7th EMN Educational Seminar on Migration: "Impacts and Opportunities of International Migration"

The relationship between migrants and the cities of the urbanizing world

Jill Helke,
Director,
International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM HQ, Geneva
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Guiding Questions:

1. Why have cities become prominent actors in migration discourse?
2. What challenges and opportunities does migration bring to cities?
3. What good or innovative practices are emerging in different regions of the world in terms of cities' leadership role and engagement?
4. How does the growing importance of cities affect research, migration policies and migration governance debates?

1. Why have cities become prominent in migration discourse?

- Global trends of urbanization are reshaping today's world. Urbanization has increased to such an extent that its effects may entail a rethinking of many aspects of governance, including the governance of migration.[i]
- Nearly all migrants and displaced persons, whether international or internal, aim for cities. More than half of the world's population – 3.5 billion people - currently live in cities; this number is set to rise to 5 million by 2030.
- When migrants return to countries of origin, even if originally they were from rural areas, they will generally settle in cities.
- 95% of global urban expansion will take place in developing countries, mostly in Africa and Asia.[ii]
- There is a close connection between migration and urban development, which makes cities and local governments increasingly important stakeholders in migration discourse.
- The geography of migration flows is changing in line with changes in the global economy and a much wider range of cities around the world have become destinations for migrants. For example, migrants are increasingly attracted to countries with higher economic growth in East Asia, Brazil, southern Africa and western India. Thus, cities face growing challenges of managing migration-induced diversity.[iii]
- Cities on every continent find themselves at the forefront of managing the impact of migration, as well as the promotion of safe, inclusive and sustainable urban environments.[iv] But cities have also become significant determinants of global migration flows and their patterns. While national policy regimes provide a background within which local activity takes place, increasingly it is city institutions, facilities, amenities, opportunities and services that attract and retain migrants.
- Local authorities face many challenges but at the same time they recognize the opportunities that migration (and migrants) bring to the host community. They have direct access and contact with the migrants themselves. They have an understanding of needs, problem areas, and a direct interest in finding solutions in the interest of their communities. Mayors often say: governments see migrants as numbers; mayors see them as people.
- Migrants and displaced persons move to cities because that is where their human capital is most rewarded.[v] Migratory flows turn cities into hubs of diversity and innovation.[vi]
- Cities across the world have growing, mobile and diverse populations to manage. In developed countries, one of the main sources of population diversity is international migration, while in the developing world it is often internal migration and international South– South migration.
- Discussions on migrants and cities have long focused primarily on the Global North and the integration of international migrants. In the last few years, efforts have increasingly been made to draw attention to migrants and migration also in the cities of the Global South, with emphasis on the well being of migrants and the protection of their rights – now often referred to as 'the right to the city'.
- IOM and others have been campaigning for some time for the crucial role of local authorities in migration to be recognized and supported. In 2015 we devoted our flagship publication, the World Migration Report, to the topic of migrants and cities, and held our International Dialogue on Migration on that topic, aiming to help build bridges and promote communication between national and subnational authorities on migration, and encourage the establish the creation of regular mechanisms for discussions between national governments and mayors.
- We have been involved, with our partners, in the annual meetings of the Global Mayoral Forum on migration and development since the beginning, and with UN Habitat, held a special mayoral event in

Mechelen in Belgium in 2017, as part of our support to getting mayors' voices heard in the lead-up to the negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration.

- The role of cities and local authorities has indeed been formally recognized in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Local leaders have a key role to play to achieve the goal of "safe, regular and orderly migration".
- The role of local authorities is acknowledged in a number of recent international agreements, such as in the Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, and the New Urban Agenda on Sustainable Urban Development (NUA), but the GCM is the first time it has been explicitly seen in a document on migration.
- Over the past decades, cities have started to organize themselves to mobilize political and financial support, shape global agendas and disseminate good practice and innovation. Today, there are an estimated 2-300 city networks around the world, some of which focus on migration.

