations.

5. Staff Burnout, Workload Pressure, and Sustainability Risks (Increased)

High productivity expectations in a shrinking civic space led to organisational and individual tiredness. Staff operated under economic strain and intense political cycles.

Mitigation:

- Restructuring workloads;
- Long-term staff development planning;
- Strengthening Secretariat–Board role clarity;
- Embedding care-based leadership in organisational culture.

6. Symbolic Participation & Limited Policy Influence (Ongoing)

Local and national institutions increasingly invite youth actors, yet decision-making power remains limited. Participation without accountability risks tokenisation.

Mitigation:

- Developing binding participation frameworks;
- Creating local youth policy models;
- Budget monitoring and youth-inclusive policy tools.

7. International Exposure as Protective Factor (New / Increasing)

Engagement with the European Commission, UN bodies, and CoE now acts as a protective political layer. International visibility reduces institutional vulnerability but increases expectations.

Mitigation:

- Systematic strategy for international engagement;
- Integration of global mechanisms into core organisational planning.

In Short between 2023 and 2025, GoFor's MEL system adapted to:

- a more hostile political environment,
- a heightened need for security-sensitive data practices,
- growing expectations from MOs, public institutions, and international actors.

Despite increased risks, GoFor strengthened its political clarity, institutional resilience, and evidence-based monitoring culture. The MEL system now functions within a more flexible, secure, and strategically aligned organisational structure.

Risk Category	2023 Status	2024 Status	Current (2025) Status
Political pressure & sudden inspection risk	High – Anti-Terror Law (3713 sayılı Terörle Mücadele Kanunu) impact; fear of sanctions; audit simulation introduced	Increased – pro-gov media targeting; heightened scrutiny during elections	Further increased – systemic volatility persists; internal audit cycle stabilised
Institutional closure / legal threats	Identified as major risk; RADA knowledge transfer initiated	Continued; legal counsel added; continuity planning strengthened	Stable but sensitive – mitigation mechanisms in place but environment remains fragile

Annex 9: References

- Çevik, S. (2016). Erdoğan's Comprehensive Religious Policy: Management of the Religious Realm in Turkey. SWP Comments 2016/C 12. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP).
- [Department of the Interior and Local Government \(DILG\) - SK Operations](#)
- [City of Boston: Youth Lead the Change](#)
- Erkan's Field Diary, 2025, An updated list of Trustee Appointments to Opposition Municipalities. (<https://erkansaka.net/2025/03/24/an-updated-list-of-trustee-appointments-to-opposition-municipalities/>)
- European Commission, 2025, Türkiye 2025 Report.
- European Commission, 2024, Evaluation of EU Support to Youth in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood Regions.
- EY, 2024, Assessment of Internal Management and Control of GoFor – National
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB). (2019). *Internal Audit Reports on Foundation Transfers (2018)*, as cited in T24 News, Jan 28, 2019
- Kabasakat Arat, Zehra F., Dec. 31, 2020, Women's Struggle in Türkiye and a New Transnational Declaration cited in EU Gender Country Profile – Türkiye, 2025.
- Lüküslü, Demet and Kezban Çelik, Gendering the NEET category: young NEET women in Turkey, Turkish Studies Vol 23, 2022 Issue 2.
- [Mozaik Foundation \(Bosnia & Herzegovina\)](#)
- Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2024, 12th Development Plan (2024-2028).
- UN Women, Gender-Responsive Cluster Evaluation for the Projects "Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender Equal Society in Ukraine" (2017–2021) & "Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ukraine (2018-2022).
- Youth Council of Turkey

Project Documents Reviewed

- GoFor, 2025, Annual Narrative Report for Expanding Space for Youth's Political Participation 1 January – 21 December 2024 plus Annexes 1-10 and LSU-GoFor Annual Financial Report
- GoFor, 2025, MEL System Risk Assessment Summary
- GoFor, 2024, Annual Narrative Report for Expanding Space for Youth's Political Participation 1 January – 21 December 2023.
- GoFor's Management Response to the Audit Report for the Financial Year 2024 Annexes 1- 31
- GoFor Sida Project Report, 01-05 2023 to 31-12, 2023

- GoFor, 2023, Expanding Space for Youth's Political Participation – Full Application to Sida.
- GoFor, 2023, Expanding Space for Youth's Political Participation Theory of Change
- Sida, 2023, Grant Agreement between Sida and GoFor Youth Organizations Forum Association regarding Expanding Spaces for Youth's Political Participation – Contribution No. 16360.
- Sida, 2023, Amendment to Grant Agreement between Sida and GoFor Youth Organizations Forum Association regarding Expanding Spaces for Youth's Political Participation – Contribution No. 16360.
- Sida, 2019, General Conditions applicable to Grants from Sida to NGOs, regarding project/programme support and core support
- Sida, 2019 Sida's Standard Terms of Reference for Annual Audit of Project/Programme Support including ISRS 4400 (Revised)

Websites consulted:

- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/12/turkey-elections-a-guide-on-turkeys-electoral-system>
- <https://www.aile.gov.tr/haberler/bakanimiz-goktas-2026nin-ocak-ayi-itibariyla-artirilacak-aile-ve-genclik-fonu-kapsamindaki-evlilik-kredisi-icin-basvurulari-bugun-itibariyla-almaya-basladik/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHxvGwXN4pk/>
- <https://kaosgl1.org/en/single-news/the-budget-proposal-allocates-21-billion-lira-to-protection-of-the-family#:~:text=In%202026%2C%20approximately%208%20billion,to%20receive%2014%20billion%20lira.>
- https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae/1c0d9c79-en.pdf
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/3501/2021/en/>
- <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-net/2024>
- https://gpseducation.oecd.org/Content/EAGCountryNotes/EAG2023_CN_TUR_pdf.pdf
- <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/turkey>
- <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/turkiye/52-youth-participation-in-representativedemocracy#:~:text=The%20average%20age%20of%20the,as%20of%20the%20election%20date>
- <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2023/11/20231129-1.htm>
- <https://www.sida.se/en>
- <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/refation/eurasia/CivicParticipation-of-Youth-in-the-Digital-Word.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/youthaffairs/en/meaningful-youth-participation#:~:text=What%20is%20Meaningful%20Youth%20Participation,participation%20is%20inherently%20context%20specific>



Evaluation of “Expanding Space for Youth’s Political Participation” – GoFor

Purpose and use

Evaluation of the Expanding Space for Youth Political Participation” project in Türkiye implemented by Gençlik Örgütleri Forumu (GoFor) focused on progress made on the project’s four objectives to: 1) Strengthen youth organisations; 2) Expand youth participation in decision-making; 3) Increase cooperation & networking in the youth sector; and 4) Develop GoFor as an institution.

Conclusion

Despite operating in a rapidly shrinking civic space, GoFor has given its member organisations a voice and safe spaces to express themselves, strengthening their capacity and its own.

These voices are being heard at local and national levels within Türkiye, and internationally in European fora and at UN bodies. These are impressive achievements sorely needed to build youth-inclusive democratic processes in Türkiye.

Recommendation

Due to domestic funding challenges for rights-based Turkish CSOs and the weak capacity of many youth organisations, GoFor fills a gap by advocating for youth rights and participation. Given GoFor’s positive track record, Sida and other donors should seriously consider providing core funding as a bridging option while GoFor builds alternative sources of funding.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Visiting address: Rissneleden 110, 174 57 Sundbyberg
Postal address: Box 2025, SE-174 02 Sundbyberg, Sweden
Telephone: +46 [0]8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 [0]8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se Web: sida.se/en

