



GOVERNING LOCALLY: CITY LEADERSHIP AT THE FRONT AND CENTER
IN IMPLEMENTING MIGRATION POLICY – PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT AND SECURING PROTECTION
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JOINT MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE POLICY BRIEF

Migrants' Integration as a Pre-requisite for Development: The Role of Cities

Introduction

In the context of the on-going refugee crisis where cities are acting in various parts of the world as frontline responders, combined with global tendencies towards increased urbanisation connected to migration, attention is growing towards the role of cities' de facto or de jure competencies in attending to the needs of newcomers. Essentially, the focus of the current policy debate is on how to provide targeted service delivery to facilitate integration in a context of scarce financial resources, where migration is too often framed as a burden on local communities.

This Policy Brief will argue that integration of migrants in cities need to be closely connected with the development impact of migration. Migrants are important players for cities as actors of territories' development as they can and do contribute to the social and economic fabric of their host and home territories. While migration can have negative effects such as social tensions, ghettoization and urban sprawl, when the right policies are put in place, investment, labour, skills, expertise and international remittances from migrant communities can directly contribute to the development of the territories of origin and destination. The extent to which integration is successful is therefore directly linked to the ability of migrants and refugees to contribute to local development in both the host and home territories.

Integration should therefore be framed in policy terms not as a mean to an end, but as a stepping stone to realize the development potential of migration. This will be illustrated based on the experience of the cities and other regional and local authorities being supported by the Joint Migration and Development Initiative¹ (JMDI).

Context

Migration and displacement is mainly an urban phenomenon. Some 60% of the total 14.4 million refugees and 80% of the 38 million internally displaced are thought to live in urban areas. Moreover, the majority of migrants and refugees living in urban areas out of the total number of refugees has increased by 8% in the last three years.

¹ The Joint Migration and Development Initiative is an EC and Swiss-funded global programme led by UNDP and implemented in partnership with IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UN Women, UNITAR and UNFPA. It operates on a global scale with field activities with cities and local and regional authorities located in Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal and Tunisia.



It is within this context that cities and other local and regional authorities are finding themselves at the forefront of managing the positive and negative effects of migration. Cities are important learning and implementation laboratories, where practical solutions and innovative partnerships with non-State actors are being developed, upon which a new pragmatic paradigm to integration and migration management can be built. Thus, some cities are increasingly looking beyond integration towards innovative and inclusive approaches to not only integrating migrants economically, socially and culturally, but building on the diversity they bring to transform their cities into prosperous, attractive and dynamic international hubs. They have taken on a development-based approach to integration where integration is no longer seen as the end of migration management, but as a means to an end with the final objective being development. This is entirely in line with current global thinking which has recognised the positive contribution of migration to development within the new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda whereby Target 7 of Sustainable Development Goal 10 calls for the facilitation of “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. It is also hoped that the Habitat III Conference taking place in October this year and carving the New Urban Agenda will fully capture this dimension.

It is only very recently that the international community has started to recognize cities as important actors in this arena, not only within countries, but also on a global scale. The Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) is a pioneer in this field. The JMDI, which started operations in 2008, has shown that Migration and Development initiatives that have a strong anchorage with local authorities and local development priorities have a more far-reaching and sustainable development impact. Since 2013 the JMDI has been working closely with local authorities and local civil society actors to support their initiatives, reinforce their capacities and connect them globally so that their experience and specific voices can be known and heard at the international level. As demonstrated by these initiatives, the wider view of migration as a local development tool is supported more and more as there is increasing evidence that it can sustain local development and enhance the dynamism of territories receiving and sending migrants.

Some examples of JMDI-supported and innovative migration management approaches that foster local development are outlined below where some cities and other local and regional authorities have embraced this vision of a development-based approach to integration.

An inclusive approach to the integration of people experiencing human mobility in Pichincha, Ecuador: This initiative led by the Provincial Government of Pichincha (where capital city Quito is located), aims to promote strategies for integration, development and sustainable strengthening of local actors’ capacities to foster the social, economic and cultural integration of migrants within a mixed migration context (including refugees, return migrants, transit and economic migrants). The Provincial Government of Pichincha has a highly successful integration model through its Human Mobility Unit which, inter alia, has seen an awareness raising campaign to mitigate xenophobia and promote mutual

understanding among migrants and locals for enhanced social cohesion. Moreover, through participation of migrants and their associations within the activities and planning of the Human Mobility Unit, they are able to further promote social inclusion, integration and access to services and support. Finally, through good coordination and support from the national government and the consortium of Provincial Governments (CONGOPE), the Human Mobility Unit model is now being replicated in other provinces with the endorsement of the state.