2. What challenges and opportunities does migration bring to cities?

- The fast rate of urbanization and rising migration to cities brings with it both risks and opportunities for the migrants, communities and governments concerned.
- Almost all the growth in the world's population over the next few decades will take place in urban centres in low- and middle-income countries, where poverty reduction is slow and large deficits in provision of basic services are common.
- Strong population growth in cities poses a great deal of pressure on infrastructure, the environment and the social fabric of the city. There is much concern about the pace of urbanization and the capacity of national and local governments among low-income nations to cope with its consequences.
- Some cities are finding it difficult to manage the rapid growth of their populations, while others are confronted with challenges linked to decreasing populations, as their residents leave for other cities.
- Various studies indicate that migrants are disproportionately represented among the urban poor in informal settlements. For example, in Accra, Ghana, 92 per cent of migrant households live in one slum, Old Fadama, without access to clean water and basic sanitation.
- Newcomers often have no choice but to settle in such informal settlements, which are in poorly planned and hazard-prone areas, and where they have limited access to resources and opportunities. Furthermore, when disasters strike, they are among the worst affected.
- Rural–urban migration is considered a main contributor to over-crowding, congestion, and shortfalls in basic infrastructure and services.
- Peri-urban slum settlements in developing countries present specific challenges linked to their location out of the city limits and often out of the legal jurisdiction of the city. Often ungoverned, with increasing problems that remain unsolved, these informal settlements are often exposed to the control of organized criminal groups.
- Peri-urban settlements are also appearing in the peripheries of cities in the Global North due to the increasing costs of housing and recent migration flows towards Europe (Athens, Rome, Lisbon).
- Yet, in many cities in low- and middle-income countries, informal settlements often function as entry points for incoming migrants. Despite the hardships of living in such conditions, migrants are still able to find economic activity and opportunities to improve their current well-being and future prospects.
- In some cases, the residents themselves resort to generating innovative solutions (Nairobi, Kenya – residents of the Mathare Valley Slums created their own economic and informal governance mechanisms).

- Urbanization clearly brings benefits. Moving to cities can greatly enhance people's well-being. It offers an escape from the impact of the hazards of a fragile rural livelihood, and an access to diverse employment opportunities and better health and education.

- Cities can turn urban diversity arising from migration into social and economic advantages. If strategically managed and linked to the formal economy, migration can help increase productivity. Fostering the inclusion of migrants into the labour market can have positive benefits both for the place of origin and of destination as links are maintained between the two.

- Yet, beneficial outcomes from migration into cities are not guaranteed. Much depends on urban policy choices as well as the power of cities to set and implement their own policies, as well as the resources available. Levels of decentralization and devolution vary across countries and shape cities' ability to respond and adapt services.

- Studies indicate a strong correlation between effective provision of services and urban development in all of the major emerging economies.

- Migrants make significant contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of their host countries and of their communities of origin. Yet oftentimes their contributions go unrecognized or, at best, are measured in terms of the remittances they manage to send back home. Migrants also play an important role in building the resilience of home and host communities through the exchange of resources and support and by contributing to forging links between cities of origin and of destination.

3. **What good practices are emerging in different regions of the world in terms of cities leadership role and engagement?**

- One of the most important indicators for success in addressing migration and migrants issues in a positive way and helping with social cohesion is having mayors who show true leadership and conviction in what they say and do on migration. Saying the right things, and promoting and attending events which encourage a positive image of, and mixing of locals with, migrant populations can make a significant difference.

- Cities have taken their own initiatives to manage migration at the local level and directly interact with migrants and with their communities of origin through transnational partnership arrangements.

- For a small and growing number of cities, immigration policies and programmes are now integral to their **urban development and management**: Migration factors are integrated into local policy planning to ensure that the effects of migration and needs of migrants are embedded in the broader development context of a given territory. Some examples:

- Medellin's improved infrastructure (roads, pedestrian bridges, and parks) developed in conjunction with the city's Metrocable to connect marginalized areas of the city fostering mobility, improving communication, and providing access to services for all community members.

- Municipalities throughout Senegal have developed and validated a method to carry out territorial migration profiles to enable local authorities to better understand and engage with migrants, and to develop policies that respond to the real needs of their migrant populations.

- The city of Lisbon has worked on opening up the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city through the renovation of public spaces in partnership with neighbourhood organisations, improved services and infrastructures, improved transport; and the organization of major cultural activities and festivals.

- Efforts are being made among city policymakers **to promote social cohesion** through institutional structures by the federal and local-level authorities in a number of cities in Europe (such as Berlin, Athens, Bilbao and Dublin) and in Asia (Fuzhou in the Fujian Province of China, Singapore and a network of cities in Japan).

- Cities like Berlin, Dublin and Lille are also forging partnerships with migrant associations to promote citizenship and political participation among migrant groups.
- As cities receive migrants and displaced persons, many **provide services** to ensure a smooth transition towards integration.
- Such services include language classes, orientation and legal support, information and referral to specialized services.
- For example, in Morocco, various municipalities in the region of Souss-Massa have established Migration Reception and Orientation Offices for returning Moroccans in order to support them with the administrative procedures related to their social rights acquired during their stays abroad, for example to gain access to their pensions.[vii]
- Over 40 municipalities in Denmark provide a buddying system whereby refugees are matched with a community volunteer who provides practical guidance and support.[viii]
- In Castelfiorentino (Italy) under the Castello Alto Project, local residents and civic organizations participate in the reception of new arrivals, which has led to improved social cohesion in the multicultural neighbourhood around the old city centre.[ix]
- Cities also implement measures to **support the social, economic, and cultural integration** of migrants and displaced persons.
- For example, the Province of Pichincha, Ecuador, has put in place a prize for inclusion and social responsibility to incentivize businesses to hire migrants and refugees.
- The region of Souss-Massa in Morocco is facilitating labour market insertion in key sectors where many migrants find work, such as agriculture, by making it unnecessary to have specific documents, only some form of identification.
- In the city of Puebla, Mexico, fast tracking of certification of skills for returnees is taking place in order to facilitate re-entry into the labour market.
- The City of Montréal recently launched the strategy "Montréal inclusive at work" working with businesses and employers to facilitate integration and overcome subjective biases that hinder recruitment of migrants.
- The Recycling Beirut initiative aims at "merging two problems into a solution": the project contributes to solving the country's waste crisis while offering work opportunities for vulnerable Syrian refugees in the country.
- In the region of Los Santos in Costa Rica, public servants are given lessons on the indigenous language Ngäbe-Buglé in order to increase the access of indigenous trans-border communities to public services in the areas of health, education and employment.[x]
- Cities like Lisbon advocate for local authorities to remove the barriers that prevent civil society to assist street vendors in their path towards integration and toward a better life.[xi]
- Cities are often best placed to understand and **mitigate the exploitation of particularly vulnerable migrants** such as children or undocumented migrants and victims of trafficking.
- The City of Chicago (USA) has developed public-private partnerships to create a local protection fund whereby civil society organisations can work with immigration lawyers so that all migrants know exactly which services they can and cannot access depending on their status.[xii]
- Cities also have to make sure existing services are accessible for migrants and displaced persons.
- The City of Malaga in Spain ensures that identification is not required when accessing services, thus limiting discrimination and reassuring migrants that their migratory status will not be in question when reaching out for services.