Enhancing migration management at local and national level through enhanced multi-level coordination in the region of Bicol, Philippines: The work of the Municipality of Naga City, capital of the region of Bicol, is another example of holistic efforts to mainstream migration into local development planning across the municipalities of Bicol. To achieve this, a well-managed coordination mechanism between the national, regional and local levels was set up. At the local level, local centres and councils on migration and development were established with corresponding budget and personnel to lead the main activities in each municipality. Technical working groups were also established at the local level to bring in the expertise and support of various key actors to oversee the mainstreaming of migration into their local developing planning. Naga City acts as coordinating and support role at the regional level (Bicol) through a Migration and Development Council to provide capacity building and technical support at the local level. At the national level, Naga City has partnered with the state through the Commission for Filipinos Overseas and fosters coordination, dialogue and mutual knowledge sharing and support between the local and national levels. All of which has allowed the migration management process to be localized whilst remaining aligned and supported at the national level and thus enhanced its effectiveness and outreach to support migrants and families of migrants, as well as the communities overall.

Inclusion of migrants, diaspora and their associations for enhanced local development in Sedhiou, Senegal: This initiative, led by the Regional Development Agency of Sedhiou in Senegal, aims to develop a policy framework for mainstreaming and managing migration for development at the local level with the financial support and know-how of the diaspora. To achieve this, the Agency created Immigration Policy Commissions at the municipal level and supported them to ensure the mainstreaming of migration into local development planning. By promoting the participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly the diaspora abroad, immigrants and generally the other key actors of the community, these development plans have resulted in concrete and effective outputs that truly respond to the needs of migrants and the community at the local level and supported through the set-up of Help Offices for Migrants. The participation of migrants and diaspora was ensured through specific coordination and dialogue mechanisms set up across the various related sectors at local and regional levels.

Recommendations

Based on the lessons learnt and good practices identified by the JMDI, one can observe the following key success factors and recommendations:

1. There is a need for cities to **mainstream migration** and displacement issues within all phases of urban and development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such processes can be in the form of migration-related provisions being included in existing local development plans; the creation of specific migration and development management mechanisms, working groups, policies and plans; building or strengthening local migration institutions or structures and expanding local programmes and services to include migrants. These are strengthened when specific economic and human resources are allocated and when these are consolidated into local development plans, statutes and laws. Such an approach also necessitates a **multi-stakeholder approach** where both migration and displacement are considered across all sectors and actors with particular emphasis on ensuring **full participation** of migrants, refugees and their groups and associations as a key stakeholder. To achieve all of this, States, international organisations and civil society should recognise and build on and support the experience and expertise of cities to construct a new migration management paradigm based on an integral local governance approach to human mobility.
2. Articulated strategies to harness the benefits of migration for local development need also to strongly look into upholding migrants' political, economic, social and cultural rights. Indeed, the extent to which migrants' rights are ensured will determine to what extent they can fully integrate into and contribute to society. Cities' initiatives should therefore be highly linked to **preserving and enhancing migrants' capacities as development actors** (Riallant, World Migration Report 2015, IOM).
3. Given that migrants from the same town or region in countries of origin tend to concentrate in the same geographical area in the country of destination, working across migratory corridors in both territories of origin and destination within the dynamics of **decentralised cooperation** can also enhance migration management. This allows for service provision and support throughout the migratory cycle from the decision to migrate through to migrating and final settlement in the territory of destination or possible return to the territory of origin.
4. Cities also need to be **linked to national and international dialogues and spaces** on migration and development not only to tap into the existing resources and knowledge that exist, but to enrich and feed into global understanding and policy making on migration and development. Nationally-led migration policies alone cannot be expected to cater for the unique and varied migratory contexts that exist even within countries at the territorial level. Rather, the pragmatic, innovative and tailored approaches of cities should be aligned with national migration and development policies for mutual support and vertical coherence. This can be achieved by, for example, ensuring cross-fertilization between the Annual Global Mayoral Fora on

Human Mobility, Migration and Development to the state-led Annual Global Fora on Migration and Development.

Conclusion

The extent to which cities and other local and regional authorities can truly harness the development potential of migration depends on how successful integration efforts are. Yet lack of competencies, capacities, fiscal resources, data and understanding of the migratory phenomenon and support at the national and international levels can severely hinder their ability to act. There is therefore a need for states and the international community to recognise, support and build on the innovative and successful cities in this regard. Finally, cities themselves need to continue to go beyond traditional integration efforts towards an integral local governance approach to migration, whereby successful integration is the prerequisite to ensuring a sustainable urban development where truly 'no-one is left behind'.

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Essential supporting documentation

- JMDI-IOM White Paper on Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning and Beyond, 2015 http://www.migration4development.org/sites/default/files/final_mainstreaming_white_paper_www_2_1.pdf
- My JMDI Toolbox set of Training Materials on Migration and Local Development, 2015 <http://www.migration4development.org/en/resources/toolbox/training>
- IOM World Migration Report 2015. Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility http://publications.iom.int/system/files/wmr2015_en.pdf
- MPI-IOM handbook on Developing a Roadmap for Engaging Diasporas in Development, 2012 http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/diaspora_handbook_en_for_web_28may2013.pdf
- JMDI dedicated platform: www.Migration4development.org