- The City of New York has introduced a municipal ID Card that is intended for all residents of New York, including otherwise undocumented migrants. It grants access to services, and includes attractive subscriptions to cultural venues so that it is used by documented residents as well, and is not seen as a stigmatizing "migrant's card". Importantly, the data of the people who register for the card is protected from the immigration authorities.
- Many cities are moving away from the idea of 'integration' of migrants towards 'inclusion' of migrants, an approach focused on eliminating barriers, fostering an active role and making the city an endeavor for all.
- For example, the city of Mannheim in Germany is developing a 'living together in diversity' alliance across over 300 local actors including schools, cultural and sports centres with a view to jointly deciding, with all including migrants, how society would like to 'live together'.
- The city of Milan in Italy has organized the 'Milano Mondo' media campaign including annual neighbourhood festivals.
- Vienna adopted in 2012 the Vienna Charter, which provides a framework for coexistence among the citizenship based on dialogue, respect and solidarity - a short document that puts forward the principles of living together in seven articles.
- Several cities have developed mechanisms for **including migrants and displaced persons in local policy making** and implementation at the local level.
- The city of Barcelona in Spain ensures the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the Municipal Council for Migration so that their voice and concerns are heard and embedded into policy making.
- In Vaud, Switzerland, the Canton-level Immigrants and Consultative Committee (CCCI) acts as an extra-parliamentary body that participates in decisions on migration and integration and is comprised of migrant community representatives.[xiii]
- Sao Paulo has established a similar model of local self-representation of migrants. Likewise, the city of Grenoble has established a Consultative Council of Grenoblois Foreign Residents, which has produced a municipal guide on access to human rights for foreign residents.
- The city of Taoyuan has introduced an award-winning Participatory Budgeting for Migrant Workers.[xiv]
- Cities are consistently developing **innovative and targeted partnerships with a variety of local actors**. Civil society organizations (CSOs), in particular, have acquired years of experience and know-how in facilitating integration and social cohesion. CSOs often occupy a position of trust and act as mediators and facilitators between migrants, their communities, and other residents and the relevant local authorities, promoting an effective response to migrants' needs. They can also bring migrants and nationals together in activities to promote awareness, understanding and social cohesion.
- In Amman, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) manages the activities of the Hashmy Janoubi community centre, which serves the local community living on the outskirts of the city through projects addressed to migrants and local inhabitants alike.
- Canada privately sponsored refugee program allows locally based civil society organization to enter into an agreement with the government: the private sponsors incur the costs of settlement and integration for the refugees for one year and the government provides visas following security and medical screening. Though the programme is under national jurisdiction, it is through the local government agencies and local community actors that the initiative functions.

Other examples of **multi-stakeholder partnerships** in cities:

- In the Philippines, several regions such as Calabarzon, Bicol and Western Visayas have set up a multi-stakeholder and multi-level group called Committee on Migration and Development (CMD) that is involved in implementing migration and development programming and initiatives across sectors. It comprises regional and local government offices as well as representatives from private companies, academia, civil society and migrants' organisations. Within each region, provinces, cities and municipalities also have their corresponding CMD.[xv]
- The Greater Amman Municipality, the French Agency for Development, the French Red Cross and the Jordanian Red Crescent launched a joint strategy to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations, improving living conditions, expanding social communication between refugees and the local community, and establishing community-based activities and opportunities for capacity building in the Badr Nazzal district.[xvi]
- Migrants tend to live on the outskirts of cities as those are often the only areas they can afford. But some mayors see the dangers of ghettos forming and have sought ways to ensure population groups mix. Some examples of how this has been achieved were given at the Habitat World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in 2018. One way was to build attractive parks and recreation areas in the outskirts near where migrants lived, so that city dwellers would come. Another was to build new, well-equipped schools in migrant neighbourhoods so that other city dwellers wanted their children to go to them.
- Architecture can also have a huge impact on whether or not people mingle, for example including shops below apartment blocks, and attractive common spaces, community centres or libraries.
- How services are offered make a difference too. In southern China, they have migrant centres in neighbourhoods where many African migrants live so that migrants can gather and the authorities go to have meetings with them on a monthly basis. In other places, migrant centres can be stigmatizing, and the use of community centres or libraries can be more appropriate and appreciated.

4. **How does the growing importance of cities affect research, migration policies and migration governance debates?**

- Although overall patterns in migration and urbanization can be observed, there is a lack of empirical data and an absence of systematically collected comparable information, especially in low income countries.
- Migration literature and data collection continue to frame the debate around *national* level factors: *countries* of origin and destination, *national* migration and integration policies, *national* employment statistics, etc.
- As migration destinations change and diversify, models which define migration as global South–North or that focus exclusively on national level factors, do not help improve the understanding of contemporary migration and mobility phenomena.
- Human mobility transfers human capital. It also transfers knowledge and material capital. The changes in the nature of mobility have implications for uneven development among cities.
- Existing gaps in research and migration policy development inhibit a deep understanding of migration in urban environments.
- To assists cities in this critical area, IOM has recently extended its Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) exercises from national to local level assessments. IOM does these assessments in partnership with the Economist Intelligence Unit, and with host governments, to promote a better understanding migration policy and governance. 50 countries have so far taken part in national level assessments.

The MGI assessment adapted to the local level has recently been pilot-tested in three cities: Accra, Montreal and Sao Paolo, and the profiles will be published in the next few days.

- Urban migration governance requires a multi-stakeholder approach and governance structure so that diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action taken.
- Partnerships between local and national level of government and across different sectors at local level are necessary to meet the challenges of contemporary migration governance (whole-of-government and-whole-of-society approaches). The process to achieve this is mainstreaming migration at both national and local levels and ensuring vertical and horizontal policy coherence.
- In the absence of vertical policy coherence, fragmented approaches and tensions may rise. For instance, some cities have asserted themselves with regard to some aspects of migration policy in defiance of national law with respect to the treatment of irregular migrants promoting themselves as a preferred destination for migrants or declaring themselves as *sanctuary cities.*
- National governments need to build into their migration and integration policy frameworks a robust role for city administrations and other local actors, and cities need to acknowledge their degree of influence and note that responsibility for migration and the migrants who live in their cities is not that of national jurisdictions alone.
- Whether cities are sufficiently equipped to manage the arrival and integration of migrants or not, the fundamental point is that cities must be part of national migration policy development and planning.
- City networks have a key role to play as well – cities need to engage with each other, to share best practices and challenges, and have an integrated approach towards migration.
- Diversifying partnerships is also important – with private sector, academia, civil society, host communities and migrants themselves.
- When mayors committed to implementing the GCM and GCR in unison in the Marrakech Declaration of December 2018, they readily acknowledged the immigration policy prerogative of states, but asked to be consulted in the elaboration of policies that affect their cities. As outlined by the Honorable Mayor of Bristol, Marvis Rees, during the Global Mayoral Forum in Marrakesh: *"There is no delivery of a GCM if cities do not deliver".*

Conclusion
Whether countries voted for the Global Compact on Migration or not, the document is a very useful guide to what needs to be done at all levels to lift migration governance to more effective levels which also enhance the developmental benefits of migration, and offers opportunities for countries, cities and communities alike. IOM, as IOM and as the Coordinator and Secretariat of the new UN Network on Migration, will do its best to ensure support to countries and cities in efforts to implement good migration policies and practices from the UN system as a whole.

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i IOM, World Migration Report, Geneva, 2018.
ii UN DESA, World Urbanisation Prospects, 2014 edition
iii IOM World Migration Report, Geneva, 2015.
iv Marrakesh Mayors Declaration: Cities working together for migrants and refugees, adopted at the 5th Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development
v IOM, World Migration Report, Geneva, 2018.
vi UN HABITAT, *Access to adequate housing: The Pathway to Migrants' Inclusion in Cities*, Policy Brief within the context of the 5th Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development in Marrakesh, 2018.
vii UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Success Stories: A collection of good practices and lessons learnt by local actors harnessing the development potential of migration, Brussels, 2016.
viii UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Global Civil Society Consultation on Migration and Local Development, A Synthesis Report in the Context of the 3rd Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, Brussels, 2016.

[ix] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments: "Towards the localization of SDGs", 2019.
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[x] UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Mainstreaming Migration into Local Policy Development Planning, Brussels, 2016.

[xi] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments: "Towards the localization of SDGs", 2019.
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[xii] Example shared by the City of Chicago during the 5th Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, Marrakesh, 2018.

[xiii] UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Mainstreaming Migration into Local Policy Development Planning, Brussels, 2016.

[xiv] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments: "Towards the localization of SDGs", 2019.
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[xv] UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative, Mainstreaming Migration into Local Policy Development Planning, Brussels, 2016.

[xvi] MC2CM Case study: https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/MC2CM/MC2M_case_studies/EN/CaseStudies_Amman_Online.pdf